

Family Reading.

Forbear My Heart!

FROM THE GERMAN OF B. SCHMOLKE.

Forbear, my heart! forbear! forbear! And cease from all the wailings; Benth thee of God's father-care, And learn to bear thine ailings. Say, "As God will! I hold me still; He never will forsake me, Nor will He needless break me."

New Select Serial.

KATHLEEN.

THE STORY OF A HOME.

BY AGNES GIBBERNE.

CHAPTER XII.

DARK DAYS.

"If Cleve were not found quickly," that was what every one was saying, "if Cleve were not found quickly, his mother would die." The words rang in Kathleen's brain hour after hour; and Hardwicke spoke them in hushed tones to her fellow-servants; and Mr. Jolliffe groaned them aloud, as he sat helplessly in his study, like ivy bereft of its supporting oak; and Mrs. Montgomerie played querulous variations on them in the ears of her companion; and Dr. Ritchie uttered them quietly to his wife. All knew the truth. Cleve could not be found. Whether willingly or under coercion he had fled, and nothing could be heard of him or his companions. That bitter despairing cry had been the child's farewell to his home, a home which might have been all that his heart could wish, but for his grievous suppleness of will. It soon became known that the Penleys would not prosecute. For Mrs. Jolliffe's sake, all concerned in the affair were only anxious to hush it up, none more so than Mr. Corrie, the chief sufferer, if indeed he were the chief. There may be suffering greater than that which is physical. Had it not been for Mrs. Jolliffe, many thought that the Hopkinsons ought not to have been let off free, and many counted that a sharp lesson might do Cleve no harm. But Cleve was having his lesson. Inquiries were set on foot vigorously to discover the missing lads. Kenison threw himself into the search with energy, going hither and thither, writing, advertising, telegraphing, doing all that brain could devise and body carry out. But all was of no avail. The elder Hopkinsons pressed entire ignorance of their sons' proceedings. "The boys would come right, never fear!" Mr. Hopkinson said. Some believed him to know more than he would confess. Marshall Corrie lay for days at death's

door. The bullet had taken a zig-zag course, passing perilously near the lungs. The first danger was from excessive loss of blood and consequent exhaustion, but other perils intervened. The bullet was extracted, and during some twenty-four hours following Lady Catherine scarcely quitted the room, even though the London nurse was there. Corrie's parents were dead, and his only sister was detained at a distance by her husband's illness, but Marshall Corrie had fallen among kind friends in his hour of need. He did not lack such nursing as a mother might have given. There came then a change, and the 'almost hopeless' verdict was exchanged for 'rather better.' He had much in his favour: a good constitution, a moderate mode of living, and a habit of cheerfulness. The chief drawback was the weight upon his mind with respect to Cleve; and, through all, this intellect was clear. He could not be put off with half-answers, and he was eager, hour by hour, to know what was done. "I don't wish to be obstinate," he said one day, when rallying. "If Dr. Ritchie forbids me to hear, I will not ask, and I will try not to dwell upon the matter. But I think the strain of that would be greater than knowing the worst. I had heavy responsibility in the matter, you know." This apparently was all that troubled him; not his own sufferings, but Cleve's; not danger to himself, but danger to Cleve. He deeply felt also the distress of Cleve's parents and sister, and it had been impossible to hide from him the fact of the mother's illness. "He is a fine fellow!" Dr. Ritchie said one day to Kathleen, and Kenison had not words of enthusiasm at command for the sufferer's docile patience and self-forgetfulness. Kathleen listened with a curious warmth of interest in the midst of her deepening trouble. It was the one thing which seemed to lie in a manner outside her surrounding fog. She had liked Mr. Corrie before, had esteemed him, trusted him, enjoyed his sermons, and found his word helpful. Now, as she heard Kenison's ardent eulogiums, a kind of admiring hero-worship for the prostrate victim of boyish insubordination sprang up in her heart. She had always liked what Kenison liked, and admired what Kenison admired. Days passed, and still Mrs. Jolliffe lay in the same dull semi-consciousness. She did not at any time awake from it fully, and to make her take food was a matter of painful difficulty. She knew and would answer her husband or Kathleen, Kenison or Dr. Ritchie, and any little attention was received with a customary 'Thank you,' courteously uttered, though faint. But mental sensation seemed numb, and when she spoke, Kathleen had a feeling of being addressed from behind a curtain. Each day she grew weaker. That could be seen by all. Kathleen asked few questions; it was enough to study the doctor's face, visit by visit. She knew almost as well as he did that life was ebbing away. Mr. Jolliffe did not see and would not believe. Dr. Ritchie was not at pains so to command his face as that Kathleen should not read it. The time had come when preparation was needful for that which drew nigh. Kenison was Kathleen's great comfort in those days. He was sometimes troubled by perplexities as to how long he should be right to stay away from his London work; but his rector was willing to spare him, and happily he did not impart his doubts to Kathleen. She saw little of anybody else, spending most of her time beside her mother. Some attention had to be paid to household concerns, and to the comforts of father, mother, and cousins. Kathleen went patiently through all necessary details, neglecting nothing; yet every minute away from their mother's side was pain and strain to her. Many friends came to inquire after the invalid, but Kathleen saw none of them. Dr. Baring was the only exception. A day rarely passed that he did not call, and once in a while he was admitted to the sick-room. Mrs. Jolliffe did not know him, however, neither did she respond to aught that he said, and prayer and Bible words seemed alike to make no impression. Once when they knelt, he tried the effect of slowly

