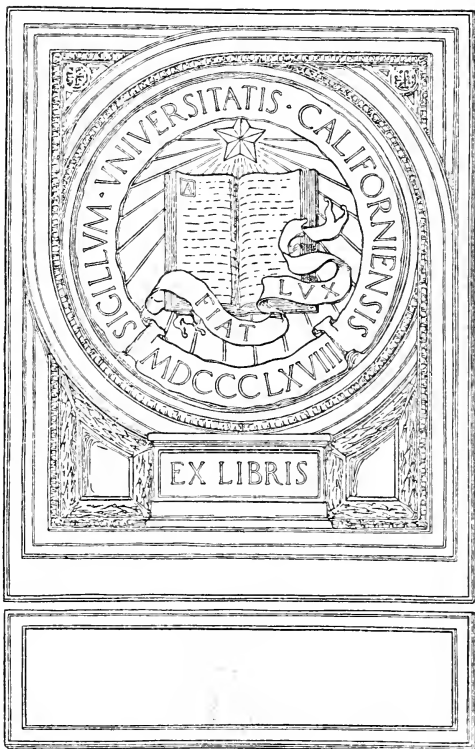


A STORY
of OLD TIMES
in
New ENGLAND.



Mother

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Christmas 1877

By Mrs. E. PRENTISS.

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900 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.



FRONTISPIECE.

PEMAQUID:

A STORY OF

OLD TIMES IN NEW ENGLAND.

MRS. E. PRENTISS,

AUTHOR OF "STEPPING HEAVENWARD," "THE HOME AT GREYLOCK," "THE
FLOWER OF THE FAMILY," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

900 BROADWAY, COR. 20th ST.

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TO THE
ALBANY

ROBERT RUTTER,
BINDER,
64 BEEKMAN STREET,
N. Y.

P E M A Q U I D .

I.

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth.”

MRS. PICKETT'S VERSION.

AT last I breathe freely. Away down in this little Eastern village of Pemaquid I shall find a safe retreat from my enemies and persecutors. It was a happy thought that brought me here. Time, it is true, will hang heavy on my hands at first, but with all my resources and devices I shall soon adjust myself to my new circumstances. And what are these circumstances? I spend my nights in a room that has been shut up from the profane eye for a quarter of a century. By dint of opening every window, and banishing the hideous green paper curtains, the musty odor of this grim apartment is beginning to become endurable. My days I spend in a room yet more religiously closed, more grim, more musty, which rejoices in the name of parlor. ‘Cousin Snell,’ as my worthy relative terms herself, has not yet

recovered from the shock of my innovations, but looks on with speechless horror and amazement. She's not much of a cousin, to be sure, but one must humor her in some things. Poor creature, she may have had some coloring once, but time has faded her out till she looks like the ancient fly-specked sheet of gingerbread one sees in shop-windows in out-of-the-way places. Take a broom, and put upon it a dabby calico dress, and there you have her. Like all the other 'ladies' in Pemaquid, she does her own work. Her husband, 'Lawyer Snell'—Lawyer, indeed!—is off to his work, whatever that may be, at five in the morning, bearing huge sections of pie for his dinner. How these Yankees eat pie. As for my beloved Cousin Snell, her range of thought is unspeakably narrow. To get breakfast, to get dinner, to get supper; to make bread, cake and pie, pie, pie; to go to 'meeting' twice on Sunday and on one evening in the week 'conference'—behold her life. A wholesome break in this monotony is my sudden advent, with my wardrobe, which she reveres, my letting the sunlight into her coffin-like rooms, and all my works and ways, the sight of which fills her with silent awe.

I shall live here gratis as long as I can. Then, when I become boarder instead of guest, I shall have to resort to strategy. It will not be very hard to circumvent a creature as weak as Deborah Snell.

For one thing, I must pretend to great sanctity.

These Puritans, though no better than any other people, make great parade of their piety, and wear it round in wondrous pomp and vanity. I flatter myself that I can play the hypocrite as well as they. The trouble will be with Juliet; that amiable child may be in my way.

There is a fine-looking man at meeting every Sunday. As straight as a poplar, with an eye as clear as a lake, and a forehead as white as snow, set off against a cheek reddened and browned by the sun; will *do* if I can find no higher game. Yes, Squire Woodford, you have the honor of being my prospective almoner, if you did but know it. Widowers *always* marry again, and I shall take him by storm—if I choose. There are two children: one a gawky boy, the other a little mouse of a girl, with exquisite blue eyes, a mass of golden ringlets, and a complexion that even I envy. It would be the easiest thing in the world to worry her out of the house; but I do not know about the boy.

Lawyer Snell is in the habit of making a long prayer through his nose, every evening, an act he designates as 'family worship.' Fortunately I have still a few novels, as yet unread, with which I can amuse myself while devoutly kneeling at my wooden chair. Juliet is far more ill-mannered, for she sits in hers, reading openly. My dear cousins are too rapt in devotion to observe our little peculiarities. Going to meeting is more of a bore than this pious custom,

as I can't take books there, and I must sit and listen to the Rev. Adoniram Strong—strong only in name. He rolls the thunders and flashes the lightnings of the law upon us in a most vainglorious way. He and his wife have been here to call on me. Two seedier mortals it would be hard to find. And as to their sanctimony!—well, good taste before all things, I say. She is a little pat of butter, round and unctuous, always giggling, and then catching herself up, as if laughter were a sin. He is a tall, lean, hungry-eyed mortal, who fasts and prays till one can count his ribs. Then there are Deacon Johnson and his wife; and they must needs call too. Goodness! can I be I? With all my accomplishments, all my good looks, pinned down for life to such associates as these? What have I done that I should be banished from regions where I could support myself in luxury, and forced to hide my head in this obscure retreat? Yes, what have I done? Who can *prove* anything against me? My husband might have had his suspicions—of course his mercenary relatives took care that he should—but nobody knows my story, just as it is, or ever will know it. Ah! there's that babbling Polly Hanson, has put two and two together, and might get me into trouble; but there are a thousand miles between us now, and if there were not I would defy her to her face. The truth is, I am the victim of circumstances. Why did my parents bring me up to value money beyond everything in

heaven above and the earth beneath, and persuade me, a young, giddy, inexperienced girl, to marry that suspicious, miserly old fox? What could come of such a marriage but dissension and misery? And now I am driven forth, homeless and almost penniless, who expected to be soon rid of my burden and left with a fortune fit for a princess. Until he dies I can not marry again, and the tough old creature may live these ten years; who knows? And they track me from city to city, overthrow all my schemes for supporting myself, and almost drive me to distraction. Well, I must live, and must get round somebody somehow. My poor father and mother, I suppose I broke their hearts for them; but it was their own fault. They brought me up to all I did.

KEZIA MILLET'S VERSION.

“Have I come home for good? No, I haven't come home for good.

“Am I sick? Well, did you ever know me to be sick? Now, mother, you jest stop asking questions, and let me ask you a few. Aint I been a white slave to the Squire ever since Mis' Woodford died? Aint I a master-hand at knocking off work? Did you ever see any apple-dowdy equal to mine? Aint my pot-pies fit for King George, if he *is* a king? Why, I've made pies enough to carpet the whole town if I had 'em all together at once; and as for bread and

biscuits, why, they've ate a thousand apiece if they've ate one. And aint I been as good as a mother to them children? Haven't I walked the house with 'em nights when they was babies? Haven't I watched for every tooth they cut? Haven't I carried 'em through the measles and the hooping-cough, and had 'em inoculated for the small-pox? You're gittin' bewildered, and don't see what I'm running on about, and you wish I'd sit down like a Christian, instead of rampaging round the room like a beef-critter. Well, I've heaved over a good deal of ballast, and feel easier, and I believe I *will* sit down and begin at the beginnin'.

“You see, one evening, just as Lawyer Snell and Mis' Snell was a-sittin' down to tea, the stage drove up to the door, and out steps a fine lady and a little girl. Mis' Snell, she had an old yaller bandanna handkerchief round her neck, and hadn't no front-piece on, nor no cap, and there was her old gray hair a-showing; and Lawyer Snell, he hadn't no coat on, for it was a hot day, and he'd been a-diggin' round some trees, and his shirt-sleeves was about the color o' mud, and here was this great lady a-knocking at the door.

“‘You open it,’ says Mis' Snell, ‘while I put on my front-piece and cap.’

“‘Open it yourself, while I put on my coat and wash my hands,’ ses he. And then, before you could say Jack Robinson, in came the lady, walks up to

Mis' Snell and hugs and kisses her, and calls her dear cousin! Mis' Snell, she couldn't think of nothing but her front-piece and two cracked cups and saucers on the table; and O, if she only had her best Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes on, and her best tea-set out; and why hadn't she mistrusted something, and stirred up a loaf of cake, she wanted to know?

"But, la! my lady said what a nice, cosy house it was, and what delicious bread and butter, and what a picture Pemaquid was, to be sure! And when Mis' Snell whipped out of the room and popped on her front-piece and best cap, my lady cries out:

"'You don't mean to cover that exquisite gray hair of yours with a frizette as black as horse-hair? Why, you were quite a picture in your exquisite gray hair!' Mis' Snell, she was well-nigh tickled to death; and then they got to talking, and my lady, she said her name was Pickett, and that she had married young and been left a widow, and in her sorrow and sadness had bethought herself of her dear cousin at Pemaquid, and had come a thousand miles to see her.

"'But I aint got no cousins,' says Mis' Snell; 'the nearest to it was Mis' Grigs, and she was only a second cousin.'

"'Yes, and that was my mother,' says Mis' Pickett, 'and how she used to talk about you! And if ever you get into any kind of trouble, my child, she would say, go to Pemaquid, where Deborah Snell lives, who's the best and kindest and dearest woman in the world.'

“ Mis’ Snell disremembered ever seein’ Mis’ Grigs, and was dreadfully ashamed of herself when she found her cousin thought so much of her. And she felt proud that such a beautiful-dressed lady should cross her humble threshold (them’s her very words), and she went and made up the bed in the parlor chamber, and got out her best towels, and drew a pitcher of water out of the cistern, and filled the best pitcher, and Mis’ Pickett said she was tired and would retire early. Retire, indeed! The next mornin’ Mis’ Snell got up at four o’clock, and if there wasn’t all the green paper curtains a-settin’ out in the entry! And about eight o’clock Mis’ Pickett comes down a-smiling, and said she wasn’t used to sleepin’ on feathers, and had had a restless night; but she had opened all the windows and let in all the air she could, and expected to sleep beautifully in future. Mis’ Snell was nigh upon faintin’ away when she heard that the sun was a-shin- ing onto her parlor-chamber carpet, and the flies lightin’ on her best dimity quilt, and her mother’s old easy-chair. And then Mis’ Pickett says, all so sweet, ‘ Will you show me the parlor?’ and goes in and slams open the blinds and makes it as light as day, and sets down there and goes to sewing. And Juliet, that’s the little girl, walked about on the sofy, and reached over and handled all Mis’ Snell’s elegant books as if they were her’n. Mis’ Snell didn’t dare to say a word, but she felt almost beat out. And she come over to our house to see if we’d got any bees-

wax; and says she, 'Kezia Millet, we've got the elegantest lady at our house you ever see; she sets in the parlor, if you'll believe me, and my best carpet is a-fadin' dreadful. But she's only come to make a little visit, and I suppose city folks is different to people in Pemaquid.' Well, I didn't mistrust nothin', and I lent her half a loaf of bread, because she had bad luck with her'n, what with her frustration about havin' them winders all hove open. But every day she kept expectin' Mis' Pickett would go away; and when she didn't, it was a comfort to the poor soul to come and tell me about it. She thinks everything of me, Mis' Snell does. And by degrees she let out that she was beginnin' to be afraid Mis' Pickett wasn't livin' consistent. She didn't keep fast-day at all, but ate everything just the same as other days, and wouldn't touch the beautiful bean-soup that the rest of 'em lived on. And they never see her readin' her Bible, neither. Mis' Snell thought she ought to be faithful to her, but was afraid to, and it was a burden on her conscience. She asked me what she ought to do; and ses I, ask her if she enjoys religion. 'I will,' ses she. So the next Sunday she just up and asked her. 'Enjoy religion?' ses Mis' Pickett, 'of course I do. I enjoy it of all things.' 'I suppose city folks enjoy it in a different way from country folks,' ses Mis' Snell. 'Don't city folks do no fasting?' 'Why, no; they do feastin',' says Mis' Pickett. 'Well, I never!' ses Mis' Snell. 'The people in Pemaquid would no

more eat pie or cake or anything solid on Church fast-day than they'd fly. Bean-soup is all we allow ourselves; and old Mis' Weed, and Deacon Stone, and Mis' Harris, and lots of others, never eat a morsel of anything all day long.' 'How often do you have 'em?' ses she. 'The Church fast is once in three months, and the State fast once a year,' says Mis' Snell.

"'How queer!' ses Mis' Pickett.

"'It's not at all queer,' ses Mis' Snell. 'It's as solemn as the grave. Why, we go away into our bedrooms, and git down on our knees, and mourn over our sins till you might wring water out of our handkerchiefs.'

"'I had no idea there were any such dreadful sinners in this innocent-looking little village,' ses Mis' Pickett.

"'As to that,' ses Mis' Snell, gittin' fiery—as who wouldn't—'we're angels, wings and all, compared with city folks, from all I've heerd.' Mis' Pickett looked as if she wanted to say something, but held in. She's the greatest hand at holdin' in I ever see! It was the fust of June she came to Pemaquid, and when it got well into July, Mis' Snell began to feel as if it was about time her dear cousin went away. The girl hadn't her mother's faculty at holdin' her tongue, and she told Lawyer Snell to his face that he was an old hypocrite, and she told Mis' Snell that she wasn't nothin' but a cook, and didn't know B from a broom-

stick. So Mis' Pickett, she comes a-prowling over to our house—'And how's that lovely little protegy of your'n, Mis' Kezia?' ses she.

"'My name's Keziy,' ses I, 'and I aint got no progedy.'

"'O, I mean no offense!' ses she; 'but my heart went out to that angelic child the first time I saw her,' ses she.

"'Dew yer mean our Ruth?' ses I. 'She aint no angelic child. She's just little Ruth Woodford, if it's all the same to you,' ses I. Yer see there's no coming round *me*, mother.

"'I thought the little creature might be lonely,' ses she, 'and would like to run over and play with my little daughter,' ses she.

"'I guess Ruth Woodford aint lonely when she's got Keziy Millet all to herself,' ses I.

"'The Squire must be lonely, at all events,' ses she. 'Do you think he'll marry again, my good woman?'

"'I dare say he'd have you, if you asked him,' ses I.

"'Dear me; you're quite a character,' ses she. 'And I *do* love transparency!' So then she slouched away on her soft toes—and I could have killed her!

"'Is that a Christian spirit? No, of course it aint a Christian spirit.

"'Don't I wish I wasn't so outspoken? No; I'm glad I'm outspoken. I wouldn't be a mealy-mouthed,

sugar-and-honey kind of a creature, like that Mis' Pickett, if I was to suffer. But you don't see why I'm so mad, nor what I've come home for? No; you never do see nothing. That's what makes you so even. It's easy enough to be even when you don't see nothing; and I might ha' known 'twant no use to expect you'd be the least grain of comfort to me in my time of trouble. You're sorry you aint bright like I be? So be I!"

II.

“ O what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive.”

RUTH WOODFORD'S VERSION.

I AM only a little girl, not quite thirteen years old. I am small of my age, and backward. But I always took to writing. And when you feel bad about anything you can not talk to anybody about, I think it is a good plan to go to the store, and buy a little blank book—not a dear one, but a cheap one—and put down in it some of your troubles. Perhaps children with mothers may not need such books. And to be sure, I have Kezia, and I used to tell her everything. But now I can not.

I shall be ashamed to let any one see this book, it will be so full of bad grammar and bad spelling. If anybody ever does see it with good grammar and good spelling, it will be because one of my grandchildren went and copied it out. I wouldn't have any one suppose I am anything but a very ignorant, backward little girl.

My mother died when I was three years old. I did not miss her much, because she never had been well enough to take care of me. I slept in a crib by the side of Kezia's bed, and she washed and dressed

and fed me till I was old enough to take care of myself. She did all the work in the house besides. People said she was cross-grained, and that nobody but my father could get along with her. But he always had a soft answer when she was contrary, and she used to tell me almost every day that he had the temper of an angel.

If it hadn't been for her I should have been very lonely, and indeed as it was I often used to wish I had a little sister. That was very wrong. I had no business to want things God did not think it best to give me.

But my father was out, all day, looking after the farm. He is a justice of the Peace, besides. I do not know what that means, and perhaps I ought to have spelt it with a capital J.

My brother Samuel used to follow him round wherever he went. And I followed after Kezia. I went out with her to milk the cows, and I watched her when she skimmed the milk, and stood by her while she churned. And betweenwhiles she used to tell me stories out of the Bible. When I got old enough to read it myself, I missed a good many things out of it that she said were there. The stories did not seem half as long nor half so wonderful as they did when I heard them as I followed her about, hearing a little here and a little there.

One day—it was late in August, and the doors and windows were open—I was sitting on the steps

of the porch, listening to one of Kezia's stories while she washed the breakfast dishes.

'You see, the Lord didn't think it was healthy for Elijah to eat dinner,' said she, 'so He only sent the ravens to feed him twice a day.'

'What did He send him?' says I. I knew as well as she did, but I liked to hear it, just the same.

'Well, He sent him a nice piece of beefsteak for his breakfast,' said she, 'and a great, large piece of bread to eat with it.'

'How large was the bread?'

'Well, about as large as that yellow bowl, I guess.'

'O Kezia! you said the other day it was only a slice!'

'Did I? Well, may be I hadn't read my Bible so careful as I ought to. What with one thing and another I don't read it much nowadays, that's a fact. But what's Lawyer Snell a-coming here for, I should like to know?'

'Good-morning, Kezia, is that you?' says Lawyer Snell, driving up close to the door.

'Yes, it's me; who else should it be, for pity's sake?'

'And how is my young friend, Ruth, this morning?' he went on. 'My wife's cousin is at my house, as you know, and nothing will do but she must have the poor, motherless child to spend the day with her. She's so fond of children, my wife's cousin is.'

‘Ruth is motherless, as you say, but I don’t see that that’s your business, or anybody’s business but hers. I guess I can see through a millstone when it’s *all holes*.’

There were two little pink spots on Kezia’s cheeks by this time, and she dashed about the porch and the kitchen till she was everywhere at once.

Lawyer Snell only smiled.

‘I’ll come for her in half an hour,’ says he. ‘You fix her up in her go-to-meeting clothes against I come for her.’

‘I aint in the habit of having two masters,’ said Kezia. ‘When the Squire tells me to send her over to your house, it’ll be time enough to fix her up. Anyhow, her every-day clothes is as good as your wife wears on the Sabbath.’

‘I see the Squire, and he said she could go,’ said Lawyer Snell.

So Kezia dressed me and curled my hair round her fingers, and pulled it dreadfully, groaning all the time, and saying, ‘O, your poor pa! Your poor pa!’

‘What is the matter with pa?’ I asked her.

‘A woman’s the matter with him, or will be. Don’t mind what I say.’

‘If you’d just as lief cut off my hair, I’d just as lief have you,’ I said. ‘You do hurt me so!’

‘La, if I haven’t pulled out a whole handful. Well, that’s better than busting, and I should ha’ bust in forty thousand pieces if I hadn’t taken hold

of something, tooth and nail. To think how nice everything was going on, and nobody a-coming between you and me, nor me and your pa!' She took me in her arms, and sat down on the door-step and rocked back and forth as people do who've got the colic.

'Ruth,' says she at last, 'do you remember your own ma?'

I said I didn't know. I thought she was all dressed in white, and there was two wings growing out of her shoulders, and she had a harp in her hand and was flying up to heaven.

'Oh dear! oh dear! To think the child don't remember her own ma, and has mixed her all up with an angel, now! Well, mind what I say, Ruth. Your own ma was just as different from that woman you're going to see as black's different from white. But she'll come round you! She'll come round you!'

I couldn't understand what Kezia meant, but I liked very much to go out to spend the day, and I liked Mrs. Pickett, Mrs. Smith's cousin, better than anybody I knew. For she was very kind to me all day long, and told me stories, and played have tea, and said I was such a dear little girl, and how sorry my own mother must have been to have to go away and leave me. And then she had a little girl, too; not so big as I was, but such a nice little girl, with black eyes and brown hair, and we played together like two twins, for Mrs. Pickett said so.

The next day, just after dinner, Mrs. Pickett came walking in with her little girl by the hand.

My father was sitting in his chair, half asleep, for he always took a little nap after dinner. He started up, quite confused when he heard Mrs. Pickett's voice.

'I am afraid I have disturbed you, Squire Woodford,' she said softly. 'I never dreamed of your being at home, or I should not have ventured to intrude. But your little daughter must be my apology. We were so charmed with her yesterday! A most uncommon child!'

'She is like her mother,' said my father, much gratified. 'Come here, Ruth.' He took me in his arms and looked down at me in his loving way.

'She tells me she does not go to school,' said Mrs. Pickett.

'The Woodfords do not take to their books,' he said. 'And there is no good school here.'

'Ah, you think schools a disadvantage. I agree with you,' said Mrs. Pickett. 'The freshness and innocence of childhood is only too apt to disappear in an artificial atmosphere. I thought of proposing—but I fear it is an intrusion—in fact I am in the habit of instructing my little Juliet myself, in preference to seeing her contaminated among other children. And as I expect to be here during the summer, it occurred to me, and my cousin, Mrs. Snell, approves of the plan—it occurred to me that it would be an

advantage to Juliet, to have your little Ruth as a companion in her studies.'

'You are very kind,' said my father, 'very kind indeed. If the distance were not so great—'

'Oh, the distance is the merest trifle,' cried Mrs. Pickett. 'I walk twice as far every day. Of course my plan was to give the lessons here, not to propose that Ruth should come to me.'

'It is really very kind,' said my father; 'I hardly know what answer to make. But I can not consent to your coming here. I can arrange it so as to send Ruth to you.'

'I do not feel quite free to act in Mr. Snell's house as if it were my own,' she said, 'so, if you please, the lessons shall be here.'

So she came every day, and was so sweet, and seemed to love me so, that I loved her dearly. I talked about her to my father and Kezia, and Kezia said she'd weaned my heart from her, but that I should come to my senses before I was a month older.

Mrs. Pickett was very sad a great deal of the time, and said it was a dreadful thing not to have any home, and to have to live on strangers. She always came just as father was rousing up from his nap, and she often brought a Bible with her, and asked him his opinion of some of the texts. Nothing pleases father like studying up the Bible, and they would get so taken up with commentaries and

such books, that us girls got no lesson at all, and went out and played in the garden or down in the orchard. I never had been so happy in my life, and never saw father brighten up so.

MRS. PICKETT PROCEEDS.

Cousin Snell will have a sweet season of mourning over her sins next fast-day. She burst into my room this morning in a perfect fury, armed with an empty raisin-box.

‘There,’ she cried, ‘do you see that box?’

I replied that I was not blind.

‘Well, that girl of your’n has ate up all my raisins that I was saving for mince pies, and flesh and blood can’t stand it no longer. Bolts and bars aint nothing to her. I can’t put my cake or pies or sweet-meats anywhere, but what she’ll find ’em. And if you don’t stop it, I’ll put pizen into everything. As dear as everything is now, to eat a whole box of raisins!’

‘I had no idea you had so much fire in you,’ I said, much amused.

Whereupon she began to cry.

‘You have such a faculty of leading me into temptation,’ she said, covering her face with her apron. ‘Since you came here, I’ve got to be an awful backslider, and don’t enjoy religion at all.’

‘I should not think you were in a very holy state when you talked, just now, of murdering my poor



"There," she said, "do you see that box?"

little girl for nibbling at sweet things. All children do that.'

'It's no such thing. There aint a thief among all the children in Pemaquid. Well, I'll have a new lock put on every door in the house, and keep the key in my pocket. And, for my part, I wish you'd hunt up a home for yourself somewhere else. You've lived on us till we're sick and tired of you. Me and pa is both agreed that the sooner you go the better. Why, you two has as good as took the bread out of our children's mouths.'

Now as the children are all married and do not live at home, this statement did not overwhelm me.

'I expected something of this sort,' I replied, 'and was on the point of suggesting that we should remain here as boarders.'

'What'll you pay?' she cried.

'I am not prepared, at present, to state the precise sum,' I returned.

'I should be proper glad to make a little money,' she said. 'We're gettin' old, and ought to lay by something against a rainy day.' Her old eyes fairly glistened.

'It is hard upon me, being a widow, to have to pay my own relatives for such food as I have had since we came here,' I said, at last beginning to lose my temper. After all the flatteries I had bestowed on this woman, it was hard to find they had not touched her heart.

‘Such vittles, did you say?’ she burst forth. ‘Well, it’s the first time I’ve heerd a word against my vittles. You and your young one have been livin’ on the bread of charity all summer, and now you call it “such vittles!”

‘I begin to realize now why you Pemaquiders have so many fasts; that is, if there are many such termagants among you as I see before me,’ I remarked quietly, having quite recovered my self-control. Whereupon the old fossil began to cry again.

‘Yes,’ she said, in a subdued tone, ‘I’ve been showing an unchristian spirit not becoming to a member of the Church. But you are the aggravatingest—old—the—aggravatingest old—well, I can’t think of no name but she-devil. You’d make the angel Gabriel swear, Kezia Millet says, with your ways like a cat, and your mean spirit, a-coming and living on us like a blood-sucker, Kezia says, and a-prowlin’ ’round the Squire, and palavering him out of his wits!’

‘Now, Cousin Snell,’ I sweetly began, ‘it is vulgar to quarrel, and commonplace. *Anybody* can do it. But there are few who can keep the peace when irritated. Now let us become friends again, and perhaps we can be of mutual service to each other.’ I held out my soft, white hand, into which she reluctantly put her hard, bony, grimy one. ‘Can you keep a secret?’ I asked, solemnly.

‘Yes,’ with eager curiosity.

‘Will you promise never to betray me if I confide

in you, remembering how you'll feel next fast-day if you break your word?'

'I hope I may die if I break it,' was her reply.

'Very well; I expect in time to become Mrs. Woodford.'

'So Kezia says.'

'I am not particularly fond of hearing quotations from Kezia,' I returned.

'If there's any chance of your marrying the Squire, you'd be a fool to make an enemy out of Kezia, for there aint her equal anywhere. She can do as much work as ten common women, and never seem to be doing nothing. I never see nobody like her. She can lift a barrel of flour as easy as you could your work-bag. And there aint nothing she won't do for them she cottons to. But, my! I wouldn't have her for an enemy.'

'Nor would I. I shall do everything to conciliate her. See, now, how quickly I have made you forget my ebullition of anger!'

'I haint forgot it. And I haint forgot that you've turned up your nose at my vittles, and me as good a housekeeper as any one in Pemaquid.'

'I said nothing about your housekeeping. I referred to the scarcity of good, nourishing food, and the superabundance of pies and the like. It was foolish in me to make any allusion to the food, for I'm sure it is very nicely cooked, and your bread and butter are perfect.'

‘Well, now you talk reasonable,’ she said, recovering her good humor. ‘And do you really think you shall manage to catch the Squire?’

‘Yes, I do, if you don’t stand in my light by putting it into Kezia’s head that such is my plan. And when you stand in my light you stand in your own. Don’t you see what an advantage it would be to you to have a cousin with plenty of money right across the street? Don’t you see that if I am to pay you for my board I must marry a man who has a plenty for me to do it with?’

‘Haven’t you got any money at all?’

‘Yes, I have a trifle, but how far would that go toward repaying you for all you have done for me?’

‘Do you mean that you expect to pay me for the whole time you’ve been here???’

‘Certainly.’

‘Why, me and pa, we thought you was jest making a convenience of us.’

It is not strange the simple creatures thought so. But I am changing my tactics, now that there is war in the camp.

‘The Squire is easy to come round,’ she said, musingly, ‘but Kezia aint. She’s dead set ag’inst you.’

‘Of course. Don’t you see that she is aspiring to become Mrs. Woodford herself?’

‘Why, no, I never thought of such a thing. That would account for her hating you so.’

‘She has no other reason for hating me. I never did her any harm, and never intend to. And don’t you think it would be disgraceful for a man of Squire Woodford’s position to marry his servant?’

‘Do you call Kezia Millet a *servant*?’ she shrieked. ‘Why, she’s as respectable in her way as you are in your’n. But she aint exactly a lady, and you air.’

Now I have no more idea that Kezia Millet is setting her cap for the Squire than she is setting it for me. There’s nothing bold about the young woman.

III.

“The mind is its own place, and in itself,
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

LAWYER SNELL'S VERSION.

I SAW through this Mrs. Pickett in a minute. But wife did not. She wound wife round her finger. And now we've been talking it over together, this scheme of hers to marry the Squire, and I don't see as it's any business of ours to interfere. He's thirty-eight years old, and ought to know his own mind. Still, if he comes to me, and asks me, point-blank, if I think she'd bring up his children in the fear of the Lord, and make a happy home for him, I couldn't in conscience say yes. But he won't come. He'll manage the whole thing himself, or rather this woman will manage it for him.

I'm sorry for the Squire.

And if I could afford it I would give him a warning. But I can't afford it. Here we have had these two upon us all summer, eating and drinking and sleeping, and that bad child devouring everything wife sets most store by. We ought to be paid handsomely for their board, for the damage done to carpets, and for all the child has pilfered. But it goes against my conscience to think of that innocent young female child Ruth Woodford's falling into the hands

of this designing woman, and living under the same roof with Juliet Pickett. What ought I to do? If it wasn't for the money—

What an ungodly thing; to do evil to get a home, and perhaps ruin that home! Mrs. Pickett has a very bad heart. And her selfishness runs into cruelty. It is cruel to enter a peaceful home merely for her own purposes. I despise selfishness, and if I could afford it I would unmask her to the Squire. But we must be paid, and I see no other way for it. We are getting old, and need a great many little comforts young people can do without. There's the sill of the barn-door needs renewing, and we need a chaise to take us to meeting. Still, if the Squire asks me, I think I ought to tell him. And suppose he doesn't, wouldn't he rather pay me a hundred dollars down than have that tricky woman for his wife? Of course he would! It aint so bad an idea, Joshua Snell! You might make the most money that way, and pacify your conscience into the bargain. I'll go and see what wife says.

MRS. PICKETT PROCEEDS.

The Squire has, at last, as Deborah Snell says, 'give in.' I found my game had to run down. The number of prayer-meetings and fasts I have attended in my pursuit has been appalling. I have met him 'accidentally' at least fifty times. I have got caught in the rain at his house about as many more. I have borrowed his fusty, musty books again and again. I

have flattered Ruth, and put up with Samuel. And I can have a home of my own at any moment I choose. The Squire has fasted and prayed over his side of the question—poor, superstitious prig that he is—and thinks I am sent him from the Lord to bring up his children.

But there is still an obstacle in the way. Old Grigs may be living. I do not believe he is; but still, if he is, I should get myself into a most dangerous plight by marrying another man. It is true that cessation of persecution has awakened the hope that old Grigs is dead; but I do not *know* it. If I had the means I would go and find out the truth, for I can not risk writing. Why didn't I die before I was born into this world of care and trouble? I am distracted with the part I have to play; but with a respectable home of my own I could be happy. Old Grigs is seventy years old to-day, if he is alive. But I do not believe he is. I am not wicked enough to marry another man when I have a husband living; that would be a greater and more desperate crime than I have yet been guilty of. But I am weary of the struggle to keep up; I long, I long for rest. If I had any one to consult! But I have no one. I haven't a friend in the world except the Squire.

LAWYER SNELL AGAIN.

That female, driven to desperation, has made a confidant of me. She is a cheat, as I have said all

along. Her name is not Pickett. She married an old man named Grigs. He is as rich as a Jew. He turned her out of his house in a fit of jealousy, and has hunted her from place to place. If she knew he was dead she would marry the Squire. But I tell her she need not do that for a support, because the law entitles her to a portion of Grigs' estate. It is worth my while to go and investigate. What a relief it will be if Mrs. Pickett—Grigs, I mean—is left so well off that she can afford to pay us handsomely for her board, as I then could afford, in my turn, to save the Squire from marrying a woman whose antecedents are doubtful, to say the least of it, and whose principles are far from being sound. I start on my journey to-morrow, having hired money for the purpose, and trusting to Providence for repayment.

REV. MRS. STRONG REFLECTS.

I feel very uneasy about Squire Woodford. This widow, that none of us know anything about, is besieging him day and night. He says she would make such a good mother to his children if he can persuade her to accept that position. Persuade her, indeed! As if she has thought of anything else since she came here! And to think of her taking the place of Love Woodford, my precious, ever-to-be-lamented friend! Oh, how can men make such blunders, especially such men as the Squire, who consults the Lord about everything, just as little innocent children talk to their

mothers! She can't spoil our dear Ruth; the child's principles are past uprooting; but she can make her miserable. She will drive Samuel out of the house; he hates a hypocrite beyond anything. And I can't make my husband see all this. He says the Squire will be a lucky man if he gets such a cultivated woman to educate his children. As to Kezia, poor thing, how will she like to give up the reins she has held so long? And she had everything just as Love did, and made the Squire so comfortable that I'm sure he would never have thought of marrying again if this artful woman hadn't put it into his head. To be sure she is a beauty; but he wouldn't be caught by that.

MRS. PICKETT PROCEEDS.

This afternoon I received a visit from the Rev. Mrs. Strong, who has appeared in quite a new character.

'Mrs. Pickett,' she began, 'you have not been long enough in Pemaquid to get at its heart. Now I was born and brought up here, and know every man, woman, and child in the village. And Love Woodford, the Squire's wife, was one of those saintly characters you read about in books, but don't meet very often out of them. She lived, and moved, and had her being in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Squire, as pure and good a man as ever lived, caught her spirit while she lived, and her mantle when she died. But he has his weak sides, and is easily taken in, or, to put it more truly, he is so guileless that he can't

believe in guile in others. We all know—for Pemaquid is like one family, as it were—that you can marry him to-morrow if you choose. But ask your own conscience, are you the woman to lead Love Woodford's children heavenward? Are you the woman to join the Squire in his fireside piety, his benevolent deeds among the poor and afflicted, and to be loved and admired by us all as he is loved and admired? Oh, Mrs. Pickett, I speak to you as with Love Woodford's voice; spare her husband; spare her children; let that home be the Christian home it always has been.'

Never was I so shaken by mingled emotions of indignation, admiration, and shame. To think that this little woman, in her shabby clothes, had read me through and through! To think how the fear of God had robbed her of all fear of man! To think of the depth of earnestness in that small frame!

I longed to pour out upon her all the vials of my wrath; but policy forbade it, and I maintained an exasperating silence which left her in a most awkward position.

'Have you nothing to say to me?' she at last asked.

'Impertinent interference deserves no answer,' I replied.

She colored painfully.

'*Could* I have been impertinent when I came to you right from my knees before God?' she asked, in such a tone of heartfelt grief that mine smote me.

‘Then I ask your pardon,’ she added, and went meekly and sorrowfully away. I watched her as she passed down the street, and said :

‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian !’

RUTH PROCEEDS.

I love Mrs. Pickett more and more, and I am very sorry for her, too, she seems so unhappy. There isn’t anything in the world I wouldn’t do for her. She says it is so hard not to have any home or any money, so I pray to God to give them to her, and He will.

Just as I had got so far, Mrs. Pickett came for my lessons. She seemed sadder than usual, and told my father that Lawyer Snell had been trying to recover some property that belonged to her late husband, but that it was so tied up there was no getting at it. My father’s tender heart was touched by her grief, and he told us little girls to run away and play. By and by he called us back, and said, ‘Ruth, my child, how would you like to have our friend, Mrs. Pickett, come and live with us?’

‘Oh, very much, very much indeed, father ; and poor little Juliet, too.’

‘You are all too kind to the widow and the orphan,’ said Mrs. Pickett ; and there were no more lessons that day.

Then I went into the kitchen and told Kezia.

She turned round and looked at me, and then

threw a pan of biscuits she had just taken from the oven into the water-pail.

‘Kezia, are you crazy?’ I said. ‘You’ve thrown away the biscuits!’

‘It aint me that’s crazy,’ she said; ‘it’s somebody else. And there’s more than biscuits throwed away. And so you’ve forgot your own ma, and are tickled to death to think you’re a-going to have a new one! Well, children will be children, and widders will be widders; and that’s all I’ve got to say about it.’

‘A new ma!’ I cried out. ‘O Kezia, you don’t know anything about it. She said she hadn’t no home and no money, and the Snells were tired of her; and I pitied her, and father pitied her, and asked her to come here to live; but he didn’t say nothing about a new ma!’

Then Kezia began to sing, and this is what she said, making it up as she went along—perhaps it is silly to write it down; but I don’t know anybody else who sings as often as she does. She sings when she feels cross, and when she’s unhappy, and when she’s happy; she sings on thanksgiving days, and sometimes, though not on purpose, even on fast-days:

Well, Kezia,
 Here’s the Squire
 Gone and set his house a-fire!
 Blessed angels fly away,
 Evil creeturs come to stay;
 We must watch and fast and pray!

At least, I suppose she calls it singing; but she gets her voice up to E sharp, Lawyer Snells says, and he ought to know, for he pitches the tunes at conference meeting. When she got through she liked her rhymes so much that she went over them three or four times. I think myself they are often as good as Mother Goose.

When she stopped, at last, she said :

‘Now run away, you little goose, run away, before I go clear distracted and demented. *You* asked her, did you? It was *you* that put your poor pa up to courting her, was it? Well, I *am* beat!’ By this time her pink spots were like two live coals, and she began to cry. I cried too, because I always cried when other folks did; but I did not know what I had done that was naughty. Samuel came in while we were crying, and wanted to know what was the matter.

‘‘We’re crying because we aint got nothing to wear to the wedding,’ said Kezia, in a glum voice.

‘What wedding?’

‘Your pa’s and your new ma’s.’

‘You needn’t tell me my father’s going to have that old hypocrite,’ cried Sam. ‘I know better. I guess he’s got a little mite of common sense.’

‘She’s going to have *him*, at any rate,’ said Kezia, ‘and she won’t let the grass grow under her feet till it’s done. La! her wedding dress is all made, I’ll warrant.’

Samuel made a horrible face, and went out and began to split wood.

‘I sha’n’t want any supper,’ said he.

The next day Lawyer Snell came driving down as gay as could be, and he and my father were shut up together two or three hours. After he had gone my father walked up and down, and I heard him sigh a good many times.

‘I hope I’ve done right,’ he kept saying to himself. ‘I hope I have chosen a good mother for my children.’ But he seemed uneasy, and as near to being worried as *he* could be.

It wasn’t long before there was a wedding, sure enough, and Mrs. Pickett came home to our house to live, and Juliet came too.

‘I declare,’ said Kezia, ‘if your new ma aint a rummaging amongst all your own ma’s things! She’s clearing out all the bureau drawers, and all the closets, and a-putting her finery in. It’s enough to make your own ma rise from her grave! And that young one has got your ma’s work-basket a-dragging it all over the house! Oh, dear! Oh, dear me!’

To-day my new mother asked me if I knew what father shut himself up three times a day for, and if it was to count money. I said I knew what it was for, but did not like to tell. Then she said she should punish me severely if I did not tell. I waited as long as I dared, and then I said, very low:

‘He is praying.’

‘Praying! What for? Is anything worrying him?’

‘It isn’t worry that makes him pray,’ I said. ‘He loves to pray. All good people do. Don’t you?’

That was a very rude question, she said.

A little while afterward we were all sitting together, and Juliet got angry with me and slapped me in the face. My father saw her. He never happened to see her do that before. The next time I was alone with him he said:

‘My little daughter, are you very unhappy?’

I was not at all unhappy just at that minute; how could I be when he was putting his arms round me, and looking so kind? And if I had complained about anything it would have troubled him, and he had trouble enough without me.

‘I want to ask my little girl a few questions,’ he went on. ‘Are you ever tempted to strike Juliet when she strikes you?’

‘Oh no, father.’

‘When she stole the pocket-piece that your own mother left you, had you any vindictive feelings?’

I was not sure I knew what vindictive meant. If it meant that I wanted her to be whipped, then I hadn’t. It is bad enough to be whipped myself, especially when I did not know what it was for. But I did not tell father that. It might be a temptation to him to get angry with my new mother.

‘You have been brought up to fear God. Does

hearing other people make a jest of Divine things weaken that fear in the very least?’

‘No, father, not in the very least. It never will.’

‘Hush! don’t say that. We are very weak creatures, and children are greatly under the influence of their elders. Say that you will pray, every day of your life, to have Almighty God in constant reverence, as becomes His holy name.’

I don’t think I can ever forget how he looked at me, as if he would look me through.

The very next day we children were all in the kitchen together, and Juliet got angry with me and pulled my hair, till the tears rolled down my cheeks. It wasn’t crying, it was only tears rolling down. Then Kezia flew at Juliet like a tiger, only I never saw a tiger, and boxed her ears soundly. Juliet set up a dreadful scream, and her mother came hurrying out to see what the matter was. She never said a word, but walked to the closet, took out a mince pie, and gave it to Juliet. Now there’s nothing puts Kezia out like seeing children eat between meals, and my new mother knew it. And Kezia knew that if Juliet ate a whole mince pie she would have a sick spell in the night, and keep everybody awake. And sure enough, she was sick, for as I sleep with her I know all about it; and Kezia, poor thing, had to get up and heat water, and hunt for peppermint; and father got up, too, and dressed himself, for he could not sleep in such an uproar.

IV.

“Look on this picture, and on this.”

MRS. WOODFORD PROCEEDS.

AT last I have a hearth and a home of my own ; but at what a price ! Joshua Snell learned that my cruel husband was dead ; but he also learned, as I ought to have foreseen he would, the side of my story told by my enemies. He has come to hold falsehood I can not confront over my head. As to the estate of old Grigs, he had blundered a large part of it away, and Snell advises me not to put in a claim for any part of it, on the ground that I am only safe while concealed. I seem fated to have no rest in this world. Any day the Snells may let loose against me these vile rumors. Deborah, with her husband's help, has made me out a large bill for board, to which she has added the price of various articles broken by Juliet in her tantrums. Now money is the last thing to be had. The people here make ‘trades,’ as they call it, with the productions of their farms ; but Deborah declines to trade with me, and insists on being paid forthwith. I shall reconstruct affairs in the kitchen, putting them on a more economical foundation, and every cent the

Squire gives me for household expenses shall go to my rapacious relative (who, as I knew of course, all along, is next to no relation). Then Lawyer Snell has presented a fearful bill for traveling expenses in the journey he made on my behalf; so that I am eaten up with care. Then to keep the peace with that termagant, Kezia, taxes my wits to the last degree. As for Juliet, she and Samuel keep up an incessant feud, while poor little weak-spirited Ruth is all the time trying to keep the peace. Then the Squire's ways are a great mystery. Three times a day he locks himself into a little room off the sitting-room, and what he is doing there does not transpire. I found a note in one of his pockets to-day which is my nest-egg, and will go toward paying those irksome debts. Deborah comes over regularly every day to harass me about them.

'If you was a good, straightforward woman,' she says, 'you'd just tell the Squire how things is. He's one of the reasonablest men I ever see.'

I tell her I wouldn't have him know about it on any account. It is always best to *manage*.

KEZIA PROCEEDS.

"Well, now, Mis' Snell, things is going on awful to our house; wuss than I expected. I take it very hard that you never told me what a bad child that Juliet Pickett is.

"'Her name aint Pickett, it's Grigs,' says Mis'

Snell. 'Her ma had been doing something out of the way, I don't know what, and so she changed her name to Pickett. It don't look well when people change their names,' ses she.

"'Indeed it don't,' ses I. 'But I can't stand things much longer, and I think the Squire is gettin' his eyes open. The way that girl tyrannizes over our poor little Ruth makes my blood run cold. Then Samuel interferences, and Juliet runs screaming to her mother, who always takes her part. And then the way all my good things go off on the sly! Not that we live now as we used to live. It's scrimp here and scrimp there, and save this and save that. If you'll believe me, the day before Thanksgivin' I was a gittin' ready for it, and she comes out, and ses she, 'Why, Kezia, what's all this?'

"'Gittin' ready for Thanksgivin',' ses I.

"'Are you expecting all Pemaquid to dinner?' ses she. 'I should think you were.'

"'Nobody's coming but Mr. and Mrs. Strong and their baby. We always have our minister to Thanksgivin',' ses I.

"'And is all this wicked waste for him?'

"'Taint waste. All for him? No, indeed. Them six turkeys is to go to six poor widders; them chickens is to go to the poor-house, along of lots of pies, pudd'n's, and apples; that ere chicken-pie is for old Mis' Harris; them mince-pies is to go to our minister, along of a turkey and some sassenges; that—'

“ ‘You have the minister here to dinner, and send him a dinner besides?’ ses she.

“ ‘Of course we do,’ ses I. ‘La, the Squire’s gittin’ out the sleigh now, and I must pack it right away,’ ses I, ‘for he makes great account of carrying things round to the poor himself.’ She looked as if she should drop.

“ ‘I never heard of such extravagance,’ ses she. ‘I shall put up with it this once, but never again. I forbid your impoverishing the family in this way.’

“ ‘You might just as well try to stop the sun from risin’, as to stop the Squire from giving to the poor,’ ses I.

“ ‘Well, he don’t give money, at any rate,’ ses she, a-chuckling.

“ ‘Don’t give money? Then what does our minister live on, I should like to know? And what does them six widders buy their tea with?’

“By this time she looked so miserable I thought I wouldn’t tell her what he’d put into the contribution-box Thanksgivin’ Day.

“She’s no more feelin’ for the poor than them pair of andirons; no, not so much, for they’ll hold wood to warm the poor creatures by, and she’d pull it off, with her own hands if she could. All the feelin’s she has is for that tyke of hers; and what does she get by that? Why, the girl makes fun of her to her face.”

MRS. WOODFORD PROCEEDS.

The Squire *must* make more money because his wife must *have* money. And I have made a great discovery. He owns immense water-power, which is now running to waste. I represent that a factory of some sort ought to be built. He rubs his hands together, and says he can't afford it. Now I am going around to stir up other men to join in the enterprise. I can persuade men to commit murder if I choose.

I need something to distract my mind, for Juliet grows more headstrong every day. I asked Mr. Woodford if he could afford it, and was willing to send her away to school. I am capable of instructing her, but she does not believe it, and I have no power over her or influence with her.

RUTH'S JOURNAL CONTINUED.

I was in hopes my new mother would teach me after she came here, but she has not time. She is busy writing in a large blank book. Perhaps she has troubles to tell to it just as I do to my little one. Kezia says she acts as if she expected a wild Indian to spring out upon her from somewhere every minute. She says a good many other things it would be naughty in me to write down.

