

LIVING STONES.

My friend, you are growing discouraged
In fighting the battle of life?
Does it seem in your weakness and dark-
ness

A hopelessly desperate strife?
Do you fear that your study and labor
Are destined to reap no reward?
Is the goal of your ardent ambition
By numberless accidents barred?
Despair not! true, thorough self-culture,
Is never unwisely bestowed:
The stone that is fit for the wall
Will not always be left in the road.

Does it seem an injustice that others
Whose merits and fitness are less,
Through chances of fortune or favor,
Push forward to easy success?
Remember that fortune is fickle,
And friends will not always endure,
So to those that depend upon either
The future is never secure:
The tide that is now in their favor
At some time may ebb as it flowed,
And the stone that is unfit for the wall
Will be ruthlessly flung in the road.

Be patient! life's loftiest prizes
Are not to be hastily won;
Expect not to gather your harvest
The moment your seeds have been sown:
A ravenous horde of pretenders,
A pushing and clamorous crew,
Will have to be tried and found wanting,
Ere you can be tried and found true;
The best by the side of the worthless
Together may lie in the loam:
But the stone that is fit for the wall
Will not always be left in the road.

Go read the encouraging story
Of eminent men in the past,
Who, long in obscurity toiling,
Compelled recognition at last:
Of men, who, in art, or in science,
Or letters, have conquered a place,
Or in the wide realm of invention
Have left a rich boon to their race:
Their names upon history's pages
Like stars in the darkness have glowed;
Like stones that are fit for the wall,
They were not to be left in the road.

Our Serial.

MURIEL'S KEY-NOTE.

BY AGNES GIBBY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TOGETHER.

"This does look like improvement,"
said Chesney, coming back from a walk
one cold day, to find John slowly
pacing the gravel path in front of the
house, with Connie holding his hand.
"I begin to feel I am a man again,"
said John.

"You don't look more than the
wrath of one yet. How many turns
have you taken?"
"One. I want to have a drive
soon."

"Where?"
"To the Manor."

"H'm! Well, we shall see."

"You think my grandfather will re-
fuse to see me?"

Chesney's look might have expressed
anything.

"Never mind. I intend to storm
the premises."

"So you shall, some day soon. Get
up a little strength first."

"Connie thinks I am getting up
lots."

"Very poor amount. Tired out,
man! Take my arm. Connie, you
can run away."

"I'll do one more turn," said John
resolutely.

"Is it wise? What a time you have
been ill now, to be sure."

"Yes. Strange his sending no mes-
sage," muttered John. "I used to
think my illness might be the means of
bringing him round. Well—what of
Muriel to-day?"

"Good girl—behaving admirably.
I didn't know there was such self-
devotedness in her before. She lives
for Mary—consults every fancy, at-
tends to every wish."

"And aunt Mary understands?"

"She values the attentions fairly
well. Things are on a happier footing
than before. Muriel is different, too.
Of course Mary did not treat her
rightly, but that was no excuse. Hers
was not the manner for a girl to put on,
under any circumstances, towards a
mother. I am glad poor Maxwell is off
the scene. We don't want any messes
in that direction."

"Muriel is quite unconscious."

"Quite. He has acted nobly, I
must say. But Mary would never
consent—least of all now. Her hopes
and little ambitions will gradually
centre themselves in Muriel. Women
must have a centre, round which to
draw their circle."

"Did you see my grandfather to-
day?"

"At the Manor? No. John, this
is enough for you."

"I'll go in."

Rose was coming out, and met them
at the door. She saw John on the
sofa, and beckoned Chesney out of the
room. But an incautious whisper
reached John's ears: "Better wait!
Overdone just now." He was up and
beside them in a moment.

"What is the matter?" he demanded.

"Go and lie down, John, like a sen-
sible man. Your sudden appearance
has made Rose nervous."

"Highly nervous!" said John, lean-
ing against a cabinet of shells. "What
are you talking about?"

"Come in here, if you are deter-
mined to have it out," said Chesney.

Marching back into the drawing-room,
and John was fain to follow. "Sit

down and take it quietly. Rose, don't
fluster yourself."

"Then something is the matter?"
said John.

"Something generally is. The long
and short of this particular matter is
that my father nearly broke his heart
about you when you were at your
worst, and has been ill in consequence."

