Family Reading.

Little Feet.

Two little feet so small that both may nestle
In one caressing hand,
Two tender feet upon the untried border
Of life's mysterious land.

Dimpled and soft, and pink as peach-tree blossoms
In April's fragrant days;
How can they walk among the briery tangles
Edging the world's rough ways?

These white-rose feet along the doubtful future
Must bear a woman's load;
Alas! since woman has the heaviest burden,
And walks the hardest road!

How shall it be with her, the tender stranger,
Fair-faced and gentle-eyed,
Before whose unstained feet the world's rude highway
Stretches so strange and wide?

Ah! who may read the future? For our darling
We crave all blessings sweet,
And pray that He who feeds the crying ravens
Will guide the baby's feet.

—*Florence Percy.*

New Select Serial.

A DEACON'S DAUGHTER.

BY MISS LILIAN F. WELLS.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER FROM AUNT CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Charlotte Iredell sat in her dining-room, taking her six-o'clock dinner. Though well prepared and handsomely served, the meal would have been but tolerably enjoyed by most people, because of its loneliness; but Mrs. Iredell was fond of being alone. Except for her three servants, she had lived alone in her handsome house for fifteen years, rarely receiving company, and making but few visits. She had not even visited her brother, Deacon Stirling, except once, in all that time, and then had only remained a week.

No brother and sister could be more unlike, both in appearance and in character, than she and the deacon were. The latter I have already described. Mrs. Iredell was a woman of sixty, of medium height, but with a fine physique. No one would have imagined that she had been born and reared in a Vermont farm house, and had done hard work, and a great deal of it too, till she was sixteen. At that time her father died, leaving a thousand dollars apiece to herself and her brother Nathan. The latter put a part of his into land, and the rest into a savings-bank, and tried hard to persuade his sister to do the same, or, at least, to let him take care of her money for her; but without success.

She first spent four years at an excellent school, where she acquitted herself honorably, and soon afterward, while visiting a school-friend in Philadelphia, was met, wooed, and won by Mr. Iredell, a prosperous merchant, considerably older than herself. A short time before his death they removed to New York, and bought the house in which she had since been living.

On being left alone, Mrs. Iredell had laid out a plan for herself, to which she had constantly adhered. The general outline of this plan was to spend certain portions of each day in reading, writing, working for the various charitable institutions to which she belonged, and taking an airing in her carriage.

On this evening of which I write, she said to the servant, as the dessert was brought in:

'Jane, are there any letters for me to-night?'

'One ma'am'—and Jane brought it.

Mrs. Iredell looked at it curiously for a moment, then tore it open, and read it twice.

'Your affectionate niece, Martha Stirling,'' mused she. 'No words mis-spelled, punctuation very good, handwriting indicating a good deal of character, I fancy she is a promising girl. 'Desperate to know more,' is she? That is a good sign: I like that. And I like her too, not telling me the real reason for wanting to leave home. I presume she thinks I do not know it. But, did not I live with my brother sixteen years? And did not I see how things were when I was there, five years ago? Yes, indeed. So, my little niece, let me think awhile, and see, what I can do for you.'

She went up-stairs to her parlor seated herself in a crimson velvet chair, took out a bit of knitting—her hands were seldom idle—and cast about in her mind for a suggestion wherewith to help her niece. Presently, she nodded her head with a smile of satisfaction, and exchanged her knitting for a new magazine.

On the following afternoon she ordered her carriage at the usual time, and rode away farther up town, to a quiet street where the houses had more a look of comfort than of stateliness. At one of these she stopped, and asked to see Miss Goodwin.

The servant knew her—for it was one of the few places at which she often called—and at once led the way to Miss Goodwin's sitting-room.

Miss Goodwin was a lady of about fifty; and when once seen, could never have been forgotten. One could see, looking at her as she sat in her large cushioned arm-chair, that she must once have been unusually tall; but the stately limbs had been entirely useless for many years. She had a large, well-shaped head, with an abundance of shining, snow white hair; a smooth, highly intellectual forehead; perfectly cut features, and dark, bright, beautiful eyes. Her face was a picture—with a soul in it.

After the two ladies had talked for awhile on subjects of mutal interest, Mrs. Iredell said:

'I came on a special errand to-day."

