

Family Reading.

At Fourscore.

She sits in the gathering shadows,
By the porch where the roses blow,
And her thoughts are back in the summers
That vanished long ago;

As she sits there, under the roses,
She turns her dim old eyes
To the road that leads up the hillside
To the glory of sunset skies;

She fancies she hears them coming;
"Ah, here at last!" she cries,
And the light of a mother's welcome
Shines in her faded eyes.

She hears the merry voices
Of the dear ones that are dead;
She smooths out the shining tangles
That crown each little head;

So, while the night comes downward,
She sits with her children there,
Forgetting the years that took them
And the snowflakes in her hair.

Ere long she will go to the country
Where her dear ones watch and wait
For her, and I think of the meeting
There at the Jasper gate.

She will feel their welcoming kisses,
And the children's father will say,
As the household is gathered in heaven,
" We're all at home, to-day!"

—Eben E. Wrecford in Christ. Advocate.

New Select Serial.

MISTRESS MARGERY: A TALE OF THE LOLLARDS.

BY EMILY SARAH HOLT,
Author of "Sister Rose," "Ashcliffe Hall," etc.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

"All quick and troubled was his speech,
And his face was pale with dread,
And he said, 'The king had made a law,
That the book must not be read,—
For it was such fearful heresy,
The holy abbot said.'"

—MARY HOWITT.

Three years had passed since the events narrated in the last chapter, and Margery was now twenty-one years of age. She appeared older than she was, and her face wore an unnaturally pensive expression, which had been gradually settling itself there since the day of her marriage. She never laughed, and very rarely smiled, except when her eyes rested upon her little golden-haired Geoffrey, whom she had sought and obtained permission to name after her father. He was a bright, merry little fellow, perpetually in motion, and extremely fond of his mother, though he always shrank from and seemed to fear his father.

On a summer day in the year, 1399, Margery sat in her bower, or boudoir, perusing the book. Lord Marnell was, as usual, at Court; and little Geoffrey was running about his mother's apartments on what he doubtless considered important business. Suddenly, in the midst of her reading, a cry of pain from the child startled Margery. She sprang up, and ran to him; and she found that in running about, he had contrived to fall down a step which intervened between the landing and the antechamber, whereby he had very slightly bruised his infantine arm, and very greatly perturbed his infantine spirit. Geoffrey was weeping and whining piteously, and his mother lifted him up, and carried him into

her bedroom, where she examined the injured arm, and discovered that the injury consisted only of an imperceptible bruise. The child, however still bewailed his misfortune; and Lady Marnell, having applied some ointment to the sore place, sat down, and taking Geoffrey in her lap, she soothed and rocked him until he fell asleep, and forgot all about his bruised arm. The boy had been asleep about a quarter of an hour, when the recollection suddenly flashed upon Margery's mind that she had left the book open to all comers and goers, instead of putting it carefully away, as was her wont. She set down the child softly on the trussing-bed, (the curious name given by our forefathers to a piece of furniture which formed a sofa or travelling-bed at pleasure), and quietly opening the door into her bower, she saw—her husband standing on the hearth, with the book in his hand, and a very decided frown gathering on his countenance. The rustle of Margery's dress made Lord Marnell look up.

"What meaneth this, I pray you, mistress?" asked he angrily.
There was no need, had Margery felt any disposition, to attempt further concealment. The worst that could come, had come.
" It is a book of mine," she quietly answered, " which I left here a short season ago, when the boy's cry started me."

"Hast read it?" asked Lord Marnell, no less harshly.

"I have read it many times, good my Lord."

"And I pray you for to tell me whence you had it, good my Lady?" said he, rather ironically.

Margery was silent. She was determined to bear the blame alone, and not to compromise either Pynson or Carew.

"Had you this book since you came, hither?" said Lord Marnell, varying the form of his question, when he saw she did not answer.

"No, my Lord, I brought it with me from home."

And the word 'home' almost brought the tears into her eyes.

"Your father—Sir Geoffrey—knew he thereof?"

"He did," said Margery, "and rebuked me sharply therefor."

"He did well. Why took he not the book from you."

"Because he showed it to Friar Andrew Rous, his and my confessor, who thought there was no harm in the book, and that I might safely retain the same."

"Then Friar Andrew Rous, is the longest-eared ass I have lightly seen. Whence got you this book?"

"It is mine own writing. I copied it."

"Whence had you it?"

No answer.

"I say, whence had you this book?" roared Lord Marnell.

"My Lord," said Margery gently, but decidedly, "I think not that it needeth to say whence I had the same. The book was lent unto me, whence I copied that one; but I say not of whom it was lent unto me."

"You shall say it, and soon too!" was the reply. "This matter must not be let drop—it passeth into the hands of holy Abbot Bilson. I will seek him presently."

