

## Our Serial.

## MURIEL'S KEY-NOTE.

BY AGNES GIBBERN.

## CHAPTER IX.

## JOHN'S HOME.

There was a great charm about Rosamund Rivers. She had nothing of the Spanish princess, or of any other species of royalty, in her appearance, being small and plump and blue-eyed. But her face gleamed with perpetual good-humour, and its varying smile rippled like summer waves upon the sand.

Traces of tears showed in those same bright eyes, as she sat on the tiger-skin rug one evening. Rosamund never took thought for personal dignities, least of all when she had her five boys about her. The floor seemed just as well suited to her little person as a sofa or an arm-chair. Constance, the only girl and the eldest of six children, chose to sit decorously on the stuffed tiger-head, with the fire-light dancing alike over its glassy eyes and her veil of fair hair. The aim of jackets, knickerbockers, and baby-frocks seemed to be to gain the nearest possible position with regard to Rosamund. She was perfectly willing, and laughingly submitted to the boyish struggles around her. Tears she might have shed, but nothing could keep Rosamund long from smiling, and she knew not the meaning of the word depression.

Amid a chorus of laughing cries, John Rivers walked in.

"O papa! papa! give me a ride on your back—and me—and me."

John evidently felt that he had no choice but to obey. He laid aside the grave face with which he had entered, and trotted one after another round the room with exemplary patience. Rosamund looked on, beaming.

"Willie has been such a good boy to-day," she said. "He is at the top of his class; and Anson has good marks too."

"There, that will do," said John, after a nod of pleasure at each praiseworthy little boy. "Papa is tired."

"Are you, John? O then don't let the children trouble you. Connie will take them all away."

Sweet-faced Connie seemed to have her troop of small brothers under absolute control. She marshalled them out of the room like a little school-mistress, without a protest on their part. Rosamund was plainly a good disciplinarian.

John threw himself into the easy-chair, with the relaxed look of a man who has been on the stretch.

"Whom do you think I have seen, Rosa?"

"Whom do you think I have heard from?"

"Who?"

"Muriel."

John's start was something unwonted.

"You don't mean to say she has had leave?"

"I suppose so. She writes her letter, not knowing in the least, she says, whether she will be allowed to send it off. By its coming I can only imagine that she was allowed. John, there is sad news from India. The twins are gone."

"The twins?"

"Yes—cholera, and very sudden. Poor Sybel! O I am so grieved."

"I saw something had been distressing you."

"I don't know how they will bear such a loss. It is just heart-breaking. But read the letter."

John pored over it silently for some minutes, meditating by the way.

"I have been wondering whether to answer her," said Rosamund.

"Answer her, by all means; only don't say anything that you would object to having made public. Whether your letter will be allowed to reach Muriel is doubtful, but you can make the attempt."

"If I didn't dislike the feeling of it, I would disguise my writing in the address."

"No, no—have all open and above-board," said John, as Muriel would have said in his place.

"I know it won't do—but the poor girl does long so to see something of us."

"This loss, as she says, will probably bring Chesney and Sybel home, Rosa."

For Major Chesney Rivers, youngest son of the old gentleman of the Manor, was only some six or seven years older than John Rivers, grandson and rightful heir of the same. And the two having been together as brothers under one roof, from John's babyhood, the position of each as uncle and nephew had scarcely been recognized. John seemed to stand half-way between the two generations. Chesney Rivers at this date was in the prime of life, not more than seven or eight and thirty.

Had John's father lived, he would have reached the age of fifty-five. Constance Irwin, the disowned elder daughter, followed near him, being ten years older than Mrs. Bertram.

So it came to pass that John's feeling about Chesney Rivers was more that of a brother than a nephew. The fact of Chesney having married one younger than his own wife, and one who was likewise as her sister, tended to strengthen this state of affairs.

"Do you think their coming will make any difference to us?" asked Rosamund.

"As to my grandfather? That is the question! Not likely, I am afraid."

"If any one can do anything Chesney can."

John smiled rather sadly. "If any one could do anything, John Rivers could. That would once have been said. I confess my fear is that Chesney may rather get himself into difficulties on our account."

"I have never told Sybel exactly how things are," said Rosamund wistfully. "It would have been a comfort, John—but you wished me not. And Muriel seems not to have spoken out either. Their sending a message through her proves that they can't understand what separation it is."

