

Family Reading.

For the Christian Messenger.

How little we know.

Yes, how little we know of the future, As before us in darkness it lay, And how little we know of the trials, That await us in life's wintry day.

And how little we know of the sorrows, And how little we know of the snares, And how little we know of the losses, Or how little of troubles and cares.

And how little we know of our dear ones, Who before us their race will have run, When their labours on earth will be finished, And a new life in Heaven begun.

When in silence we think of our loved ones, Who are now just beginning life's race, Then we pray to our Heavenly Father, Their young hearts now to fill with his grace.

Then their lives in the years of the future, In the service of Jesus they'll spend, May they earnestly work for the Master, Strive his cause to maintain and defend.

But 'tis well that we know not the future, Tell me what would this life be to us, If we knew every sorrow or trial, Or affliction through which we may pass?

We've no need now to know of the future, Since the Saviour so true is our friend, In afflictions we know he is near us, And his grace unto us he will send.

And sailing over the sea of life, Though strong currents against us may roll, If we're simply trusting the Saviour, For our good he will all things control.

B. M.

For the Christian Messenger.

Heart Breathings.

My Saviour and my Guide, As Thou for me hast died; All needful gifts I know, Thou wilt on me bestow. Thou dwellest Lord above, Still Thy great heart of love, Unfolds its treasures sweet, When I seek Thy mercy seat.

Thou dost invite me near, Then what have I to fear? All sin defiled and weak; Thou hast bidden me to seek With penitence Thy face; And taste Thy boundless grace, Yield myself to Thee, My kind Physician be.

The enemy stands by, With jealous, angry eye: Could he my soul destroy, How great would be his joy! But he knows I am Thine own, And his plans are overthrown; And so his anger burns, As on me his eye he turns.

O my Shepherd and my King, To Thy side I'll closely cling, How dreary life would be, Without a hope in Thee! This world is rough and cold, But I know the upper fold, Will be a shelter sweet, When life's journey is complete.

My spirit often sighs, For that Home beyond the skies, How much longer here below, I must stay I do not know: But when Thou seest best, Thou wilt take me to my rest, With Thee I'll leave it all, And wait till Thou dost call.

H. COLB.

Milton, Queen's Co.

Select Serial.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

BY HESBA STRETTON.

CHAPTER XXV.

GEORGE CARR'S WORK.

It was a mere shed; and one corner of the wall had either given way, or it was in the course of being pulled down for the wind was blowing, and the rain and hail beating in through a great gap. Under the wall (farthest from this wide opening, and upon the damp, unpaved floor, there was crouching a figure, upon which the light of Philip's lantern shone fully. It was that of a miserable girl, very young, as I knew afterward, but old-looking to my eyes, that had never seen a face like hers; the hollow cheeks were painted, and the thin, wasted arms

and shoulders were hardly covered by the dingy finery that could not shield her from the storm. Her wild, bright eyes glared at me fiercely; or rather they gazed pass me, to Philip. I thrust myself between him and her, as if to hide her from him, with a vague sense of aversion and terror in my heart.

'Annt Milly!' said the pleasant, pitiful voice behind me, 'this is work for you, not me, to do.'

'Philip! I cried, half angrily, turning round to look into his face. It was pale and sorrowful, so as I had never seen it before, with an expression of deep pain and pity in his eyes, as they looked back at me earnestly. Yet it seemed to me, in spite of its sadness and pain, almost like the face of an angel.

'Save her!' he said, 'God sent me to save her from the river; and he sends you now to save her from sin. I give her into your hands.'

'Leave us,' I said. I could not bear to see him so near to her, or know that her eyes were fastened upon him. Yet when he was gone I did not know what to do. The terrible, painted face looked up at me with the sullenness of despair, yet with a dumb pleading in the solemn eyes that was irresistible.

I saw that her poor, tawdry clothing was drenched with rain, or perhaps with the troubled waters of the river; and that she was shivering violently. A short, dry cough shook her. We gazed at one another in painful silence.

'God help me!' I cried, in my own heart, 'If I cannot love her, I can do nothing for her.' Then I came to know as I never knew before, that Christ Himself could not save us from our sins, if He did not love us with a love that passeth knowledge. Love alone wins the victory over sin. I drew nearer to the crouching girl. I laid my hand, which had never touched any one like her, upon her forehead, and found it burning with fever. The fierce, questioning eyes were fixed upon me, without blinking an instant.

'Will you come home with me?' I asked gently.

'Your own home?' she said.

'Yes, with me,' I answered, 'come. You shall have some food first, and a night's rest; and then we will talk together.'

But the girl bent down her head till it almost touched my feet, hiding it from me. 'Not your home!' she repeated, sobbing.