And so saying, Lord Marnell strode out of the room, leaving Margery in a condition of intense terror.

That afternoon, as Margery sat in her bower, she was informed that the Prioress of Kennington was in the oaken chamber. Margery went down to her, holding Geoffrey by the hand, and found her seated on a settle, apparently preferring this more ancient form of seat to a chair; and wearing her veil low over her face. The Prioress rose when Lady Marnell entered, and threw back her heavy black veil, as she advanced to greet her. Margery returned her salutation courteously, and then tried to induce Geoffrey to go to his aunt—but Geoffrey hung back and would not go. Margery did not attempt to force the child, but sat down, and he attached himself to that particular plait of her dress which was furthest from the Prioress. The Prioress tried to appropriate him, by drawing from her pocket a piece of linen, which, being unfolded, revealed a placenta—a deli-

cacy which the nuns of several convents were specially famed for making, and the nature of which will be better known to an ordinary reader by the explanatory term cheese-cake. Geoffrey graciously accepted the placenta, but utterly declined all further intimacy. The expression of the Prioress's countenance suggested to Margery the idea that she had seen her brother, and had heard of the discovery of the book, so that Margery was quite prepared for her remarking gravely, after her unsuccessful attempt to attract her little nephew—

"I heard this morn, fair sister, of a thing which did much trouble me."

"You mean," said Margery simply, "of the discovery of a book in my chamber by my Lord my husband, the which did anger him?"

"I rejoice that you take my meaning," answered the Prioress in an even voice. "I meant that verily. I grieve much, fair sister, to hear from my fair brother that you have allied yourself unto those evil men which be known by the name of Lollards."

"I cry you mercy, holy mother," answered Margery quietly, "I have allied myself unto no man. I know not a Lollard in the realm. Only I read that book—and that book, as you must needs wit, holy mother, containeth the words of the Lord Jesu. Is there hurt therein?"

The Prioress did not directly answer this question. She said, "if your elders,* fair sister, had shown the wisdom for to put you in the cloister, you would have been free from such like temptations."

"Is it a temptation?" replied Margery. "Meseemeth, holy mother, that there be temptations as many in the cloister as in the world, only they be to divers sins: and I misdoubt that I should have temptation in the cloister, to the full as much as here."

"I cry you mercy, fair sister!" said the Prioress, with an air of superiority. "We have no temptations in our blessed retreat. Our rule saveth us, and our seclusion from the vanity of the world—and I pray you—what other evil can assail a veiled nun?"

Margery glanced at the heavy gold chain round the Prioress's neck, the multifarious rings on her fingers, and the costly jewels in her girdle, and rather doubted her testimony as to the utter absence of vanity in a veiled nun; but she contented herself with saying, "I trow, holy mother, that ye carry with you evil hearts into your cloister, as have all men without; and an evil heart within, and the devil without, need not outward matters whereon to form temptation. At least I speak by my own."

The Prioress looked rather shocked. "The evil heart," answered she, "is governed and kept down in us by our mortifications, our alms-givings, our penances, our prayers, and divers other holy exercises."

"Ah, holy mother," said Margery, looking up, "can you keep down by such means your evil hearts? I trow mine needeth more than that!"

"What mean you, fair sister?" inquired the Prioress.

"Nought less," replied Margery, "than the blood of the Lamb slain; and the grace of Christ risen, have I yet found, that would avail to keep down an evil heart!"

"Of force, fair sister, of force!" said the Prioress coldly, "that is well as said."

"Then I pray you, why said you it not?"

The Prioress rose. "I trust, fair sister," said she, without giving any reply to Margery's home question, "that you may see your error ere it be full late so to do."

"I trust," said Margery, as she followed her sister-in-law to the door, "that God will keep me in true faith, whatsoever that be."

"Amen!" said the Prioress, her long black robe sweeping the steps as she mounted her litter.

"Is she gone?" lisped little Geoffrey, when his mother returned. "Deff'y so glad! Deff'y don't like her!"

That evening Margery received a message from her husband, bidding her meet him and Abbot Bilson in the oaken chamber, and bring the book with her. She took the book from the

*Parents.

table on which Lord Marnell had thrown it—no need to hide it any longer now—kissed little Geoffrey's sleeping forehead, as he lay in his cradle, and went down to the osken chamber.

Lord Marnell, who, when angry, looked taller than ever, stood on the hearth with his arms folded. Abbot Bilson was seated in an arm-chair, with his cowl thrown back. He was a man of about sixty, with a finely formed head, more bald than the tonsure would account for, and a remarkably soft, persuasive voice and manner. Had the Order of Jesuits existed at that time, Abbot Bilson might fitly have been the head of it. "His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

"The Lady Marnell," said her husband to the Abbot as she entered, and the latter, without rising, saluted her with the benediction, "Peace be with thee, daughter."

