

Family Reading.

The following stanzas by R. L. (now Judge) Wetherbe, were recalled and read at the recent Acadia College Alumni Dinner. They appeared in the Christian Messenger in 1858.

Farewell to Acadia.

[For Graduating Class of 1858]

Four my years my brothers!—O how strangely swift their days Have one by one gone down the winding ways Of the dread past. Those days are all with thee Great God— Those sinful days. O Father spare thy rod. Four years into Eternity—we marked them sink; And standing now upon the brink Of the broad future, let us breathe a sad good-bye, And then go forth to dare and do and die. Farewell our MOTHER, fare thee well, we feel this word That, parting here, the lips can scarce be heard. Good-bye, my Mother, and my Brothers, We must go; But going, linger oft with footstep slow. What though the years are rolling from beneath our feet Why sad, that we no more on earth may meet, Since through our Christ, who bled and died upon the tree, Our band shall yet again united be. The birds are warbling forth a farewell on the hill, I would their voices for an hour were still; For as I go, it pains my heart that I must hear Their mournful echoes die upon the ear. The boat is off—the sails are filling with the breeze And I—if I but turn, my blood shall freeze; But I must turn—one long and lingering farewell gaze A sigh—a tear, for dear departed days. R. L. W. Acadia College, June 4th, 1858.

New Select Serial.

KATHLEEN.

THE STORY OF A HOME.

BY AGNES GIBBERNE.

CHAPTER VII.

A THUNDER-CLOUD.

“Miss Leena, can you stay a few minutes while I go down stairs?” asked Hardwicke. Kathleen consented and sat down. Mrs. Joliffe gave her a smile, but seemed disinclined to talk. Hardly two minutes passed before Mr. Joliffe walked in. Kathleen immediately knew that something had occurred to distress him. He was flushed and agitated, and his hands shook as if he had the palsy. Mrs. Joliffe too saw, and was at once aroused from her half-sleeping state. “What is the matter, Albert?” she asked. Kathleen tried to warn him by look and sign, and even said, “Papa, please come with me for one minute,” making a movement towards the door. But Mrs. Joliffe’s hand checked her, and Mr. Joliffe neither perceived nor heard. He sat down in helpless fashion near the foot of the bed. “I am utterly bewildered,” he said. “It is enough to knock a man down. Mr. Harding has been here, making the gravest complaints of Cleve. What have we all been about? The boy has gone wrong for months.” “Cleve!” “No other word escaped Mrs. Joliffe. She lay breathing quickly but otherwise calm. Her first thought was always of her husband. “O papa, you should not—mamma ought not to be worried,” broke out poor Kathleen, too late. “Hush, Leena! I must hear everything,” said Mrs. Joliffe, with the composure of strong self-repression. “What did Mr. Harding say?” “My dear, I hardly know how to tell you. I could not have believed it. He has found out Cleve in a perfect tissue of deceit, taking in him and us right and left, making friends with some of the worst boys in the town, breaking rules, going out of bounds. It is terrible! Mr. Harding seems grieved beyond expression—perplexed too. He says he really does not know whether to look upon the boy as consummately artful, or as a mere dupe of designing companions. I told him at first that I could not believe it—would not—and he gave me proofs. It appears

