

Poetry.

SAY "NO."

When tempted to wander from duty and truth,
By the siren of joy, in the freedom of youth,
Have courage to answer the soft smiling foe,
And when you are tempted, say earnestly "No!"

When the glass that is sparkling is pressed to the lip,
And cheerful companions invite you to sip,
Beware of the serpent beguiling the rich glow,
And dash the bright cup with a hearty "No!"

The gambler may tempt you with deep, burning wiles,
With words that are pleasant, and face full of smiles;
In sport he may ask you the dice box to throw;
Be firm in your virtue! Indignant, say "No!"

The way that is evil, which multitudes throng,
With music, and dancing, and soft-melting song,
If beauty should beckon, and ask you to go,
Shun, shun, the false splendour! say heartily "No!"

O ponder your footsteps! leap not in the dark!
Upon the wild ocean launch not your frail bark!
Without the true wisdom that God will bestow,
When beckoned by Error, say earnestly "No!"

Take, take the Good Book for your guide and your chart,
And bid its pure precepts close to your heart;
O then with the virtuous you never will go,
But even, when tempted, say heartily "No!"

-Appeal.

Miscellaneous.

(From the Christian World.)

OLIVE'S ORDEAL.

A TRUE STORY.—BY MELLA RAYNES.

Chapter III.

HIGHT AT LAST.

Five years had passed since Olive first became an inmate of the Dingle, and had brought to little change either to the old house itself or its inhabitants, that sometimes she could not help wondering whether so long a time really could have passed since that Sunday that stood out the one black-bordered day in her book of life.

True, her visits to the pretty Hampshire village where her parents lived, had not been quite so uneventful; some way there was always a small amount of excitement going on there at that period. First of all, there had been May's wedding. That was the first break in the family circle. Then the next year Clara followed her sister's example, and there was one more bird missing in the parent nest, and before they had grown quite accustomed to her absence, Charlie, to use his own characteristic rather than elegant expression, "had been gone and done for himself," and brought his young wife to pay a lengthy visit to his relations, who specially loved to love the pretty dark-eyed girl, and vied with each other in planning country festivities in her honor; while Frank, the restless, mad cap Frank, had managed to overcome all opposition, and had obtained the one great desire of his life in becoming a member of the Royal Navy, returning, after his first voyage, so stout, so noisy, and so brown, that every one agreed that a sea-faring life must suit him, and many became infected with the young sailor's own belief, that he would be rear-admiral some day. And while all these changes were taking place, Olive pursued the even tenor of her way, taking pleasure in the pleasures of others, never for a moment swerving from the path of duty, winning rich graces of love and gratitude from all those who knew her, always cheerful, always gentle; and if at any time her sweet face was clouded, it was with a shadow reflected from the sorrows of others.

"She is the very sunbeam that ever came to cheer an old woman's home," said Aunt Lucy; "but I confess that I should like to see her some good man's wife. Her disposition is too loving, too clinging to be without support, but then there are so few who would rightly appreciate her—very, very few, to whom I would willingly entrust my darling. However, God knows best; it will all come in His own good time. We shall see it right at last!"

And, by degrees, brothers and sisters began to ask if Olive meant to be an old maid, and May, in her would-be matronly fashion, expressed her own intense horror of such a thoughtless state of being; but the object of her pity only smiled, though, sometimes, in the solitude of her room, when the duties of the day were over, and there was no reason to work or think for others, she would wander back in thought to the period of her short-lived happiness, would wonder where Herbert was, what he was doing, whether her unceasing prayers that he might be brought to see the sin and folly of his atheist creed, and alas, for the frailty of human nature, whether he was married; but the ordeal had done its work, and Olive was purer, better, and wiser than she ever would have been had her feet never trodden the holy pilgrimage of conquered passion.

The garden at the Dingle was beginning to look very gay with its variety of many-colored autumn flowers; dahlias, chrysanthemums, sunflowers, and hollyhocks were in full bloom, and the few summer blossoms that yet remained looked sadly out of place among their gaudy but senseless sisters; and one morning Olive and her aunt were busily engaged in gathering what they expected would be their last bunch of roses that year, when the old rector came down the lane, and seeing them in the garden, preferred joining them to waiting a ceremonious reception in the drawing room.

