

Family Reading.

My Mother's Hymn.

Like patient saint of olden time,
With lovely face almost divine,
So good, so beautiful and fair,
Her very attitude a prayer;
I heard her sing so low and sweet,
His loving kindness—Oh how great;
Turning, beheld the saintly face,
So full of trust and patient grace.

"He justly claims a song from me,
His loving kindness—Oh how free;"
Sweetly thus did run the song,
"His loving kindness," all day long;
Trusting, praising, day by day,
She sang the sweetest roundelay—
"He near my soul hath always stood,
His loving kindness—Oh how good.

"He safely leads my soul along,
His loving kindness—Oh how strong;"
So strong to lead her on the way
To that eternal, better day,
Where safe at last in that blest home,
All care and weariness are gone,
She "sings with rapture and surprise
His loving kindness in the skies."
—Presbyterian.

New Select Serial.

KATHLEEN.

THE STORY OF A HOME.

BY AGNES GIBBENS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHICH PATH?

Summer and winter passed away, and another summer followed in their train.

One year and nearly eight months since Mrs. Joliffe's death Kathleen could have believed the time to be thrice as long. Sometimes she felt as if she had lived through a quarter of a century in that space.

In herself she was much changed from the fresh fair maiden of two years earlier. She had grown into a slender fragile girl, with thin cheeks, and large wistful eyes of Mediterranean-blue. Her soft sweet self-possession of manner was much admired.

Kathleen wore deep mourning still, or rather again, since that for her mother had been in some degree lightened. The heavy crape trimmings spoke of recent loss, not indeed of one in the house, yet of one very near.

For Mrs. Montgomerie was gone to her rest. Poor little anxious unhappy old lady! The change must indeed have been 'rest' to her.

She had spent her life in bondage to the fear of death. Not, as Miss Jackson truly said, in fear so much of that which should come after death as of death itself. She was oppressed with a nameless horror and dread at the thought of grappling with the last enemy. Like many other people, she could, with some confidence leave the care of her spirit to her Saviour, but could by no means leave to Him the care of her body also.

So each time a trifling illness came, she was fretted and tortured with fears of possibilities, and knew no peace until she found herself well again.

But when the day at length drew near, when the last enemy was in very deed permitted to seize upon her, then there was a change. Then repose and calmness reigned. "How strange it is—I have no fear," she said again and again to those about her, "Isn't it wonderful? such a nervous person as I am! It doesn't seem as if I could be afraid." And Kathleen's answer, "Dear grannie, it is Jesus keeping you," explained the whole. For she had of old ever met the prospect of death in her own weakness, and now she was meeting the reality of death in her Master's strength.

One fear only she had, and that was that the fearlessness must surely leave her. Something of a struggle before the close she must surely endure. True to herself, up to the last she could not entirely rest. But He who upheld her knew her weakness, and would not put her to a test too great for her little strength. She was borne peacefully through the flood, smiling and saying, "I never thought death could be like this." And quietly thus she entered upon the other life, leaving behind for ever all her falterings and fears and frettings and nervous heart-sinkings.

So her Master did not fail her, and at the last she learnt to trust Him,

quietly, like a little child. But why had she not trusted Him all through life? He who could bear her thus sweetly through the strong flood of the river of death, could surely have borne her in like manner, without stumbles or bruises, through the lesser streams and torrents of life. Only she had not permitted Him. But something of regret weighed upon her towards the close, and she said sadly to her son, "I wish I had trusted Him more, Albert, I wish I had trusted Him more; I think I have not honoured Christ."

And Mr. Joliffe went home and told Kathleen, as he told her everything. "I am afraid it is true," he said. "Poor dear! she has suffered sorely from a habit of expecting evil through life." But he did not take a lesson from what he saw. He went on still in his own fashion, worried with very small matters, and expectant of many small ills, at every step in his pathway.

Kathleen's sorrow at her grandmother's death was mingled with a sense of calm, at the thought of that unquiet spirit having passed beyond quietness. She grieved and was glad together.