"No. If they come home they will soon find out."

"But what will they think? What will they do? Sybel not to come to see me! Why, it is impossible. John, what a miserable thing an uncontrolled temper is!"

"My dear, don't you spoil any of your boys. That lies at the bottom of it. He never had his will crossed in childhood."

"Then his mother was downright cruel. Why, he makes for himself more trouble and headache than half-a-dozen other people's troubles put together," said Rosamund. "I can't think how he bears it all, for my part."

"Don't you care to know whom I have seen?" asked John.

"O yes—I am forgetting. I meant to find out. Who is it? Mr. Bertrid? Mr. Tottridge?"

"My grandfather."

"Why, John! Why didn't you tell me before? How did he look? You haven't spoken with him?"

"Yes. He was out with Lilius—driving furiously as usual—and the horse came to grief in a hedge. I don't precisely know how it happened. Lily was not hurt, but she looked very white. The horse was limping, and the traces were broken, and the foot-board was smashed. I stopped to offer my services, and Lily told me that this was the third upset within twelve months, but she seemed almost afraid to look at me."

"And Grandfather?"

"He gave me as distinct a cold shoulder as one man ever had from another."

"Would he not let you help him?"

"He said, 'No, I thank you.' I said, 'Lilius looks pale, and the Rectory is nearer than the Manor. May she not come and rest?'"

"And he—"

"Said—'I thank you, no'—with sufficient emphasis."

"And you?" Rosamund asked breathlessly.

"I made another attempt, spoke just as I used to do, and said, 'Grandfather, we might splice this up easily enough. I have not quite forgotten how to do a bit of carpentering. Do you remember what a good hand I was once?' He came a step nearer, holding himself like a ramrod, looked me straight in the face, and said, angrily, 'Will—you—go, if you please?'"

"Then I can be of no use?" I said. "None," he answered curtly. So I walked on, and sent a man to them."

Then there was a silence. Rosamund stood gazing into the fire, with her eyes full. When she glanced up, John had his face buried in his hands.

"O John, don't!" she said, but he did not move.

Rosamund came close, and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"You don't mind so very much, do you? It is nothing new."

He gave her no answer. Even Rosamund had scarcely realized till that moment the closeness of the tie between grandfather and grandson.

"Some day things will be set right. Don't you believe they will? I do. He must forgive you, sooner or later. It isn't as if he had any real reason."

"More hopeful, if he had," muttered John huskily. "He would not then have to confess himself in the wrong, and the yielding might come from me."

"But you won't let it distress you. He was not likely to give way at the moment of meeting you. It seems to me that Muriel's letter being allowed to come is a good sign. Doesn't it to you?"

"I don't know. I saw no good signs to-day."

"I didn't know you cared so very much. At least, I mean, one gets used to the state of things," said Rosa-

mund, as he leant back, looking depressed.

"Seeing him brought back old days. Well—no use to moan over spilt milk," said John, with a deep sigh. "Only he is growing old."

"He is old."

"Aye—seventy-five. How many more years of life are likely? I don't think I could stand his being taken—without one kind word to me."

John started up, and went to the window. Rosamund, good little wife that she was, held quietly aloof, and presently he came back.

"Well—it is God's will," he said. "I believe our prayers will be heard—whether through Chesney's influence or any other means. It does not matter how. Somehow, we shall be heard."

And the door opened.

"Mr. Ray, ma'am," said the servant.

YOUNG MEN VOID OF UNDERSTANDING.

