Family Reading.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Home Missionary Hymn.

BY THE REV. J. CLARK, NICTAUX.

Eternal God! before whose throne
The angels bow with sacred awe:
Thy Son hath made Thy nature known;
And magnified Thy righteous law.

These hearts of ours adore Thy grace,
These lips proclaim Thy lofty praise;
With one accord we seek Thy face,
And grateful Ebenezers raise.

The cause for which our fathers wrought
Is dear to us, and dear to Thee,
In all things they Thy glory sought,
And we like them would faithful be.

For work performed, for help bestowed,
For souls redeemed, what thanks are due!
Lord! make each church Thine own abode,
And every member staunch and true.

To send Thy truth through all the land,
Give men and means, O Lord! we pray;
And may we see, on every hand,
Thy kingdom grow from day to day.

Go forth with power; let young and old
Thy triumphs sing, Thy glory see;
And crown with blessings manifold
The work Thy children do for Thee.

New Select Serial.

MISTRESS MARGERY:

A TALE OF THE LOLLARDS.

BY EMILY SARAH HOLT,

Author of "Sister Rose," "Ashcliffe Hall," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN LONDON.

"When we cam' in by Glasgow toun,
We were a comely sicht to see,—
My luve was clad in velvet black
And I mysel' in cramoisie."
—*Old Ballad.*

A fortnight after the events recorded in the last chapter, Lovell Tower was in the confusion of great preparations for the approaching wedding. Friar Andrew was despatched to York fair to purchase twenty yards of scarlet cloth, fourteen yards of tawny satin, eight of purple satin, and the same number of blue cloth of silver, with jewels and rich furs. All was cutting-out and fitting-on, with discussions about trimmings, quintises, and head-dresses. Richard Pynson was sent hither and thither on errands. Sir Geoffrey himself superintended the purchase of a new pillion, and ordered it to be covered with green velvet. Lord Marnell, who did not often come to Lovell Tower himself, sent over a trusty messenger ever day to inquire if Mistress Margery had rested well and was merry. From the latter condition she was very far. At length the preparations were completed; and on a very splendid summer day, when the birds were singing their most joyous melodies, Margery Lovell was married, in Bostock Church, to Sir Ralph Marnell of Lymington, Knight of the Garter. The bride was attired in blue cloth of silver, trimmed with miniver; and her hair, as was then the custom at weddings, was not confined by any head-dress, but flowed down her back, long and straight. The bridegroom was dressed in cramoise — crimson velvet—richly trimmed with bullion, and wore three long waving plumes in his cap, as well as a streamer of gold lacee. If any one who may read these pages should inquire why Margery chose blue for her wedding-dress, I may answer that Margery would have been greatly astonished if any one had recommended white. White at this period was not only a mourning colour, but mourning of the very deepest character.

No pains were spared to make this a merry wedding, and yet it certainly could not be called a joyous one. All the inhabitants of Lovell Tower knew well that the bride was very far from happy; Sir Geoffrey and Dame Lovell were naturally sorry to lose their only child; Friar Andrew mourned over his favourite and his kettle of furmety; while Richard Pynson had his own private sorrow, to which I need not allude further in this place.

The bridal feast was held at Lovell Tower, and all the neighbours were invited to it. The festivities were prolonged to a late hour; and at five o'clock next morning everybody was busy helping the bride to pack up. Everybody thought of everything so well, that there was very little left for her to think of; but she did think of one thing. When Margery set out for her new home in London, the book went too.

The journey to London from the North was in those days a long and wearisome one. There were no vehicles but litters and waggons. Margery travelled part of the way in a litter, and part on a pillion behind her bridegroom, who rode on horseback the whole way. He had with him a regular army of retainers, besides sundry maidens for the Lady Marnell, at the head of whom was Alice Jordan, the unlucky girl who, at our first visit to Lovell Tower, was reprimanded for leaving out the onions in the blanch-porre. Margery had persuaded her mother to resign to her for a personal attendant this often clumsy and forgetful, but really well-meaning girl. It was a Friday evening when they arrived in London; and Margery was much too tired to think of doing anything but rest her wearied head in sleep.