"I have brought you some news," he said, when the first greetings were over.

"Good or bad?" said Olive, pushing back her broad-brimmed garden-hat, and selecting the prettiest rose-bud she could find for the old gentleman's button-hole.

"A little of each, Miss Olive; at least, I hope, for my own sake, that you will think so. You know the doctors all seem agreed in recommending me to try my native air; and I have at last succeeded in obtaining a living in Devonshire. I want to leave here as soon as possible—before the cold weather commences. I have just written to my successor to ask him to come down on Saturday. If I can induce him to preach on the following morning I shall be very glad. I should like to know a little of the man to whom I am to entrust my flock."

"To you—don't you know anything of him?"

"This is his first living," he said; "to the second, his family connections. I hear that he is a very influential man; and I pray for God he may be so."

There was great consternation in the village when it was known that the rector was really going to leave, and wondering as to what the new incumbent would be like, and the interest grew intense when on the Saturday evening it was rumored that "the new parson had come."

From the time of the rector's visit to the Dingle until the following Sunday there had been an almost incessant rain; so Olive and her aunt had been deterred from hearing any of the village gossip. But, as if for once the weather wished to conform to the generally expressed desire, the eventful Sunday morning dawned bright and unclouded; so, after a prudential discussion on the mud, colored petticoats, and gloves, the inmates of the Dingle set off on their way to church, and had nearly reached their destination when Olive was startled by the matter-of-fact question, asked in a very emphatic manner—

"What is our new minister's name, child? I declare I quite forgot to ask Mr. Lane!"

"Well, that is strange, auntie; I never thought about it. He would not feel flattered if he heard of such an apparent want of interest."

"It was rather negligent not to ascertain; but we shall hear all the particulars very soon, no doubt."

Mr. Lane read the prayers that morning with more than his usual earnestness. The old minister felt the approaching separation from the people whose spiritual welfare had been his care for years past, very keenly, and there were many in the church scarcely less affected.

The hymn preceding the sermon was being sung, and Olive's eyes and thoughts—like those of many of her neighbors—were straying from her book to the pulpit, anxiously awaiting the appearance of their new pastor; and at last the door of the little vestry opened, a firm, measured step ascended the pulpit stairs, and the next moment she recognized Herbert Claridge. How she contrived to exercise sufficient self-possession to hold her book steadily until the concluding verse of the hymn came to an end she never knew; she felt giddy and faint; it seemed like some strange, wild dream; and the deep, modulated tones of the well-remembered voice, offering a fervent prayer for guidance to the God formerly dearest, brought such a rush of confused feeling to her heart that for a time the words of the eloquent version, to which every one else was listening in rapt attention, had no meaning for her, and she could only keep dreamily repeating the text he had chosen, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

At the conclusion of the service she laid her hand on her aunt's arm, with the joyful, eager intensity, "Let us go home directly, please!"

"Influencing Aunt Lucy greatly by her strange, excited manner—let her be not until they reached the Dingle that she gave an explanation of the mystery."

Sunday afternoon was always a very quiet time for Olive; the walk to and from the church was rather a strain upon her, who generally lay down for an hour or two, especially if she were going out again in the evening; and Olive too restless to remain in domestic seclusion, before she reached the garden-gate, was swung back, she saw Herbert walking rapidly down the path, and before she had time to recover from this second surprise, he was standing beside her, and taking her hand in his.

"Olive, dear Olive," he said, "do not fancy me unkind of my Master's commands because I for my own worldly interests occupy me on this sacred day. He in His great mercy did not think it beneath Him to do works of mercy on the Sabbath, and with His blessing I would willingly sacrifice the minority of the people I caused you five years ago. The sin was committed on a Sunday; so on a Sunday let me try to atone for it. I know you do not wish to see me, but I am sure you will not refuse to see me."

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