"Where is the book?" asked Lord Marnell sternly, but not quite so angrily as he had spoken in the morning.

Margery passed it to him.

"Seethere, reverend father," said he, as he handed it to the Abbot. "What callest thou that?"

The Abbot turned over the leaves, but the suavity of his manner suffered no change.

"A fine, clear scribe hath written this," remarked he politely. "The Gospel according unto the blessed John, I ween, from the traduction of Master John Wycliffe, the parson of Lutterworth, who deceased a few years back. And our good brother Andrew Rous thought no harm of your keeping the book, my daughter?"

"So he said," answered Margery shortly.

"Ah! But your father?"

"Did not like thereof at the first; but after that Father Rous had so said, he made no further matter."

"Ah! of force. I conceive it fully. Your mother, good daughter?"

"My mother spake not of the matter. She witteth not to read, and therefore knew not the book."

"Certes," said the Abbot, with the most exquisite gentleness. Lord Marnell, who kept fidgeting up and down the room, seemed almost annoyed at the Abbot's extreme suavity.

"You had this book from a friend, methinks?" resumed the Abbot.

"I cannot tell you, father, whence I had it," was Margery's firm reply.

The Abbot looked surprised.

"Did our brother Rous lend it you?" he asked, his manner losing a small portion of its extraordinary softness.

"Nay."

"Some friend, then, belike? Sir Ralph Marston, your good cousin? or Master Pynson, the squire of my worthy knight your father?"

Margery felt instantaneously that she was in the power of a very dangerous man. Now he was endeavouring to ferret out admissions and denials which would afterwards stand him in good stead! How came he, too, to know so much about her friends? Had he been questioning Lord Marnell? Margery's breath came short and fast, and she trembled exceedingly. She was annoyed with herself beyond measure, because, when the Abbot named Richard Pynson, she could not help a conscious blush in hearing him mention, not indeed the person who had actually lent her the book, but one who was concerned in the transaction. The Abbot saw the blush, though just then it did not suit his purpose to take notice of it.

"Well, well," said he courteously, "we will not go further into that question at present. But you must wit, dear daughter, that this book containeth fearful heresy! Hath not our brother Rous taught you the same? Error of all kinds is therein, and weak women like unto you be not able, my child, for to separate in all cases this error from the truth wherewith, in these pernicious volumes, it is mingled. You are very young, daughter, and wit not yet all that the fathers of the Church can tell you, an' you be meek and humble in receiving of their teaching."

He ceased, evidently thinking that he had made an impression. He was quite prepared for a little pouting, and for entreaties, and even passionate words; but the one thing for which he

was not prepared he got in Margery's answer.

"I wis well, reverend father," she said very quietly, "to the full as well as it list you to tell me, how young, and weak, and all unwitting I be. But I trow that Christ deceiveth not His children because they be weak; and that if I can any words at all conceive, I can His. Saith He not, 'If any man wole do His wille, he shall knowe of the techinge'?"

Saith he not again, 'Seke ye Scripturis'?"

"I pray you now, father, to whom said He that? Unto fathers of the Church? Nay, soothly, but unto Jews unbelieving—very heathens, and no Christians. Moreoyer, saith He not again, 'He that despiseth me, and takith not my wordis, hath him that schal juge him; thilke word that I have spoken schal deme him in the laste day'?"

"I pray you, good father, how shall I know the word that shall judge me if I read it not? Truly meseemeth that the despising of His Word lieth more in the neglect thereof. Also say you that this book containeth heresy and evil teaching. Good father, shall Christ the Son of God teach evil? Doeth God evil? Will God deceive them that ask Him in truth? Knoweth He not as much as fathers of the Church? Nay truly, good father, I trust that you wot not fully what you have said. He is 'weye treuth, and luf; no man cometh to the Fadur but by Him.'"

Abbot Bilson, for once in his life, was completely dumfounded. He looked silently at Lord Marnell.

"I pray you see now, reverend father," said Lord Marnell, angrily, "how the teaching of this book hath leavened your girl's talk! Is it a small evil, Madge, to turn upon thy teacher when he teacheth thee of wisdom, with sayings picked up from a book? Art not ashamed?"

"No, my Lord, I am no wise shamed," answered she; "for the reverend father teacheth me the words of men, and the words of my book be the words of Christ; and when Christ and men come to warring, I trow there is small doubt as to who shall be the winner."

The Abbot sat mutely gazing at Margery. Her face, usually so calm and pale, was lighted up, as she spoke with a light not of this world; and he could not comprehend it. Had she asked pardon, he could have soothed her; had she lamented and bewailed, he might have promised her many things to comfort her; had she spoken bitterly or passionately, he might have commanded her silence. But this conduct of hers, so quiet, yet so decided—so gentle, but so uncompromising—puzzled him extremely. He only saw the exterior, and he could not discover that wherein her great strength lay.