She is very unhappy, Kezia is. She says she isn't living consistent, and can't, with her temptations. Father says she has got a great, big, warm, kind

heart, and we must overlook her failings. He says his motto is, and always has been, 'Give and forgive.' I mean to take it for mine.

So I shall give Juliet any of my things she wants. I do not think she will want my Bible or my "Pilgrim's Progress," so I can keep them. And when she wants the seat next to the fire I shall let her have it. And I shall forgive my new mother *everything*, and never tell anybody as long as I live what she has done to me. And I shall pray day and night about it, saying, 'O God, make me *give!* Make me *forgive!* Make me give! Make me forgive!'

Such a wonderful Providence as I have had since I wrote that! I must write it all down.

One cold day in March, Kezia went up into the garret and got a little hair-trunk that had been up there, full of herbs, ever since I was born, I guess. She had it in the kitchen, dusting it; and when she had spread a clean towel over the bottom of it, she says to me:

'You bring anything down you want to take with you, except your clothes. *I'll see to them.*'

'Anything to take where?' I said.

'Why, aint your pa told you?'

'No, indeed.'

'I expect he couldn't for the lump in his throat. Much as ever he could do to tell me. Well, you're going where there aint any new ma a-slouching round,

nor no Juliets to slap you in the face. You're going to your pa's ma, and she'll be good to you, and you'll be good to her. Only you won't have your poor old cross Kezia, and she won't have you! And here's eight little mites of pies for you, just as if it was Thanksgivin' Day. You eat the cranberry tart for your dinner on your way to Kittery P'int, and the apple tart for your supper, for you won't get there till night. You see, there aint anybody where you're goin' that'll realize you're a little girl and fond of little pies.'

I never saw any tarts like Kezia's. She covered them with bunches of grapes, made of pie-crust, cut out with a key, and made grape-leaves and little tendrils too. But I did not care anything about them, I was so glad I was going away. I hadn't made any fuss about anything my new mother did or anything Juliet did; but now I ran up-stairs and locked my door and cried. Oh, how I cried! And when I felt better, and was going down again, I met my father; and he put me back into my room, and locked the door again, and took me in his arms, and his great breast went up and down as if something inside of it was going to burst; and then I cried harder than ever. At last we got quiet; and when father went to open the door, there was Juliet's great black eye at the key-hole.

I had never seen grandma. About the time I was born she had a fall, and broke her hip and was

hurt in her spine ; and though my father went to see her twice a year, he never took me, though he often took Samuel. He told me on the journey that it wasn't good for a little girl like me to see an old person suffer as she did, but that lately her pain was greatly relieved.

When we went in he said to her :

‘ Mother, I've brought you my ewe-lamb to keep ; ’ and she put her arms out and I went right in, for I don't think anybody could help it who saw that sweet, shining old face. It was night and I was tired, and Rachel, grandma's girl, helped me to get to bed ; and when I got in I found she'd warmed it with a warming-pan ! In the morning they told me my father could not stand it to say good-bye, and had been gone two hours.

After breakfast, that I had right by grandma's bed, she made me read a chapter in the Bible, and then she had family prayers with me and Rachel. Then I helped Rachel about the house, and by eight o'clock all the work was done ; and grandma made me bring all my clothes, and she looked them over and found some of them needed mending, and told me where to get patches and how to sew them on. Then she gave me a sheet to patch, but I couldn't hold it in my little hands, and so she showed me how to sew it on, over and over, and then crease the seam down with my thumb. I never heard of such a handy way to put on a large patch.

When the clock struck twelve Rachel brought in her dinner on a little tray.

‘Here’s your dinner, grandma,’ says she; ‘and Ruth can eat with you if she wants to.’

I said I did; and we two had our dinner together. Grandma shut her eyes and folded her hands and asked a blessing first.

After dinner she took a little nap, and when she woke up she told me to bring all my lesson books and let her hear my lessons.

I recited to her in geography and spelling, and then she told me to sit down and write a copy. Then she made me read one chapter in “The Saint’s Everlasting Rest” and one chapter in “Owen on Spiritual-Mindedness.”

‘You don’t understand what you read, poor child,’ says she. ‘But never mind. You will by and by. Now come close up to me, and let us have a good talk. What sort of a little girl are you, Ruth?’

‘O grandma, I’m just as naughty as I can be!’

‘I hope not,’ says she. ‘Come tell grandma all about it. Grandma won’t be hard with you child.’

‘Well, grandma, it says in the Bible if anybody smites you on one cheek you must turn the other cheek to her. That means I should let Juliet slap me as much as she’s a mind.’

‘Does it?’ says grandma.

'Why, yes, grandma. And I never do. I run away and hide.'

'Well, what else?'

'And cold nights I don't like to get into bed first to warm a place for her.'

'And so you never do?'

'O yes, I always do. But I don't *like* to. If I was good I should like to, you know.'

'Is there anything else?'

'Yes. I like father a *great deal* better than I like mother!'

'That will do,' says grandma. 'You and I are going to try now to see how good we can be. You shall help me and I will help you.'

'Why, grandma! how can I help you? And aint you just as good as can be now? Father said so. Father said—'

'Never mind what he said. We are both going to try to be as good as we can be. We are going to pray together, and to read the Bible together, and grow good together.'

I liked that. I like grandma very much. And I guess it will be pretty easy to be good here. As soon as I get very good indeed I mean to ask grandma to let me join the Church. I asked mother once, and she laughed and said she guessed I was well enough as I was. She said it wasn't no use to join the Church.

I haven't written in this book since my birthday.

I don't like to write very well ; but I mean to write New Year's Days and Thanksgivings.

It is six months since I came here, and I am thirteen and a half now. I like to stay here. Grandma is just as nice as can be. She says she is afraid it's lonesome for me sitting all day with an old woman like her. But I aint lonesome at all. I am learning to sew beautifully. And I say lessons every day. Grandma says she don't know much, but what she does know she'll teach me. I go to meeting every Sunday morning, and in the afternoon Rachel goes and I stay with grandma. Before I came, grandma used to stay all alone in the house while Rachel was gone. Father said it was not safe. For if the house should get on fire, poor grandma would be burnt up.

Now I have no one to plague me, I should think I might be perfectly good. But I aint. I do not dare to ask grandma to let me join the Church, because I know she would say I must wait till I was better. I pray a great deal about it, and maybe God will hear me some time.

There was an old lady here yesterday to see grandma. They talked together about loving Christ. They seemed to love Him so much ! And then they prayed together. Grandma often has dear old ladies come and pray with her. While they were praying I thought I felt just as they felt. I thought I truly loved God. But when the old lady was going away, she said to grandma :

‘What a comfort this child must be to you! How attentive and gentle she is!’

And grandma said, ‘Yes.’

Then Satan he up and whispered :

‘Do you hear that? They both praise you, and such old ladies ought to know.’

So I suppose it can't be that I really love God. If I did Satan would not *dare* to say such things to me.

I am fourteen to-day. Ever so old that is. Since my last birthday I have grown ever so much. I have had to let down all the tucks in my dresses, and piece down all my sleeves. Grandma says if I am clean and whole it's no matter if I am pieced.

Father has been to see me once since New Year's. He says I have grown plump and healthy. I suppose it is because I don't have anybody to plague me.

I noticed to-day, more than usual, how much grandma says about her sins when she prays. So I asked her what she could do that was bad, lying still there in bed.

‘You know the catechism,’ says she. ‘What does the catechism say sin is?’

‘Any want of conformity to the will of God.’

‘You see, then, my heart can sin while my hands and feet are idle.’

‘But it dosen't seem as if you did anything wrong, grandma.’

‘You think, then, that it was not needful Christ

should die for me? that I could get to heaven without Him?’

‘Oh, no, grandma. But it seems so strange for any one that really loves Him to go on sinning.’

‘Yes, it does seem strange,’ said she, ‘passing strange. But it is true as it is strange that even God’s own dear children do sometimes wound and grieve Him.’

‘Do you think, grandma—but no, I am sure you can’t think so. I was going to ask you if you thought I should ever be good enough to join the Church?’

‘No, dear, never. But whether Christ is good enough to wrap you in the robe of His righteousness, that is another question. And that you can answer as well as I. You see, dear,’ she went on, after a while, ‘it is just as if some great man should invite you to a feast at his house. You might say, I should like to go, but I have nothing fit to wear. And he would reply, But I will give you the wedding-garment, and that will make you fit.’

Then it all at once seemed plain to me that I might get a wedding-garment.

Grandma said yes, and that Christ was more willing to give it than I was to receive it.

After I came up to bed I thought a good deal about it. I am small of my age, and backward, and the Woodfords don’t take to book-learning. But for

all that, somehow, I do believe I love God, and love the people that love Him. And I don't think I should be afraid now to stand up in the broad aisle and join the Church. And, if grandma is willing, I shall.

3*

V.

“Oh, what a thing is man ; how far from power,
From settled peace and rest !
He is some twenty several men, at least,
Each several hour.”

—GEO. HERBERT.

LAWYER SNELL CONFIDES TO “WIFE.”

THAT woman ought to have been a man. She'll never rest, or let any of us rest, till she gets that factory built. And 'taint so bad a thing either. I'll take ten shares in it. It will make all the difference in the world to Pemaquid. The Squire's quite interested in the scheme, and so's Deacon Stone and Josiah. Josiah is getting to be quite a man. We'll get the factory built, and then we'll see what else we can do.

What kind of a factory? Why, a cotton factory. Kezia Millet has taken a share, if you'll believe it. She's made money in all these years at the Squire's, and now she wants more, though what for I can't guess.

Oh, for her mother? Yes, I suppose it *is* for her mother. Well, to go back to Mrs. Woodford. There aint a man in the village whose head she hasn't turned. She can be as agreeable, when she pleases, as

need be. But the more the men like her the more you women are against her. It's always so.

She hasn't turned my head? No, no; I am too old a bird for that. But I wish I had her more in my power. I know enough of her past life to keep her in constant terror, but not enough to ruin her. And I do not want to ruin her. All I want is to have our honest debts paid, though no amount of money can pay for all you went through with her and hers. Are you particular to go over every day and labor with her about that debt? That's right. And I believe I will step over every evening. Between us both she will get exasperated into confessing to the Squire. I do not care so much about the money. What I want is to bring her to repentance. And if anything will bring her to repentance, it will be our giving her no peace.

MRS. WOODFORD IS RESTIVE.

It would have been better to run the risk of having two husbands at once than to have sent this small-minded Joshua Snell into the midst of my enemies and their infamous falsehoods. He and Deborah make me weary of my life. If I could only pay them that wretched money I might begin to have a little peace. However, I am wrong there. There is no peace for the mother of such a girl as Juliet. The Squire says he would cheerfully send her to a board-

ing-school if he could afford it, but that he can not command money enough.

She has nothing lady-like in her, but in spite of all my remonstrances goes to all the huskings and other rustic amusements of the village, is very rude and free with the set of boy-men who frequent such places, and unless I can send her away will grow up like the vulgar herd about her. Then how Samuel grins at me, and flings out hints about 'Old Grigs!' What does the boy know, I wonder?

Then there's Kezia! She is enough to drive an angel mad with the hideous doggerel she shrieks about the house. To-day I caught her boxing her own ears.

'Have you gone crazy?' I asked her.

'No, I haven't gone crazy,' she returned. 'I wish I had! It would be better than being a member of the Church, as I be, and not living consistent. And Mis' Woodford, our Ruth's mother, she made me promise to humble my pride. So I have humbled it by boxing my ears. And if you'd do the same by your'n it would help you wonderful.'

Perhaps it would; but I should prefer to box Deborah Snell's.

WHAT RUTH HAS TO SAY.

Grandma says we are a pair of twins. That is, that she is as young as I am, and that I am as old as she is. We all get along together beautifully. There

is never any scolding or fault-finding, or selfishness in the house. Only pious people ever come here, and all their talk is about good things. Grandma thinks and talks a great deal about heaven, and that makes me think about it; but I don't dare to say anything; I don't know enough. Grandma says she shall go there long before I do, and that she wants me to get so out of the way of being selfish now that I shall be more taken up with being glad for her than with being sorry for myself when she goes. When she talks that way I don't feel like a twin at all. I can't bear to think of her dying. Nobody ever helped me as she has. Nobody ever set me to reading such books as she has. If she could live forever I should like to live forever too. But she can't. She is very old and very feeble, and if she dies, what shall I do? What shall I do? It is not safe for me to live with bad people; I am not good enough. Even in this house, with these two old saints (I was going to say angels, but I suppose *they* never grow old), I feel wicked rebellion and resentment in my heart when I think of my new mother and of Juliet. This is all that makes me realize that I am not in heaven. For to live with saints, and to try, all the time, to be like them, is the gate of heaven, anyhow.

I walked down to the sea-shore to-day to see the waves dash against the rocks after the great storm we had yesterday. By and by a little bird came flying in, all tired out with fighting against the wind,

and dropped almost dead at my feet. I took it up and warmed it in my bosom. It cuddled down there like a kitten. And that's the way I cuddle down in grandma's arms. Nobody can know what it is like who hasn't tried it.

I don't worry about father at all. He's 'way up beyond storms. I don't know but to get where he is I should much mind having such awful things happen to me as have happened to him.

I can see the ocean from the window of my room. I like to see it by moonlight. The light goes *tipping* over it on little tiny feet. At least that's the way it looks to me. Rachel says it doesn't look so to her; but then she says things never do look exactly alike to different people.

'How large does the full moon look to you?' says she.

'About as big as a tea-plate.'

'It looks to me,' she said, 'as large as a wagon-wheel. So you see how it is.'"

KEZIA GOES HOME FOR GOOD.

"There, mother, don't ask me no questions, nor say another word! You jist sit down in the corner where you used to sit afore I went away, and let me put my head in your lap and cry, just as I did then.

"Have I come home for good? Yes, I have come home for good. Do I feel better now I've had my cry? Yes, I do feel better now I've had my cry.

“Don’t I want a cup of tea? No, I don’t want no cups of tea. I want to git the burden off of my heart, and there aint no way to git it off unless your mother can git it off for you. You see things have got to such a pass to our house that I couldn’t stand it no longer. I was a-losing all my religion, and had a bad conscience gnawing at me all the time because my temper was riled and riled and riled.

“Wouldn’t it ha’ been better to put up with things?

“Yes, it *would* have been better to put up with things if I *could*. And if she’d a bit and a barked, why, I could a bit and a barked, and we’d a had it out together. But she palavered. She said Yes when she meant No. And she said No when she meant Yes. The bait she fished the Squire with was our Ruth. She made believe hear her say lessons, and all that. But as soon as she got the Squire fairly caught, and had hauled him in, la! there warn’t no more lessons, you may depend. She was a rum-magin’ over all the things, and a-turning of ’em upside down, and a-planin’ and a-calculatin’ till I near about burst. I should have burst and been blowed up if it hadn’t been for Samuel, and he’d a burst and blowed up if it hadn’t been for me. Him and me we used to sit and whisper in the dark, for she wouldn’t let us have a candle if it was to save us. Sam, he kept his eye on her; and me, I kept my eye on her. And one day her cousin, Mis’ Snell, she

come over to spend the day to our house, and they had a regular row together. Sam, he heard all they said, for they thought he was asleep; and he heard Mis' Snell say she'd tell something she knew ag'inst Mis' Woodford if she didn't pay her for her board that summer. Well, I was riled and tempted enough afore, but after I'd heard that, Satan he got such a grip of me that I couldn't behave decent. I couldn't no more say my prayers than them 'ere tongs could. Every time I got down on my knees I'd get to thinking about Mis' Pickett that was, till I was right down mad; and every time I spoke to her I near about took her head off. If she'd a fit it out, as I was a-saying, we might a come to an understanding. But, la! butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, she was so soft-spoken. And so I thought it was about time for me to quit.

“Wouldn't it have been better to stay for the sake of the Squire and them children? No, it wouldn't a been better to stay and set 'em such an example as I was a-setting.

“Have I shown a Christian spirit to Mis' Pickett that was?

“No, I haven't shown a Christian spirit to Mis' Pickett that was. I was clear beat out with the temptations. And it's my opinion that when things git to such a pass that you can't act decent, you'd better cut and run.

“I shall find temptations here at home? It's no

such a thing. Don't you never set up your back and I won't never set up mine. Don't you go to calling me Kezief, my good girl, and I won't go to calling you no names neither. When I'm took with one of my ugly fits, you jist go ahead and let me alone. And if you see me a-fasting and a-praying, don't you take no notice of that neither. I'm bound to git right somehow, and to live consistent, and I'll work my passage to it, you see if I don't. And if you've a mind to pray for your poor old Kezief, you may pray, mother, for you're a master-hand at praying, and maybe you'll prevail. And, mother, you're not to put your hand to the house-work no more. You're to sit in the chimbley corner a-knitting and a-reading the Bible and the hymn-book, and I'm to do the knocking round. There! you needn't go to wiping your eyes, and calling me a good girl. I aint a good girl, and I won't have no palaver talked where I am. La! you can jist sit and take your ease all the rest of your days. You can have the numb palsy, or the paralytics, or any of them things that makes you helpless, and I'll nuss you like a baby.

“You don't want to have the numb palsy? Well, have the shaking palsy then; it's all one to me. Only give me a plenty to do, that's all.

“You never saw anybody like me?”

“Well, I don't suppose you ever did. *I* never did neither. 'Taint your faith, mother. You tried hard enough to git me into shape when I was a young

one, and you couldn't. But, la! don't you suppose the Lord can do what you can't?"

Goes off singing:

Now like a sheep that's lost its way,
I've wandered from the fold astray.
Temptation it was hard to bear,
And Satan caught me unaware.
My pride, it's had a dreadful fall;
But then the Squire had no call
To bring that artful creetur home;
For her and me there wasn't room.

VI.

“ He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.”

“ Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I HAVE met with another providence, and must write it down. One Saturday Rachel said she felt snow in the air, and that she should draw four or five pails of water before the storm came on. The storm came very soon, and it snowed all day and all night. In the morning Rachel complained of her throat, and said she felt chills running all over her, and was afraid she was going to have the throat distemper. She made herself some herb tea, and sat by the fire, with a shawl on. Grandma said I had better go to Deacon Titcomb's and ask to ride to meeting with him and his folks in his double sleigh. Rachel said it was very cold, and she made me wear her hood over my hood, and her moccasins over my moccasins, and I kissed grandma good-bye, and set out. I started early, so as to be sure to get to the deacon's in good season. But I started too early. Nobody had got out yet, and no paths or roads had been cut,

and all I could see was one great, white sheet of snow. I turned my face toward the deacon's, and fought my way on a few steps, and then I came to a fence that was hidden by the snow, so I knew I wasn't in the road. I thought I would turn round and go home in my own track, but just then the wind caught Rachel's hood off my head and carried it the other way; and just as I would struggle up to it, away it would go again. I went on pushing and fighting till I was out of breath, but I could not see a sign of anything that would tell me which way to go. The snow was above my head in some places, where it had drifted, and when I got into such a spot I had to scramble out of it as fast as I could. I began to feel very tired and cold, and to wish the bells would ring for meeting, or that somebody would come and help me. Then I got bewildered, and went this way and that. Then I was frightened, and began to cry out for help. But no help came, and I was so tired that the last time I fell down I did not try to get up, but lay like a stone, all beat out. Then I grew sleepy, and got a notion I was in bed at home; so I tried to say my prayers, but the words wouldn't come. Then I said, "O God, let me just get a little warm first, and a little rested, and then wake me up to say my prayers."

At noon, when I did not come home, grandma was not worried. She thought as Rachel could not go to meeting I had concluded to stay with the Titcombs.



“ Just as I was settling down to sleep she caught me in her arms and held me to her breast.”

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But when it came time for afternoon meeting to be done, and still I did not come, she became so distressed that the only way she could lie still was by crying out to God with all her might. Rachel was so sick that she had gone to bed, and it would be as much as her life was worth to go out in such a storm, and our nearest neighbor was a quarter of a mile away. What could poor grandma do? She had lain helpless in bed fourteen years. She was in such anguish that her strength came to her as if she had been young. She got out of bed, she found Rachel's clothes and put them on, she stole out of the house, and out into the storm; but she did not look down to find me: she looked upward, to where there was an Eye that saw all things, and she cried out, "Guide me to my son's ewe lamb! O my God, guide me! My only hope is in Thee!"

She never knew how far she went, but she went on till her foot touched me, just as I was settling down to sleep, and she caught me in her arms, and held me to her breast, and praised God. Just then the deacon and his wife came in sight. They had been to see their married daughter, and were going home. They did not pester us with questions, but they lifted us into the sleigh, and wrapped us up, and took us home. The deacon felt round till he found the steel and tinder, and so got a match lighted and a candle, and they made up the fire that had gone out, and put on the tea-kettle, and made us tea; and by that

time grandma was all beat out and as helpless as ever, and Mrs. Titcomb undressed her and put her to bed, and then undressed me, and put me to bed too, alongside her. Rachel never knew anything about it till the next day, and then she wouldn't believe it, and said we had been dreaming. And when the deacon said it was not a dream, she said the Lord had more sense than to send poor old grandma out into the snow, for He could have carried me home Himself if there was no other way to save me. But grandma says He works by means, and that He wrought a miracle for her, and gave her strength for the time, according to her faith.

"Then why don't you exercise faith all the time, and get well?" says Rachel.

Then grandma said she could exercise faith for her son's sake that she could not exercise for herself. Still she seemed puzzled, and lay thinking all day.

Word came in that the Widow Doane's sheep were all out in the storm, and had been sheltered by the snow, and not one had died.

"It was the same snow that sheltered my son's ewe lamb," said grandma.

They say the snow is now five feet deep.

People talk a great deal about grandma's exploit, but she says it was a miracle of God's grace, and that if anybody else could have found me, He would not have sent her.

“But why could no one else find her, grandma?” says Rachel.

“Because no one else loves her so,” says grandma. “Cords of love drew me to her. I went straight to where she was.”

“Then if cords of love drew you, there was no need of God,” says Rachel.

Then grandma was puzzled again, and said she never did know how to argufy.

But she told me to bring a piece of paper and a pen, and to write these words, to be read next Sunday at meeting, just before the long prayer :

“The widow Woodford desires to return thanks to Almighty God for the great deliverance He hath wrought for her grandchild.”

And she said a spared life ought to be consecrated to God.

I think so too.

I feel very solemn when I think how near I came to being frozen to death. Where would my soul have gone if I had?

• Oh, I have been so wicked, right after my great deliverance! I carried grandma's note to meeting and our minister read it to the people, and then he prayed an hour. Just before he got through I heard a little noise in the next pew, and opened my eyes—that is, I partly opened them—and there was Jesse Titcomb slyly lifting up his father's seat behind him;

and when he went to sit down he went way down to the floor. Then I laughed. Yes, I laughed at meeting! I laughed in the house of God! And then I cried. Oh, what a sinful child I had been! And crying could not wash sin away.

After meeting people wanted to make much of me because of my great deliverance, but I broke away and ran home and frightened poor grandma almost out of her wits by telling her I was afraid I had committed the unpardonable sin.

But she said I was not given to levity, and that she was sure I did not laugh on purpose, and, at any rate, God would forgive me and be my deliverer from temptation, as He had delivered me from death. And she said people ought to be more taken up with writing sweet, loving things about God than with writing bitter things against their selves.

I am spent with crying.

MRS. WOODFORD ONCE MORE.

There has been a terrible distemper raging in this region, and it has swept away the young children like a tempest. Mr. Strong came to-day to inform me that Deborah Snell was near her end and was eager to see me.

I asked if she had the distemper, for if she had, of course I should not dare to go. He said there was nothing infectious in the case, and that it was my duty to gratify my relative's last wishes.

I dread the thought of death, much more the sight of it. Still it would not be pleasant to let it put a seal to the enmity between us, and we might part friends.

I concluded to go.

I found Deborah eagerly awaiting me. She had sent several messengers in pursuit of me.

“Let every one go out of the room but us two,” she said, as soon as I entered. We were left alone together.

I went up to her and said how sorry I was to see her in this condition.

“I don’t know about that,” she returned sharply. “I rather think you’ve wished more’n once that I was out of the way. You’ve reckoned it would be one the less to tell your secrets. Well, I’m going! Secrets and all, I’m going! And I’ll tell you what it is, Cousin Woodford, death may do to joke about when you’re up and about, but when you come to face it, it’s an awful, awful thing. All your sins come and stand round your bed so thick you can’t see nothing else, hardly. You remember the things you did when you was a little girl, and them you did when you was a-growing up, and, worst of all, the things you did when you was grown up and knew better.

“You turn this way and you turn that way, and you make this excuse and you make that excuse, but it aint no use. Then you give up and expect noth-

ing but to be lost forever and ever. And just as you get there, and your heart's broken all to pieces with its shame and its sorrow, why, then you get a glimpse of the Lord Jesus, such as you aint had for many a long year, having been a miserable backslider and cold and dead as a stone. Well, that glimpse grieves you so that there aint left nothing of you. You just give up and there's the end of it."

"But, Deborah," I said, "you are a member of the Church and you've not done any such dreadful things. You are low-spirited and can't see yourself as you really are."

"Don't tell me," she said. "I never saw things so clear as I do now in my life. The time has been I set myself above you and thought your company wasn't fit for me. But now I see that in the sight of God I'm a bigger sinner than you are. I've had light, and you haven't. I was brought up under the droppings of the sanctuary, and you wasn't. I've stood up before angels and men, and promised to love and serve God with all my heart, and I aint kept my word. And now I'm going to die. And if it wasn't for that glimpse of Christ, Oh, how dark, how dark the grave would look! But I keep a-getting them glimpses, and I don't know; maybe there'll be some little corner in heaven, away off from those that walked worthy, some out-of-the-way place I can creep into and just stay there, a-getting glimpses through all eternity."

Her earnestness and her solemnity, and the pale

shadow of death on her brow, moved me to my very foundations.

“Oh, Deborah, if death looks so awful to you, how must it look to me?”

“Then don't look at it,” she said feebly, the temporary excitement that had sustained her beginning now to give away. “Just look at the Lord Jesus. And, Cousin Woodford, it's my last word before I go: don't put it off to such a time as this. It's no time at all. *Life's the time—*”

She sank back upon her pillow; her eyes became fixed; I had only time to call her husband before she was gone.

One moment here, delivering to me her parting message; the next moment—*where?*

I went home, and as I went I wondered how the sun could shine and the busy works of nature and of man go on in a world subject to such terrific mysteries as this!

Mr. Woodford met me with unusual gentleness, and after dinner begged me to go to my room and lie down. But I could not sleep. My guilty life went surging through my brain, back and forth, back and forth, with relentless progress. The exceeding sinfulness of sin was beginning to become manifest to me. I abhorred, I shrank from myself.

It is a long time since I have had leisure to write. After endless labors, and a severe conflict with in-

numerable difficulties, I have pushed the matter of the factory through, and it is in successful operation, and money flows in apace. Juliet has been away at a boarding-school more than a year. I have been to see her once, and found her in disgrace of all sorts. I will not allow her to come home until she shows some signs of amendment. But I believe girls at her age are always unruly and restive.

Ruth writes home regularly once a month. She seems quite happy in the aged life she is leading. Her father goes often to see her, and she comes home now and then. Her grandmother says her character is lovely. When I look forward to declining years, or old age, I always rejoice that I shall have this unselfish, good-natured little puss to wait upon me. I can not conceive of care of any sort from Juliet.

Ruth "joined the Church" last Sunday, to Mr. Woodford's great delight. I can not understand the pleasure this gives him. But to these Puritans that step seems to be what getting married is in a novel. The curtain falls on this act as if it were toward that point, and for it, the whole scene had tended. The fact is, however, life really begins with a happy marriage, if there is such a thing on earth. And if I were going to join the Church, I should feel that it was one of the first of my real steps on earth—the beginning of a march, not the end of a journey. And I would not settle down at my ease, as most people seem to do, at that point. I would be something, or

nothing. I would be a saint—not an uncomfortable sinner.

It is two years since I sent Juliet away. She is now seventeen. A handsomer young woman is rarely to be seen. She has left off some of her most disagreeable ways, and is, at times, really attractive. Her teacher says the trouble now is to keep off a crowd of boys, calling themselves young men, who are constantly prowling around her. But such things can not be avoided—and the child must have her little pleasures.

My cares and trials multiply, and I have no refuge. Mr. Woodford's children have turned out so well that he could not sympathize with me now, if he would.

About two weeks ago I received a letter from Juliet's teacher, enclosing a little bill for confectionery and the like, that this child has actually ventured to run up in my name. The amount is so large that I am sure she has played Lady Bountiful to the whole school. I hurried to the spot, reproved the confectioner, upbraided Juliet, and made myself fairly ill with vexation and shame. Juliet laughed at my distress, and declared it was all my fault; there was nothing fit to eat at the table; she had no money to get what she needed; all the other girls had boxes of "goodies" sent them from home, etc., etc. I spoke to Miss Temple about the table. She said I

could judge for myself whether it was comfortable or not, and begged me to drop in at any meal I chose.

The result was another scene with Juliet, who still maintained that things were not as good as they were at home. The end of it was her removal to another school, where she is to be under strict government and have even plainer food than before. What am I to do with the child? She has no law before her eyes; her one study is to please herself. I can not see that she has a particle of respect or affection for me. In my despair I went to see Mr. Strong. Everybody else goes to him for comfort, why should not I?

He received me with great kindness and courtesy, and expressed real sympathy for my sufferings.

"Juliet is still quite young," he said. "We must hope for the best. God's grace can do the work man throws down in despair. Is she under good moral influences at school?"

I said I supposed she was, of course.

"Unless you are sure on that point," he said, "would it not be better to take her home, watch her with such care as only a mother can give, instruct her in her duty to yourself and to God, and, above all, constantly implore His blessing on her behalf?"

"But I can do nothing with her," I returned. "She is the most headstrong creature I ever saw. Indeed, I never had any control over her. I supposed that as she grew older she would become more reasonable.

But on the contrary she grows more and more self-willed."

Mr. Strong was silent for a time.

"Such characters often turn out useful ones," he said at last. "If God takes them in hand and beats them into shape, lack of early discipline is sometimes more than atoned for."

"That depends on when He begins His work," I said, desperately. "Discipline embitters and sours those whom it attacks too late."

"There is no *too late* with God," he returned. "He can begin and finish His work at the eleventh hour. And discipline that He sends and sanctifies does not embitter. It softens and moulds and sweetens and ennobles."

"Ah, it is easy to theorize about such things," I said. "You have never known, and never needed to know, such shame and sorrow as I writhe under. Your life has been all sunshine."

He smiled, a little sadly.

"That is not true of any life," he said. "I have had not a little real happiness, but I was not fit to enjoy it till I had passed under the rod. Because you can not see the friction on the wheels of a man's life, it is not safe to conclude there is no friction. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness."

"And we go about the world regular Spartans, our sorrows gnawing into us, and our faces covered with smiles!"

“Nay, some of us go about regular *Christians!*” he returned. “We know our pains and our disappointments, but we take them, with loving hands, straight from Hands yet more loving, and they bring forth in due season most peaceable fruits.”

He said no more. If he had done so I was in the mood to strike him.

VII.

“The way of the wicked He turneth upside down.”

MRS. STRONG ON THE SITUATION.

YES, we dined at the Squire's on Thanksgiving Day. It was the first invitation for four years. Things are entirely changed there. Samuel was not at home, nor Ruth, which is strange; but the strangest thing of all is a Thanksgiving dinner without Kezia to cook it, and hardly a thing on the table fit to eat. The Squire had no appetite, and, as baby cried, he made that an excuse for leaving the table and walking up and down with it. I never saw a man so fond of little children.

Mrs. Woodford fidgeted in her chair as if, somehow, baby was defrauding her of something she wanted, or ought to have. She couldn't have been more than thirty when she married the Squire, and now she looks every minute of fifty. After dinner they asked me if I knew of a private family that would take a pious young man to board. I looked at my husband, and he looked at me. At last I said I would take him as an experiment, as he was a pious youth. The Squire replied that he was the son of a

widow of no means, had struggled his way through college, and now wanted to earn enough to carry him through a course in theology.

“I have need of a book-keeper in Samuel’s place,” he added, “and have promised him the situation.”

So Samuel is gone for good, it seems. I wonder why? However, it is not for me to pry into family secrets. If he had gone for any pleasant reason the Squire would have come and told us, as he always does, poor man, if there is anything agreeable to tell. Well, to go back to the book-keeper; the idea of a religious young man in the house was rather pleasant than otherwise. The Squire then inquired if there were any specially needy cases in the parish, and gave my husband money to spend among them. *That* seemed exactly like old times. There must be a change in Mrs. Woodford. She certainly seems softened. After we reached home Mr. Strong said to me:

“You generally see things sooner than I do, but to-day I have the advantage of you. The Squire has heard of a deserving, but needy, young man, and it is just like him to come to his rescue. He knows how hard we find it to live on my small salary, and gives us the first chance to eke it out through this boarder.”

So it is; exactly like him; I wonder I did not see that before. What a mercy it is going to be to earn a little money. Mr. Strong needs books, and I need

everything, with those children to clothe. How a kind Providence watches over us! Thanks to the Squire, and other friends, we are amply supplied with groceries, such as flour, apples, cheese, spices, raisins, wine, and brandy. The latter I keep in case of sickness; the wine I give to Mr. Strong when he comes home unusually fatigued. Thanksgiving is a glad season for a poor New England minister.

MRS. WOODFORD.

I have a plan in regard to Juliet which, if carried out, will relieve me from the annoyance I feel about the money I have laid aside for her. Samuel is now a fine-looking young man, well informed for a Pemaquid youth, for he is a great reader; he has a good salary, and can afford to marry, and would make Juliet a faithful husband. He never goes round with girls, as other young men do, so I am sure his heart is untouched. It is true they have always hated each other, but separation may have done away with that sort of thing. Once married to Juliet, the money would come back to him, and I should only antedate the day when he should become his father's heir. I can hardly believe that this handsome young man is the dull, awkward boy I found him. He has the position of book-keeper in his father's office. Mr. Woodford has displayed more business talent than I could have believed he possessed. He is very generous to me in regard to money; but this gives me

little satisfaction. I have a weariness and a disgust of life that is well-nigh insupportable.

A month ago, early one morning, Mr. Woodford brought in and placed on the fire a heavy stick of wood. As he rose from his stooping posture, after arranging it, a sudden pallor overspread his face, and he put both hands to his chest. I led him to a chair, and supported his head on my breast, while I called loudly for help. Samuel opened the windows, thinking this to be a fainting fit; to me it looked like death itself. As I stood there, holding that noble head, I knew what I had suspected before—*I loved that man!*

“Are you going to let him die for the want of a doctor?” I said hoarsely to Samuel, who stood staring helplessly at us both. “Saddle one of the horses, some of you, and tell the doctor to ride for his life!”

They all flew in different directions, and I stood holding the head whose weight seemed every second to grow heavier and heavier. Once I proposed to lay him on the floor—for there was no couch in the room—but he resisted my efforts.

“I could not breathe lying down,” he said.

Before the doctor arrived the spasm of pain had subsided, but his color had not returned. After a few questions, the doctor declared, sepulchrally:

“Disease of the heart!” and after a few unmeaning remarks, took leave.

Mr. Woodford sat in his chair, silent and thoughtful. His face looked like the face of an angel.

“I thought myself almost *there!*” he said, looking upward, with a smile.

Seeing him at last entirely relieved, I left him with Samuel, and went to my bedroom. Then I faced the awful truth—I loved that man, and he was my husband, but he never had loved me.

This is the first line I have written since that day. Mr. Woodford has had no recurrence of the attack. The doctor may possibly have mistaken its nature. I can see, however, that Mr. Woodford has set his house in order and girded himself to depart at a moment's notice. He has made Samuel familiar with all the business details of the factory, and given him full authority to act in his place. Samuel is now as tall as his father, and very like him in person. A finer-looking young man is not often seen. His manner to me has improved not a little. He treats me with perfect civility, and never crosses my path in any way.

To-day is Sunday. Mr. Strong preached this afternoon on the text, “Every heart knoweth its own bitterness.” Surely no heart knows such as mine.

I try in every way to make myself agreeable to my husband. All his old habits I have revived. I prepare a bountiful table, and he can invite all Pemaquid to it when he chooses. I fall in with his ways of

“sending portions,” as Kezia used to call it, and fairly pamper all the Strongs. By the by, there are four children there now, and Mrs. Strong as jocund as ever. But nothing moves him. He is perfectly civil and kind, but never more than that. I would prefer a little occasional discord to this wearisome, superficial harmony.

I must say the fates deal harshly with me. Why should I not have the love of my husband, since I stoop to desire it? I am still young and attractive; I have never spoken to him a harsh word; I fall in with his whims, and submit to all his wishes. I am his superior in education and intellect, it is true; but it is not this that comes between us. He respects himself—not unduly, but as a man should—and never has stood in awe of me. I would defy any woman to live in the same house with him as long as I have done and not feel the uprightness and beauty of his life. But what is love without a return?

Mr. Woodford has had another of those alarming attacks. This time I took no pains to conceal my anxiety and—yes, I will own it—my distress. He seemed surprised at my tears, and expressed much gratitude for the interest I had shown in him.

“I suppose you know, my dear,” he said on recovering from the spasm, “that sooner or later I shall go off in one of these attacks. I have arranged my worldly affairs so that I can leave them at any moment.”

I said I wondered he could speak so cheerfully on such a gloomy subject.

He smiled, and declared it was not a gloomy subject.

“What is there gloomy in the thought of getting rid of a body of sin and death, and waking up in heaven?” he asked.

“But death is such a solemn, such an awful event,” I said.

“Solemn, but not awful,” he replied.

“It may not be awful to those who expect to go directly to heaven,” I said. “It must be pleasant to think of escaping the troubles of life and getting a shelter from its storms.”

“It isn’t heaven to me to escape troubles,” he returned. “It is *sin* I long to escape. My troubles have been few and small. But my sins! Oh, they have been without limit!”

Was there anything more absurd? After a long silence, he broke out with—

“My dear, shall you come to meet me there?”

I said I hoped so. God is merciful. He makes allowance for human infirmity.

“Yes, if we love Him and have faith in Him. But heaven will not be heaven to us without love, you know.”

Yes, I know. But what can I do? There are those things in my life that stand as impassable barriers between me and such experiences as his. Yet

when I see his face actually transfigured with joy, I can not help envying him his more favored lot. Allowing it to be all a delusion, it is a *safe* delusion. Allowing mine to be a delusion, where will it end?

I plunged from one horror into another. Since writing the above I have had the most terrible scene with Samuel. A few days ago as I was at the post-office, Deacon Stone, who keeps it, handed me a letter addressed to the youngster. My curiosity was not a little excited when I observed that it was a feminine letter.

“What young lady corresponds with Samuel?” I inquired, as carelessly as I could.

“O, it won’t do to tell tales,” said the Deacon. “Samuel is too likely a young man not to have his admirers.”

“It is a regular correspondent, is it?”

“O, I can’t say. Their letters go back and forth as young folks’ letters will.”

I came home with the letter in my hands, and no little uneasiness in my heart. If my project of marrying Samuel to Juliet should fail, what am I to do? That money oppresses me. I wish I was fairly rid of it. It stands between me and peace of mind. I know not why—it was not always so—but of late I am tempted to curse the day I began to put my hand to such unsatisfactory work.

On reaching home I examined the letter on all

sides. It was sealed with a large red wafer, pressed down with a thimble—a brass thimble, I have no doubt. My evil genius suggested that there would be no harm in opening the letter and just learning the name of the writer. Steam from the tea-kettle, already boiling for tea, would do that in a trice. It was easy to get everybody out of the way, and to soften the wafer, but in opening the letter I could not help tearing it a good deal, the wafer was so large and so firmly pressed down to the paper. But, at the moment, I did not heed that. I hurried to my room, went to the window, and glanced quickly at the signature—“Ellen Wyman.” But the name threw no light on the subject; it was necessary to read the letter, after all. I had finished the first page, hurriedly, when I recollected that my door was unfastened; some one might enter and detect me at my work. I went, letter in hand, to repair this error, and confronted Samuel, who said, quickly :

“The Deacon says there was a letter for me. Where is it?”

At this moment his eyes fell upon it, opened in my hand. He became pale as death, and threw himself upon me like a tiger. For a single instant I held it aloft out of his reach, then looked round in despair for some way of escape, and seeing none, let him rend it from my grasp.

“One of us must leave this house,” he said in my ear. “You or I. It is too strait to hold us both after this.”

He rushed away like a madman.

A few minutes before, all was going well. But what terrible mistakes can be committed in a few moments! Mistakes a lifetime can not rectify. I went downstairs and met Mr. Woodford.

“Why, is anything the matter?” he cried. “You and Samuel look as if you had just seen a ghost!”

“Where is Samuel? I must see him. There is a terrible misunderstanding between us.”

“I do not know. I believe he has gone to his room. What is the trouble? Let me mediate between you. Poor boy, his temper is fearful when once roused.”

I hardly waited to hear him through, but hurried past him, up the stairs that led to Samuel’s room. I knocked, but there was no answer. I tried the door, but it was fastened on the inside. But I could hear draws opened and shut, and the sound of hasty movements.

“Samuel, I entreat you to hear me a moment.”

He came to the door, put his lips to the key-hole and said :

“*Fool!*” and resumed his labors.

“Samuel,” I repeated, “remember that sudden excitement would be the death of your father.”

There was immediate silence. Then, opening the door, he said, bitterly :

“*You* should have remembered that an hour ago.”

“Yes, I know, I know! But oh, Samuel, it was a

sudden temptation. I did not mean to read your letter. Indeed, I have only read a part of it. But if your father learns it, if you tell your father, it will kill him."

"I have no intention of telling him, Mrs. Woodford. I shall leave you in undisturbed possession of the house from which you have driven both my father's children. God grant it may not be his turn to go next."

He closed the door in my face and I went down to tea. Mr. Woodford asked me no more questions, and we passed through the meal in silence. After a time Samuel came in.

"Father," he said, "you will have to look out for a book-keeper to take my place. I'm off before daylight to-morrow."

Mr. Woodford still asked no questions; but he became very pale, and passed his hand uneasily over his chest.

"The accounts are all fair and square," continued Samuel. "You will have no trouble with the books. And now, as I am going away to seek my fortune, I should like your blessing, father, and leave to pay myself up to this time what the concern owes me. It is all I shall ever want, and whatever else would have come to me I make over to Ruth. And, father, I'll try to make a man of myself and not to disgrace your name."

Mr. Woodford still sat without a word. At last he

rose up and laid his hand on his son's head, and blessed him.

"God be gracious to you, my son," he said.

At these words, uttered in a trembling voice, Samuel's assumed coolness melted away, and tears began to run down his cheeks.

"Say the word, father, and I won't go," he said.

"No, my son. You are old enough to choose for yourself."

I stole away and left them together. At breakfast next morning Samuel's seat was empty, and I knew that he was gone. So here ends my scheme for Juliet's future. I hope that ungrateful child will repay me, sooner or later, for all she has cost me. At family prayers, after Samuel had gone, Mr. Woodford, who reads in course, came to the verse:

"If I am bereaved of my children I am bereaved," and then he broke down. He nerved himself, by a great effort, and knelt and prayed like a little child. I wish *I* could break down. I almost wish I could pray.

VIII.

“ I dwell among mine own people.”
“ Life ! we’ve been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
’Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps ’twill cause a sigh, a tear :
Then steal away, give little warning.
Choose thine own time,
Say not ‘ Good-night,’ but in some brighter clime
Bid me ‘ Good-morning.’ ”

RUTH’S JOURNAL.

I AM eighteen years old to-day, and grandma asked me what I should do when she died. I began to cry, and said I should die too.

She said, “ I want you to stop crying, my child, and listen to me. I am very aged, and it can not be very long before I come to the end of my pilgrimage ; and it will half spoil my comfort in going if I see you cowardly and rebellious about it. Now, of course, you will feel my loss at first a good deal, because I have been as a mother to you. But I want you to glorify God by bearing your pain bravely and patiently, just as you would any other sort of pain—such as sickness, for instance. As to dying, you will do no such thing. There is a great deal of talk about broken hearts, nowadays ; but do you know of any one in Pemaquid or Kittery Point that ever died of grief ? ”

I had to own I never had.

“You wish I would stop talking on a subject so painful,” she went on. “But I want to help strengthen you for what *must* come. And when I am called home, don’t take on as if nobody ever had a sorrow before. You will probably live to have your heart ache far harder over living troubles than dead ones. I see you do not believe me; how should you, at your age? But let me say one thing more for your comfort. Or, no; bring your Bible and read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”

I read it, and her dear old face began to shine.

“Don’t be afraid of the furnace, child, after this. You don’t know what it is to be there, with the Son of God to see that the fire is not too hot; besides, you can not get grace against sorrow before it comes, any more than you can get dying grace till you come to die. But I can tell you that you will be astonished at the way in which you will be supported if you put your trust in God, who says, ‘As one whom His mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.’”

While grandma was talking I began to feel very brave, and as if I could stand anything. Still I said:

“But the Widow Green lived to be ninety!”

“And would you have your poor old grandma live to be a burden and trial to herself and everybody about her?”

“She was very large and heavy, and hard to lift;

but you are small and light, and I can't imagine you as being a burden."

"It's the old story over again," grandma said. "Young people must earn their own experience; and it is such a pity!"

But since I came to my room and wrote down what she said, it has come to me that I dread her dying, not just because I should miss her love, but because she helps me so on my pilgrimage. But I shall promise God that I won't stand between Him and grandma, and hinder her getting to the end of hers. But my heart bends right up double when I think how old and how feeble she is, and what may come any day.

Oh, how stupid and wrong I was! Why couldn't I believe dear grandma when she said God would comfort me if I would trust Him! After I wrote that I knelt down and said, "Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" and there came to me such sweet peace that I could hardly help dancing about my room; but I hope I shall never do anything so worldly as that.

MRS. WOODFORD PROCEEDS.

Since the first burst of emotion on the morning after Samuel left, Mr. Woodford has been as tranquil as ever. He never mentions his name now; but I can see that he misses him sadly. My own disap-

pointment at the failure of my plans for him and Juliet is very bitter. For after I had paid the Snells, I began to deposit small sums of money in a savings bank at Aroostook, a thriving town about six miles from here. It was for Juliet, not for myself; but as she is a minor, I had to deposit it as her trustee. If I could have arranged a marriage between her and Samuel, my conscience would have been perfectly at rest; as it is, I am tortured with fears of discovery. Once I would have braved detection; now I can not. I value my husband's esteem above everything on earth. A glance of contempt from him would kill me.

All these years of strategy have begun to wear upon me. I live in mortal terror. I ought, in some way, to let Juliet know about her money; and yet if I tell her now it will be the signal of new extravagances on her part. It will be better to address to her a sealed letter, to be opened only in case of my death, telling her how to proceed to procure the money, and directing her also to destroy this manuscript. But for pouring out my cares on this paper I should have lost my senses.

Mr. Woodford says he has heard of the son of an old friend, whom he shall secure as book-keeper in Samuel's place, and that he shall let Mrs. Strong take him to board, if she wishes it, as she and Mr. Strong find it hard work to live on their salary.