In the course of his "New Year's Address to Young Men," which appears in the *Evangelical Magazine*, the Rev. Arthur Mursell eloquently observes, in a passage that it would be well if the class referred to would read and ponder—"It ought to go without saying that wholesome pleasures are God's good gifts, and not the devil's decoys. But let me tell you where the harm comes in. It comes with the wretched creed of the poor aimless rake who votes home 'slow,' and clubs and orgies 'fast.' If you young men who are at home make a mother's heart to ache when you might make it dance, there comes in the harm. There are brigades of feather-headed fools, authorities on hats and trousers, and oracles on canes and collars, who would call a meeting 'bad form' which made a challenge on the mind or brain deeper than that which sought an opinion on the breed of a puppy, or a 'tip' for the 'Legger.' But your discussion class must be slow indeed if it is slower than the flat and sterile monotone of drawl which is the *patois* of such as these. It must be mindless itself if there is not a sparkle in its flow more bright than the fume of the billiard and the card-room, amidst which their life vegetates. The same witless jests; the same badinage; the same heartless gambling; the same music-hall ribaldry; the same humdrum; the same profanation of all sacred feeling, and satires on fatherhood and home. All this in exchange for a sister's smile, a mother's voice, a wife's endearment. Love bartered for a latch-key. Slow! Oh, ye poor maudlin convicts in the gang of guilt, working the treadmill of folly, waging and hazarding, what do you know of life? What life, or force, or humor is there in your round of indulgence, that you should pass us by as too dull for your brainless set? When did a spark of real wit flash from those lips? When did a throb of nobleness pervade that narcotic saturation? When did the fire of true friendship or true love glow in those eyes? This is what some young men delight in as 'fast life.' I tell you it is slow death; and I call on you, while manhood is undrugged, unpoisoned—for a mother's sake, a sister's sake, a wife's sake, a home's sake, which you are making desolate; for your own sake; for Christ's sake—to lift your head out of the Delilah lap where she has shorn you bare, taste what real life is, and shake off the traitor Passion for the angel Peace."

KEEP THE HEART YOUNG.

"Well, mother, how do you feel this morning?" asked a son of his mother the other day.

"Why my son, I feel just like sixteen. And truly she did look as bright and fresh and happy as a girl, notwithstanding that the snows of threescore and ten winters have whitened the auburn hair, and traces of care and sharp sorrows are visible in the once unfurrowed brow.

She had had troubles, and who has not, in this changeable world? She has seen the little child taken from her arms, and laid in the cold grave. She has been parted, by death's relentless hand, from husband, parents and grown-up children, who were, in their maturer years, her comfort and support. Still, amid all the changes and trials incident to a long life, she is cheerful and happy and as interested in all the details of this work-a-day world as if her life here were just commencing.

And herein lies the secret of her happiness and cheerfulness and youthful feelings—that she does not set apart and look with wise and reproachful eyes upon the pleasures of those around her. She does not say: "I am only in the way." But she is always thinking of the happiness of others, and sharing in their pleasures, and so keeps her own young.

Thoreau said: "None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm."

And we are obliged to admit this truth; for we see every day aged people sitting apart, and brooding over their own troubles, or vainly regretting some past folly or failure, or sighing over the ingratitude and selfishness of the world in general, never thinking that they are themselves a miserable example.

Who have so much cause for thankfulness and gratitude as the aged—those who have passed safely through years of changes and dangers, and who can still say: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me;" "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken."

The chief thing in keeping the heart young is to get out of self as much as possible; to have more of the spirit of the Master, who "pleased not himself;" to learn to see the bright side and sunshine of life, and let the dark and cloudy days pass by, and, with joyful anticipation, look forward to that other life, in that better world, where the inhabitants never grow old.

"SOWN IN OUR WEAKNESS."

"That picture is immortal," said a gentleman to Bonaparte, showing the result of the genius of a great master. "Immortal! how much longer will it last?" "Four or five hundred years," was the reply. Bonaparte's answer, "A fine immortality!" showed what he thought of eternal life that was bounded by five hundred years. A clergyman told us lately of a poor invalid, almost entirely paralyzed, who is, in very truth, though by the world unseen, doing immortal work. He can use his lips, and he holds a brush in his mouth, and thus paints texts from the Word of Life, that go abroad with their message of healing, winged by the yearning love of the artist who must do something for God. When the fruit sown in weakness shall be garnered in power, the Lord who is very pitiful will assuredly reveal blessings from these feeble efforts, to abide for all eternity. "I wish I could do more," we say sometimes, half fretfully, forgetting that if all other power be denied, we can at least tender to God a patient heart. Yet it is wonderful what power for service he mercifully leaves even with the least among us. We have in our mind the room of a private house which may be said to be truly consecrated to the Lord, and where strong men, perhaps above joining regular "classes" for Bible instruction, throng regularly to be told by a weak woman of the way of eternal life. The Master has need even of the feeblest. A respectable man who was gradually sinking into drunkenness went one afternoon to carry his little crippled daughter home from school, the weather being wet. He turned into his accustomed place at the public-house bar, and was about to settle himself there with a glass, when he felt a tear fall down on his strong hand, and looking at his child, he saw her face quivering all over, while "Father—don't!" seemed all her frightened lips could say. He put the glass down, and set out once more to carry the little cripple home. "I can't drink any more," he told his wife. That tear and that childish cry were used of God to strengthen him to resist the craving, and the helpless one of the household saved her father.—*The Quaker*.