"Ill! Not seriously?"

"Dangerously, but better now. You
are getting on, both of you."

John was very much overcome. He
sat looking on the ground, not trusting
himself to speak.

"He held out to a point, you see,
and then broke down. But don't be
anxious. He is pulling through, all
right."

"Has he spoken of me?"

"He has said your name. That is
about all he can accomplish."

"So bad?" said John, distressed.

"The paralysis has affected his
speech. Only temporarily we hope."

"But he is conscious. He would
know me. I must drive to the Manor
this afternoon."

"No need," said Chesney quietly.

"He is in this house."

"He! My grandfather! Rose,
why have you never told me?"

John was on the borders of down-
right anger for a moment.

"Rose has no responsibility. The
doctors forbade it. See how fit you
are now, John," said Chesney, gravely.

"Don't make yourself ill again."

"No."

John put back the hair from his fore-
head with trembling fingers, and then
rested his head against the sofa-arm,
looking spent. Rose glanced at
Chesney.

"Not quite 'up to anything' yet,"
said Chesney. "You must lie still for
an hour, John."

But that suggestion brought John to
his feet. "No—on no account. It is
nothing—only a feeling of weakness.
I am all right now. He shall not want
me for another ten minutes. He does
want me you think, Rose?"

"I don't believe you are ever out of
his thoughts."

"Will he need preparing?"

"I think not," said Rose. "We
were talking about it this morning, and
Dr. Peters advised your being taken
in without warning. But, John dear,
you will not stay long. I can't have
you ill again even for grandpapa's
sake."

"No fear. This is as good as a
tonic."

Fatigue seemed for the moment to
be forgotten. John stood and moved
with his usual vigour. "Can't be
helped now. The quicker the better,"
Chesney muttered, and they went up-
stairs.

It was an out-of-the-way room, but
withal a very cosy one. A curtained
bedside stood opposite the door, and a
withered face lay there on the white
pillow, with hair as white falling round
it. Sad hollow eyes were those, look-
ing out with a thirsty expression, as if
seeking something which they never
found. He had looked thus ever since
consciousness returned. Once he had
asked for John, and they told him
John should come soon—when well
enough. He did not ask a second
time, only the longing eyes seldom
ceased in their anxious quest.

Suddenly a change came into them.
For steps sounded outside the door,
and without warning John entered.

He came in quietly, making no stir.
On the way up-stairs he had schooled
himself into composure. He stood be-
side the bed, and only said,

"Grandfather!"

The hungry eyes were fixed on him,
and the bony hands grasped at him
feebly. A strong emotion shook the
old man from head to foot, till the bed
swayed beneath him. John sat down,
holding the aged hands between his
own thin ones, tenderly as a woman
could have done.

"Dear grandfather, here I am at
last," he said. "You know your John,
don't you?"

Mr. Rivers struggled in a painful
way for speech. It was distressing to
see his utter inability. He strove in
vain, and heavy tears fell from his
eyes.

"Never mind. I quite understand.
Some day you will tell me," said John.

"All is forgiven and forgotten now,
isn't it?"

The old man shook his head despair-
ingly. Rose brought a small slate to
the bed.

"Sometimes he can write a few
words," she said, and John held it in
the right position.

Mr. Rivers clutched at the pencil,
but his shaking hand was almost power-
less. Twice he tried and failed. A
third time the semblance of letters ap-
peared. John, following his uncertain
movements, read:

"My—dear—John—"

There he paused, strength coming to
an end.

"Always your John, grandfather,"
said John huskily.

Again the old man mournfully moved
his head from one side to the other,
and again took the pencil.

"Forgive—"

There he broke down. The pencil
dropped, and his long heart-broken sob
was like a child's pitiful wail. It came
again and again. John was almost un-
nerved. He could only say, "Don't!"

Mr. Rivers pointed to the word
earnestly.

"We won't speak of that any more.
All is forgiven. We are going to be
happy now, all together, — please
God."

The old man's look grew more rest-
ful. He lay gazing at John for awhile,
as if dreading to lose him. But pre-
sently the eyelids dropped, the feeble
grasp loosened, and sleep gained the
mastery.

