

Family Reading.

The Morning Psalm.

BY MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

"Read us a psalm, my little one." An untried day had just begun, And ere the city's rush and roar Came passing through the closed home door,

The family was hushed, to hear The youngest child, in accents clear, Read from the Book. A moment's space, The morning look died from each face— The sharp, keen look that goes to meet Opposing force, nor brooks defeat.

"I will lift up mine eyes," she read, "Unto the hills." Who was afraid? What had that psalm of pilgrim life? To do with all our modern strife? "Behold, he that doth Israel keep Shall neither slumber, nor shall sleep The Lord thy keeper is, and he The shade on thy right hand shall be; The sun by day shall not thee smite, The moon shall hurt thee not by night."

And the child finished the old psalm, And those who heard grew strong and calm;

The music of the Hebrew words Thrilled them like sweet remembered chords, And brought the heights of yesterday Down to the lowlands of to-day, And seemed to lead to common things A mystery as of light and wings, And each one felt in gladness mood, And life was beautiful and good.

Then forth, where duty's clarion call Was heard, the household hastened all, In crowded haunts of busy men, To toil with book, or speech, or pen, To meet the day's demand with skill, And bear and do, and dare and will, As they must, who are in the strife And strain and stress of modern life, And would succeed, but who yet hold Honor of higher worth than gold.

These are the days of peace, we say, Yet fiercest fights are fought to-day; And those that formed that household band Had need of strength, that they might stand

In firmness and unruffled calm; But sweetly did their morning psalm Amid the clamor loud and long, Like echo of a once-loved song, Rise to their hearts and make them strong.

At close of day they met again, And each had known some touch of pain, Some disappointment, loss or care, Some place of stumbling, or some snare. "And yet the psalm is true," said they, "The Lord preserveth us alway; His own were safe in days of yore, And from this time, and evermore, If skies be bright or skies be dim, He keepeth all who trust in him."—*London Christian World.*

New Select Serial.

KATHLEEN.

THE STORY OF A HOME.

BY AGNES GIBERNE.

CHAPTER XX.

A SUNDAY AT LUCERNE.

"My dear, Hardwicke does not think you ought to go out this afternoon," said Mr. Joliffe. Kathleen had been with him to the English service, and had sat beside him at luncheon, as usual. She was spent by this time, and lay on the bed in her little room, which overlooked the lake.

"I am sorry, papa, but I don't much think I could walk," said Kathleen. "If you want a turn, do you think you would mind going with Joan for once? Or would you rather stay in? I should like so much to have you to read to me, and presently we can go in the garden together."

"I will read to you by-and-by, certainly, darling. Joan and Mrs. Dodson and Mrs. Macartney talk of having a quiet stroll, so perhaps I had better go with them and return in half-an-hour. A little sleep will do you good, and you will be quite undisturbed. What pleasant people they are!"

"Yes, Mrs. Macartney particularly. Mrs. Dodson looks good," said Kathleen. "There is something in her face which make one feel confidence in her. Only I am a little sorry that Joan takes to her quite so much, for she is not a thorough lady."

"Not by birth, perhaps, but she is well off, and accustomed to society, and she quite takes the position of one, my dear."

"O yes, it is only that there is a certain something wanting. No one would call her vulgar, for she has no pretension about her, and she is simple and at her ease. It is only that she is not quite a lady. But I don't want to say anything unkind about her, papa. She is very nice, and I am sure she is very good. Mrs. Macartney tells Joan that she is always doing kindnesses. She often denies herself luxuries that she may have the more money to give away."

"That is a kind of self-denial which one does not often see in people who have become well-to-do in middle life," said Mr. Joliffe. "It must be an estimable character."

"I dare say it is. She has a fine face," said Kathleen. "Then I shall see you back soon, papa."

"Very soon; and I hope I shall find that you have had a good sleep, my child."

