

SOME TIME.

Some time the grass will o'er us wave,
While we shall rest within the grave;
Some time the flowers will sweetly bloom
Above the spot that marks our tomb.

Some time the friends we now hold dear,
For us may shed the silent tear;
And, though we then may know it not,
We would not be by them forgot.

Some time our places will be filled;
Some time the soil by strange hands tilled;
Some time the flowers will bloom as fair
That other hands have trained with care.

Some time, when death has set its seal
Upon the lips that cannot feel
The pressure of that last, fond kiss—
As time rolls on shall we be missed?

Some time! Ah! soon that time will come
When we shall all be gathered home.
To shores celestial, where the blest
From worldly strife shall be at rest.

Our Serial.

MURIEL'S KEY-NOTE.

BY AGNES GIBERNE.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRACTISING AFTER PREACHING.

Muriel had yet a call to pay on her road home, and she stopped at the Maxwell's house, not in the least aware of some impatient eyes watching her movements from a distance.

It was a disorderly room into which she was ushered, by the no less untidy little maid-servant. Books lay everywhere, and papers filled up gaps. Montgomery was on a sofa—the sofa, rather, since the house contained not a second—with a large volume close to his eyes, and another open at his elbow.

There was also a little old lady in an arm-chair, with a green shade over her eyes, and some knitting in her hands. Blindness almost total in the mistress and housekeeper, combined with utter indifference to appearances on the part of the master, served to explain any lack of neatness in surroundings.

"May I come in?" Muriel asked, and Montgomery started up, letting his big volume fall with a bang.

"O I beg your pardon—oh, I beg—ah!" and a sharp twinge of pain showed in his face as he grasped Muriel's hand, steadying himself against the table. "Mother, here is Muriel."

"Mr. Maxwell, if you don't lie down directly, I shall go," said Muriel with decision. "I thought your knee was to be kept still."

"I assure you I have not moved for hours."

Muriel stood waiting, refusing to advance till he had regained his proper position. Then she crossed over, and very affectionately kissed the old lady. "That's a good girl," murmured Mrs. Maxwell. "I knew you wouldn't let a whole week go by without coming. It always cheers me to see you, my dear."

She talked of "seeing" still, after the fashion of the blind. Muriel sat holding her hand, listening to details of housekeeping troubles, giddiness of young servants, and bodily aches and pains.

"How are you all at home?" Montgomery broke in. "Arthur told me of your uncle's sad loss."

"I can't think how Sybel will bear it," said Muriel sorrowfully.

"She will be brought through. God will bring her through somehow. He doesn't lay on His children a heavier burden than they can bear. Men sometimes take a heavier burden of their own accord," added Montgomery in a meditative tone. "Yes, I have seen that done."

"It seems almost enough to kill her—so delicate as she is," Montgomery shook his head slowly—half in sympathy, half in dissent. "She has one child still!" Mrs. Maxwell remarked.

"Oh yes—the baby. But he can't take the place of the other two."

"No, my dear. No one can ever do that."

Muriel was silent for a minute. "Mr. Maxwell, do you want a compliment?" she suddenly asked. "Who from?"

"Grandpapa. He says you are a very sensible person."

"I am glad to hear it. Mr. Rivers does not often—does not think everyone that," said Mr. Maxwell, looking pleased.

"Not John, for instance."

"Ah, poor John!"

"Don't you care to hear how you are so sensible?"

"I should like it indeed—if you are not betraying confidence."

"Oh no. You keep your religion to yourself, and think what you like, and nobody is the wiser."

"Hum—yes—ah—just so," faltered Montgomery, blushing to the roots of his hair. "Oh yes; of course. I think I see Mr. Rivers' meaning."

Muriel said nothing. Montgomery turned more fully in her direction, leaning on his elbow, and trying with his short-sighted eyes to reach her face.

"You are sure he said just that, Muriel?"

"Yes. I was struck with the form of expression."

"Think what I like, and nobody the wiser. Just so," reiterated the unhappy tutor, not in the least wishing to confirm the assertion, but at a loss what else to say.

"I am sure he meant it most kindly," said Muriel.

"He meant it—no doubt—oh yes—no doubt," said Montgomery, with a beseeching look at Muriel. "Would you like it said of you?"

"I am only a woman," she said. "I may claim a right to have my own thoughts, but I should like folks to be the wiser for them."

And then she turned smilingly to chat with Mrs. Maxwell, leaving Montgomery in a crushed condition. Had Muriel meant reproach? Did she despise him for cowardliness? He reached that point while she was sitting there. After she was gone he went deeper.

His words to her at parting were—"I see you think I have been weak."

"You have been prudent," she said with a slight play of feature.

"Yes—prudent. That has been my aim. Without prudence no one could have taught long in Mr. Rivers' house. My great dread was always lest I should be banished."

"It would have been a great loss to us, if you had been."

"That I felt, though indeed the loss to myself would have been greater. But you see, if I had insisted on talking of my religious views, Mr. Rivers would soon have had enough of me."

