

Family Reading.

Another Year Gone.

BY LILLIE E. BARS.

I am just a little weary to-night,
Sitting alone in the waning light,
Alone in the silent room;
And my eyes are full of unshed tears
For the hopes and dreams of the sweet, dead
years,
Years lost in a tender gloom.

Oh, to think how my memory strays
Back, and back to the beautiful days,
The days when I was young;
When Hope and I were never apart,
When love made melody in my heart,
And melody on my tongue!

Never again shall I dream such dreams;
See such meadows, and woods and streams,
Or carry a heart so glad,
I have crossed the hill at the turn of life;
I have borne the burden and heat of strife:
I'm tired, and a little sad.

Hush! there are footsteps upon the stair;
Hush! there are sounds on the soft still air,
And I forget to complain,
My sons and daughters are in the room,
And gone is the soft regretful gloom;
I am glad and young again.

Polly, and Kitty, and Jack, and Chris—
All of them wanting a mother's kiss,
All tenderly full of fears;
Then quite forgotten are youthful joys,
I am well content with my girls and boys,
Content with my fifty years.

New Select Serial.

A DEACON'S DAUGHTER.

BY MISS LILIAN F. WELLS.

CHAPTER I.

DEACON STIRLING'S HOME.

It was a plain, white house; its plainness unrevealed even by green blinds, or a porch over its yellow front door. As to the blinds, Deacon Stirling had said to his wife when he brought her there on the day of their marriage, thirty years ago:

'Blinds is nothin' but an invention to get money out o' folks, Nancy. They aint no kind o' use, but to keep out the sun an' air; an' I've made up my mind that I shan't have none on my house. So ye needn't never say nothin' about it.'

So Mrs. Sterling had obediently kept silence on the subject from that time forward; but she put up thick, blue paper shades at the front windows, and the deacon never said a word.

The house stood about thirty feet back from the road, and was protected by a high picket fence. A straight, narrow path led from the gate to the spotless yellow steps; but it had no border of flowers—no one in the house had time to care for flowers. In the summer the grass was allowed to grow tall and rank; for, as Deacon Stirling said:

'There wa'n't no reason in wastin' so much good hay as most folks do keepin' the grass in their front door yards not more'n half an inch long all the time. It is an up an' down waste; an' wastin' isn't right—isn't according to Scripser.'

On either side of the path stood a tall spruce tree, sombre, and sighing in the very brightest weather. The only redeeming feature of the place was an immense walnut tree, standing at one end, and a little in front of the house, as if it were doing its utmost to shelter the latter from too curious eyes.

The spruce trees looked almost black one afternoon toward the last of September, when heavy, gray clouds were hovering round the mountains, covering the sweet, blue sky, and promising rain for the morrow. A strong, chilly wind was blowing too, sighing and moaning in the spruce trees, as if it were telling them some sorrowful story. There was nothing stirring about the place. To all appearances it might have been uninhabited. But that was nothing unusual for the front part of the house; for the family seldom occupied that. The great, square kitchen was dining-room and sitting-room as well. A long row of out-buildings, painted red, stretched out to right and left behind the house, and wore a look of almost painful neatness. Not a thing was out of place; not even a whisp of straw was allowed to remain upon the ground before the doors. There was an utter lack of home-likeness about the place; and on this dreary September afternoon it looked more uninviting than usual.

So thought the young girl who came slowly up the road; and, stopping before the house, stood still a moment, with her hand on the gate, and looked around her.

'It's an ugly old place,' thought she; 'and I wish I'd never been born in it!'

She passed through the gate, slammed it after her, and going round to the back of the house, opened the kitchen door, and went in. She was greeted by the fragrant odor from a pan of baked beans just out of the oven, and the sight of her mother getting supper.

'Seems to me you was gone a good while, wasn't you, Marthy?' asked Mrs. Stirling, without lifting her faded eyes from the bread she was cutting.

'It's three miles there and back,' Marthy replied, taking off her hat and shawl and putting them away.

'I know 'tis, but you've been gone since half-past one. It's five now. Did you go in to Huldah's?'

'No, ma'am,' said Marthy.

'How long did you stay to Miss Gleason's? was the next question.