'Yes,' I said; 'there is a little room inside mine, where Philip used to sleep when he was a child. You shall sleep there; and to-morrow you shall tell me all.'

'You ought not to have me,' she cried; 'you never would, if you knew all.'

'There is no need for me to know,' I answered; 'our Lord Jesus Christ knows it, yet He sends me to take you home.'

Perhaps, I thought, He will let me take her to another home some day, in His Father's home, where she has the same right to enter that I have. I lifted the miserable girl from the ground though she made a feeble effort to withstand me; and I drew her cold hand through my arm. The storm beat vehemently against us as I opened the door; but Philip had been standing outside in the rain and hail, and without uttering a word, he led the way to the street, and put us both into the cab, where the girl sank down on the floor, and hid her face in the folds of my dress.

The little room, where Philip had slept when a child, did not need much preparation; and before an hour was gone by, the poor forlorn lost girl was sleeping there, with the painted cheeks washed clean, and the feverish head resting peacefully on the pillow. The last thing before I went to bed myself, I stole in softly to look at her, shading the candle with my hand, as I had been wont to do when my little Philip was lying there. When I came away I opened my Bible, and read with misty eyes, before which the words swam confusedly, the story of the woman who 'stood at the feet of Jesus, behind Him, weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with ointment.' 'Wherefore,' said the Lord, 'her sins, which are many are forgiven,

for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.'

But the next morning the girl was sullen, and would say nothing except that she must go, and she could not live the life we led. I reasoned with her and laid before her the awful death from which Philip had rescued her the night before, and the remorse which would again drive her to self-destruction. She listened, and shuddered, and wept; yet she persisted that she must go—the stillness and quiet of our life, would kill her. I seemed to have no power to cast out the wayward and sullen spirit that had entered into her. What was I to do? Must I summon Philip to speak to her? I shrank, why I hardly knew, from that.

Then all at once a light broke in upon my perplexity, shining down the years that had gone by, as though they had been years of long training for some special work God would have us do for Him. There was my life of monotony, and separation from those ties most women have, and George's years of pain, and slowly purifying chastisement. Now Philip had guided us into the field, white unto the harvest, where we two, consecrated by suffering, might reap, and receive wages, and gather fruit unto eternal life, until we should be called to rejoice together with our Lord.

No; Philip was not the one to win the stubborn girl back to God. But I could take her to George. Without telling her where we were going, I bade her come with me. I can see her now—the weary young creature, standing on the threshold, and peering forward with searching, hollow eyes into his room. And his face worn and wasted with pain, and his thin hair white as snow, and his hand stretched out to her, as if he knew why I brought her to him, and needed no word of explanation.

'Come,' he said, in a tone as if he were speaking to some wayward child, 'come, and talk to me, and let us see what we can do to get right again.'

The girl stepped softly into the room, her face changed from stubbornness to pity. I heard him ask her to give him a draught of water, and to lower the blinds for him; and she did so with womanly gentleness, moving as quietly as I could have done. Then I waited no longer; for I saw there was a link between them there could never be broken. It may be that it was the travel-stained feet, and the un-anointed head of the Lord, that first stirred hope in the heart of the woman that was a sinner. There was something that even she could do for Him.

How happy we were that evening! Captain John Champion's sunburnt face wore a look of great content. Philip whistled gayly as he wandered about the house and garden. George lay upon his sofa, glad at heart, for he had found work to do for God and his fellow creatures. And I felt that life had new possibilities, and could never again sink into an insignificant monotony.

I remember that when Captain John Champion left us to go to his lodgings, which were near at hand, he put both his hands on Philip's shoulders, and looked into his eyes with a steadfast, profound look of love.

'God bless thee, my lad!' he said. 'Never was father better pleased with his son!'

CHAPTER XXVI.

PHILIP'S FORTUNE.

Yes; that was our work, given at last directly into our hands. It seemed strange to me at first, and I shrank from it a little; but it was never strange to George. There was with him some unseen power, which never failed of victory. After a while we were compelled to take a house near to us, near enough for his influence to be felt in it. Other persons, who had the same work at heart, joined themselves to us, and before long we found ourselves too busy for life to be monotonous, or pain unendurable.

Philip was still with his father upon the sea, when his uncle's great fortune fell to him as heir-at-law. I knew of it some weeks before he did, for he had just set sail when his uncle died, and could not be recalled. I occupied myself, in such spare moments as I had, in building castles in the air for him, as I was wont to do, when he was a clever boy in school.

I should have liked to have seen him when he first heard the news his inheritance; but this could not be, for a letter from the lawyer found him at one of the ports they touched at, where they expected news from us. So I did not see him in the first flush of his change of fortune. When he reached home seven weeks later, there was no difference in him that I could discover. 'You are a rich man now, Philip,' I said, after I had kissed him, and held him near to me for a minute or two, scanning his face closely.

