

Family Reading.

"Two Cents a Week and a Prayer."

"Two cents a week and a prayer." A tiny gift may be, But it helps to do a wonderful work For our sisters across the sea.

"Two cents a week and a prayer," From our abundant store; It was never missed, for its place was filled By a Father's gift of more.

"Two cents a week and a prayer," Perhaps 'twas a sacrifice; But treasure came from the store-house above, Outweighing by far the price.

"Two cents a week and a prayer," 'Twas the prayer, perhaps, after all, That the work has done, and a blessing brought, The gift was so very small.

"Two cents a week and a prayer," Freely and heartily given; The treasures of earth will all melt away— This is treasure laid up in heaven.

"Two cents a week and a prayer," A tiny gift may be, But it helps to do such wonderful work For our sisters across the sea. —Heathen Woman's Friend.

Select Serial.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XI.

GROWING OLDER.

After that I went every month to carry my rent to my landlord: and pretty much the same conversation passed between us each time, only he never again offered to give me sixpence out. Now and then, when I had received a letter from his nephew, Philip Champion, I took care to tell him about it, and how he was getting on well in the world, and how grand folks up in London thought much of him. The old man rather liked to hear of it, especially when Philip sent me word how his father was making a great deal of money by his voyages out to foreign parts. Once I carried down a handsome shawl, far too fine for an old woman like me to wear, which Captain John Champion had brought for me all the way from India. My landlord told me I could sell it readily for ten pounds, and then the buyer would consider it a bargain; but I would not lower myself by thinking of such a thing. Love is more than money.

Year after year I saw him growing more withered and shrunken, yet still in good health, and with his mind keen; ay, keener than ever where money was concerned. He came by degrees to have a sort of liking for me, more because I never missed going with my rent to the very day than for anything else I can think of. There was never any change in the gloomy house, not even in the fire, which always seemed smoldering sulkily in the big grate. How dreary this sameness was to me! As bad even as the sameness of the bare walls of the workhouse, where no change ever came. He, with his riches, lived a life as dreary and desolate as the poorest pauper in the parish.

I believe Rebecca liked me a little also. I felt very sorry for her, and it came into my heart to take each time a posy out of my garden, or an apple, or some early fruit, fresh gathered; and she was pleased with them, for the master kept such a close hand on all expenses, that she scarcely tasted a morsel of fruit. She loved flowers, she told me; but ever since Transome had been forced to give up working in their garden, the master had been afraid to hire any other man for fear of being cheated. So there the garden lay all about the house, overgrown with weeds, and so hard for want of digging that it could not be otherwise than barren and useless.

I scarcely know how many years went on. When one is old the years pass by like months, and the months are shorter than weeks used to be. But year after year I saw a change creeping, creeping over my old landlord, till it became so marked and plain that nobody could help seeing it. I

think sometimes that may be he was not altogether given up to the love of money, until he turned Transome and me out of the cottage, where we had lived under him so many years. Ever since then he had grown nearer and closer handed, grudging even necessities for himself and Rebecca. It was a very hard life for her; for he was certainly growing childish and simple, and would often and often make her sit up half the night lest robbers should break into the house. It was pitiful to see how thin, and worn, and wrinkled she was growing before her time; and she must have been a bonny lass in her youth, for her eyes were still dark and bright, and when she smiled, which was very seldom, poor thing! there was something kindly in her face that made it a pleasure to look at it.

Well! though I had been seeing my landlord growing older, the change startled me at last. His love of money had been growing into a heavy bondage. For a long while he had complained of poverty; and to see him in an old worn-out brown coat, and shoes with holes in the sides, and linen such as Transome never put on in his life, you would have taken him for one of the poorest of beggars. He had given up going out of doors; and no visitors came to the house, except his lawyer. I asked the lawyer one day if the old master was not growing simple, but he said nobody in the town was sharper or longer-headed. He was like a tree I once saw, with every branch blighted and bare, save one which grew green and strong amid the withered boughs, as if it drew all the sap that should have fed them to itself, and was nourished by their barrenness. The love of money had swallowed up all other love that may be, once dwelt even in his heart.