'Just long enough to give her the yeast and tell her what you said,' replied Marthy, knowing she would be obliged to tell the whole story, but just perverse enough to enjoy having it drawn out of her bit by bit, and feeling, besides, that her mother would not approve of the way she had spent her time that afternoon.

'What did ye do then, I should like to know?'—and Mrs. Stirling lifted her eyes curiously to her tall daughter's face.

'I leaned over the bridge and looked at the river for half an hour, I should think.' Marthy walked calmly around the table distributing plates.

'Was that all you did?'

'Oh, no, ma'am! I walked.'

'But it didn't take ye no three hours and a half to do that much, did it, Marthy?'

'No, ma'am. I stopped to rest.'

'Where?'

'In Thompson's woods.'

'Marthy, have you ben doin' anythin' this afternoon that you're afraid or ashamed to tell?'

Mrs. Stirling laid down the bread-knife, and looked really anxious.

'No, no, mother, I haven't truly. I'm ashamed of myself for trying to tease you, though. I'll tell you, like a good girl, what I was doing. I was reading this.'

She took a little thick red book from her pocket, and held it up.

'What is it?' Mrs. Stirling asked.

Martha glanced out of the window, and then said, coming closer to her mother and lowering her voice:

'It's 'The Children of the Abbey.' Julia Gleason lent it to me; and it's just splendid?'

'It's a novel, aint it?'

'Yes'm.'

'Why, Marthy Stirling! What would your father say if he knew you was readin' such a book as that?'

'He needn't know. You won't tell him, will you, mother? Now, please don't!' begged Marthy, eagerly.

Mrs. Stirling shook her head dubiously—

'It aint good stuff to be fillin' your head with; an' I don't approve of it no more'n he does. But you don't care for that; so, if the only way to make ye stop it is to tell him, I think I'd ought to do it.'

'Didn't you read such 'stuff' when you were my age, and like it too?'

'Well, yer, I s'pose I did. But I see the folly on't now. I don't want you to git your head full o' such fine ideas as I had, an' then have to have 'em all took down, one after the other.'

'But you won't say anything about it this time, will you, mother?'

'If you won't hear to me, it's my duty to use some other means. It's all for your own good, Marthy.'

'Dear! I wish I could ever do anything without being lectured,' exclaimed Marthy, angrily, as she ran up-stairs and put the little book away in a drawer.

When she came down, her father was standing in front of the stove, his hands clasped behind him, and his face wearing an expression that Marthy had learned to read long ago. The deacon had been a very tall man, but was somewhat bent now from his years of hard work; his face was long and thin, and its expression naturally stern; but he had been so long in the habit of putting on the solemn look which he thought

befitted his position in the church, and of mourning over the wickedness of the world around him, that at the sight of his forbidding countenance men and women felt uncomfortable, young people grew suddenly silent, and little children shrank away in fear.

Martha would have crossed the room to go into the pantry, but her father arrested her with a loud, stern 'Marthy!'

'Yes, sir,' said Marthy, stopping, and becoming suddenly interested in a fold of the table-cloth, which refused to lie quite flat.

'Marthy, let that 'ere table-cloth be an' listen to me,' commanded the deacon.

Martha obeyed, looking straight up at him now, with a little flash in her eyes.

'Your mother says you've ben readin' a novel. Is that true? began the deacon.

'You never knew mother to tell a lie, did you?' asked Marthy, demurely.

'No impertinence, or it'll be the worse for ye!' cried her father. 'Answer me as you'd ought to. Is it true that you've ben readin' a novel?'

'Yes, sir, it is.'

'Is this all the good my teachin' an' example has done ye? I thought I broke ye o' readin' novels more'n two years ago.'

Martha's cheeks grew hot at the memory of that scene. The marks left on her shoulders by the birch rod were there for days. But the scars on her indignant, girlish soul had not yet worn away.

'Hain't ye read no others besides this one?' asked the deacon, noticing the deepening color in her face, and thinking he would let her off as easily as he consistently could if this were the only offence.

'Yes, sir, I have,' she answered.

'You have? Marthy, hain't ye got no respect for your father, an' him a deacon in the church too? To think that my own daughter should be such a disgrace to me! Aint you ashamed o' your wickedness? But I know ye ain't. Now ye may jest take that 'ere pisenous book straight back to Miss Gleason's, an' tell 'em I shall report 'em to the next church meetin'. Start along, now! And when ye come back I've got somethin' to say to ye. Do ye hear?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But, Nathan,' interposed Mrs. Stirling, coming out of the pantry, 'you don't mean to make her go right off now, afore she's rested, and without a bite o' supper?'