Mr. Joliffe went away, and Kathleen shut her eyes. She was weary and sad, and a fit of longing for her mother was upon her. Two or three tears forced their way from beneath her eyelids. Somehow she had not expected Mr. Joliffe to be so content to go without her. It was quite right and natural, no doubt, that he should do so; but Kathleen was a little startled at the acuteness of her own pain. She had not before been aware how much she valued her position with her father; how much she prided herself on being his all; how much she reckoned on his exclusive devotion to herself. Why should he not be content to leave her for an hour? How unreasonable to expect or wish him to stay indoors, simply because she could not go also! Kathleen said all this to herself, and tried to believe that she was satisfied—yet the pain was there still.

"I must be growing jealous," she thought. "I did not know it was in me. Perhaps it is a good thing to have my eyes opened."

The half-hour grew into an hour, and no one came near her. The noise outside made sleep seem an impossibility. She had, from where she lay, a view of part of the town, and of the gay Sunday fair, with its whirligigs and its merry throng of pleasure-seekers, and the rattle of music and hum of voices came up unceasingly, while all around there was the grand sweep of silent mountain summits, as they had stood for ages past. The contrast of grandeur and littleness was marked. Kathleen tried to forget the rattle of sounds, and to think only of those solemn heights, and for a while she read her little Testament. Then Hardwicke came softly in.

"Miss Leena—alone!" she said. "I thought my master was here."

"He has gone for a walk," said Kathleen.

"And you've been resting. How do you feel, Miss Kathleen?"

Kathleen had not much to say for herself. Hardwicke stood looking at the wan little face.

"The noise makes your head ache, doesn't it?" she said.

"Yes; but it is too warm to have the window shut."

"It's worse than heathendom, kicking up a row like that of a Sunday," said Hardwicke. "You wouldn't like to sit in the garden a bit, Miss Leena."

"I hardly think I can," Kathleen said. "If I don't keep quiet now, I shall not be at dinner with papa."

"I wish Dr. Ritchie was here," said Hardwicke from the bottom of her heart.

"I had a letter from Lady Catherine this morning, and she hopes to get away with him directly for a short holiday. They speak of a fortnight at the Italian Lakes. I thought at first that we might possibly meet them here, but papa has been talking of going on to Rome."

"What's put Rome into his head?" demanded Hardwicke in an unwontedly curt tone.

"I don't know, Hardwicke. I should like to see Rome."

Hardwicke thought she would not. "There's Mrs. Dodson and Mrs. Macartney going," she said with an air of dissatisfaction.

"No, I believe not!"

"I heard Mrs. Dodson a-telling Miss Brey she meant to," said Hardwicke. Kathleen made no immediate answer. Her next words were,—"I don't think

I can talk more now. Please give me that little hymn-book off the table, 'Songs amid the Shadows?'"

Hardwicke obeyed, but said, "You're not fit to read, Miss Joliffe."

"Not much. I only want to find something to think about."

Hardwicke took a seat near the window, and looked out, with bent brows of disapproval. Kathleen turned slowly to one or two favourite pages. The hymn which Kenison had read to her one day, shortly before her mother's death, was there, but she could not trust herself to peruse it. She went to another equally familiar.

"Come, Lord, and fight the battle, My hands are tired and faint; I have no strength to struggle, Consider my complaint! One of Thy weakest soldiers Is weary in the field; Yet thine is all the victory, Thy love is all my shield."

"'Tis not that I am weary Of service done for Thee; 'Tis not that I would alter Thy loving will for me, Sweet is the vineyard labour Through all the toil and heat; And sweet the lonely night-watch, Safe resting at Thy feet."

"Yet, Lord there is a warfare No eye but Thine may see; Oh, hear my cry for succor, Come, Thou, and fight for me. The self I cannot conquer, The will that still is mine, Oh take them both, Lord Jesus, And make them one with Thine."

"Take them! I cannot yield them, I am not what I seemed; I have no power, Lord Jesus, To do what once I dreamed. The yearning of the earth-life Is stronger than my strength; When may the spell be broken, And freedom come at length?"

"Like dew on drooping blossoms, Like breath from Holy Place, Laden with health and healing, Come Thy deep words of grace; Thy strength is all in leaning On One who fights for thee; Thine is the helpless clinging, And Mine the victory!"