This was how the change startled me at last. I had gone down to pay my rent one cold day in November, just such a day as that which drove Transome and me to seek shelter in the workhouse for the winter. It made me feel very low and down, thinking of that bitter, bitter day. Rebecca opened the door for me, and took me into the kitchen, where there was the poorest pretence of a fire I ever saw. But when she sent me into the master's parlor, there was no fire at all there; and the old man sat with his feet on the fender, and a tattered shawl over his knees, shivering with the cold. He was hard upon eighty by that time; and the most withered skeleton of anatomy you could have found in all our country.

'Why! dear sir!' I cried, 'you'll catch your death of cold, sitting without a fire a day like this! Whatever has Rebecca left the fire out like this for?'

He turned to me; his face was ghastly, with purple lips, and watery eyes. I could hardly believe that so much misery could look out from a human creature's face: one of God's creatures, whom He loved, and for whom Christ died. Yet I had seen misery in my time God knows.

'I've lost all my money,' he said, in a weak, complaining voice, 'every penny is gone, and there's nothing before me but the workhouse.'

He spoke so solemnly, that just at first I was quite taken aback. It all flashed across me how he had turned us out of our old home, and so forced us into the workhouse, and I thought may be the Lord's words are coming true. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' But do not think that I was glad. Nay; I felt grieved for the old man, who looked so desolate and forlorn, and I prayed silently, in my inmost heart, that he might not fall so low in his old age.

'How have you lost your money, sir?' I asked.

'I don't know,' he said, with a trembling, sobbing voice, 'only it's all gone, and I must go to the workhouse to-morrow.'

But just then I caught sight of Rebecca at the door, which stood ajar. She was tapping her forehead, and nodding at her master, as much as to say his head was not quite sound. So then I understood that it was only a notion that had taken possession of his brain, and troubled and distressed him, as if it had been real.

'Ay! to the workhouse!' he went on, 'where you and Transome went

once; but nobody will come to take me out, as Philip Champion took you. No, no. I shall die there, and be buried in a pauper's coffin and a pauper's grave.'

Then I thought of Transome being buried in a pauper's coffin and a pauper's grave, all through our landlord's hard-heartedness and covetousness. But I knew well that through that gloomy door he had entered into God's house, where he was at home now, like a child gone home for his holidays. All the while my landlord kept on groaning and shivering, and lamenting that he too must die in the workhouse.

Now when I came to ponder over it, it seemed a more dreadful thing for this rich man to lose the sense of being rich, and to suffer all the terror of poverty, than for us who were actually poor, and could feel that poverty was only a trial and a lesson sent us from our heavenly Father. For we were but like His Son, who for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. But this rich man, with his hoards of money, how was he like the son of God?

Still it was not in my nature to stand quiet, and see sorrow, without trying to comfort it. So I went up to my poor landlord, and put my rent in his numbed hand, which closed tightly over the money, as Transome's fingers closed over mine, when he lay dying.

'There, I said, 'that is ten shillings; and it will keep you nearly a week at least. Let Rebecca light a fire, and get you some food, and you'll forget the workhouse.'

'You're a good woman,' he said, 'you'd be sorry to see me go to the workhouse?'

'That should I,' I answered; 'but don't be afraid, sir. Turn your thoughts to God Almighty, who loves us all—'

'Ah!' he said, interrupting me with a long, long sigh, most pitiful to hear in one so old, 'it's God who is taking away my money, no one else. Who can keep it, if He takes it away? I'm a poor man, Mrs. Transome,—a friendless, penniless man.'

'But how is God taking it from you?' I asked.

'I cannot tell how,' he answered; 'but it is melting away, melting away; and I cannot keep it. Every night and every morning I know it is going; but I cannot see or hear anybody taking it.'

It is God, I tell you; and who can help me if He begins to take away my treasure?'

'But tell me,' I urged, 'how you know it is going?'

