

Family Reading.

A Catastrophe.

No human being Who saw that sight, But felt a shudder Of pale affright. He sat in the window Three storeys high, A little baby, With no one nigh, A stranger saw him, And stopped to stare; A crowd soon gathered To watch him there.

Purity and Steadfastness of Purpose.

By Rev. J. Clark.

Not carelessly drifting With ebb and with tide; Not evermore shifting From side unto side; Not idly complaining Of men and of things; In thought—kingdoms reigning, As kings among kings; Discerning a beauty In truth and in right; E'er doing your duty In darkness and light; Ye heirs of the ages, And sons of the free; As pure as a sunbeam Your purpose must be.

Select Serial.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

By HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XVII.

NO WILL.

The next morning early an inquest was held by the coroner, and twelve jurymen. All the doctors, that had come in on Sunday to look at the master's corpse, were of one mind as to his death. No one had laid a hand upon him. He had waked up suddenly from his dreams of terror to find they were no longer dreams, but real. His life had been nothing better than the flickering flame of a candle ready to go out if a puff of wind reached it; and the sudden shock had come upon him as if a door had opened, and a mighty rushing wind had swept over his soul, carrying it away like a leaf into the other world. There was no reason to think that Robin Cherrick and his mate had any direct hand in his death.

But they were carried from the town jail, where they had been locked up, and taken before the magistrates; and both me and Rebecca were forced to go and witness against them. Poor Rebecca! It was years since she had seen Robin; and now she had to look him in the face, a sullen, evil face, and swear to him being the man who had courted her in old times, and how he used to come about the place, and knew the house well, and the master's riches, and his lonely way of living. He scarcely looked at her after the first minute; but she could not keep her eyes away from him: and even when she was speaking to the worshipful magistrate, answering the question he put to her, her white face was turned toward Robin, and her frightened gaze fastened upon him. We heard him and his mate sentenced to go to Lancaster jail, there to wait till the next assizes, when they would be tried by the judge. Then we returned to our dismal dwelling-place, which could never be called a home, where preparations were being made, under Mr. Saunders' directions, for the funeral of the dead man.

No news came of Philip Champion, except that the lady in London who had adopted him and brought him up wrote word that she did not expect him home from his voyage with his father for several weeks to come. The old master had made no friends in the town, or such as he once had had forgotten him, and did not care to come to his burial. Even Rebecca refused to go. So it came to pass that there was none but me, save Mr. Saunders and one doctor, who would both be paid for their trouble, to follow him to the grave.

I went into the death-room just before the coffin lid was fastened down upon the poor, wrinkled, withered face. The men were gone away; for they had forgotten to bring the proper nails with them: so the room was empty, but for me and the corpse. So still it lay, so lifeless, that I could hardly believe that somewhere apart from it the soul was living yet! Then the remembrance came across me how once I said to Transome, 'If God would ask me what I wished for, like He did Solomon, I'd have chosen to write a book that would prick our old master's heart to the quick.' Ah! but God Himself had written a book for him that ought to have pricked his heart to the quick over and over again. I wondered how he could have read about God's own Son being a poor man, and all His blessed words against the love of riches, and yet go on loving money till it cast out all other love. And I thought of Jesus, and His great sacrifice of Himself, and His dying upon the cross, and how all this had been cast aside, and counted as nothing by the side of gold. He had known it all; once he professed to believe it all. He had put Christ and his own soul into the balance with money; and he had chosen money! 'And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy; and they were forgotten in the place where they had so done.'

I was very sorrowful that evening: for it seemed to me as if Christ Himself in heaven must be grieved at heart. If it were not for men like Transome, who loved Him, He could never be satisfied with the travail of His soul. But Rebecca was more lively, and inclined to talk more than she had done while the corpse was in the house. She was restless, too, and made herself busy about the kitchen, doing first this thing, and then that, for the mere sake of moving about, and keeping her face away from me.

'I suppose the will won't be read till the heir comes back,' she said to me from the far end of the kitchen.

'There is no will,' I answered: for Mr. Saunders had told me for certain, as we drove home from the burial, that there could not have been one made.'

'No will!' she repeated coming swiftly across the floor, and looking down upon me with eyes all aflame, 'no will!'

'No,' I said, 'Mr. Saunders says he's searched everywhere, and there isn't one.'