'Yes, I saw that in your face when you first came in,' said Miss Goodwin, smiling. 'And, of course, I am curious to know what it is.'

'I will explain it at once, then. I have a niece, living up in northern Vermont—a seventeen year-old girl, who is very anxious to earn her own living; and who, I should judge from her letter, is quite intelligent and promising. I should like to have you read the letter I received from her last night, and tell me what you think.'

Miss Goodwin complied, reading the letter very carefully; then, looking up at her visitor, she asked, abruptly:

'Why don't you take her yourself, Mrs. Iredell?'

'I see you have guessed what I wanted,' said Mrs. Iredeli, laughing. 'But pardon me for not answering your question at once. You may remember that, when I was here a few days ago, you said you would be very glad to have a bright young girl for a companion? Now I will answer your question. It would be postive torture for me to have a young girl in the house. Neither she nor I would be happy. I have my daily routine, of which I never tire; but know it would be extremely irksome for a young person. Besides, I have nothing for her to do. To be sure, I might send her to school; but for various reasons I prefer carrying out her own plan. If you still think you would like to have a young girl with you, I should be very glad if you would try my niece. If she does not please you, you may consider yourself perfectly at liberty to say so.'

'Martha Stirling,' repeated Miss Goodwin, softly. 'It is a good name; and I must own to an inborn prejudice in regard to names. I like her frank letter too. I *do* want to have a young girl here if I can—the more intelligent and attractive, the better I should be pleased. You are fond of loneliness Mrs. Iredell; I am not. I long especially for bright young faces. How soon do you think your niece could come?'

'In a few days, probably. Shall I write to her to do so?'

'If you please. I will take her for two or three months, at least, and will try to get her something else to do in case I do not wish her to stay.'

Martha watched the road as constantly as she could, during those bright days of October, that she might see Amos, if he came from Sherwood with a letter for her. But when he did return from the village with the desired missive in his pocket, Martha was nowhere in sight. So he drove on toward home, as she had told him to do, if he did not see her on the look-out for him. It was the first time she had missed seeing him on his regular Thursday trip; so, of course, she was haunted by a presentiment that he had a letter for her, and after the evening work was done, she set off for Huldah's.

Amos, thinking she might come, was on the watch, and, stepping to open the door for her, slipped the letter into her hand.

'What are you two smiling about?' asked Huldah, as they came into the sitting-room.

'Oh, Amos did a little errand for me, that's all,' replied Martha, carelessly, beginning to play with the baby.

But her anxiety as to the contents of the letter was too great to be resisted long, and she soon started for home She walked rapidly, and sat down by the window in her own little room, while the west was yet aglow. Years afterward, she could recall to her mind just how the sky looked that night. Often and often the sight of a deep blue sky, strewn with billowy golden clouds, would waken in her heart just such feelings of mingled hope and dread as she had while sitting there with the letter, which she felt was to decide her future, still unopened in her hand. It was only a moment that she hesitated before tearing open the envelope. Even if she were to be dissappointed, it would be better to know it at once. The letter was short, and characteristically to the point.

Mrs. Iredell merely informed Martha of the receipt of her letter, of the application she had made to Miss Goodwin, and of its success.

'Let me know what day you will come,' she had written in conclusion, 'and I will meet you, and go with you to Miss Goodwin's house. I presume yor will not have suitable clothing for you new position; but do not attempt to get any ready. Bring whatever money your father will give you for it to me, and I can get you a much betted outfit than you could get for yourself.'

Martha read the letter over and over in the waning light, her heart beating fast, and her excitement increasing as she realized that her great desire was likely to be fulfiled. She had obtained a position—such a one, too, as she had not dreamed of. She was really to leave her 'tiresome life,' as she called it, behind her, and go away to the great city, to a new life, new surroundings, new people.

Her face was radiant with joy, and she drew quick, deep breaths of exultation. Ah, how she had longed to spread her wings and fly away—away from the nest that seemed to shut her in and oppress her—it was so narrow! And now—*now!* She sprang up and ran lightly down-stairs to tell what she wished no longer to be kept secret.

The deacon had just lighted the candle, and was sitting down to read. Mrs. Stirling was straining her eyes over a pair of her husband's blue socks, trying to darn them by the flickering light. The two looked up as Martha entered, and even in the half-light they could see that her cheeks were flushed and her eyes shining.