"Yes, perhaps so," said Muriel.

"And I have tried, from time to time, to use my influence rightly with all of you—at least I trust so."

"I am sure you have."

"So perhaps after all it has been for the best that I have acted thus."

"It has been the smoothest course."

"But you are not satisfied. You think I have been too prudent. You would say that I have held my tongue too much."

"No, I would not say anything," she answered cheerfully. "I cannot teach you, Mr. Maxwell. Grandpapa's words struck me, and I thought they might strike you. That is all. Good-bye, and take care of your knee."

No efforts on the part of Mrs. Maxwell could draw him into conversation again that evening. She sat and yawned, poor old lady, and made occasional remarks about Muriel. But the silent mood gained the day. She yielded, and went quietly to sleep.

It was no small matter to Montgomery. Muriel to blame him! That was a new order of things. He was not humiliated, in the sense of suffering from wounded pride, being a man of lowly spirit, with little pride to be wounded. But he stood abashed.

Nobody the wiser for his thoughts; nobody the better for his religion! Was that it?

Not quite, and he was thankful to be able to say so much. He could point to John, Muriel, Arthur—perhaps also to Sybel and Rosamund—as more or less gainers from his influence. But even there the influence had been chiefly of the indirect kind.

Had he verily smothered his religion into a back corner? Had he preferred the smooth and easy path of a cowardly prudence? Had he been unfaithful to his God?

For Montgomery Maxwell was in his heart as well as in profession a Christian man, only a somewhat timid if not a temporising one. And these were grave questions for a servant of God. Muriel did not know to what a night of self-searching she had condemned him. His knee was not the better for agitation of mind next day, and Arthur, for almost the first time within his own recollection, found an absorbed and listless teacher.

Meanwhile Muriel had an encounter on her way homewards. She walked quickly to avoid being overtaken by the dusk; and where the Upper Claverton Road branched off from the Lower, she turned downwards. Just then she heard, almost without noticing it, a rustle among the trees, and some one ran lightly down the green bank. Muriel lifted her eyes and saw—Cramer Ray.

"Forgive me," he said. "I knew you must pass here."

Muriel's face grew as colorless as it had done the night before. She gave him her hand, but simply said, "I cannot wait; I am forbidden."

"Will you not walk home by the upper road?"

"Not if you do. Your way and mine must not be the same."

"Nothing more than that after eight years?" he said, as if he felt himself slighted. Then, with a change of tone, which brought over her a sudden rush of suffocating feelings, "Muriel, this once—only this once—just a few paces."

He could not see how sorely she was pulled by a very agony of temptation. Eight years truly had passed, as he said, since the half-formed and

roughly-sundered engagement had shaken her girlish nature to its core. The two had never met since. Now it might be a doubtful question how far the man who had satisfied the young unformed mind of seventeen years could offer all required by the matured character and intellect of twenty-five. Cramer Ray was not of a nature to expand greatly. He had reached his full growth early, and there stood still. Muriel had opened out rapidly and would do so more. But no such doubt occurred to her in these few seconds, and little was required to dazzle her in contrast with her own home. Duty held a strong sway, however, over Muriel's actions.

"This once—for a few paces," he pleaded. "It may be years before we meet again."

He did not see the struggle. He only knew how she drew up her head. "No, Mr. Ray. I must say good-bye."

"I must see you again," he said impetuously. "Where shall it be? If I come to the Manor, I shall be turned from the door like a dog. Will you meet me at Copenhagen Villa?—no, you won't"—as he read the expression of her face. "Forgive me again. You think it would be underhand. But the matter looks different to me. I am not bound. And surely he is utterly unreasonable—almost in his second childhood. Is there no way?"

"I can do nothing. Come to the Manor, if you like," said Muriel, calmly; "but I cannot promise you admittance."

"And will you give me no word of encouragement?"

"I am absolutely forbidden. Mr. Ray, this must not go on."

"Muriel—Muriel—would you, if you were not forbidden?"

Her lips were quivering beyond the power of repression. Cramer caught her hand in his own, but she drew it away.

"No, I can say nothing. I will not say anything. Good-bye."

"Good-bye—but I can wait now," he said.

She heard the words as she turned away, and they were the last spoken. Cramer stood looking after her in fervent admiration, at the moment fully satisfied. When he came to think the matter over coolly, it seemed to him that he had received very scant response indeed.

Muriel went swiftly and resolutely homewards, never stopping till she found herself in her own room. There she cast hat and gloves aside, and set herself to a restless pacing up and down in her jacket. Burning tears dropped at intervals. Long-buried hopes and long-sleeping associations came up vividly. It seemed as if the old trouble had woke to life with a new power. She was racked with a wild longing for somebody to hear, somebody to sympathize. Her loneliness pressed upon her very heavily that hour. Sometimes there came a throb of joy, in connection with Cramer's parting words, followed by yet more bitter weeping. For how hopeless it all seemed. Wait! Wait till when? He could not wait a life-time. And Mr. Rivers and Mrs. Bertram were in full accord on this matter. Muriel felt that she could not disobey—could not, and would not. John had always strongly held her to the principle of obedience. So had Mr. Maxwell.