'But how shall I get my thousand pounds?' she cried, in a shrill voice. There it cropped up again—that terrible love of money, which had destroyed

our poor old master, body and soul. It was almost as though I saw some devil glaring at me through her eyes. I got up from my chair, and stood opposite to her, trembling like a leaf.

'My poor lass,' I said, 'God is too good to you to let you have the money you've sold Robin and yourself for. He'll give you something better than that. He has given you His own Son, who for our sakes became poor, though He was very rich, that we through His poverty should become rich also.'

My voice was choked and unsteady: but I felt as though God gave me the words to speak. Rebecca stood staring at me for a minute, as if she did not fairly hear me; and then she flung her apron over her face, and sank down in my chair, and broke out into passion and a fit of sobs and crying.

'Poor Robin!' I said after a while, 'if you had the thousand pounds, it'd be the price of his soul.'

'Ay! she sobbed, 'it would. I've been the ruin of him. I'm a wicked woman, and very foolish, Alice Transome. Tell me what I can do now.'

So in the freight, I told her as well as I could, of what our blessed Lord and Saviour did to prove His love to every one of us, and to teach us how little count He set upon what we are apt to prize most. He never cared for money; what he looked for was love. She listened and listened, sobbing now and then, and catching her breath so as not to lose what I was saying about Him. And I spoke also to her about Transome and me, how we had lived together forty years, learning more and more about God's ways, until we came to know that we were nothing, no more than helpless little babes in His hand, but that He was all, Master, King and Father. And I began to say how it might have been the same with her and Robin; but there she cried out as if my words wounded her sorely.

'If I could but have my time over again!' she said.

But not one of us can have our time over again. I thought of Transome, and our early days: and how if those could come again I would take care so as that he should not have to die in the workhouse. No, no. Only one moment at a time belongs to us; and we have no more power over yesterday than over to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRUE AT LAST.

Thank God, Philip reached us before Robin's trial came on. I was so rejoiced to see his face, that I was ready to say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' Yes, peace came back with him. I went home to my own cottage, and lighted a fire on my own hearth; and sat in my own chimney-nook again. Philip was close at hand; and no more charge or anxiety rested upon me.

Yet when the time came I was obliged to go to Lancaster Assizes, and appear before the Judge, to bear witness against the prisoners, who stood for trial before him at the dreadful bar. Rebecca was forced to be there too. It was not very long before trial, so they told us afterward; but to her and me it seemed as if it would never, never be ended. We sat together in a little room, not far from the great hall where the trial was going on, hearkening for some one to come with news. At last Philip opened the door, just as the daylight was growing dim, and we could not clearly see his face. He sat down on the bench with Rebecca, and put his hand kindly upon hers.

'Rebecca,' he said, in that voice of his which always seemed to go straight to one's heart, 'it is a heavy sentence.'

'Tell me,' and she whispered, in a hoarse tone.

'Remember' he went on, 'that my uncle's death was caused by their crime; and that Robin has been in prison for theft before, five years for stealing a letter with money in it. Now he is sentenced to transportation for fifteen years.'

'It was me that did it,' she said again, in the same loud whisper.

'Yes!' Philip answered, for he knew all about it, 'yes! in one sense you did it. You loved money more than you loved him. If men and women were only true to one another, faithful to one another, whom they have seen, they would be more faithful to God, whom they have not seen.'

'What can I do?' she asked, 'what can I do? There is no way now that I can make it up to him. And I do love him, spite of all; I do, indeed.'

But there did not seem to be anything she could do for Robin. Philip found out for her that he was to be transported to some place in Australia, where there was a convict settlement for prisoners with long sentences like his. By his influence he got an order for Rebecca and me to visit him before he went away; though we were only allowed to see and speak to him through a double grating, with a warden standing by, who could hear all we said.

I thought at first that Rebecca would say nothing, and the fifteen minutes given to us would pass by in silence. She stood, holding fast by the iron bars and looking at Robin with fixed eyes; all her face quivering, and her lips twitching; while he stared back at her, sullen and miserable, with his felt mask pushed up over his forehead, ready to be pulled down again so as to hide his face, when he went back among his fellow convicts. How many minutes had gone I could not tell, but I felt as though we had been there a long, long while, gazing at one another, before Rebecca found voice to speak to him.

'Robin,' she said, 'forgive me.'

'No,' he answered, gruffly, 'you've been naught but a curse to me, and aw' curse you every day o' my life.'