'She heerd what I said,' returned the deacon, setting his thin lips together more tightly than before. 'I said start now, an' I mean it.'

Martha went up-stairs and into her room. She took out 'The Children of the Abbey' and looked at it a moment, then put it snugly away in the drawer again, under a pile of clean gingham aprons, shut the drawer, and turned away with a smile on her lips. But it was not a pleasant smile.

'I will read it in spite of him,' she said, resolutely.

The twilight was already falling, for the heavy clouds made it dark earlier than usual; but Marthy did not care. She was not at all afraid, even to go through the long stretch of woods bordering the road in one place. She was glad on the whole, to get away from home for a while, notwithstanding the fact that she was very hungry. Her thoughts were not pleasant ones as she walked quickly on through the fast deepening shadows. They were hard, angry thoughts of her father, such as ought never to embitter a daughter's heart. Many and many a time in her life had Marthy Stirling felt just as she was feeling now.

With the generality of people the face gives a pretty reliable account of the life. A happy life makes a happy face; unpleasant circumstances, congenial surroundings, everything that goes to make the life unhappy, are reflected in the face to a greater or less degree. Marthy's face very plainly told the tale of her life in the hard lines that were already beginning to spoil her mouth, the worried knitting of her white forehead, and the restless, impatient look that detracted much from the beauty of her eyes. There did not seem to be a very favorable prospect of her ripening into a sweet and gentle woman.

Her first intention had been to walk to Mrs. Gleason's, but not to go in. She

changed her mind at the end of half a mile, however, for there, in a small, brown house, under a hill, lived Huldah, Marthy's only sister, who had been married nearly three years. On reaching the gate, Marthy stopped.

'What a goose I am,' thought she, 'to walk three miles when a mile will do just as well. I'll go into Huldah's, and stay as long as it would take me to walk to the Gleason's and back.'

She stood still a moment opposite the house, and looked in. The candles were lighted, throwing two wide bands of light out across the yard through the front windows. As soon as she had a house of her own, Huldah had declared that there shouldn't be a room in it that she couldn't feel perfectly free to use whenever she wanted to. So, as the house was small, she had no parlor, but kept her sitting room looking so fresh and cozy and pleasant, that the very few people who came to see her did not feel so properly shocked at Mrs. Parker's want of a 'best room' as they had supposed they would be.

To-night, Huldah was setting the table for supper, while her husband sat by the stove holding his baby son in his arms, and looking down into the rosy, sleepy, little face with an expression of blissful content.

Huldah had been a pale, quiet girl, who bore the unpleasantness of her home in patient silence, trying in her gentle way to keep things as peaceable as might be! but when Amos Parker, whom she had known and liked from her childhood, asked her to be his wife, she said 'yes,' very gladly. And since she had lived with him in their cozy little home, her cheeks had grown round and rosy, and the timid, wistful look had left her eyes; for Amos Parker was no more like Deacon Stirling than a mellow peach is like a green persimmon.

'There, Amos, supper's ready,' said Huldah. 'You just put baby in the cradle, an' he'll go right to sleep, bless his heart!' At this moment Marthy opened the door and walked in.

'Why, Marthy Stirling, how you did scare me! I come within one o' drop in this teapot! Where did you come from at this time o' night?'

'Home,' replied Marthy, concisely.

'You don't seem very glad to see me.'

'Why, I was so surprised I couldn't get my wits together,' explained Huldah.

'Have you had your supper?'

Marthy shook her head.

'Take your things right off, then, and come and have some. I'm glad we happened to be later'n usual to-night. I've got some beautiful bread this week, an' I cooked up a whole pan full o' doughnuts this morning, that look as if they'd be good. Did you come to stay all night?'

'Oh, no,' said Marthy. 'I can only stay about an hour. I'll tell you all about it after supper. If you know how hungry I am, you wouldn't ask me to say another word till I'd had something to eat.'

'Come right along, then, Amos. Can't you leave baby long enough to keep a fellow creature from starving?'