'I do not know,' he said; 'only I feel it. The moth and the rust have got at it, and I shall die in the workhouse.'

It was all in vain to argue with him, or try to comfort him. He hid the money I had brought, in the breast of his ragged coat, and clasped both hands over it, when Rebecca came to the door. I bade him good day, and went out into the kitchen, grieved to the very core of my heart.

'A maudering old fool!' said Rebecca, 'he's been going on like that the last week or more; and nothing'll put it out of his head. I sent on the sly for Mr. Saunders, the lawyer, but, thank you! master was too 'cute to say a word of it to him, and Saunders was quite naggy with me, though he'll take care to be paid for his trouble in coming. I don't know how to carry on, for I can't get a penny out of him scarcely.'

'It's hard for you,' I answered, 'but you've been a good servant to him for many years, and you must bear on to the end now.'

'Ay!' said she, with a long breath, 'twenty good years, the best of my life. I should have been wedded long ago but for him. If he don't leave me the thousand pounds he's promised me over and over again, I've made a bad bargain. But he's left it to me in his will; he's told me so scores of times.'

This was more than Rebecca ever said to me; and I went home turning it over in my mind, and wondering how folks can do things for money that they would never do for love.

CHAPTER XII.

AN OLD FOX.

ALL through the coldest and darkest months of winter, my landlord was

tormented by the dread of going to the workhouse, and dying there. He stinted himself of necessities even, often lying all day in bed to save a fire; as people are compelled to do, who are brought down to the lowest poverty. How Rebecca managed was a puzzle to me; but she had a hard time of it, you may be sure.

Many and many a time did the old man send for me that I might tell him what the workhouse was like; and every time I had to speak of it, my heart was made sore by the remembrance of Transome. Yet I could not refuse the poor rich man the only comfort he had in questioning me, and hearing my answers. For truly he would have been more cared for, and had better food and firing in the workhouse than he allowed to himself. Now and then I tried to turn away his thoughts from this miserable delusion, and to fix them upon God and His Son, whose love can cover every sin, even the sin of covetousness. But he could not keep such things in his mind. As I said before, he had but one branch left in him that was still alive, and it clung only to the thought of money.

But one day when I was down there while Rebecca was gone out on some errand or other, though there were few errands to do in that house, the master tottered across the floor, opened the door, looked if anybody could be listening, and then came back to me, whispering in almost a frightened voice.

'She robs me,' he said, 'there is always money going; and nobody but her to steal it. But I dare not send her away, and have a stranger in the house.'

'No, no, sir,' I answered, 'she's served you too long to rob you now. You must not get such a fancy into your head. Remember what a many years she's been with you.' 'Yes,' he said sharply, 'because I said I'd make it worth her while to be faithful to me. But she's not to be trusted now, I tell you. She thinks my wits are going; but I'm sharp enough to know when I'm being robbed.'

There was such a frightful, sneering look on the old man's withered face, that I could not bear to see it. I turned away my eyes to the dusty window, through which the sun was trying to shine into even that gloomy room; like God's grace into his gloomy heart, if he would but let it in.

'Ah!' he said, 'I could have trusted Transome with untold gold, and you are like him. Come and live here, and keep your eye on Rebecca.' 'Oh! no, no! I cried, hastily, thinking of my peaceful little cottage on the brow of the hill, with the flowers that would soon be blooming in the garden, and the birds chirping of a morning under the eaves, and my scholars trooping up merrily from the town. It made his large house seem a doleful prison. 'I'll make it worth your while,' he began, but there I stopped him at once. 'You couldn't make it worth my while, sir,' I said; 'please God I'm not long for this world, and my old home is better to me than any spot in the world; and your nephew, Philip Champion, has promised I shall have all I want, when I cannot win it for myself.'