'Hearken to me, Robin,' she went on, 'I've made up my mind what I'll do. I'll come out to Australia, and I'll get a place as servant near where you are and if ever I can see you, I'll go through fire and water to get a sight of you; and whenever you're let out, I'll be there ready to take hold of your hand the moment you come through the jail door, Ay! I will, if there's a breath of life in my body. God help me!'

I saw a gleam come over Robin's miserable face, and into his sullen eyes; and he stretched out his hand through the bars, as if he could take hold of hers there and then. But he could not reach her, nor her hand touch his.

'Are you true to me?' he asked, in a doubting voice.

'I'm true to you now,' she answered, 'I've been false to you, but I'm true now. And, oh, Robin! Jesus Christ is true to you; and He's never been false. If I'd only known him better, you'd never been here. Money's nothing; but love's everything.'

'That's true, lass!' he said. And I saw the light glisten upon a tear in the corner of his eye.

'You'll forgive me, if I'll do what I say!' asked Rebecca earnestly; 'it's many a year to bide, but I'll do it, if the Lord keeps me alive. I'll be at thy prison door ready for thee to come out; and we'll begin a new life, my dear, thee and me, though we shall be old folks then. You had a good mother, Robin.'

Ah! he said with a sob, and the tears rolling down his face.

'Oh! if I'd only been a good woman like her!' cried Rebecca, 'but God's forgave me, Robin, and He'll forgive you too. Only think of your mother, and ask God to forgive you, and help us to be good till we meet again. I must go away now, and never see you for a long while; maybe not till your time's over; but I'll be there, in Australia; and you say to yourself till then, 'She's true to me at last.' Tell me if you forgive me before I go.'

'Ah! aw' forgie' thee fully and freely,' he answered, 'God bless thee lass! Aw'll look out for thee to be waitin' for me out yonder.'

'Time's up,' said the warden, throwing down his newspaper, and coming close to us.

'Good bye, Robin! Good-bye my dear!' cried Rebecca; 'I'll be there!'

'Good-bye!' he said; but there was no time for another word from either of them. Robin had to march off to his dreary cell; and we went away from the jail shuddering, as we looked up at the high, strong walls, to think of all the sin and misery shut in within them. But what must the blessed Saviour feel as His eye looks down upon the wretched hearts beating there!

So Rebecca and I went our way, leaving Robin within those dreary walls, with but a little spark of hope shining in the far off years. We told Philip Champion of the pledge she had given to him; and his face glowed, and his eyes sparkled with joy, as he said

it was a true thing, and a noble thing to do. And he called Rebecca his friend and sister and promised to use all the influence he had at home or abroad on behalf of Robin Cherrick, though it was little anybody could do for him; for the sentence was passed, and he must bear it as a due punishment for his crime. But Philip made every arrangement for Rebecca, so that she could go out to Australia with ease and comfort; and, though it did not come to my knowledge until I heard from her months afterward, he settled upon her the thousand pounds which had been promised to her by his uncle. So she was a rich woman in that distant country; and being clever and quick, she opened a small business, and began to make a home for herself and Robin when his time was up.

I went to Liverpool with Rebecca to start her on her long voyage. The ship lay in the middle of the river, with a blue flag floating from the mast-head. There was a crowd of emigrants waiting on the pier, for the pilot-boat to put them on board of her; and one little child in the throng, who looked up into Rebecca's face, saw something there that took her fancy, and would cling to her, till Rebecca took her up in her strong arms, and held her there, kissing her little mouth fondly from time to time. Then I knew she would not be lonely or dull on board ship, through the long idle months. I went across in the boat with them, and saw the berth where she was to sleep. But I was dazed by the bustle about me, and hardly knew what I said or did, till there came the clang of a bell, and a shout of 'All friends ashore!' and Rebecca clasped me about the neck, and burst out crying. They hurried me along, and down into the boat again; and when my eyes were clear from tears I saw the ship lying behind us, with its masts against the light of the setting sun: and the blue flag was being lowered from the mast-head.

And I said to myself, 'There isn't a truer heart than hers on board your ship. God grant she and Robin may win through to a good old age yet, like Transome and me.'

I Can and I Will.