That was calming. Others had fought the same battle, others had met the same temptations, others had come out victorious. Kathleen had a temptation to meet, a battle to fight, that afternoon, and she knew it. She shut the book, and lay with closed eyes, repeating now and then to herself:

"The self I cannot conquer, The will that still is mine, Oh take them both, Lord Jesus, And make them one with Thine."

And she did not know how the afternoon had passed, when suddenly she opened her eyes to find her father by her side.

"Better, my sweet one?" he asked.

"You have had quite a nice sleep."

"Have I been asleep?" asked Kathleen.

"So Hardwicke says; for a while. I am glad we did not return sooner, or I should have disturbed you. We were beguiled onwards. I wish you had come too. Mrs. Dodson and Mrs. Macartney are capital walkers, and really most pleasant companions. Joan is striking up quite an intimacy with Mrs. Dodson; and I should say it is a healthier friendship for Joan than that with Miss Jackson. She certainly is a woman of very superior mind,—well read, too, and refined in her ideas, which is more than one would perhaps expect at first sight. You must see a little more of her, Leena. We think it would be pleasant to make an excursion or two together, beginning with the ascent of the Rigi to-morrow, if fine. You must really come there with us, my darling, so be sure you have a good night."

But if she could not go, he would go without her. Kathleen understood, and in the rush of painful feeling which followed, it seemed to her that the afternoon's struggle and apparent victory had been all thrown away. Yet it was not so in reality.

"I am coming down to dinner," she said, rising; and she sat through it, and accompanied her father to the evening service, and did not leave him again till bedtime.

She paid for her exertions by an almost sleepless night, and appeared pale and haggard in the morning. "Not fit for the Rigi," was the general verdict, but for once Kathleen showed herself obstinate. She was bent upon going, and counsel and entreaty alike failed to move her. Mrs. Dodson had rather a surprised look, and remarked apart to Joan, "Your cousin looks so gentle that I should have thought her easier to manage. She ought not to attempt the excursion."

"So Hardwicke says. But Kathleen likes her own way, Mrs. Dodson. 'Most of us do,' said Mrs. Dodson. 'And I suppose she would find it dull alone in the hotel.'

"Is that all? I would stay with her gladly. I have been up the Rigi before. I thought she was going for Mr. Joliffe's sake."

"Oh yes, so she says. But I really don't believe my uncle would mind, if Kathleen did not make herself so necessary to him," said Joan.

"Well, we can't judge for others," said Mrs. Dodson. "I will keep watch, and if she seems tired when we reach the foot of the mountain, I can bring her back."

But Kathleen did not give in, and the ascent was accomplished. They went by steam-boat to Vitznau, and thence up the Rigi-Kulm by rail, a very prosaic mode of ascent in sound, but in reality fascinating.

Kathleen was in one compartment by her father's side, and Joan was in the next with the two ladies. Mr. Joliffe found his own companion unwontedly silent, and he repeatedly leant forward to exchange remarks with the others.

It was a grand scene, grander perhaps, seen thus in a rapid rise, than it could have been in a slow foot ascent. Sitting still, to be borne steadily upwards, the impression on the mind was of excitement and exhilaration, almost as of a rush into cloudland. Not that all felt alike. Mr. Joliffe occupied himself with his neighbours as much as with the scenery. Kathleen turned giddy, and scarcely ventured to take a peep at the depths below; Mrs. Macartney smiled, serenely, as she might have done upon the most level of pasture-lands; Mrs. Dodson's face showed thorough enjoyment, and Joan stood eagerly up, with flushed cheeks, preferring to go forwards rather than backwards.

Each moment the horizon widened and mountain after mountain sprang into view, scene after scene burst upon the sight. Wild peaks were there, crowned with perpetual snows, and fantastic rocks, and fierce precipices, and castle-like promontories, and deep gorges, and glittering glaciers. As they rose with only the jarring bumps of the cog-wheel to break the smoothness of their motion, the whole landscape had an extraordinary slanting appearance, as if something were wrong with its perspective,—a delusion owing to the level of the carriage floor being at a different angle from the level of the horizon. This appearance gave a certain air of dreamy unreality to the scene. It was righted, however, immediately they left the train, and climbed the little space remaining.