repeating the words of the General Confession. She stirred at the familiar sounds, clasped her hands, and softly uttered half-sentences after him. Then he rose, and said, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,"—and she whispered, "Yes—all." A great longing grew up in Kathleen's heart for something of clearer intercourse before the end. She did not feel as if she could bear the parting without it. Nobody saw the passion of longing as she went about, pale and low-voiced, in her new calm, a calm not only on the surface. She could not have talked much of her feelings, but through all she had the child-like sense of a Father's clasping and supporting Hand. Even on days when definite prayer became an impossibility, she could still look up and see her Father's pitying smile. Well was it for Kathleen that in hours of sunshine she had learnt so pure and simple a trust. She suffered keenly, but she did not question or doubt. The calm broke down one evening. Mr. Jolliffe was out, and Kenison coming into the study, found Kathleen kneeling on the floor in an agony of sobs, her head bowed down upon the open page of a small book. He lifted her up, and made her sit in the chair and comforted her with tender words, which at first increased the sobbing, but presently helped to still it. The little book he kept open in his left hand and her first words, when voice returned, were, "Was it this which upset you, Leena?" "Yes—don't lose the place. Ken, do read it to me." "I don't think you can bear it just now," said Kenison, glancing down the page. "Yes, I can—I must. I have to learn the lesson. Please read it." Kenison had some difficulty in commanding his voice to obey: "Master, say on! Thy words are sweet; I hush my heart to hear; I wait in silence for thy voice, That is so true and clear. It quiets all unrestful thought, It stills the throbbing brain, It soothes, like hymn from mother-lips, The weary ache of pain." "Is it indeed the Master's voice? It speaks in altered tone; It bids me follow through the dark, And bear my cross alone: It bids me leave the pastures green, Where quiet waters flow, And climb the rugged mountain height That lieth cold in snow." "Oh, no, not there. My steps are weak. There are dear faces here— There are dear hands I clasp in mine, Dear voices in my ear. I cannot leave the sunny way, And take that heavy cross: I cannot bear to wake and sleep With bitter sense of loss." "Once more He speaks. No stern rebuke, No anger in the word: 'Is it so hard to turn from all, And walk with me, thy Lord? I do not say the way is fair For tear-dimmed eyes to see, I only say through all its pain, Thy heart shall lean on Me." "Come! thou hast never heard My voice, As thou shalt hear it now; I have no words for brighter days Like those the dark ones know. I cannot speak them here; yet come— The desert-path lies bare, And better far the wilderness, If I am with thee there." He had a break in the middle; the last two lines at the third verse brought a shuddering thrill, and Kathleen sobbed,—"O Ken, I can't,—I can't!" and then,— "But go on please," and he reached the end without interruption. "Leena, that is true," he said softly at the close. "Christ has words to speak in dark days which He does not speak in bright ones." "If I could only feel it," said Kathleen. "If I could only feel that it would be better with Him, than with— But I can't; I only long to have back the old happiness. O Ken, it was such happiness. I only feel like those other words, 'I cannot bear—' O Ken, it is so very very dreadful, the feeling that one day more is gone—one day till,—till—" "It will be different kind of happiness from the old. But wait, dear, wait till He speaks. The pain must come before the comfort. I think He does bear you up, and He will do it more as the need grows more." "Only every day it seems as if I could not keep on—could not bear the pain. You love her dearly,—but you don't know—you don't know—I feel as if all the world were nothing to me beside her. And if she should not know

me,—should not talk to me again— "Dr. Ritchie thinks she will." "Does he? I could not ask him. I did so want to know. He thinks she will wake up, and be more like herself?" "He thinks it very probable." "Only that—not sure!" "No, but very probable. If not, it might spare her some sorrow. She would be so grieved to know all. Still I think he expects a change. The shock has affected her strangely, but he does not expect this state to continue." "If Cleve were found," murmured Kathleen. "If Cleve were but found." "That might cause a rally—for a time," said Kenison, in a low voice. "But only for a time. Both knew it, and neither now had much hope, if any, that Cleve would be quickly found."

Atmospheres.