But I do not see how she can endure any new

cares. The Pemaquiders seem to regard her as their property, exactly as they do Mr. Strong. She has to be the First Directress of the Sewing Society, the leader of the Female Prayer-meeting, the Treasurer of the Bible Society and of the Auxiliary Tract Society; she has charge of the Juvenile Benevolent Society, the Female Benevolent Society—and they are talking of having a Foreign Mission Society besides. She cuts out every shroud in the village. She settles all the feuds that arise between the choir and the parish; and her only “help” is a young girl she is “bringing up,” forsooth! I should like to be the minister’s wife here for one week. They would not find it so easy to make a slave of me!

Mr. Strong spent the evening here. It seems his fame has extended to a large city; commissioners have come to hear him preach, and he has been “called” to an important church there. He came to consult Mr. Woodford about it—as if there could be any question in his mind about leaving his present laborious and obscure position! How men dilly-dally over matters women settle, as the Pemaquiders say, in a jiffy!

Meanwhile I have been making the acquaintance of our new book-keeper, whom he brought with him. He is a bright, joyous, attractive young fellow, better educated than any one else in Pemaquid, except Mr. Strong. Mr. Woodford likes him, and, I believe

goes to the Strongs oftener than ever. If he takes a fancy to advance his interests as he did Samuel's, why not secure him for Juliet? Meantime I shall take care to make myself agreeable to him.

KEZIA MILLET GETS A LETTER.

“Why, look here, mother! I've got a letter from Pemaquid, and things is goin' on *awful* there. I always said our minister wasn't one of the common sort, and I've argufyed about it with Lawyer Snell and Mis' Snell forty times if I have once. And now he's got a call to go to the city of Broadstairs, if you know whereabouts that is—I'm sure I don't—and all Pemaquid is lamentin', and the Church has appointed a day of fasting and prayer, and all the widows is crying out to heaven not to take away their live idol that they've been worshippin' and bowin' down to, as if he was great A, little a-ron's golden calf. They say if he'll go, they'll give him a big salary and put him in a handsome house, and his wife can keep two girls if she's a mind to, and have their children go to first-rate schools, and I don't know what not.

“Of course he'll go; there aint no of course about it. It'll be just as the Lord says, and if He says stay at Pemaquid, our minister'll stay. I declare, I'm all in a flurry about it. And, la! mother, who do you think's dead? Deborah Snell! You might knock me down with a straw! And our Samuel, he's gone

off; I always said he and that woman would fall out some time, dreadful.”

Sings:

“O, what will the people in Pemaquid say
 If their golden idol is taken away?
 I’ve said it once, and I say it again:
 He aint the least like the children of men:
 They talk in the Primer about Obadiah,
 And two or three more of his kind, that was pious—
 But, la! they warn’t nothing to our Parson Strong;
 He’ll make a short cut into heaven ere long!”

MRS. WOODFORD IS SURPRISED.

After keeping the whole village in a ferment for three weeks, Mr. Strong has proclaimed that duty constrains him to remain here! The man must be insane! To refuse the most tempting offer, the most congenial field of labor and settle down here for life! For my part I am disappointed. I hoped we should get a younger man, and one without his solemn views of life, which I think unnatural and unsound. And what he has done to make himself so beloved here I can not imagine. I met Mrs. Strong the other day, and she had the face to tell me she was glad her husband had decided to remain here! As if she *liked* being the parish slave, doing housework, making all her own, her husband’s, and her children’s clothes! Why, the way they live is pitiful! They sleep in a deathly cold room, with two of the children in a trundle-bed, and one in a crib by Mrs. Strong’s side;

if any of them are ailing in the night, she must get up and attend them in an actually freezing atmosphere—the weather here is like Greenland. She has to get up at five o'clock in the morning and see about getting breakfast; then the children are brought down and dressed by the kitchen fire, she being the nursery maid, and shivering herself with the cold. They make their coffee of parched peas, and in every department economize in the same way. She hasn't had a new dress for three years, and Mr. Strong's old camlet cloak looks as if it had been worn fifty.

These, and a score of such items, I have learned through Frank Weston, with whom I am on the best of terms. I need somebody for a friend, for Mr. Woodford still holds aloof. He seems to vent on little children the affection I long to have him bestow on me. The other day I met him drawing one of the Strong babies on a little sled, the child having reins and a whip in its hand, and crying out to him to "Get up, old horse!"

He looked very much ashamed when he saw me, and got out of the way as quickly as possible.

It is amazing that he does not see how I honor him, how I long for something more than this unvarying courtesy and cold civility. Did he love my predecessor, I wonder? And is his heart in the grave with her? Ah! I envy her the sleep she is taking!

Thanks to me—for nobody would have had enter-

prise to get up the factory if I had not stirred them up to it—Pemaquid is thriving finely. Mr. Woodford is building a boarding-house for the factory girls; two new stores are going up, and half a dozen houses. And, as if Mr. Strong was not overworked before, he has undertaken to form a Bible-class for the girls and any one else who wants to attend; and Mrs. Strong came and asked me to join it! I think I see myself saddled with anything new in religion! It is just as much as I can stand to keep up a decent outside on Sundays. Last summer we had a most disastrous drought, and everything bid fair to be burned to a crisp. Of course the Church appointed a day of fasting and prayer, and Ruth, who was home for a short visit, went to it, carrying a huge umbrella! Just fancy the Lord making it rain to suit Pemaquid! What does He care for Pemaquid? But Pemaquid fasted, and Pemaquid humbled itself, and Pemaquid prayed, and lo! just as the people were pouring out of the meeting-house, it began to rain, and everybody but Ruth and an old woman she waited upon home got wet to the skin. Now see their inconsistency! They pray for rain, pretending they expect to gain something by that operation, but prove that they did not expect anything by their surprise when rain appeared. For my part I think it is blasphemous to pray so much. Fancy the Lord caring whether farmer Jay's potatoes dried up, or farmer Tobey's grass! It isn't likely He ever heard of either of them!

As I said, Ruth came home. Deacon Chitcome, or some such name, was coming this way, and her grandmother sent her home to surprise her father, who had a regular Thanksgiving Day dinner got up, and sent for the Strongs and young Weston. The latter seemed not a little struck with Ruth, who, it must be owned, is a very pretty, quaint girl, who looks as if she had just stepped out of "Watts' and Select Hymn-Book." Her father says, with rapture, that she is just like her grandmother; and I should think they were just about of an age. I made it convenient for Mr. Woodford to take her back to Kittery Point in a few days, as Frank Weston might get fond of her, and interfere with my plans for Juliet. Once having seen *her*, this little Puritan will stand no sort of a chance. Still, it is to be hoped grandma's precious life will long be spared!

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

It was so kind in grandma to let me go home and see father! He can not come here as he used, for the factory takes a great deal of his time. Considering all things, he looks pretty well. I missed Kezia more than I can tell. It is such a pity she went away, for all the girls go into the factory, and it is impossible to get good help in the kitchen. I made a great many nice things for them, and if it had been cold weather would have made enough to last a great

while. But it rained so much after the day of fasting and prayer, that things got mouldy.

I spent one day at the parsonage—for they've built a parsonage, and a real pretty one, too. Mr. and Mrs. Strong are just two saints. All they seem to care for is the Church, and what they can do for it. They are lovely to each other, and lovely to their children. Mrs. Strong has always loved me for my own mother's sake, and she told me a great many beautiful things about her that she said I was not old enough to understand when I went away, more than five years ago. Take it all together, I had a pleasant visit at home. My new mother treats father as well as she knows how, and waits upon him and hangs round him as if she was trying to get him to notice her. But he doesn't. I saw a little kitten try to get intimate with a very large black dog once. But he did not so much as see her.

IX.

“As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

“The Pilgrims they lived in a large upper chamber, facing the sun rising. The name of the chamber was Peace.”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

DEAR grandma tried, as hard as she could, to prepare me for what she knew was coming. I came down one morning, trembling with the cold, and found Rachel had made the fire, and was busy at it. I have always made the fire myself, for Rachel is very old, and it would have been a shame to let her get up in the cold.

“Why, Rachel, what are you up for?” I cried.

“This is the fourth day of this horrid cold weather,” she said, “and very hot and very cold weather is bad for the aged. They are apt to go off in one or the other.”

I did not understand her.

“You'd better go and set by grandma,” she said. “I think she's took a change in the night. I mistrusted it afore I went to bed, and I jist slep' with one ear open.”

I ran into grandma's room, but didn't see any

change. She was lying there, sleeping like a baby, breathing softly, and smiling every now and then.

Rachel came in with a cup of hot tea, but she couldn't rouse grandma to take it.

"Drink it yourself, poor child," she said; "you'll need it before the day's out; and I'll run to the window and see if there's any one passing. It would be a comfort to see Father Andrews."

"Oh, send for the doctor first!" I said.

"We don't want no doctors round; we want our minister. And don't you take on so, child. It's enough to hender grandma's passage into Paradise."

I grew still in a minute. Who was I that I should dare get in grandma's way?

At last Rachel saw a boy going past, and sent him for Father Andrews.

"Tell him there's no hurry," I heard her say, "but to eat a hot breakfast afore he venters out."

She had to call out very loud, and the noise woke grandma up. We were in each other's arms in a minute, and she told me how she loved me.

And then she said, "I got my invitation in the night. You'll let me go, won't you?"

I thought her mind was wandering, and so I said:

"You never go anywhere, grandma. Nobody has invited you anywhere."

She smiled and pointed upward. Then I knew! And soon she fell sweetly asleep again.

Father Andrews lives pretty near us. He came in,

a good deal out of breath, and it took him a long time to get over it; for he is ninety-three years old, and has been the minister here over sixty.

“I knew you’d want to see her once more,” said Rachel.

“Yes, yes,” he said. “But I’m jealous of her; she has outrun me, and will get into heaven first; and I wouldn’t have thought that of her.”

He took his cane and slowly made his way to grandma’s side. The tears rolled down his venerable face when he saw her.

Then two of the old ladies who used to come and pray with her came in. They sat and held her hand, and now and then would say a text. All at once one of them asked me how soon my father would be here.

My father! I had not thought of him!

One of the neighbors, who had come in to see if we wanted help, offered to go for him. It was good sleighing, and the sun was up. Then all I prayed for was that she might live till he came, and know him.

And she did.

And then what a prayer Father Andrews made! Why, he opened heaven for us, and let us see grandma going in, and smiling!

It is a long time since I have felt like writing here. Dear grandma has *gone* home, and I have *come* home.

What a difference! She was so glad to go that I could not bear to ask God to keep her here for my sake and Rachel's. Yet Rachel says she shall not know how to live without her. She has lived with her ever since I was born, and that is nearly twenty years. I think it would be very mean and cowardly in me to want to keep her out of heaven a single day because I was not willing to suffer the pain of parting from her.

Still, the pain is very hard to bear, and if it was right I could spend my whole time crying and moaning, for it is just as if a *mother* had been snatched away. But I am determined to obey her just as exactly as if she could speak to me and tell me how to act, and to do that all my life long, even if I live to be eighty years old; besides, there is a great deal to do. Nobody in this house knows how to prepare such food as my father has been used to; there is a girl in the kitchen, to be sure; but she is slovenly and ignorant, and I must do all the nice work myself; and I can, for Rachel has taught me all her ways. Rachel would have come home with me, but she is all worn out, and needs rest.

Grandma has left her books to me. These are the works of Hannah More, in eight volumes, "Owen on the Holy Spirit" and on "Spiritual-Mindedness," Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest," the "Pilgrim's Progress" and Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." They are all such books as it is good for a weak and

ignorant girl like me to read over and over again, and it almost seems as if I could see dear grandma's face, as I sit and read them by myself, as I have read them to her.

I am too old to be slapped in the face now by Juliet or anybody else. But it stings worse to have such holy books laughed at and made fun of. It is like making fun of the Being I love and adore as I love nothing else. Poor mother! Poor Juliet! They know not what they do.

MRS. WOODFORD.

Juliet has finished her course at school and has come home, since which event I dare not say my soul is my own. It was more comfortable to have her away. She has ill-bred school-fellows come to visit her, and goes riding and driving round the country with them, while it never seems to occur to her that any one else has any use for the horses. She and Frank Weston have become quite good friends, and it has occurred to me that if she marries him, as I rather think she intends to do, she will not need the ill-gotten sum I have laid up for her. I wish I had not put it into her power to touch it by giving her the sealed letter, to be opened in case of my death. It would have been wiser to confide my secret to Mr. Woodford, should he outlive me. But it is not likely that he will. If goodness entitles a

man to a passport for heaven, he may go there any day.

A messenger has just come to summon him to Kittery Point. He took time, before he went, to send this message to the conference meeting :

“Aaron Woodford requests the prayers of this church for his mother, lying very weak and low, that she may be restored to health, or, if not, prepared for all God’s will and pleasure.”

If she dies I suppose Ruth will come home. Well, she is a harmless creature, is handy with her needle, makes delicious things for the table, and on the whole it will be rather a convenience to have her around.

Ruth has come home. She is a very pretty girl, with her father’s fresh complexion, smooth, white forehead, and honest, kindly blue eyes. Her hair has not an angular line in it, but waves and curls gracefully about her head. The contrast between her and Juliet is almost ludicrous.

On Sunday, just before we rose for the long prayer, what were my sensations on hearing these words read from the pulpit :

“Aaron Woodford and his wife desire your prayers that the death of their mother may be sanctified to them for their spiritual and everlasting good ;” after which followed one from Ruth, to much the same effect.

The time has been that this would have driven me out of the meeting-house in a rage. As it is, I can not afford to insult Mr. Woodford. But how I felt, standing shivering through a whole hour of "long prayer," and Mr. Strong piling up petitions for me to a heaven I do not more than half believe in! Juliet fairly giggled aloud, "Their mother, indeed!" And yet, such are the contradictions of human nature, there was a mixture of sweetness in the words.

JULIET WRITES TO HER FRIEND IN BOSTON.

Since you went home I have had all sorts of times with Frank. In the first place, Ruth Woodford's "grandma" must needs go and die, and she has come home and quartered herself in Samuel's room. She's just such a girl as I *can't endure*. When we were young ones she'd let me slap her in the face, and pull her hair, and any other little pastimes of the sort. She is just as mean-spirited still. The other day I went to get her to hook my dress, and there she was arranging a set of old musty books, left her by her grandmother, in a little pine bookcase she had just had made. I took down volume after volume, and read paragraphs here and there, which I made sound *perfectly ridiculous*.

"Do you pretend that you *like* these solemn old divines?" I asked her, at last.

"Like them?" she asked. "Yes, and love them too."

“And you believe in prayer-meetings and fast-days, and all such nonsense?”

“Juliet, I do not try to wound and hurt you; then why do you come and try to wound me?” she cried out.

“Because I hate religion the way it’s thrust on one here at Pemaquid. I *hate* it, I say!”

“You have a right to hate it, I suppose,” she said, “and I have rights, too. I have the right to leave the room, and shall take it now.”

So off she marched, and I took the opportunity to act the spy in her apartment. In the first place, it seems she has a fire. Then I shall have one in my room. In the second place, she has got stored away in a box an old faded flower or two, so it is plain she is in love with some Kittery Point swain. In the third place, she keeps a journal; and I have read some holy twaddle in it, but find no mention of the swain. And now to sum up her crimes in one. Frank walked home from meeting with her last Sunday night, though he *knew* all I went for was to see him! Don’t you wish her joy of the life I am going to lead her?

I flirted desperately with Josiah Stone, who did me the honor to escort me home. I did not seem to observe it, but sang hymns with Ruth. The girl is a *perfect beauty*. But she’s deep. She knows how to get at the best side of Frank, and between us both I imagine he is *half distracted*. It is my opinion that

he'd like to marry Ruth on Sundays and fast-days, and have me week-days. Well, burn this letter up, there's a dear, and I'll do as much for you.

MRS. WOODFORD.

The throat distemper is raging here in perfect fury, and in all the region round about. A public fast was therefore ordained, but very few were present. The women have their hands full taking care of the sick, and the men are doing the housework their wives have no time to attend to. The children are dying off at the rate of three or four to a family. I stirred up the people to buy a bell, but I never would have done it if I had foreseen these dreadful times. Its dismal toll falls on the ear every few hours, ringing out the age of the departed. Juliet is half wild with terror. She will not enter a house or see any one who comes here, lest she should take the infection. News has come that one hundred children have died in an adjacent parish. One old man, aged ninety-nine, has died here. Nothing could be more forlorn than the ninety-nine strokes of the bell.

Juliet has just come to say that stay here she can't and won't.

"Do you mean to leave the field to Ruth then?"
I ask.

"What field?"

"Frank Weston, to be sure."

“Do you suppose he would look at that little chit after he had seen ME?”

“Well, where are you going?”

“To Boston; to some of the girls at Boston.”

“And suppose I have the distemper while you are gone?”

“Why, I suppose Pa Woodford and Ruth would see you through it. *I* wouldn't do it for the world!”

“But I might not survive it, you know.”

“Oh, yes, you would. You are not fit to die.”

“Neither are you.”

“I know it; and that's the reason I'm going to beat a retreat. And I must have some money right away.”

There was no use in arguing with her, so I reluctantly gave her the money, and she is to start in the stage as soon as she can get ready.

Ruth says Mr. Strong is wearing himself out with going round and praying with the dying.

I said I thought it very wrong to expose his own family in that way. If he must pray, couldn't he do it at home? She said she did not think it was the same thing.

Frank Weston walked home from meeting with Ruth last night, and said he had stopped on his way for the doctor, as Mrs. Strong was not well.

“If she has the distemper tell her I will come and take care of the children,” said Ruth.

“You will do no such thing!” I cried.

“I certainly shall,” she said, turning upon me a look I had never seen on her face before.

Juliet was afraid to come down, but she leaned over the banisters and held a bantering dialogue with Frank from that retreat.

“If they’ve got the distemper at the Strongs you’ll be catching it next. Don’t come here if you do, for pity’s sake.”

“It is the last place I should come to,” he said with some contempt. “If I find Mrs. Strong too sick to take care of herself I will come back for you, Ruth.”

So it’s Ruth already, is it?

“She sha’n’t go,” cried Juliet, “she’ll bring the horrid disease to us.”

“I shall go,” said Ruth. “I am no longer a child. What is the use of being a strong and healthy young woman if I am not to nurse the sick?”

We had hardly got to bed when Frank returned. Ruth opened her window. He said she was needed at the Strongs. I begged Mr. Woodford to forbid her going, since she was so headstrong and would not obey me. He said somebody must go, and why not Ruth? Somebody’s daughter must go, why not his? He got up and dressed, harnessed the sleigh, which he piled up with provisions, and drove off. I made him promise not to go into the house, and Juliet and I snuffed up hot vinegar till he came back. He

reported Mrs. Strong as very sick with the distemper and two of the children as ailing.

Ruth was going to sit up all night. She had her Bible and her "Saint's Everlasting Rest" to keep her company.

KEZIA MILLET RECEIVES ANOTHER LETTER FROM
PEMAQUID.

Oh, mother, help me pack my trunk right away! They've got the distemper down to Pemaquid, and our Ruth's gone right into it, and the Squire, he's down with it, and I'm a-goin' right down to nuss him. Aint it lucky you didn't want to have no numb palsy, and air as spry as a gal, and don't need me to home? Oh, the Squire! That blessed man! He sha'n't die for want o' nussing! Aint I afraid of catching it myself? No, I aint a mite afraid of catching it myself.

But s'pose I do? I aint afraid to die, mother. I know I'm a poor, sinful creetur, but there's One standin' in my place that never sinned and the Judge wont never think of old Keziey Millet when He sees His lovely face, and so I'd jist slip in at the gate unbeknownt.

PACKS HER TRUNK AND SINGS.

Though mountings fall and seas are dry,
I never will my Lord deny;
The pestilence may walk at night,
But He will make my midnight bright;
My duty I'm resolved to do,
And He will see me safely through;

I'll nuss the blessed Squire, he,
And even that Mis' Woodford, she.
Put up some currant jelly, mother !
That aint the jar ! I meant the other !
And you're a master-hand at prayer,
So pray for me while I am there,
That I consistent may remain
And never slip and fall again,
And suffer such a dreadful pain.

X.

“There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.”

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

A FEW days after Ruth went away Juliet rushed into my room, with a white face, and the announcement that she had the distemper.

“It’s all Ruth’s fault,” she said. “If she had stayed at home, and helped me to do my sewing, I should have got away from this abominable hole.”

I had hardly got her into bed when Mr. Woodford came in, and said he thought he was going to be sick too.

I felt as if I should drop. What was I to do between them both? At first he would not go to bed, but insisted on helping me in the care of Juliet, whose malady was greatly aggravated by her alarm. But at last he had to yield to the fearful exhaustion that accompanies this disease. My heart died within me. What if I should fall sick with it myself? What if I should take it and die?

The thought made me shudder! I have a dread of death beyond compare.

The Bible says something comes after death; I believe it is judgment.

In two days I was nearly worn out with running back and forth between the two rooms. For among friends who would rally round the Squire in this emergency, there was not one who did not have his or her hands full, the malady was so wide-spread. As to money, there was not enough in all Pemaquid to induce hirelings to venture into an infested house; and no wonder.

What, then, was my relief when Kezia Millet came rushing in, caught up the reins where she had let them drop, and became mistress of the house. Her energy, her strength, her tact and skill, her perfect fearlessness of the disease, made her presence invaluable.

"Were you never afraid to die, Kezia?" I asked her, one day.

"La, yes, when I was a poor, unconverted creetur like you be," she said.

"What *is* being converted?"

"Why, it's turnin' right round, and bein' jist as different from what you was before as can be. Here, Squire, you drink this 'ere raspberry syrup right down. It's the best thing for the throat there is."

"I would give anything not to fear death."

"Massy sakes alive! 'Taint *givin'*. It's *takin'*."

"Taking what?"

"Why, what the Lord gives you."

"I don't understand."

"No, of course you don't. Everything's got to be

learnt. It aint jist having ingredientses that'll make a mince-pie. It's gettin' the right proportionses; a little beef here, and a little suet there; jist enough apple and jist enough raisins, and jist so much spice. Now, Christians is different. One'll be all beef, and another all suet, and another all raisins; but 'twon't do. They oughter learn the proportionses."

Now how was I going to make anything out of this jargon.

And yet I could endure her homely talk better than I could Mr. Strong's pious prayers, or the old deacon's solemn discourses and talk about revivals. I wonder what a revival is, anyhow. If I could get religion enough to take away my harassing fear of death, I think I should be glad to do it. But I do not know how.

"Kezia," I began again, "suppose you should catch the disease, and die?"

"Well, suppose I should? Mother can take care of herself now, and when she gets old and beat out she can go to live to my brother's at Bethel. My brother has got the cutest little wife you ever see."

"But I was not asking about your mother. I was asking about you."

"Oh, me? Why, I should go to heaven."

"You couldn't *know* that."

"Yes, I could. Why, even Job knew, and Christ hadn't come in his day. And it's hard if we can't know in our'n."

I had been away too long from Juliet, and now returned to her. I found her very fretful and fractious, and displeased at being left alone.

“Pa Woodford has got Kezia,” she said, “and what does he want of you?”

“I don’t suppose he wants anything of me; but I want a great deal from him. It would nearly kill me to lose him.”

“That’s the greatest joke I ever heard in my life! I suppose you’ll say you love him next, and will call him dear Aaron!”

“Juliet, you are enough to drive me wild. Why don’t you fix your mind on the danger you are in?”

“Danger? Danger of what? Who says I’m in danger? Why didn’t you tell me sooner? Why didn’t you bring me up better? Mother, *is there such a place as hell?*”

“I don’t know. I hope not. I brought you up as well as I knew how. And as to the danger, you are not nearly so sick as Mr. Woodford; not nearly. But everybody is in danger who has this horrid disease.”

“I tell you what it is, mother—if I die, and am lost forever, *it will be your fault*, and you’ll have the comfort of remembering it after I’m gone. It’s the mother’s fault when their children go astray. Oh dear! Oh dear me! How sick I am!”

Just then the doctor came into the house, stamping the snow off his feet, and making noise enough

to wake the dead. For all that he is a great favorite of mine. Running over with health, vivacity, and kind-heartedness, he is quite the opposite of his gloomy partner, who attended the Squire at one time, and pretended that he could not live a week.

He rushed into the sick-room now, bustling, laughing, hopeful, and bringing in pure breezes from without.

“Well, Aaron, how are you? Hi! what are you shaking your head for? How dare you shake your head? Do you pretend to say you are not ten per cent. better than you was last night?”

“I do not realize that I am. I have no vigor.”

“Vigor! Vigor! Well, who expects vigor on a sick-bed? I am ashamed of you. Have you taken your nourishment regular?”

“I had no appetite. I have declined food.”

“Kezia Millet, hand me that gruel. Did you bile raisins in it, as I told you? Here, Squire, open your mouth while I pour a pint of these slops into you.”

“You act as if the Squire was a hay-mow, and you was a-pitchin’ in hay,” quoth Kezia.

“Hand me my bag and hold your tongue while I make up some powders. I’m going to give him a good dose of calomel and jalop. Wish I’d done it sooner. How’s the girl, Mrs. Woodford?”

I told him she was very restless and nervous, and took him to see her.

“Doctor, tell me the truth,” she said, “am I very sick?”

“How can I tell before I’ve seen your throat? Hand me a spoon, Mrs. Woodford. Well, your throat is pretty bad, but we’ll pull you through, we’ll pull you through.”

Juliet threw upon me a reproachful look.

“Mother frightened me nearly to death,” she said.

“What is there to be frightened about? What’s death? Why, it’s the beginning of all that is good. Still, it’s my business to keep people alive, and I shall stick to my business and pull you through.”

I followed him out with imploring looks.

“Well,” he said, “they’re both bad cases; very bad. I can’t say how they’ll turn out. And as to the Squire, it does not matter. He’s been two-thirds in heaven many a long year. And as to the girl, it aint for me to be her judge, nor yours either. Keep up their spirits, anyhow. Take pattern by me. I never carry such a face as yours into a sick-room.”

I went out into the kitchen. I knew there was nobody there. Our girl had left us in a fright. There was a good fire on the hearth, and a kettle boiling on the crane. Kezia had got everything under way for dinner. I lay down on the cold floor, that shone with yellow paint and cleanliness, and wished I were dead. They were all I had, and both bad cases very bad!

But I heard Juliet shrieking from her room, and had to go to her.

She wanted her pillow shaken up; she wanted

water; she wanted gruel without those *nasty raisins* in it. I went to make the gruel, and met Kezia in the kitchen.

“Don’t you be so down-hearted, Mis’ Woodford,” she said; “our doctor is an experienced old man, and knows what he’s about. He’ll have to pull pretty-hard to keep the Squire out o’ Paradise, but, la! your Juliet aint drawed that way!”

I heard Juliet calling again, and hastened to her side.

“You keep leaving me alone,” she whined. “I don’t dare to be alone a minute. Why does not Ruth come home and help take care of me? There’s plenty of other people in the parish to take care of the Strongs.”

“So there are; I will send for her. But she will not come.”

“Why not?”

“What sort of treatment has she had from you?”

She made no reply. I wrote a hasty note to Ruth, telling her of our sore trouble, and asking her to come to our relief.

“Well, now, it’s a sight I never expected to see!” cried Kezia, “and it’s a sight good for sore eyes. You’ve went and wrote a note asking for the prayers of the Church; now haven’t yer?”

“I ask for the prayers of the Church!” I exclaimed. “You are out of your senses, Kezia.”

“Worse luck for you, then,” she said, and went back to Mr. Woodford.

To be sure, there was this one last faint hope. But after my sneers at such resorts, could I humble myself to seek it now?

I sent off my note to Ruth and sat down by Juliet. She was very restless, though sleeping, and often cried out aloud. Then I would waken her and ask why she cried. She made no answer, and would sleep again. The short winter's day was growing gray; I sat in the gathering darkness, fighting with myself. Kezia came in noiselessly.

"I don't like the looks of the Squire," she whispered. "Come and see what you think."

I followed her, and she held the candle so as to let me see the worn, exhausted face. He, too, was asleep, or dead, it was hard to tell which.

As we stood there the doctor came in. After examining his patient he turned, without a word, to Juliet's bedside. That, too, he left in silence.

"I have done all I can for them. They are in God's hands. *He* can save them, even now."

I told him I had sent for Ruth.

"She can't come," he said. "It's hard for her, but she can't come. Those little Strong's won't take anything except from her; their mother is very low and so are they; their only chance of living is in her being there. Mrs. Strong has a very peculiar feeling toward Ruth; she thinks she is Love Woodford, come back from heaven to take care of her. I'll look in

again about nine o'clock this evening. Put your trust in God, ma'am."

It might not do any good to ask for the prayers of the Church. But it could not do any harm, except to my pride. And was this a time to nourish that? I wrote the note and sent it. Yet for Mr. Woodford there was no need to ask the prayers of the Church that loved him to a man.

When the doctor came in the evening, he brought Ruth with him to give her father a parting kiss. She then went to Juliet's room, and kissed her on the forehead. She looked worn and weary, and crept silently away to the parsonage.

It was a keen, wintry night, and the moonlight lay all over the snow. Our patients slept on. Kezia, exhausted with fatigue and grief, slept in her chair. Never had I felt so lonely in my life. Hour after hour dragged on; I stole from one sick-room to another, gave drops as directed, and watched for the day. It began early. I heard the man open the barn-doors and bring the cattle out for water; then the poultry flew down from their roosts, and their clear, loud voices proclaimed that with them all was well; then dogs began to bark; then came the sound of distant sleigh-bells. And as daylight dawned, the solemn bell in the church steeple began to toll. I counted: one, two, three, four; some little child dead. How many times would it toll for Juliet? how many for my husband? Kezia awoke refreshed. She wen'

down to the kitchen and made coffee, and brought me some.

At last the bells began to ring for the morning service. I heard the sleighs go by; the bell tolled; the last sleigh load had gone into the house of God; soon the church will stand up and pray. I looked at my two patients—they were both living.

Now the church is praying—praying for us, I said to myself. “If their prayers prevail I shall believe in God,” I said aloud.

“They *will* prevail,” said Kezia. “But it may not be in a way to suit us. God knows a great many things we don’t. He may see that it’s best for you to be chastised. He may take that poor girl of yours away, to keep her from breaking your heart.”

The doctor came in quietly, and examined his patients with great care.

“While there’s life there’s hope,” he said.

I asked what child had died that morning.

“It was little Woodford Strong,” he said. “The Squire’s namesake.”

“How are the others?”

“Going, too.”

“What, Mrs. Strong, and all?”

“No, only the children.”

“It will kill the Strong’s to lose all their children.”

“No, it will not. It will change this world to them forever, but it will not kill them. They may be brought low, but God will help them.”

At noon the bell began to toll again.

I counted as before. One, two, three. Another of the Strongs.

And yet again : one, two, three, four, five, six, seven : Love Woodford Strong. I heard afterward that her father was praying with her when she went.

"I want something to eat," said Juliet. It was as a voice from the dead. I gave her gruel with wine, and she fell asleep again, but cried out no more.

I went to look at my husband.

He was awake and conscious. Kezia was crying for joy. He looked at me and spoke. I could not understand what he said.

But it was no matter ; he was alive.

Convalescence was rapid in both cases, but there was more to do for them than when they were in most danger. Ruth came home and relieved us in our cares. She was as devoted to Juliet as to her father ; bearing with her whims with extreme patience, and inventing numberless ways of diverting her in the tedious hours of confinement to her room. Juliet did not realize that her life had been in danger ; her illness, therefore, had no moral effect. She was eager to get out, to see her friends, to take sleigh rides, to amuse herself as she had been wont to do.

Mr. Woodford sat patiently in his chair by the fire ; Ruth read aloud to him from some of her choice books ; Kezia put the disordered house to

rights, made marvels of good things for our invalids, and I thought I had at last found rest.

For of course I never meant to part again from the faithful, excellent creature, whose value I never knew till I had lost her. What annoyance I have suffered in my kitchen during her absence! What waste and destruction have gone on there!

XI.

“Ah, if you knew what peace there is in an *accepted* sorrow!”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I WAS at the parsonage four weeks. I can hardly keep from crying when I think how patiently Mr. and Mrs. Strong bear their grief. It will be something to remember all my life.

All their dear little children are gone. Mrs. Strong was near death, too, and so were my father and Juliet. The parish got together and prayed for us all in our agony. And my father and Mrs. Strong and Juliet are getting well. But for some reason—I can't see *any*, but God can—the little ones died. And Rachels are weeping all over the village. In every house, almost, there is one dead; in some houses three, in some four.

Mr. Strong seems to forget his own grief in his sympathy for his people. He goes from house to house praying with the sick and with the afflicted, and on Sunday he preached to the mourners.

I was not there, as I was needed at home, but I have had the privilege of reading the sermon and of copying part of it.

He says: “As far as my experience goes, attempts

at human consolation are a solemn mockery. I may tell you that your children were, perhaps, taken from evil to come. But is a mother's aching heart to be healed by a perhaps? You may tell me that my children would, peradventure, have grown up to evil courses, from which God snatched them in their innocent childhood. But in this awful hour away with peradventures! What you want, what I want, is a Reality, yea, a Personality, which, as it looms up in the misty distance, we may descry in the storm, toward which we may make our way in our dismantled ships, on which we may cast anchor, to do battle with the uncertain waves no more.

“It is to *our* God we must look when we have taken our last look at the faces we loved; it is on His sovereign, holy, infallible will that we must plant our stumbling, bewildered feet. Ten thousand reasons we could not understand, should He stoop to explain them, guide His infinite mind; He *knows* why He spares this life, why He takes that. He is not an arbitrary Sovereign, laughing at our calamity; He is our loving, sympathizing Father, who grieves that He must chasten us—our sympathizing Redeemer, who weeps with us when we weep, and is afflicted in all our afflictions. So, then, faith, faith, faith in this living, personal God, is our stronghold in this day, when but for Him we should be swept away on a midnight sea.

“But Faith goes sometimes in another garb, and with another name.

“Perhaps the weeping mothers I see before me know it best when it is called love.

“Yes, my dear friends, get love into your hearts; a new, tender, absorbing, personal love to Christ, and see if He does not become more to you in His gracious response than the most devoted child, yea, than a thousand children could be. If I could see this church filled with ardent lovers of my Master, as the fruit of my own share in our calamity, how would I sing songs in this house of my pilgrimage; what a small price have I paid if it buys you this freedom!

“Another word before I close.

“More than one distracted mother has been racked with needless terror about the possible fate of the little ones who have gone from her into an unknown future.

“Who led these little lambs away from their embrace? The king of terrors? The devil and his angels? A hundred times, *No!* They went away in the arms of the Good Shepherd, with the Redeemer who, for their sakes, once knew infancy and childhood as helpless as theirs. Never were they so safe, so sheltered, so cared for, so happy, as now. They are in green pastures and beside still waters; they drink, earlier than we, of the river of life; they have put on immortality before mortality had saddened or crippled them. We fancy that they are dead and that we are alive; nay, it is we who die; it is they who have begun to live!

“ And yet, and yet !—we are human beings and our hearts are rent with human pain. We have no sublime power to give up our children because it is well with them.

“ We may weep, we must weep over the vanished forms of our beloved. Yea, as long as we tarry on this earth, we may cherish their memories in a sacred sorrow with which no stranger may intermeddle. And we shall have need of patience, as the long days come and go, and the pangs so remorselessly pulling at our heart-strings; but oh, my brethren, anything but evil questions as to the doings of our Lord !”

As he uttered these words his brave soul gave way and he fell back in a fainting fit. Men and women wailed aloud; the old deacon and the doctor were in the pulpit in a minute, and when he revived a little they and the sexton and another man carried him out through the people all standing and weeping.

I feel greatly condemned at the way I have taken grandma's death.

I did not bear my sorrow in faith, or love, or patience. May God forgive me!

MRS. WOODFORD.

We have not yet told Mr. Woodford or Juliet how many deaths there have been here. They are not yet strong enough to bear excitement.

I must have been out of my mind when I sent a request for the prayers of the church. Of course

only superstition believes in such absurdity. Prayers were offered for the Strong children, but they died. In fact, prayers were offered for all who died. Yet it made no difference. And "Old Man Boody," as they call him, wouldn't ask for prayers, and he got well.

I said all this to Kezia, who took great offense, as if I had done something personally obnoxious to her.

"You and me never'll agree until you meet with a change," she said.

"What do you mean by meeting with a change?"

"What everybody means that uses them words. I mean till you've had a change of heart. And Ruth's come home now, and I'm a-going back to mother. I can live consistent when I'm along of mother, 'cause she's a good, pious woman that believes in prayin' and readin' the Bible and keepin' the Sabbath day."

"But, Kezia, we can't do without you. Besides, I certainly do not aggravate you as I used to do."

"No, you don't, I'll say that for you. But the change is all on the outside. Your heart aint a mite better than it was when you came a-prowlin' 'round the poor Squire, and courted him jest to git a home."

"But, Kezia," I said, "do you know you are the most intolerant person I ever met?"

"If I'm intolerable, what makes you try to coax me to stay, then?"

"I did not say intolerable. I said intolerant. That

means that you insist on everybody's looking at things exactly as you do."

"If you mean things in the Bible, then I s'pose I be intolerable. Mis' Woodford, she brought me up from a child, and she ground the truth into me, as you might say. And I can't stand it to live with folks that despise religion. If you'd pave my kitchen with yaller gold, and then come into it to sneer at good people, I wouldn't stay in it a day. I'm a poor, sinful creetur, but I've got feelin's, and my feelin's is hurt awful when you say you don't believe in prayin', because that's just the same as sayin' you don't believe in God. And that right on top of His sparin' your husband and your girl! Something wuss than having 'em die will happen to one or both on 'em if you make light of the mercy that healed 'em.

"O, Mis' Woodford, I did hope so that you'd show some gratitude for what has been done for you!

"Well, I don't mean no harm, and I wish you well, and I'll go home, and me and mother will pray for your poor soul day and night. You don't know what you're cheatin' yourself out of, but we do. And I'm awful sorry for you; awful. But it's my opinion you'll get religion yet."

"We'll raise your wages as high as you please; only stay. I have had no peace in the kitchen since you left."

"Do you think to stifle my conscience with wages? No, no, I must go home to mother. I can't stand it to

hear my Lord despised and His prayin' people despised; I love Him a hundred times more than you have money; and I love them that love Him a hundred times more than you love that girl of your'n. And I couldn't stand such another fight with the devil as I had when I left here before; an' I wouldn't if I could."

"You must be a very weak Christian if you are so easily tempted."

"So I be! I never pretended I wasn't. I'm as weak in my soul as I'm strong in my body. And I'm a-goin' home to mother."

MR. AND MRS. STRONG CONFER TOGETHER.

"I've been thinking, dear, how to spend the time I have on my hands, which I used to spend on our children. And it has come to me that now we can have your good old father come and live with us. I think I could make his last days happy; and, besides, you would enjoy having him here."

"Thank you, my dear, I should. Though his preaching days are over, his praying days are not, and he would bring a blessing with him."

"You and I could move up-stairs and give him our room. I think I should *like* to move up-stairs. Not that I should forget the children any more there than here; but it would be a trifle easier when I wake in the morning to be in a different room."

"He could not bear the journey in this severe

weather. We shall have to wait until spring. But we can move up-stairs, my dear wife, if it will be of the least relief to you."

"Perhaps it is childish in me to wish it. Still, I should like the occupation of fitting up your father's room right away. There is a chair in the garret I could stuff and cover for him. And I shall think of other little comforts. There, don't look at me as if you thought I was an angel. I am doing it all out of selfishness, because I *must* have something to do."

"Something to do, when you have my whole parish in your heart and on your shoulders? Oh, Faith, precious little wife, how merciful was God when He spared you to me!"

"And He might have taken you from me! Surely, goodness and mercy have followed us all our days!"

MRS. WOODFORD.

Kezia has gone, headstrong, narrow-minded creature that she is! And as to finding anybody to fill her place, it is simply impossible. Fortunately, Mr. Woodford and Juliet are well enough now to take care of themselves, and Ruth has time to do the work our ignorant slattern in the kitchen is incapable of.

Juliet is in the state people are apt to be in when recovering—peevish, exacting, and unreasonable. I thought that hearing of what others are suffering in this village might tend to make her forget herself. I

had already told Mr. Woodford about the Strongs, and now told her.

I ought to have taken the precaution, knowing how thoughtless she is, to have communicated what I had to say in Mr. Woodford's absence, and not let her appear to him as utterly heartless as she did.

"Juliet," I began, "you make more ado about your little physical discomforts than poor Mrs. Strong does about her terrible affliction."

"What affliction?"

"All three of her children died when you were so sick."

"You don't say so! Well, why should she make an ado? They were all little things! And they had such a housefull! And there was just nothing to bring them up with. Susan Stone says that one night, when Mrs. Strong was sick, her mother was there, and poured out tea for Mr. Strong; and he had it sweetened with *molasses!*"

"You know that is not true," I said, seeing Mr. Woodford listening from behind his book. "You know better than to repeat such nonsense."

"Indeed it *is* true," she maintained; "for Mrs. Stone was pouring in the molasses, and he checked her, saying, 'That'll do, Mrs. Stone,' and she kept on pouring it in, saying, 'Dear me! if it was *all* molasses it wouldn't be none too good for you!' I know I almost died a-laughing, Susan Stone told it in such a droll way."

“There is not a word of truth in that story,” said Mr. Woodford, taking off his spectacles and looking as severely at Juliet as he knew how. “The more shame to the parish if it were. You misunderstood Susan Stone.”

“Well, it was some minister, I know, and I thought it was Mr. Strong. It doesn’t make much difference. All ministers are poor. I would not marry one if he was the last man on earth. And Susan Stone said that Father Stephens had to work so hard on his farm to make out a living that before he went to General Conference he had his hands poulticed to take off the tan!”

Mr. Woodford took a paper from his pocket-book and began to write.

With my mind’s eye I could read what he wrote. And it was this, or something like it:

“*Mem.*—Send six loaves loaf-sugar to Mr. Strong.

“Also, one half-barrel brown sugar.

“Send Father Stephens money to hire a man. He is too old to labor with his hands.

“Make inquiries about other needy ministers.”

Meanwhile I gave Juliet a warning look.

“It jars on one to hear you giggling so, and thinking nothing of Mr. Strong’s loss.”

“I suppose she *will* think it a loss. For my part, I should imagine she’d be glad to thin out a little. How she used to dress them! She had to sit up half

the night to do her sewing. Faugh! before I'd marry a minister!"

"Perhaps you are not aware," remarked Mr. Woodford, "that Frank Weston intends to study theology as soon as he has earned the means."

Juliet colored high with surprise and incredulity.

"I don't believe a word about it!" she cried. "I shall just ask him when I see him!"

I gave her another warning look. Ruth came in, bearing a tray with the dinner of the invalids.

"What is this story about Frank Weston's studying theology? Have *you* been putting him up to it, Ruth Woodford?"

"I? No, indeed. It was all settled before he came here."

"Oh, you are in his secrets then?"

"I never heard of it as a secret. It was frequently spoken of at the parsonage as an understood thing."

"I suppose you saw a great deal of him while you were at the parsonage?"

"No, very little. I was too busy."

I said I had been telling Juliet about the children.

"Isn't it enough to break one's heart to think of it?" said Ruth. "When I carried them, one by one, to their mother, to take leave of them, I thought she would die."

"How can you talk about such horrid, gloomy things when I am eating my dinner? Talk of something else. How did Frank appear?"

“Very serious and sympathizing,” Ruth replied.

“Well, now, confess. Should you have stayed at the parsonage a whole month if he had not been there?”

“He was not there. They would not let him stay lest he should take the disease. He used to come three times a day to know how they all were, and some one would open a window and tell him.”

“I suppose the ‘some one’ was Ruth Woodford.”

“I do not remember going to the window once. I almost always had a child in my arms.”

“I don’t see why he does not call to see me all this time,” continued Juliet.

“So do I,” said Ruth, cordially. “He admires you very much.”

“I doubt if he is in the mood to make calls,” remarked Mr. Woodford. “He was extremely fond of the little Stronges, as they were of him.”

“He ought to go out, then, and divert his mind,” said Juliet.

“He is probably diverting it in his closet,” said Ruth.

“Of course he is,” said Mr. Woodford. “That is, he is finding his solace there. It is the only place in all the world for mourning souls.”

“Now don’t, Pa Woodford,” quoth Juliet. “I want to eat my dinner in peace.”

Whereupon he subsided.

I only hope he is not aware that she calls him "Pa," in derision.

And somehow those few words about finding solace in prayer have clung to me, and I can not shake them off. Sometimes I almost wish I had been born and brought up here in Pemaquid.

XII.

“O what a sight were man, if his attire
Did alter with his mind ;
And if, like a dolphin's skin, his clothes combined
To alter with his mind !”

—HERBERT.

FRANK WESTON'S SIDE OF THE STORY.

THERE is a passage in the Bible to this effect :
“Unstable as waters, thou shalt not excel.” I
am beginning to think these words describe my char-
acter and prophesy my future.

When I came to Pemaquid I fully intended to stay
here only so long as it would require to earn suffi-
cient to carry me through my professional studies.
And my profession was to be that of a minister.

I knew that if I chose that, I must renounce a
good deal—all chance of being rich, of indulging my
love of ease, of gratifying my taste. At times this
seemed hard. At other times, when I was in a good
frame, for example, it seemed easy.

Well, I came here, right into the heart of a minis-
ter's family, and saw his life, stripped of all romance,
just as it was. I saw him overworked and under-
paid. I saw him toiling, day and night, not merely

to feed the souls of his people, but to feed the bodies of his wife and children. What little his people paid him they paid grudgingly and irregularly. He had to be all things to all men, and Mrs. Strong all things to all women. He was a hewer of wood, and she a drawer of water. To be sure, they maintained that it was a most blessed life. Neither of them would own that, having put their hand to the plough, they had once looked back. And they were most eager in urging me to carry out my intention to enter the ministry.

On the other hand, with a tenth of the labor Mr. Strong bestows on his vineyard, I receive in mine twice his salary. The question, then, naturally arises, Why not stay where you are, and make the most of the bird in the bush?

During six days out of seven the question is easily answered. But on Sunday, when I have leisure for reflection, life puts on a new aspect. Sunday says, in one voice or another, that no man liveth to himself. It rouses and shakes me, and reminds me of vows and promises made upon my knees to God.

If the truth must be told, Sundays are gloomy days to me. I pass them in vain resolves, and a kind of stupid remorse; Monday sets me on my feet again, and by Saturday I am quite disenthralled.

This pretty little village does not offer much temptation to worldliness. The people of Pemaquid are a staid, church-going people, and most of the young

folks follow in the way they should go. Yet a temptation has met me even here. It is in the shape of one of the handsomest girls I ever saw. She is tall and commanding in figure, and her eyes are magnificent. She is the best educated of the young people here, and as full of life and spirit as a young hunter.