The old man sank down in his chair, almost in a heap, for he had very little strength left in him. But still I saw his sharp, glittering eye fixed upon me. 'Mrs. Transome,' he said, after awhile, 'if you'll come and take care of me till I die, I'll leave all I have to Philip Champion.' That was different. I could not say no to that hastily. If I consented, Philip Champion, my little scholar Pippin, whom I loved more than any one else in the world, would become a wealthy man. And I knew what Philip would do with riches—lay them, where he had laid himself, at the feet of Christ. Rather than see him grow like his uncle, I would have joyfully followed his coffin to the grave. But I had no fear of that. If Philip came into his uncle's money—and no one had a better claim to it, he would take it as a loan from God, to be laid out into His service. 'You must give me time to think of it,' I said to my landlord. And I did think of it, turning it over and over, till my poor head was fairly weary. Philip was gone away on a voyage with his father, and I could not write and ask him for counsel. Besides, if I did it, I should do it for his sake; and you cannot ask any one you love how much you must give up for their sake. I had never thought I should be

called upon to leave my old home again. But even my home spoke for Philip, who had taken me out of the workhouse, and bought everything that was in it; and provided to take care of me when I was past work. It was but a little thing I could do in return; and it seemed as if I heard Transome's voice, saying, 'Ally, lass! Faithful in little; faithful in much!' After that I made up my mind to go, and quit my home a second time.

So the next day I dismissed my scholars, bidding them good-by sorrowfully, and I went down again to my landlord's house. It looked more gloomy and dismal than ever; a large square, dark house, of three stories, standing alone in a big garden, though there were plenty of other dwellings just beyond the garden walls; the windows were crusted over with dust and cobwebs, the only curtain they had, and here and there a pane was broken. The woodwork had not been painted for so many years that no one could guess what color it had been at first. All one side of the house was utterly desolate, for the rooms were unoccupied. But on the other side there was the master's parlor, with the kitchen behind it, his bedroom, and a spare room on the floor above, and Rebecca's bedroom and an attic over that. Yet even that side of the house seemed neglected and comfortless; for the sun was shining full upon it, making it look more dreary than it did on cloudy days. I thought of my own cheery home, and half turned away. But there was Philip to remember. I went on slowly down the gravel walk, overgrown with grass and dock-leaves, and was soon face to face with my landlord.

'You've made up your mind to come?' he said eagerly. 'Yes, sir,' I answered; 'but only on conditions. You'll leave your money to your own nephew, Philip Champion? 'Ay! ay!' he said; 'I'll send for Sanders at once, and alter my will; and I'll not forget you, Mrs. Transome. So now you must look sharp after Rebecca, you know, and see there's no waste or extravagance. You know what it is to be in the workhouse, and I look to you to keep me out of it. I've very little money to spend on house-keeping, and now I have three months to feed instead of two; so you must look sharp after Rebecca.' I had made up my mind he must promise a settled sum for every week's expenses; but we had a hard struggle before I won the victory. He beat me down by pence, and even by halfpence, moaning over his poverty, and it was only when I threatened to leave him altogether that he gave way.

Then I went out to tell Rebecca; but, to my surprise, Rebecca knew all about it, and expected me to stay. Her story was, that she had told her master it was impossible for her to go on any longer without some help either in the day or at night; a nurse or charwoman they must have. He had grumbled at the expense, and refused to listen to her till she suggested me. How he had prevailed upon me to go, paying no more than for my food, I have told you already. 'He knew a nurse-ud ask such high wages,' continued Rebecca, 'and eat and drink so much; and as for me I hate 'em. They give themselves such airs, and are no end of trouble. Besides, master's afraid to have any strangers in the house, for fear of 'em robbing him. He's as cunning as an old fox; and I'll be bound he's engaged to you to come for next to nothing but victuals and lodgin.' She waited for me to tell her what he was to pay me, but I had not given up my own home for money. I should be paid well enough when Philip came into the old man's property. Yet I felt downcast at the thought of so much cunning and deceit in a man so near the grave as he was. I went back to spend the last night in my house, and made arrangements for a neighbour to keep the key, and give an eye to it. For instead of being paid, I had made it a condition that I should keep on my cottage, and have every Sunday quiet to myself in it. The next morning I quitted it once more, not as when Transome and me were turned out of it, after living there nearly forty years, but still sadly and with a great craving after the peace and quietness I was giving up for the sake of Philip Champion.