Amos laughed, but put the baby gently down, and coming to the table, offered a hearty thanksgiving for the food, and then heaped Marthy's plate till she begged him to stop.

When supper was over, Marthy helped to clear it away and wash the dishes, and while doing so told her story. Huldah's face was full of sympathy; but she shook her head very gravely when Marthy finished.

'I'm ever so sorry for you, Marthy,' said she, after a moment's silence, 'but I don't think you're doin' right.'

'I knew you wouldn't; so that don't surprise me any. But what else can I do? Huldah, I can't just bear it, and be good and patient, like you; it ain't my nature. I can't stand being treated like a child, and as if I couldn't tell right from wrong. If father had just let me read novels at first, I don't believe I should have cared a fig for 'em now, for most of 'em are perfect nonsense. But his acting so about it makes me feel as obstinate as a mule, and as if I didn't care what I did.'

'I don't know what I ought to say to you, Marthy,' said the gentle Huldah, much perplexed. 'I know you're wrong, but—Marthy, don't you think you'd be happier just to give it all up, and keep the peace? I know you would, dear,—and she laid her hand caressingly on Marthy's arm.

For a moment, Marthy looked as if she were relenting. The next moment, she shook her head decidedly.

'No, I don't want to do it, Huldah; and I can't.'

Huldah looked disappointed, but said no more. She had learned years ago that, when Marthy had made a decision, it was time wasted to argue with her.

Soon after, Marthy said she must go. Huldah stepped to the door and looked out.

'It's raining, and it's very dark,' said she. 'Amos, I guess you'd better take the umbrella, and walk home with Marthy. I hate to have her go alone.'

'Why, yes; o' course I will,' said Amos, rising at once.

'No, no!' cried Marthy. 'You've got your boots off, and you don't want to walk a mile after your day's work.'

But Amos insisted, and they went away together. The good fellow agreed with Huldah that Marthy was wrong, and he wanted to try his power of argument on her. But he found his efforts to bring his young sister-in-law to a right state of mind as ineffectual as his wife's had been. When they reached a point in the road from which they could see the light in the Sirling's kitchen, Marthy stopped, saying:

'You needn't go any futher with me, Amos. Thank you ever so much for coming so far. You and Huldah are a thousand times kinder to me than I deserve; and I'm sure I don't know what I should do without you. But you musn't try to make me change my nature; for it can't be done.'

'Yes, it can, too, Marthy,' said Amos, earnestly.

'How, I should like to know?'

'You can't change it, nor Huldah an' I can't. But God can.'

'Oh! was that what you meant? I might have known it was, though. Well, I can go the rest of the way alone, just as well as not, and I'd rather, if you don't mind, you're a good brother to me, Amos. Good night.'

And almost before he could answer, she had disappeared in the darkness.

Amos found Huldah sitting before the fire with baby in her arms, and a troubled look on her face. She glanced quickly up at him as he came in.

'Baby aint sick, is he, Huldah?'

Amos asked.

'Oh, no, Amos. It didn't seem so lonesome when I had him in my arms. I was thinkin' about Marthy, that's all.'

'Well, what did ye think about her?'

Inquired Amos, putting on his slippers, and stretching his feet out comfortably toward the fire.

'I thought a good many things. One was, that she's been doin' a foolish thing.'

'About the novel? Yes, I tried to make her see it so myself; but you can't move her when she's made up her mind no more'n ye can move old Dobbin when he takes a notion to be balky. Ye see, I feel a real interest in her, Huldah; an' I want to see her come out well. I said everything I could think of; but it didn't make no more impression than as if I'd said it to baby.'

'No,' returned Huldah, 'I could have told you it wouldn't. She's got a will just like father's. I'm afraid she's makin' a sight o' trouble for herself. Poor child, she's had a hard time of it; an' it's worse for her than 'twas for me, because she's so different. There's some folks you can't drive, an' she's one of 'em. I hope she can have a home of her own in a few years—though I don't know as 'twould be a very happy one, either, if she goes on cherishin' such a contrary spirit.'

'She'll make a smart woman, Marthy will; for there aint a cleverer girl in the township. But she'll never make such a wife as you be, Huldah,—and Amos beamed upon her with a look of admiring satisfaction.

Huldah blushed with pleasure.