How many boys there are who can but never do, because they have no will power, or if they have, do not use it! Before undertaking to perform any task you must carefully consider whether you can do it, and once convinced that you are able to accomplish it, then say, 'I will do it,' with a determination that you will never give up till it is done, and you will be successful. The difference between 'Give up,' and 'I can't,' and 'I can and will,' is just the difference between victory and defeat in all the great conflicts of life. Boys, adopt for your motto, 'I can and will,' and victory will be yours in all battles. 'I can and I will,' nerves the arms of the world's heroes to-day, in whatever department of labor they are engaged. 'I can and I will,' has fought and won all the great battles of life, and of the world.

I know of a boy who was preparing to enter the junior class of the New York University. He was studying trigonometry, and I gave him three examples for his next lesson. The following day he came into my room to demonstrate his problems. Two of them he understood, but the third,—a very difficult one—he had not performed. I said to him, 'Shall I help you?' 'No, sir. I can and will do it if you give me time.' I said, 'I will give you all the time you wish.' The next day he came into my room to recite another lesson in the same study. 'Well, Simon, have you worked that example?' 'No, sir,' he answered, 'but I can and will do it if you will give me a little more time.'

'Certainly, you shall have all the time you desire.'

I always like these boys who are determined to do their own work, for they make our best scholars, and men, too. I knew he had it, for his whole face told the story of his success. Yes, he had it, notwithstanding it had cost many hours of the severest mental labor. Not only had he solved the problem, but what was of infinitely greater importance to him, he had begun to develop mathematical powers which, under the inspiration of 'I can and I will,' he

has continued to cultivate, until to-day he is professor of mathematics in one of the largest colleges, and one of the ablest mathematicians of his years in our country.

My young friends, let your motto ever be, 'If I can I will.'

Vulgar Words.

A distinguished author says: 'I resolved when I was a child never to use a word which I could not use before my mother without offending her.' His rule and example are worthy of imitation. Boys readily learn a class of low, vulgar words and expressions which are never heard in respectable circles. The utmost care on the part of parents will scarcely prevent it. Of course we cannot think of girls being so much exposed to the peril.

We cannot imagine a decent girl using words that she would not give utterance to before her father or mother. Such vulgarity is thought by some boys to be smart—the next thing to swearing, and yet 'not so wicked.' But it is a habit which leads to profanity and fills the mind with evil thoughts. It vulgarizes and degrades the soul, and prepares the way for many of the gross and fearful sins which now corrupt society.—Sunshine.

When an Austin schoolmaster entered his temple of learning a few mornings ago, he read on the black-board the touching legend, 'Our teacher is a donkey.' The pupils expected there would be a combined cyclone and earthquake, but the philosophic pedagogue contented himself with adding the word 'driver' to the legend, and opened the school with prayer as usual.—Omaha Republican.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 163.

I was the wife of one of the kings of Israel but I am sorry to say that my husband was a very wicked man, and brought upon the nation much trouble. I was however blessed by having a good son who after his father's death tried to introduce reforms, and correct the mischief done by his father. In the first month of his reign he open the door of the house of the Lord which had been closed. He had the temple cleansed, and sacrifices offered. A solemn pass-over was held in the second month with great rejoicing. Idolatry was destroyed, and the people brought tithes to the priests and Levites. He had exceeding much riches and honor, and was prospered in all his works. What was my name? Who was my husband? What was my son's name?

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 323. How many brothers and sisters had Samuel?
324. Meaning of the name Samuel?
325. What king ordered a contribution box made for the temple?
326. Whence came the inhabitants of Samaria?
327. Who was the grandmother of King Josiah?
328. Who wished to assist in building the temple after the captivity?
329. Form a diamond of the following letters and words:

- 1. Half of the verb to be.
2. A sanguinary color.
3. One with whom we contend.
4. A number.
5. Ventured.
6. A good sized boy.
7. Half of an exclamation.

WORD BUILDING.

Prefix a letter to the past tense of eat and form, behind time. Prefix another letter and give pleasure. Prefix another and form, to recite. Prefix again and you have a church dignitary.

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. 162.

Joshua x 10-27.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 318. 2 Cor. iii. 1; Acts xviii. 27; Col. iv. 10.
319. See Neh. vi. 5, 6. Sanballat sent his servant to Nehemiah with the letter.
320. Uriah the Hittite carried the letter from David to Joab. 2 Sam. ix. 14, 15.
321. The Epistle of Paul to Philemon.
322. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, received the letter from the king of Syria concerning his general Naaman.
323. A shadow.