It is not vanity in me to own to myself, here in secret, that she thinks equally well of me. We have gradually got up a regular flirtation. Now and then my conscience gets the upper hand and warns me to stay away. Mrs. Strong, who can not endure any one who does not belong to the Church, warns me solemnly against her. Then I force myself to keep aloof week after week; business presses; I have engagements; all sorts of excuses can be got up in an emergency. Then Juliet gets my head into the noose again. I rush back to her side, and things are soon on their old footing. Am I in love with this beautiful sinner?—for a sinner she is, in will, at least.

I can not help pitying her, and her mother too. They seem so out of place in that stiff, puritanical atmosphere at Mr. Woodford's. But I ought to be careful what I say about him. If ever there was a man of angelic nature, he is one. Mrs. Strong says so, and she knows about all there is to know in Pemaquid. He has certainly treated me with great generosity, but he treats his cat and his dog as well, or would do so if he could.

Mrs. Strong is fain to make a match between myself and a certain little girl of his whom she has seen only once for many years. I can imagine what sort of a commonplace heroine she would introduce into my life! Many thanks for your trouble! Meanwhile I shall choose for myself, dear madam.

We stand jesting on the very threshold of impending calamity! While I was writing the above, this trio of lovely little children was being signed and sealed for eternity! Ah! how life looks in the presence of death!

To go back to the beginning, if I can collect my thoughts. So Mrs. Strong's little paragon, Ruth Woodford, has come home. She is the quaintest, purest, sweetest little rose-bud of a Puritan one can imagine!

There is an epidemic prevailing in the village, and Mrs. Strong thought that she and the children were coming down with it. I laughed at her, but called at the doctor's on my way to the Woodfords, where I spent the evening. As I left, Ruth made me promise I would come back for her if she was needed at the parsonage.

I went back for her, though I knew they were stricken down with contagious disease. I knew she would go, if it cost her her life.

And my three playfellows, my pride and delight, are all gone!

All the laughter and merriment, all sound of little voices, the pattering of little feet, forever gone!

If I am so unmanned that, as I write, I am crying like a boy, what is this grief to the poor father and mother! I hardly dare to go nigh them; such sorrow as theirs is too sacred to be looked upon. How much they are beloved! The whole parish seems afflicted with them. Is not such devotion and sympathy as this better than money? Suppose a fortune were at this moment offered Mr. Strong in exchange for the tears and kind services of his people at this awful moment!

I trust that from this hour I shall be another man. I will dismiss forever my worldly ambition and slothfulness. I will never think of Juliet but as the merest acquaintance. I will, as soon as possible, resume my studies, and make it my life-work to preach that Gospel which offers the only refuge from calamities like these.

I find Ruth Woodford quite a pleasant little friend. She was with Mrs. Strong during the illness, and for some time after the death, of the children, and likes to hear me talk of them. She has, certainly, more heart than Juliet, who is merry at my seriousness. Though there have been so many deaths here, and she has been herself on the border of the grave, there is no getting her to stop to think one minute.

A pretty minister's wife she would be, to be sure!

I find it will be more prudent to remain here a little longer. I never shall have another opportunity of laying up a penny or two, and a year more or less can not make any serious difference as to my usefulness. Indeed, I am acquiring an experience now that will be of great service to me hereafter. It would really be cruel to run away and leave the Strong's just now. Mrs. Strong does not seem to know what to set herself about. She wanders over the house looking like one in a dream.

I am so indignant I can hardly contain myself. That jackanapes, Josiah Stone, is actually making up to Ruth! He torments her with his coarse attentions. I am sure that pure-minded, innocent girl can not endure them. But he shall never have her! Never! Rather than see her his victim, I would marry her myself. How different she and Juliet are! She has a quiet, steady cheerfulness that quite rests one. Juliet, on the contrary, with her bursts of merriment and heights of passion, almost wears one out. Fortunately, these village lads are all afraid of her. Of course, now that I have decided finally on the ministry, I must be on my guard against this dangerous beauty.

I hardly know how it has come about, but my good angel has won the day. After not a few struggles between contending inclinations—for I admire

Juliet exceedingly—I have at last proposed to Ruth. The little thing was easily caught and caged. Mr. and Mrs. Strong are delighted with my choice; I have not seen them so cordially pleased for many a long month. Mr. Strong says a worthy attachment was all I needed to settle and establish my character. He says, too, that there is no reason why we should not be married before I complete my studies. I have now quite a little sum on hand, and Mr. Woodford would do up things handsomely.

Mr. Woodford is not so enchanted with our proposed union as we are. He is going to make us wait a year before we are actually engaged. I dare say he is right. I find it rather a relief to be left free yet a little longer. Not that I expect to become weary of Ruth. She is too much in love with me for that. Why, I can wind her round my finger already!

I do not know how Juliet will feel if she happens to find out how I stand toward Ruth. I shall have to try to keep her in ignorance, though that will be no easy matter, I imagine.

MRS. WOODFORD.

I am extremely puzzled by Frank Weston's behavior toward Juliet.

He treats her with no little caprice. After paying her every attention he will stay away for weeks together, and when they meet after such an interval he

treats her with a coolness she can hardly endure. I feel not a little perplexed and annoyed at his conduct, which I can not understand. Juliet frets and chafes, and vents her ill-humor on me. I have not dared to tell her that during her sickness he never came once to inquire for her, though he was assiduous enough in solicitude about Mr. Woodford.

In honor of her present restoration to health I gave a small tea-party, gathering all the young folks together from all the region round about Pemaquid. It passed off very well, only at half-past nine Mr. Woodford would have prayers, and that broke up the assembly, of course. Frank Weston lingered behind to transact some business with Mr. Woodford, ostensibly, and he and Juliet fell into a running fire of banter and fun which ended in her inviting him to come and play backgammon with her to-morrow evening.

Things progress quite to my mind. Frank Weston is here on every possible pretense and Juliet is perfectly infatuated about him. It is true he is rather cool for a lover, but such joyous, thoughtless characters as his are not usually accompanied with much heart. He likes Juliet better than anybody else and she ought to be satisfied with that. I can safely leave her to play her own cards. She is perfectly capable of managing her affairs, and sooner or later, Mr. Frank, you will have to yield.

Frank has spent the evening here. There was some

jesting allusion made to Ruth's want of education by Juliet. Frank defended Ruth warmly. He said it was the best sort of education for a woman to spend the years of her girlhood as Ruth had done.

"The fact is," he said, "all the wisdom in the world will not make a woman a pleasant companion. I would not give a fig for your learning, except as it teaches you to be a blessing to others."

"I declare, if you haven't caught the real Strong twang," cried Juliet. "You prefer sweet simplicity and ignorance to talents and accomplishments."

"I did not *say* that," he returned, good-humoredly enough. "All I meant was to defend poor Ruth: however, I dare say she is able to defend herself."

"You make pretty free, it seems to me, sir!" said Juliet.

He smiled and looked at Ruth.

"You don't care, do you?" he asked; "I can't make myself call you Miss. I have been used so long to think of you as 'Ruth,' and nothing more."

She looked surprised.

"Ah, I forget that you do not know how often Mrs. Strong has spoken of you. You must revenge yourself by calling me Frank."

"I will," she said quietly.

Juliet looked extremely annoyed, but had sense enough to say no more.

After a little more laughing and jesting it was agreed that Frank should come every evening, except

the two devoted to meetings, and give and receive lessons. Juliet was to teach him French and he was to instruct her in Latin. As to Ruth, he was to teach her a little of everything.

Juliet recovered her spirits and soon they were "Juliet" and "Frank" to each other.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Mrs. Strong sent for me to spend the day with her. Frank was there at dinner and at tea, and all evening, and was ever so pleasant.

Mrs. Strong says he likes me; and he acts as if he did. But I tell her he likes Juliet just as well.

She looked troubled.

"I fill a mother's place to him," said she, "while he is from home. And he has been open and frank with me always. I took it for granted he liked you best. Why, Juliet is a most unsuitable person for a minister's wife!"

My heart beat so I was afraid she would hear it. I am afraid I have almost forgotten dear grandma and have put Frank in her place. I am afraid I want him to like me better than Juliet. If I do I hope God will forgive me and deliver me from this temptation.

Frank has said a good many things to me lately. He says he likes me and that I am his good angel. I tell him I am a poor, sinful child, and not worthy to be called an angel. But I suppose it is a way men

have of talking, and that they don't mean much. I am getting to think of him a great deal. I always know whether he is at meeting or not. I pay attention to all he says to Juliet. Sometimes I am afraid I am displeased with Juliet for hanging round him so. The next time he comes I will stay up here in my room and pray for a better frame of mind.

Frank walked home with me from meeting this evening. And he said he had made up his mind to be a minister; and when he has got through his studies he will come back to Pemaquid for his little wife. I said he must ask father first.

But of course father will only be pleased. He may not think I am good enough for Frank, or that I am fit to be a minister's wife. Indeed, I know I am not. But there will be so many years while Frank is studying that I can be praying to God to make me worthy of him; though if I should pray all my life I should never be so good as Mrs. Strong is. But I have told Frank that, and how much he'll have to put up with.

Frank and I went together to ask father. He did not seem so pleased as I expected he would. He said we were both young and not fit to judge what was best for us. And he said he did not like long engagements. Frank argued with him a good deal, but I did not say a word. At last father said he

would reflect on the subject and let us know in a few days what he had decided.

After Frank had gone, father looked at me so kindly and said :

“Do you really love him, my daughter?”

And I was so silly I just burst out a-crying and went and hid in his arms.

Mrs. Strong sent for me this afternoon, and she and Mr. Strong both said they were so pleased with what Frank had done. Mrs. Strong said it had been *her* plan all along, and her plans always turned out so nicely! Father had been there to talk with them about it, but they did not tell me what he said.

Father has made up his mind to let us choose for ourselves. He has given us a great deal of good advice for him, for he is not in the habit of talking much. He says he should prefer not to have it an engagement, but to have us wait a year or so and see if our minds do not change. I know mine never will. I liked Frank the first time I saw him. But perhaps when he goes away from here and sees other girls he may wish he was not tied to me. I should not blame him if he did. But it would break my heart.

Frank says we will do just as father likes. We won't call it an engagement yet awhile, but will love each other just the same.

It seems as if God was *too good* to me! Perhaps I think more of having Frank to love because I haven't any own mother.

We have not told any one yet. Frank says it is not worth while as it is not a real engagement. I wish, though, Josiah Stone knew it, because he worries me by following me about. And it seems as if Juliet ought to be told, too. For she is greatly taken up with Frank, and might get to liking him too much.

But Frank is quite earnest to have nothing said. He says father knows best, and we ought to do all we can to please him. That is so kind in Frank!

So things go on just exactly as they did before. Juliet laughs and jokes with him as much as ever, and when he is here she takes him all to herself, and I have to listen to Josiah Stone. I shall have to pray not to be led into temptation more than ever now. Loving Frank has made me so selfish!

XIII.

“He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind, and tossed.”

FRANK WESTON.

I BEGIN to fear I was a little hasty in proposing to Ruth. I know how it happened, though. I admired the self-sacrifice with which she devoted herself to the Strongs, and then I was greatly shaken by their deaths, which awakened slumbering aspirations for a better life. And to a man in such a mood, Ruth was most congenial.

But my moods vary. If Ruth influences one side of my character, Juliet influences the other. Still, I hope I shall remain faithful to Ruth, for she has power to become my good angel, especially if I enter the ministry. And if ever there was a girl with a devil in her, it is Juliet. There is nothing to which she would not stoop.

The most unlucky thing has happened! Ruth and the rest of them being absent, Juliet drew me into playing cards with the Stones and their set. I had about made up my mind never to play cards again;

Ruth would not like it, and it would not look well in a theological student. But just for this once I yielded. Juliet not appreciating or not knowing my scruples, took pains, at least seemed so, to betray me to Ruth. The poor, dear little Puritan's face expressed the most painful horror and incredulity. I never thought to see such a look there.

She went off without speaking a word, and I can fancy her righteous indignation. I could not help showing some uneasiness, but Juliet declared I need not be concerned.

"Her fits of the pouts never last long," she said, encouragingly.

So it seems that, amiable as she appears, she is subject to fits of being quite the reverse. After all, what have I done that I need be so annoyed? Card-playing is not in itself amiss. I do not know of a young fellow of my age who does not play if he can get a chance. It is merely the association with worse things that makes the saints shrug their shoulders and pass by on the other side. Yet, I must give them up if I study theology, as well as some other little amusements of which I am fond, and in which there is not the least harm in the world. Meanwhile, why should not I enjoy myself as other young people do? Ruth will see how reasonable it is that I should do so. I shall talk her into a good humor to-morrow, and that pretty little face of hers will smile on me more charmingly than ever.

I have not had a chance to see Ruth alone yet. It is a regular nuisance to be engaged, yet not engaged. I have spent every evening of this week at the Woodfords, but Juliet has been at home, and so has her mother, and Ruth has kept as steadily at work as if that were her sole business on earth. I can not say she seems in the least vexed with me. But she looks grieved and sorrowful, and as if something had gone out of her life. Poor little puss! Her rigid, Yankee training has come within an ace of spoiling her.

At last I have prostrated myself before my little confessor. She has forgiven me, and we are on the best of terms again. But I had no idea the child had so much in her. Why, her sense of duty is like a mountain of granite. You can neither undermine it or bore through it. There it stands, and since it can not be moved you are fain to move yourself. I have promised never, never to play cards again! Well, it is only to antedate the day of sacrifice and yield to her what I must soon yield to public opinion.

Josiah Stone, that great lump of humanity, has been to see me to-day. The interview ought to be recorded for future gratification.

“I say, Frank Weston,” he began, “it’s time you and I came to an understanding.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, it is. You needn’t look so innocent. You know what I mean.”

I profess ignorance.

"Well, see here. Are you courting both of them girls? And if you aint, which one of 'em *air* you courting?"

"I really am not aware to whom you refer," I said, coolly.

"Well, now, you stop that. What girls? Why, the Woodford girls, of course."

"I was not aware there were two of the Woodfords."

"I'll tell you what it is, Frank Weston, you have got to come up to the scratch, and 'taint no use to hang back. Come, now. Behave reasonable. Is it Juliet you are after, or is it Ruth?"

I leaned back in my chair and fixed my eyes meditatively on the ceiling.

"On the whole," I said, solemnly, "I believe it's both of them!"

"Very well, sir. I shall give you the trouble to say as much to Mr. Woodford!" He got up, swelling his plumes till he looked like an enormous turkey-cock. I rose, opened the door to its fullest extent, and let him out. Alas! for thee, oh Josiah! the days of choking and stabbing and shooting your rival are over. It is only in books that such romances are enacted.

This evening I met my plucky hero at the house of my two heroines. Mr. Woodford sat in his usual

corner, nodding over his book. Mrs. Woodford, pretending to read, swallowed every word that fell from our precious young lips. I made myself agreeable to the girls, which it was not hard to do. Juliet turned her back upon Josiah and forgot that he was in the room. Ruth, after a few attempts at civility, soon did the same. Without meaning to wound her, meaning only to exasperate Josiah, I flirted desperately with Juliet. She dared me at last, after a deal of preliminary nonsense, to kiss her. Though we sat apart, and talked in half-whispers, I saw that Ruth heard all that passed. Her color mounted, the needle trembled and quivered in her fingers; yet my evil genius led me on. I leaned over Juliet; she sprang up, laughing and defying me; a chair was upset and Ruth's work-basket thrown down; I rushed on, caught the beautiful, tempting creature, and kissed her!

Mr. Woodford took off his spectacles, looked at me a full minute, and rising, said:

“Young man, you have been drinking!”

“I told you so!” cried Josiah, with a malignant laugh. “I told you so! And it was only last evening he owned he was courting both on 'em. Courting Juliet and courting Ruth!”

I had come to my senses by this time. There was only one thing to do, and that I did.

“Mr. Woodford,” I said, “I can not wonder that you are shocked at my behavior. I assure you I am

shocked myself. I was led from step to step till I was guilty of unpardonable rudeness. I owe you an apology for it, as I do to every one present."

Well, there is tremendous power in good looks and in agreeable manners. My frank, boyish, penitent way went straight to all their hearts (except Josiah's, of course. He has none). I went up to Mr. Woodford, whose displeasure had begun to relax.

"Forgive me this, my first offense," I said. "It was done in boyish frolic; I meant no disrespect to you, sir. And I assure you that I was intoxicated with folly, not with wine."

"I believe you, Frank," he said. "You have a good, honest eye of your own, that is not afraid to meet mine. But let me tell you, young man, that I will not overlook such shameless conduct in my house again. Juliet, you were in fault also. I hope you intend to follow Frank's example and apologize for it."

"Pooh! what a fuss about nothing!" cried she. "Young folks must have a little fun. You can't expect us to sit each in a corner with our hands folded in our laps. However, I owe Frank an apology, and here it is!" So saying, she marched up to me and boxed my ears soundly.

Mrs. Woodford looked frightened, and drew Juliet out of the room. Josiah stood his ground during a few minutes' unpleasant silence, which was at last broken by Mr. Woodford's saying, gravely:

"It is after nine, Josiah."

On this hint Josiah took his departure.

I looked now at Ruth. She still sat at the table with her work in her hands, but her tears were falling fast.

I approached her timidly.

“Ruth,” I said, “are you very angry with me?”

“Not *angry*,” she said.

“You surely do not believe what that wretched fellow has been saying. Indeed, Ruth, I was only trying to punish him for thinking of you. Dear Ruth, say you forgive me! You know I never, never will be guilty of such folly and rudeness again.”

“Frank,” she said, looking at me steadily, “do you think it is right to try to make Juliet like you so? Don’t think I aint willing you should like her. But you are so— so—”

“Yes, I know,” I said. “I have behaved abominably. I would give my right hand to take it all back. After this I will not come here any more. You must meet me at Mrs. Strong’s.”

“Oh, *no*,” she said. “But, Frank—you mustn’t mind my speaking of it—wouldn’t it be better for you to go right away into the seminary? You have got into such a habit of joking and frolicking with Juliet, that I don’t believe you can change your ways now. The best plan is to go away where you won’t be tempted.”

“Ruth, my daughter,” said Mr. Woodford, from his remote corner, “it is getting late. You ought to

be in bed. I wish to have a word with Frank before he goes."

Ruth rose and said good-night. Her poor little hand was cold as ice when she took leave of me, though her cheeks glowed like a furnace.

"I have been thinking of speaking to you for some time, Frank," Mr. Woodford began. "Let us come to an understanding now, once for all. Do you still love my daughter?"

I declared that I did.

"And you still mean to become a minister?"

I said yes.

"Then why are you not at your studies? Several months have passed since you declared that you meant to enter the seminary at once."

"Yes; I remember. But, to be frank with you, I have waited and waited from a sense of unfitness for such a position as that of a minister of the Gospel. I am naturally gay and impulsive; what I aim to be on one day, I fail to be on the next. I assure you, I pass many an hour of shame and remorse; sometimes I am tempted to throw up the whole project and devote myself to business."

"It is a temptation of Satan," he said, impressively.

"But if I fail, if I fall, if I sin, the scandal would be very great."

"You have no right to such *ifs*. You have no right to fall or to sin."

I said a young fellow of my temperament had peculiar difficulties to contend with.

“And you can have very peculiar help in the time of need. But let me tell you what you lack. You lack that warm, fervent love to Christ that breaks down all obstacles and conquers all difficulties. Without this love you are not fit to be a minister. But then you are not fit for anything else. You see you can not get rid of responsibility by merely escaping the ministry. If you choose to be a man of business, you still must live to Christ. Ah, we can't escape responsibility, not one of us.

“I don't mean to be hard on you,” he began again. “If I have been, I hope you'll overlook it. But when you go home get down on your knees, open your Bible before you, and read and pray at once. You can't do it without getting light, sooner or later. Ah, it's a blessed thing to pray. Think, now: a poor, ignorant, sinful man may get down on his knees and speak to God! That seems almost hard to believe, doesn't it?”

The clock struck ten.

I came home completely sobered and saddened. What a reckless, good-for-nothing fellow I am! Why can't I get anchored somewhere, instead of drifting about in this style? As to my behavior this evening, I can never think of it without a blush. It was partly Juliet's fault, however. She led me on from step to step till I was mad with folly. I wish I

had never seen her. I wish I had never set foot in Pemaquid. I have a good mind to leave it to-morrow, and start afresh in some place where I am not known. But, after all, what have I done? Nothing so very terrible, I am sure. Who, in my place, would not have kissed a pretty girl who dared him to do it? The bother is their all seeing it, and the disrespect to Mr. Woodford, good old man! Well, if I were half as good as he is, I would enter the pulpit with a rush, and carry all before me. Oh, for some power, outside of myself, to force me to the manner of life I ought to lead! I hope that little saint of mine prays for me now and then.

I have had a talk with Mr. Strong in reference to my future. He asked me what led me to think of the ministry. I told him my mother made me promise to enter it on her dying bed.

“Was this promise made with no qualifications?” he asked, with some surprise.

I said there was a qualification. I was to enter the ministry if called to it by the Spirit. And in the tenderness of feeling consequent on her death I thought I had such a call. But repeatedly, since that time, the world, the flesh, and the devil have been too much for me, and I often question whether I have not mistaken my vocation.

“Whatever your vocation, you can not escape responsibility.”

“That is exactly what Mr. Woodford says. Well, now, Mr. Strong, pray counsel me. What would you do in my case?”

He smiled.

“What did I do in my own case?” he asked.

“Oh, but you are very different from me. You can have had none of my temptations. Your temperament is wholly unlike mine. You never can have been so eager for pleasure as I have.”

“You know not what you say. Does not Luther tell us that temptation helps to form a divine? And do you suppose that when Satan sees men prepare to do aggressive work in his kingdom he sits down and folds his hands? No, Frank, no. You have put your hand to the plough; do not look back. Throw away your boyishness and become a man. Live for Christ. Work for Christ. Spend and be spent for Christ. If need be, suffer with and for Christ.”

I was greatly moved and stimulated.

I *will* live for Christ, cost what it may.

XIV.

“The superfluous spirits of youth are like the coverings of some insects, which afford them food and support in their transition.”

MRS. WOODFORD.

WE had the most disgraceful scene here last night! I am perfectly ashamed of Juliet, and not a little vexed with Frank. What does he mean by his conduct? He keeps Juliet in a continual state of excitement. I am afraid that, as agreeable as he is, his wavering, unstable character offers her little chance of happiness. If such a thing were possible I should say he was in love with both these girls, their opposite natures suiting his contradictory moods, the one consoling and attracting when the other wearies him. I will not let things go on in this style much longer. He must be made to do one thing or the other. Juliet's nerves can not endure this strain on them; she will be doing some more foolhardy thing than she did last night.

Ruth is a little inclined to mope. It is something new to see her listless and idle. Mrs. Strong keeps sending for her, but she will not go. If there were

not sick children all about the village I do not think she would stir out-of-doors.

Mr. Woodford has just told me the most extraordinary thing! He says Ruth is virtually engaged to Frank! He has not given his full consent, but it will amount to that in the end. He is not the man to thwart his only daughter.

I must let Juliet know at once what to expect. She little dreams to what a two-sided fellow she has given her affections. He is most unworthy of her. What right has he to come here, week after week, and to pay her the most devoted attentions, when he *knows* he is hazarding her happiness forever?

If there is in this world one spot where the weary can find rest, how gladly would I flee to it! I dread the burst of passion to which Juliet will give way when I break this news to her. Who, more than myself, has reason to shudder at the thought of seeing such a character as hers the sport of disappointment!

I went to Juliet's room, after many an hour of dismal delay, and found her dressing for the evening. Her magnificent hair was flowing all over her shoulders. I have never seen her look more beautiful.

"Juliet," I began, "are there any of your old school-mates whom you would like to visit?"

"I don't know," she answered indifferently. "There's Lizzie Hunter—I like her pretty well; we

used to be great cronies at school. But she never asked me to make her a visit."

"What has become of Harriet?"

"Oh, Hat Boon? Yes, she did beg and beseech me to come and see her, and I said I would. But I am in no hurry about it. I rather think I can wait."

"But I particularly wish you to have a little change of air and scene."

She turned round from the glass and faced me.

"Mother, I do wish when you've got a thing to say you'd say it, and done with it. If there's anything I hate it's beating about the bush."

"Very well, then. This is what I have to say: Frank is engaged to Ruth, and has been I do not know how long."

She burst out laughing.

"Well, and what then?" cried she.

"Oh, if you can take it so coolly, nothing at all. I fancied you might feel that you had an equal claim to him with Ruth."

"Equal!" she cried, "I have ten times the claim! But that is nothing. Let me alone, mother. I know what I am about. I have told you twenty times that I can manage my affairs to suit myself. What if he *is* engaged to Ruth? He is not married to her, I suppose?"

"As good as married," I answered dryly—for her imperious manner displeased me.

"Come, now," she continued, beginning to braid

up her hair, "I'll tell you all about it if it will make you feel any better in your mind. I'm going to give F. W. plenty of line, and let him play out in deep water if he likes. He and Ruth can have the sea all to themselves for aught I care. I can afford to wait. But all of a sudden I shall draw in my line, and then you'll see what you will see!"

"Well?" I said, uneasily.

"Well, I shall catch him at the right moment, and carry him off in triumph. Then good-bye forever to the land of Pemaquid."

I shook my head.

"You needn't shake your head, it isn't worth the trouble. I shall be Mrs. F. W. whenever I please."

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Father and Mr. and Mrs. Strong and I have all been beseeching Frank to go away from here, where his temptations are very great. He can not come to our house any more, unless he is prepared to break his engagement with me. I have quite made up my mind to that, even if it kills me to see him no more. Oh, how much better off I was when I lived with grandma, reading good books to her, hearing her heavenly conversation and prayers!

I think father would be glad to have Frank go away and never come back. He forgets how young people feel.

He says forgiving a man is one thing and marrying him is another.

I do not know what to make of Juliet. She is in such spirits, and is pleasant to every one, even to me.

It is plain enough that I have not now the sweet peace I had about the time grandma died, and afterward. I have been too taken up with Frank. But he was so different from me, so well educated, so full of his fun, so bright and wide-awake, and then, at times, showing such a warm, strong, real heart. How he loved those little children! How tender and solemn he was after they died! How hard he tried to be a better man!

Since I wrote that I have had a beautiful letter from Frank, in which he says he has decided to study theology with Dr. Robertson, instead of going to the seminary. He says he has sown all his wild oats, and is going to study very hard, and try, by prayer and meditation, to become a godly and useful man.

I knew he would come out all right, and wrote and told him so.

I have had another letter, entreating me to meet him at the parsonage. I shall not do that. Her father's house is the place where a young woman should see her—friend.

Why doesn't he go? He said he was on the wing.

He writes again, and says he *can not* go without seeing me.

It is hard for both of us. If I could persuade Juliet to stay in her room just one evening! But there is no use in trying.

It is two weeks since Frank promised to go, and he is still here. My father is much displeased. But Frank says if he can have one interview with me he really will go.

Juliet had such a raging toothache that she was in bed all day. I suppose father notified Frank that he could see me undisturbed, and he came. He made all sorts of protestations and promises, and said he should be only too thankful to get out of Juliet's way. He said he should write to me often, and that I must write as often as I could to him.

We agreed not to let Juliet know where he was going or when.

And at last he has gone.

Mrs. Strong has been very kind and sympathizing. She says she loves Frank warmly, and believes he will become a good and useful man.

FRANK'S JOURNAL.

It is a year since I left Pemaquid—a year of hard work under a very austere, but most worthy man.

Last evening, after a day of unusual fatigue, I was lazily turning over letters that had come from different directions, when I found among them this card :

MISS WOODFORD,

Pemaquid.

with a city address appended.

I was on my feet in a moment. Had my good angel, my little loving girl, so heartily forgiven me as to take this long journey to see me once more? I bounded down-stairs and into the street. In ten minutes I had reached the house indicated, and sent in my name. Was there any doubt now as to who I loved with all my heart and soul? The door opened, I sprang forward with a face all aglow with delight, when lo! Juliet, not Ruth, stood before me!

“Your humble servant, sir!” she cried, dropping me a profound courtesy.

“You have deceived me cruelly,” I said as soon as I could speak.

“Indeed? And how, pray?”

“By beguiling me here under false pretenses, under a false name!”

“As to that,” she returned, “I have gone by the name of Woodford for years. And so you are not glad to see me after this long journey?”

I began, indeed, to find great pleasure in seeing her. Of course a man deep in theological study is in no danger of being tempted by such a girl as this.

So we began a lively conversation, in which we were joined by her hostess, a young lady to whom I was introduced as "Hat Boon."

It was quite late when I rose to go.

"There are no gentlemen in this family," said Juliet, "and we hope to find you serviceable as an escort. To-morrow being Sunday, we should like to go to church where we can hear fine music."

I saw no harm in this, and promised to be on hand at an early hour the next evening, excusing myself for the day, not daring to face the temptation of the thoroughly worldly conversation I should have to engage in.

On reaching the house I found both ladies equipped for the walk.

"You have asked nothing about Ruth," said Juliet. "She is quite well, and sends you this token of her affectionate remembrance."

Whereupon she presented me with as vulgar a piece of handiwork in the way of a picture it was ever my misfortune to see. It was made of cloves, allspice, beans, corn, watermelon seeds, and I know not what.

I felt myself blush all over. Was a girl capable of such crude folly to be my future wife? Was my house to be made hideous by similar performances?

"It is trying for you," said Juliet. "But what could you expect?"

"I expect some germs of refinement in her," I re-

plied hotly. "Why, such a gift as this would insult a ploughman!"

"I was afraid it would annoy you, but Ruth would make me bring it."

Greatly ruffled, and giving the thing a kick as I passed it, where it stood leaning against a chair, I took the young ladies to a fashionable church, where they may have heard music; I heard only discord. The next day I received a letter from Ruth, saying she had availed herself of an opportunity to send me a specimen of her own workmanship, with which she hoped I would be pleased. I wrote and acknowledged the gift, but in an ungracious way. In one sense it was a little thing, but so are mosquitoes, and they sting.

One stormy evening when I called upon Juliet, she said that they were expecting a few friends, and hoped I would join them in a game of cards.

I declined, remembering my promise to Ruth. Besides, I knew Dr. Robertson would disapprove of a theological student of his engaging in an amusement universally abandoned by the religious world.

"But just this once," Juliet pleaded; "just to help make up the party."

I yielded, just for once. I played, and lost; tried to retrieve my losses; plunged in deeper; at last, at a late hour, went home ashamed and provoked

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Juliet said she was going to visit her friend, Miss Boon, and that as she lived only twenty miles from where Frank is studying, she was sure if I sent him a present of some sort she could get it conveyed that short distance to him.

“But how came you to know where he is?” I asked, in great surprise.

“Why, you did not really suppose he would keep me in ignorance of his whereabouts, did you? Such good friends as we are not to correspond?”

I was so hurt at such duplicity on Frank's part that I could hardly keep from crying.

But I had been at work all winter on a set of fine linen collars for him, and this opportunity of sending them to him was too good to lose. So I made them up into a neat little bundle which I delivered into Juliet's hands.

I did not hear from Frank very soon, but when his letter came, it was so plain that he was not pleased with my gift, that I was cut to the heart. The linen was very fine; I am esteemed a good needle-woman; what could annoy him so?

I wrote and begged him to tell me what I had done to vex him.

He replied that he was not vexed, but that he trusted I would spare him any more specimens of my work, as it looked more like that of a lunatic than that of a sane woman.

I don't believe *any* girl could have helped crying at that!

Then I could not help going and telling Mrs. Strong about it.

She sat and meditated a long time in silence.

Then she said :

“ I have two theories about this matter. Either Juliet has substituted some vulgar piece of finery for your delicately-stitched collars, or the wrong parcel was accidentally sent him.”

This relieved me. I wrote at once to Frank, suggesting that there had been some strange mistake made by the carrier.

He replied that this was not possible, as Juliet had delivered it to him with her own hands.

O! O! Juliet is there, then!

XV.

“One dupe is as impossible as one twin.”

MRS. STRONG TO FRANK WESTON.

MY DEAR FRANK: You must not blame our dear little Ruth for coming to me in her trouble, or blame me for pleading her cause. My own sorrows bring home to me the griefs of other hearts. I am almost glad that I have suffered, because I have learned to feel tender sympathy with all who need it.

I need not tell you how I love Ruth, or why. I never can forget her generous devotion to my children, or ever cease admiring her pure, upright character. And as you well know, I love you also, Frank, and earnestly desire your best good. And that you are now living as no Christian man should I am quite sure. Your own good sense tells you that Juliet Pickett can never be anything but a temptation to you. It is true she has a certain attraction for you that flatters your vanity, and her great physical beauty attracts your worst side. But what a companion would she be to you when you become an ambassador for Christ! You may reply that you have no intention of making her your wife, being, virtually, en-

gaged to Ruth. But you know that Juliet intends, if possible, to marry you, and there is nothing to which she would not stoop in pursuit of this end. I suspect she has already created some coolness on your part toward Ruth. May I ask you what she put into your hands as a gift from that innocent child?

In conclusion, I entreat you to arise and be a man. You have chosen the ministry of Jesus Christ as your profession; it is the best work in which a human being can engage. Let nothing make you false to Him.

Yours, affectionately desirous of you,

FAITH STRONG.

FRANK WESTON'S REPLY.

DEAR MRS. STRONG: Your letter has perhaps saved a foolish boy from a fatal mistake. I send you, with this, the gift Ruth conveyed to me by Juliet's own hands, and you must judge for me if, on receiving it, I did well to be angry. You know I am a good-natured fellow, and that it is a rare thing with me to lose my temper. But the idea of spending my life with a girl capable of anything so vulgar, jarred upon me and Juliet took advantage of this mood, and led me on, from step to step, till I came near losing faith in God, faith in myself, faith in Ruth, and plunging into the pleasures that have, for me, such attractions. Pray for me, I entreat you, that I

may win in this conflict, and believe at much as you can in your wayward boy,

FRANK.

MRS. STRONG'S REPLY.

How could you so misjudge our delicate little Ruth? The 'picture' was made by a crazy woman who is supported by our parish; she sent it to Mr. Strong as a New Year's gift, in great pride and pomp; it was a source of innocent amusement for a time, then tossed aside and forgotten. The malignity that led Juliet to pass it off on you as Ruth's workmanship is too dreadful. I shall lose all respect for you if you ever allow that wicked, heartless girl to cause Ruth to suffer as she has done during the last six weeks. Once more I ask you to rouse yourself and be a man. Yes, a true man in Christ Jesus.

Your sincere friend,

FAITH STRONG.

FRANK'S JOURNAL.

How a foul fiend could dwell in so beautiful a form as Juliet's I can not imagine! As soon as I learned the trick she had played me—credulous fool that I was!—I flew to upbraid her for her infamous deed.

She burst out laughing and declared it was a mere joke, and produced a dainty little parcel, which, she said, she was only reserving for the right moment.

I told her she need expect no more visits from me

She said of course not, as she was going home as quickly as possible to tell Ruth about my goings on. That startled me. Ruth *must not* know—at least not through Juliet.

“A pretty budget of news I shall have for the child,” she went on. “Her pious Frank neglecting his studies to go hither and thither and yon. A card party one night, the theatre the next, oyster suppers, wine, dancing—Oh, what fun I shall have!”

“Juliet, it will break the child’s heart.”

“You should have thought of that.”

“And what do you expect to gain?”

“I expect to gain you, sir. You have as good as told me that you enjoy my society more than Ruth’s; you have shown that you do by the way you have followed me round, and by plunging into every worldly amusement I have suggested. You will never become a minister. You will never marry Ruth. You are not good enough for either.”

“We shall see,” I said. “Meantime do not let us part as enemies. Promise me that you will not betray my follies to Ruth. The past six weeks have been an episode in my life of which I am ashamed. I am going now to return to my studies like a man.”

“I shall make no promises,” she said. “My conduct will be guided by yours. If you continue to make love to Ruth, I shall find it my duty to unmask you to her.”

“Very well. Since you defy me, I defy you. I

shall confess everything to Ruth and she will forgive me. A more long-suffering being does not exist on earth."

She looked at me with the angry gleam of a demon in her beautiful eyes, and I bowed myself out.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Frank has been here. He went first to father and made the most humble confession to him, won his heart by it, and then came and told me everything. I think there is great excuse for him. Juliet makes almost all men admire her, and Frank can't help being pleased at her giving them all up for him. And if I thought she would make him happy, and help him to be a good man, I would retire and leave the field to her. But it would end in his ruin. I said I would take for my motto: "Give and forgive." So I must give Frank a good deal more love than he does me, and do it cheerfully. And I must forgive him the pain he has caused me, and do it generously. But I have talked to him very seriously and plainly about his duty to God. It is a small thing to have him wrong me in comparison with his wronging his own soul and sinning against God. And I had set myself up so high, like a silly child as I was!

MRS WOODFORD.

Frank has taken our breath away by sweeping in upon us like a tempest. Something serious has

brought him here, I am sure, but what it is I do not know. I am afraid Juliet has been making mischief between him and Ruth. I am sorry for both girls. One of them must be disappointed, and Ruth would bear such a trial far better than Juliet would. However, it will be so long before he can marry either, that I need not trouble myself so very much about the matter. Juliet may meet some one she can like better, or twenty things could happen. Besides, I begin to feel that it would be painful to part with Ruth for her own sake. She seems to be everybody's right hand. Her father needs her to read to him, now that his eyes begin to fail him, and she is his greatest comfort in every way. Juliet needs her as hair-dresser, waiting-maid, and general aid in all dilemmas. As for me, I really believe I am attached to the child. Her unvarying, sweet good-humor is such a refuge from Juliet's pert and irritable ways; she is so useful about the house, so neat and thorough with her needle—in short, such a dear, stupid, innocent little thing, that it would be a positive shame to let her go and leave us. Besides, she is not a suitable person for Frank. He needs a firm hand to control and guide him. His flexible nature absolutely requires the influence of a forcible one. I will find out what Mr. Woodford thinks on the subject, if possible.

I said to Mr. Woodford, in a tone that implied that I knew all about it :

“What a pity that Ruth should be kept on pins and needles by Frank. Would it not be better to break this half-engagement before she is quite worn out?”

He looked thoughtfully into the fire, took the tongs and arranged the burning brands with deliberation, and was silent.

“It goes against me to stand in the child’s way,” he said, at last. “I hope I shall be directed.”

And, of course, he took up his candle and went for “direction” to that dismal, cold room of his.

I wish he would take counsel of me instead. The matter is simple, and I could manage it with ease.

By the by, as Juliet is now of age, I have transferred the money in the bank to her and prepared a second note to her, apprising her of the fact. This I shall conceal, but in case of my death it will be found among my papers. This takes a burden off my mind. My increasing respect and affection for my husband make me dread more and more the danger of becoming degraded in his eyes. If Juliet could only make a splendid match, I might transfer this sum to him, passing myself off thus for a prudent wife. Still I am tired of deception and almost wish I had been born and brought up in Pemaquid. Better austerity than undue laxity.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I have been spending the day at Mrs. Strong’s, helping her quilt. She treats old Father Strong

beautifully. But I don't wonder, he is such a dear old man. He told me to-day, as I sat at the quilting-frame, a great deal about the beginning of his ministry, sixty-five years ago. He was minister over one church sixty-three years. When he first went to it the country was little more than one great forest, full of savage Indians and fierce wolves. This seems hard for a man who had been educated at Harvard College. But everybody was used to hardship in those days. At one time the Indians carried off eight women and two children. This caused great fear and trembling, no one knowing whose turn would come next. They were especially cruel to children and aged persons whom they took captive. If an infant became troublesome its brains were dashed out. Feeble old men and tender women were driven like cattle over mountains, through swamps, through the snow in winter and the heat in summer. The people were kept in a very serious and godly state of mind by means of these calamities, and they were resolved to keep their community free from vice, so if a bad family came to settle among them it was warned away. They agreed to build Mr. Strong a house—he was not Father Strong then, of course—and they cut down the timber in cold weather and drew it to a three-acre lot and helped clear it, so that he could partly support himself. That same year there was a great earthquake, which so frightened the people that a revival of religion took place. The next year he lost his

cattle, as did many others, owing to scarcity of hay and deep snow. Then a wolf came and killed three of his sheep. About that time Quakerism began to spread, and the churches in all that region kept days of fastings and prayer on account of it.

Soon after this he was married to a thrifty wife, who knew how to use a gun in case the Indians surprised her.

In the year 1745 Mr. Whitefield came to preach at Falmouth. There was a large party opposed to him, and the whole parish was in a buzz about it. Mr. Strong heard him preach twice. Soon after this they had a visitation of worms that were fain to eat up every green thing. The Church fasted and prayed about it. The Indians becoming bolder, another day was spent in fasting and prayer, and the Government offered a bounty for every scalp brought in. On some Sundays there would be hardly any one at meeting, through fear of the Indians. And at times everybody suffered from scarcity of food. On one of these occasions Mr. Strong persuaded a man and a boy to go out with him to shoot pigeons. It was running a great risk, but the people were suffering and he was not afraid. They brought home ten dozen, which caused great rejoicing.

At the time of the great earthquake at Lisbon there were two or three shocks in his parish, and a day of fasting and prayer was had. Of course they did not hear of the one at Lisbon till a long time afterward.

About a year after that there was such a fall of snow that nobody could possibly get to meeting. The Selectmen ordered everybody who owned horses or oxen to go out and break the roads. The next summer Mr. Strong had such a harvest of cherries and currants that he supplied more than a hundred women and some men.

Then came the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. He lived under the reign of four sovereigns—Queen Anne, George I., George II., and George III.—and to see his country pass from a monarchy into freedom and independence. Not a soul that composed his first flock is now living; he has survived them all.

I asked him if he could suggest any reason why his life had been so prolonged. He said he had been strengthened by his early hardships, and had, besides, always been a temperate man, and that he observed many days of each year in private fasting and prayer, in no wise a detriment to his health, but, on the contrary, he had no doubt it had been a blessing to him, keeping him down, mortifying the flesh, and giving him such sacred and blessed communion with God as kept his mind at peace amid all the incursions of Indians, the horrors of war, the death of his wife and children, and of friends nearly as dear. I have not put down half the things he told me. Think of his condescension in trying to entertain a young maid like me! And now he is everybody's father, and will never be called "Mr." any more.

Mrs. Strong says she should not wonder if he lived to be a hundred. People here in Pemaquid, unless they die young, are apt to live to be from eighty to one hundred years old, especially if they are pious people and live in that communion with God that hinders inordinate grief and makes a great sweetness come into the hardest lot.

Oh, if my poor Frank were like this good man, whose heart was *fixed* upon God in his youth, and who has been a valiant soldier of the Cross through such a steadfast, holy life, and is now enjoying a peaceful old age!

And if I were, in my day and generation and according to my measure, as faithful to God, should I not carry Frank with me, and inspire him with my own devotion? Ah, I must get the beam out of my own eye before I undertake to meddle with the mote in his!

XVI.

“It’s all fuss, fuss, and stew, stew till you get somewhere, and then it’s fuss, fuss, and stew, stew to get back again; jump here and scratch your eyes out, and jump there and scratch ’em in again—that ’are life.”—MRS. STOWE.

KEZIA GETS ANOTHER LETTER FROM PEMAQUID.

“**I**T beats all, mother, the knews I’ve got! I’m all of a toss when I think of it. They say that spark of our Ruth’s has undertook to spark her and Juliet both to once, and the Squire was that put out that he forbid him the house. And finally they got him to go away and study geology (as near as I can make it out); anyway, to learn to be a minister. And Juliet’s follered him, and made a mess between him and our Ruth; and what with mails bein’ so scarce, and misunderstandings bein’ hard to clear up in writin’, there’s no end to the trouble. It’s jist like droppin’ a stitch in a stockin’—it’ll run clear down the whole leg afore you know it. And they say our Ruth is gettin’ so peaked you wouldn’t hardly know her! I declare, I’d like to send that ’ere Juliet and her spark to sea in a bowl! What? They’d get drowned? Of course they would get drowned, and serve them right, too!”

Sings :

Ho, Mister Spark, I will engage
To send you on a pilgrimage
Across the Atlantic Ocean wide,
With Juliet Pickett at your side.
Jump in, jump in, the bowl is cracked,
And very shortly you'll be wracked ;
Repentance then will be too late,
And you will sink and meet your fate ;
There'll be no gravestone at your head,
You'll spark no more when you are dead !

FRANK'S JOURNAL.

It is rather hard upon me, that, accustomed as I have been all my life to find favor in everybody's eyes, I am now held in disfavor by them all. Ruth has behaved like an angel ; but she can't conceal that, whereas she looked up to me as a superior being, she has greatly fallen off in respect, and consequently also in affection, for me. Then the Squire would be thankful if I never darkened his doors again. Mrs. Woodford eyes me with suspicion, and Mrs. Strong is no longer the hearty friend she was when I lived under her roof, and loved her and the children so. As to Juliet, she is now my downright enemy, and it is quite possible she wrote the anonymous letter to Dr. Robertson, containing the full list of my enormities. At any rate, he knows how I have wasted my time and money, what a self-indulgent fellow I am, how mad I am after pleasure, and has read me such a lecture as I never want to endure again. He says he

will overlook my follies this once, but never again, and that he is very doubtful whether a man of so little strength of character has any right to enter the ministry. On the other hand, he says my address is very winning, and would stand me in stead as a pastor, as my love for children and my strong sympathies would, and that to preach Christ is the most favored lot on earth, and warns me solemnly to make full proof of my call to it. He has dealt with me as a father deals with a prodigal son, and, with the exception of Ruth and her father, has been, amid much severity, kinder than any of my other friends. I owe him something for this. At the same time I shrink from the austerities of a clerical life as I used to shrink, as a child, from a cold bath.

I suppose Juliet has gone back to Pemaquid, but do not know.

JULIET TO "HAT" BOON.

DEAR HAT: I took your advice, and wrote a long letter to Dr. Robertson, setting forth the unfitness of F. W. to become a minister, and mailed it on my way home. It will reveal the young man as he really is; he will be obliged to relinquish the idea of a profession for which he is just about as fit as I am; and when that is once done I shall have him in my power. Pa Woodford will never let Ruth marry him if he is disgraced by such a man as Dr. Robertson; I am sure of that. Keep your eye upon him if you can, and let me know what he is about.

While I was gone, Miss Ruth contrived to worm her way into my mother's heart ; or, at least, into the place where there ought to be one.

A horrid old man has come to Pemaquid to live—Mr. Strong's father—and she pretends she likes to have him there, and Ruth pretends she loves him. The other day I had to go to the parsonage to borrow a pattern mother wanted, and Mrs. Strong spent fully half an hour looking for it, so as to give this canting old creature a chance to 'labor' with me about my sins ! Did you ever hear of such impertinence ? I was so angry that I could hardly keep my seat. I have had plenty of hints before, from all sorts of people here, but never anything equal to this. I hate him ! What business has he to meddle with me ? And then, when he could see as plain as day how provoked I was, he said :

'Very well, my poor child. I thought you would take a kind word from an aged man, as kindly as it was spoken. Most young people do. I shall pity and pray for you as long as I live.'