There's a great deal in atmospheres; we wish that all church sextons knew about it. There are atmospheres so heavily laden with carbonic acid gas, and so soporific in consequence, that the apostle Paul himself couldn't keep people awake. And what a comfort it is to us poor slumber-inducing preachers to remember that at least one man—and he a young man, and so not heavy with years—went fast asleep even while such an one as Paul was preaching; and that at the very "top of his bent." And the windows were wide open, so that it couldn't be charged to choke damp. But very frequently, undoubtedly, the somnolence of hearers is attributable to the want of oxygen in the air, rather than to the want of animation in the sermon, or interest in the teacher.

If the sexton will smother the congregation that gather to listen to the preacher, let him. It is their own fault if they allow it, for they are old enough to defend themselves; but we protest against the murder of the innocents that gathered about the Teachers in the Sunday-school for the study of the Scriptures.

Chase out the dampness and the poison, and let in God's pure air and light. Let the room be sweet and fresh, and full of inspiration. One cannot praise the Lord properly without plenty of oxygen.

And there is another kind of atmosphere that is deserving of being very carefully considered. There is a moral atmosphere that is all the more potential because it is impalpable. Human beings influence us insensibly, and yet very really, by a sort of subtle something in their presence. There are some, after being with whom for a little while, you feel yourself lifted up, elated, invigorated, broadened in your views of truth; thinking kinder of humanity, more hopefully of its future, and more gratefully of God almighty. You come away from their company with more of conscious manhood, and stouter resolves for noble work. And then there are others, after a little contact with whom you find yourself disposed to be cynical and misanthropic and pessimistic; and you leave them with a sort of contempt for them, and for yourself, and for the world, and a lowering of your whole being to a lower plane, and a more unhealthy tone.

Avoid such people as you would Medusa's head, or the fateful eye of the fabulous Basilisk, or the deadly valley supposed to be shadowed by the Upas tree.

There is an atmosphere pervading books that deserves as well to be carefully considered. The question ought not to be whether the teachings of a book are palpably pernicious, but which way is the trend of it, and what is the tendency of the atmosphere of it.

The moral constitution may be insensibly broken down by poison so insidiously diffused as to defy detection. The writer lived for two years in a malarious district of Eastern North Carolina. Nobody could persuade the natives that their air was not every whit as salubrious as any to be found on the breezy mountain tops. "Analyze it," they would triumphantly say, "and you will find nothing but oxygen, nitrogen, and vapor of water, and a little trace of carbonic acid—precisely the same constituents as are to be found in the atmosphere of the very healthiest regions of the globe." And so with their argumentation and analysis, they assuaged our rising fears, and we

laughed for two years at chills and fevers, and then we shook and scorched for two whole months. There was something in the air after all, although too subtle to be discovered by the chemist's tests. What's the matter with the theatre, somebody asks? And they proceed to "argufy" to prove that it can't be harmful. But the fact remains—painful, palpable, indisputable—that those who habitually inhale the atmosphere of the theatre, the opera-house, and the ball-room, come to be so debilitated with malarial poison, as to be incapacitated for almost any kind of steady, sturdy Christian work. And this is a view of the matter that cannot be too earnestly pressed upon the thoughtful young Christians who are trembling upon the verge of a decision of such questions.

We have spoken already of the physical atmosphere of the house of God, and have urged the importance of its proper ventilation. There is another kind of atmosphere more vital still, for which the sexton is not responsible; but which depends upon the spiritual oxygen contributed to it by every worshiper that crosses the threshold. The oxygen of the material air, with our ever leaving lungs, we are constantly consuming, and converting into unbreathable carbonic acid gas. Just the opposite of this function is performed by every child of God, who, in proper frame, appears before him, for every prayer ascending heavenward is like the stroke of a pump bringing fresh supplies of spiritual ozone down from the celestial heights, until the whole place is filled with the very atmosphere of heaven, and the worshippers are so uplifted and exhilarated, that they are ready to exclaim:

Our willing souls would stay In such a frame as this, And sit and sing themselves away To everlasting bliss. —Baptist Teacher.

A Little Woman.

She was a very little woman not more than four years old, and I am afraid she was running away.

Perhaps I ought not to say running; for she walked gravely and deliberately along the street, looking about her with an observant air. She had on a ruffled white apron, and a brown stuff dress, and over her head she had thrown an apron of blue and white check in place of a bonnet. The apron was so large, and the little woman so small, that while the chubby hand held it snugly under her round chin, one corner trailed on the ground behind her. The apron also served as a shawl for a rag doll with no features to speak of, whose head, with a ghastly wound on top, peeped out under the little mother's arm. A great many people were coming and going, but the little woman did not notice them. She was singing to herself and the doll,

"Tis His hand that leadeth me." She only knew this one line, so she sang it over and over as she went on, walking close to the fences, and peeping into yards where flowers were growing, and into basements, where she had glimpses of tables covered with red cloths, and shining casters towering in the middle like revolving batteries. She was directly in the wake of a fat woman, who turned the stream of travel one side, and left a quiet little path for her small follower.