Something else weighed upon her through those days, more heavily perhaps than she or anyone knew.

Mr. Marshall Corrie was no longer in Rockston, or in England, and Kathleen had had a hand in his going. She felt that she had been right, felt that she could not act otherwise, if the test should come over again. And yet—and yet—

He had remained in Rockston a year and a quarter after Mrs. Joliffe's death, assisting Dr. Baring. His health was fairly re-established, though he was as yet by no means the man that he had once been. He was much in and out of Rocklands, always a welcome guest. Mr. Joliffe liked him and encouraged his visits. Mr. Joliffe seldom saw what lay before his eyes, and the idea never occurred to him that something might come of it.

Something did come of it, for Kathleen grew to be very dear to Marshall Corrie, grew to be more to him than all the world besides. Mr. Joliffe did not see; Joan, absorbed in Miss Jackson did not see; Miss Thorpe, absorbed in herself, did not see. But Dr. Ritchie and Lady Catherine and Miss Jackson saw, and they rejoiced for Kathleen's sake.

Kathleen had grown to be Mr. Corrie's all-in-all of earthly things; but he did not at all know what he was to Kathleen. She was so gentle and courteous, so apt to light up in conversation, and with all her frankness, she had so much self-command, that it was very difficult to judge of her feelings. He saw that her father was ever her first thought, her first consideration. Yet he had some hope. She was very easy and cordial with him, and always seemed pleased to see him enter. Farther than this he had no certainty.

The matter might have continued longer in this doubtful stage, but a crisis came. Mr. Corrie had an offer of work in Australia with good remuneration, from a clerical relative living there. He thought the matter over, and consulted Dr. Ritchie, making no reference to Kathleen. Dr. Ritchie wondered a little silently, but gave his honest verdict that the sea-voyage and thorough change would be beneficial to Marshall Corrie's health. "Even if you do not stay more than a year or two," he could not help adding, "it will do you good."

"If I go at all I am likely to stay longer than a year or two," Corrie responded, and the Doctor saw more clearly.

That same afternoon Mr. Corrie called at Rocklands, and asked for Mr. Joliffe. He was too strictly honourable to say a word to Kathleen, without first obtaining her father's leave. It certainly was no part of his plan to depute Mr. Joliffe to speak for him. But Mr. Joliffe never kept anything from Kathleen, and when, after a brief interview, Mr. Corrie went away, he had left Kathleen writing letters for him. He always turned to her in every perplexity,—why not in this?

She saw in a moment that he was troubled. He had an uneasy way of drooping his head and moving his eyebrows, and his blue eyes wandered

about the room with an unhappy expression, as he sat down, and sighed heavily.

"Leena, my darling," he said, and she came to him, with a touch of alarm. "I have something to say to you. Mr. Corrie has just been here,—he has just been here,—he has been speaking to me."

Kathleen's heart fluttered and paused and then beat wildly, and a wave of cold faintness swept over her, but she smiled in Mr. Joliffe's face, and he did not see her paleness.

"Yes, papa," she said.

"About you, my darling. It came upon me quite with a blow. I never dreamt of such a thing,—never thought it possible. I told him I was sure it was a mistake—that it would not be possible, I mean,—but of course I do not know. He said you had not given him direct encouragement, still he had hopes, and he wished my leave to address you." Then with an almost childish look of distress, Mr. Joliffe took Kathleen's two little cold hands into his big trembling ones, and asked beseechingly, "My darling, could you—do you wish it? Of course," with a tardy sense of fatherly duty, "if it is for your happiness I would not say no, my Leena; my happiness is a secondary consideration."

Kathleen saw his face, and heard his words, but not so vividly as she saw at that moment her mother's dying face, heard in that moment her mother's dying words: "Leena, my child, you will be dear papa's comfort, you will take care of him." The charge seemed to ring through the room, with a strange and solemn clearness. Kathleen could hardly believe at the moment that it was only her own excited recollection, that her mother was not actually present, was not actually speaking.