On the summit they paused to take breath and admire. The peaks of the Wetterhorn, the Schreckhorn and the mighty Jungfrau, showed in the far distance, and between lay bewildering masses of glorious mountain heights. Glaciers were visible, glistening with translucent brightness. Cloudlets lay low here and there upon the mountain sides; but the summits were clear, except that mist wreaths clung to the Jungfrau and her lofty neighbors. The lakes of Lucerne and Zug were within sight, and hundreds of tiny villages, with church-steeples scattered far and wide, and thousands of chalets dotting the intervening spaces. In one direction lay a wild tangle of mountains, in the other a fair and smiling lowland. The Rossberg, showing signs of the tremendous landlip of the past, stood near. Mount Pilatus, though rugged and beautiful still had a dwarfed appearance.

They could have remained for hours, and some proposals were made to that effect. Mr. Joliffe was willing, but Mrs. Dodson touched Joan. "Your cousin—" she said in a low voice, "she must return by train."

"Kathleen talked of walking down with us all," said Joan aloud.

"Impossible. If you three like to walk, I will take Miss Joliffe home," said Mrs. Dodson.

Kathleen would not hear of this. If her father walked, she would walk, she quietly said. Mr. Joliffe decided against the walk, and they went down as they had come up.

The next day, there was a change in the weather. They had a long ramble, despite drizzling rain, and Kathleen was of the party. Hardwicke

could not make out whether or no she was better. She made no complaints, and looked ill, yet she seemed to have more strength. Was it only determination?

The day after, they started for the Italian lakes.

Truth.

"He told me all about the affair, and he said the version of it I have given you was the truth, whether it was believed or not," said Mr. Snow, the wealthy manufacturer, to the guest with whom he was conversing.

"Truth dwells at the bottom of a well," replied the young man addressed, laughing heartily.

"Four-year-old Marion Snow, sitting on her papa's knee, opened her blue eyes at this remark, and at once before her childish mind a picture of the dark, deep well, with its messy curb, its dripping bucket, and its long, high sweep clearing the summer air in the cool, shady grassy yard of her grandfather's farmhouse away up among the New Hampshire hills.

She treasured the picture, often pondering over it and wondering what 'Truth' was like, and if she should ever succeed in getting a sight of her.

When, a few months later, an invitation to her cousin Eliza's wedding came from the country homestead to the city mansion, Marion clasped her tiny hands in delight, exclaiming,—

"Oh, now I can look for Truth! What a pity it will be if she gets out of the well before we arrive there!"

It was late on the June evening preceding the wedding day when the lumbering stage-coast set them down at the homestead. Marion was too sleepy to think of Truth that night, but the next morning she was early awake, and slipping out of bed and peering from the vine shaded casement, she spied the old well, and, following a childish impulse, she resolved to ascertain at once whether Truth was concealed in its mysterious depths.

Her little bare feet carried her silently down the winding stairs, through the big parlor where the presents were displayed and everything was ready for the wedding, and out upon the back stoop.

"I am going to look for Truth," she called sweetly to her grandmother, who was busy in the dairy, and like a bird she fitted in her long, white nightgown across the yard, climbed upon the well-curb, leaned over, and seeing her own charming reflection in the crystal depths, she shouted joyfully:

"Oh, I see her, I see Truth! She is ever so far down. Will she not come up to the wedding?" and losing her balance over she went into the well.

By a singular providence she went down feet first, and grasping a strong rope by which a pail of cream was suspended, she kept her head above water until she was drawn up to the arms of her agonized parents.

The accident so affrighted and excited the whole family that throughout the day nothing went on quite as it had been arranged.

In looking over the presents after the guests had departed, the bride missed a string of heavy gold beads, an heirloom in the family; they had been given her by a great aunt.

