

## TRUST.

BY M. K. F.

Something better than my own way  
My Father is showing me, day by day:  
How to enter that realm of rest—  
That refuge of spirits by sin oppressed.

My restless will runs to and fro,  
Hurriedly seeking some great work to do;  
Or filled is my heart with deep despair  
Because of the sinfulness hidden there.

"Consider the lilies how they grow;  
No thought of wearisome toil do they know;  
From rain and sun and fragrant air,  
They gather their beauty and perfume rare.

So, in the sunshine of God's love,  
Waiting his showers of grace from above,  
I dwell in him through trusting prayer,  
While he robes my soul in his righteousness fair.

## Our Serial.

## MURIEL'S KEY-NOTE.

BY AGNES GIBBERNE.

## CHAPTER XL.

## THE LETTER THAT CAME.

Nobody saw much of Mr. Rivers that evening. He chose to sit gloomily apart in his study—sure sign with him of a disturbed mind. Lillias was poorly from the effects of her fright, and Mrs. Bertram waited upon her with a dignified species of motherly anxiety. She swept about gracefully, and was never hurried, but had eyes and ears for nobody else.

What Mr. Rivers did with himself could only be conjectured. Arthur being once sent on an errand to the study, was questioned on his return, and briefly related that "Grandpapa seemed bothered."

"Where was he sitting?"  
"In his arm-chair."  
"What was he doing?"  
"Nothing."  
"Not reading?"  
"Nothing."  
"What had he said?"  
"Almost nothing."

Arthur seemed disposed to do the same, and escaped. Later, he confided to Muriel that he had walked in by mistake, thinking a voice answered, and had found Mr. Rivers with his head down on the table, and a white handkerchief spread over it.

"And, Muriel, when he started up, you don't know how wretched he looked."

"Poor grandfather."  
"I couldn't tell you!" said the boy.  
"It was that sort of hungry gnawing look that one sees sometimes in a poor half-starved person. He looked just miserable. I thought he would be furious at my mistake, but he only said, 'Be off!' So I put down the parcel, and made myself scarce in a hurry."

"I believe he longs for John every day of his life," said Muriel.  
"Then why doesn't he send for him?"

"He would be vexed at things John does, and he prides himself on never changing."

"It's the stupidest thing a man can ever pride himself on," said Arthur indignantly. "It is either making out oneself a pope, and infallible, or else declaring that one will never be wiser than to-day. No sense in it either way. I believe nine people in ten count themselves wiser, without knowing it."

After which Arthur drew in his horns, not being wont to let out so much. Muriel wished sometimes that he would be more open with her, but she did not take much pains to bring about that end.

At breakfast next morning the post came in as usual, bringing, for a wonder, only a single letter, that being addressed to Muriel. Letters were always handed on a salver to the old gentleman. Muriel saw his moustaches curl, as if on receipt of an excitement-telegram from his brain.

"I am not going to have this sort of thing!"

"What sort?" asked Mrs. Bertram easily.

"Letters from that house. Do you hear, Muriel? I won't have it. So there."

"Grandpapa, I did not ask for any answer," said Muriel.

"Asked or no, it has come. I tell you I won't have any more of this."

He had the letter in his hand, which shook visibly. "Is it from Rose to me?" asked Muriel, with a half-unconscious stress on the last word.

"It is from Rosamund Rivers to nobody. She has the right to address no member of my household."

"There may be some message to Sybel in it," said Mrs. Bertram in a careless tone, secretly afraid of something unpleasant, for Muriel looked very white and rigid.

"I don't care. Sybel or no Sybel, it shall go behind the fire."

"I should like to see it first, if you please," said Muriel, in a constrained voice.

"You would like—you—"

"Yes, if you please."

A word more would have undone the effect. Mr. Rivers frowned sternly at her.

"Very well. Take your choice. Either I put the letter behind the fire, or you read it aloud to me in my study."

"I will read it aloud."

"Come, then."

Mr. Rivers went off with a jerk, and Muriel followed. She was used to the peremptory tone, and only trembled at possible utterances in the letter. Yet she trusted to John's prudence.

"Now!" said Mr. Rivers. "Mind—no omissions or alterations."

And Muriel began:

"My own darling Muriel—"

"Fudge," said Mr. Rivers.

"Your letter made me very unhappy this morning, for our poor Sybel, and Chesney too. O it does seem sad, but God knows best, and some day we shall see the why."

"Go on. It is not worth dawdling over," said Mr. Rivers.

"John and I think with you that it will bring them home before long. India will indeed seem dreary to them after this. I don't know whether grandfather will like me to write to you—"

"Don't know indeed!" said Mr. Rivers in a subterranean growl.

"But I can't resist sending a few words. We often think about you all, and John never prays without bringing in your name and grandfather's."

"Much obliged," said Mr. Rivers; but the working of his features was not all scornful.