"Papa, dear, I could not leave you," she said calmly. "And you do not care for Mr. Corrie—in that way, I mean? Of course he is a most estimable young man. But you have not that feeling for him, my darling?"

Kathleen did not know at the moment whether she had or not. She had gone on so quietly, poor child, never realizing the actual posture of affairs, only, very busy and, as a rule, very happy, and sometimes perhaps disposed to wonder how she could be quite so happy without her mother. Now a sudden revelation had come, and she was tempest-tossed. She would not look to right or left. She knew there was a tempting brightness down one path which might not be trodden. She would not turn her eyes thither. The cry of her heart was that she might be kept to her duty. Just before her seemed to lie the right and only path, pointed out by her mother's dying words. She could not, might not, would not, forsake her father. What was all the rest of the world to her, compared with him? But the struggle, if brief, was fierce; and as her resolution was formed, and as thought after thought flashed through her brain, the throbs of her heart grew stronger, till they seemed to vibrate through every nerve and fibre of her body. Even Mr. Joliffe saw the change in her face.

"My dear, you are not quite well," he said.

"Not quite to-day," Kathleen answered, with some difficulty. "I think you had better tell Mr. Corrie that I cannot be. Tell him please, very kindly—and her lips quivered.

"You are quite sure, my darling? You have no wish that way? Don't let your old father be selfish," said Mr. Joliffe tenderly.

"You don't want me to leave you?" she whispered.

"My sweet one,—it would break my heart. I think it would kill me Leena." That clenched the business, if clenching were needed. Kathleen clung to him for support, panting.

"This has quite agitated you," he said,—and I do not wonder, it agitated me, and made me feel positively ill. I had never dreamt of such a thing as losing my little Leena. Life would indeed be desolate."

"Will you tell him, dear papa,—or shall I?" asked Kathleen softly.

"I think perhaps I had better," Mr. Joliffe said, contrary to his usual habit of putting off disagreeable duties upon others. He had possibly an instinctive fear of Mr. Corrie's personal influence;

also he was dimly conscious that Mr. Corrie had not exactly meant him to speak to Kathleen, and that it might be a little awkward for Kathleen to come forward. "I will go at once to his lodgings and try to find him. Better put the poor man out of suspense."

Mr. Joliffe took his hat, and started immediately, impatient to have the matter settled; and Kathleen spent the time of his absence in a long tumult of troubled thought.

She was very inexperienced in such matters, and did not at all know what might be the next step.—Would Mr. Corrie wish to see her? Somehow she thought this not unlikely, and her heart leapt at the thought of a few words of explanation—just that he might understand the true state of affairs. Yet would it not be kinder not to explain, and thus to leave him perfectly free? How could she ask him to wait? She would never be able to leave her father. Would Mr. Corrie wait half a life-time for her? Nay could she wish him to do so, even if he were willing? These and a hundred other questions tortured the poor child during her father's absence, resolving themselves into a passionate longing for her mother. "Mamma would know, mamma would tell me what is right," she thought. Then she began almost to wish that she had not quite so hastily decided, had taken time for consideration. But if she had—what then? Could she leave her father? Oh, no, impossible. Things were no doubt best as they were. Only perhaps—it might be not quite at an end yet.

And at this stage, Mr. Joliffe's steps were heard returning, and Kathleen stood up to meet him.

"Poor fellow, I was very sorry for him," Mr. Joliffe said pityingly. "I told him as kindly as I could, my darling, knowing you would wish me to do so. He asked me if I could give him any hope at all for the future, and I said of course that I could not feel justified in doing so. He seemed a good deal upset, but really he took it very nicely on the whole, and said he was not worthy of you, and so on. He said this would decide him to go to Australia."

Kathleen put her hand to her forehead. "Australia?" she faltered.

"Yes, he has had an offer of a curacy out there—or a living, I am not sure which. I do not know particulars." Mr. Joliffe sat down with a relieved air, as if the business were satisfactorily disposed of. It was not his habit to keep anything from Kathleen; still, he did not find it necessary on this occasion to enter into details of the young man's distress, or to inform her how earnestly Mr. Corrie had pressed for a personal interview, and how decisively he had himself declined it for her. He had not intended to say a single word beyond what he was authorized to say; but certainly Kathleen could not have truthfully described her own feelings as he had described them.