As early as four o'clock the next morning, she was roused by London cries from a happy dream of Lovell Tower. 'Quinces! sweet quinces! ripe quinces!' 'Any kitchen-stuff, have you, maids?' 'Cakes and ale! cakes and ale!' 'Cherry ripe! cherry ripe!' 'Come buy, pretty maids, come buy! with an undercurrent of the long rhymed cry of the hawker of haberdashery, of which Shakespeare has given us a specimen, as regards the English version—

"Lawn, as white as driven snow;
Cyprus, black as e're was crow," &c.

Margery lay still, and listened in silence to all these new sounds. At length she rose and dressed herself, with the assistance of Alice, who was seriously dissatisfied with the narrow streets and queer smells of the town, and spared no comment on these points while assisting her young mistress at her toilette. Having dressed, Margery passed into an antechamber, close to her bedroom, where breakfast was served. This repast consisted of a pitcher of new milk, another pitcher of wine, a dish of poached eggs, a tremendous bunch of water-cress, a large loaf of bread, and marchpanes—a sweet cake not unlike the modern macaroon. Breakfast over, Margery put on her hood, and taking Alice with her, she sallied forth on an expedition to examine the neighbourhood of her new home. One of Lord Marnell's men-servants followed at a short distance, wearing a rapier, to defend his mistress in case of any assault being made upon her.

Lord Marnell's house was very near the country, and in a quiet and secluded position, being pleasantly situated in Fleet Street. Green fields lay between the two cities of London and Westminster. There was only one bridge across the river, that silver Thames, which ran, so clear and limpid, through the undulating meadows; and the bridge was entirely built over, a covered way passing under the houses for wheeled vehicles. Far to the right rose the magnificent Palace of Westminster, a relic of the saxon kings; and behind it the grand old Abbey, and the strong, frowning Sanctuary while to the left glittered the walls and turrets of the White Tower, the town residence of royalty. Margery however, could not see the whole of this as she stepped out of her house. What first met her eyes were the more detailed and less pleasant features of the scene. There were no causeways; the streets, as a rule, would just allow of the progress of one vehicle, though a few of the principal ones would permit the passage of two: and the pavements consisted of huge stones, not remarkable either for evenness or smoothness. A channel ran down the middle of the street, into which every housewife emptied her slops from the window, and along which dirty water, sewerage, straw, drowned rats, and mud, floated in profuse and odoriferous *melee*. Margery found it desirable to make considerable use of her pomander, a ball of various mixed drugs inclosed in a gold network, and emitting a pleasant fragrance when carried in the warm hand. As she proceeded along the streets which were lined with shops, the incessant cry of the shopkeepers standing at their doors, 'What do you lack? what do you lack?' greeted her on every side. The vehicles were of two classes, as I have before observed—waggons and litters, the litters being the carriages of the fourteenth century; but the waggons were by far the most numerous. Occasionally, a lady of rank would ride past in her litter, drawn by horses whose trappings swept the ground; or a knight, followed by a crowd of retainers, would prance by on his high-mettled charger. Margery spent the happiest day which she had passed since her marriage, in wandering about London, and satisfying her girlish curiosity concerning every place of which she had ever heard.

Lord Marnell frowned when Margery confessed, on her return, that she had been out to see London. It was not fit, he said, that she should go out on foot: ladies of rank were not expected to walk; she ought to have ordered out her litter, with a due attendance of retainers.

'But, my lord,' said Margery very naturally, 'an't please you, I could not see so well in a litter.'

Lord Marnell's displeased lips relaxed into a laugh, for he was amused at her simplicity; but he repeated that he begged she would remember, now that she *had* seen, that she was no longer plain Mistress Margery Lovell, but Baroness Marnell of Lymington, and would behave accordingly. Margery sighed at this curtailment of her liberty, and withdrew to see where Alice was putting her dresses.