"If things were but different! O we do so long for that. John saw grandfather yesterday, and when he came home he was quite upset, and sat with his face hidden, hardly able to speak. You know it takes a good deal to overcome John, but he never can shake off the old clinging to poor grandfather, and anything to do with old days has such power over him."

This part of the letter was received in dead silence. Muriel found her task a nervous one. She stopped to clear her throat, and Mr. Rivers said stiffly, "Make haste, if you please."

"But we do hope that some day all will come right. The children are well, and often talk of 'dear Cousin Muriel'—Connie especially. John will write a postscript, so I must stop. Believe me, dearest, ever your own loving cousin

"Rosie."

"Enough, in all conscience," said Mr. Rivers. "What does that fellow say next?"

Muriel had glanced on slightly.

"Grandpapa, you will not enjoy hearing it."

"Finish," said Mr. Rivers conclusively.

Muriel had to obey.

"Just a few words, dear Muriel. We are writing to Sybel, and will not send messages by you. Do not talk again about 'not joining.' There can be no music if the heart is not in tune."

"Hey?" said Mr. Rivers.

"Grandpapa, I only said something about the difficulty of feeling happy, as things are now," said Muriel, with drooping head.

"Get on. I suppose he has sent a sermon."

"Remember those words, 'Rejoice always,' and try to live in their spirit. So you have not found your key-note yet."

"Hey?" repeated Mr. Rivers.

"It was only an idea of ours, about every one having to play a tune in life."

"Very childish idea," said Mr. Rivers, who was like a good many other people in condemning always what he did not understand.

"You have not found your key-note yet. I thought of you a day or two ago, when I came across these words—'Shall I read them, grandpapa? Only a quotation about music?'"

"Go on."

Muriel obeyed once more.

"Before a tune can be created, a certain sound, whether high or low in pitch, must be chosen, and fixed as the key-note (governing note) of the coming tune. Immediately, according to those laws of nature by which God has tuned our ears and souls, six other notes spring forth at measured distances from the key-note, claiming the sole right of attendance upon it."

"You know this well enough, but it is a good clear statement. Now you have to find your key-note. I thought of the word 'Love' for you, and then there flashed into my mind the graces of the Spirit following—'joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.' There are the seven. Perhaps in spiritual things we may say there are nine, and add the two last—'meekness, temperance.' What a key-board you will have! Sweet and holy tunes may be belocked for from such a group—love to God and man your governing note, and each of the others falling into its right place. Take care that the note 'joy' is very often sounded in your tune. This is a long

postscript, but I have not often the opportunity of giving you a thought.

"Believe me, your affectionate Brother,

"JOHN RIVERS."

"Brother! No," said Mr. Rivers harshly. "Well, that is a good thing over. A farrago of nonsense."

To Muriel it seemed that the harshness was somewhat forced. If there were any softening, however, it proved to be of short duration. She went away quietly, not a little surprised at being allowed to keep her letter. But when again she saw Mr. Rivers, he said in his most severe manner:

"Mind—the next letter that comes goes behind the fire unopened."

And Muriel knew that he meant it.

## THE BRIDAL WINE-CUP.

"Pledge with wine, pledge with wine," cried the young and thoughtless Harvey Wood. "Pledge with wine," ran through the bridal party.

The beautiful bride grew pale; the decisive hour had come. She pressed her white hands together, and the leaves of the bridal wreath trembled on her brow; her breath came quicker, and her heart beat wilder.

"Yes, Marion, lay aside your scruples for this once," said the judge in a low tone, going toward his daughter; "the company expect it. Do not so seriously infringe upon the rules of etiquette. In your own home do as you please; but in mine, for this once, please me."

Pouring a brimming cup, they held it, with tempting smiles, toward Marion. She was very pale, though composed; and her hand shook not, as smiling back, she gracefully accepted the crystal tempter, and raised it to her lips. But scarcely had she done so when every hand was arrested by her piercing exclamation of "O, how terrible!"

"What is it?" cried one and all, thronging together, for she had slowly carried the glass at arm's length, and was fixedly regarding it.

"Wait," she answered, while a light, which seemed inspired, shone from her dark eyes—"wait, and I will tell you. I see," she added slowly, pointing one finger at the sparkling ruby liquid, "a sight that beggars all description; and yet listen; I will paint it for you, if I can. It is a lovely spot; tall mountains, crowned with verdure, rise in awful sublimity around; a river runs through, and bright flowers grow to the water's edge. But there a group of Indians gather; they flit to and fro, with something like sorrow upon their dark brows. And in their midst lies a manly form, but his cheek, how deathly! his eyes wild with the fitful fire of fever. One friend stands before him—nay, I should say, kneels; for see, he is pillowing that poor head upon his breast.

"O! the high, holy-looking brow. Why should death mark it, and he so young? Look, how he throws back the damp curls! See him clasp his hands! Hear his thrilling shrieks for life! Mark how he clutches at the form of his companion, imploring to be saved! O! hear him call piteously his father's name, see him twine his fingers together, as he shrieks for his sister—his only sister, the twin of his soul, weeping for him in his distant native land."