that he found out Cleve months ago, in a comparatively small matter, but the boy seemed so penitent that he quite hoped nothing of the kind would occur again. He was wrong to hide it from us, and I told him so. He said he felt now that he had made a mistake, but Cleve entreated so passionately that we might not hear, and promised so earnestly not to transgress again, as quite to over-persuade him. Cleve! Why, I have always counted our boy the very soul of honour—never dreamt of doubting him. Mr. Joliffe covered his face, and fairly groaned. “You could have knocked me down with a straw while he was speaking.” Kathleen’s hand came on her father’s. “Papa, don’t,” she whispered. “Mamma will be ill.” Mr. Joliffe stood up slowly, and came round to the side of the bed, where his wife lay, pale and stricken, yet trying to smile, lest she should add to his distress. “My dear don’t think too much of it,” he said, with a feeble attempt at encouragement. Cleve is very young still—and perhaps by-and-by—if we can keep him out of the way of his companions—but that is the difficulty. Mr. Harding strongly advises that I should remove him at once from the school, and send him to a distance, away from his present temptations—” “Not out of Rockston,” broke from Mrs. Joliffe. “Not yet!” “I was afraid you would not like the thought, and I told Mr. Harding so. He said it was the safest plan by far—but if you could not bear the parting, the only alternative was to overlook him strictly. He recommended strongly a change of some sort—perhaps a private tutor for a time. We must think it over, and you shall decide. I must speak to Cleve. Mr. Harding has done so already this morning, and he said Cleve cried bitterly, so he did last time. It is not systematic deceit—I can’t believe that of our boy. He is easily influenced, and has been led astray, and we must guard against the same influences in the future. But don’t worry yourself too much, Katie. If only we had known sooner—had been more observant—poor boy—” Mr. Joliffe was making the matter worse, stumbling and choking tearfully over his attempts at consolation, and wearing a look of extreme dejection. Mrs. Joliffe lifted her eyes, with a pitiful smile on her white lips, and said— “Don’t, Albert!” “Poor dear boy! and we have always hoped so much from him. I could not have believed—have thought—I have such a horror of these first downward steps—it must be checked, at any cost—but if we can safely keep him with us still—” “Papa, please leave the room,” said Kathleen, in a low voice. “Don’t say another word. Please leave me alone with mamma.” Mr. Joliffe was not easily dislodged. He tried to console his wife anew, went to the door and came back to the bed, nearly ended in tears afresh, attempted to discuss the matter with his daughter, wanted to know then and there what steps he ought to take, and was at length almost pulled from the room by Kathleen. She saw him to the end of the passage, made him promise not to return, and rushed back to her mother. “Mamma, dearest, don’t think too much of it. Please don’t. Things may not be so bad as Mr. Harding fancies. Cleve is so loving—so fond of us all. I am sure we can do a great deal with him. It is only that he is easily led.” But the strain of self-command had been too great, and the return wave overflowed all barriers. Mrs. Joliffe knew better than Kathleen the meaning of that “only.” She raised herself in the bed, sobbing with straightened breath. “O Cleve—Cleve, I cannot bear the thought. O Cleve, my own—my only boy—if I could but live, for your sake! Who will watch over him when I am gone?” The words fell with a dull thud upon Kathleen’s heart, and a sharp pain shot through her head. “Mamma!” she said huskily, and then she sat quite still. Mrs. Joliffe was weeping intensely, her boy’s name breaking now and then through the sobs, but Kathleen could make no effort to bring comfort. Every faculty seemed frozen. She felt as if all the world had suddenly