As it was approaching evening Lord Marnell's voice called her down-stairs.

'If thou wilt see a sight, Madge,' he said, good-naturedly, as she entered, 'come quickly, and one will gladden thine eyes which never sawest thou before. The King rideth presently from the Savoy to the Tower.'

Margery ran to the window, and saw a number of horses, decked, as well as their riders, in all the colours of the rainbow, coming up the street, from the stately Savoy Palace, which stood, surrounded by green fields, in what is now the Strand.

'Which is the King's Grace, I pray you?' asked she eagerly.

'He weareth a plain black hood and a red gown,' answered her husband. 'He rideth a white horse, and hath a scarlet footcloth, all powdered over with ostrich feathers in gold.'

'What!' said Margery, in surprise, 'that little, fair, goodly man, with the golden frontlet to his horse?'

'The very same,' said Lord Marnell. 'The tall, comely man who rideth behind him, on yon brown horse, and who hath eyes like to an eagle, is the Duke of Lancaster. 'John of Gaunt,' the folk call him, by reason that he was born at Ghent, in Flanders.'

'And who be the rest, if I weary you not with asking?' said Margery rather timidly.

'In no wise,' answered he. 'Mostly lords and noble gentlemen, of whom thou mayest perchance have heard. The Earl of Surrey is he in the green coat, with a red plume. The Earl of Northumberland hath a blue coat, broidered with gold, and a footcloth of the same. Yon dark, proud-looking man in scarlet, on the roan horse, is the Duke of Exeter,* brother to the King's Grace by my Lady Princess his mother who was wed afore she wedded the Prince, whose soul God rest! Ah! and here cometh my Lord of Hereford, Harry of Bolingbroke,† the Duke of Lancaster's only son and heir—and a son and heir who were worse than none, if report tell truth,' added Lord Marnell in a lower tone. 'Seest thou, Madge, yon passing tall man, with black hair, arrayed in pink cloth of silver?'‡

'I see him well, I thank your good Lordship, was Margery's answer; but she suddenly shivered as she spoke.

'Art thou cold, Madge, by the casement? Shall I close the lattice?'

'I am not cold, good my Lord, I thank you,' said Margery in a different tone; 'but I like not to look upon that man.'

'Why so?' asked Lord Marnell, looking down from his altitude upon the slight frail figure at his side. 'Is he not a noble man and a goodly?'

'I know not,' answered Margery, still in a troubled voice. 'There is a thing in his face for which I find not words, but it troubleth me.'

'Look not on him, then,' said he, drawing her away. She thanked him for his kindness in showing and explaining the glittering scene to her, and returned to her supervision of Alice.

A few days after this, the Prioress of Kennington, Lord Marnell's sister, came in her litter to see her young sister-in-law. Margery was surprised to find in her a lady so little resembling her country-formed idea of a nun. She wore indeed, the costume of her order; but her dress, instead of being common serge or camlet, was black velvet; her frontlet and barb‖ were elaborately embroidered; her long gloves§ were of white Spanish leather, delicately perfumed, and adorned with needle-work in coloured silks; she wore nearly as many rings as would have stocked a small jeweller's shop, and from her girdle, set with the finest gems, were suspended a pomander, richly worked in gold and enamel, a large silver seal, and a rosary, made of amethyst beads, holding a crucifix, the materials of which were alabaster and gold.

In those palmy days of Romanism in England, nuns were by no means so strictly secluded as now. They were present at all manner of festivities; the higher class travelled about the country very much as they chose, and all of them, while retaining the peculiar shape and colours of the prescribed monastic costume, contrived to spend a fortune on the accessories and details of their dress. The Prioress of Kennington, as I have just described her, is a specimen of nearly all the prioressess and other conventual authorities of her day.

This handsomely-dressed lady was stiff and stately in her manner, and uttered, with the proudest mien, words expressive only of the most abject humility. 'If her fair sister would come and see her at her poor house at Kennington, she would be right glad of so great honour.' Margery replied courteously, but she had no desire to see much of the Prioress.

