

Poetry.

"MY SHIELD."

BY GRACE WEBSTER HINDEALE.
 God is my shield! beneath the storm
 I stand unmolested;
 God is my shield! why should I fear
 If guarded by his arm?
 God is my shield! through raging waves
 Dash toward my helpless soul,
 My feet are firm upon a rock
 O'er which they cannot roll.
 God is my shield! and Death may hurl
 The arrow from his bow—
 It shall not pierce my waiting heart
 Till I have leave to go!
 God is my shield! I will not shrink
 Though duty's path be steep;
 Jehovah's care shall pitch my tent
 Where I may rest and sleep.
 God is my shield! behind his strength
 From rushing winds I hide,
 And, fainting in a weary land,
 Near Christ, "The Rock," abide.
 God is my shield! no towering wall
 Shall check my onward way;
 I will surmount each barrier,
 And faith's reward display!
 God is my shield! my soul is bold
 To meet all earthly ill—
 The peace of faith shall keep my heart
 Till its last pulse is still.

Miscellaneous.

AMY'S TRIUMPH.

"I wish I could have a little more liberty, and not be forever tied down to some antiquated notion of propriety and right. I don't think I should do anything so very bad if they didn't watch me so closely. I am running over full of life and must have a little fun once in a while, and have it in my own way, too. I'm tired to death of this everlasting preaching, and I'm just going to assert my rights, and if I don't happen to be quite so particular about all these old maid whims, it's nobody's business but mine. And if I get into trouble, nobody will be to blame or have to suffer but myself. You needn't look so dubious, Auntie, I don't expect to do anything so very bad, but I must be allowed to choose my own company. It is a pity if I am not as well acquainted with the young folks as mother is, and capable of choosing for myself. Hear I am, seventeen years old, and treated like a child! I tell you, I can't endure it any longer, and I will not. Mary Evans, Kate Steers, and lots of other girls have told me that their mothers let them choose their society and do as they like; and some of them are church members too. And I'm going to have the same privilege, or I'll go where I can, that I will!"

And Amy threw down her work and tossed back her head with a defiant look that gave a very decided emphasis to her last declaration. The pretty mouth was compressed, and the gray eyes that were wont to beam on her chosen friends with such magnetic power, grew dark, and, with the flushed cheek, told of a fearful tempest within. Aunt Harmon sat still, quietly knitting on Tommy's new stocking, and for some time did not seem to notice Amy's presence. At length she folded her work and bade Amy come and sit by her while she told her a story. Looking earnestly into her eyes a moment she began:

"Many long years ago I remember sitting with my twin sister in mother's room for a talk with mother, which had heretofore been a season of sweet enjoyment and profit also. Sister and I were just seventeen, and in looks and appearance were much alike, though our tempers were very different. Mina was gentle, and never seemed so happy as when sacrificing her own wishes to please our mother or me. I was headstrong, and could not possibly see why my way was not best, and finally came to the conclusion that I could not yield my will to another without compromising my independence. This to me was all important. Trusting to our good genes and good training, mother had thus early allowed us to enter society, and this our first winter was fast and pleasantly passing away."

"Mother, though a church-member, laid few restrictions on our pleasures; ever giving us good advice and listening to our tales of joy or sorrow. We thought none could ever be blessed with a mother so good and kind. But after a time mother's quick, practiced eye discovered that two young men, with whom we had been acquainted from childhood, were quite attentive to us, and that, almost unconsciously, we were favoring their attentions. We knew they were not just such companions as mother would choose for us, but of course there could be no harm in accepting their courtesies, as we never expected to marry them—of course not. Matters were in this shape when mother called us to her room for a talk. With a good deal of feeling, which seemed to me uncalled for, she told us of the influence of such companions, and requested us firmly to decline receiving any further attention from them. Mina sat pale and trembling, and for the first time I knew that her gentle heart loved Frank. But the struggle was soon over, and throwing her arms around our mother's neck, she sobbed out, 'Mother dear, forgive me, and it shall be as you say. I know you are my best friend, and you know what is best for me!'