Why should he pity me ? I am young, and well, and strong, and handsome ; what is there pitiful about that, and why should he pray for me ? Horrors ! he'll be calling down fire and brimstone on my devoted head ! Such everlasting prayers as these people keep up ! How thankful I shall be when F. W. and I turn our backs upon Pemaquid forever !

FRANK WESTON'S JOURNAL.

There has been a great outpouring of the Spirit here, and, thanks be to a merciful God, I have had a share in the blessing. I have renewed my vows to Him, have sought and found His pardon, and will consecrate myself to His service, as a minister of the Gospel, with a joyful heart. How hath my soul escaped as out of the snare of the fowler! I tremble when I think of the lengths into which that beautiful, but unprincipled, girl led me, and wonder, in deep penitence of heart, why God did not say, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." Ah! I am so weak that all I need for my ruin is to be thus let alone. As I reviewed my past life, the pangs of hell gat hold upon me, and I could only cry out, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul!" No earthly pleasure, however sweet, can compensate for such anguish and remorse as I have endured.

My poor little Ruth! How I have troubled the depths of her heart! I am sure that my infidelity to her God and Saviour has given her more pain than my wavering toward herself. As soon as I get through my studies I will seek some primitive little Pemaquid, where I can preach the Gospel, and where my beloved wife and I shall go hand in hand in the work of the ministry, rear our children in the fear of God, and live to have them rise up to call us blessed.

I must write to her now.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I have had a delightful letter from my dear—friend. It was full of love to God, love to His people, love of His service, and love to me! It has made me very happy. I read a little, a very little, of it to Mrs. Strong; but it did not please her as much as it did me. She said he was evidently deeply moved, for the time, but that we must remember that his feelings often changed, and that she hoped I would rejoice over him with trembling.

This gave my love to her a great shaking. Why should we not believe that God has answered our fervent prayers for him, and delivered him once for all? He paints a lovely picture of the life we shall lead together when he settles down with me in some modest country parish.

I would rather marry a country minister than a king. I should like to work for our people, just as Mrs. Strong does for hers. To live in this world just to have a good time would be horrible.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

Pemaquid is fated to become a city, I really believe. New families keep moving in, new enterprises are undertaken, new buildings are going up, and we are a prosperous community. I take the whole credit of this to myself. We have had the meeting-house enlarged, the ugly great square pews taken away,

and neat slips put in their place : it is carpeted, cushioned, and next winter it is to be warmed. What a march of improvement on winters we have shivered through, with nothing but the foot-stoves we carried with us to keep us from freezing ! I have been the prime mover in all these improvements, and am called " active in the church." My next act will be to persuade the people to sit through the long prayer, instead of standing till they are ready to drop. But here I meet with opposition dire. Old Mr. Strong says it would be an insult to our Maker to sit while addressing Him. And as even the devil can quote Scripture, why should not I ? So I pointed triumphantly to the passage which represents David as sitting before the Lord. In return they aimed at me so many texts about standing, kneeling, bowing down, lying on the face, that I was quite put to rout. However, I recovered myself, and declared I would rather kneel than stand. Symptoms of holy horror appeared. Papists kneel, consequently we must not. Was ever anything more ridiculous ? As far as I was taught any religious service by my parents, it was to kneel when I entered church and count ten ; an act I have repeated here from force of habit, thereby making myself the object of no little merriment, it seems.

HAT BOON TO JULIET.

Your adored F. W. is in a highly devout and elevated frame. There has been a solemn revivalist

here. He has set people's sins before them, turned many unto righteousness, and healed not a few backsliders. Among the latter is F. W.

I went to Dr. Robertson's church last Sunday to look after the young man, and he walked home with me, discoursing with great unction on the event that has occurred to him. I expressed deep interest, and he was so absorbed in his subject, that he could not help coming in to enlarge still further upon it.

This evangelist is to be here again next winter, and you had better come and let him convert you for a brief season. Ha! ha! you can do it to perfection, and it will be as good as a play to look on.

Do not let Ruth know it if you come here. Pretend you are going elsewhere. Otherwise she will build a Chinese wall round her beloved.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

Frank has been here for a short visit, and has been so devoted to Ruth that I do not see the smallest reason to suppose Juliet will ever regain her power over him. When he is his best self he certainly is as charming and winning a young man as can be found. I do not wonder that all the girls in Pemaquid are pining for him. Ruth is radiant with happiness, yet very sympathizing and kind to Juliet, whom she pities, as she well may. Still, Juliet does not seem to realize that Frank is lost to her. She made herself very agreeable to him when he was here, and be-

haved in a meek and downcast way quite new to her, and very becoming.

This winter has set in with an extraordinary snow-storm. Every man and boy in town who could handle a shovel was ordered out by the Selectmen to make a path to the meeting-house. They dug a long, narrow path, barely wide enough for one person to pass, and we formed a long procession, Indian file, till we reached it. The men were so tired that half of them fell asleep. We returned home in the same way, the walls of drifted snow towering on each side of us like mountains. It gave me the strangest sensations imaginable to walk in this funereal way, on noiseless footsteps. Nobody could get into the meeting-house to light the fire till this canal had been dug, so we nearly perished with cold.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Frank has made us a short visit, and reconciled everybody to him. Even Father Strong is interested in him. We had ever so many delightful talks together, two or three sleigh-rides, took tea at the parsonage twice, and Frank spoke and prayed at the conference-meetings to the edification of everybody. Old Ma'am Huse told me he talked like one inspired, and not long for this world.

Juliet behaved beautifully. She kept out of his way all she could, and when she had to be with him was quiet and gentle as I never saw her before. So



"We formed a long procession, Indian-file, till we reached the meeting-house."

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I don't see but my cup runs over, and I hope I feel some gratitude to God for all these mercies.

Mother has changed too. Now that Juliet is pleasant to her, she seems relieved of care, or, at least, a good deal relieved, and I should not wonder if we settled down into a peaceable family. Perhaps Juliet and her mother are beginning to believe in God, and to care for their own souls, though that would be almost too good to be true. Only when I think how often I have prayed for them, and what an example father has set them, I ought to expect any wonder to be wrought. All that we should want then would be to have Samuel and Kezia come home.

XVII.

“ With devotion’s visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o’er
The devil himself.”

“ Be like the bird, that, halting in her flight
Awhile on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her and yet sings,
Knowing that she hath wings.”

FRANK’S JOURNAL.

I HAVE received by to-day’s mail a most touching letter from Juliet. She says she was so much struck with the change for the better in me, during my last vacation, that she has come to have faith in the religion I profess. This accounts for her meek and gentle manner when I was at Pemaquid, and with which I was very much charmed. She inquires whether the blessed evangelist of whom I spoke is likely to be here this winter, adding that if he is, she shall make a great effort to come and hear him. All this is indeed wonderful, but nothing is too hard for God.

She has come, and I have had several conversations with her. The poor girl is very ignorant of

divine things, and I am obliged to explain simple truths to her over and over again. As she has no other religious friend in the city, she naturally leans upon me, and I am only too thankful to help her onward and upward. I am sure my dear little Ruth would feel no annoyance at our being together so much, if she knew what subject attracts us to each other. But Juliet begs me not to write to her about it, as she feels very shy concerning her sacred purposes, and speaks of them to no mortal but to me. This shyness is natural and becoming, and raises her in my opinion.

So I begin my ministry before completing my studies, and am surprised to find how delightful it is. If it is so transcendently beautiful to labor for one soul, what will it be to spend and be spent for many?

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

We are having another peaceable winter, as Juliet has gone to Boston to visit her friend Miss Hussey. She has evidently given up trying to wean Frank from me and attract him to herself, and she may meet with some one now whom she could like as well.

Frank has not much time to write me now, as he says he is greatly occupied, in every leisure moment, in doing good. I am so thankful he is so hard at

work. It shows that the change in him was not a mere matter of feeling, but that his soul is truly in earnest.

I am hard at work, too, only it isn't hard. Mr. and Mrs. Strong find plenty for me to do in the daytime, and in the evening I read to father.

MRS. DEACON STONE CALLS ON MRS. WOODFORD.

"I thought I'd just call in and have a little talk with you about Ruth. Our Josiah, he's dreadful fond of her, but she won't look at him, and he's grown so fractious that there's no living with him. Now if you'd just speak a good word for him, Mis' Woodford."

"Why, what can you mean? Ruth is engaged to Frank Weston."

"I know some think so. But Josiah says he was put on probation, and that he's one of the kind that never knows his own mind, and may jilt her any day. And he thinks he is fond of your girl."

"Oh, there's nothing in that."

"Well, now, what objection has Ruth to our Josiah? He's a rising man, and can afford to support a wife handsome."

"Really, Mrs. Stone, if Josiah wants to marry Ruth he should apply to her."

"So he has. He has offered himself four times, and she has refused him. I never see anybody so obstinate. You need not laugh. It's no laughing

matter. His pa and me used to take comfort in him, but he's nothing but contrariness now. If Frank ever does jilt Ruth, and folks mostly say he will, won't you speak a good word for our poor boy?"

"Oh, certainly! With great pleasure. Being the child's own mother, I can undoubtedly place her in your son's arms the moment she falls out of Frank's."

"Well, now, it is hard to tell when you're in earnest or when you're making believe. They do say your girl's set her heart on Frank Weston, and if you'd favor that, Ruth would be left for Josiah; don't you see?"

"Yes, I see a great many things. I do not expect you to see your son with my eyes, or with Ruth's eyes; but I advise you to cease persecuting that poor child as you and he have done. She will never marry Josiah; of that I am perfectly sure, and the sooner he makes up his mind to it the better. We are in no hurry to part with Ruth; she is quite young, and—"

"You won't do nothing to help my Josiah? Then I think you are very unfeeling. I might have known you was. I've always heard so. And Ruth she's so obstinate!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"What *are* you laughing at?"

"Why, ha! ha! excuse me, ha! ha! the idea of our Ruth, ha! ha! ha! the idea of our Ruth being obstinate because she will not break off her engagement

with the man she loves, to marry a man like 'Siah Stone!"

"Well, I think you might be a little politer, and not laugh in a woman's face that is a-worrying about the only son she's got. I know his hair's red, but so was his father's, and I didn't let that hinder my marrying him; and he aint had much book learning, but his father hadn't neither, yet he's been promoted to be a deacon. And I don't see what Ruth's got against Josiah, no, I don't."

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I have a long letter from Frank, which has overwhelmed me with the sense of my own poor spiritual attainments. He is soaring in sublime regions I have never explored, while I creep along away down here, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" With shame and confusion of face I bow before Him, wondering at His patience and forbearance, and the many gracious discoveries He makes to me of Himself—to me, so unworthy.

Frank says he never even conceived of such bliss as he is now enjoying, and that he longs for the day when he shall tell to thousands the story of the Cross. "Yes, *thousands*," he says. "I could not be satisfied with preaching to a handful in some remote village. I must become a city pastor, and win a multitude of souls."

JOSIAH STONE VISITS RUTH.

“What have you got against me, Ruth Woodford? You look as if you’d seen a wild Indian.”

“I’ve nothing against you, Josiah, except your coming here so often, and talking to me as you do. And I have made up my mind to one thing. *You shall not come here again!* I have put up with it, and put up with it, because your father is a deacon, and because I hated to do anything unkind. If I was married to Frank you would not *dare* to come and make love to me; well, it is just as much of an insult now as it would be then.”

“It’s hard for a feller to be hit when he’s down.”

“You are not down. You have pushed, and pushed, and pushed me to the wall, and I’ve borne it; but I can’t go through the wall, so I’ve had to turn round and face you. You can’t bear to see me angry? *I ought* to be angry when you trample Frank’s rights under foot. You wish I wouldn’t cry? Then go away, Josiah Stone. I forgive you all your persecutions; I forgive you all the mean, cruel tricks you’ve played so as to see me; I forgive you the unkind things you’ve said about Frank; but you shall not talk love to me any more. How *can* a man demean himself to a girl who—who—”

“Hates him.”

“I don’t hate you, Josiah. But I do hate your ways.”

“To think of her caring so much for that sneak, that she won’t look at a feller like me, that— Hi! if she hasn’t went out of the room in a jiffy! Who’d ’a thought she had so much pluck in her? Why, I thought she was a soft little thing that I should worry into havin’ me. It beats all!”

FRANK’S JOURNAL.

I know of nothing pleasanter than the life I am leading now. I see Juliet every day, and notes pass between us very frequently, and of the most spiritual character. I wish Ruth’s religious experiences were as remarkable as Juliet’s, but she has never had any other than the most ordinary ones. Juliet has great nobility of character. She knows of things to Ruth’s discredit, but will not tell me one of them. She says it is enough that she can not live under the same roof with her for any length of time, and yet Ruth always contrived to give me the impression that she had a sweet, very sweet disposition. I could not think of marrying a girl with any other. I mean a naturally good one, or one sweetened by divine grace, as Juliet’s has been.

Juliet grows more lovely every day. Her gratitude for the Christian aid I have rendered her has taken the form of a pure and exalted friendship for me. I return it warmly. The tie that binds kindred Christian hearts together is perfectly beautiful.

I have received to-day an illiterate, anonymous letter from Pemaquid, containing these words :

You are welcome to Miss Spitfire. Take warning from
A FIEND.

Juliet says the writer is Josiah Stone, and that "Miss Spitfire" means Ruth, and pointed out the mistake of the writer, who undoubtedly meant to sign himself a friend.

The warning was not without its effect, however.

"Juliet," I said, "you know whether this appellation justly applies to Ruth, and you ought to tell me the truth."

"Don't ask me to tell the truth," she said, in a low voice. "But I may say this: I have always pitied you for your infatuation about her. And now you see she has been showing herself to Josiah in her true colors."

"But why should Josiah undertake to play the friend to me, and put me on my guard against her? He always hated me cordially."

"Perhaps, then, he means me when he speaks of Miss Spitfire," she said, laughing merrily.

Ruth has played the hypocrite very cleverly, it seems. I thought if there was a defect in her character it was want of spirit. I felt imposed upon, and that my love for her had had a chill. And here was Juliet, this beautiful girl at my side, full of sympathy, and looking at me with moist eyes.

“Fortunately you are not married to her,” she said.

“I am engaged to her, which is the same thing,” I said.

“Oh, no. You were put on probation.”

“So I was.”

And I always admired Juliet; and if she had been a religious girl I should have chosen her, of course, instead of Ruth. And with her remarkable experiences she would be more suitable as a minister’s wife. “Oh, Juliet,” I cried, “to think how different things might have been. To think of the delightful winter we have spent together—the happiest months of my life!”

“The happiest months of mine, too,” she murmured. “Oh, Frank!”

The scales fell from our eyes.

I knew that I loved her passionately, madly.

She knew that she loved me, as by a lightning flash.

In a moment we were in each other’s arms, pouring out our confessions and protestations in a frenzy of wild delight.

That was yesterday. This morning comes a bitter waking. I am engaged to two girls at once. There is a reaction from long, unnatural religious strain in both Juliet and myself. We are tempted to go to the devil. And with which of the two must I break off? To which shall I play false? “Unstable as

water," Frank Weston, "thou shalt not excel!" Oh, that I could take yesterday back!

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Since I would not see Josiah Stone he has written me a letter, in which he says he has unmasked me to Frank. I do not know what he means. What was there to unmask? But whatever it is, it may explain my not hearing from Frank for so many weeks.

What a mercy it is that in this time of suspense and trouble I have the inestimable privilege of telling my story to One whose sympathy is always ready, and who never sends me away empty. If it is His will that Frank should love and trust me, no human beings can come between us. And if He sees it best to separate us, His will shall be done, even if it kills me.

XVIII.

“For they have sown the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind.”

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

AFTER an absence of nearly five months Juliet returned home triumphant, and went singing about the house like a mad creature. I went up to her room the next day to hear her adventures, for she never writes.

“Well,” she said, “you see before you the future Mrs. F. W.”

“What nonsense are you talking, child?” I cried.

“I am not in the habit of talking nonsense,” she replied. “F. W. and I have fixed the wedding-day, and you can be present at our nuptials if you like.”

“And what about his engagement to Ruth?”

“Oh, Ruth! Well, it won't take long to sweep that little chip away.”

“But Frank has no means of supporting a wife.”

“No, but his wife has means of supporting him till he has.”

“What do you mean by this absurd talk? How can you, a penniless girl, support a husband?”

“Penniless? Really! Oh, I'm penniless, am I?”

she cried, laughing. "Gracious, how good it does feel to laugh, after my solemncholy winter!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, beginning to feel some vague alarm.

"Why, is it possible that you have forgotten the precious letter you gave me to read—the letter in which you reveal the secret of the nice little dowry you had been hoarding up for me?"

"The letter I told you only to open in case of my death," I gasped out. "Oh, Juliet, I wish I were indeed in my grave. Undutiful, ungrateful child! But your wickedness shall not go unpunished. I will withdraw every cent of that money from the bank, and then you will, indeed, be penniless."

"It is a pity you had not thought of that a little sooner," she returned, coolly, arranging her hair elaborately, and trying the effect of one shade of ribbon and another. "Unfortunately, however, I have spared you the trouble."

"Do you mean to tell me to my face that you have stolen that sum; that fruit of so many years of sacrifice and sorrow?" I took her by her shoulders as I confronted her.

"Your language is not very choice," she returned. "I should hardly call it stealing to transfer my own property to a place of greater safety. You seem to forget that the whole sum was invested in my name."

At that moment, if the instrument of death had been in my hand, I should have killed her.

“Ah!” she cried at last, “I knew we should have a scene sooner or later, and wanted to have it over. But I didn’t think things would come to such a pass as this. There’s no use in going on so. If you write letters to me, and then put it down in your journal what they’re about, you can’t wonder that I read them. A precious specimen that journal is, isn’t it? How I did scream when I read it, especially the part about being in love with Pa Woodford. Why can’t you listen to reason, mother? Wasn’t it better to do what I did, than be driven to do what people say you did, when you were threatened and torn asunder from the man you had set your heart on?”

And she, too, believed the worst side of my story! I remember uttering those words in a sort of shriek, and after that I knew nothing till I found myself in bed, under the ministry of tender hands. I started up and looked around me. My room was dark and silent, but I felt two hands busying themselves about me.

“Is it you, Juliet?” I asked, faintly.

“No, it’s Ruth,” she answered. “I wouldn’t talk any more. You’ve had a fall, and got hurt. Juliet says you tripped over a trunk in her room. The doctor is down-stairs; shall I let him come up?”

I was too faint and dizzy to answer. The doctor was soon at my side.

“Ah! things have improved since I left her,” he said. “I think she will do well now. Keep her quiet,

and have no talking in the room." I heard him go away; then Mr. Woodford came and sat down by the bed.

"I will watch your mother to-night," he said to Ruth.

She remonstrated in a whisper, but at last crept silently away. The room became darker and darker. I could hear my head beating and throbbing on the pillow. I moaned aloud. Mr. Woodford leaned over me, and I felt him applying ice to my temples. Then he raised me tenderly, and gave me water to drink. I gathered all my strength, and whispered:

"Tell me, am I dying?"

"No, dear, no," he said, soothingly. "Try to fall asleep. Don't look so terrified. Nothing can hurt you. I shall be right here."

He began to sing. I remembered that Thanksgiving Day when he walked up and down singing thus to Mrs. Strong's baby. It was the same hymn now, and sung as it was then. I fell asleep then. But when I awoke, with a start, he still sat there, thoughtful and tender, so tender that I could almost fancy that he loved me.

The next day Juliet took his place at my side as nurse. For the moment she was subdued and awe-stricken. I saw it in her face—she believed I should die.

Die! But there was something appalling in that word! I rose up and fought against it with all my might.

“Don’t, mother! Don’t,” cried Juliet. “Do lie still. Mercy on us! I believe she is raving distracted. Ruth! Mr. Woodford! Do come somebody and help me keep mother in bed!”

Mr. Woodford and Ruth came hurrying in.

“I am rested now, let me stay with your mother,” he said to Juliet. He sat down by my side and soothed and calmed me.

I think that after this he was always there in that one spot. When I awoke, shuddering, from fearful dreams, and turned, with a cry, to look for him, there he sat; always quiet, gentle, unwearied. Ruth was always at hand, too. But Juliet’s exuberant vitality wearied me. I was glad to see her less and less as the days and weeks advanced.

When at last I began slowly to recover, I still clung like a child to my husband.

When he left me I begged him to return as soon as possible. When he came I clutched at him with sobs and tears of relief; I who had been so self-reliant, so well-poised!

Ah! into what infantine helplessness I had fallen!

So the weeks crept slowly and languidly away. Mr. and Mrs. Strong came to see me and were full of kind, quiet sympathy. Mrs. Stone, Josiah’s mother, came sneaking in, eyed me cautiously, and uttered an ominous “Humph!”

Being interpreted this meant:

“*Your* day is about over, ma’am! And I, for one, am glad to see your pride brought down.”

But my day was not over. There came a time when Mr. Woodford carried me down-stairs in his arms and took me out to drive. It was on a dreary day in March that I had last looked on the face of Nature. Now spring had burst into leaf and bloom and verdure; even Pemaquid was beautiful and radiant. Mr. Woodford was kind and careful, and drove with caution, often asking if I felt tired. And in spirit I was very weary. All this flush of blossom and beauty mocked my desolate, bloomless soul.

Ah! if Mr. Woodford only knew all the past and yet could lavish on me such kind cares! And oh! if that grim, terrible spectre called Death would never again look me in the face!

But no; there could be, there should be for me no peace, here or hereafter!

Amid these gloomy thoughts health was stealing back to me very slowly, but every summer’s day brought strength with it.

“Ruth,” I asked suddenly one day, “why have I an unpleasant association with the thought of Frank? Was there news from him on the day of my attack?”

“I have not heard from him lately,” she replied, and went steadily on with her work.

“I have some unpleasant association with his name,” I went on, confused ideas struggling in my mind.

She was silent ; but at last she said :

“ I wish I could read well enough to read aloud to you ; I used to read so much to grandma.”

I said I wished she would try it ; and she went and got the “ Pilgrim’s Progress.” I soon forgot the reader in the book.

Mr. Woodford came in after a time and listened with me until it was time for Ruth to go to bed. Every evening after this passed in the same way. The sound of her voice would finally put me to sleep ; and sleep was what I needed now. And the more I slept the less chaotic my thoughts became, and the more I began to recall the past. Who had irritated me on the day of my seizure ? Was it Juliet ? or was it Frank ? or was it both ? I gathered up my confused memories to no purpose. All was vague and confused.

At last I said to Ruth :

“ I *must* know what has happened. Where is Frank, and what has he done ? ”

“ I do not know exactly where he is,” she replied. Something tremulous in her voice made me search her face. Yes, I looked at her, really looked at her now for the first time in all these weeks. My illness and my thoughts, how they had absorbed me !

“ Ruth, he has forsaken you,” I said.

“ Yes, mother,” she answered.

There was no need of that meek answer. He had forsaken her, and so had her girlish beauty, her

round, full cheek, her fresh color. She had grown old under my very eye and I had not perceived it till now.

Juliet came into the room, half dancing, half running. Ruth got up and went out. The contrast of the two as they passed each other was never so striking. Juliet, with life and hope all before her; Ruth, slowly and quietly creeping away from it.

“Juliet, where is Frank?” I cried.

“Not too far off to be found when wanted,” she answered.

“How shockingly Ruth is altered!” I said.

“Yes, she does grow old. Poor little poke! She actually has pined and moped after her beloved since his love for her took wing. Mother, what are you going to give me for an outfit when I take wing in pursuit of F. W.?”

Then it all rushed back to me!—our conversation in her room, the stolen money, my passion!

“I wonder you have the effrontery to allude to the subject,” I cried. “Do you know, wicked girl, that you were near causing the death of your mother?”

“You shouldn’t have taken it so hard. But you always were so fond of money. I am sorry to disoblige you so much; but really I don’t see how you can expect Frank or anybody else to take me off your hands with nothing but the clothes on my back.”

“Frank?”

“Yes, Frank! Who else? You know I have always said I should marry him.”

“He was engaged to Ruth. You *knew* he was engaged to her.”

“He was not. Ruth can tell you so, and so can Pa Woodford if he’s a mind. They were put on probation for an unlimited period, and before the time was up, my gentleman changes his mind, and drops off.”

“It was the same thing as an engagement; precisely the same. It only wanted the mere form of Mr. Woodford’s full consent.”

“Make it out to suit yourself,” she returned carelessly. “It’s all one to me—only some morning if you wake up and find another bird has flown, you needn’t be frightened. I declare, I wish it was to be to-morrow! What with your falling sick, and Ruth’s moping, and Pa Woodford’s glum looks, and Mr. Strong’s horrid great black eyes staring one out of countenance every time one meets him, Pemaquid is getting to be intolerable. How you ever came to settle down in such a hole is a perfect mystery to me. But as long as you have; as long as you’ve got to stay here the rest of your life, I wonder you don’t make the best of it and go to psalm-singing, and all that, like the rest of ’em. I declare! if I was as old as you are, and had one foot in the grave, I’d begin to get ready for what’s coming—for I suppose something is coming some time, isn’t there?”

I rose up and tottered out of the room. Must Saul become one of the prophets to preach up to me

my duty? Oh, if I only dared to shake the very life out of that girl! Everything in this world is hateful, hateful! And if I would flee from it, where shall I flee?

I tear my hair as I write, and curse the day that I was born. And Juliet! unnatural, thankless child! What of the day when *you* saw the light?

XIX.

“ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

“ Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven.”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

JULIET came home from Boston in great spirits. Mother had been talking with her up in her room, and just as she was coming away she fell over a trunk and was dreadfully hurt. I can not think how that trunk came to be in the way. Juliet screamed so that everybody ran to see what was the matter, and father took mother in his arms and carried her to her own bed. We got her undressed somehow, though she was quite insensible. The doctor stayed here all that night and did what he could for her. He said but for Juliet's word, he should call it a fit of apoplexy. Father said she was not one of the red-faced, apoplectic sort, but the doctor said that was all nonsense. A lily could have such an attack if it only had blood in its veins. He bled mother and cupped her, and I really believe he would have leached her, but father declared he should not. I suppose the doctor knows, but somehow, the more he bled her the weaker she grew.

She was weak and sick for a good many weeks.

Father spent a great deal of time praying that God would spare her life till she had made her peace with Him. And in my poor way I did the same. Juliet was quite sobered down when she saw her mother lying there day after day in such a dull and heavy state. She tried to help us take care of her, but it never seemed to come handy to her to nurse sick people. Mother said she tried her by making such a bustle, and after a little while Juliet gave up the case to us and said she would see to things down-stairs.

All the while mother was shut up in her room she was silent and sorrowful. Sometimes, after she began to get better, I would see tears in her eyes, and sometimes she would look at father in a wishful sort of way, as if she had something to say to him, or wished he would say something to her.

It was well I had so much to do. For as soon as her first fright about her mother was over, Juliet told me she was going to be married to Frank in two or three months. She said she had not been to Boston, as was supposed, but had been at her friend's, Miss Boon's, in New York, and had seen Frank every day. At first I did not believe her. But at last he wrote me about it himself.

I never thought, when I began to write in this book, what a comfort it was going to be to me. It seems like talking about my troubles to somebody that pities me, while I am writing down what has happened.

When grandma died I felt as if I had been asleep and dreaming. Since then a great deal worse thing has happened to me even than that. I hope I do not murmur against God for sending me this trouble. But it must be that I do, else why am I so sad and sorrowful?

Frank and I were engaged to each other, I thought. Father had not said so in so many words, but he never hindered us from being together and corresponding, and Frank said of course we should be really engaged as soon as the period of probation was over. He said he loved me and never should change his mind about wanting to have me for his wife. I think now that I made an idol of him, and so sinned against God; but at the time I did not know how my heart was set on him.

Mother was very sick a long, long time. She needed a great deal of care. We never dared to leave her alone a single minute. If we did she would get to crying out and seem terrified, as if she saw some evil or frightful object. It took all father's time and all mine to nurse her, for she would not let any one else go near her. It seemed strange that she hated so to have Juliet come into the room. But I suppose it was because Juliet always hit her face when she fanned her, and shook the floor when she walked across the room; and then once she spilt cologne into mother's eyes and hurt her dreadfully. The reason she liked my nursing best was that I had

learned of grandma what to do and what not to do for sick people. And then I like to stay at home, and it comes handy to me; and it doesn't come handy to Juliet, because she never has been used to it.

Well! I suppose not seeing me, Frank got to thinking less of me. It was out of sight and out of mind with him. And seeing Juliet—and Juliet is very handsome and knows so much more than I do—he got, by degrees, to liking her the best. I can not blame him. The only wonder is how he ever came to like me at all. And then, as he says in the letter he wrote me about it, we were never really engaged. *I* thought we were, but he says he never did. He said father decided to have us defer our engagement, thinking our minds might change.

I hope nobody will ever know how much I cried over that letter. I think there are some things God is willing to have us keep secret from everybody else, if we honestly tell Him all about it. And I did tell Him everything—even the sinful passion I felt when I came to the place in Frank's letter where he said he hoped I would try to like Josiah Stone as well as I had liked him.

Father was very sorry for me when Frank broke off with me. He gathered me all up like a little baby in his arms and cried.

Then he said:

“Poor little motherless thing!” in a choking sort

of voice, a good many times. That was all he said at first.

But after a while, seeing that I did not seem to set myself about anything except nursing mother, and how I moped round, he said one day, all of a sudden :

“Try God, my child! Only try Him!”

I looked puzzled, not knowing what he meant.

“I know you love Him,” he said, “but it isn’t with all your heart. If you did you would be satisfied.”

Father never says much at a time. It isn’t his way. Perhaps I think the more of what he does say.

That night, when I went up to bed and had shut my door, I felt lonely and dreary. Somehow my little room, that used to look so pleasant, had looked dull and gloomy ever since I got Frank’s letter and after I had read it there.

I read my chapter and knelt down. But somehow, though I kept saying words over, I wasn’t praying. Then father’s words came to me—“Try God.”

It was just as if he had said: “There’s no use in trying anybody else. Nobody else can comfort you now.”

I burst out crying. I said, “No, I know there isn’t. Nothing seems as it used to seem.” And then I began to pray in earnest. Sometimes crying got the upper hand and sometimes praying did. But between them I got so near to God that I *knew* He heard me and saw me. I knew He pitied me and

loved me, though I did not see how He could. Yes, I saw now what father meant.

Let no one who has Christ say that all is lost when earthly friends are lost. Let no one forget that, "as one whom his mother comforteth, so He comforts the stricken heart." I know now how Paul and Silas sang in their prison-house, with their feet fast in the stocks, and how other songs can be sung in the night.

Poor mother has her troubles, too. Juliet has worried and harassed her almost to death. The very day after Frank sent me that farewell letter Juliet said she hoped I was not going to make a time about it, but just behave in a sensible way and consider how much more suitable a wife she would make than I could. For she said I talked very bad grammar and was awkward in my ways. And as soon as mother got really well again, one morning Juliet was missing. We found a letter in her room telling all about it.

She said she was going to some place where Frank was to meet her, and they should be married right away. She said she hated scenes, and was so afraid mother and I would get one up she had decided to slip off quietly without any fuss. And she said she was glad she could leave mother in such good hands as mine, and was sure I would make her a better daughter than she had done. That was very kind, I thought. I shall try to prove worthy of that opinion,

and make mother believe I am truly her daughter, given her by God to comfort her in this time of her great distress.

For she does seem almost beside herself. It seems Juliet has carried off some money and other things that mother says are as good as stolen, and that she never, never will forgive her for her undutiful behavior. Of course there is some misunderstanding about it. Juliet never would do such a dreadful thing as to take what did not belong to her. Poor mother! She just walks up and down, wringing her hands, and saying, "But I never will forgive her! Never! never!"

Father does not say a word. He looks sorrowfully at mother, and steals away to pray for her. It is a great thing to have father's prayers.

And in my poor way I pray for her too. My trouble was nothing to this, for Juliet was all she had.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

It is three months since Juliet went away. Sometimes it seems more like three years. When she stole away like a thief in the night, taking with her every cent of the money I had gathered together by years of economy and toil and care, my natural love, such as it was, turned into relentless hate. I said a thousand times I would never see her again, never forgive her. Mr. Woodford did not say a word, nor did Ruth. At first I hardly noticed their silence nor their

quiet sympathy and kindness. I could only go chafing up and down encompassed with rage and despair.

But one day, when I had cried for the thousandth time, "I will never forgive her," Mr. Woodford's silence attracted my attention.

I turned to him sharply, and said: "Mr. Woodford, why don't you say something? Why don't *you* say you will never forgive her? Has she not robbed your child of her youth, and her good looks, and her spirits, and all she had to hope for?"

"It is not for me to deny her forgiveness," he answered gently. "Indeed I do forgive her, with all my heart."

"It is easy for you to say so," I cried contemptuously. "You have no spirit or pride in you. For my part, I find it a luxury to hate even my own child when she wrongs me."

An answer seemed struggling to his lips, but he restrained himself. But as I stood confronting him his face was as the face of an angel. Its serenity and sweetness were the peacefulness of a victory that stood over against my defeat.

"What!" I cried again, "you pretend that you have ever known such provocation as mine, and that, knowing, you have risen superior to and conquered it?"

"No, my dear, I do not pretend to anything," he replied. "We all have our provocations, and we are all occasions of them to others. But we must forgive as we hope to be forgiven."

I was maddened by his quietness.

"Listen, Mr. Woodford," I cried. "If you knew but the tithe of my past history—but the *tithe*, I say—instead of sitting there, smiling and preaching forgiveness, you would be spurning me from your door!"

He got up and walked to and fro through the room.

At last, coming close to me, and taking me tenderly by the hand, he said:

"I do know it. I know the whole. And with my whole heart I have forgiven you."

"Since when?" I gasped, while everything became dim and confused before my eyes.

"Since many years," he answered. "Let us speak of it no more. Only bear with me this once while I plead with you to forgive as you would be forgiven."

I rushed from him to my own room and hid myself there.

"Many years!"

"Many years" he had known and yet forgiven me! "Many years" he had borne with my pride, my hardness, my insincerity! "Many years" I had confronted him with my arrogant, self-seeking, relentless nature! And he had forgiven me! I lay on the floor and watered it with my tears. Shame overwhelmed and crushed me. Before the simple goodness of this man my learning, my talents—they shrivelled into nothing and vanity!

But out of the chaos of my thoughts one rose clear and well-defined into living form:

This is the religion of Jesus Christ!

I said it to myself over and over and over again, as that long, lonely night of mingled agony and ecstasy dragged itself on.

We took breakfast next morning in absolute silence. Mr. Woodford only noticed my tearful face by redoubled gentleness and courtesy; Ruth glanced at me anxiously from time to time, but asked no questions even by her looks.

As we rose from the table I said to Mr. Woodford:

"Can you conveniently take me to see Mr. Strong this afternoon?"

He looked surprised.

"You are not fit to go out," he replied. "Mr. Strong would come to see you, I am sure. Let me send for him."

"No, I prefer to go to him."

Nothing more was said. When we reached the parsonage Mrs. Strong came out to meet us, saying that Mr. Strong had gone to visit a sick person and would not be back for an hour or more.

"It is Deacon Stone's wife," she added. "You have probably heard how sick she is."

No, I had not heard.

Mr. Woodford asked me if I chose to wait until Mr. Strong's return, and Mrs. Strong pressed me cordially to do so.

I begged Mr. Woodford to leave me, and to send for me before night.

XX.

KEZIA HEARS FROM PEMAQUID.

SAKES alive! Look here, mother! Our Ruth's gone and forgiv' Frank Weston, and they're coo-in' together like two young turtle doves. But 'twon't last, you mark my words; 'twon't last. There aint no dependence to be placed on that good-for-naught.

There, didn't I tell you so? That ere spark of our Ruth's has been an' jilted her wuss'n ever, and he and Juliet's run away! I guess they'd have run tighter than they did if *I'd* been around. Wouldn't I have liked to be after them with a horsewhip, and have licked 'em out of town! And as if 'twasn't enough to rob our Ruth of her spark, Juliet's robbed her ma out of all the money she'd laid up by scrimpin' and pinchin'. Oh, what a faculty she had for scrimpin'! She was the snuggest woman I ever see. And now that bad girl has run off with every cent. I'm *proper* glad. It served her right. Why, what can people expect when they bring up their children so sinful?

They say Mis' Woodford went into fits when she found her money was gone. She had an idea she

was a-savin' of it for Juliet, and then when it came to the scratch, she found she'd been a-savin' of it for herself.

What's that? It aint consistent to be so glad when people gits into trouble? La, mother, everybody's jist so, only they darsent show it out as I do. You're as glad as I be, and the Lord He knows it, for He looks at the heart. Why, when the Widder Larabee tumbled down on the ice, on the way to meetin', you was as pleased as parsnips; you enjoyed seein' her heels fly up, and her specs fly off, and her hymn-book go rollin' down the hill; you can't deny it. 'Taint in human natur' not to like to see folks get their dues. Have I got to set down and cry like a crocodile 'cause Mis' Woodford's got what belongs to her? Who give her her dues? Wasn't it Providence? And am I to fly out ag'inst Providence?

I shall have to spend a day of fastin' and prayer if I cherish such an ungodly spirit? Well, I'd rather spend ten days a-fastin' and a-prayin' than not to ha' got this news about Mis' Woodford. Nothin' never done me so much good.

I don't seem to have no feelin' for our Ruth? Am I to cry my eyes out because a kind Providence has rid her of a whiffle-whaffle of a fellow that didn't know his own mind two minutes runnin'?

She'll be feelin' awful? Well, what of that? Her bad feelins'll be sanctified to her. She'll live to be glad on 'em. Bad feelin's is a blessin'.

Mebbe Mis' Woodford's troubles'll be blessed to her? Mebbe they will; *I sha'n't do nothin' to hinder.*

Sings:

Two birds as black as crows has flew
 Away from Pemaquid,
 And left a little snow-white lamb
 A bleating there instid.
 Bleat away, poor little lamb,
 To hear you grieves me sore ;
 But there's a land where sighs shall cease,
 And sorrows be no more.
 Mis' Woodford she may weep and groan,
 And she may tear her hair,
 It serves her right, and not a rush
 Does old Keziey care.
 I see the Hand of Providence
 A guidin' of us all,
 I see His stripes a fallin' fast,
 Upon the great and small ;
 I see Him turnin' pitiful,
 And comfortin' of Ruth,
 And givin' back to that sweet maid
 Her roses and her youth ;
 I see the earth that swallered up
 Bad Korah and his crew,
 A openin' wide to swallow up
 Another wicked two ;
 So glory, glory be to God
 Who can't make no mistake ;
 A better woman may His hand
 Of old Kezia make !

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

Mrs. Strong took me into her small sitting-room and said very kindly : " I am sure I need not tell you

that we are fellow-sufferers. Frank was very dear to me and to my husband also. His wavering, uncertain course gave us a good deal of anxiety, it is true; but he was a warm-hearted, lovable boy, and we expected a good deal from him. I could not have believed him capable of the unmanly conduct he has been guilty of. Excuse my speaking on the subject," she continued. "It fills my thoughts, and it is to converse on it with Mr. Strong that you come, I conclude."

"No, I came on a more serious errand. Mrs. Strong, do you know anything of my past life? My life before I came to Pemaquid?"

She colored and looked embarrassed. But seeing me resolved to have an answer, she said, "Do not let us talk of those painful things. I assure you it is many years since a word on the subject has passed my lips."

Many years again. I was weak and spent with watching through the night, and could not control myself. She burst into tears almost simultaneously with me.

"Oh, I have been so sorry for you," she said. "We have both pitied you so. We have so longed to speak a word of comfort to you."

"Tell me, only tell me what you know; what my husband knows, everything. And oh, Mrs. Strong, do not spare me. Tell me the whole truth."

"I will," she said. "You remember a woman call-

ed Polly Hanson, who died here so long ago? When she was taken sick her mind ran much on past events in her history, and among other things on what she knew of yours. The doctor, dear good man, finding some of the neighbors were getting hold of the story, came to consult Mr. Strong as to what was best to be done. We thought we could remove her to our house and keep her from seeing persons who would make a bad use of her revelations. We did so at once, and she died here. We allowed no one to enter her room save ourselves. Mr. Woodford heard rumors of what was going on, and we had to let him question and try to silence her. There was some gossip about the village for several months after her death, but by degrees, seeing Mr. Woodford's conduct toward you unchanged, people began to believe that Polly's stories originated in her own brain, and the whole thing was forgotten."

"And knowing what I was, you went on treating me with kindness and sympathy," I cried. "And Mr. Woodford, oh, why did he not trample me under foot and cast me from his door!"

She looked surprised and pained.

"We only did to you what we would have had you do to us," she replied. "And as to Mr. Woodford, oh, he is so truly a Christian man! He could not fail to do the right and kind and beautiful thing."

I could only weep in silence. Where was my contempt for this woman who had nursed a miserable

dying pauper for my sake. I said to her at last, very earnestly : "Did Polly Hanson give you the impression that I was guilty of *crime*?"

"Yes," she said reluctantly.

"And may I tell you my story, exactly as it is?"

She gave another reluctant consent, and I spoke the truth, as before God.

"I was the only child of my parents, and they devoted all their energies to preparing me for this world. I was educated at considerable expense, and taught that to make a brilliant marriage was to be the business of my life. Notwithstanding their hopes and plans, I failed to do so at the early age they had expected it of me. The truth was, I had met secretly a young artist for whom I had conceived a passion, and was determined to give myself to him. I was only seventeen years old, and at that time had had no occasion to learn the value of money by the want of it. I was not aware that my parents had spent nearly all they possessed on my education, expecting a return in seeing me well established for life. They were beginning to feel the pressure of want when a rich old man named Grigs proposed for me. He was repugnant to me, but what with tears and prayers and dismal pictures of coming ruin, they persuaded and frightened me into the marriage. For a little time my new position dazzled and pleased me. Then I began to grow weary and to yearn for something real and substantial amid all this pretense of

felicity. That yearning summoned the young artist to my side by some mysterious agency. I saw him at first only as a friend. He gave me lessons in drawing, with my husband's knowledge and approbation. It was in a thoughtless, reckless moment that I let him persuade me to elope with him. I was willing to face any misery rather than the pain of not having him continually near me. In intention I sinned. But this woman, Polly Hanson, had her eye on me, and before I could carry out my plan she betrayed me to my husband. They both believed me to be more guilty than I was, and I was cast out of my home disgraced. I could not go to my mother for shelter and sympathy, for she was dead; not to my father's compassion, for he declared I had killed my mother. People vied with each other who should cast the first stone. My fancied lover fled from the avenger to Europe. I lost husband, father, mother, lover, at one stroke. Then pride came to the rescue. I hardened myself to meet my fate. It was easy to disappear from the scene of my disgrace, and under a new name to begin life afresh. I wandered away to a distant town, opened a school, and led a peaceable and harmless existence there. People supposed me to be a young widow. Juliet was born there amid scenes of poverty and want. My school was broken up by her birth; I was unknown and friendless; it was nobody's business to look after me, and I suffered for the bare necessities of life. It was thus the

iron of poverty entered my soul. I conceived a horror of it that wrought itself into my very being and became a part of myself. Oh, Mrs. Strong, I was only eighteen, and cares sit like a nightmare upon the young. I roused myself and rose above all the circumstances that dragged me down. I became cool, crafty, and circumspect. My beauty and my youth remained to me, my two staunch friends. I had another in my dauntless courage. So it came about naturally enough that I should marry again. I had lost all faith in men; I was drifting about at everybody's mercy; I could have a dishonest home, but I scorned iniquity like that, and cast about me for an honest one. Into that home I carried nothing but misery."

"Stop!" she said. "You carried pain there, but not misery. No one is miserable who can stay himself on God as Mr. Woodford can, and who can make hundreds of hearts sing for joy as he has done. If you had known him better, and trusted him, and told him your story as you have to me—I know his great, warm heart—he would have spared you all this deception and self-contempt. Yet more, if you had known God, and trusted Him, and left all your cares in His hand, whose heart is wider and warmer than all the hearts in the world put together, how much suffering you might have been spared! But do not be discouraged. He has brought you down so low only to lift you up. He makes excuses for you that no poor human being can. Suppose you see Father

Strong, and let him comfort you? He would delight to do it. He is the sunbeam of our house, running over with love for all God's creatures. Will you go?"

I said, feebly, that I would go anywhere and to anybody who could pity and help me.

She took me to his room. He is very deaf, but Mrs. Strong made him understand that here was some one in sore trouble, and left us alone together.

"I am very sorry for you, dear child," he said. "I don't know what your trouble is, but I'm well acquainted with One who does, and He'll comfort you. You just go and tell Him all about it; don't leave anything out because you're afraid it might look small to Him; nothing looks small in His eyes that grieves the souls He has made. You must go to the throne of His grace as bold as a lion and as meek as a lamb. You must remind Him of the promises He has made, and plead them before Him."

"Oh," I said, "I do not know how."

"Dear child, I will show you how. Say to Him, 'Be not far from me, for trouble is near.' And He will say, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Say, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' And He will reply, 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Say, 'Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted.' And just

hear His answer: 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' Tell Him that He has chastened you sore. And He will answer, 'I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.' Tell Him that fearfulness and trembling are come upon you, and hear His answer, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by name. Thou art Mine.'"

"But I have been such a sinner. You never heard of such a sinner."

"Maybe not, dear child, but *He* has. Hear what He says about it: 'Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help.' 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.'"

So he went on for hours, pouring in oil and wine out of the treasure-house of his memory, and touching the sore spots in my soul, as the tenderest mother touches her new-born child. I knelt down before this aged saint, and asked for his blessing. A more broken-hearted penitent never knelt to mortal man.

He rose up, laid his fatherly hand on my bowed head, and said: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee! The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee! The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace! Amen."

XXI.

“Behold, all things are become new.”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

SOMETHING like a miracle has taken place in this house. Mother has become a Christian. I do not know exactly how it began, but Juliet's going away was a great blow to her, and at first she was very, very angry, and kept saying she never would forgive her. I think father must have said something to her about that, for all of a sudden she began to shut herself up in her room, and when she came out it was plain she had been crying dreadfully. Since she came here she has never cried before that I know of. And besides crying, she seemed sort of broken down and tender, and would keep going to see Mr. Strong, and having him come here. If Mr. Strong was out when she went there, she would talk with Mrs. Strong by the hour together. That struck me, for I know she never could bear Mrs. Strong.