"Papa—he did not seem very sorry?"

"He was disappointed of course—how could it be otherwise? But when he gets into a new country, among fresh scenes and fresh faces, he will no doubt soon get over it. I fancy he will leave Rockston quickly."

Kathleen kissed her father's forehead, said gently, "I will come back soon," and went to her own room. Hardwick found her there on her bed somewhat later, in a half-fainting condition. No one heard of this, for Kathleen insisted on silence. Hardwick did not know the reason. She only knew that Kathleen was not afterwards the same in spirit that she had been before.

The illness and death of Mrs. Montgomerie, following immediately after, took up much of Kathleen's time, and afforded an excuse for her pale looks. She did not see Mr. Corrie again. For a few days she was haunted by vague hopes of a possible encounter, and then she heard that Marshall Corrie was gone.

No one spoke of him to Kathleen, though many wondered at the posture of affairs. But Mr. Corrie had confided his trouble to none, not even to Lady Catherine; and not even to Lady Catherine could Kathleen speak of hers. The subject was tacitly avoided between them. Intimate as Lady Catherine was with Kathleen, she was far too

delicate to ask questions uninvited, or to attempt to lift the veil which Kathleen had drawn.

Joan had her trouble, alongside of other people's troubles, and doubtless she considered it to be one unsurpassed in kind. The source of her woe was neither more nor less than Miss Jackson's departure from Rockston.

For a while after Mrs. Montgomerie's death, Miss Jackson remained at Rocklands. Mr. Joliffe was grateful to her for her care of his mother-in-law, and though he did not like her personally, he yielded immediately to Kathleen's suggestion that she should be asked to the house for a few weeks, that she might look out for other work in the place. But none presented itself. Joan passed through various stages of hope and despair, settling down finally into the latter, when work in Rockston failed to appear, and a situation in London was accepted.

The despair remained in abeyance, so long as Miss Jackson was in the house. But no sooner did Miss Jackson take her departure, than Joan went down to zero.

Nothing was right with Joan. She would not go out, would not exert herself, would not work, would not read, would not take interest in aught around her. The touchstone had been applied, and the result showed that the change in her had not been genuine, that the improvement had been superficial, that the motive had been faulty.

"For Miss Jackson's sake" had swayed her so long as she could enjoy Miss Jackson's company and rejoice in Miss Jackson's approval. That failing, no higher motive remained to bend her will.

Whatever was the precise nature of her affection, however, Joan contrived to make herself very unhappy. She fretted and pined and yielded to gloom till there was some foundation for Mr. Joliffe's frequent complaint to Kathleen, "That girl grows perfectly unbearable." Curiously enough, a good many people who connected naturally Kathleen's pale looks with her grandmother's death, connected Joan's moody looks with Mr. Corrie's departure. Perhaps the mistake was not surprising. Kathleen always had a smile at command, and Joan had none.

"My dear," Mr. Joliffe said one day to Kathleen, early in September, "Dr. Ritchie has been speaking to me about you, and he has quite frightened me,—he has indeed, darling."

This of course was the last thing that Dr. Ritchie had intended Mr. Joliffe to say to Kathleen.

"I don't think there is any need," Kathleen answered gently, while a sudden wonder flashed through her mind—was she going, as her mother had gone? The thought was almost a wish for the moment—a longing for rest; if God so willed. But what would her father do without her? And then she remembered Marshall Corrie,—and sighed.

"No, so I told him, Leena. Indeed, I have always counted yours a strong constitution, not like your dear mother's. But he says you have been overtaxed and he wants me to take care of you. He said, by-the-by, that I was not to repeat his words, but I know my Leena is not one of the nervous sort, easily frightened. You will take care of yourself, my child, for your father's sake."

"Oh yes," Kathleen answered, smiling.