'Yes,' he answered, 'and I am glad of it.'

'You can become whatever you please now,' I said, with a thrill of exultation, for I wanted all the world to know what he was, 'you will become a great man, and make yourself a famous name, Philip Champion; Sir Philip, perhaps, some day.'

'No,' he answered, so quietly that I felt checked and quieted also, 'I can do nothing but what God has chosen for me. This money does not set me free from the work He has given me to do.'

'What do you mean?' I asked. 'This great fortune changes your position and circumstances altogether. You cannot remain a mate on board a merchant vessel; that would be absurd with wealth like yours. Remember it brings its own responsibilities and duties.'

'It brings no duty greater than that I am already fulfilling,' said Philip. 'You forget my father cannot live except on the sea; and that no one can take my place with him. The chief difference my uncle's money could make to us, if it were ten times as much, would be that our cabins might be more luxuriously fitted up. The sea and the wind care little whether one is rich or poor; there are the same storms and the same risks for us seamen.'

'But, Philip!' I exclaimed. 'Well,' he said, smiling, 'there is my father in one scale, my fortune in the other. Which is to kick the beam, Aunt Milly? No, no. I gave up my profession for his sake, and it is a light matter to give up this. But I am glad to be rich, too; for if any whim or fancy should come into this dear head, I can gratify it to the utmost. Tell me what my money shall do for you?'

But it could not do anything for me to compensate for the disappointment I suffered in seeing him push aside the golden opportunities offered to him. My brother upheld him in his resolution. I know now that George and he, in their close friendship, had climbed nearer up to God than I, and looked down as though they were already sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, upon the glittering accidents of time, which dazzled my eyes with their lustre. Captain John Champion sided with me, and at times poured into my ear his bitter regrets at being a hindrance to his son's career. But there was no remedy for it; none that we could see. We never saw a cloud on Philip's sunny face, nor heard a syllable of dissatisfaction with his lot. If he felt any, the thought of our Lord in His ungenial work checked it. What then was of gloom, and of natural disappointment, was fought out in loneliness, with no eye to witness but his Master's.

One thing would prosper from his wealth, that was certain. Our work would no more be limited for want of funds. He made, too, an arrangement that was good for us all. One evening, before he went away again, after all the law business connected with his inheritance was settled, he found me weary, rather with the anxieties than with the labor of our work, which was increasing almost beyond my strength. I had good assistants under me, but not one who could share the special cares crowding upon me. He stood looking at me that evening with a very thoughtful face.

'Aunt Milly,' he said, 'you seem scarcely older than when I came to you nearly twenty years ago.'

'That was true; for I had had no girlhood, and his life had brought back youth, and hope, and gladness to mine. I hardly felt older than when he was a child, standing at my knee to say his lessons.'

'But you will soon be old if this goes on,' he continued. 'I must find a mother for your girls.'

'I wish you would,' I said, almost despondently.

'I will coax Mrs. Transome to come,' he answered, 'she's lonely in her little place now. Transome is gone, and she will soon enter heart and soul into our work here. Don't suppose she is too old; she is a sharp, active, little woman; besides, what you want is not another person to work, but some one to share your anxiety. You must recollect I am a rich man now, and what money can buy I can pay for.'

'Money cannot buy what I want,' I said.

'No; you want Mrs. Transome,' he went on, 'and she will come. She will trot about the house, and give a kind word to this one and that; and they'll learn to look upon her as a kind of mother, with her bright, natty, old-fashioned ways, and her pleasant face. Wouldn't such a woman be a comfort to you, Aunt Milly?'

'I think so,' I answered, yet doubtfully; but he would not heed the hesitation in my tone.

'She shall come,' he said, 'I will set about it at once. We must set apart a little room for her own; and you'll find it will become a haven for the girls in their worst moments. Yes; we must have Mrs. Transome. The home is not complete without her.'

When Philip had any idea like that in his head, he could not rest till it was worked out. The next day the little room was chosen; and the day after it was so furnished that you felt, as you put your foot into it, that it was the very place where an old woman would find herself at home and comfortable. He hurried down to Lancashire, and before a week was over he brought Mrs. Transome back in triumph.

The moment I saw her I knew that Philip was right, and that he had brought me what money cannot buy. She had once been rather tall; but she was bent down into a small woman. Her white hair was covered by a still whiter mob-cap, lying in folds quite round her rosy, withered face, even under her chin. A plain black gown, and a white kerchief pinned about her neck; a white apron, shoes, and home-knitted stockings completed her dress. Such a pleasant, wholesome, motherly old dame she looked that I stooped down and kissed the placid, sweet face which was smiling at me.

'Thank you kindly, my dear,' she said; 'there's a welcome in it.'

