

Family Reading.

For the Christian Messenger. "The Time is Short."

"The time is short," rise up my soul, And walk no more in sadness!

"The time is short," thou must not stay Amid the shadows fretting;

"The time is short," too much, alas! Is gone past the recalling,

"The time is short," then take thou up, With purpose true and willing,

"The time is short," and thou my soul Hast long with sorrow striven.

"The time is short," ah! much too short To spend in idle feeling;

Select Serial.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

BY HESBA STRETTON CHAPTER IX. HOME AGAIN.

Well, I cannot tell you any more You have heard enough to know how Transome was faithful unto death.

All I saw of his funeral was the little plain hearse belonging to the union, with four of the workhouse men riding outside it, ready to carry his coffin to the grave.

It was one day in the spring that Transome had spoken of, 'I th' spring, Ally—i' th' spring time!' I was lying in my bed late on in the morning, for no one had bid me rise,

'Surely this cannot be Mrs. Transome!' 'It's Alice Transome,' answered the matron. Her husband died four months ago, and she's never been herself since.

'She'll take notice of me,' said the same strange, clear, pleasant voice. 'I must make her know me; for I am come to pay a debt I owe her. Mrs. Transome, you have never forgotten our little scholar, Pippin?'

No, I had never forgotten him; yet I did not lift up my eyes all at once. I tried to recall his bonny face; but it was so mixed up with Willie's face, I could not.

It's Pippin! said the voice, close to my ear. I made a great effort then to shake off the weight that had been crushing me down all these long months.

'Look at me!' said Pippin. So I opened my eyes, and saw him standing beside my bed, a young, sun-burnt man now, but with the same sunny hair and bright eyes that my little scholar had.

'I am come to take you away from this place,' he said, soothingly; 'but you must not talk to me now. After dinner you shall get up, and dress, and come away with father and me.

Then I looked, and saw behind him a man of middle age, whose hair was just growing gray, and whose grave face bore the marks of bitter sufferings. But he looked kindly upon me as Pippin spoke, and said, 'You were my boy's best friend when he had no one to care for him: and we will not leave you here.'

That evening I had tea with them in a grand parlor in an inn in the town, and was waited upon as if I were a born lady.

How, like a child, the memory of me had died away from his mind, amid the many changes of his life. How when he was a boy of sixteen, just leaving school, there came a rumor to him of his father's ship having been wrecked upon the coast of Africa nine years before, and how a white man was living among the black tribes there.

Yes, they repaid me nobly. Captain John Champion had brought home with him stores of gold and ivory, not enough to make him rich, but ample and to spare for starting himself and Philip again in a way of getting more wealth.

Well, by some means or other they prevailed upon our old landlord, who was Philip's uncle you remember, to let me have my old cottage back again. He was more friendly with them now they had no need of any friendship from him.

When the first rent-day came, and Transome was not there to take it, than I felt keener than ever that he had nothing more to do with the old place, where he and I had dwelt so long.

But ah! that one change was almost more than I could bear. Never to have Transome sitting opposite to me in the chimney-nook all through the long, lonely evenings; never to hear him move about in the room overhead, or see him pass by the window

When Pippin and Captain John Champion were gone, then I felt how desolate it was. There were the flowers, and the spring sunshine, and the fresh air blowing over the brow of the hill, but Transome was not there with me to enjoy them.

Then one night I dreamed a dream in which I saw him standing among a great crowd of folks, very rich and very learned, and very grand; and I thought he looked lonely and strange among them; and I called to him to come back to me, who loved him, though he couldn't read a word out of a printed book.

All at once a solemn trumpet sounded, and I saw a glorious throne, and One upon it who was too bright for me to look upon, only I could hear His voice speaking; and after my ear was used to the sound of it, I heard Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

And I looked to see who it was standing in the light of the throne, with a crown of life upon his head; and it was Transome.

CHAPTER X. A HARD MAN.