'What ye bein' doin', Marthy?' questioned her mother.

'Mother,' said Martha, trying to speak calmly, 'Aunt Charlotte has found me a place in New York City to wait on an invalid lady, at fifteen dollars a month.'

Her mother and father gazed at her in speechless amazement.

'*What?*' exclaimed the deacon with a sort of gasp, as if someone had dealt him a sudden blow.

Martha repeated her statement, and read Mrs. Iredell's letter aloud. After recovering from the first astonishment, the deacon declared she could not go. He would not consent to let his daughter go into such a den of iniquity as New York City. But Martha succeeded in setting the matter before him in another light, and with such arguments as were difficult for him to resist. The sum of fifteen dollars a month was not to be despised, and as he was not at all averse to letting his daughter earn her own living.

'But what am I goin' to do without ye, Marthy?' asked her mother. 'Here's all the fall work to be done, an' I can't work so hard as I used to. I can't spare ye, Marthy.'

'I'll tell you, mother,' suggested Martha, whose bright face had sobered for a moment. 'Go to the poor-house and get a girl.'

The idea commended itself to the deacon at once. He could have a girl 'bound' till she was twenty-one, who would be even less expense to him than was his daughter. Besides, would it not be a real charity to give one of those paupers a comfortable home?

'Well, Marthy,' said her father, recovering from his astonishment, and assuming his most judicial air, 'it's all for the best, in course; it's a good thing for a woman to learn to depend on herself. You've always had good influences around ye; an' if ye *do* stray into by an' forbidden paths, it won't be besause I haint done all *I* could to hender ye. I can trust to providence to keep ye.'

Since she had no special preparation to make, Martha settled on the following Tuesday for her journey. She was very doubtful as to what reception a request for the money she needed would meet. For, though the deacon was always ready with a liberal contribution to the missionary fund, it was his conviction that women were naturally possessed of an inordinate love of dress, which must be constantly checked and discouraged. Therefore, his wife and daughters were distinguished above all the female members of the congregation of Sherwoood meeting house, for their extreme simplicity of dress. This was a painful fact and one that had cost beauty-loving Martha many an hour of envy and repining.

But Martha knew that to obtain any money, she must ask for it. So she plucked up courage the evening following the one on which she had received Mrs. Iredell's letter, and, as her father sat down by the fire, after 'the chores' were done, she said, speaking with assumed carelessness:

'Father, I suppose I shall need some money, besides what you give me to pay my fare with.'

'What d'ye think ye'll want it for?'

'To get clothes with.'

'Clo'es!' repeated the deacon. 'Hain't ye got clo'es enough to be decent and comfortable?'

Martha would have liked to say 'No,' but to get into an argument about it would have been sure defeat for her, so she answered quietly:

'You know I shall have to dress differently there from what I do here.'

'I don't know any sech thing. What's good enough here is good enough for New York.'

'But, father, here we all dress alike, and nobody expects us to have anything better. But there, where there will be rich ladies coming in to call, and where the lady I am to live with is rich, I could not get along with two calice dresses and one old green delaine.'

'That's all nonsense, Marthy. I'm older'n you be, an' know more o' the world. You hain't got to dress up in silks an' satins an' all sort o' vanities, jest to wait on them that wears 'em. I've got to pay you're fare down there, an' that's every cent I can afford to give ye.'

The Wrong Sunday.

A TRUE STORY.

It was very quiet at the old farm. For the first time in their lives the young people, four grown-up girls, had gone away together to stay a week. At home they generally kept things astir, in the way of fun and frolic, from morning till night. 'Something ought to happen,' they said to each other, 'when father and mother are left alone, something funny.' 'Look out, father,' cried Bessie, gayly, as they were leaving. 'Keep hold of the almanac, or you may lose the days of the week.'

So Deacon Stearns and Mrs. Stearns settled down for a quiet spell. They could hardly remember that such a time ever came to them before. Even the hired man had gone home. The deacon remarked, 'Wife, I'll finish that history, and add up my yearly accounts. We shan't have such a racket now.'

She replied, 'I'll finish drawing in my mat. There'll be time to turn off a good many things.'

This was Tuesday. Wednesday morning he said, 'It beats all how we miss those girls. How do you stand it, mother? I believe it's going to snow.'