grown dark around her. But after a while, it occurred to her that this passionate weeping might not continue unchecked, and she stood up, in mechanical fashion, to pull the bell. Hardwicke, coming hurriedly in response, found them thus; Mrs. Joliffe overpowered by an anguish of sobs, Kathleen ashen-white and trembling. “Sit down, Miss Leena,” Hardwicke said, and Kathleen obeyed. She was dimly aware that after some time the sounds of distress lessened. Hardwicke came to her side. “Miss Leena, are you faint?” “No,” Kathleen said huskily, “I don’t think so.” “You have been too long in this room. Do go into the garden, Miss Leena, and get a little fresh air. Dr. Ritchie will come presently, and I think your mamma will do now.” In a lower voice she asked, “What was it made her cry?” Kathleen had a bewildered look for a moment. “It was—it was—something papa said,” she answered, recalling the fact with difficulty. Hardwicke asked no further and she made her way downstairs, though not to go into the garden. That suggestion was forgotten as soon as heard. Her mind had grasped only one fact,—that Dr. Ritchie would shortly come. He could tell all—could explain the meaning of her mother’s terrible words. She had forgotten about Cleve’s misdemeanours, and the very existence of Joan had passed out of her memory. One thought alone weighed upon her in like a black pall, shutting out all lesser considerations. Nobody was in the dining-room. Kathleen stationed herself at the window, and waited there, half-concealed by the curtain. She did not definitely think or look forward, and to pray was not possible. Her whole being seemed concentrated into an intense longing for Dr. Ritchie’s arrival. Half-an-hour passed, and Dr. Ritchie’s carriage dashed up. He mounted the front steps, and Kathleen went slowly out to meet him in the hall. She took his hand without speaking, and led him into the dining-room, shutting the door. Dr. Ritchie said nothing. He stood quietly, Kathleen’s little cold hand still in his, and his kind eyes bent upon her with unspeakable pity. She asked him no questions, but her wide-open eyes searched his face, and the shadow in them deepened. “What has happened, Kathleen?” he asked at length. “Mamma—” She could say no more, and he did not press her. After a minute she spoke again. “Papa has had a bad report of Cleve from Mr. Harding, and he came and told all to mamma. I could not stop him. It upset her very much.” “I am sorry for that. I must give Mr. Joliffe a warning for the future.” “Hardwicke is with her. I am afraid it has done her harm. She loves Cleve so much—I think it would break her heart if he went really wrong—” “Shall I see her now?” “Wait please—” He knew she had another question to put. “Dr. Ritchie—” and again a pause. “Mamma—said—” “Yes.” Kathleen’s face quivered intensely. “I can’t,” she whispered; “I can’t say the words. Is it true?” “Is what true?” “That—that—she—” Kathleen turned away in an agony, and went to the window. She could not face him,—could not stand any human look at that moment. To have to express her fear was like tearing open a deep wound. She thought him cruel not to answer her, while he hoped still that she might not know all. He believed that with Kathleen expectancy would be almost the worst part of the sorrow. She came back half-way to him once, only to turn again to the window. A second time she came and reached him, to stand with a look of dumb misery, as if awaiting her sentence. “Why don’t you speak?” she said after two or three seconds, in a tone of suffering. “Oh, why don’t you speak? It can’t be true?” “What did your mother say to you Kathleen?” “She said—said—about Cleve—when—when she was gone.”

The words went into a kind of sobbing wail, but Kathleen caught herself up and fiercely repressed the cry, pressing her clenched hands on her chest. “I want to know all please,” she said in an altered tone and quite calmly. “I must know all. Is mamma ill?” “Yes” he answered. “Has she been so long?” “It has been long coming on, but she has been worse lately.” “Will she ever be well again?” “I am afraid not.” She put both hands over her face, and stood with bowed head, in a crushed attitude. Dr. Ritchie’s eyes were full. The next question came almost inaudibly: “Dr. Ritchie—how long—” “I cannot tell you,” he said gently. “It may be much longer than any one would imagine. I have seen invalids live for years after all hope of actual recovery was over.” “This kind of illness?” “The same in a measure.” “Is it consumption?” “Yes, with complications.” “And nothing can be done?” “Yes—you can do much. Every thing depends upon sparing her fatigue and anxiety.” Dr. Ritchie placed Kathleen in the large easy-chair and she submitted in a kind of powerless way, her head sinking down upon one of the broad arms. “I will see your mother, and be back presently,” he said and left her. Kathleen did not know how long he was gone. It might have been minutes,—it might have been hours. She was in no haste to see him or any one again. Her only distinct feeling was of utter weariness,—her only distinct wish to lie down and be alone. A sound of voices presently roused her and she sat up slowly, to find Dr. Ritchie holding her wrist. “Drink this, Kathleen.” “I am not ill,” Kathleen said; but she obeyed, and then said, “I must go to mamma.” “Not now, Miss Leena,” said Hardwicke, standing by with jacket and hat. “She is better, and it would frighten her to see you looking so white.” “Hardwicke will do all that is necessary for the present,” said Dr. Ritchie. “I told your mother that I should take you for a drive.” “Oh no—I would rather not, please.” Dr. Ritchie disregarded the protest. He stood waiting, and she submitted to having her jacket put on. “But you are busy,” she said, looking in a dazed way at him. “I have a country patient at some distance to see, so it will not be lost time.” Kathleen made no further effort at resistance. Dr. Ritchie placed her in the front seat beside himself, sent the boy into the back seat, and set off at a brisk pace through Rockston and country lanes following. No remarks were made, and he was content for a while that fresh air and change of scene should do their work alone. By the time his destination was reached, he was glad to see the tension of the young face a degree less than it had been. He drew up at the front door of a large house, within a garden. “Will you mind waiting here a few minutes, Kathleen? I shall not keep you long I hope.” “I don’t mind how long,” she said, and the Doctor disappeared, while the boy went to the horses’ heads. The sudden lull after rapid motion had something about it soothing to the senses. A kind of dizzy sleepiness crept over Kathleen. Her thoughts were awake, but she had not full control over them. It was very still, a grey November day, not cold, yet with a certain chill in the air. Few leaves hung upon the branches of the elms around, and those few dropped motionless, as if lacking energy to rustle. Kathleen had something of the same want. A nightmare sense of weight was upon her, a black shadow seeming to cut her off for evermore from the happy childhood and pleasant girlhood of the past. But presently, while she sat there, white and drooping as any lily under the oppression of her new sorrow, there came a light into the darkness. She did not know how or why it came. Analysis of the gleam was not needed, was not possible. It did not come, as such gleams sometimes do, in the form of Bible-words whispered to the heart.