At last she spoke to me all of her own accord. She said father had broken her heart by forgiving her some

dreadful things she had done to him, and that that had set her to thinking. And growing sorrowful as she got to thinking, she went to praying; and that made her still more sorrowful. She *would* tell father every wrong thing she had done, though he did not like to have her do it, because he said his charity was not equal to God's. Well, if *father* is lacking in charity, what of the rest of us? She says it is his life that has preached to her, and Mr. Strong's life, and Mrs. Strong's, and even mine! Who could get lower than that? One night she could not sleep, her misery was so great, and father was praying with her, and reading the Bible, and crying by turns, for father is just like a woman when anything touches him. Mother became just as meek and humble as a little child. It made me cry whenever she spoke to me. And she was so earnest about learning the right way that she even would ask me to help her.

And now while I am writing this at one end of the table, she is sitting at the other end with the Bible before her, looking so peaceful and satisfied that I can't believe it's mother. And father takes such comfort in her! He has got one of her hands in his now, and I never saw him do that before. If things had gone smooth with Frank and me, perhaps this would never have come to pass. But Juliet's going off with him seemed to be just the last drop poor mother needed to fill her cup with disappointment and bitterness.

We talk a good deal now of Juliet. Mother says it is all her fault that she has turned out so. She says she never taught her anything that was right, and all the wonder is that things are no worse. Poor Juliet! I wonder she doesn't write to us and let us know where she is.

Mother does not write in her Journal now as much as she did. She says she does not need that comfort because she has so many others. But she has written a long letter to Samuel, telling him all that has happened to us, and beseeching him to come home. I never knew till she told me that it was something she did that angered him and drove him away. It is a long time since we, any of us, heard from Samuel, but father knows where he is, and thinks that after mother's letter he certainly will come.

Dear father seems so contented and happy now. Only now and then, when he looks at me, he clouds up and sighs. I *must* try to be cheerful and pleasant, so that he need not be grieving so for me.

It is a good while since I wrote that. I have had too much to do and too much to think of to feel like writing. In the first place it is so nice about mother. Nobody would believe how changed she is. She is just as gentle and humble as a little child. She has Mr. and Mrs. Strong to tea just as often as father wants, and we have meetings here, and mother acts as if she had lived in Pemaquid all her life, and liked

Pemaquid ways and Woodford ways. But I've got something else to put down that is even stranger than that. We've got a baby here. It's three months ago to-night that, just as we were sitting down to tea, the stage drove up to the door and a man got out with something wrapped carefully in his arms. We all left the table and ran to the door. I'm sure I don't know what I thought, but I thought of everybody before I thought of Samuel, and when he came in and walked straight up to mother and kissed her, and she held out her arms and he put a baby into them, we all just burst out crying together.

I don't know how it was, but I suppose it's being round so much among the sick, the first look I took of Samuel, standing there so pale and quiet, went through me like a knife. I knew he hadn't come home to stay. I knew what hand had got hold of him, and that it wasn't a hand we could snatch him from. Father and mother were too glad to see what I saw. Father only saw his son come back to him, and mother only saw that she was forgiven. I don't know which of us made the most of a time over the baby. Father got it away from mother, and cried over it and laughed over it; and I got it away from father, and ran into the kitchen and mixed a little cream with warm water to feed it with, and got out what it needed from its father's carpet-bag—for of course he was its father; but if he was, where was its mother, poor little darling?

Such a happy time as we had round the table that night! Samuel got quite a color when he had his tea and some of the bread and butter he had been brought up on, and I began to think I might have thought too much of his looking sick. He said nothing about the baby's mother, only he told us he had come home for good, and that he was going to give the baby to me when he had done with it. That night I went up to bed as proud and as rich as a queen, with the little thing in my arms, and father following after to give all sorts of advice about it, and mother taking its clothes out of its trunk and filling all the chairs with piles of little frocks and such things. Samuel went to bed early, in his own room; for mother, after she wrote to him to come home, had kept it in order with her own hands. The next day Samuel told us all that had happened to him since the day he had left Pemaquid. How he had gone into business, and been married, and how his dear little wife had made a new home for him in place of the one he had lost, till at last the baby came to make everything pleasanter even than it was before. But whether it was the climate he had taken her to, or what it was, he couldn't say—the baby was only a few months old when its pretty young mother died. At that very time came mother's letter begging him to forgive her, and to come home. So he had settled up his affairs, and taken his little motherless child in his arms, trusting it to no other care till

he fairly could put it right into ours. It was wonderful to see how handy he was with the baby, and how he loved it; but it isn't in nature for men to be confined with such cares, and by degrees I got my darling all to myself, to lie on my arm all night, to feed and to wash and to dress, and to be just the same as my own baby—only father would give a good deal of advice, and would have the little fellow take his naps in his arms, and would teach him all sorts of bad habits by walking up and down with him by the hour together. And mother, who hates to sew, fell to making short frocks in place of the long ones, so that he could have room to kick and to grow; and when we got him into them, and put on his shoes and stockings, it's a wonder the bells of the meeting-house did not ring of their own accord!

Samuel looks better than he did when he came home, and does not complain of anything. Sometimes I think I was too much frightened about him the night he got home. But then again when I hear his prayers in the family and at the conference meetings, I can see that he's getting ripe for heaven, and won't be able to keep away from it much longer. Father does not mistrust it. He takes solid comfort in Samuel, and consults him about everything. He wants to turn over all his business into Samuel's hands; but Samuel puts him off from day to day, and nothing is settled between them.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

The repose I have been vainly seeking so many years has at last come to me. My burden fell from my shoulders as did Christian's at the sight of the cross. After carrying it so long, I feel now like one who treads on air. Yet the remembrance of what is past; the wrong I have done to others, and the sin of which I have been guilty, these must cost me life-long sorrow. But I bless God, who led my weary footsteps to this little Puritan village, and brought me under the influence of some of the best people the world contains. I can see now that their power over me, the power of their godly lives, began almost immediately. I resisted it with all my might; but, blessed be God, its dominion became daily more powerful. Oh, that I had begun in the days of my early youth to walk in the path I now find so pleasant! By what strange infatuation was I led to avoid the first steps that could lead to peace--repentance and confession?

Having now consecrated myself publicly and solemnly to God, and being resolved in His strength to live to and for Him, I desire also to be to my long-suffering husband all I can become for his highest happiness and best good. I desire to make his home the truly Christian, happy home he expected I would do when, in a moment of strange infatuation, he asked me to become his wife. May God help me to

cleave to this desire till it becomes interwoven into my very being, and proves to be a part of myself.

Our family has become somewhat re-united. Samuel has come home, bringing with him his little boy, a genial, healthy child, who is like a broad ray of sunshine on the path of every one of us. Samuel is still like his father. I have the undeserved comfort of having his confidence, and, to a certain extent, his affection. He calls me mother, and talks with me frankly and fully about the past and the future. I suppose it is the early sorrow through which he has passed that gives him so light a hold on this world. Some of his expressions remind me of his mother. Ah! I have been reading with new eyes that saintly record of hers. No wonder that I was stirred to my very foundations when, on that dreary Sunday long ago, I looked idly over its pages!

I feel satisfied that Samuel will only gladden his father's life a little while. He seems to me very ill. Nothing we can procure tempts his appetite, though when he first came home he did, for a little time, seem to enjoy our country fare. We need Kezia's skillful hands now. It is next to impossible to fill her place. All the girls rush into the factory, and Ruth has to spend much of her time in the kitchen. Dear, good child! The baby, who is her special charge, is gradually weaning her from Frank, and one now hears her singing about the house almost as gayly as ever. *Almost!* But there is a difference.

I hear next to nothing from Juliet. There is only one thing I can do for her, and that is to pray that God will open her eyes and touch her heart and bring her to repentance. She is my only care now, and that care I have ceased to bear alone.

Take us altogether we are a happy family. I see now that real blessedness may be built up on the ruins of fancied felicity; nay, may exist in the very midst of much outward trial.

Ruth has gone for some days to take charge of a sick friend, and I am left to care for her precious baby. How differently I shall do my share of his training from the miserable one I gave my own poor child! It was her mother who taught her to despise religion, to yield to her evil passions, to play the hypocrite. She was not born more depraved than other girls; but I never cultivated her conscience, never taught her to pray, never led her to live for anything but herself; and she is living now on money obtained by me through mean economies and petty fraud.

As I look into the baby's innocent face I recall a time when *my* baby's was as innocent. Oh, my poor Juliet; day and night I will plead for you till you, too, come to the repentance that, if it has its bitter moments, has thousands that are sweet.

XXII.

“ I can call spirits from the vasty deep.”

“ And will they come when you do call for them ?”

Sometimes they do.

MRS. WOODFORD TAKES TEA AT THE PARSONAGE.

“ I WOULD not trust any one to tell the news, dear Mrs. Strong, and have come to spend the afternoon, and if you ask me to stay to tea I shall.

“ Ruth had to give up her precious baby to me, and go to nurse Mercy Sutton.

“ You did not know she was sick? Well, she is, and nobody would suit her but Ruth. I am not very handy with babies, but this little fellow is no trouble at all. I was sitting with him on my lap when our girl came in and said she was going to leave; she never could abide a baby, it made so much washing; and she must look for a place where there wasn't no young ones. I begged her to stay till Ruth came home; but no, go she must, and go she would. She said she thought her health would be better if she went South. I asked her how far south, and she said to Kennebunk Port.

“ It was awkward, being left alone, especially as I am

no cook ; but I thought I would do the best I could. Samuel and his father would relieve me in the care of baby, and as there was no coffee for next day's breakfast, I knew I must roast some in the afternoon. This is work I particularly dislike, for I never do it well ; all my performances in the kitchen are awkward for want of early training in household duties.

“ As I opened the kitchen door I stood spell-bound on the threshold. There sat Kezia, in her old seat, with the very checked apron she had on the day she left us, engaged in looking over the coffee which had just come in from the Deacon's store.

“ She just glanced up from her work on seeing me, and went on with it with the eye of a connoisseur.

“ ‘ There's stones enough in this 'cre coffee to build a tomb with,’ said she. ‘ The Deacon ought to know better than to send us such stuff. I've a good mind to carry it all back, only there aint none for breakfast, and it's rather late to go and come this afternoon.’

“ I fell into her humor at once. If she chose to forget she had ever left us, well and good.

“ ‘ I'm afraid there isn't bread enough for breakfast, either,’ I said, nonchalantly, though it was with a sigh of relief I mentally welcomed the good old creature back again.

“ ‘ I guess you won't starve under me!’ she returned. ‘ Don't you bother about nothin'.’

“ And to be sure, there sat the big bread pan, covered with its snowy cloth, as in the long-gone days.

“‘I guess it’s as good a rising of bread as you’ve seen this many a day,’ she continued. ‘But, la! don’t you stand there a-tiring of yourself; I rather think I know the way about this house by this time.’

“I went back to Samuel, with whom I had left the baby, and, snatching it from him, ran with it to the kitchen. Kezia dropped her coffee and jumped up from her chair.

“‘Is he your’n?’ said she.

“Her assumed character was all gone now. Kezia, with her own good, big heart stood before me with tears sparkling in her eyes.

“‘I’m *drcadful* glad to get home!’ she cried. ‘My! what legs he’s got, now, aint he? It’s what I’ve always said, and if it was the last word I had to speak, I’d say the same: a house without a baby aint a house. I wouldn’t give the snap o’ my finger for it. Come here to your old Kezey, you precious little lamb, you. Oh, you and me, won’t we have times together?’

“‘It’s Samuel’s baby, you know,’ I said.

“‘La! you don’t say so; I never heerd the like! All I heard was you’d met with a change; and mother, she went to live with my brother and his wife; and says she, “Kezey, you go back and see if they’ll make up with you.” And so I came. But I never heerd nothing about no baby!’

“By this time Samuel had come into the kitchen, and was laughed and cried over at intervals, while

between whiles the coffee was put down to roast, and had a vigorous stir every other minute.

“‘Here comes Mr. Woodford; he’ll be glad to see you back again, Kezia,’ I said.

“‘I don’t want to see him this afternoon,’ she said, shrinking back. ‘I can’t stand it to have everything come to once. That ’ere baby’s near about upset me. I can’t see the coffee, nor nothing, my eyes they do plague me so.’

“I promised not to tell Mr. Woodford of her arrival, and she contrived to keep out of his way till the next morning at breakfast, when she came dashing in with hot biscuits, and her usual business air, and the salutation :

“‘We’re most out o’ rye meal, Mr. Woodford, and you may as well get a barrel of flour while you’re about it; I’ve only got a handful left.’

“Mr. Woodford leaned back in his chair, and looked at her with mild surprise. For a moment he was almost deluded into the belief that she had never left us; that he had been dreaming, and was now but just awake. He glanced helplessly at me, then at Samuel; our impenetrable faces threw no light on his perplexity. He recovered himself almost instantly, and said, with a smile :

“‘You made the last barrel go a good way, Kezia; it’s more than ten years since you asked for a new one.’

“She smiled grimly and got out of the room; and

when we burst into a peal of happy laughter, we heard her join in the chorus from the kitchen with right good will."

"I am delighted to hear it all. The family is complete now. You'll never have another care."

"No, I never shall. Kezia is getting everything into order, as of old. Her tin pans are almost as bright as silver; you might eat off the kitchen floor; even the tea-kettle sings a new song. Then she knows exactly what to make for Samuel, to tempt his appetite. She has thrown all the 'doctor's stuff' out of the window, and is brewing decoctions of her own. I can not help hoping she may bring the dear boy round."

"I don't know about that. It seems to me that he's got his mother's wings tacked to his shoulders, and will fly up, some day, as she did. And why not? It is cruel to keep people out of heaven who want to go there."

"Ah, but you are doing all you can to keep Father Strong out of it."

"Yes, I know; it is such a blessing to have such an aged saint in the house. By the by, he has lent me a journal to read; such old-fashioned spelling you never saw. Take it home and show it to Ruth, if you like."

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Dear old noisy, bustling Kezia has come back! It seems too good to be true. But there she is, rushing

about the kitchen, making stacks of good things, screeching out songs till she makes the house ring, and just about distracted about the baby. Oh, my baby! How little I thought when I was pining my life away for what my heavenly Father took from me in mercy, that He was all the time preparing this beautiful gift for me. It makes me so ashamed!

Father and mother took tea at the parsonage last week, and Mrs. Strong lent mother a printed letter, or sort of journal, written by Father Strong's great-aunt, on a journey she made ever and ever so many years ago. If it amuses me so much now, it will sound yet more quaint and funny to baby, when he grows up to be a man. So, if Father Strong is willing, I mean to get a blank-book and copy out some of the best of it for him. I mean to copy out for him everything I can get hold of that I think he will enjoy reading. I used to think I should have children and grandchildren. But I never shall now. Baby is the only child I shall ever have. That does not make me unhappy. Nothing does now, for I am satisfied with God.

KEZIA GOES UP TO THE STORE.

“Well, now, Deacon Stone, have I bin gone ten year, or aint I bin away a day? It seems to me as if I hadn't been away, and then ag'in as if I had. It beats all! Well, there warn't no baby when I was here afore; I know that, and you oughter see our'n.

“What’s that? All babies is alike? It’s no such a thing! Our baby aint like any other in the ’varsel world! And such times as we’re havin’ to our house!

“(I want six nutmegs and a stick of cinnamon.)

“Why, it’s as easy to live consistent there now as down to the meetin’-house!

“The Squire, his face it shines like Moses in the burning bush; his prayers is all turned to psalms, and he’s as happy as the day is long.

“(A pound of raisins and a quarter of a pound of currants).

“And our Ruth, she always was as good as gold, but now she’s all the things you read about in the Bible; not that I pretend I’ve ever see any of ’em, but I believe my Bible, every livin’ word on it, and our Ruth is all made of precious stones, jasper and sapphire and chalcedony and emerald and sardonyx and jacinth and amethyst, and all the rest of ’em that I disremember.

“You believe it all, and could take your Bible oath on’t, and she’s just the girl for your ’Siah?

“She’ll never look at your ’Siah or any other feller ag’in, not she! She’s fit her way through her troubles like a soldier, and has come out victorious through Him that loved her. But she got wounded in that ’ere battle nigh to death, and she couldn’t survive another such a scrimmage, no, not for all the people of the male persuasion in the world, except babies.

“(Five yards of that ’ere calico).

“(A skein of blue yarn and a ball of pipin’ cord).

“There’s no manner of use talkin’ ’Siah to her, and he’d better put his eye on somebody of his own kind ; ’Cindy Muggs, or Cerinthy Wiggins, or Jane Ann Hobbs ; *they’d* all of them have him and divide him among ’em like Turks ; or is it Turkeys ? I aint got much book learnin’.

“Air you sure you’ve give me good measure ? The last pound of tea weighed light. Well, as I was sayin’, Mis’ Woodford had dropped all her snug ways, and goes around among the widders, carrying of ’em such comforts as lone widders needs ; and she reads her Bible and ses her prayers and lives as consistent as any other member of the Church.

“(A bread-pan, Deacon, the biggest you’ve got. Mis’ Woodford said I could get a spic-and-span new one the fust time I come to the store. And I want a firkin to hold meal. And a paper of No. 9 needles ; no, two papers, one sharps and one between. And a pound of old Hyson. Lemme see, is there anything else ? Oh, Mis’ Woodford wants a paper of pins and a gallipot and a piece of chalk and a broom. And our Ruth, she wants this phial filled with rose-water and two yards of flannel for the baby. And, la ! I came near forgettin’ the molasses jug ; here it is ; I’ll have it filled ; and that makes me think—I want a quarter of a pound of mustard-seed to put in my pickles and a quarter of a pound of ginger for my

ginger-bread. And eight pie-plates and a puddin' dish; and our bean-pot it got cracked and I must have a new one. The Squire's helps have destroyed half the things I left in the kitchen. Yes, there's one thing more; a little reddin' to red my fire-place, and a little blue clay to mix with it when I do the sittin'-room fire-place. You see I make a little difference between the family and me. There, now, put up a Bristol brick and some rottenstone and sweet oil; the andirons has growed dingy while I was away. And I tell you what, I pity andirons that is dingy when I take 'em in hand.)

“Well, I declare! how'm I ever to git all these things home to onct? I s'pose I ought to sent Luke up with the sleigh. Never mind! I'll manage it somehow. Good-bye, Deacon.”

XXIII.

THE JOURNAL OF THE GREAT AUNT OF ABIATHAR STRONG, DURING A TOUR FROM THE TOWN OF BOSTON TO THE CITY OF NEW YORK IN THE YEAR 1704. ABRIDGED AND COPIED BY RUTH WOODFORD FOR HER BABY.*

MONDAY, October ye 2d, 1704.

ABOUT three o'clock I began my journey from Boston to New-Haven, being about Two Hundred Mile. My Kinsman, Capt. Robert Luist, waited on me as farr as Dedham, where I was to meet ye Western post. I visited the Reverend Mr. Belcher, Minister of ye town, and tarried there till evening, hoping ye post would come along. But he not coming I resolved to go to Billingses, where he used to lodg, being 12 miles further. But being ignorant of the way, Madam Belcher, seeing no persuasions of her good Spouse or hers could prevail with me to Lodg there that night, very kindly went with me to ye Tavern, where I hoped to get my guide, and desired of the Hostess to inquire of her guests whether any

* The original Journal was published in New York many years ago.

of them would go with me. But they being tyed by the Lipps to a pewter-engine, refused to go. At last a man a Century old, I trow, arose and demanded what I would give him. "Well, Mr. John," sais I, "make your demands." "Why, half a piece of eight and a dram," sais John. I agreed, and gave him a Dram (now) in hand to bind the bargain. His shade on his Hors resembled a globe on a Gate Post. His Hors resembled a Ghost.

When we had Ridd about an how'r, wee came into a thick swamp wch, by Reason of a great fogg, startled mee. But nothing dismay'd John; he had encountered thousands of such Swamps, having a Universall Knowledge in the woods. After we left the swamp, we reached the house where I was to Lodg. But I had not made many steps into the house, ere I was Interrogated by a young lady, who Rored out: "Law for me, who are you, coming here at this time a night? I never see a woman on the Rode so Dreadful late, in all the days of my 'versall life. I'm scar'd out of my wits."

I stood aghast, Prepareing to reply, when in comes my Guide. To him Madam turn'd, Roreing out, "Lawful heart, John, is it you? How de do! Where in the world are you going with this woman? Who is she?" John made no ansr, but sat down in the corner, fumbled out his black Junk, and saluted that instead of Debb; she then turned agen to me and fe'l anew into her silly questions, without asking

me to sitt down. I told her shee treated me very rudely, and I did not think it my duty to answ'r her unmannerly Questions. I paid honest John with money and dram, according to contract, and Dismist him, and pray'd Miss to tell me where I might Lodg. She conducted me to a little back Lento, wch. was almost filled with the bedstead, wch. was so high I was forced to climb on a chair to gitt to ye wretched bed that lay on it, and on wch I stretched my tired limbs.

Tuesday, Oct. ye third, I set out with the Post and rode till two in the afternoon, when I stopped for Refreshments, and was served with Pork and Cabbage, of wch I swallowed a Mouthful. I then took Another Hors and a Guide, who rode very hard; and having crossed Providence Ferry, we come to a river, which they Generally ride thro'. But I dare not venture, so the Post got a Ladd and Cannoo to take me to the other side. I had to be very circumspect, through fear of being upset and engulfed, sitting with my hands fast on each side, my eyes stedy, not daring to budg my tongue a hair's breadth more on one side of my mouth than tother, nor so much as think on Lott's wife, for a wry thought would have oversett our wherey, but was soon put out of pain by feeling the Cannoo on shore. Rewarding my sculler, again mounted and made the best of our way forwards. The Rode here was very even and ye day pleasant, it Being now near Sunsett. But the Post told mee we had neer 14 miles to Ride to the next

Stage (where we were to Lodg). I askt him of the rest of the Rode, foreseeing we must travail in the night. He told me there was a bad River we were to Ride through, which was so very fierce a hors could sometimes hardly stem it; But wee should soon be over. I cannot express the concern of mind this relation sett me in; no thoughts but those of the dang'ros River could entertain my Imagination—Sometimes seeing myself drowning, otherwhiles drowned, and at the best like a holy Sister, Just come out of a Spiritual Bath in dripping Garments.

Now was the Glorious Luminary, with his swift coursers, arrived at his Stage, leaving poor me with the rest of this part of the lower world in darkness. The only Glimering we now had was from the spangled Skies, whose Imperfect Reflections rendered every object formidable. Each lifeless Trunk, with its shattered Limbs, appear'd an Armed Enymie; and every little stump like a Ravenous devourer. Nor could I so much as discern my Guide, when at a distance, which added to the terror.

Thus, absolutely lost in Thought, and dying with the very thoughts of drowning, I came up with the post. Soon we descended a Hill and I knew by the Going of the Hors we had entered the water which my Guide told mee was the hazzardos River he had told me off, and hee, Riding up close to my Side, Bid me not fear—we should be over Imediately. I now ralyed all the courage I was mistriss of, Knowing that

I must either Venture my fate of drowning or be left like ye Children in the wood. So, as the Post bid me, I gave Reins to my Nagg, and, sitting as Stedy as Just before in the Cannoo, in a few minutes got safe to the other side, which he told me was the Narragansett Country. We rode on in the darkness, the branches of the trees tearing my face, and my Imagination full of alarms.

Now, coming to ye foot of a hill, I found great difficulty in ascending; But b'ing got to the Top, was there amply recompensed with the friendly Appearance of the kind Conductress of the night, Just then Advancing above the Horizontall Line—The Raptures wch the Sight of that fair Planett produced in mee, caus'd me, for the moment, to forget my present weariness and past toils; and Inspir'd me for most of the remaining way with very divirting tho'ts—From hence the way being smooth and even, the night warm and serene, and the Tall and thick Trees at a distance, especially when the moon glowd light through the branches, filled my Imagination with the pleasant delusion of a Sumptuous citty, fill'd with famous Buildings and churches, with their spiring steeples, Balconies, Galleries and I know not what; Grandeurs wch I had heard of, and wch the stories of foreign countries had given me the Idea of. Being thus agreeably entertain'd without a thou't of anything but thoughts themselves, I on a suden was Rous'd by the Post's sounding his horn and I knew we had

reached our Lodg. Here I had a little chocolate, and betook me to bed, but no sleep could I get, through the Roreing of the Town-topers in the next room. I heartily fretted and wish't 'um tongue-tyed ; but with as little success as a friend of mine, who was kept awake by a county Left and a Sergent, Insigne and a Deacon contriving how to bring a triangle into a Square.

Oct. 4.—At about four in the morning, set out for Kingston, and rode twenty-two miles without being able to bait our Horses. The post encouraged me by saying we should be well-accommodated at mr. Devill's; but I questioned whether we ought to go to the Devil to be helpt out of affliction. But we fared hard at his hand, only unlike t'other one, he let us depart. Leaving this habitation of Cruelty, we rode two miles further where we found tollerable accommodation, and poor weary I slipt away to enter my mind in my Journal.

Next day we proceeded through the Narraganset country and about one in the afternoon came to Paukataug River, now very high—Stop at a Hutt where dwelt a guide who would conduct me over the Waters. It was built of clapboards, so much asunder, that Light came through, everywhere; the door tyed on with a cord, in place of hinges; The floor the bare earth, the furniture a Bedd with a glass bottle hanging at ye head on't, an earthen cupp, a small pewter Bason, a Bord wth sticks to stand on instead of a ta-

ble, and a block or two in ye corner instead of chairs— Having ventured over the River and rode on very slowly thro' Stonington, Octobr. ye 5th I sat forward for New London where, being safely arrived at the house of Mrs. Prentices, between 9 and 10 at night; waited on Rev. Mr. Gurdon Saltonstall, minister of that place, who very kindly invited me to stay that night at his house, where I was very handsomely Lodged; and made good the great character I had before heard of him, viz.: that he was the most affable, courteous, Generos and best of men.

Oct. 6.—I got up very early in Order to have somebody to go with mee to New Haven. A young Gentleman was provided by my hospitable entertainer, and wee advanced on toward Seabrook. The Rodes are very bad all along this way, Incumbered wth Rocks and mountainous passages, wch were very disagreeable to my tired carcass. In going over a bridge my hors stumbled, and I narrowly escaped falling over into the water. But through God's Goodness I met with no harm. In about half a mile's Riding I come to an ordinary, were well entertained by a woman of about 70 and vantage, but of as Sound Intellectuals as one of 17. We arrived at Saybrook ferry about two of the clock, and crossing it, stopped to bait and pd sixpence apiece for our dinners, wch was only *Smell*. About seven at night we came to Killingsworth.

Sat. Oct. 7.—We sett out early in the Morning,

and being something unacquainted wth the way, we ask't it of a Young fellow wee mett, and he said wee must Ride a little further, and turn down by the corner of Uncle Sam's Lott. My Guide vented his spleen at the Lubber, and we soon after came into the Rhode, and about 2 in the afternoon arrived at New Haven, where I was received with all Possible Respects and civility. They are governed by the same Laws as wee in Boston (or little differing) thr'out this whole Colony of Connecticut, and much the same way of Church Government, and many of them good, Sociable people, and I hope Religious too; but a little too much Independant in their principalls, and, as I have been told, were formerly in their Zeal very Riggid in their Administration towards such as their Laws made Offenders, even to a harmless Kiss or Innocent merriment among young people.

Their Diversions in this part of the Country are on Lecture days and Training days mostly; on the former there is Ridings from town to town, and on training days the youth divert themselves by Shooting at the Target, as they call it, when hee who hits nearest the white has some yards of Red Ribbon presented him, wch being tied to his hat band, ye two ends streaming down his back, he is led away in Triumph wth great applause, as the winners of the Olympick Games. They generally marry very young; the males oftener as I am told under twenty than above.

There are great plenty of Oysters all along by the

seaside, as farr as I Rode in the Collony, and those very good. And they generally lived very well and comfortably in their families. But too Indulgent (especially ye farmers) to their slaves, suffering too great familiarity from them, permitting ym to sit at Table and eat with them (as they say to save time), and into the dish goes the black hoof with the white hand. As to the Indians in the towns I passed through, they were the most savage of all the savages of that kind that I had ever seen.

Being at a merchant's house, in comes a tall country fellow, with his alfageos full of Tobacco—for they seldom Loose their Cudd, but keep Chewing and Spitting as long as they'r eyes are open,—he advanc't to the middle of the Room, makes an Awkward Nodd, and spitting a large deal of aromatic Tincture, he gave a scrape with his shovel-like shoo, leaving a small shovelfull of dirt on the floor, made a full stop, Hugging his own pretty Body with his hands under his arms, stood staring row'n'd him, like a Catt let out of a Baskett. At last, like the Creature Balaam Rode on, he opened his mouth and said, “have you any Ribinen for Hatbands to sell, I pray?” The Questions and Answers about the pay being past, the Ribin is bro't and opened, Bumpkin Simpere cries, its confounded Gay I vow; and beckoning to the door, in cōmes Jane Tawdry, dropping about 50 curtsees, and stands by him; hee shows her the Ribin—“*Law, you,*” sais shee, “*it's right gent; do*

you take it, 'tis *dreadful pretty*." Then she inquires: "Have you any *hood silk I pray?*" which being bro't and bought, "Have you any *thred silk to sew it with?*" says she; wch being accommodated with they departed. They generally stand after they come in a great while speechless, and sometimes don't say a word till they are askt what they want, which I Impute to the awe they stand in of the merchants, who they are constantly almost indebted too; and must take what they bring without Liberty to choose for themselves; but they serve them as well, making the merchants stay long enough for their pay.

¶ We may observe here the great necessity and bennifitt of Education and Conversation; for these people have as Large a portion of mother witt, or Sometimes a Larger, than those who have bin brought up in citties; But for want of emprovements, Render themselves almost Ridiculous, as above. They are generally very plain in their dress, throuout ye Colony, as I saw, and follow one another in their modes. Their Chief Red Letter day is St. Election, wch is annually Observed according to Charter, to choose their Govenr, a blessing they can never be thankful enough for, as they will find, if ever it be their hard fortune to loose it—The present Governor in Conecticott is the Honble John Winthrop, Esq. a Gentleman of an Ancient and Honorable family, whose Father was Governor here sometime before, and his grandfather had bin Govn of Massachusetts—This gentleman is a very

curteous and affable person, much given to Hospitality, and has by his good services gain'd the affections of the people as much as any who had bin before him in that post.

Dec. 6.—Being by this time well Recruited after my Journey, I set out from N. Haven with my Kinsman, Mr. Thomas Trowbridge, and about 11 same morning, came to Stratford ferry; wch crossing, Baited our horses, and wd have eaten a morsell ourselves. But the Pumpkin and Indian mixt Bred had such an Aspect, that we left it, and proceeded forward, and at seven at night, came to Fairfield, where we Lodg'd. Early next morning we set off for Norwalk, from its half Indian name of *North-walk*, where about 12 we arrived, and Had a Dinner of Fryed Vension, very savory. From hence we hasted towards Rye, walking and leading our horses near a mile together, up a prodigious high Hill; arrived about nine at night, and took up our Lodgings at an ordinary which a French family kept. Being very hungry, I desired a fricasee wh was managed so contrary to my notion of Cookery, that I hastened to bed supperless. Being exceeding weary, I laid my poor Carkes (never more tired) and found my Covering as scanty as my bed was hard. Annon I heard a noise in the next room, the men complaining their leggs lay out of their Bed by reason of its shortness. Poor I made but one Grone; wh was from the time I went to bed, to ye time I Riss, wch was about 3 in the morning.

About seven in the morn we come to New Rochell, a french town, where we had a good breakfast, and in the strength of that, about an hour before sunsett, got to York. Here I apply'd myself to Mr. Burrough's, a merchant, to whom I was recommended by my Kinsman, Capt. Prout, and received great Civilities from him and his Spouse, who were now both deaf, but very agreeable in their Conversation, diverting me with pleasant stories of their knowledge in Britain, from whence they both came. Mr. Burrough's went with me to Vendue, where I bought about 100 Rheem of paper, wch was retaken in a fly-boat from Holland and sold very Reasonably here. And at Vendue I made a great many acquaintances amongst the good women of the town, who curteously invited me to their houses and generously entertained me.

The city of New York is a pleasant, well-compacted place, situated on a commodious River, wch is a fine harbor for shipping. The Buildings, Brick Generally, very stately and high, though not altogether like ours in Boston. The Bricks of some of the Houses are of divers Coullers and laid in Checkers, and being glazed, look very agreeable. The inside of them are neat to admiration; the wooden work (for only the walls are plastered) and the Sumerr and Girt are plained and kept very white scowr'd, as so is all the partitions, if made of Bords. The fireplaces have no Jambs (as ours have), But the

Backs run flush with the walls, and the Hearth is of Tyles, and is as far out into the Rooms at the Ends as before the fire, which is generally five feet in the Low'r rooms; and the piece over where the mantle tree should be is made as ours, with Joiners work, and, as I suppose, is fastened to iron rodds inside. The House where the Vendue was had Chimney Corners like ours, and they and the hearths were laid with the finest tile that I ever see, and the stair-cases laid all with white tile, which is ever clean, and so are the walls of the Kitchen, which had a Brick floor. They were making Great preparations to Receive their Governor, Lord Cornbury, from the Jerseys, and for that End raised the militia to Gard him on shore to the fort.

They are Generaly of the Church of England, and have a New England Gentleman for their minister, and a very fine church, set out with all Customary requisites. There are also a Dutch & Divers Conventicles, as they call them, viz., Baptist, Quakers, &c. They are not strict in keeping the Sabbath as in Boston and other places where I had bin, But seem to deal with great exactness as farr as I see. They are Sociable to one another, and Curteous and Civill to strangers, and fare well in their houses. The English go very fasheonable in their dress—But the Dutch, especially the middling sort, differ from our women, in their habitt go loose, ware French muches, which are like a Capp & a head-band in

one, leaving their ears bare, which are set out with Jewells of a large size, and many in number, and their fingers hoop't with Rings, Some with large stones in them, of many Coullers, as were their pendants in their ears, which you should see very old women wear as well as young.

They have Vendues very frequently and make their Earnings very well by them, for they treat with good Liquor Liberally; and the Customers drink as Liberally and generally pay for it as well, by paying for that which they Bidd up briskly for, after the sack has gone plentifully about, tho' sometimes good penny worths are got there. Their Diversions in the Winter is Riding Slays about three or four Miles out of Town, where they have Houses of entertainment, at a place called The Bowery, and some go to friend's Houses, who handsomely treat them. Mr. B. cary'd his spouse and Daughter and myself to one Madam Dowe, a Gentlewoman that lived at a farm House, who gave us a handsome Entertainment of five or six Dishes, and choice Beer and metheglin, Cyder, etc., all of wh. she said was the product of her farm. I believe we met 50 or 60 slays that day; they fly with great swiftness, and some are so furious that they'll turn out of the path for none except a Loaden Cart.

Having transacted the affair I went upon, after about a fortnight's stay, I left New York with no little regret, and Thursday, Dec. 21, set out for New Haven, with my kinsman Trowbridge and the man

that waited on me about one afternoon, and about three came to the half-way house about ten miles out of town, where we Baited and went forward, and about 5 came to Spiting Devil, where they pay three pence for passing over with a horse. We unhappily lost our way, and being overtaken with a great storm of wind and snow, wh. set full in our faces about dark, we were very uneasy. But meeting one Gardner who lived in a cottage thereabout, offered us his fire to sit by, having but one poor Bedd, and his wife not well, or he would go to a House with us where we might be better accommodated. Thither we went. But a surly old shee Creature, not worthy the name of woman, would hardly let us go into her Door, though the weather was so stormy none but shee would have turned out a Dogg. But her son, whose name was Gallop, who lived Just by, Invited us to his house, and I went to Bedd with a hot stone at my feet. Insomuch as I was cold and sick, I was forced to call them up to give me something to warm me. They had nothing but milk in the house, wch they Boild, and to make it better, sweetened it with molasses. Alas! poor me, to let it go down!

Friday, ye 22 Dec., we set out for New Rochell, where being come, we had good Entertainment and Recruited ourselves very well. This is a very pretty place, well compact, and good handsome houses, clear, good and passable Rodes, and situated on a Navigable River, abundance of land well fined and

Cleared all along as we passed, which caused in me a Love to the place, which I could have been content to live in it. Here we Ridd over a Bridge made of one entire stone of Such a Breadth that a cart might pass with safety and to spare. It lay over a passage cutt through a Rock to convey water to a mill not far off. Here are three fine Taverns within call of each other, very good provision for Travvilers.

Thence we travailed through Merrinak, a neet though little place, with a navigable River before it, one of the pleasantest I ever see. Here were good Buildings, especially one, a very fine seat, wch they told me was Col. Hethcoats, who, I had heard, was a very fine Gentleman. From thence we came to Hors Neck, where we Baited, and they told me that one Church of England parson officiated in all these three towns once every Sunday, in turns, throughout the Year, and that they all could but poorly maintain him, which they grudg'd to do, being a poor and quarelsome crew, as I understand by our Host; then quarreling about their choice of minister, they chose to have none, but caused the Government to send this Gentleman to them. Here we took leave of York Government, and, descending the Mountainous passage that almost broke my heart in ascending before, we come to Stamford, a well compact Town, but miserable meeting-house, wch we passed, and thro' many & great difficulties, as Bridges which were exceeding high & very tottering and of vast Length,

steep & rocky Hills & precipices (Buggbears to a fearful female travailer). About nine at night we come to Norrwalk, having crept over a timber of a Broken Bridge about thirty foot long & perhaps fifty to ye water. I was exceeding tired out & cold when we come to our Inn, and could get nothing there but poor entertainment and the Impertinant Bable of one of the worst of men, among many others of which our Host made one, who, had he bin one degree Impudenter, would have outdone his Grandfather. And this, I think, is the most perplexed night I have yet had. From hence, Saturday, Dec. 23, a very cold & windy day, after an Intolerable night's Lodgings, wee hasted forward, only observing in our way the Town to be situated on a Navigable River, with indiferent Buildings, & people more refined than in some of the Country towns wee had passed, tho' vicious enough, the Church and Tavern being next neighbours. Having Ridd thro' a difficult River, wee come to Fairfield, where wee Baited and were much refreshed, as well with the Good things wch gratified our appetites as the time took to rest our wearied Limbs, wch Latter I employed in enquiring concerning the Town & manner of the people, &c. This is a considerable town, & filled, as they say, with wealthy people; have a spacious meeting-house & good Buildings. But the Inhabitants are Litigious, nor do they well agree with their minister, who (they say) is a very worthy Gentleman.

From hence we went to Stratford, the next Town, in which I observed but few houses, and those not very good ones. But the people that I conversed with were civill and good-natured. Here we staid till late at night, being to cross a Dangerous River ferry, the River at that time full of Ice; but after about four hours waiting, with great difficulty wee got over. Being got to Milford, it being late in the night, I could go no further; my fellow-travailer going forward, I was invited to Lodg at Mrs. —, a very kind and civill Gentlewoman, by whom I was handsomely entertained till the next night. The people here go very plain in their apparel and seem to be very grave and serious. This is a Seaport place and accommodated with a Good Harbor. But I had not opportunity to make particular observations because it was Sabbath day.

Dec. 24.—This evening I set out with the Gentleman's son who she very civilly offered to go with me when she saw no perswasion would cause me to stay, which she pressingly desired, and crossing a ferry, having but nine miles to New Haven, in a short time arrived there and was kindly received and well accommodated amongst my Friends and Relations.

Jan. 6.—Being now well Recruited and fitt for business I discoursed the persons I was concerned with, that we might finnish in order to my return to Boston. They delayed as they had hitherto done, hoping to tire my Patience. But I was resolute to stay

and See an End to the matter, let it be never so much to my disadvantage. So January 9th they come again and promise the Wednesday following to go through with the distribution of the Estate which they delayed till Thursday and then come with new amusements. But at length by the mediation of that holy good Gentleman, the Rev. Mr. James Pierpont, the minister of New Haven, and with the advice and assistance of our Good friends, we come to an accomodation and distribution, which being finished, though not till February, the man that waited on me to York taking the charge of me, I sit out for Boston. We went from New Haven upon the ice (the ferry being not passable thereby) and the Rev. Mr. Pierpont with Madam Prout, Cuzin Trowbridge and divers others were taking leave. We went onward without anything Remarkable till wee come to New London and Lodged again at Mr. Saltorstalls, and here I dismiss my Guide, and my Generous entertainer provided me Mr. Samuel Rogers of that state to go home with me. I stayed a day here Longer than I intended by the command of the Honble Govenor Winthrop to stay and take a supper with him, whose wonderful civility I may not omitt. The next morning I crossed ye Ferry to Groton, having had the honor of the Company of Madam Livingston (who is the Govenors Daughter) and Mary Christophers and divers others to the boat—and that night Lodgd at Stonington and had Rost Beef and pumpkin sause for supper.

The next night at Haven's I had Rost fowle, and the next day we come to a river which by Reason of ye Freshets coming down was swell'd so high wee feard it impassable and the rapid stream was very terryfying. However we went over and that in a small Cannoo. Mr. Rogers assuring me of his good conduct, I after a stay of near an howr on the shore for consultation went into the Cannoo, and Mr. Rogers paddled about 100 yards up the Creek by the shore side, turned into the swift stream and dexterously steering her in a moment wee come to the other side as swiftly passing as an arrow shott out of the Bow by a strong arm—I staid on ye shore till hee returned to fetch our horses, which he caused to swim over, himself bringing the furniture in the Cannoo. But it is past my skill to express the exceeding fright all their transactions formed in me. We were now in the colony of Massachusetts. There I mett Capt. John Richards of Boston who was going home, So being very glad of his Company we Rode something harder than hitherto, and missing my way going up a very steep Hill, my horse dropt down under me as Dead, and I was obliged to get another Hors, resolving for Boston that night if possible. But many mishaps, and the people much discouraging us, it so wrought on me being tired and dispirited, that I agreed to Lodg at Dedham that night wch we did, and the next day, being March 3d, wee got safe home to Boston, where I found my aged and tender mother

and my Dear and only Child in good health with open arms ready to receive me, and my Kind relations and friends flocking to welcome mee, and hear the story of my transactions and travails, I having this day bin five months from home, and now I cannot fully express my Joy and Satisfaction, But desire sincerely to adore my Great Benefactor for thus graciously carrying forth and returning in safety, His unworthy Handmaid.

XXIV.

“Death is another life. We bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the King’s
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.”

RUTH’S JOURNAL.

IT is a great while since I have written anything. I kept thinking I would set down what I knew I should want to remember, and then I would put it off.

After Kezia came back and relieved mother of all care in the kitchen, things seemed to get into the old track. All the old ways father used to have, and that he took such comfort in, came of themselves. Mother joined in with him, heart and hand. They went round together, carrying good things, and giving tracts and little books; speaking a kind word here and a kind word there; and Kezia kept them in everything they wanted for sick people and poor folks, no matter whether it was day or night. I never saw father so happy. Mother seemed very happy, too; though I don’t think she ever forgot for one minute that she had caused him a good deal of trouble and sorrow. I know by experience that you can have pain and pleasure both at once.

I thought nobody noticed that, in the midst of all this peace and content, Samuel was growing feebler and weaker every day.

But one morning when Kezia and I were trying to get something for Samuel's breakfast—it was a good while since he'd been up to eat his breakfast with the rest of us—Kezia all of a sudden threw down what she had in her hands, and burst out crying.

“I verily believe you're all as blind as bats!” she sobbed. “Nobody aint got no eyes but me. Me as nussed his ma when she was a-going, and how there wasn't nothing you could coax her to eat!”

“What do you mean, Kezia?” I asked. I was all of a tremble, and wanted to hear, and yet didn't want to hear.

“No, nobody aint got no eyes but me,” she repeated.

“Kezia,” I said, “you've forgotten that I was at grandma's a good many years. I got into the way of watching the looks of sick folks there; and after I came home I hadn't anything special to do, and there were things that made me kind of sore and sorrowful, so that I got into the way of going round among sick folks; and the moment I saw Samuel the night he came home, I felt—well, I felt as I do now.” And with that I burst out crying.

“And why aint you said nothing?” cried she. “If you'd a spoke I could have spoke, and not jist kep' shut up till I burst into forty pieces! And who's to

tell his pa, I want to know? You needn't ask me to do it, for I'd sooner be pitched into the mill-pond! So there!"

"No, I'll tell father, Kezia. Father's heart is a good deal set on Samuel, I know. But it's more set on God; I know that. Oh, Kezia, when you're in trouble it does make such a difference whether you love Him or not!"

"Yes, it does," she said, wiping her eyes. "And on the strength of that I'll beat him up a raw egg, with a spoonful of brandy, and see if I can make him swallow it. La! the raw eggs I made your ma worry down! It's a wonder they didn't bring her to!"

That night after tea father went to his room as usual. I watched for him when he opened the door to come out. It's a good time to tell people bad news when they've been praying.

I went in and shut the door. He saw how my lips quivered, and that I couldn't get out a word.

"What is it, dear?" he said. "Frank?"

"No, no, father. Samuel."

"Yes, dear, I know," he said. "We've got to let Samuel go."

"Oh, father! But I feel such a weight gone, now that I've found out that you know it!"

"I was not likely not to know," he said. "I only had you two."

And then, for two or three minutes, I thought his heart was breaking.

“We have everything to be thankful for,” he said, at last. “We have Samuel at home with us, and can do everything for his comfort. Then the change in your mother! Think of that! And then look at the way God has ripened him for heaven!”

Then we knelt down, and gave ourselves and Samuel and everything we had to God. We kept back nothing, nothing.

Oh, how strong I felt after that prayer!

And we needed all our strength, for it was days, and not weeks and months, that Samuel was spared to us.

He did not suffer any pain, but would lie quietly for hours, lost in his own thoughts. Mother was a great comfort to him, and to us all, giving herself no rest day or night, exactly as if he were her own son. And no tongue can tell how all that was tenderest and best in Kezia came out then. Sometimes his mind would wander, and he would fancy he was a little boy, and would coax her to sing the queer old songs she used to sing to us when we were children, and thought her one of the wonders of the world. Then she is stronger than father even, and would snatch him out of bed, and hold him in her arms, and rock him just as she did when he was a baby, while mother and I put on fresh sheets and pillow-cases. I had entirely forgotten the song we used to call “Kezia’s glory-song,” because she stretched out the last words all the way to the meeting-house:

“ Listen, lad, and listen, lass,
 To my wondrous story,
Till you clap your hands and shout,
 Glory, glory, glory !
On a cold and frosty night
 Shepherd's watched their sheep,
Lest the bears and lions come
 And eat them in their sleep.
Suddenly they saw a light
 Shinin' in the sky,
‘ Oh, what's that ? ’ they all cried out.
 ‘ Brothers, let us fly ! ’
But a great white angel
 Came upon the wing,
Said : ‘ Good tidings, shepherds,
 Unto you I bring ;
Yea, I bring you tidings
 Wonderful and true,
For a little Babe is born,
 And is born for you ! ’
‘ What ! for us poor shepherds rough,
 Is it born indeed ?
Can we men an infant nurse,
 Understand its need ? ’
‘ Nay, thou foolish fellow,
 He is Christ the Lord,
He for all your wants shall care,
 Grace and peace afford.
You shall find the Infant
 In a manger laid :
Go and see this mighty sight,
 Do not be afraid ! ’
Suddenly above their heads
 Other angels came,
Singin', Glory be to God,
 Blessed be His name !