Marion, hearing the talk about them, piped up, "Oh, let me tell you where they are. I had them on when I fell into the well, and now Truth has them."

"That is impossible," they all said. "That is just a chimera of the dear child's over-excited brain."

Some of the family were positive they saw the necklace after breakfast, but every one had been so wrought upon that they were not sure of anything.

They all united, however, in laughing at Marion's story, and Grandpa Snow said:

"The well is very old and very deep. The water is deep and cold. It is not worth while for anyone to risk his life to prove the accuracy of a baby's prattle."

The bride made up her mind that her cousin Martha, who lived on the adjoining farm, had stolen the beads out of spite, for she had been heard to say that she had just as good a right to them as Eliza had.

Having abruptly arrived at this conclusion in her first chagrin at the loss of her necklace, she repeated her

conviction to everyone without charity or prudence, until poor innocent Martha was branded as a thief by the whole community.

Mr. and Mrs. Snow and their child Marion soon after this event took up their abode in the then far West, and Marion did not come east again until she was married and came on her wedding tour.

She had not been long in the square parlor of the old homestead, before she said to Cousin Eliza, now a rosy matron:

"I want to go and look in the well. I want to see 'Truth' again. I wonder if she wears the gold beads I carried her when I went down to make her a call, you know, on the morning of your wedding day. I shall never forget that experience. The time seemed interminable, after I lost my balance, before my bare feet struck the icy-cold water."

"Do you still believe that you had on my gold beads at that time?" asked Eliza laughing heartily.

"To be sure I do, my dear cousin; I know I had them on. They lay on some pink cotton in a little box on the parlor table there in that corner. I put them on, and came here and stood on tiptoe to look in this very same gilt-framed mirror. I remember just how they looked over my white nightgown. Has the well never been cleansed since then?"

"No. It has not been considered safe to go down into. The well is only used to hang things in that we want to keep cool, and the beads are not there. Cousin Martha stole those beads. I have never had the least doubt upon the subject."

Visiting around among her relatives, Marion found that her cousin Martha, a sweet, gentle, Christian woman, had been all these years under social ostracism on account of the report circulated at the time that she stole her cousin Eliza's necklace.

Marion's young husband was a minister of the gospel. "I mean to know the truth of this matter," he said, "and in this instance 'truth' certainly lies at the bottom of the well."

One day Grandma Snow, who was still living, made a party for the young couple. After the guests were assembled, many of them being the same who were at Eliza's wedding, the young man introduced the story of the gold beads, and announced that the event of the afternoon was to be their recovery if they were in the well.

He called the men he had engaged to assist him, and putting on a pair of long fishing-boots, he descended into the mossy depths.

As each bucketful of sand and water was drawn up it was scanned by anxious eyes. After a while, when they had almost given up the quest, Marion cried:

"Oh, there is a shining gold speck. Eureka! It is one of the beads. We have found one of them," she shouted down the well to her young husband.

"There are twenty-five of them," said Eliza, and it was not long before she held them all in her hand. Marion was delighted, of course, and Eliza knew not whether she was the more gratified or chagrined.

She sent for her cousin Martha, who had not been invited to the party, asked her forgiveness in the presence of the company for the wrong she had done her, and presented her the necklace. Upon that everybody cried and kissed Martha, and asked her forgiveness for believing such a foolish report.

"I knew I was neglected by everybody, left out in the cold, as it were," said Martha at last, "but I never knew why. It was never told of the unjust suspicion resting upon me, but as I lost my friends one by one I drew nearer to God, so the years have not been as weary to me as you suppose. I cannot take the necklace. All this suspicion is a punishment for my unkind remark in saying, I had just as good a right to it as Eliza."

"Marion shall have it as a wedding present from us both, said Eliza, and the beads having been restrung, they were fastened about the neck of the youthful bride. She has always worn them in memory and in praise of 'Truth,' she says.

Several summers ago I met her at the old homestead. The gold necklace sparkled and shone on her white, plump throat as, standing by the old well and looking down into its crystal depths, she told me this story.—*Christian Weekly.*