"See!" she exclaimed, while the bridal party shrank back, the untasted wine trembling in their faltering grasp, and the judge fell overpowered upon his seat—"see! his arms are lifted to heaven—he prays—how wildly! for mercy; hot fever rushes through his veins. He moves not; his eyes are set in their sockets; dim are their piercing glances; in vain his friend whispers the name of father and sister—death is there. Death—and no soft hand, no gentle voice, to soothe him. His head sinks back; one convulsive shudder—he is dead!"

A groan ran through the assembly; so vivid was her description, so unearthly her look, so inspired her manner, that what she described seemed actually to have taken place then and there. They noticed, also, that the bridegroom hid his face in his hands, and was weeping.

"Dead!" she repeated again, her lips quivering faster and faster, and her voice more broken; "and there they scoop him a grave; and there, without a shroud, they lay him down in that damp, reeking earth, the only son of a proud father, the only idolized brother of a fond sister. There he lies, my father's son, my own twin brother, a victim to this deadly poison. Father!" she exclaimed, turning suddenly, while the tears rained down her beautiful cheeks, "father, shall I drink it now?"

The form of the old judge was convulsed with agony. He raised not his head, but in a smothered voice he faltered:

"No, no, my child; no!"

She lifted the glittering goblet, and letting it suddenly fall to the floor, it was dashed in a thousand pieces. Many a tearful eye watched her move-

ment, and instantaneously every wine-glass was transferred to the marble table on which it had been prepared. Then, as she looked at the fragments of crystal, she turned to the company, saying: "Let no friend hereafter who loves me tempt me to peril my soul for wine. Not firmer are the everlasting hills than my resolve, God helping me, never to touch or taste the poison cup. And he to whom I have given my hand, who watched over my brother's dying form in that last solemn hour, and buried the dead wanderer there by the river in that land of gold, will, I trust, sustain me in that resolve."

His glistening eyes, his sad, sweet smile, were her answer. The judge left the room, and when, an hour after, he returned, and with a more subdued manner took part in the entertainment of the bridal guests, no one could fail to read that he had determined to banish the enemy forever from his princely home.—Selected.

## HOW THE TALENTS WERE DOUBLED.

He was a "good and faithful servant"; he doubled the talents given him; he was rewarded accordingly; that is about all the story tells the ordinary reader. But there is a little intimation how he managed to double them. He "went and traded with the same." He turned them over, and made them a source of profit.

Just how he traded is not told in the parable; but if it was in the line of the best trading nowadays, it was by quick sales and small profits. If he had gone into the market-place with his ten talents, and waited for a chance to make his hundred per cent. all at once, he would probably have waited till his lord came back and asked for an accounting; and he would have had no more to show for his stewardship than the unfaithful servant who hid his lord's money. At the end of the first week he had made very little profit, but he was glad to get that little; and he was able to make a little more the next week; and more still the next, until, when his lord came home, the accumulated profit had doubled the original capital. Half a per cent. profit is very little, but half a per cent. a week is thirty-five per cent. a year; and the lord of that servant might have come back in scarce more than two years and found his capital doubled, and all done in insignificant little profits.

Is not this very much the way it is in Christian service? Men often think they will not do anything for Christ until they can do something noticeable and handsome. They want their talents to bring in a big profit on each transaction. But those big opportunities happen very seldom. Every week and every day there are little opportunities; chances for a word, a smile, a cup of cold water. Each of these is an investment for the Master, not at a large profit, but at a satisfactory one; and when the Lord cometh the grand total of profit we can hand in to him as our account will be made up of these little half per cent. transactions, which count up in the end more than the large ones. It is on these that we get compound interest. It is these that show the good Christian financier, who took his talents and traded every day with the same, accepting every opportunity to make a little, and thus gained the "Well done." It is the man who does common duties every day to the best of his powers, neglecting no smallest occasions, that gives the world the example of a living Christian character, and secures a larger harvest of blessing than many an ambitious and noisy professor of religion.—Independent.

## RANDOM READINGS.

Faith puts a strengthening plaster to the back of courage.—Spurgeon.

None are so truly courageous as those who are truly religious.—Wm. Secker.

To the flippant objection that God has no need of our learning, Dr. South replied, "Much less has he need of your ignorance."

We shall never know the value of time till it has slipped from us, and left us in eternity. Dearest Lord! wilt thou leave us then with thee?—Faber.

Receive Christ with all your heart. As there is nothing in Christ that may be refused, so there is nothing in you from which he must be excluded.—John Flavel.

When we pray to be helped we should ask for the improvement of the faculty that will enable us to help ourselves. It is not a new use of conscience, judgment, imagination, we need, but a better use of them.

Every man goes into the future world with a character on his hands. He will have it there on his hands and must do something with it. He ought to be careful about what he is to take with him inseparably into eternity.—Castle.

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