There were no words; there was no distinct message. Only through the black pall which shrouded her, there crept a calm and soft pervading sense that God loved her, that a Father’s arm was around her, that all would be well. This was definite enough without words. It was the feeling of safety which a little bird has, creeping after terror under the parent’s wing. It was the feeling of comfort which a little child has, lying after a fall in its mother’s arms. No effort of Kathleen’s own had brought the gleam, for she had had no power to make effort. There are times when the suffering child cannot even lift its eyes in appeal for help, yet the mother’s cool hand will none the less be laid on the little one’s aching head. Just such a tender and loving touch had come to still the throbbing pain of Kathleen’s heart, at a moment when most needed. For with her mother she would lose all she had most loved, most clung to, most leant upon in life. The more need for a Heavenly stay and comforter. Dr. Ritchie’s absence was longer than he had intended it to be, but when he came out he knew that the interval had not been lost time for Kathleen. Tears were stealing quietly down her cheeks, and the look of hopeless misery was gone. “Are you tired of waiting?” he asked as he took the reins. “Oh no—I liked it—” she said. “I had a little talk with your mother about Cleve,” he remarked presently. “She seems to think a private tutor in Rockston may be the wisest plan, and I suggested to her that Mr. Corrie might be the man.” “Mr. Corrie? He is—” “I think he would like the work. He is acting as assistant to Dr. Baring but not as full curate, and I believe he has had the idea of finding two or three pupils. Your mother seemed relieved at the idea.” “Dr. Ritchie, do you think she knows—” Kathleen faltered and paused. “About her own state of health? Yes. About what she said to you? No I think not. I am afraid it will distress her to find that she has put you to so much pain.” “I will take care,” said Kathleen. “I will take great care. And you, think that if—if she has not worries, it may make a difference?” “It will make all the difference. Kathleen, can you let her see you happy still?” She looked up at him mournfully, and he said, “I am very sorry the knowledge has come to you so soon. But now that you do know, you must be brave and strong under the knowledge. If you are constantly dwelling on what may happen by-and-by, you will wear yourself out, and that will react upon her. You have a definite aim, to spare her in every possible way. Keep that before you, and take each day as it comes, but don’t look forward. The future is in God’s hands. Try to leave it there.” “Yes, only it seems so dreadful to know what must come.” “You do not know. Things may go on much longer than I or any one would naturally expect. Doctors are not prophets, Kathleen. Sometimes people in good health are called away and sickly ones are spared. I cannot give you hopes of final recovery, but the rest of the matter is and must be so. You and I cannot look forward a single day. How do I know that my wife and children will be living this day week? Should I be wise or right to dwell upon that uncertainty, and to let it paralyze my energies and darken my life?” “Oh no” she said, drawing a long breath. “I will try—I will try not to look forward.” He left his words to work, and said no more until Rocklands was reached. Then there was only a kind hand-shake on his part and on hers a low, “Thank you.” She watched him drive away, and went slowly into the house with shadows around her still, only she was no longer crushed beneath them. Passing through the hall a remembrance of Joan flashed into her mind. Poor Joan—forgotten all this while! Kathleen’s heart smote her. She went first to her mother’s room and found her sleeping. Then she hastened to Joan.