'You think so because you're so easy to please, Amos,' said she, laying her unoccupied hand on his knee. 'The woman that wouldn't try to do her best to be a good wife to such a husband as I've got, wouldn't deserve to have a husband—that's all.'

Why is coal the most extraordinary article known to commerce? Because when purchased, instead of going to the buyer it goes to the cellar.

You must judge religious movements not by the men who make, them but by the men they make.—Joseph Cook.

A Visit to the Capital of Persia

BY REV. FRANK S. DOBBINS.

If you were to take a balloon, and starting from Raleigh, North Carolina, go directly east about eight thousand miles, you would arrive at Teheran, the capital of Persia. If you went westward from the same starting-point the same distance, you would arrive at Tokio, the capital of Japan. Rub the Aladdin's Lamp of your imagination, that the slaves of the lamp may take you up and bear you through the air until, at your bidding, they set you down before the gate of Teheran. You would have gone over the Atlantic Ocean, right across the Straits of Gibraltar, then over the entire expanse of the Mediterranean Sea, flying over Constantinople. To the southward, you would see the oldest city in the world, Damascus, then across the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris, until you could see the Caspian Sea before you, and below it a chain of mountains, on the southern side of which, some seventy miles from the sea, nestles the City of Teheran.

We find the heat excessive, and the dryness of the atmosphere very great. We notice the absence of trees and of large bushes. There is an abundance of goats, with hair almost equal to that of Kashmir; of fat-tailed sheep, which is the chief food of the people; of mules that are the chief beasts of burden; and of camels used in the caravans in crossing the deserts. The famous Persian camel's hair-cloth is made of the hair of camels for the wool, and cotton for the warp. I have before me a cap that has been in constant use for nearly seven years, that has been worn in journeys extending over twenty-five thousand miles, and that, as yet, shows no sign of wear. You see the people wearing this cloth on every side.

Teheran has been the capital since 1788, and yet it has scarcely a fine-looking building to show, except the mansions of the nobles and of the members of the European Legations, and, above all, the Palace of the Shah. The palace occupies nearly a fourth of the space enclosed within the city's walls. This wall has a length, in its circuit, of five or six miles. The streets of the city are narrow, crooked, poorly paved, and lined with low houses, made of sun-dried brick, roofed with rushes. The houses are mostly one story high. Some few and small districts of the city have clean, wide, and straight streets. Gas is soon to be used in the city, instead of oil. You can rest you in the caravansaries, or you can go about among the bazars, where you will find a good collection of the various artistic objects for which Persia is celebrated.

The people, you readily perceive, are quick-witted and of a persuasive manner. The Persian is never at a loss for words; he is a fine and fluent rhetorician and a skilful sophist. Like the Greek and the Jew, the Persian exhibits much good taste and a strong love for the beautiful. In 641, A.D., the Persians yielded their faith in Zoroaster to become followers of Mohammed. They are the most fanatical of Moslems. There are some few American missionaries in Teheran, who preach in the Persian language. The Moslems came occasionally to this service, but finally the chief of police ordered the missionaries not to preach to them. The Shah, however, telegraphed him not to forbid them. If Teheran becomes Christian, there is great hopes for all of Persia, and all of Central Asia.

DISCOVERIES AT TROY.—The following letter has been sent from Mr. Schliemann to the King of Greece:—

'To his Majesty King George,—With unbounded joy I announce to your Majesty that I have discovered the monuments which tradition, as related by Pausanias, points out as the tombs of Agamemnon, Cassandra, Eurymedon, and their companions, who were all killed whilst feasting at a banquet by Clytemnestra and her lover Ægisthus. These tombs are surrounded by a double parallel circle of tablets, which were undoubtedly erected in honour of these great personages. In these tombs I have found an immense archaeological treasure of various articles of pure gold. This treasure is alone sufficient to fill a large museum, which will be the most splendid in the world, and which, in all succeeding ages, will attract to Greece thousands of strangers from every land. As I am labouring from a pure and simple love of science, I waive all claim to this treasure, which I offer with intense enthusiasm in its entirety to Greece. Sire, may these treasures, with God's blessing, become the corner-stone of immense national wealth.—DR. HENRY SCHLIEMANN, Mycenæ, November 26.'

All growth that is not towards God is growing to decay.

George MacDonald.