Presently the little woman stopped. She had come to a yard, filled with trees and flowers, around an old-fashioned brick house. The flowers were old-fashioned, too, but they were all of the sweetest, and over them the cherry boughs were like one great white bouquet. The little woman forgot to hold the apron under her chin, and it slid down to the sidewalk. She took her doll from under her arm, and held her close to the fence that she might see too, and smell the blossoms, and hear the fine, clear piping of the bees at work among them. There was a wonderful bird flashing about the trees like a great golden blossom. The bird seemed always just about to launch into a song, but was so busy he broke off at the first syllable. A man came across the lawn with a wheelbarrow, in which was a green shrub. He dug a hole into the turf, and began to plant the bush; but he saw the eager little face, and the dolly with her woolen

brains oozing out behind. He nodded goodnaturedly. "Where are you going, sis?" "Anywhere," said the little woman. "What are you looking at?" "God's flowers," was the grave answer. The man laughed again and pushed up his hat. "Them's the Gov'nor's flowers; want some?" The little woman only nodded, but her eyes grew large and round with wonder and expectancy as the man broke a white bough from the cherry-tree, and a purple spike of hyacinth bells. He put them in her hand, saying, "Now run home, or that there young lady will be took up by the p'lice; looks like she'd had a row." The little woman had neither eyes nor ears for anything but the flowers. The man went back to his work, and she went slowly on. One block, two blocks, six blocks, then she came to a little triangular park at the intersection of the streets—a very small park, with only grass and a few trees in it, and an iron drinking fountain for horses just outside the fence. Two dusty horses were drinking from the round iron bowl, and a dog was eagerly lapping the slender stream that spilled over upon the stones below. The little woman went into the park and sat down under a tree. She was just beginning to be afraid she was lost, but she could not be very unhappy while she had her flowers. She sat very still looking at them, and to her great delight a brown bee came sniffing at the white cups for an instant as he passed. Stretched on the grass near was a boy—a big boy; the little woman would have called him a man. He had red hands and a sunburned face, and coarse, clumsy clothes. You would not have looked twice at him, but the little woman looked and looked, and saw he was crying. She looked again and then crept a little nearer, holding her doll very tight. "Does you want some of God's flowers?" she asked holding the sweet things toward him. The boy took them eagerly—took them all; but just as the little woman was going to cry he gave them back to her, so she broke off a piece of the cherry bough and one little stemless hyacinth, and gave them to him. The boy had but lately come to the city. He was hungry, he was friendless, he was utterly discouraged, he had taken the first step downward. But when he smelt the familiar scent of cherry blossoms, and saw the pure, pitiful eyes of the little woman looking at him, it brought back the homely brown house among the hills, and the little sisters who believed in him and trusted him. "I'll try one day more," he said resolutely, "and if I can't get work, I'll go home; I won't stay here and go to the bad." Surely they were 'God's flowers' which the little woman had given him. She sat quietly under the tree, talking sometimes to her doll, and counting the hyacinth bells over and over. She knew now she was lost, but was not really frightened. She felt sure some one would come by-and-by and find her. The market-house clock began to strike twelve. With the first stroke a babel of sounds broke in. Steam-whistles in every key, bells that clanged slowly, bells that rang wildly, clocks striking from a dozen steeples, and through them all the slow deep boom of the market clock. The street was full of hurrying people, going home to dinner. Clattering over the pavement came an empty express wagon; the driver hesitated, then turned up to the brimming water basin, and let the big gray horse plunge his nose in the cool water. A flock of brown sparrows were taking shower-baths in the overflow; and as the driver waited, his eyes followed them with amusement from the water to the branches where they dried their feathers. What was that under the tree? A child lying asleep on the grass? "Looks like my little woman," said the driver, jumping over the fence, and coming up to the tree in three strides. "Sure's you live it's herself," he said, as he picked the little sleeper up in his arms. He stooped again for the doll, and thrust it head first into his pocket; but the little hand clung to the flowers even in sleep. The big horse whisked them away, but with the jolting of the wagon the blue eyes opened. "What ye s'pose mother'll say?" asked the driver, pressing the soft cheek against his rough coat. "Where was ye goin', anyhow?" "Just went a-walkin'," said the little woman, "and I could't go back cause the house got lost." When the terrified mother had assured herself that her darling was safe and sound, when the little woman was eagerly crowding her withered flowers into her tin cup, the father looked up from his dinner to say: "Curious how I happened to drive by the park to-day; haven't been that way in a week." "Tis His hand that leadeth me," sang the little woman over her flowers. The father looked at the mother and nodded. "Might be," he said thoughtfully. —Emily Huntington Miller.