"But alas! how differently I answered the same request. My heart burned with uncontrolled passion, and I felt that the mother that bore me and had so tenderly loved and cared for me, had all of a sudden become a tyrant, and was interfering with my rights. Had I not read of cruel parents and heroic daughters who ventured all for love and triumphed? I did not once stop to seriously think whether I did truly and sensibly love Leon, or whether he ever respected me. But with a feeling of chagrin at Mina's weakness, I very decidedly and consequently told that dear mother that in everything else I would try to obey her, but in affairs of the heart I must be allowed to do as I pleased—that I thought I was capable of managing my own business, and she need not hold herself responsible for my conduct in this matter."

"Years have come and gone since then; but never, never can I forget the look of anguish that came into my poor mother's face, as she told me faithfully of the consequences of my disobedience. But warning reason and entreaty were alike unheeded, and I blindly, madly yielded to be led by my passions, despising the commands and trampling under my feet the tears of my poor, poor mother, all the time thinking myself dreadfully persecuted and abused. Very naturally, feeling myself forsaken by mother and Mina, when in fact I had torn myself away, I avoided their society as much as possible and as naturally sought Leon and a few others whose sympathies I could enlist. I did not like to see my mother. Her sad anxious face sent a thrill of pain and remorse through my soul. But my proud heart would not yield. What right had she to

choose my associates for me? As though I had not sense enough to take care of myself, I would often say. And then, a little softened, if she would only trust me I should feel better."

"Days, weeks, and months passed, and I still persisted in my reckless course; at last, cautiously, often deceiving my mother who could not believe that falsehood could find a place in my heart. If conscience reproved, I stifled it by blaming the tyranny of my mother. After a while, through the influence of my chosen friends, I gained courage to bid a bold defiance to all authority, and spend as much time as I chose in Leon's society. 'I knew his words were rather loose, but he was young and was only 'sowing his wild oats.' He always treated me with respect and gentlemanly courtesy, and I had no doubt I could win him to the right way."

"Time passed, and mother's health failed slowly, till, one day, I was called from the scene of gaiety with Leon at my side, to stand beside my mother's death bed, my poor, murdered mother."

"Amy, who had drawn closer and closer to her aunt, threw her arms around her and cried passionately, '—O Auntie, am I killing my mother? I'll go and ask her to forgive me right off!'

"Stop just a moment, dear," said her aunt; "let me finish my tale, that you may never forget it. My passionate grief knew no bounds. I cursed myself as the murderer of my precious mother. I felt that I had not only killed my mother but broken my gentle sister's heart and made us both orphans indeed. I had tried so hard to forget Leon's faults and see only his kind gentle manners, had tried so hard to believe that I could and did love him, and that the fates had decreed it so, that he had really become a necessity of my being; and when after my first passionate burst of sorrow, he came with real sympathy and offered me his heart and hand, forgetting the counsel of my sainted mother—shutting my heart to the entreaties of a loving sister, I accepted and we were soon married."

Folding Amy in one long, loving embrace she held her to her heart while silent tears fell fast on her head. Kissing her tenderly she said, softly,—"Now, darling, the curtain must fall over those ten years of married anguish, till your Uncle Leon found an untimely grave."

"O Auntie! can it be possible that one so good and gentle as you, were ever such a passionate, headstrong girl as I am?"

"Yes, dear Amy, and I hope the bitter experience of my life will bless my thoughtless little niece. Dear child, seek not only your gentle mother's forgiveness, but humbly and earnestly implore his pardon and wisdom whose love alone can keep you in the slippery paths of youth. Seek for a new heart. 'A heart in every thought renewed.' Seek in God's word as for hid treasures, and now are the chains of habit and the flattering smiles of the world have bound you in a captivity that only divine judgments can break, consecrate your talents, your will, your all, to your Heavenly Father's service. Yield to him now while your heart is comparatively tender. Will you not, my dear niece?"

Amy remained thoughtful a moment, then placing her hand into her aunt's, and looking up with calm but tearful eyes said, earnestly, "I will Auntie, pray for me."

THE SAILS OF A VESSEL.

One fine Sunday afternoon, Clara and her father were seated on the balcony of a hotel overlooking the sea. They had come to spend a few weeks, and they enjoyed watching the great ocean, the waves of which broke at their feet.