Glory, glory be to God,
 Glory, glory, glory !
 Spread the story, spread the news,
 Sing the wondrous story !
 Then the angels flew away,
 Singing as they flew.
 And the shepherds stood and cried,
 ‘ Is the story true ?
 Let us go to Bethlehem,
 This Infant for to see ;
 He who runs and gets there first
 The luckiest will be ! ’
 So they ran, and Mary found—
 Joseph found also.
 And before the little Babe
 Down they bended low ;
 Then, returning home, they sang,
 Glory, glory be to God ;
 Glory, glory, glory !
 Spread the story, spread the news,
 Sing the wondrous sto—ry ! ”

Poor Kezia ! How she loved Samuel ! She was here when he was born, and though she was only a little girl then, she was the first to have him in her arms. Father says he remembers just how she looked at that moment. She takes his death very much to heart, and says more than ever about living consistent.

Mother has taken a class in the Sunday-school. She and father have persuaded a great many of the factory girls to come, and everybody who can teach has to have a class ; even I have some of these big girls. It does not seem right ; I am so ignorant, and

get so frightened. I am afraid I would rather stay at home with baby. But mother says she is just as ignorant as I am, and not near so fit to have a class. And as to baby, I feel very unfit to obey the last charge my beloved brother gave me when he said, "You will be his father, and his mother, too. I charge you to train him up in the fear of the Lord and for the glory of Jesus Christ!"

Who am I that I should have a child to train? I can not see why God should be so good to me.

Samuel grew very fond of mother before he died. He thought she was his own mother, and hated to have her out of his sight. He was her boy, and made her love him. When he had gone, she quite broke down, and father forgot himself in trying to comfort her.

"I have been in Christ's school longer than you, my dear," he would say, "and I ought to know its rules better than you do, and keep them better. And the first rule I ever learned was to *ask no questions.*"

Mother catches a thing quickly. She looked up and smiled through her tears when he said that. We never heard her say again that she wished she knew why, when Samuel was making us all so happy, God should think it best to take him away.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

Such genuine grief as the death of Samuel has caused us all is hard to bear. But my share is hardest, for there are mingled with my sorrow pangs of self-reproach unknown to the rest. How I alienated his heart from me and drove him from his home! But God has been very good to me. The dear boy came to love me as dearly as I did him. I had the fondest caresses from his transparent hands, and at last his eye followed me if I left his side; and when I returned he welcomed me as if I were his own mother. Ruth had the whole care of the baby, and it was delightful to find myself necessary to Samuel in consequence. Mr. Woodford was very kind and affectionate, and put down his own grief in order to comfort mine. And how different is the pure sorrow I suffer now from the wicked, worldly sufferings of most of my life! *This* pain has the sweetest, the most sublime consolations mingled with it; no one who has experienced them needs any other argument to prove that Christianity is true. I envy now ministers of the Gospel who have the privilege of preaching to others what they have themselves learned in their own wonderful experience of God's presence, when beloved ones have passed out of their sight. Mr. Strong does this like one inspired, and in her own less public way so does his wife.

KEZIA BECOMES A GREATER COMFORT THAN EVER.

“Yes, yes, Mis’ Woodford, I aint forgot that you was hard on the boy; but then he was an obstreperous lad, all along from the time he was fourteen till he got to be a man. Boys is that way unless they’re uncommon of their kind. And you wasn’t brought up like us folks in Pemaquid, and all our ways seemed queer to you and all your ways seemed queer to us. La! the first time you and Juliet got down on your knees to meetin’, you never see how we was all struck of a heap! We thought nobody but Papishers got down on their knees to meetin’. But we don’t none of us mind it, now we’ve got used to it. And you was dreadful good to Samuel all the time he was sick, and you’ve no call to think hard of yourself for what you did before you met with a change. I’m sure you’re livin’ consistent now, and have mourned over your sins till you’ve growed so poor I don’t believe you weigh a hundred pound. And though it come awful hard to give Samuel up, it aint as if he hadn’t gone to glory, and we don’t sorrow as them as hasn’t no hope. And the Squire’s gittin’ over his grief a-comfortin’ you, and our Ruth won’t never go away now after no spark; and me, I’ve come back for good, and you, Mis’ Woodford, has growed so agreeable, and take it all together our cup is runnin’ over. And then, as if that was not enough, *there’s a baby throwed in!*”

XXV.

“Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

“Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

“Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

IT was New Year's Day, and everybody in the house, and some out of it, made baby a holiday present. We had Mr. and Mrs. Strong to tea, and they came early and went early, because Father Strong can not be up late. After they had gone, I put baby to bed with his hands full of his new playthings, and some under his pillow, and then I began to pick up and put away things, and get the sitting-room to rights for the evening, as I always do. The lamps were lighted, the fire snapped and sparkled on the hearth, father's light stand was drawn up to it, and mother's rocking-chair was on the other side. Everything looked cheerful, and happy, and cosy; perhaps all the more so because the wind was rising and a snow-storm was coming on. I thought I would take in the door-mat



“When I opened the door a heavy body fell in.” Page 287.

before the snow began to fall, but when I opened the door a heavy body fell in. I was so surprised that I cried out, and Kezia came running with a lamp. Then we found a half-frozen man lying in the doorway, so that we could not close it. Kezia lifted him up in her great, strong arms and carried him into the kitchen and laid him on the floor by the fire. Then the light shone on his face, and though it was dreadfully changed, I knew it was Frank. Then there came a little weak cry, and we found he had a very young and very tiny baby under his coat. I lifted it up; it had an old, wrinkled face, and when I offered it some warm milk, it drank it as if it was half-starved. By this time mother had come from her room, and she ran for some brandy, and she and Kezia did all they could to restore Frank. But he was very much exhausted, and was put to bed by Kezia, who snorted privately to herself meanwhile.

When she came back to the kitchen she snorted more publicly.

“There, hand me that 'ere young one,” she said, “you’ve got your hands full with your own baby, and this imp is a-goin’ to sleep along o’ me. Not that I can abide the sight on it; humph! I’ll git down the cradle and put it in that daytimes, and I’ll lay a bolster between it and me nights.”

I did not know what to say or do. Where was Juliet? Was this her child? And why had Frank come here?

Mother looked pale and frightened, and did not know what to think. How our pleasant evening was suddenly overcast!

At last I began to come to my senses.

“Kezia,” I said, “what do you mean by saying you’ll put a bolster between you and this poor little baby?”

“Why, do you suppose I’d let Juliet Pickett’s young one lay alongside of me nights, and *touch* me? I’ll take care of the crectur, and warm it, and clothe it, and feed it, because Providence has sent it here; and you’ve no call to nuss it, because you’ve a baby of your own. But, my patience! I aint a-goin’ to *love* it! No, Scrawny, you needn’t expect me to love you. But you won’t have nothin’ to complain of. I’ll do my duty by you, you may depend. And I guess I’ll put the clothes you’ve got on into the pounding-barrel and give ’em a good pounding, for blacker clothes I never see. And whilst I’m a-doin’ of it, Ruth, you have an eye to the soft-soap I was a-makin’; it’s coming beautiful. And I guess I’ll put off dyeing the stockin’s till next week. The sugar-loaf paper’ll keep, and I can dye with it next week as well as this; and this young one *won’t* keep unless it’s seen to right away. Well! if anybody’d told me I’d shirk the soap and put off the dyeing for a young one of Juliet Pickett’s I wouldn’t have believed it! Why, Church Fast stands fust, and Thanksgivin’ next, and making a barrel of soft-soap next, and dyeing with

sugar-loaf paper next. And somehow or other this baby has crep' in and upset 'em all. I shouldn't wonder if I stayed away from Church Fast and Thanksgivin', just for Scrawny!"

The next morning when Kezia went to look after Frank she found him in a high fever; he did not know her, but imagined her to be Juliet, and shrank from her with great aversion. Kezia had been up half the night with the puny, wailing child, and was in none too sweet a frame of mind.

"There aint an end to one kind of temptation before another comes a ravin' and a tearin' in. Now here's our Ruth's spark come a quarterin' of himself and his young one onto us, and what for, I want to know? Why, to rile up my feelin's dreadful."

Notwithstanding which she would not let me touch the new baby, and handled it skillfully herself, addressing to it, meanwhile, anything but complimentary remarks.

"Come, you little bag of bones, and be washed and dressed. La! was you ever washed before in your life? I declare, there's eight places where the skin's off! No wonder you wailed in the night. And you've no call to eat up my fingers. There's plenty of milk, and that'll agree with you better'n Kezia would."

Mother does not take to either Frank or the baby. And Frank has such an aversion to Kezia that he will not let her do anything for him. So the care comes on father and on me. And I ought not to pretend

that I nurse him out of love. Love was buried long ago in a very deep grave. But Providence has sent him and his child here, and it is plainly our duty to do what we can for him. And that is very little.

Frank is more conscious now, and does not take Kezia for Juliet any more. And if she isn't full of the milk of human kindness, nobody is.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

The wreck of what was once a brilliant, talented young man has drifted to our door, and we have taken him into port. To me his mutterings are intolerable, and I shrink from entering his room. What has become of my poor, misguided Juliet? Is she dead? or what is worse, has she deserted her husband and child? It is not likely I shall ever know, for Frank's intellect is, I fully believe, wholly dethroned. Well, I must bear this uncertainty in faith and patience. Ruth's task is not a hard one. She is fond of nursing the sick, and there is little to do for Frank. Kezia is the one to be pitied. That sickly, peevish, moaning child is enough to wear out even her strong constitution. No maternal instinct attracts me to the unhappy little being. Nothing tells me this is Juliet's child. And yet it must be hers.

LAWYER SNELL CALLS TO SEE KEZIA.

“Well, Kezia, my good woman, I hear you are, as usual, wide awake and stirring round, though you are afflicted with a feeble female child on your hands. It is a mysterious Providence. I thought I would just step over and try to sustain you in your path of duty.”

“My path of duty? Who says it’s a path of duty? Was I to let a poor little wailing infant die because I liked to lay abed and take my ease? You’ve heard it kep’ me awake nights? Well, who do my nights belong to if they don’t belong to me? You think it’s a dreadful scrawny infant? Is it any scrawnier than you be? And hasn’t it a right to be scrawny if it’s a mind? Poor little deserted lamb, has folks got to come and poke fun at its skin and bones? What if there wasn’t no love lost between its ma and me, am I to let it starve to death to spite her, when its livin’ would spite her more? What have I got ag’inst this poor little motherless rag-baby? Why, I aint got nothin’ ag’inst it. And if you’d got any heart amongst them old yaller bones of your’n you’d see forty reasons why I should be good to it. However, one’s enough for me. I’ve made up my mind to it, and that’s enough.”

“But, Kezia, I’ve always thought a great deal of you, and it puts me out to see you wearing yourself to death for this miserable infant. Better send it to

the poor-house, and then the town will have to pay the expenses of its funeral. And I've been thinking it's pretty lonesome for me at home, and I've always thought a good deal of you, and I'm pretty well-to-do in the world, and I aint never riled by your temper; I rather like it, for you know it's mostly put on, and if we could have our names read out in meetin', and the parson join us two, it would be quite a rise in the world for you and make me very comfortable. You've got a penny laid by, and you're an elegant cook, and I declare, Kezia, there wasn't a better-looking woman in the parish than you till you took in this wretched infant. Come, now, say the word and we'll be one."

"Do you see that broom, Lawyer Snell? Well, I'll lay it across your shoulders if you ever come prowling into my kitchen ag'in. What have I done, I want to know, that you suppose I'd part with a poor little bag of bones that's got a soul in it, anyhow, and our Ruth, and the Squire, and Mis' Woodford to go to be 'one' with you? Yes, it would be *one* with a vengeance! I should be in your house and you nowheres!"

Sings:

Well, off he sneaked from out the room
 When I made for him with the broom:
 'Twas well for him and well for me
 There wasn't assault and battery.
 Me leave the folks I love so well,
 To go and marry Lawyer Snell?

Me leave this puny, wailing thing,
To get a old brass weddin' ring?
No, Scrawny, it aint come to that,
I'll nurse you if it lays me flat.
Not that I ever loved your pa,
Or ever could abide your ma,
But if I would consistent be
I must from all temptation flee.
To hate you for your parents' sake,
Or angry be when kep' awake
By your incessant wails at night—
No, I must do the thing that's right,
And so I will, with all my might.
And as for Lawyer Snell, I see
All that the man would have of me,
My savings earnt through many a year
Of toil and care and labor here.
To be his cook and make his pies,
And then to nurse him till he dies.
I thank you kindly, Lawyer Snell,
I like this baby far too well
To go and be a slave to you,
So we're *not* one and we *are* two.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

It is plain that poor Frank's days are numbered, and that his mind has gone. And who knows whether he was in his sound senses when he married Juliet? All she ever wrote about him was that he could not sleep. At any rate I have fully forgiven him for all he ever did to harm me, and am perfectly willing to go on nursing him as long as God pleases to prolong his life. I was a silly, obstinate girl to love him as I

did, and how thankful I am now that I was not allowed to have my own way and cast in my lot with his. How much happier we all should be if we had the temper of little children, and let God guide us without undertaking to have wills of our own. How ridiculous it would be for my baby to make plans for himself. But it was even more foolish for me to imagine I knew what was good for me.

Mother is troubled that she does not take to the new baby, but I don't think she ought. She is very kind to it, and does all she can to favor Kezia about the housework, because the sickly child needs so much time. But she can not make herself realize that she is its grandmother, having no proof that she is. We all think there is no doubt that she is. As to Kezia, she has taken up "Scrawny," as she calls her, as some people approach vice, and she "first endured, then pitied, then embraced" it.

She thinks herself in only the first stage, that of endurance, and goes about looking like a martyr. But if any one suggests that "Scrawny" is sickly, or peevish, or troublesome, she is up in arms in a minute. I do not doubt she would pluck out her eyes for it. And it fills up an empty place in her big heart without crowding any of us out of it. She exhibits the poor, pitiful, sad little creature that has never smiled since it came here two months ago, with as much pride and delight as if she was its mother or had created it herself. Dear good, faithful soul!

And Mrs. Strong keeps coming to see her and hold councils with her over it when it is particularly out of sorts, and I really believe they both of them love it better than any healthy child in the world. Mrs. Strong feels very tender toward all sick children.

Mother's most intimate friends, out of her own house, are the three at the parsonage. There is nothing she will not do for them. And, considering that she is not naturally fond of children, and regards the new baby as Kezia's property, not her own, I think she is very patient with the noise and the trouble the poor little creature makes. For mother is not strong, and when she loses her sleep she is easily upset. I think it a mercy that she does not try to take care of the baby, as she would do if she realized it as her grandchild, for she is utterly unfit to be up with it nights.

Of course Frank expected to leave his own and Juliet's child in our care, and then lie down and die in peace. And if Keiza gets worn out with it, as I fear she will, I shall change babies with her, even if it kills me. Why not? Why should all the wear and tear come upon her, and I take nothing but solid comfort for my share?

I am a good deal ashamed that I do not love the little creature half as well as I do my own baby. As soon as Frank dies I shall spend a day of fasting and prayer, that God would make me as thoroughly forgiving as He is, and if I have any secret shrinking from Juliet's infant, to give me true repentance and a tenderer heart.

XXVI.

“Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised?”

‘The strongest plume in wisdom’s pinion
Is the memory of past folly!’

MRS. STRONG CALLS ON MRS. WOODFORD.

“MIS’ WOODFORD aint to home this afternoon, Mis’ Strong, and Ruth she’s gone with her, and aint to home neither. Come into the kitchen and set right down in the chimby corner, and I’ll heave a couple of sticks onto the fire in no time. You’ve been to Bosting, haven’t you? Well, the wonderfulest things has happened while you was gone. That ’ere blessed baby aint no more Mis’ Woodford’s grandchild than I be. What do you think of that, Mis’ Strong? I’ll tell you all about it.

(Baby begins to cry).

“There, now, come to its own Keziey, so it shall. Snuggle its little head down onto her, and keep still while she talks to Mis’ Strong. She’s Kezia’s ownty, downty minister’s wife, and baby must keep stilly so

it must. There now, eat its little thumb, and make believe its little thumb is its ma.

“Well, as I was a-sayin’, one mornin’ I went to Frank Weston’s room, and lo and behold he wasn’t there! He had been better’n usual for a week; his fever had gone and his mind had come back, though he looked like a livin’ skeleton. He came out to see his baby, and

“‘Kezia,’ says he, ‘you seem fond of that poor little creature,’ says he.

“‘So I be,’ says I.

“‘Would it be a great trial to go on caring for it till it is old enough to thrive in my clumsy hands?’ says he.

“I turned as red as fire.

“‘You don’t mean that Ruth’s to have a baby, and poor old Kezia have hers tore out of her heart by the roots?’ says I.

“‘Do you really love the child?’ says he. ‘Would it pain you to part with it?’ says he, his lips all of a tremble, for he hadn’t got his strength back by no manner of means.

“I bursted out crying at that, and don’t know what I said; but he took the child in his arms and kissed it over and over again, and then handed it back to me and went out, but pretty soon he came hurrying in and pressed it to his heart, and put his hand on its head and blessed it.

“‘I meant to give her to Ruth,’ says he, ‘but I see

she has her hands and her heart full of her own child,' says he. 'Kezia, did she marry Josiah Stone?' says he.

"Massy sakes alive! Goody gracious me! I thought I should drop.

"'Marry Josiah Stone!' I screeched out. 'Our Ruth! You are crazy!'

"'Who did she marry, then?' says he.

"'She aint married to nobody. 'Tain't *her* baby. It's our *Samuel's*!'

"He sot right down in the fust chair he sec, as if he was shot.

"'I am goin' to give you a piece of my mind, Frank Weston,' says I. 'What bizness had you to bring Juliet Pickett's young one to our Ruth?' says I. 'Did you suppose she'd touch it with a pair of tongs?' says I.

"'Juliet Pickett's young one?' says he. 'Why, Kezia Millet, do you imagine, do any of the rest of them imagine that this is her child?'

"'Of course, we never thought nothin' else,' says I. 'Why should we?' says I. 'Didn't she run off to get married to you?' says I.

"He actually began to pound himself on the forehead, as if he meant to beat his brains out. And then he all but fainted away.

"When he come to, 'The sooner I leave this house the better,' says he. 'There's terrible mistakes all round,' says he. 'I did not marry Juliet, and this is not her child. I must write and explain everything.'

“I declare, I could ha’ danced for joy. I caught up the baby, and if I kissed it once I kissed it forty times. And to think I’d ever slep’ with a bolster between me and it because of Juliet Pickett’s bein’ its ma! On the whole, I believe I *did* dance about the kitchen, for I didn’t see Frank go out; but go he did, without any more words.

“It was a fortnight before we heard from him, and then he wrote a long letter, saying he had not married Juliet after all. It seems she’d played the hypocrite, and made believe she’d met with a change, and at the last minnit he found her out, and charged her with it, and all the love he thought he felt for her melted away. She declared she’d never go back to Pemaquid, to be everybody’s laughing stock; and he suspected—though he did not know it—that she never let her ma mistrust that she wasn’t married. At any rate, she said she never should tell her.

“After he got his eyes open he went away and kep’ school. He knew our Ruth would never look at him again, and there was a good, pious little girl in the family where he boarded, and he got married to her. But she was very young and very sickly, and when the baby came she died; and he tried to take care of it himself—you know he was dreadful fond of children—and, la! what with mismanaging the little thing, and losing his sleep night after night, he got wore out. He hadn’t any money to leave it, and knew it would die if somebody did not take extra

care of it out of love, and so he made up his mind to bring it to our Ruth, confess all his sins against her, and beg her to take pity on the child. But the journey was too much for him, and he just dropped, half-dead, at our door. Mis' Woodford, she'll show you his letter when she comes home. We all had a great time laughing and crying over it, and we was all sorry that you'd gone out of town, and so couldn't laugh and cry with us.

“ And Mis' Woodford, she'd always said she couldn't cotton to it, and didn't believe it was her grandchild; and our Ruth, she said she didn't want two babies, and wouldn't rob me of mine, and break my heart all to pieces, and she knew I'd bring it up as pious and consistent as she could; and me and you, Mis' Strong, will watch over it, and nuss it, and it'll grow to be as plump as a partridge and as chirp as a robin red-breast. I'll take it in the arms of my faith and carry it to Him who loves to heal the sick, and ask Him to make it all over bran new. And He will, you see if He don't ! ”

Sings :

“ We've had our ups, we've had our downs,
But now it's plain to see
That through them all we have turned out
A happy family.
The Squire's got a pious wife
That he can fondly love :
And more than that—two blessed saints
Who live in heaven above.

Mis' Woodford has her cares, 'tis true,
But she has learnt to rest
Her cause with One who never can
Forget her heart oppressed ;
And she's a happy woman, now,
Intent on doin' good,
And pious as the day is long ;
I always hoped she would.
And there's our Ruth, as rich and proud,
As proud as she can be.
But then she can't a candle hold
To one as rich as me !
Why, who'd have thought I'd ever have
A baby of my own,
That with the eye of faith I see
Begin to run alone ?
We was a happy set before—
To doubt it would be sin—
And then, as if it warn't enough,
Two babies was throwed in !
And I have said a hundred times—
To say it I've a call—
A house without a baby in,
It ain't no house at all !”

FRANK WESTON EXPLAINS.

I owe it to you all, my dear and honored friends, to clear up the mistakes into which we have all fallen. In the first place, then, let me confess that, unconsciously to myself, I had become inflated with spiritual pride, and was, therefore, ready for a fall. Satan knew only too well my weak points, and he sent a beautiful tempter to work, if possible, my ruin. I indulged myself in the notion that a young and in-

experienced fellow like myself could, safely for either party, plunge into a pious friendship with a young lady. There was honest purpose in my conduct, but that does not excuse me. We are responsible for our mistakes, and I must account to God for mine. At the same time I was sinned against. A plot was laid to dishonor my betrothed in my eyes, and I, who never should have injured her by so much as a thought, became more or less alienated from her, fool that I was. My behavior to her was most base and unmanly; I have no excuse to offer for such conduct. Almost in a frenzy of that dangerous mixture of sentiments, love and religion, I engaged myself to a being whom I believed to have become, thanks to my influence and instructions, a ripening saint. You will hardly believe that, amid all this folly, I still kept up a life of prayer; through that the Divine Hand saved me at the eleventh hour. Our wedding-day was fixed, our arrangements all made; a few hours only separated me from a fatal mistake. Secure of having gained her end, my future wife threw off her disguise and presented herself before me in her true colors.

I had lost all comfort in religion, but its deep-seated, invincible principle remained. He to whom I daily offered my puny, unsatisfactory prayers came to my rescue now. To unite myself in marriage with one who scorned Him was no temptation. It cost me nothing to part with her. And since I had shown myself so weak, so unable to take care of myself, there

was but one course to pursue: to tear myself away from her seductive influence at once and forever. However dangerous to her soul was this sundering of ties, I believe I was doing the only thing left me. A man so weak and human as I could not have saved her, and we should have plunged down together into an abyss of evil.

In our final interview I gave her as solemn a warning as a mortal just escaped from eternal death could give to one in danger of it. But it was of no avail; and on that occasion I was told that Ruth had engaged herself to Josiah Stone, and was forever lost to me.

I found employment as a teacher in a remote town, and a certain peace. In the family where I boarded there was a pious little girl. I can not explain to you why, at the end of a year, I married her. I shall have to appear in your eyes as one who counts marriage a very trifling thing. Yet this is not true. She never missed anything in me; she was satisfied and happy. Then a little feeble infant came to me, and she stole away, to be gone forever. I tried to be both father and mother to the child, and night after night, walked my room with it till I broke down. And if I died, what would become of the child? It might die too, but it might live and suffer. My wife had no mother, no sister. What should I do? I knew a being who never thought of herself when needed by others; I knew my misconduct would not

close her heart to my child; I determined to appeal to her and then lie down and die. You know in what a condition I reached your house; you all know how you sheltered, how you nursed me, how you brought me back to life. Then I saw Ruth radiant and happy, with a child of her own, as I fancied; and when that error was corrected, learned to my amazement that you all believed me to be Juliet's husband and that that puny infant was her child. I assure you I have never seen nor heard from her since we parted. I know she never meant to return to Pemaquid, and as you hear nothing from her I presume she has married and found a home elsewhere.

As to my child, it has nestled its way into as honest and warm and tender a heart as ever beat. How Kezia nursed me at times during my long illness I never can forget. And as to Ruth's magnanimous treatment of one who had cruelly wronged her, it would be an impertinence to speak of it. God will bless and reward her. I never can.

As long as Kezia Millet is fond of my poor little motherless child, and you are willing to tolerate it, I shall be thankful to leave it in her charge. If I regain my health I shall expect to meet its expenses myself. This is man's portion in this life. He gives money. Woman gives youth, health, beauty, time, heart, and soul. Will the twain fare alike in the world to come?

I have resumed my theological studies, and if I

ever become a minister of the Gospel it will be as one who has known the torment of a furnace of temptation, has fought with the tempter, and been smitten almost unto death with his fiery darts. What lessons of deep humility I shall have to teach! What warnings to utter against spiritual pride.

And now, having humbled myself before God, I humble myself before you all, entreating your forgiveness as I trust I have obtained it from Him.

FRANK WESTON.

MRS. WOODFORD READS FRANK'S LETTER TO MRS.
STRONG.

“What do I think of it? I think it is a sincere, straightforward letter, and that he has suffered far more from shame and remorse than he has made any attempt to tell. Fancy how one possessed of the principle of love to God agonizes when all his joyous emotions disappear, and he finds himself standing stripped and bare before the All-seeing Eye! Some souls have to go through this process. I think Frank is going to make an exceptionally useful man.”

“I know too little about Christian experience to form any opinion about it. But it is an inexpressible relief to hear of Juliet. If Frank had only had courage to marry Juliet, who knows what he might not have made of her?”

“He had no right to do evil that good might come. Hers is the dominant nature. He would not have

lifted her up; she would have dragged him down. How did his letter affect Ruth?"

"I think the fact that he did not marry Juliet was a great delight to her. It made a difference about the baby. And I confess it is a relief to me to know that I am not that child's grandmother. I am not fond of young children. And this one is so unsavory, poor thing. Kezia proposed to go home to her mother's with it, as it was such a wearing thing to us to hear it cry so much. But I would not listen to it. The good creature deserves every indulgence at our hands, and we all agree that she is as much one of the family as any of us. I don't know who among us all is the happiest. Sometimes I think I am; and then that it is the Squire, with his deeper religious life; and then that it is Ruth, with her baby, or Kezia, with hers."

"But women are meant to be wives as well as mothers."

"That may be. But Kezia would chase out of her kitchen any man who mentioned matrimony to her; and Ruth—well—Ruth—would make a splendid minister's wife; but she is contented as she is, looking after the church with you and Mr. Strong, and revelling in her baby. Yes, and we are beginning to grow old, and what would become of us without our Ruth?"

"Yes, I know. But here is Frank Weston emerging into ten times the man I ever thought or even

dreamed he would. Ruth will get attached to his baby inevitably, though she does not think so now. She has to write to him every now and then about it, and on this common ground they will meet."

"She does not love him, and I do not believe a dead and buried love ever comes to life again."

"Well—perhaps I agree with you. But a slumbering affection may wake up and arise refreshed and strengthened."

"I had no idea you had so much romance about you."

"Do you know where Frank is?"

"Certainly."

"Can you give me his address?"

"Certainly. But I won't have any matrimonial project put on the carpet. We could not do without our Ruth. She is the very tower of our strength."

"I have no matrimonial designs on her. But for my own satisfaction, and because I have loved Frank dearly, I want to have this mystery of his marriage cleared up."

"You will find it the simplest thing in the world. He had a faculty of shifting his affections about at will."

"I shall hold my judgment in suspense until I hear, at any rate. You can not object to that?"

"Oh, no! But you will see that I am right in my opinion of him."

XXVII.

‘ And a little child shall lead them.’

REV. MR. STRONG TO REV. MR. BEACH.

DEAR BROTHER: In reply to your favor just received, I am happy to say that Frank Weston's little child is in good hands and doing as well as could be expected. I had reason to suppose he was kept informed as to its welfare.

Will you now permit me to ask, if I may do so without intrusion, what were the circumstances of his marriage to your daughter? His relations to my wife and myself, and another family in my parish, justify, I think, our wish for light on a subject very painful in some of its aspects. We want the right, if he deserves it (I mean some of us do), to reinstate him in our affections.

If, however, for any reason, you prefer to make no reply to this letter, I beg you will feel perfectly free to do so.

I remain, truly yours,

A. STRONG.

REV. MR. BEACH TO REV. MR. STRONG.

DEAR BROTHER: I hasten to reply to your letter in regard to my beloved son-in-law, Frank Weston.

He came to this town to teach in our academy, which is a flourishing one, designing at the same time to pursue a theological course with myself. I soon became deeply interested in him. He struck me as one who had trodden a wine-press of suffering, although he never spoke of himself. It is thus God often trains the soldiers whom He means to put in the forefront of the battle.

As I became more interested in him, it occurred to me that it would be pleasant to have him in my family. This consisted of a young daughter and myself. We were lonely, and found Mr. Weston's society very congenial. That it involved any danger to my daughter never crossed my mind. I looked upon her as a mere child. But before many months had passed I became aware that she had conceived an enthusiastic affection for him. And I could not blame her. A more attractive young man I never met.

He did not, however, occupy himself with my poor little girl, or see what I saw. And I should not have seen it myself but that I have been her mother as well as her father ever since her birth.

I let things drift as long as I could. Then I had to speak.

He was very much surprised and pained, and begged me to tell him if he had been guilty of any error in regard to my little girl.

I assured him that he had not, but begged him, if

he was heart-free, to think of my poor child as faultless and pure a young girl as ever lived.

He then acquainted me with the fact that he had had dealings with young ladies that did him great discredit as a Christian man, and declared himself utterly unworthy of my daughter. He spoke with great penitence and humility, and only endeared himself to me the more by his confessions. Here was pure gold: it had been tried in a fire and had come forth refined for the Master's use.

He proposed to leave my house at once, but I would not consent. The mischief, as far as my daughter was concerned, was done. And I loved him as a son. Yet I reproached myself bitterly for not realizing that Alice was not still a child. If he left us, however, she would know that her secret was discovered, and be overwhelmed with shame. It seemed best to think of some plausible excuse for sending her away, poor child.

The proposal to depart came, however, from herself. She was a girl of high principle. The moment she discovered the state of her heart she began to meditate on the best means of retreating from a position that made her blush in the solitude of her own room. All this I learned only after her death.

She had great faith in prayer, and she prayed constantly that she might be delivered from this trial or be permitted to find refuge away from home. At last an occasion offered, and hiding a sore heart un-

der a smiling aspect, she asked my leave to go. But I was less courageous than she. I could not part from her. I began to flatter myself that Frank could not live long under the same roof with so lovely a character, and not come in time to appreciate it. She was perfectly modest and retiring. There was nothing to disgust, and everything to attract him.

Yet it cost him a great struggle to decide to make her his wife.

It was three months before he could make up his mind to take any step in the matter, and it was not till he had spent a year under my roof that the marriage took place. On his side there was no romance, but he made a devoted and kind husband to my child, who, I am sure, suspected nothing, and was happy in him to her dying day.

After she had gone he devoted himself to the babe like a woman. It slept by his side, he fed, he dressed it with his own hands. In vain I pleaded with him against a course of conduct dangerous for both himself and the child. His whole soul seemed to concentrate itself on that frail life. He fought manfully for it, risking his own, for that active brain of his needed the sleep of which the little creature deprived him. Of course he soon broke completely down.

This occurred in my absence at the funeral of my father, and when I returned he had disappeared with the child. Imagine, if you can, my distress. My fear

was that the ordeal through which he had been passing had partially dethroned his reason, and that he had put an end to his own life and that of the child. Every effort was made to find a trace of him, but in vain. Brother, if I had had no faith in a kind, wise, overruling Providence, my own reason would have given way. Three months had passed and I mourned him as one dead, when late one night, an emaciated, pale, and almost lifeless man, he returned to me. His account of himself was vague, and confirmed me in the idea that he was suffering from brain fever and not accountable for what he did when he set forth on his pilgrimage to Pemaquid. Nor was he fully himself on his return. His mind ran on one idea, namely, that I was about to slay his child, and that he must take it away out of my reach. Even after his health began decidedly to improve, this idea haunted him, and he refused to tell me where he had placed it. I had only learned that it was at Pemaquid, and in your parish, when I wrote you.

Frank's health is now entirely restored, but he is very restless and uncomfortable since he parted with his little babe. Every time the mail comes in, he rushes to the office hoping for news. Can he not be informed regularly how it thrives?

Truly yours,

THERON H. BEACH.

MR. AND MRS. STRONG READ THE FOREGOING TOGETHER.

“Well, husband, I must own that I am greatly relieved. It *looked* as if it made next to no difference to Frank whom he married. And it is plain as day to me that he never has got over his old affection for Ruth. But what can she mean by neglecting to let him hear from his child? I thought she would write every week or two, and that gradually things would stand on the old basis. I always loved Frank; and I never liked the idea of Ruth’s being an old maid.”

“Now, my dear, don’t let your heart run away with you. Let Frank alone. Ruth is happy and contented as she is, and very useful in the church, and a world of comfort at home. And I do not think she could ever so thoroughly forgive Frank as to marry him.”

“That shows how little you know her. When she was a mere child she took for her motto the words, ‘Give and forgive.’ You know how she responds to every appeal for help, how exactly like her father she is in searching out and relieving the cause she knows not, and I believe she is just as generous with her affections.”

“Now, my dear, romantic little wife, do let well enough alone. Don’t go and mix yourself up in any matrimonial scheme whatever. By the by, they have

it all around in the parish that Lawyer Snell offered himself to Kezia Millet, and she drove him off with her broom. And now he is after the Widow Green."

"I'm afraid Joshua Snell cares too much for money. It is a pity, for he has some excellent qualities."

"And as if Kezia would marry the Lord Mayor of London, if it involved her parting with that child! I declare, her devotion to it is something perfectly beautiful. Its own mother could not have had a purer, more unselfish love for it. Well, I'll step in to see how it is, and agree on some method of keeping its father acquainted with its condition."

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

Kezia's spirit is a good deal broken by loss of sleep, and after coming nearer to a quarrel with her than I ever did in my life, I have her baby in bed with me, and mine in a crib by my side. And I have got to loving it so that I dread her getting strong and well again, and taking it from me. I think it cries less with me than it did with her, and it certainly begins to grow pretty. I do believe that to sleep with a baby each side of you is just the nicest, sweetest thing in the world! Dear little soft, helpless creatures. How happy, how happy I am!

Mrs. Strong has been here and reproved me for not writing to the extra baby's father, who, she says, is suffering great anxiety about it. Certainly I have

been very thoughtless and selfish. I was so taken up with my own blessed lot that I entirely forgot how lonely and sorrowful his life must be.

Oh, I know what I'll do! I'll get *mother* to write to the baby's father. She is always so sweet and kind about everything now. And really, I have a deal to do. I wonder whether Kezia's baby has any name?

I have asked her, and she shrinks from it just as I did; but Kezia hit on such a capital plan that all difficulties disappear. Kezia *is* bright; there's no doubt about it.

"La! let the *baby* write to her pa herself!" quoth she.

FRANK'S BABY TO HER PAPA.

MY DEAR PAPA: I am tied into the high chair by Kezia's apron, and am going to write you a letter all by myself. When you went away I used to cry a great deal, especially at night, but Kezia never got out of patience with me, and would get out of bed and walk up and down with me till it is a wonder she did not drop. One thing was, my clothes were not warm enough, and then they were too long, and tangled my limbs up so that I did not know which was which. I wear a red flannel dress now, with pretty black dots all over it, and have shoes and stockings on my feet. And I sleep in flannel nightgowns, and on a flannel sheet. I have got a silver porringer of my own, and

have bread and milk in it. And I have four little white teeth. Kezia loves me to distraction. Do you suppose she will ever give me back to you? *I don't.* And there is another thing. What is my name? Kezia calls me Scrawny, but I think it is only for fun. And some of them call me the extra baby! I think, myself, I ought to be named for my own mamma.

YOUR BABY.

PAPA'S REPLY.

MY DEAR LITTLE BABY: You *are* named for your own mamma. Your name is Alice Neill Weston. I am very thankful that you have learned to write, and if it is not asking too much, I hope I shall hear from you once a month. I love you very dearly, and if I ever have a home of my own shall coax Kezia to let you come there. You do not know that your papa is a minister now and has preached a good many times. His heart is in his blessed work, and next to his work, his heart is in Pemaquid.

YOUR LOVING PAPA.

KEZIA VISITS THE PARSONAGE.

"Well, now, Mis' Strong, our Ruth's took both them children and aint left me none."

"But, Kezia, she only does it for your good. You were getting all worn out from loss of sleep."

"That's jist a notion of our Ruth's. I got down in the mouth one time, for fear it wasn't consistent

to love a fellow-creature as I loved that baby. And our Ruth thought my spirit was broke with hardship. And then there's another thing. I always *could* see through a millstone, and I see right through Frank Weston when he was here. He'd give his two eyes to make up with our Ruth. And if he gets a chance he'll come and carry her off, and I shall lose her and my baby both to onct."

"Now I call that borrowing trouble. And don't you see that you *can't* lose the baby unless a wise Providence wills it?"

"Of course I wouldn't fly in the face of Providence."

"One of the best things about a Christian is that he is not afraid of evil tidings. He enjoys what he has as long as it lasts, and when it is taken away he enjoys God. Take my word for it, He will never let anything befall you that you can not justify Him in doing."

"Well, it's strengthening to hear you talk. You must know all about it after all you've been through. I expect my faith's been dreadful weak. And this poor wailin' little infant has got such a grip on my feelin's that it nigh about kills me to see it suffer. And yet I'm such a selfish creetur I'm a-doin' all I can to keep it alive, bless its little heart. Well, good-by, Mis' Strong, I won't hinder you no longer, for you have all the troubles in the parish laid right onto your shoulders. Come, Scrawny, we'll go home, and when we git there I'll sing to you."

" Mis' Strong, she's made the burden light
 That weighed upon my heart,
 And made me see that from my babe
 I could consent to part.
 The very hand that strikes a blow,
 Wipes bitter tears away ;
 When earthly joys and comforts fly,
 The Lord will be my stay.
 Now, precious baby, go to sleep
 Upon my faithful breast ;
 Forget your weakness and your pain—
 Sleep on and take your rest.
 I loved our Samuel and Ruth,
 But not as I love you,
 For they were well, and did not need
 Both love and pity, too.
 O, little sad and tired face,
 Upon my knees I pray
 That He who infants dearly loves
 Would take your pains away ;
 Or else—how *can* I say the words?—
 From heaven come marching down
 And take you up to be with Him,
 And wear a martyr's crown.
 Yes, there are infant martyrs there,
 And with the eye of faith
 I see them smiling at the words
 The loving Master saith.
 So, little pilgrim, sigh no more,
 Your pangs in patience bear ;
 Your path is rough and flinty here—
 'Twill be all glory there !"

BABY'S SECOND LETTER TO PAPA.

MY DEAR PAPA : I am a year old to-day. Do you
 remember that? I have had ever so many presents.

The one I like best is a great black dog. I smiled when he put his cold nose up to my face. Then I heard somebody burst out crying, and I was frightened, and thought I had done something naughty. But everybody kissed me, and said it was such a relief to see a smile on my poor little sad face. So then I smiled again, and there was more crying and kissing. I watch the other baby running about—he isn't a baby, but a great boy—and begin to think I should like to run about too. I did pull hold of the leg of the table and get up onto my feet, but Kezia set up such a scream that I thought I had done something naughty, and so sat down again. They all say that I do not look like you, and so must be like my own mamma, who must have been lovely. Mr. and Mrs. Woodford are very well and very happy; so is Kezia. She gets a good night's sleep now, and the color is coming back into her cheeks. I send you my love, and am

Your baby,

ALICE NEILL WESTON.

XXVIII.

“ All this, and heaven too ? ”

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

KEZIA seemed so restless after I stole her baby from her, that I have lent her my little Samuel. So now we have put the crib up into the garret and each goes to bed armed and equipped with her charge. Meantime I have grown so fond of baby Alice that I don't know but I love her almost as much as Kezia does. As for father, he makes no difference between the children. He considers himself grandfather to both. Whatever is going to become of us all, if baby Alice is claimed by her papa, I do not dare to think. Sometimes I fear Providence will settle the question by taking her to Himself. That thought throws my soul into a most unholy toss.

Mrs. Strong persuaded me to spend a week or ten days at the parsonage, baby and all. I had a perfectly delightful time. Father Strong is like a shock of corn fully ripe. He has excellent health, and is as happy as the day is long. I asked Mrs. Strong if she thought we should ever have to give up baby Alice.

She said Kezia might have to part with her, but it was not likely I should. Then I said it was cruel to let Kezia take care of it when she was ailing and troublesome, and when she had nursed her into health have the child snatched from her.

“As to that,” says she, “it is six of one, and half a dozen of the other. I don’t see but you take as much care of her as Kezia did. And don’t you see that the Rev. Frank Weston’s daughter is not to be brought up in a kitchen?”

I had not thought of that.

“It was to you he brought the child,” she went on. “But there were two facts in the programme: one he was ignorant of, and one he could not foresee. He expected to die and bequeath his child to you. Don’t you see what a high opinion he had of you when he selected you to hold this sacred trust? And if he had died, should you have hesitated for one minute to accept this trust and all the self-sacrifice it involved?”

“But he did not die, and what was his embarrassment to find you, as he supposed, married, and with a child of your own! Then Kezia’s extraordinary affection for the baby led him to do the next best thing he could do—leave it with her. It would have been the death of it to expose it to another journey. Of course he had to yield to circumstances. But if the little creature lives, as soon as she passes beyond babyhood she must be in your charge, not Kezia’s.”

“But perhaps her papa will marry again. In that case he might not need Alice.”

“My dear, he will need her. And don't you see the simple, natural way to solve this problem—how Frank can reclaim his child and yet not take her from you?”

I tried to think of a way, but couldn't. “I advise you, then,” she said, “gradually to attach Kezia to little Samuel and attach Alice to yourself. Do it very gradually, so that she will not perceive it.”

“But Samuel should not be brought up in the kitchen any more than Alice,” I said, quite puzzled.

“Why, it will be the old story over again. Kezia was all the mother you and your brother had till you went to your grandma's, and he was sent to school. Don't look so puzzled, dear child. I should not have spoken a word, but that Providence has already spoken first. You love baby Alice, for aught I see, just as well as you do little Samuel, perhaps better, for ‘the bird that we nurse is the bird that we love.’”

I said I began to love her most tenderly the night I took her to sleep with me.

“Well, now, you and Kezia had both better leave off saying mine and thine. Love the two children together, just as a father and mother do theirs.”

Well, I forgot all this talk in a great surprise that met me when I reached home. Mother had packed me off to the parsonage while she had my room made into a sort of earthly paradise. It had been papered

and painted, there was lovely new furniture, there were pictures on the walls, and a flower-stand covered with beautiful plants, all in bloom. There is not another room in Pemaquid to be compared with it. And I never dreamed that mother had such exquisite taste. How disagreeable it must have been to her to live so many years among our homely old furniture! Oh, and there was a beautiful bird in a cage, singing away like one without a care, and a great globe, full of goldfish, that went darting about like little flashes of lightning--and to think that it was *mother* who had all this done, while she left her own room as bleak and bare as ever!

I could hardly stand it. Why should I, of all creatures in the world, be so loved and cared for?

Well, I know what I shall do; I shall just pack father and mother off on a journey, and turn their room into fairy-land!

KEZIA GOES HOME ON A VISIT.

"You see, mother, Mis' Woodford says to me, 'Kezia,' says she, 'you go home and make your mother a visit.' Well, I knowed I couldn't take my baby with me, though I wanted you to see it dreadful. So says I, 'Mother used to be awful fond of our Samuel, and she'd be proper glad to see his little young son, who's his pa's livin' image.'

"Well, Mis' Woodford she's growed so agreeable

that I believe she'd a let me take the Squire along if I'd asked her.

“ ‘Why, Ruth is the one to ask,’ says she.

“Of course I knowed that all along, but I knowed she'd like to be asked all the same.

“Well, now, aint this little young 'un jest a copy of his pa? But then you ought to see *my* baby! Such a poor little white lamb as it is!—only I'm all the time in a toss for fear its pa will take it away. And, mother, I tell you what, I made an idol of that 'ere child, and when I found it out, I fasted and prayed, and prayed and fasted, and was so sorry for my sin that I got wore out. Our Ruth, she thought I was wore with broken nights, and nothin' would do but she must take the screaming idol to sleep with her, so that I could rest. But, la! mother, I couldn't rest with sin on my conscience, so I used to set up on end in bed a-pleadin' with the Lord to make up with me and give me back my peace of mind. And at last He did. But He said as long's Ruth's strength held out, I had better let her keep my baby nights, ‘For you can fast from a baby,’ says He. ‘just as you fast from meat and drink,’ says He. Do you think there's any harm in prayin' in bed this awful cold weather, if you set on end? I wouldn't undertake to pray a-laying down any more than I'd break a Commandment a-purpose. Of course I always pray by the side of my bed, night and mornin', with nothin' but my nightgown on, no matter how cold it is. That's

mortifying to the flesh, and keeps down the body wonderful. I tell you what, about four o'clock in the morning, my room bein' on the north side of the house, it takes natur' and grace combined to say your prayers, especially when the snow beats down the chimblly and catches you by the feet.

"Now, mother, you jest lop down in your old sofy and rest yourself, and I'll git dinner. You aint tired? Well, I didn't suppose you was; but I should think you might make believe, jest to please me. Still, I s'pose you'll want to be follerin' me round to hear me talk. There! you may grind the coffee if you want to; only do it easy, so as not to drown my voice. You see Mis' Woodford has growed awful fond of our Ruth, and she says to me one day, says she, 'I've a good mind to fit up Ruth's bedroom beautiful,' says she.

"'What's the use o' that?' says I. 'Aint her room comfortable?' says I.

"'I like to see a pretty young girl with pretty things about her,' says she.

"'But what's the *use*?' says I.

"'What is the use of white lilies?' says she, 'and what's the use of green grass?' says she.

"'Ask the cows,' says I.

"'But wouldn't it taste just as good if it was as red as strawberries or as yellow as buttercups?' says she. 'But think how our eyes would ache if it were!' says she.

“ ‘And I’ve set my heart on fitting up Ruth’s room, but she must be got out of the way first. I’ll ask Mrs. Strong to invite her to the parsonage for a couple of weeks, and make a fine surprise for her,’ says she.