Her answer was, 'Well, I think women have so many things to do they don't mind being lonely as much as men. If the children only get back safe, it's all I'll ask.'

The storm came on Tuesday, fast and furious, with raging winds, piling up huge drifts, and rolling along banks for children to tunnel. Inside, everthing was peaceful in the dear old sitting-room, and *so still*. The deacon heaped up the wood in the open fire place, where the flames roared, as if to show that the elements in doors were equal to those without. Then he went to sleep over his Prescott, and she nodded over her mat. The old dog looked round occasionally to see if they were still alive; and the cat sat up and washed her face, in order to keep something moving. Thus the short day wore on to another night.

Nor is it to be wondered at that with the quiet and the storm, and the going to bed early, somehow this worthy couple lost a day, and awoke next morning with the firm conviction that it was Saturday instead of Friday.

'Well, I forgot to put my beans asoak last night,' said Mrs. Stearns; 'but I suppose I can boil them longer this morning.'

'And I must look out for the brick oven, and see to the fire-place logs for over Sunday,' said Deacon Stearns, as he unlocked the door.

At night it was still snowing; but the Sunday baking was all in, and ready to come out hot the next morning,—the beans, brown bread, and sweet apple pudding. Besides, there were a whole pan of apple puffs, brown and flaky, in the pantry, a jar of doughnuts, and oak-leaf cookies.

The next morning was clear and cold. The sun shone, and the snow was deep and smooth. No one had appeared in the street to dissipate their notion that the day was Sunday.

'Wife,' said the deacon, as he came in to breakfast, 'the snow is pretty deep, and the drifts will be high below Mace's. What do you say to staying at home from meeting to day? Can't we manage to keep Sunday by ourselves?'

Now the deacon's wife was one of the best women in the world; but she did like, sometimes, a quiet Sunday at home. Being very conscientious, she seldom allowed herself such a luxury. Her face wore a smile of satisfaction as she spoke. 'It would be hard for the horse to stand out. Didn't he go a little lame the other day? I hope we shan't set a bad example to our neighbors, but as you think best, husband.'

Toward noon she took her Bible, and sat down at the south window. She could hardly believe her eyes. There went by a load of wood, and another, and still another!

'Taking advantage of this snow for sledding, what a shame! It looks like Mr. Foster's man, too.'

There came a knock at the door. A man asked for something to eat. The deacon was in the barn, but she would not refuse a meal and shelter. 'Besides,' she thought, 'I can talk to him about keeping Sunday.' She seated him by the kitchen fire, with a plate of provisions and a cup of hot coffee.

'Are you travelling far?'

'Just up from down below, looking for work.'

'You don't look for work Sunday, I hope.'

'Well, I don't know what I'll do to-morrow. Guess I'll wait till Sunday comes.

'Poor heathen,' she said to herself, 'if I could only give him some instruction!' 'We are staying at home from meeting to day, but we usually go. If you are able to walk in this snow, when you get into the city, you will find a church on the right hand side, this very road straight ahead! You may go right into our pew, tell the sexton 'Deacon Stearns's. Your clothes are good. You mustn't go about Sabbath day if you would prosper.' She rose and looked steadily at him to make her remarks effective.

The man stared, then got up. 'Thank ye, marm; your food was good and hot. I guess you're all right, if you are a little fuddled in your mind.'

She was too indignant to utter a word, and the man stepped out. The deacon met him in the door-yard, and he said to himself:

'Good chance to say a word to this man.' But, when he began, the tramp actually burst out laughing, and turned away. The deacon watched him with growing displeasure. He went a few steps, turned around and looked at the house, and seemed to be overcome with mirth.

Another knock at the door of the kitchen. There stood a little girl, one of the new neighbor's children.

'Please, ma'am, will you lend my mother a frying pan? she's cracked hers, and we can't get another to-day.'

'Of course you can't my child. We're not heathens in this town. Yes, you may take it; but come in and sit by the fire. For,' said she to herself, 'perhaps this is another chance, and there's more hope for children.'

She brought out two nice apple puffs on a pretty plate, and began:

'Do you know the commandments?'

'Yes, ma'am, some of them.'

'Will you say one after me? 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.''