Lord Marnell took his wife to Court, and presented her to the King—the Queen was dead—and the Duchess of Gloucester,¶ his aunt. The King spoke to Margery very kindly, and won her good opinion by so doing. The duchess honoured her with a haughty stare, and then 'supposed she came from the North?' in a tone which indicated that she considered her a variety of savage. The ladies in waiting examined and questioned her with more curiosity than civility; and Margery's visit to Court left upon her mind, with the single exception of King Richard's kindness, a most unpleasant impression.

In the winter of 1396, King Richard brought home a new queen, the Princess Isabelle of France, who had attained the mature age of eight years. Margery watched the little Queen make her entrance into London. She was decked out with jewels, of which she brought a great quantity over with her, and fresh ones were presented to her at every place where she halted. Alice, with round eyes, declared that 'the Queen's Grace's jewels must be worth a King's ransom—and would not your good Ladyship wish to have the like?'

Margery shook her head.

'The only jewels that be worth having, good Alice,' said she, 'be gems of the heart, such like as meekness, obedience and charity. And in truth, if I were the chooser, there be many things that I would have afore jewels. But much good do they the Queen's Grace, poor child! and I pray God she rest not content with gauds of this earth.'

Before that winter was over, one thing, worth more than the Queen's jewels in her eyes, was bestowed upon Margery. Something to take care of—something to love and live for. A little golden-haired baby, which became, so far as anything in this world could become so, the light and joy of her heart and soul.

Margery soon learned to value at its true worth the show and tinsel of London life. She never appeared again at Court but once, to pay her respects to the new Queen, who received her very cordially, seated on a throne by her husband. The small Queen of eight 'hoped she was quite well, and thought that England was a very fine country.' The king spoke to her as kindly as before, offered her ipocras* and spices, and on the close of the interview, took up his little Queen in his arms, and carried her out of the room. Margery had, indeed, no opportunity to visit the Court again; for the young Queen was educated at Windsor and very rarely visited London. And Lady Marnell, tired of the hollow glitter of high life, and finding few or none in her own sphere with whom she could complacently associate, went back with fresh zest to her baby and the book.

*Sir John Holland. †Afterwards Henry IV. ‡These descriptions are taken from the invaluable illlustrations in Creton's *Historie du Roy Richart Deux*, Harl. MS. 1319. Creton was a contemporary and personal friend of King Richard.

‖The frontlet and barb were pieces of white linen, the former worn over the forehead, and the latter over the chin.

§Gloves were just becoming fashionable in the fourteenth century for common wear. Before that they were rarely used except when the wearer carried a falcon on the wrist.

¶Elenor Bohun.

*A sweet wine or liqueur, generally served at the "void."

Resisting Temptation.

BY MRS. S. M. READ.

'O Mother, Richard has an invitation to go home with Charles Marble, and stay six weeks. Isn't it splendid? Charles says they will go fishing and hunting, and it will be just like a picnic six weeks long instead of a day. One day in the country does him so much good, I feel sure that so long a time will make him quite strong, like the other boys.'

Then followed an earnest talk between Hattie Seaver and her mother in regard to ways and means.

Life's burdens rested heavily upon this family, but there was so much mutual love that they hardly seemed to realize it. They all seemed to be ever thinking of ways by which they could help one another. The mother said that she went out so little she could do without a new bonnet and shawl that she had been thinking of getting, and Hattie would make over for herself an old black silk that had been her grandmother's, and give the money which she had been saving for a new suit.

Alfred, a boy of seven, would give a dollar which he had earned by running of errands; and little Mary, who was not quite five, hearing the talk, and judging that there was some plan for self-denial going on, put up her little foot towards her mother, with her stocking showing through the toes of her worn shoes, and said, in her sweet way, 'I can do without any new shoes.'

When Richard came in and was told that he had better accept the kind invitation of his friend, it was some time before he could decide to do so. The hope of gaining strength and being able to do more for the dear ones in the future, at length prevailed.