I went back to my old cottage in May, having been away a whole year, and part of that time in the workhouse, where Transome died; and where I should have died likewise, if it had not been for good friends who took me out, and set me up in my old home, and gathered scholars again for me.

The house never let, and it vexed him sadly. He was glad enough to have you back again as tenant. Come this way; master never leaves me to take a penny for him.

She led the way along a dark passage into a large, gloomy room, that looked as if no sunshine or fresh air could ever find their way into it.

At the far end from the door sat my landlord, cowering over a little morsel of fire, which was burning in a large grate. I could scarcely see him at the distance he was; but when he spoke, his voice was the piping, quavering voice of an old man.

When I was close enough to see him, I noticed a great change in him since I saw him last in church, more than a year ago. He had been stout enough then, and looked well nourished and comfortable; but now his cheeks had fallen in, and all his body seemed shrunken and smaller.

It seemed to me as I went slowly down the steep street which led to the town, that if Transome had only been there, the spring day would have made

me young again. But there is always an if stealing in between us and perfect happiness, and always will be, till we stand before the throne of God, where the light is never dim, and where the very air we breathe is the breath of life.

I could not get rid of a bit of fear in going to see my landlord, though I had my rent tied up in my pocket-handkerchief; and I had no thought that he would wish to disturb me again, like he had done before, in the hope of building more houses where our old cottage stood.

I knocked as soon as I was myself again, and a servant woman opened the door for me. She was a little under forty years of age; and looked weary and peevish. But Transome had told me what a life she had led for many a year, with no one about her but a close-handed suspicious master; and I smiled, and spoke as pleasantly as I could.

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Rebecca scowled at him, sure that he could not see her, and muttered something under her breath, which even I could not catch. But she slammed the door after her with a bang, that made the old man half jump up from his chair, and cry, 'Noisy huzzy!'

When I was close enough to see him, I noticed a great change in him since I saw him last in church, more than a year ago. He had been stout enough then, and looked well nourished and comfortable; but now his cheeks had fallen in, and all his body seemed shrunken and smaller.

That's right,' he said, after counting them twice over, 'ten shillings a month! I should have been six pounds richer if I'd let you and Transome alone last year. But times are bad! times are bad!'

He never seemed to think of how much poorer I was by the loss of a

home for twelve months, or by the death of Transome: nor how I might have been nothing but a pauper still, dying a slow death among other paupers, but for those dear friends, who had found me out, and set me up again with my little school.

'Times are bad, sir,' I said, 'and likely to be badder.' 'Ah! ah!' he moaned.

'God helping me,' I said, 'I'll win my own rent, sir. I could have won it all this year, if you'd not turned us out of our cottage.'

'It was a mistake,' he answered, 'a sad mistake; and I've lost six pounds by it. Philip Champion told me you taught him for nothing when he was a boy; is that true, Mrs. Transome?'

'It cost me nothing,' I said, 'and he was the quickest scholar I ever had in my school; and see how he is paying me now, by setting me up again! He's your own nephew, sir, the only relation you've left, people say.'

I was almost afraid to say that, for he had been very bitter against his sister, Philip's mother, who had left him to marry a poor man such as Captain John Champion was. But my landlord took it very quietly.

'Ah! he said, looking into the smoldering fire, 'I recollect the lad coming to me one morning: how Rebecca came to let him in, I don't know to this day! He was a pretty boy about seven, I think. 'Uncle,' he said, as bold as brass, 'please to pay for me to go to school.'

She led the way along a dark passage into a large, gloomy room, that looked as if no sunshine or fresh air could ever find their way into it.

'For love,' I said, 'he loved me dearly, and me him.'

'Well,' he went on, fumbling at the money, 'I should not mind returning you sixpence out of the rent this once, as times are bad, and you gave my nephew schooling for nothing. But only this once, Mrs. Transome.'

The servant had just come into the room; and I saw him hide away the ten shillings quickly out of her sight, pretending to laugh all the while at what I had said.