“You have been gone a time! I thought you were coming back soon!” was the greeting she received. “I am so sorry Joan. How are you now?” “Just the same.” “Joan, dear, I am very much vexed with myself,” said Kathleen gently. “I meant to ask Dr. Ritchie to see you, but—” “Has he been?” “Yes, and I intended to speak about you but other things came up— Kathleen’s lips were quivering over the words, “and I quite forgot.” Joan’s self-importance was wounded. She did not know the reason and Kathleen could not tell her. “Oh very well,” she said in an offended tone. “It shows how much you care!” “I am very sorry, Joan, I would send word after him, only he is so busy, and he has been here twice to-day.” “Of course—I quite understand,” said Joan curtly. “Where have you been all this time?” “Dr. Ritchie took me for a drive, to a patient’s house and back,” faltered Kathleen. “Oh yes, I see! It wasn’t likely you would think of me when you were enjoying yourself. Of course I know I am nothing to you,” said Joan, in a choked voice. Kathleen could not trust herself to speak! She tried to put Joan’s pillow straight. “Just leave me alone please, said Joan sharply. “And mind, Kathleen, I am not going to see Dr. Ritchie tomorrow.” “I think you ought,” said Kathleen. “I shall not. So it’s no use your speaking to him!” “But Joan he will expect—” “I don’t care what he expects, or you either. I won’t see him. You needn’t stay there, fidgeting. I am going to get up now.” Kathleen could stand no more. She went away, with averted face, straight to her own room. There she locked the door, and knelt down beside her bed, in a dumb appeal for help. Only dumb at first. Words would not come, and the sobs which sought for utterance could not be allowed. But presently there was again a breath of comfort, with the sense of an upholding Hand. Let what would happen, she could not be alone. She thought of Mr. Corrie’s words—“suppose the storm does come, and the bolt does fall. . . . The child will be borne through . . . always, yes, always.” “He did not know how near it was, and oh, I did not,” moaned poor little Kathleen. But God her father had known. Kathleen stayed her troubled heart there. Push. If there was more push in the world there would be fewer hungry, half-clothed, homeless, suffering children, fewer broken down, disappointed men and women; less need of almshouses, houses of correction, and homes for the friendless. Push means a lift for a neighbor in trouble. Push means a lift for yourself out of the slough of despond and shiftlessness, out of troubles, real or fancied. Push never hurts anybody. The harder the push the better, if it is given in the right direction. Always push up hill—few people need a push to get down hill. Don’t be afraid of your muscles and sinews; they were given you to use. Don’t be afraid of your hands; they were meant for service. Don’t be afraid of what your companions may say; don’t be afraid of your conscience; it will never reproach you for a good deed done—but push with all your heart, might and soul, whenever you see anything or anybody that will be better for a good, long, strong, determined push. Push! It is just the word for the grand, clear morning of life; it is just the word for the strong arms and young hearts; it is just the word for a world that is full of work as this is. If anybody is in any trouble, and you see it, don’t stand back; push! If there is anything good being done in any place where you happen to be, push! Small courtesies are often like the drops of oil poured upon an engine in motion, making our complicated social machine work smoothly and peaceably