The child ate her pies, regarding her questioner with an amazed look that convinced Mrs. Stearns she had not been well taught. She proceeded to enlarge:

'My dear, I don't blame your mother for not sending you to Sunday-school today the snow is so deep; but you must be careful when you go home about playing, for that would be wicked.'

Still eyeing her doubtfully, the child departed

The teams of wood went by at intervals through the afternoon. They talked the subject over, as, later, they sat by the dying embers. 'I don't know what this land is coming to,' said the deacon. 'It will get to be another Sodom.'

'And I've made up my mind,' said Mrs. Stearns, sorrowfully, 'that I won't stay at home from meeting again. It may be a judgement upon me. I do hope I've done some good, though, to-day.'

At six the next morning she was up and at her washing, and he went to his usual work.

As the sleighing was good, and none of the family were present at church, the deacon's nephew thought he'd ride down, and see if they were sick. Fastening his horse, he heard the sound of the deacon's axe, and made his way to the shed, but was never more surprised in his life. 'Why, Uncle Sterns! working Sunday!'

'Tain t Sunday,' said the deacon pausing with uplifted arm.

'Ain't Sunday! Why, I've just come from meeting. Thought you must all be sick.'

'I tell you yesterday was Sunday, and mother and I kept it at home.'

The nephew leaned against the work bench for support, as the truth dawned upon him.

The deacon threw down his ax, and started for the house. Mrs. Stearns, her clothes all out, was taking up the dinner.

'Mother, what day is it?'

'Why, it's Monday, father. What do you mean?'

'Here's Ben, and says it's Sunday!'

'Sunday! Ben, you are crazy.' And she sank down on the sofa.

Ben had a hard time proving the truth of his statement; but, when he finally succeeded, she drew on her hood and mittens. 'Clothes shan't *dry* Sunday, anyway.'

'Mother, I'd let 'em alone. It will be just as bad if you take 'em down."

'Mr. Stearns, I never could enjoy wearing them again, never!' And she brought them back into the tubs.

To think that Mr. Foster's men should have gone by this morning, and seen me putting them out. Well, it will be a lesson to me never to judge anybody again'

'I guess it will be overlooked, wife,' said the deacon, seeing how seriously she was taking it. 'I'll harness up, and we'll go to meeting this afternoon.' They went without their usual supper, in order to avoid any more work, and concluded that the mistake was owing to the storm without and the stillness within.

As for Ben, he laughed all the way home, and he laughed for years after; and so did the girls, when they thought of it.—*Christian Register.*

Rumshops a benefit to a place.

AND A DUTCHMAN'S REASON THEREFOR.

Der ort to be a rumschop on every corner in every town, und den peezness vill be goot Der vhisky peezness helps any town. No matter how dull peezness vas, beeples vill spend der monish fur trinks. Dis vas proved efery tay. All ofer Nye York you can find vorking mans dot vill go on some strikes pecause dey don't get more vages, und yet dose same mens vill spend feefty cents efry tay fur vhiskey and pier. Dot prooves, dot der liquor peezness vas helpin' trade aint it? Und dat vas not der only vay; der vas monny udders. Uv it vas not fur trinkin' many bublic puildings vould not peen puilt—dose prisons, und shails, und poor-houses, und such dings; und if dese houses vas not puilt, vy, uv gourse, der meganics vould haf noddings to do; aint it? Uv you don't get some rum schops in ter town you vouldn't need no shail, und uv gourse you don't vant no sheriff, und vot vould der boliticians done! Uv der vas no rum der vould peen no murder, no fites, no stabs, no licken your vife, no noddings fur der newspapers, and vot vould der editors done? Ah! mein frents, pefore you run down der rum you yust tink uv all dose dings. Haw many beeples vould been out of vork mitout liquor? Vy, dey vould need no bolices, no charity gbommissions, no soup houses no communisto, no noddings. Uv you hat no vhisky schops vare vill your poys spend efenings? Vy, dey vould haf to stay at home und it vould kill menny uv dem to be cast into der same society as der mudders and seesters. Der mudders dell dem some sholly shtorie vot dey hear mit der saloon? Dot vos empossible. Pesides, der saloon vas uv yuse to der vamily. Uv you haf a son und you don't vand him sitting arount der house all der efening, you can yust send him to der saloon, und he vould not vorry you some more dot night. In all dose vays a saloon helps a town very much, ain t it?—*Karl Kannocks, in Kansas paper.*