I pondered it much that evening, as my fire burned briskly and cheerfully. The flames played and leaped as they had not done in the rich man's smoldering fire; and my mind was full of the difference betwixt him and us.

'Why, Transome,' I said, 'he's ten times poorer than us. All our riches are on the far side of the grave, where Jesus is preparing a place for us. It doesn't matter what we have here for such a little while.'

But when I remembered, and lifted up my eyes, and saw the other chimney-nook empty, then I found how poor this life can be, even though we know the Lord is laying up treasure for us in heaven.

A straight line is the shortest in morals as well as in geometry.

Youths' Department.

Scripture Enigma. No. 158.

- A WORD OF TWO SYLLABLES. 1. My first, though great and wide, A rod did once divide; 'Tis where God bath his way; And, where, in Moses' day, All Israel were baptized, While Pharaoh stood surprised; And things of curious kind, Who search therein may find. 2. My next, since time began, Is just—a little man, By many a father claimed, By many a mother named; Diverse and infinite— Who can its names recite? Yet still, wherever known, 'Tis clearly one alone. 3. My whole—a point sublime, Is man's appointed time; The time when all events, All works, and all intents— Whatever man can do, Transpire in order due; 'Twas when, in days of old, Of Herod's crimes they told, Who did their altars stain; With blood of officers slain; And when the prisoner Paul Came at proud Felix' call. While my young friends are fair My riddle to explain, Let me devoutly pray That their "convenience" may Agree with God's—to-day!

While my young friends are fair My riddle to explain, Let me devoutly pray That their "convenience" may Agree with God's—to-day!

CURIOS QUESTIONS. 305. Subject—LIGHT.

- 1. Find passages of Scripture in which Jesus is spoken of as the Light of this dark world. 2. Find where God's people are (a) called children of light; (b) bidden to walk in the light; and (c) commanded to show light to others? 3. What has God given us to be our light on our way through the darkness of this world? 4. Where shall we no longer need a light, and why? 306. A QUEER DREAM. There is a word from the vegetable kingdom hidden in each line. Beneath the trees I sleep in ease, And dream, a pleasant dream; I see a knight, with helmet bright, Beside a dashing stream. And through the glade appears a maid— A figure small and slight; "Art thou a fay or angel, say?" Exclaimed the plumed knight. "I am no fay, but peasant gay," She scornfully replied. "Oh turn, I pray," the knight did say, "And be a noble's bride."

She at his word awhile demured, "Now master, you provoke me,"— Uprose, and frowned; but here a sound, A robin's call, awoke me. —Home Circle.

- 307. Form a square of words: 1. A small island from which comes Parian marble. 2. A notice of danger. 3. A Jewish teacher. 4. The path of the earth. 5. One who works in metals. Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma. No. 157.

- 1. Archelaus. 2. Bethlehem. 3. Herod. 4-5. Orpha and Ruth. 6. Tarasus. 7. Hebrew. 8. Aреopagus. 9. Tertullus. 10. Wilderness. 11. Heaven. 12. Idumea. 13. Canaan. 14. Hebron. 15. Isaac. 16. Sarah. 17-18. Esther and Vashti. 19-20. Issachar and Levi. "ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL." Rom. xii. 9.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS. 300. Regal, glare, lager. 301. Water from the well of Bethlehem. 302. The three great captains in David's army. 303. He poured the water out before the Lord. 304. Changed words: Line, pine, lane, lime, ling.

Stretch it a Little.

A little girl and her brother were on their way to the ragged school on a cold winter morning. The roofs of the houses and the grass on the common were white with frost, the wind very sharp. They were poorly dressed, but the little girl had a sort of cloak over her which she seemed to have outgrown.

As they walked briskly along she drew her little companion up to her, 'Come under my coat Johnny.' 'It isn't big enough for both,' he replied. 'O, but I can stretch it a little,' she said; and they soon got as close together and as warm as two birds in the same nest.

How many shivering bodies and heavy hearts and sweeping eyes there are in the world, just because people do not stretch their comfort a little beyond themselves.