"I told him I had had some thoughts of taking you abroad for a few weeks. The idea occurred to me only yesterday, and I meant to propose it this morning. You have never been out of England, and I think a run on the continent would freshen you up. What do you say, darling? Dr. Ritchie urges it strongly."

Kathleen looked pleased, as she was expected to do. "It would be delightful," she said. "And papa, may Joan come too?"

"Joan! My dear, she will spoil everything with her moods."

"No, I think it would do her good. She is so depressed about losing Miss Jackson, and she really is not looking well—"

"Not likely, when she yields to these tempers."

"But perhaps if she were better she would be less easily vexed. Of course it must be as you like, dear papa, only I think the treat would be nice for Joan,

"You shall have it all your own way, my darling," said Mr. Joliffe kissing her. "Only don't you be ill. I think that if Joan goes, we must take Hardwicke. I can't have you tied down at hotels, looking after Joan. You must be free to go about with me."

"Where shall we go first, papa?"

"Where would you like, Leena? I had some thoughts of Lucerne, and perhaps across thence into Italy."

And Kathleen had as usual to plan and arrange the whole.

What makes a House Beautiful.

It is an excellent thing to have a well kept house and a beautifully appointed table! but, after all, the best cheer of every home must come from the heart and manner of the home-mother. If the one is cold, and the other ungracious, all the wealth of India can not make the home pleasant or inviting. Intelligence, too, must lend its charm, if we would have home an Eden. The severe style of house order, neatness, seldom leaves much margin for intellectual culture. Even general reading is considered as out of the question for a woman so hurried and worried with her scrubbing and polishing, and making of garments. A simpler style of living and house furnishing would set many a bonded slave at liberty, and add vastly to the comfort of all the house.

Hospitality rarely prevails in these spotless, line and letter houses.—Company disarrange the books, and disorder the house, which had work enough in it before. The mother can not throw off her carking cares and sit down in a real heart-to-heart converse with the old friend of her childhood. Still less can she enter into the joys and pleasures right and delightful to her own children, because of the extra work of clearing away it will be likely to make.

With all your toils to make a house beautiful, do not neglect the first element of all, to beautify yourself, body and soul. A sweet, loving word, and a warm clasp of the hand, are far more to a guest than the most elaborately embroidered lambrequins at our window, or the most exquisite damask on your table. There are bare cabin homes that have ever been remembered with pleasure, because of the beautiful, loving pleasure there; and stately palaces there are, which leave the impression of an iceberg on the mind.

The Fatal Prayer Meeting.

BY MAY KINGSTON.

Mabel Clark to the surprise of her parents concluded to go to the Wednesday night meeting. The girl had been interested in the subject of religion for some time, but her father was too intent on money making to detect it, and the gowns to be made over and general chase after spring fashions filled the mind of her mother, to the exclusion of all else. The question uppermost in Mabel's mind was this, "Does this religion make any one really happy?" She looked about the chapel.

Deacon Hart through his fingers took frequent looks at the clock. After minister-killing pauses, one brother after another got upon his feet and attempted to pray, but there was nothing in these prayers that met Mabel's case. They tuned their formal songs, and Mabel's devotion died out.

The first words spoken by Mabel's mother when they had got out, was a criticism upon Sister Worden's bonnet: "Jane Worden has resurrected that old spring scoop again. I am tired to death of it; she isn't poor, but stingy. I've no patience with her!"

And then Mabel's father remarked that "he did wish Brother Rand would not spin out his prayers so!" and "it seemed to him the minister was not up to the mark; he ought to stir up the people and make the meeting interesting; that was his business!"

Next item was, "Deacon Bell's son came in with Bessie Lane," and a season of wondering "if there was any thing in it" followed, in which the money advantage of the match was commented upon with considerable spirit. As they neared the home, worldly cares were taken up and the meeting was forgotten.

Mabel Clark has never been inside P—Street chapel since, but is now known as a graceful dancer, charming in company, well informed as to the opera and its stars, and is soon to marry a man who has a princely income and a heart that despises the religion of the cross. Was not that Wednesday night the turning point? Are her parents guiltless?