Something falling from her dress attracted her attention. She picked it up, opening the paper mechanically.

"Soyez toujours joyeux."

Sophy's little card. She had forgotten all about it this past hour. "Always rejoicing!" What—even now?

Impossible. She would not have said so to Sophy or Mrs. Rokeby, but she said so in pretty plain terms to herself.

"Always rejoicing"—you can't get out of that," John had told her. "Every Christian ought to have for his motto, 'Toujours joyeux'!"—so she had told Sophy.

But when her own troubles were concerned, things looked different, and John's words sounded hard to comply with.

"If I could but see you, John—you or Rosie!" she murmured. "How can I get on without a single friend at hand? How can I be happy?"

"Toujours joyeux!"

"But I cannot be so," she said, as the words sounded persistently. "Nobody could be in my place. I think I am worse off than even poor Sophy. She has at least her mother's love. I have to make a stand, and do what is right, in the face of my own wishes, and get nothing by it—not even a smile!"

But what of the heavenly smile, which she had told Sophy should be the one reward craved?

Muriel sighed rather drearily. "There does not seem much to look forward to. I shall just have to keep plodding on. But as for rejoicing, as things are now—"

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

One of my neighbors in town and church is an old lady whose dress is of no period of fashion. I wonder sometimes if for forty years the cost of it has exceeded as many dollars. Her step is as light as a girl's, her manner bright and cherry, and over her otherwise homely face spreads the glow of a heart at peace with God. Her youth was spent in a struggle for daily bread; and scarcely was this pressure removed before she was called upon to mourn the loss of first one, then another, loved member of her family, until she had outlived every relative. Her home is plain, almost bare of the luxuries considered as indispensable to comfort; yet there is no one from whom I so much enjoy a visit as this solitary woman, ever so warm in greeting, so cheerfully companionable.

"There is so much heart-ease about you," I once said to her, "that it refreshes me to meet you. Why, you are the youngest and happiest person I have met to-day."

"Oh, yes," she replied, smilingly, "I have stopped growing old, for each year brings me nearer the possession of endless youth in my better home. And how can I be sad in this beautiful world where my heavenly Father has placed me?"

"Still, you have had your full share of trials and sorrows."

"Yes, I have surely passed through the valley of Baca; but, by the grace of God, I have been able to make a well. But, my friend," she continued, "I have been happy only since I ceased to strain after what was beyond my reach, and resolved no longer to hug to my bosom my griefs and disappointments; but take them all to God, and leave them with him, content to be what he wishes, and only that."

Christian Weekly.

TELL HIM.

If we see no souls brought to the Redeemer's feet, we are ready to lie down and die. I read, the other day, of an old minister who had been some twenty years without a conversion, as far as he knew, and yet he was really an earnest man. At last, having prayed much over it, he announced that he should preach no more in that place, but resign his charge; and the reason he gave them with many tears, was: "I am doing no good among you; there are no souls saved; and, perhaps if another minister filled my place, you might listen to his appeals. At any rate, I will not stand in the way of one who might be more useful, and so I bid you farewell." As we went out, an old woman, named Sarah, said: "Oh, sir; you cannot go; you were the means of leading me to Christ, some three or four years ago."

"You," he said. "Sarah, I thought you were one who did not care for my ministry?"

"Ah, sir," said she, "it has been my meat and my drink."

"Woman," said he, "why did you not tell me as much before? My heart has been breaking for you."

In the course of the week, twenty or thirty came in to testify that they had sought and found the Saviour through his ministry. All he could do was to say: "Bless the Lord; I'll not leave my post. But why did you not tell me of it before? Oh, the sleepless nights I might have missed, if you had but told me. Some of you may have been saved, and yet you have never confessed the blessed fact; and I put it to you whether you do well and kindly by His servant, thus to rob him of his wages and keep back comforting news from his burdened heart!"—Extract from one of Spurgeon's sermons.

RANDOM READINGS.

Honesty, like gold, is frequently used to plate base metals.

What we need most is not so much to realize the ideal, as to idealize the real.

What is heaven but an everlasting access to God; present access is an earnest of it.

The aching head may cease to throb when laid upon the softest pillow for human pain—"God knows?"

We must lend an attentive ear, for God's voice is soft and still and is only heard of those who hear nothing else.

It is the very essence of love, of nobleness, of greatness, to be willing to suffer for the good of others.—Spencer.

I did but look to Christ and I received eternal life. I looked to Jesus, and he looked on me; and we were one forever.—Spurgeon.

One earnest gaze upon Christ is worth a thousand scrutinies of self. The man who beholds the cross, and beholding it weeps, cannot be really blind nor perilously self-ignorant.

It is to sadness that the world owes many of its choicest writings. The Pilgrim's Progress was written in a jail. So the harp of David gave its sweetest sounds in the wilderness.

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