In a new suit of well-fitting clothes Richard stepped aboard the cars with his friend, the morning after the close of the summer term of school. At the close of the day he was nearly two hundred miles away from his home in the great city, waiting at a small station for the carriage that soon would be there to take them to Mr. Marble's, for they were expected. They had not long to wait. It was a beautiful day in June, and the journey all the way was delightful. Richard was hardly conscious of feeling weary at all, and, had he been so, the kind welcome which he received from the father and mother of Charles would have driven such feelings all away.

Richard was a member of a church, and when his pastor knew he was going away, he said:

'Now, Richard, don't leave your religion behind. Take some time every day to read in your Bible and pray. Your soul cannot prosper without proper food any more than your body. The Lord will keep you if you will let Him. He will not turn away from you unless you first turn away from Him.'

It was well for Richard that he had learned where to look for strength in the hour of temptation. There were many things to enjoy in this beautiful home, and there were also many strong temptations that it required a good deal of moral courage to resist.

Mr. Marble and his wife and daughter were church members, but they were very worldly Christians. There was no family altar; no blessing asked at table; home-made wine and cider were common beverages; they thought it no harm to play cards for amusement, and a little dancing in their parlor did not disturb the conscience of either of them.

Richard could not quite see through the sophistry of their arguments in favor of their acts. This, with the laugh of the hired men, nearly turned him from the right. He found himself questioning if he had not better conform a little to their ways while visiting them. Then he remembered what his pastor had said in a sermon: "Don't venture too near the edge of a precipice." If there was danger of these things leading to the brink of a precipice, he would let them alone; and he was sure there was danger, for there were many examples in proof of it.

Richard's consistent Christian life was the means of leading Charles to feel that there was a reality in religion, and he was led to seek for himself the Pearl of great price. A revival of great power followed, and it was a genuine revival. The new converts, and those who were reclaimed from a cold and back-slidden state, sought diligently to 'add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, goodliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness.' Surely brotherly kindness would not lay a stumbling-block in any one's way.

The Brown Towel.

'They must be very poor who have nothing to give,' said Mrs. Jarvis, as she deposited a pair of beautiful English blankets in a box that was being filled by the ladies of the church to be sent to the poor.

'And now, ladies, as you are nearly through, I would like to tell you an incident in my history; I was once very poor.'

'You once very poor?' said a lady.

'Yes; I was once *very poor*. There came to our village a missionary to deliver a lecture. I felt very desirous to go; but having no decent apparel to wear I was often deprived of going to church, although I was a member.

'I waited until it was late, and then slipped in and took a seat behind the door.

'I listened with streaming eyes to the missionary's account of the destitution and darkness in heathen lands. Poor as I was I felt it to be a great privilege to live in a Christian land and to be able to read the Bible.

'It was proposed by our pastor that the congregation should fill a box and send it out with the missionary on his return.

'Oh! thought I, how I would like to send something. When I returned home my poor children were still sleeping soundly and my disconsolate husband waiting my return, for he had been out of employment for some time. After he had gone to bed I went to looking over my clothes, but I could find nothing that was suitable that I could possibly spare; then I began looking over the children's things, but could find nothing that the poor dears could be deprived of; so I went to bed with a heavy heart, and lay a long time thinking of the destitution of the poor heathen, and how much better off I was.

'I got to thinking over my little stock again. There was nothing I could put into the box except one brown towel.

'Next day I got my towels, picked out the best one, and when it was almost dark, put on my bonnet, went to church, slipped my towel into the box, and came thinking that the Lord knew that I had done what I could.

'And now, ladies, let me tell you it was not long after that before my husband got into a good situation; and prosperity has followed us ever since. So I date back my prosperity to this incident of the brown towel.'

Her story was done and as the carriage was waiting at the door she took her departure, leaving us all mute with surprise that one so rich and generous had been trained to give amid poverty.—*Christian Woman.*