“So off she goes to Bosting and buys all sorts of things; why, every time the stage come in it brought boxes and I don’t know what all, and everything was cleared out of Ruth’s room, and painters set to work. And it beats all natur’ what elegant things was put into that ’ere bedroom. I never see nothin’ like it, and you never see nothin’ like it, either.

“I kep’ my eye on the Squire, a-wonderin’ if he’d think it consistent to make such bowers of bliss in this vale of tears, but he never said nothin’, but went round rubbin’ his hands and lookin’ awful pleased. And I declare, when we came to make up the bed if there wasn’t two handsome George Rex blankets ready to put on it, and a white quilt. I don’t think I could compose my mind to pray amongst such finery. But our Ruth she’s different. And when she came home she cried for joy. Only she said everything was too nice, and Mis’ Woodford was too kind.

“ ‘Well,’ says I, ‘if you can’t be happy in this beautiful room you can’t be happy nowhere,’ says I.

“ ‘Happy!’ she cries. ‘Why, Kezia Millet, I could be happy in a dungeon and wretched in a palace.’”

“And then she went to her bookcase and takes down an old book, and reads out this ’ere :

“ ‘The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.’

Now who can make head or tail of that 'ere. How *could* heaven be in hell, or what's more contrary to natur', hell be in heaven? 'Well,' says I, all beat out, 'there aint nothin' like that 'ere in the Bible, and it does say there that having food and raiment we oughter be content. And it don't uphold an elegant carpet, nor elegant furniture, nor George Rex blankets, nor nothin' of the sort, and I mistrust such things as making it too agreeable here below for us, pilgrims and strangers as we be, travellers at the very best on't.' Mis' Woodford she laughed, and says she, 'Neither does it say anything in the Bible about roast turkeys, or mince pies, or cranberry tarts, and a host of other things your soul delights to set before us. The fact is, hardly two people agree about its teachings on minor points. The main thing is to agree on vital points. And I am sure you and I unite on those. As to George Rex blankets, how *could* they be in the Bible? And surely it is right for Ruth to sleep warm.'

“So she went on argufyin' like a lawyer, which she had ought to ha' been, and though Satan can quote Scripter, I never can at the right minnit.

“ ‘The fact is,' she went on, 'you are a Papist at heart, and I wonder you do not wear haircloth next your skin.' To think of your poor old Kezicy being called a Papist! But it was done so good-natured

and kind like I didn't feel riled at all, only struck up so that I couldn't speak if I was to suffer.

“‘You Pemaquiders,’ says she, ‘are all alike in one respect. You think God hates beautiful things and beautiful employments. But who is there in all the universe that has made such myriads of exquisite things as He has? And do you suppose He is displeased when we admire the works of His hand? Look at these flowers! Look at this bird and listen to his wonderful voice! Look at these goldfish! Was it by accident that they were formed in beauty? Oh, you don't know what a new world I live in since I began to love Him.’ And the tears come rollin' down her cheeks. There, mother, you've no call to go to crying. I wouldn't cry as easy as you do for anything.

“So Mis' Woodford she went on, and says she, ‘I have done so much to make Ruth unhappy that I can't do enough to please and console her now,’ says she. There, I've got everything on to bile, and we'll have a biled dinner, and now I guess I'll put Samuel onto the sled and haul him over to see the neighbors. At any rate, I'll give him a ride. Oh, no, I'll set the table fust.

“And so you think there aint no harm in prayin' irregular, settin' on end, 's long's I pray regular on my knees? And you don't see no harm in our Ruth's having an earthly paradise in her bedroom?

“ Well, I’m awful glad, for our Ruth aint one of the kind to have her head turned easy :

“ But Satan this he knoweth not,
And he has climbed to yonder spot,
And, like a spider in her hole,
He’s watchin’ careful for her soul.
Ah ha ! ah ha ! ah ha ! quoth he,
I to Ruth Woodford have the key ;
She’ll love her new possessions so
That tight she’ll cleave to things below :
Short prayers she’ll by her bedside make,
In place of those that made me quake ;
Her Bible and her hymn-book, they
Will by degrees be tossed away.
No tears of penitence she’ll shed,
But she will feed her bird instead ;
Yes, all she’ll know of saintly showers
Will be to splash them on her flowers !
Well, Mr. Satan, have you done ?
Is this poor stuff the web you’ve spun ?
Ha, ha ! It’s now my turn to laugh !
You think you know too much by half.
Do you suppose a girl that had
An offer from a likely lad,
And give to him a love more true
Than the contempt I feel for you,
And yet consistent could remain
When crawlin’, creepin’, in you came,
And tried to wean her heart from heaven—
And futhermore, when seven times seven,
A furnace was lit up, and she
Flung in, its greedy food to be,
And she could instantly begin
To kiss the hand that throwed her in—

Did you suppose your chance was bright
To catch her then and hold her tight?
Weepin' endured a night, and then
The mornin' came with joy again;
Yes, all her heart ran o'er with joy,
A-claspin' of her baby boy.
But prayed she less for love of him?
Did her strong faith grow dull and dim?
O Satan, I'm ashamed of you!
After all this to hope to do
The maid a mischief with the things
Mis' Woodford, her peace-offerings."

MRS. WOODFORD SEES MRS. STRONG.

"Was Ruth as much pleased as I expected? Yes; she was delighted. Kezia was a little troubled at first. She was afraid to see Ruth enjoy herself lest she should 'cleave too much to things below.' Nor could she see any *use* in having birds, and flowers, and fishes, and pictures. So we laid our heads together, Ruth and I, and agreed to send the good creature home for a week, and take her room in hand. First we had it painted. Then I went around to the neighbors' garrets, as I had already done for Ruth, and bought old furniture that had stood idle and useless for years, and had it repaired and varnished. Then I took twenty yards of new rag-carpeting of old Ma'am Huse, and we put that down, and last of all, I put in a stove. That was Ruth's idea. She said baby Alice cried much less at night when with her, and that it must be because her room was warm.

And when I think how much the good old soul prays, and what blessings she thereby brings into this house, and how many hours she has spent in midwinter walking her room with that crying child, I feel really hurt at my thoughtlessness in not giving her a fire long ago.

“Then Ruth, who is ingenious and handy about such things, made bright, warm curtains, had a book-shelf put up, and arrayed books on it, and made a pretty little table-cover, and last of all, hung on the walls some colored prints of Scriptural scenes—which she used to think perfectly splendid, till I taught her better—and a cosier, sweeter room none need desire. So when the stage drove up, Ruth and I were sitting in it with our work and the baby. Kezia rushed in and sought us all over the house.

“At last the baby set up one of her shrieks, and that drew the good creature into the room. At first she was so wild with joy at getting home, that she did not notice anything; when she did, she fell back into the nearest chair, and burst out crying in such a tempest that poor little bewildered Samuel began to cry too.

“‘Well,’ she said at last, ‘I’m clean beat out! Me have a fire to say my prayers by? Me have handsome curtins? Me have elegant Prodigal Sons, and prayin’ Samuels, and good old Elijahs a-hangin’ round my room? Why, I sha’n’t never want to go to heaven. When I git my invitation, I shall hang back and say

I've got so much to live for. Well, if you pamper me up this way, some awful thing will happen to keep me down. For I have to be kep' down dreadful. The baby, she'll die. Or her pa will carry her off. Or our Ruth, she'll 'get married. If it aint one thing, it'll be another. Well, I'll fast entire once a week, and I'll fast partial once a week, and may be I can keep this 'ere beautiful room and my peace o' mind too.'"

"And then I suppose she fell to singing?"

"Yes, but Ruth forgot to write it down. And now don't you think I am a happy woman?"

XXIX.

'L'absence diminue les petites amours et augmente les grandes passions, comme le vent qui éteint les bougies et qui rallume le feu !'

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

I THOUGHT I knew what trouble meant. I thought my heart had been broken all to pieces—yes, into such *little* pieces that it never could be put together and be the same heart again. It only shows how little I knew.

Baby Alice was now two years old, and was running about, and growing a little stronger. Somehow Kezia and I were more taken up with her than with Samuel ; for he was a great, strong, hearty boy, getting into all sorts of mischief, and wonderfully able to take care of himself. He never wanted to be held in our laps and told stories, or to hear Kezia sing. All he wanted was plenty to eat and drink, and to get out-of-doors and race and tear and climb, and go scampering into the neighbors' houses, and hear and see everything that was going on in Pemaquid. Everybody knew him, and everybody liked him ; and he knew everybody and liked everybody. But Alice was made to be petted. She would sit by the hour

hearing Kezia sing. She would sit by the hour in my lap, wanting nothing but love for her pastime. It was not everybody who loved her. Many people thought of her as nothing but a puny, uninteresting child. But old Father Strong always said from the very beginning that she was not made of common clay.

Well—well—dearie me, have I got to write it down?

It was a day in July, and I went down into the orchard with both the children. Mother and Kezia had gone to the female prayer-meeting, and father was at the office. I sat down under a tree, cuddling Alice up to my heart, and feeling very peaceful and happy. Kezia and I had done saying my baby and thy baby; it was *our* Samuel and *our* Alice, and we both felt the better for it.

Samuel had been skirmishing round among the trees, and I had almost forgotten him, for though he is always getting into scrapes, he is always getting out of them. But now he came, screaming with delight, astride on a man's shoulders; and the man was Frank.

‘My poor little girl, have I frightened you so?’ he said, putting Samuel down. I suppose I had turned pale, for I felt faint. I got over it in a minute, and said, “Alice, darling, this is your papa.” She stretched out her arms to him, and he took her, but he *looked* at me.



"My poor little girl, have I frightened you so?" he said, putting Samuel down.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in the context of public administration and government operations. This section also highlights the role of technology in streamlining record management processes and reducing the risk of errors or data loss.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of robust internal controls and risk management frameworks. It outlines the need for regular audits and assessments to identify potential vulnerabilities and ensure that organizational policies are effectively enforced. This section also discusses the importance of employee training and awareness programs to foster a culture of integrity and ethical conduct throughout the organization.

3. The final part of the document addresses the challenges of data security and privacy protection in the digital age. It stresses the need for comprehensive security protocols, including encryption, access controls, and regular security updates, to safeguard sensitive information from unauthorized access and cyber threats. Additionally, it discusses the importance of adhering to relevant data protection regulations and ensuring that data is handled in a lawful and ethical manner.

“Ruth,” he said.

I was silent and distressed.

“Ruth,” he said, “I never so much as expected you to look at the Frank Weston of past times. He was utterly unworthy of you. It is another man who comes to you now, with all the boyish love and admiration of his youth, and a new and better affection, and a more appreciative esteem, than was possible in immature age.”

He paused, holding Alice close, but still not looking at her.

“Have you no eyes for your child?” I said at last. For the silence of that July afternoon was awful.

He held her out now, and there was a gleam of love and pride in his eyes as he gazed at the lovely little creature. And I saw that this was indeed another man. But it was Frank I loved; and I did not love this stranger.

“Ruth,” he began again, “you have never forgiven me. I should not have expected forgiveness from any one but you. But I hoped—I thought the child had been forming a new tie between us, and that you would come and help me in my work. My child, I was unfaithful to you for a time, and under dire temptation; but only for a time. You are the only human being with whom I was ever thoroughly in love. I had a passion for Juliet—an infatuation that passed for love; but it was all a delusion. The instant I saw her in her true colors I fled from her as

from a demon. But I felt that I had lost you forever. And under this conviction, a reckless man, looking for happiness no longer, but willing to give it if I could, I married this child's mother. This fact complicates my cause, I am well aware. But I am not afraid that He who reads the human heart counts that a deed ill done."

He paused, and there was another awful silence. If I had only been like Kezia I could have burst out and put an end to it; but I could not speak. All the old wounds I thought healed were bleeding afresh. I looked away from him to a sight I usually delight to see—the men pitching the hay onto the cart; Samuel gamboling about, waiting to be perched on its top and ride to the barn, wild with glee. But the sight jarred now; and the tears began to stream down like rain. He came and tried to take my hand, but I drew it back and shrank away from him. And at last I could stop crying and speak calmly.

"Who did you consult before you came here?" I asked.

"God, and my own heart," he replied.

"And no woman?"

"None."

"Then I might have been spared all this pain. *Any woman* would have said to you, 'You must not go!'"

It was now his turn to be silent. There came upon the stillness the cheerful voices of the men at their

work; the sweet note of a bird; the harsh, yet not wholly unpleasant cawing of passing cows; best of all, the sound of wheels, and mother and Kezia driving in. Kezia left mother at the house, drove to the barn, and came strolling back, singing to herself.

“Kezia!” I cried out.

She stopped singing, and with three strides was at my side.

“Whatever have you bin a-sayin’ to our Ruth, Frank Weston?” she shrieked out. “Air you a-goin’ to take away our baby, or what is to pay?”

“Nothing has been said about the baby,” he replied, “but I thank you, Kezia, with all my heart, for the kind care you have taken of her.”

“You thank *me*? I aint taken no more care on her than our Ruth has, nor loved her any better, except one spell when I made a graven image out on her, which warn’t of no earthly use to her and was a dreadful grief and pain to me. But it’s no use for you to carry her off. Men aint no more fit to bring up babies than cats air. And it’s far healthier down here to Pemaquid than it is where you be, where they say you could cut the smoke with knives.”

“That is true,” he said, with a great sigh. He was looking so steadily at the child that I got up softly and stole away.

Oh, what made him come? Why did God let him come? Dear me—Oh, dear me!

FRANK WESTON CALLS ON MRS. STRONG.

“Why, Frank, is this really you? How you have changed! I can hardly believe that this is our boy Frank. Well, I should know you had been in deep waters if I had not been told it. And now you are a full-grown man, every inch of it, and the words ‘hard work’ are written all over your face. You have come to see your baby, I suppose. Isn’t she a sweet little creature?”

“I saw her in the arms of a sweet little creature, whom I hoped to make her mother. But that hope has been dispelled, and I must go back to my work alone. And I richly deserve my fate.”

“You don’t mean to say you have been making love to Ruth? Oh, why *didn’t* you consult me about it first? Poor little thing! I can fancy how you have cut her to the quick. How you men do bungle about your work. What is the use of women in the world if it is not to keep you all out of hot water?”

“I never dreamed of wounding her. I fancied she would be proud to find how, in the depths of my heart, I had been true to her. And I thought her one of the sort to love once and love forever.”

“Girls of that sort only exist in books. To have kept on loving you when she believed you to be Juliet’s husband would have been both weak and wicked.”

"But she turned so pale when she saw me that I had little doubt she loved me still."

"That is nothing to the purpose. The sight of you revived the old pain."

"Did she suffer so very much, then?"

"She suffered, but silently and in faith and patience. No one saw any violent outbreak of grief after the first day. And later on there came the peaceable fruits of her grief."

"But, oh, how she cried this afternoon. Fancy, if you can, how a man feels when he witnesses such anguish and knows he has caused it, and is powerless to do anything for its relief."

"Yes; you set all the old wounds bleeding, no doubt. I am sorry for the poor child and sorry for you. Your love for her slumbered and then awoke again. Her love for you is not asleep, it is *dead*."

"You think there is no hope for me, then?"

"I am not prepared to say that. But there will be no manner of use in approaching her now, in any character, much less in that of the Frank Weston of times past. Possibly her love for your child may plead for you in some distant future. At any rate, never approach her again without consulting Mrs. Woodford or myself."

"I will not. I see that I have made an almost fatal mistake. And, after all, it is not necessary that I should marry again. My people are very kind to me and I am happy in my work. And, if it is not pre-

sumption to say so, I know something of what Christ can be to a lonely and desolate and abased soul. I don't know but every form of suffering *pays*. I think I shall go back to my work more saddened and sobered by this experience, and so better fitted to be a son of consolation to other weary hearts. For everybody, sooner or later, takes his turn."

"That is true. But if I were you I would not be so much saddened by this event as chastened by it. There is all the difference in the world between these two results of trial. In sadness there is a touch of self-will and intention to give way. But the chastened soul has thrown self-will overboard, and while it suffers it is patient, it is courageous, it knows depths of sweetness in the midst of its pain. For it gets 'drops of honey out of the Rock Christ.'"

"It does indeed, it does indeed. I would not change my lot for that of any man on earth, however prospered. What internal evidence we have of the fundamental truths of Christianity, when our hearts faint for heaviness and we are held up by an unseen Power, as evident to our consciousness as if it were a thing to be seen or touched. As I walked my lonely room last night, it seemed too good to be true that I knew Christ and could preach Him. I shudder when I think of my giddy boyhood and youth, and the danger I ran of making shipwreck of my faith. But now, Mrs. Strong, about my precious little Alice. What ought I to do? Take her away? You know

how I love children, how delightful it would be to hear the sound of little feet in my study once more."

"If you take her away now, I have not the smallest doubt you will lose her. But for the love and prayers of those devoted creatures, Ruth and Kezia, she never could have lived as long as she has done. And it would be an ill moment for Ruth to have to part with the beloved little one; besides, your only faint chance of winning Ruth will be through the child. Don't you see that the moment you remove it you lose all opportunity of communication with her?"

"Yes, so I do. But how am I to have news of my child? Is it likely that Ruth will be willing to write me any more letters in the baby's name?"

"Let me think a minute. Did she ever allude to herself in those letters?"

"Never. That was, to me, a hopeful sign. I thought if she were entirely indifferent to me all shyness would disappear, and she would write mere business letters about little Alice with perfect freedom. But you women understand such things better than we men do."

"I see no reason why Ruth should not go on issuing her bulletins the same as ever, so long as this does not oblige her to put herself forward in the least. She has an unusual amount of the rarest kind of sense in the world—*common* sense; she is not proud or vindictive. By this time she is accusing

herself of selfishness in letting you see how she had suffered, and she will be glad, since she can do no more for you, to render you this little service."

"I want to see my child once more before I go; can it be managed?"

"Certainly. Kezia will bring her here or take her to the tavern, just as you like."

"Oh, there is another thing. Ruth must have talked a great deal about me, for Alice came to me the moment she heard who I was."

"And why Ruth, pray? Why not Kezia? Besides, Alice is very confiding. She always would go to any one who looked kindly at her. No, young man, your name has never passed Ruth's lips since the day she received your cruel letter. She forbade all of us ever speaking it in her hearing. She loves your child for its own sake, not yours. And as to the letters about her, it cost her a great effort to begin to write them; but after awhile, I doubt not, she ceased to connect herself with them at all; it was pure communication, to her mind, between father and child. If I were perfectly sure you were worthy of Ruth I might be tempted, perhaps, to speak a good word for you."

"Let me assure you, then, that I am not worthy of her. I am utterly unworthy. I do not know where I ever got the assurance to come to see her. But some of the letters she wrote in my baby's name—nay, in fact all of them—gave me the idea that they

were written by one whose heart was at rest, and I thought, I hoped, she knew how precious those letters were. Why, when I first saw her, sitting in the orchard, my eye overlooked my own child; I seemed to be a boy again, and she the little wild rose I knew and loved. But I deserve all the pain I am suffering and shall suffer."

"There's Kezia, now, with the baby. I'll call her in."

"La, now, Frank Weston, be you to Pemaquid still? We thought you'd gone. Well, I'm dreadful glad you aint gone, for I was left to say things to you yesterday afternoon that I was ashamed of when I come to say my prayers. Anyhow my bark's wuss'n my bite, and I was riled when I see our Ruth's face all swelled up with cryin', and you that oughter been strung up as high as Haman, a-settin' there lookin' like a pictur' (ye'r handsome, I will allow), and dressed up as if you'd jest come out of a bandbox. And if I expressed my mind too free, you must excuse my ways; I wouldn't hurt a flea a-purpose, much less this ownty downty precious lamb its pa.

"La, I've sung to her about you till she could ha' picked you out among a hundred pa's. Not for your virtue's sake, but to warn her ag'inst follerin' in your ways. Not to say that your ways aint improved, for I see by your face they air. And our Ruth and me, we'll bring her up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She shall be took to the Eternal Associa-

tion and learn her Catechism and her Primer, and see John Rogers burnt at the stake, and Xerxes a-lyin' in his coffin, and Zebedee up in a tree his Lord to see; Oh, never you fear but she shall know all there is to know! And I tell you what! You come to see her every summer, and I'll fetch her here, or to the tavern, or wherever you say, only don't you never come a-poaching after our Ruth no more.

“This 'ere baby favors its ma, don't it? Anyhow, she aint a grain like you. Aint she a little pictur'? And the Squire thinks he's her grandpa, and nobody can persuade him he aint. And we jest take the money you send us for her and heave it into the contribution-box!

“Well, if you've done eatin' of her up, I'll be goin' with what's left of her. Good-by, Frank. Good-by, Mis' Strong. Kiss your pa, lambkin; you won't see him ag'in for a whole year.”

XXX.

“ Meeting thus upon the threshold going out and coming in :
Going out unto the triumph, coming in unto the fight ;
Coming in unto the darkness, going out unto the light ! ”

—ISABELLA CRAIG.

“ The years of old age are stalls in the cathedral of life, in which for aged men to sit and listen, and meditate, and be patient till the service is over, and in which they may get themselves ready to say Amen at last, with all their hearts, and souls, and strength.”—MOUNTFORD.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

TWO great events have occurred here in Pemaquid that have given me something to think of besides myself.

I don't see how God *can* be so good to me.

Mrs. Strong asked me to come to the parsonage and take care of Father Strong while she was laid aside. There is not a girl in the village who would not have felt this, as I did, a great honor and delight. Ministering to him is somewhat like ministering to one of the old prophets. I went right away, so as to learn all his ways, and never did I spend two more delightful weeks. He was nearing his hundredth birthday, and his physical strength was well-nigh

gone. But his soul was as strong as a young man's; yes, stronger, and he seemed to live in it and to hold constant communion with the Being whom he had loved and served so long. And this filled him with such sweet charity, that though of course I could not tend him with Mrs. Strong's skill, and sometimes forgot things, and blundered in others, he always said everything was just right, and that he hadn't time to form a wish before it was gratified.

And at last his birthday came, and he was one hundred years old. And I was privileged to carry his dear little grandchild and place it in his arms: for there was another birthday in the house, and a life beginning just as his was going out. Tears of joy rolled down his aged cheeks, and he blessed the child, and then said, "I thank Thee, O Christ, for the joy that has come to my sorrow-stricken children. Spare this little one, and let him grow up to be a preacher of righteousness. And now what wait I for but leave to go home to be with Him whom my soul loveth. Lord, call me home to-day, to be with Thee in Paradise."

I stood awe-struck by his side a moment, and then took the baby back to his mother. Father Strong welcomed me with a smile as I returned to him, and asked me to turn him upon his side; I did so, and he put his hand under his cheek, looking as peaceful as a child.

I leaned over him and asked him how he felt.

“*Delightfully!*” he said, and fell into a gentle sleep.

Mr. Strong came in repeatedly during the day, but there was not another movement, and just as the sun was setting he drew his last, painless breath.

All we had asked was that he might live to his hundredth birthday, and to bless the child. It was not a death to mourn over; it was one to remember with sacred and solemn joy.

And the little life that had just begun, how it claimed us all; how happily it broke in upon the household so long written childless!

Father Strong's funeral was something quite wonderful. Ministers came from all over the State, and everybody in Pemaquid who was not detained by sickness or the care of little children was there. The men even left their haying and every sort of work to pay respect to the oldest and best man they had ever known or were ever likely to know.

Alice is three years old to-day. And her papa has been to see her. He wrote to ask Kezia to bring her to the parsonage to see him, and did not come here at all, of which I was very glad. And yet I saw him, and heard him preach a wonderful sermon for a young man. Of course I should not have gone to meeting if I had known he was going to preach. They all knew it, but took care not to tell me. Am I glad or sorry that I heard that sermon? I think I

must be sorry, for there is a lump in my throat now. And yet, it is a comfort to see that the love I once felt for him was not wasted on a nobody; was not the idle fancy of a little country girl.

He must be very much displeased with me not to so much as call!

However, he may be engaged to some other girl, and so have forgotten all about me. In that case he will be taking Alice away from us. The thought is terrible.

There are plenty of girls in love with him, I do not doubt—that is, if he often preaches such wonderful sermons. It sounded like Baxter and Owen and other old writers grandma taught me to love. Grandma would have *feasted* on such preaching.

And to think he did not even call! But I am glad he did not.

And I am glad that I have kept writing to him about Alice. He is not the sort of man to be hampered with a girl's whims. And my reluctance to write to him about Alice *was* a whim.

I think I shall have to spend a day of fasting and prayer. My head runs upon Juliet in a most unseemly way. And I have no right to look at second causes. It was God who separated me from what I loved too much, and it is He who has poured so much sweetness into my cup that I have often felt too happy to live.

Still he might have just called.

And now here comes Kezia. I have kept out of her way hitherto, but now I am in for it.

“Well; Ruth Woodford, did you ever in all your 'varsal life hear such preachin'? Why, it's laid me flat as a pan-cake. I don't feel no bigger'n a flea. All Pemaquid is afire about it! And you ought to ha' seen how awful fond he is of Alice. And how she went on about you! It was Ruth this and Ruth that; but he never said a word to encourage her.

“He don't look very rugged, and it wouldn't take much to upset him. What makes you so silent, child? Why don't you say nothin' about that 'ere sermon? 'Taint possible you haint forgiv' Frank for the visit he made you a year ago? Well, you needn't be a mite afraid he'll ever try to see you ag'in', he's as good as promised me he never will. You think he might have called here? Where would ha' been the good of that? You could like him as a friend? Pshaw! it's no such thing. When a young man makes a friend of a girl it means he's going to court her. And when a girl wants to make a friend of a young man it means that she's a-throwin' dust in her own eyes. And men may preach beautiful, and pray beautiful, but it don't foller that they'll make good husbands. In fact, it's often just the contrary. Frank Weston's throwed you overboard, and then you've had your turn and throwed him overboard, and kep' his little lambkin besides.”

Pemaquid has grown so fast that the meeting-house has been enlarged twice, and now a new one is to be built immediately. And ours is one of the families appointed to leave our dear old church and become a part of the new one. It has been a great blow to us all. It will be impossible for us to love a new minister as we do Mr. Strong. Kezia has cried about it till the tears have worn two lines down her cheeks, where the skin is off, and I can't deny that I have cried too. One has need of patience in this changing, evil world. But grandma's lessons are ever repeating themselves in my ears. She could not endure faint-heartedness, and I will not give way now, though many things conspire to try my courage.

When I was a little girl I used to take it for granted that I should have children and grandchildren of my own. I see now that I never shall. But I have my dear young rogue Samuel, whom God only can take from me, and I have, for a season, this little miracle of sweetness, our precious Alice. But we may have to part with her any day. Well, one's life doth not consist in the abundance of what one hath. What a blessed, beautiful truth that is!

FRANK WESTON TO REV. MR. STRONG.

DEAR MR. STRONG: You will excuse my troubling you with my affairs, when I tell you that my health has broken down again. I made a mistake in undertaking such severe and varied labor as this large,

growing church requires. My physicians insist on entire rest for six months at least. I am to try a sea-voage during a large part of that period. Of course this is a heavy trial, and I am tempted to envy the ass and her colt, of whom it was said, "The Lord hath need of them." But though perplexed, I am not in despair. I believe the Master has yet something for me to do. So if you hear of any vacant New England pulpit, six months hence, I beg you will bear me in mind. I have learned to cease from picking and choosing how, when, or where I shall pitch my tent, content that each day brings me a day's march nearer home. Not that I have any morbid desire to die young. Only there shoots athwart my soul at times the blissful thought of becoming like Christ, in seeing Him as He is.

Remember me most kindly to Mrs. Strong, kiss the baby for me, and believe me

Affectionately and gratefully yours,

FRANK WESTON

MRS. STRONG SENDS FOR RUTH.

"My dear child, here is a letter from Frank that troubles me. He has broken down in the midst of his brilliant career, and has had to abandon his important field of usefulness, never to resume it."

"But, dear Mrs. Strong, there is nothing I can do about it. I am very sorry for him, but there is nothing I can do."

“We shall see. In six months the new meeting-house will be done, and Mr. Strong says that if at that time Frank is in working order, he shall recommend the new church to call him to be its pastor. Now could anything be more delightful? I always have loved him for his own sake and for his love to my children, and this climate agreed with him perfectly. And Alice will be far better off here in our pure air than in a great smoky city. Dear heart, how your cheeks burn! But you would have to hear all this sooner or later, and I wanted the pleasure of telling you myself. Think now; your father and mother and Kezia won't have to give you up, and you will not have to part with Samuel or with Alice. Yes, it is going to be delightful all round. You are not so sure of that? We shall see.”

XXXI.

FRANK WESTON TO MRS. STRONG.

DEAR MRS. STRONG: I have received your very kind letter, with its seal of "Do come," and am most grateful for it. It has pleased God to restore me to health, but my physicians still agree that I must renounce the excitement and fatigue of city life and spend the rest of my days in some rural retreat, where I can have plenty of air and exercise. The call to Pemaquid, if accepted, would fulfill all these conditions. And I hardly need tell you that my heart leaped up at the thought of living once more near Mr. Strong and yourself, not to speak of other friends. But my doing so is out of the question. I can not trust myself. And I have other calls equally pressing from New England parishes, between which I must soon decide.

I have a friend, a noble fellow, whom I think just the man for Pemaquid—a man superior to myself in every way. It costs me an effort, however, to say this, and I have had a tussle with both myself and the devil before I could make up my mind to do it.

For if Henry Althorpe is heart-free, and if he goes to Pemaquid and becomes Ruth's pastor, he will become her husband; of that I am sure. And I am mean enough, and enough of a dog in the manger, to want to stand in his light if I can. Dear Mrs. Strong, you are like a beloved elder sister to me, and I have no one else to whom I can speak on this sore subject. But I do not intend to be nothing but a love-sick fellow, making the most of my discomfort. With God's help I am going to be a brave, cheerful man—yes, and a happy one, too; for, after all, the human soul was formed for Him, and He can satisfy it. I long to get to work again.

Faithfully yours,

FRANK WESTON.

P. S.—This mail carries my partial acceptance of a call to South Greenville.

KEZIA'S OPINION.

“Well, now, Mis' Strong, you might knock me down with a straw! As true's my name is Kezia Millet I thought Frank Weston was as good as settled in our new church, and our Ruth as good as married to him. Says I to Mis' Woodford, says I, 'Everything's turned out like a book, with a weddin' to the end.' Not that I ever see any sense in doin' that. It reminds me of a story of somebody's meetin' a hired girl and asking her where she lived now, and her saying, 'La! I don't live anywhere now; I'm *married!*'

If I was goin' to write a book I'd put the weddin' on the fust page.

“ Well, I thought if anybody could help me to live consistent 'twould be Frank Weston. He aint 'way up in the clouds, dressed in glory, like Mr. Strong; he's got lots of human natur' in him, and can understand and pity them as has lots of it too. Oh, Mis' Strong, the conflicts and temptations I have! *Even* people like you don't know anything about it. Why, you're as even as the hem of my best apron. And it's calculated to exalt the flesh to have an even temper. Not to say that you're exalted; I meant people in general. I've always took notice that them as could hold their tongues never had no charity for them as couldn't. They think we fly out a-purpose. Jest as if people was corks in yeast bottles, and could keep in if they'd a mind to, and the yeast all the time workin' powerful. Now, Mis' Strong, I aint never tempted to tell lies, and your nice, sweet-tempered kind *is*. They don't go to do it, but the first thing they know out it flies. They are apt to be kind of cowardly, and afraid of bein' found fault with, and so they tell stories. Aint our Alice growed to be a beauty? And with me and Ruth to bring her up nobody'll ever hear her a-tellin' fibs, though she's got the temper of a angel. Seems to me we oughter call a town-meetin', and send a committee after her pa and bring him here whether or no. I expect it's all along of our Ruth that he won't come, don't you? ”

MRS. STRONG TO FRANK WESTON.

MY DEAR FRANK: The new church, which had set its heart upon having you for its pastor, can hardly believe that you have refused its call. And I can hardly believe that you have acted so hastily in a matter of such importance. My husband says South Greenville is not the place for you, as the character of the people requires a different man and one older than yourself. And Pemaquid is growing apace, and needs the best spiritual work. It is extremely considerate in you to furnish it with a pastor it does not want—because it wants you—and to provide Ruth Woodford with a husband out of hand, when a husband is the last thing she is thinking of. It is true that in one sense it does not matter much in what part of the vineyard a man works, but in another sense it does. The people here know you as you never can be known elsewhere. As a crude boy, sowing his wild oats, we loved you and forgave you; as a man who has put away childish things, we love you yet better. Now the new church is largely composed of young people whom my husband regards as his spiritual children, and he is very much in earnest about their future. And we both feel that you have been prepared for efficient work by the discipline through which you have passed, and have been led by Providence into the hearts of this people.

As to Ruth, if you are the man I think you have

become, you will not let her stand between you and a plain duty. She and Kezia are your child's devoted mothers; they are both the most maternal beings I ever met. Neither of them needs to marry; their hearts are satisfied with loving God, and Christ, and duty, and little children. I will own that I clung fondly, and for a long time, to the hope of seeing Ruth your wife; but it seems plain to me now that, while she may learn to respect you as her pastor, she never again will allow her heart to be stirred by human passion. And once convinced of this, and that she has found her vocation, you will give your mind fully to yours. Thousands of human beings never marry; they can not force Providence in this more than in any other thing. Leave your fate in God's hands, and set yourself manfully at work.

Affectionately yours,

FAITH STRONG.

FRANK WESTON IN HIS JOURNAL.

After a day of fasting and prayer, I have decided to accept the call to Pemaquid. It ill becomes a minister of the Gospel to set his heart on a human maiden, and I have done with such folly forever. Mrs. Strong has removed my last scruple about settling at Pemaquid, by assuring me that Ruth will never think of me again but as her pastor; I therefore resolve never to think of her again but as a parishioner. The

thought of living near my precious little daughter is very refreshing, and so is the thought of living only for Christ, crucifying the flesh and all its affections. Nothing now stands between my soul and Him.

MRS. WOODFORD IN HER JOURNAL.

At last our poor young church is rich in its new young pastor. During the last few years he has matured wonderfully. It is delightful to hear him preach, and he is equally beloved by young and old. It is delightful, too, to see him with his little Alice, who is the only recreation he allows himself, with the exception of a daily romp with Samuel.

Though he comes regularly every evening after tea to see the children, he rarely sees Ruth. They treat each other with great formality when they do meet; there is something unnatural about the whole thing. She has become so very dear to me that I frequently speak of her to him, as to others, as she deserves; but he never makes the smallest response, and invariably changes the subject. Then, when I speak with admiration of his sermons, Ruth says, quietly, "Yes; *grandma* would have liked them."

To-day I almost lost patience with this apathy, and said to her:

"When you were so devoted to him, years ago, he was not half the man he is now. How you can help loving him is a mystery."

"Perhaps I do love him," she said, thoughtfully,

“just as I should Owen, and Baxter, and Bunyan, if they were alive. But it would be wrong and silly for me to think of him now as I used to think of him when he was a boy. Besides—”

And here she stopped short, and would say no more.

Kezia rushed in, a few hours later, with a red spot in each cheek.

“We all know what that Stone girl is, and it wouldn’t never do for our minister to marry her.”

“Of course not,” I returned; “what put that into your dear old silly head?”

“Why, Mis’ Jackson see him payin’ her attention after meetin’ this afternoon, and she was so riled that she labored with him about it.”

Half amused, and a trifle uneasy, I gave him a gentle hint the next time we met.

“*Paying attention!*” he exclaimed, “why, she was caught in the rain, and as I passed down the aisle and out of the meeting-house, I held my umbrella over her head, as I should do to any man, woman, or child I stumbled on. Is it possible that people are so wanting in sense that they can make a mountain out of a mole-hill? This is not my first annoyance of that sort,” he went on. “Last week I met Miss Angela Daw, and she stopped to speak to me about a sick woman; and in half an hour the old deacon came and warned me that the parish would be greatly scandalized if I courted that venerable maid. And

the day before yesterday I picked up somebody's old brass thimble at the sewing-circle, and was twirling it about on the table, when a scrap of paper was placed before me by invisible hands, containing these words: 'That is Cindy Green's thimble that you are making so much of, and it looks *particular*.' Really, a man hardly knows which way to turn under such circumstances."

"The only way to avoid their constant repetition," I said, "is to take refuge in matrimony."

In reply he took from his pocket and handed me a book containing an engraving of a youthful disciple, seeking and obtaining counsel from an aged man, in this wise:

"Say, where is peace, for thou its paths hast trod?"

"In poverty, retirement, and with God."

"I am experiencing too much of this sweet peace to wish to exchange it for another. And I hope, dear Mrs. Woodford, that you will take pains to have it understood in the parish that marriage is the last thing in the world of which I am thinking. I have enough to satisfy any mortal—retirement, poverty, and God. I have besides, a people who love me and whom I love, and a little daughter whom I think the most winsome and engaging of children."

"I still think, however, that a minister needs a home and a cheery, helpful wife. You are young and strong and well now, but life will bring its burdens and its

changes and you will need somebody all your own who will be to you what no other friend can be. An unmarried minister is a good deal like a bird with one wing or a boat with one oar."

I repeated a part of this conversation to Kezia that it might get round the parish that our minister had no matrimonial tendencies.

"Well," she said, "I'm beat. I thought he was just waitin' for our Ruth to give in. But if he don't want her, there's plenty that does, and me and you we love her wonderful, especially you. Does he think she aint got book-learnin' enough to make a good minister's wife? Or what is it?"

FRANK WESTON IN HIS JOURNAL.

I am a free man in Christ Jesus and haven't an idol in the world. Ruth is not now more cold to me than I am to her. I should even be willing to unite her to Henry with my own hands.

But "sadder than separation, sadder than death is change," and while I no longer seek her as a wife, I feel that she will not even be my friend. It is now more than a year since I became her pastor, and I do not think that in all that time I have had a half-hour's conversation with her. And there are so many points where I need to consult with her about my precious little Alice. When I go to her house after tea she is either absorbed in her garden or invisible.

And this is not because she fears another pursuit from

me, for I have made no secret of the fact that I never intend to marry. It is very unnatural and unpleasant, and grows more and more irksome. I wish she was my sister. If she were, how I should love to tell her all my thoughts and plans and have her share in all my labors for this people. I would take a house and go to housekeeping and we should educate Alice together. And in the reaction that follows my sermons she would sympathize with and cheer me.

But, alas! she is not my sister; not even my friend. And when I boarded with the widow Cutter she drove me nearly frantic with her tongue. And here at the spinster Gleason's I am worshiped, waylaid, and waited upon and fed till I *am* frantic. How thankful I am that my study door has no keyhole and *has* a bolt!

RUTH IN HER JOURNAL.

Of course I could not expect my minister to think of me as he did that day down in the orchard. An ignorant, stupid, country girl! And I never have.

But I did not think the time would ever come when he would despise and almost hate me.

I am sure he thinks I am in love with him. But I am not. I respect and esteem him too much for that, and realize how far he is above me till I ache. Oh, how heavenly-minded, how devoted he is. His sermons are like the books on which grandma brought me up; they remind me of her every Sunday, and then I miss her and feel lonesome. Miss Tabitha

Gleason says he is so far above the world that he does not know roast-beef from bacon, and that she is afraid he is all soul.

I wish I knew whether my management of Alice suits him. But of course it doesn't. Kezia has pretty much given her up to me, and takes to Samuel. But though he is my own dear brother's child, and just like him, and Alice is no relation, I am ashamed to own that I love her best. What *can* be the reason? Susan Stowe says it is because she is our minister's child. Susan grows spiteful as she grows older, poor thing. I dare say she doesn't know it; and perhaps she has her trials and can not always rise above them. Perhaps I have spiteful fits, too. But I hope not. Yet when I think that Alice's papa is likely to take her away from me to live with him, I feel torn to pieces. Rather than part with her I would go and be his kitchen-maid. I should not mind working for such a good man and his lovely child.

He can't say that I intrude upon him, at any rate. I lock myself into my room generally when he comes to see Alice and frolic with Samuel. Samuel loves him dearly. He will always be a good boy if we tell him our minister shall know it. He was very naughty at meeting last Sunday, and one of the tithing-men hit him hard on the head. That will teach him how to behave in the sanctuary.

XXXII.

MRS. WOODFORD'S JOURNAL.

MRS. STRONG came to see me to-day. She is a dear little bright woman, and our going to the other church has not disturbed our friendship in the least.

“I want to talk to you about Frank,” she said. “I do not think Tabitha Gleason makes him comfortable. I do wish he would get married and go to housekeeping.”

“He says he never shall,” I returned.

“Then couldn't you take the poor fellow in here? You have such beautiful housekeeping, and could make him so happy and at home here. He isn't one of the sort to make trouble, and as he is now he would be a blessing to the house.”

“That is true,” I said; “but—Ruth—”

“What about Ruth?”

“Why, I do not think she would like it. I am afraid she has never quite forgiven him for the past. At any rate, she does not share in the enthusiasm the rest of us feel for him. She always takes herself off when he comes, and when I speak of his sermons she talks about her grandmother. No, I am sure she would not like his coming here to live. And I doubt

if he would like to come. He and Ruth do not harmonize."

"It is very strange. I thought their love for the child would be such a tie between them."

"She never consults him about her management; he never volunteers any advice. Perhaps he looks down upon her from the elevation he has reached. I suppose if he ever did marry, he would want a woman of culture; a woman with literary tastes."

"Bless you, what good could literary taste do him? It wouldn't love him, or sympathize with him, or see that he was properly fed. No, no, Ruth is just the little affectionate, kind-hearted, motherly creature he needs; and what is keeping them apart, when that child ought to be drawing them together, I don't see. But if, as I suspect, there is a misunderstanding between them, we must hope it will be cleared up providentially. And now I must go. I take it for granted you are all well."

"Yes; all but Alice. Alice is drooping a little."

"It is the weather. It has been so sultry for nearly a week now. Shall I look at her? You know I have been consulting physician all her life. Why, Alice, darling, what's the matter? Don't look so mournful. You'll feel better by and by."

FRANK WESTON'S JOURNAL.

I said I had not an idol in the world, and in that spake I truly. But God has written me childless, and

pierced my heart with a great sorrow. I sit here in my lonely study, longing to hear the little feet climbing the stairs, and trying to say—nay, saying—Thy will be done. She faded away before we had time to feel uneasy. How I loved her! How I miss her! Patient little lamb, how sweet and docile she was through it all!

Ruth seems stunned. I looked to her, as the one who loved my Alice best, for sympathy. No one has given so little. But even this I must bear in faith. It is a bitter drop in a bitter cup.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

How can I write? How can I eat, and drink, and sleep? I always thought it would nearly kill me to lose Alice. But I never foresaw that even a worse thing could befall be. But to see his agony and not fly to take him to my heart; not to dare to speak to him, to write to him, to tell him how I ache through and through to bear everything to save him a single pang—this is misery indeed. If God had only let me die, and left him his little treasure, the light of his life, the image of his saintly wife. I wrung my hands and prayed Him to spare her, and take me; over and over I besought Him, but He answered me never a word.

Why should this fervent, heavenly spirit be thus dealt with? Was he not already seven times purified? Had he made an idol of her? No! He loved

God better than he loved her; she was all he had, and he justified Him in taking her from him. Never did I witness such faith, such grand, such sublime submission; just the very Christian graces I admire and value the most. Let me have them, too. Though He slay me, let me trust Him.

FRANK WESTON'S JOURNAL.

Sharp as this blow is, I could bear it better but for Ruth's want of sympathy. Out of her wealth of flowers, she has not offered me one to lay on my child's coffin. Apt as she is at administering consolation, she offers none to me. And I should be so soothed if she would be to me as a sister in this time of my sorrow; put kind arms around me; speak loving words; support my drooping faith; pray with me and for me, and talk of my Alice to me; speak of the home to which she has gone; magnify Christ, and fill me with joy in Him. A man in trouble needs a woman to lean on. Dearly as she loved Alice, she is not crushed as I am; she is stronger, and she looks down on my weakness.

KEZIA INTERFERES.

"Now here's just where it is, and I can't stand it no longer. Here you sit, and you a man, and a real good man at that; and you're a-pinin' to have our Ruth fly in by that 'ere winder and bind up your wounds. And there she sits a-wearin' and a-tearin'

because she's achin' to do it, and dursen't. Everybody but me's as blind as bats; you be, and our Ruth, she be. You two love each other to distraction, and have all along; and is she to speak fust, I want to know? You needn't think I aint got no feelin's 'cause I come and scold at you. I've cried my eyes out to think of you havin' to lay that sweet lamb away in the ground, and my heart it will be laid low in the grave with her when you do. But—now don't you go to dyin' of joy; *she aint dead*; she's been in a trance, like Mr. Tennent, but she's come to, and has eat hearty, for her. And if she aint been and broke the ice between you and our Ruth, my name aint Kezia, and as the French woman said, 'What's the use of bein' a woman if you have to look at things when you don't want to see 'em?'"

KEZIA SINGS ONE DAY IN HER KITCHEN.

O, what a mass of ignorance
 We mortal women be!
 How we refuse to walk by faith,
 And walk by what we see!
 How many times I've cried for fear
 The baby it should die,
 And almost seen her takin' wings,
 Straight into glory fly!
 How often I have quaked with fear
 Lest on some dreadful day
 Her pa should come with cruel hands
 And snatch our bird away;
 How often trembled lest some spark
 Should fall in love with Ruth,

And tear her from my breakin' heart
 To dwell with him, forsooth.
And how we all bemoaned the fate
 That threatened us ere long
With loss of our dear church
 And blessed Mr. Strong !
And now jest see how things turn out !
 Kezia Millet, look
And tell me if it isn't like
 A story in a book :
The baby, she aint died, but growed
 Into a lovely girl,
With dimpled hands and rosy cheeks,
 And hair that can't but curl ;
Her pa, he'll never take her hence—
 Our Ruth will never go
A single step from Pemaquid
 And all who love her so !
'Tis true, we all have had to leave
 Our own beloved church,
But 'taint like Providence to leave
 His people in the lurch ;
And our new minister's a man
 The very stones can love ;
He's not an angel—didn't drop
 Right down from heaven above—
He's made of jest such stuff as I
 And other mortals be ;
He's had to fight the world, the flesh,
 And Satan, too—all three ;
He's had his falls, as I've had mine,
 He's had his sorrows, too ;
And when his people suffer theirs,
 Knows what to say and do.
A son of consolation, he,
 And going everywhere

With strengthenin' words and kindly deeds,
And loving, tender prayer.
The Squire, O how glad he is
To have once more a son !
Mis' Woodford thinks for such a man
Too much can ne'er be done ;
And Ruth, our Ruth, the mornin's broke
For that dear soul at last ;
She's sippin' Paradise to pay
For all the wo' that's past.
A little robin aint more plump,
Nor skips more light than she ;
Yet she's a pillar in the church,
And proper glad I be !
Aye, there goes our new minister,
Them children on his back,
And he, I do believe my heart,
The merriest of the pack !
Well, if to paint the happiest home
On earth my hand was bid,
I shouldn't be afraid to say
It is in Pemaquid !

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