(To be Continued.)

The chief religious event for which 1881 will be noted in history, was the publication of the Revised Testament.

Boys' Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 159.

From the TWELVE following subjects frame. An ancient city's awful name: The numbered letters form the same.

- 1. Find in one, ten, eleven, two, nine, A gift and attribute divine, Which makes earth's mighty monarchs shine.
2. Hence two, eleven, and nine, four, ten, Describe the rank of mortals, when They rule as sovereigns over men.
3. Three, six, four, ten—in Israel's land, A mount, where half the tribes should stand, And curse themselves at God's command.
4. There Joshua built, in Israel's view, With stones, God's covenant to renew In writing—four, ten, five, seven, two.
5. Five, nine, two, three—a city fair, Famed for its various kinds of ware, From many a nation bartered there.
6. Six, four, seven, ten—an idol rude, In beast's or man's similitude, Beguiling Israel's multitude.
7. Manoa's wife saw seven, twelve, one, Three, ten, ere she had borne a son, By whom great feats of strength were done.
8. Good Daniel once a beast did view, In vision, named eight, three, four, two, To show what Persia's kings should do.
9. God's promise to believers given, By His Beloved Son from heaven, Stands well confirmed in nine, three, seven.
10. By ten, seven, eight, four, twelve, is shown, A Syrian shepherd little known, Whom Israel's sons their grandsire own.
11. The eighth of Peleg's nephews, when The earth was newly shared by men, Appears eleven, six, seven and ten.
12. On twelve, three, six, eleven, they stand, Where Israel's dying leader scanned, But never trod—the Promised Land.—Selected.

CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 308. Find the texts of Scripture referring to darkness.
(a). Where is sorrow compared to darkness?
(b). Where is the restoration of joy spoken of as a return of light?
(c). Where is our present life compared to a day with the night fast approaching?
(d). Where is the believer's life compared to night with the dawn of day at hand?
(e). What should be the Christian's attitude in looking forward to that day?
(f). Where is there darkness without light?
(g). Where is there light without darkness?
309. Insert a, e, o, where they belong in the following, and make two stanzas of a favorite lullaby poet:
Grps nd Thrns.
W must nt hp to b mwrs,
Nd t gthr th rtp glr rs,
Until w hv frst bn swrs
Nd wrtd th furws with trs.
Is it nt just a w tke it—
This mysticl wrld f urs?
Lif's fld will yild s w mk it
Lrv f thrns r flws.
310. A PET.
I own I belong to a down-trodden race,
But all will agree 'tis not a disgrace;
You rate me beneath you,
But here let me say,
I can enter a palace
And stay,—can you? Nay.
When you visit the palace
I'm right at your heel;
Should I fail to be found there,
I'd be missed a great deal.
You see me in churches,
Sometimes at the halls,
I'm always before you
When making your calls.
I'm found in your room
As you open the door;
I'm allowed to remain there,
So can't be a bore.
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. 158.

- 1. Sea. Pa. civ. 25; Exodus xiv. 16; Pa. lxxxvii. 19; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.
2. Son. Prov. x. 1.
SEASON. Eccles. iii. 1; Luke xiii. 1; Acts xxiv. 25.

ANSWERS TO CURIOS QUESTIONS.

- 305. Passages in reply to questions respecting Light:
1. Isa. xlix. 6; Luke ii. 32; John i. 4, 7, 9; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 36, 46.
2. (a) Eph. v. 8; Luke xvi. 8; John xii. 36.
(b) 1 John i. 7.
(c) Matt. v. 16; Phil. ii. 15, 16.
3. Pa. cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23.
4. Rev. xxii. 5.
306. Tree, maple, elm, ash, fig, orange, plum, pea, corn, turnip, bean, heath, aster, rose, calla.
307. SQUARE OF WORDS.
P A R O S
A L A R M
R A B B I
O R B I T
S M I T H