RANDOM READINGS.

If God has called he will also open the door.—*Weighted and Wanting*.

The children of the married would be but ill cared for were there only the married to care for them.—*Weighted and Wanting*.

The due admixture of Christian worship and Christian work makes the true Christian life. Are these elements properly balanced in your life?—*Nashville Advocate*.

Things are unbearable just until we have them to bear. Their possibility comes with them; for we are not the roots of our own being.—*Weighted and Wanting*.

Satan recruits his ranks from the vagrants. Christ's twelve chosen men were workmen. The drifting boat drifts down the stream. Young aimlessness is the beginning of all iniquity.

The man who goes to church every Sunday, and yet trembles before chance, is a Christian only because Christ has claimed him, is not a Christian as having believed in him.—*Miracles*.

Talk about those subjects you have had long in your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.—*Holmes*.

Faith does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is put it has done them already, and is always engaged in doing them. You may as well separate burning and shining from fire as works from faith.—*Luther*.

**HALF A MILLION GARDENS**  
ARE ANNUALLY  
**SEEDS**  
Peter Henderson & Co.  
PLANTS  
Our Seed Warehouse, the largest in New York, are filled up with every appliance for the prompt and careful filling of orders.  
Our Catalogue for 1886, of 140 pages, containing colored plates, descriptions and illustrations of the NEWEST, BEST and RAREST SEEDS and PLANTS, will be mailed on receipt of 6 cts. (in stamps) to cover postage.  
**PETER HENDERSON & CO. 35 & 37 Cortlandt St., NEW YORK.**

**1886 GREGORY'S SEED CATALOGUE 1886**  
**FAIR SQUARE DEALING.**  
Believing that if a man has dealt equitably with his fellow-men his patrons are his best advertisers, I have always made inquiry of the character of my seeds among over a million of Farmers, Gardeners and Planters who have used them during the past thirty years. Raising a large portion of the seed sold, (few seedsmen raise the seed they sell) I was the first seedman in the United States to warrant (as per catalogue) their purity and freshness. My new Vegetable and Flower Seed Catalogue for 1886 will be sent FREE to all who write for it. Among an immense variety, my friends will find in it (and in none other) a new drumhead cabbage, just about as early as Henderson's, but nearly twice as large!  
James J. H. Gregory, Manchester, Mass.

**SUN LIFE Assurance Co., OF CANADA.**  
UNCONDITIONAL INCONTESTABLE LIFE POLICIES.  
Assets about \$1,300,000  
The objection is very often made to Life Assurance that the Companies may take advantage of some of the numerous and complicated conditions on the policies, and thus either avoid entirely the payment of claims, or compromise with the widow for a small sum. There is considerable force in this argument, but it cannot be urged indiscriminately against all Companies.  
THE SUN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF CANADA, issues absolutely unconditional policies. There is not one restriction of any kind on them. The assured may reside in any part of the world without giving notice or paying one cent of extra premium. He may change his occupation at will; he may travel, hunt or do anything else without any extra of any kind. The contrast is remarkable with other policies. Ask an Agent to show you one; it speaks for itself.

**WHY DO YOU SUFFER**  
When such valuable Remedies are within your reach.  
**LIFE OF MAN BITTERS**  
Will cure most all diseases of the Lungs, Liver and Kidneys, including the worst cases of Dropsy, and is certainly the best blood purifier known.

**INVIGORATING SYRUP**  
Cures Dyspepsia, Coughs, Colds, Headache, Worms; acts as a gentle physic, and should be kept in every household for all emergencies.

**ACADIAN LINIMENT**  
Cures Diphtheria and Sore Throat, Rheumatism, Quinsy, Cuts and Pains of all kinds, as well as for other ailments on man or beast.