She stroked my hand with her wrinkled fingers, and before I could prevent her, lifted it to her lips and kissed it. I followed her and Philip to the room he had prepared for her, and watched him point out to her all the little things he had chosen for her himself, with a boyish gladness that I had not seen in him since he was a boy.

'You are to be a mother to us all,' he said, seating her in a cushioned, old-fashioned chair he had found somewhere, just suited for her; and she sat in it, smiling at us both, with her spectacles pushed up to the white border of her cap; 'we're a set of rebel children, he went on, 'and you'll find us harder to manage than your little school. As for me, I intend always to have my own way.'

'Ah! but thee has chose the Lord's way, Pippen,' she answered, 'and now thee canst have thine own way. Only mend thee, He chose thee first.'

'I am as happy as the day is long,' said Philip.

'I believe thee,' answered Mrs. Transome, 'them that know His love need never go hunting after gladness.'

'And you'll be at home here?' I asked.

'Sure!' she replied; 'as much at home as in any place where Transome isn't? I shall go home where he is some day; but never fear me not being happy till the time comes.'

That was true; for there was a quiet cheerfulness, which was almost merriment in her, that never seemed to flag. The storm of life was over with her, and she was in the haven where she would be. Even the sorrow and the sin with which we had to deal did not disturb her deep tranquillity and profound trust in the immeasurable love of God. And this came into our refuge as a calm and pacifying element, which breathed itself over the passionate and stubborn hearts among whom our work lay. There was not one among the poor, miserable, lost girls, whom we sought and gathered into our home, who did not learn, before many days had passed, to call her 'mother.'

The Deserted Mill.

Drip, drip, drip, The eager flow is still, And only drops of water fall Beneath the unused mill. All mouldy are the bags of meal, And moss is grown upon the wheel, So silent and so still.

Drip, drip, drip, Upon the fruitful fern; The silent timbers of the wheel Are powerless to turn. And where a blade of grass is seen, The gaping joint is grown between, Parted, will not return.

Drip, drip, drip, Into the stagnant pool Where glides the spotted water-snake Among the cresses cool, And, silent in his coat of mail, All slimy creeps the cautious snail, Upon the window stool.

Drip, drip, drip, Upon the oaken floor, And broken from its rusty lock, Hangs, silently, the door, Save when a gust of wind goes past, It groans upon one hinge still fast, Then silent as before.

Drip, drip, drip, Upon the rotten deal, Between the timbers in the roof The shadows softly steal; And from a corner of the house, Sly peeps forth the cunning mouse That eats the mouldy meal.

Drip, drip, drip, Upon the well-worn stone, While blueflies at the window buzz, Monotonous in tone. No more the miller grinds his corn, For he, good man, is dead and gone, The mill is left alone.

New York Mail.

Questions to a Fretful Wife.

'Hester!' exclaimed Aunt Susan, ceasing her rocking and knitting and sitting upright, 'do you know what your husband will do when you are dead?'

'What do you mean?' was the startling reply.

'He will marry the sweetest-tempered girl he can find.'

'Oh! Auntie!' Hester began.

'Don't interrupt me until I have finished,' said Aunt Susan, leaning back and taking up her knitting. 'She may not be as good a housekeeper as you are—in fact, I think not; but she will be good-natured.'

'Why, Auntie—'

'That isn't all,' composedly continued Aunt Susan. 'To-day your husband was half-way across the kitchen-floor, bringing you the first ripe peaches; and all you did was to look on and say: "There, Will, just see your tracks on my clean floor! I won't have my floors all tracked up." Some men would have thrown the peaches out of the window. To-day you screwed up your face when he kissed you, because his moustache was damp, and said: "I never want you to kiss me again." When he emptied anything, you tell him not to spill it. When he lifts anything, you tell him not to break it. From morning until night, your sharp voice is heard complaining and fault-finding. And last winter, when you were sick, you scolded him about his allowing the pump to freeze, and took no notice when he said: "I was so anxious about you that I did not think of the pump."'

'But Auntie—'

'Hearken, child. The strongest and most intelligent of them all care more for a woman's tenderness than for anything else in the world; and without this the cleverest and most perfect housekeeper is sure to lose her husband's affection in time. There may be a few more men like Will—as gentle, as loving, as chivalrous, as forgetful of self, and so satisfied with loving that their affections will die a long, struggling death; but in most cases it takes but a few years' of fretfulness and fault-finding to turn a husband's love into irritated indifference.'

'But, Auntie—'

'Yes, well you are not dead yet, and that sweet natured woman has not been found, so you have time to become so serene and sweet that your husband can never imagine that there is a better tempered woman in existence.'

What is the proper use of religion? The sun was made to see by, not to look at.—Alexander Scott.