Vessels of all shapes and sizes were sailing before them—some going north, some south—some lighted up by the sun, others under the shadows of the clouds, but all in movement.

"Father," said Clara, "I never could understand how the wind should drive the vessels in more than one direction at the same time. Look, there are two with their sails filled, and yet one is coming nearer to us, while the other is going away from us."

"Everything depends upon the way in which the sails are set," said her father, and he explained the various ways of setting the sails. Clara became very much interested in the directions in which the different vessels in view were sailing, and her father, pleased by her attention, continued:

"It is just the same with men and their lives in the world. Some are going toward heaven, driven by the same wind that drives others towards ruin. To become rich makes one man generous and another mean. Sorrow hardens some and softens others. I have been thinking of poor Fred Merrill, who appeared to learn so much that is in the same school in which our Edmund was taught only good."

"I understand now," said Clara; "I remember going to church with one of my friends, and I was much interested in the sermon. I came out of church full of what I had heard, and resolved to practice it. I was astonished when my companion said, 'What a stupid sermon! I thought it would never end!'

"Yes, my dear," said her father; "the gospel itself saves some, and condemns others. It is a solemn thought that every good we refuse is no good to us. Every warning that we attend to is a benefit; but if it is neglected we only grow hardened in evil. Every gift of God is good if we use it without abusing it. We ought to try to get some good out of every experience we have, and then we shall grow and be strong."—Child at Home.

THE BOOK OF THANKS.

"I feel so vexed and out of temper with Ben," cried Mark, "that I really must—"

"Do something in revenge?" inquired his cousin, Cecilia.

"No; look over my Book of Thanks."

"What's that?" said Cecilia, as she saw him turning over the leaves of a copy-book nearly full of writing, in a round text hand.

"Here it is," said Mark, then read aloud—

"March 8. Ben lent me his hat."

"Here again: 'Jan. 4. When I lost my shilling, Ben made it up to me kindly.' Well," observed the boy turning down the leaf, "Ben is a good boy, after all."

"What do you note down in that book?" said Cecilia, looking over his shoulder with some curiosity.

"All the kindnesses that are ever shown me; you would wonder how many there are. I find a great deal of good from marking them down. I do not forget them, as I might do if only trusting to my memory, so I hope that I am not often ungrateful; and when I am cross or out of temper, I almost always feel good-hearted again if I only look over my book."—New-Jerusalem Messenger.

INDEPENDENCE.—Let a child wait very much upon himself; do not let him be waited upon, hand-and-foot, by servants; it will make him a poor creature if you do. Besides, a child is never so happy as when he waits upon himself, and when he can be useful to himself and others. A spirit of independence should be instilled early into him; it will make him a manly little fellow; he will then truly know

"the glorious privilege
 Of being generous."—BURNS.

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"Amy, who had drawn closer and closer to her aunt, threw her arms around her and cried passionately, '—O Auntie, am I killing my mother? I'll go and ask her to forgive me right off!'

"Stop just a moment, dear," said her aunt; "let me finish my tale, that you may never forget it. My passionate grief knew no bounds. I cursed myself as the murderer of my precious mother. I felt that I had not only killed my mother but broken my gentle sister's heart and made us both orphans indeed. I had tried so hard to forget Leon's faults and see only his kind gentle manners, had tried so hard to believe that I could and did love him, and that the fates had decreed it so, that he had really become a necessity of my being; and when after my first passionate burst of sorrow, he came with real sympathy and offered me his heart and hand, forgetting the counsel of my sainted mother—shutting my heart to the entreaties of a loving sister, I accepted and we were soon married."

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"Yes, dear Amy, and I hope the bitter experience of my life will bless my thoughtless little niece. Dear child, seek not only your gentle mother's forgiveness, but humbly and earnestly implore his pardon and wisdom whose love alone can keep you in the slippery paths of youth. Seek for a new heart. 'A heart in every thought renewed.' Seek in God's word as for hid treasures, and now are the chains of habit and the flattering smiles of the world have bound you in a captivity that only divine judgments can break, consecrate your talents, your will, your all, to your Heavenly Father's service. Yield to him now while your heart is comparatively tender. Will you not, my dear niece?"

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