**NERVE OINTMENT**  
Is truly a household necessity, and is used externally and internally, for the Lungs, Piles, Sores, Cuts, Burns, Scalds, Chapped Hands, Cutaneous Eruptions of the Skin, and a hundred ailments flesh is heir to.

**VEGETABLE PLASTER**  
Cures Boils, Cuts, Cracked Hands and Lame Back. Being put up in Tin Boxes it is one-third cheaper to use than those ready spread, beside being so much better.

**CERTAIN CHECK**  
Cures Cholera, Diarrhoea, and all like complaints in children and adults.

**EYE RELIEF**  
Cures all forms of Sore Eyes, Piles and Chillsains. Don't forget to try it this winter.

All the above preparations are Manufactured by C. GATES, SON & CO., Midway, N. S., and may be relied on. Send for Pamphlets of Cures. Sold everywhere.

Wholesale Agents, DAVIS, STAPLES & CO., GEO. H. DAVIS, J. M. WILEY, Fredericton, N. B. T. B. BARKER & SONS, R. W. MCCARTHY, St. John, N. B.

**St. John BUSINESS COLLEGE.**  
Old Fellows' Hall, Saint John, N. B.

We give as full and thorough a course of study as any Business College in Canada or the United States. Students do just what work as will be required of them when they enter a merchant's or accountant's office, preceded and accompanied by such training as will fit them to do that work intelligently and well.

Circulars, containing terms, course of study, &c., mailed free. Kerr's Book-keeping applied to any address on receipt of \$1. Students can enter at any time. Evening Classes re-open on MONDAY, Oct. 12.

10 Per Cent. Discount will be allowed those who enter for full Evening Term (6 months.)  
**DANIEL & BOYD.**  
S. KERR, Prin.

**MILLINERY OPENING.**  
BY late Steamers we have received large deliveries of NEW MILLINERY GOODS. Our Stock is now replete with all the most desirable Novelties for the present season.

**FANCY FEATHERS.**  
We are showing an extensive and varied collection of German and French Fancy Feathers, Wings, Plumes, Aligrettes, and Pompons, in all the most novel designs and colorings.

**ENGLISH & FRENCH HATS.**  
Every leading shape in Straw, Felt and Plush Hats, making a superb assortment.

**LATEST NOVELTIES.**  
Ribbons in Plush, Velvet, and Plush; also Satin and Tinsel Edged Novelty.

New Striped Plushes, Fancy Striped Terry and Trimming Materials. French Flowers, Jetted Sprays and Crowns.

Silks, Satins, Broches and Ottomans, Velvets and Trapes.  
All Orders entrusted to us receive careful attention and the selections are made by a competent staff.

**DANIEL & BOYD.**  
oct 16

**FOR SALE.**  
3,000 SACKS, SUITABLE FOR handling Grain.  
Low priced. P. NASE & SON, Indian town, St. John.

**CLIFTON HOUSE,**  
74 PRINCESS AND 143 GERMAIN STS.,  
**SAINT JOHN, N. B.**  
A. N. PETERS, PROPRIETOR.

**TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION.**  
HEATED BY STEAM THROUGHOUT.  
jan 20 1y  
**SPRING TRADE, 1886.**

**DANIEL & BOYD**  
Have received the following Goods for the Spring Trade:  
83 Cases WHITE COTTONS;  
300 Bales GREY COTTONS;  
2,000 Pieces Paris' Fancy SHIRTINGS;  
1,500 " St. Croix SHIRTINGS;  
1,100 " Fancy GINGHAMS;  
LANDS DOWN TWEEDS,  
COTTONADES,  
JEANS,  
LININGS,  
FRENCH CANVAS,  
WORSTED COATINGS, in Corkscrew, Cable Cord, Ripples, Ottomans, Diagonals, etc., etc.

A very large range of these Goods. A full line of KNITTING COTTONS, every shade and size. KNAX'S LINEN THREAD. BERLIN WOOLS. DRESSING AND FINE COMBS. COTTON HOSIERY, and a general assortment of Smallwares. All these Goods are direct from the manufacturers, and very low quotations will be given.  
**DANIEL & BOYD,**  
jan 27 LONDON HOUSE.