"My Lord Marnell," he said, in a perplexed tone, "I would speak with you. Good lady will you give us leave?"

Margery rose, and, courtesying, quitted the room at once; but she took the book with her, and nobody prevented her from doing so.

"My Lord," said the Abbot, when she was gone, "I am bewildered utterly. I know not what to do with this girl. Never the like of her saw I before, and my experience is baffled. But meseemeth that the best thing is to treat her gently at the first; and if she relent not, then—"

The sentence was left unfinished, but Lord Marnell understood it.

[John vii. 17. John v. 39. John xii. 48. John xiv. 6.]

Youths' Department.

Chirp and Hop.

Chirp and Hop lived in the same field. Chirp was a little cricket. Hop was a big grasshopper. They were cousins. Some people thought they looked alike.

"You will never be as pretty as I am," said Chirp to Hop.

"Why not?" asked Hop.

"Because you will never be so black and shiny," said Chirp.

"Well," said Hop, "you will never be so lovely and green as I am."

Then they shook feet to show they were good friends. Crickets and grasshoppers cannot shake hands, for they have no hands.

"Cousin Chirp," said Hop one day, "let us go on a journey together."

"Where shall we go?" asked Chirp.

"To the hay-field to see old Brindle."

"Very well, Hop. I hear she has fine clover in her field," said Chirp.

So they started. In a minute, Chirp cried, "Oh, dear! How fast you go!"

Hop looked cross. He called out, "Well, can't you hurry up?"

"No, no," said Chirp; "my legs are not so long as yours. Please go slow."

"I will not," said Hop. John will soon come to let down the bars, and take Brindle home."

It is very early, dear Hop," said poor little Chirp. "John will not come until night. Please wait."

But Hop was almost out of sight. Chirp could hardly hear his cross "no." Chirp jumped along as fast as he could. But he got to the field long after Hop got there.

He looked through a hole, but he could not see his cousin.

In a minute, Brindle came to the fence. She liked Chirp, because he always sang such a happy song.

"Who are you looking for, my dear?" said Brindle.

"For my cousin Hop. Do you know where he is, dear Brindle?"

"Yes, indeed," said Brindle. She shook her head sadly.

"He hopped over my fence just as Jocko, the rooster, came along."

"Oh, my! oh, my!" said Chirp. "He could not get out of the rooster's way," said Brindle. "He had come across the field so fast he was out of breath."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" was all Chirp could say.

"Yes, said Brindle, he could not get out of the way, so Jocko gobbled him up."

"I guess he wished he had waited for me," said little Chirp.

"It never pays to be unkind," said Brindle. "Come in and have some clover, my dear."—Our Little Ones.

Original and Selected. Bible Enigma.

No. 290.

Find out the following and let them stand after each other, and when properly divided into words they will make a proverb quoted by Jesus:

A small number, an animal, a vowel, an adverb of comparison, one of the tribes of Israel, a different one, and the cutting of grain.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS. No. 279.

Form a Square of words:

- 1. Favor.
2. A large black bird.
3. Stop.
4. A common name of Rome's emperors.
5. A place to enter a house.

No. 280.

Form a Diamond of words:

- 1. One-third of man.
2. A small dog.
3. The harmony of sweet sounds.
4. A hole in the earth.
5. The head of cat.

No. 281.

Fill in the vowels in the following lines and make a six line stanza:

D nt fr shrnk t mt m ft,
Bt wth pnc swt
Sw, nd nr th Mstr's tm t wt
Fr lf's aw-grnd wht,
Rd tht whn h omth, sn r lt
Tly t t h ft.

No. 282.

Change a word meaning food, to a horse and wagon. Change one meaning what a person or thing is called, to the close of a prayer. Change a rapid rider, to a sudden halt. Change a fastening, of a letter to a bargain closed.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Bible Enigma.

No. 289.

- 1. Weasel; 2. Huzzab; 3. Ant; 4. Tyre; 5. Ivy; 6. Simon; 7. Thomas; 8. Yoke; 9. Pillow; 10. Euphrates; 11. Tetrarch; 12. Iturea; 13. Tarshish; 14. Ishboeth; 15. Og; 16. Nathan.

WHAT IS THY PETITION?—Esther v. 6.

[Our Editor of the Youth's Department wishes to say—that in the enigma No. 289, one letter, H, was omitted after 7.]

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

No. 274.

Regal, lager, glare, large.

No. 275.

Dart-mouth.

No. 276.

E N O C H
N I T E R
O T E R
C R E E D
H E R D S

No. 277.

W
N I T
N O S E S
W I S E M E N
T E M P T
S E T
N

No. 278.

Whate'er God deemeth best, if loss or gain,
To make my life complete,
Whate'er my path, if it be joy or pain,
I walk with willing feet
Life's untrod ways, and he will make it plain
When he shall deem it meet.