"Come," said Chesney gently,
touching John.

And John went out of the room, and
wept like a child. No offence to his
manliness that he did so.

"THE HOLDER-ON."

BY EDWIN LAWRENCE.

One beautiful Sabbath morning, not
long ago, a little company of Christians
gathered in the parlor of the church in
"M—."

For several months it had been their
custom to meet there, and pray for a
blessing upon the Word preached. The
church was filled every Sunday morn-
ing with many attentive listeners, but,
somehow, the large majority of them
were "hearers of the Word" only,
and the blessing for which they prayed,
that these might become "doers,"
seemed to be withheld.

An hour later, a large audience
gathered in the church to listen to
their gifted pastor. The crowded
house elicited remarks from the brethren
who lingered in the vestibule.

"Takes the old Doctor to draw,"
said one, delightedly.

"I knew he would the first time I
saw eyes on him," responded the old
sexton, between pulls at the bell rope.

"N' I haint ben disappointed, he's fed
us on turkey right along—no biled din-
ner sence he come."

The bell tolled. As it ceased, the
few who had met for prayer came up
from the vestry followed by the pastor.
During the preliminaries it was noticed
by some that he did not produce and
place in the Bible the usual roll of
manuscript. Neither did he read from
the sacred Book his text, but instead
came slowly forward, and gazing wist-
fully upon them, said, with unwonted
solemnity,—

"Brethren, I have brought no ser-
mon with me this morning, although I
had one prepared. I felt impelled to
talk to you familiarly as with a friend.
If I were to take a text it would be
this:

"Thou art not far from the King-
dom."

He paused to look earnestly upon
his parishioners. Then broke the deep
silence with this:

"Yesterday I visited the Mason
Machine Works, and was shown
through their great shops. When in
the boiler department I learned that
the men were divided into three
classes, and they were called, Riveters,
Clippers, and Holders-on. I asked,
"what are the duties of the Holder-
on?" One was pointed out to me. I
found it was his duty to sit within the
shell of the boiler, holding the rivets
in place with an iron, while they were
headed by men outside. Month after
month, and year after year, these men
sit in the darkness, in a cramped po-
sition, with no light but what comes in
at the boiler-end; their ears dulled by
the deafening clatter of the hammers.
One of these men told me:

"I have been at it so long I've got
used to it; I can almost say I'm con-
tent to be a Holder-on. But," he
added, "it seems to be necessary that
we do something else."

"He pointed to a machine in an-
other part of the room, up to which a
boiler was being raised.

"That is going to do away with us
Holder-ons."

"How so?" I asked.

"That machine, as you will see in
a minute, with one powerful blow
drives the rivet in and heads it on
both sides. That will practically do
away with the Holder-on."

"My brethren," continued the pas-
tor with much earnestness, "I could
not help thinking of some of you yester-
day, more than usual, for you are
never out of my mind; and as I
thought of your relation to this church,
it seemed to me that you were not
wholly unlike these Holders-on. For
five years I have presented to you my
Master's message—every phase of it
that I could possibly think of—that I
might, if possible, meet each individual
case. But—with a sadness that all
felt—"I fear that I have not succeed-
ed. It is true that each Sabbath you
are promptly in your seats, honoring
God's house by your presence, but, as

far as I know, you go away apparently
indifferent. Your faces are never seen
in our prayer-meetings, and when we
meet, seldom do you show any interest
in the church. At first, perhaps, my
Master's message impressed you, mak-
ing you feel uncomfortable for a time,
but gradually your ears have become
dulled, you seem to be content to be
simply Holders-on."

He spoke these last words slowly and
distinctly. Several faces crowned with
the gray hairs of advancing age changed
perceptibly, as if an arrow had entered
their hearts.

"You hear occasionally of the work
of the church, and know that some-
thing is being done; but, like the
Holder-on, you sit in darkness, de-
prived of the sunshine and light of re-
ligion. The Holder-on says his work
is practically done away with. Dear
brethren," the sorrowful tone sud-
denly changing to earnest entreaty,
"I trust it is not so with you. I can-
not help saying to you this morning as
my Master did to one of old, 'Thou
art not far from the Kingdom.' Those
of you who have attended our prayer-
meetings of late have felt that the
Spirit was there. Some hearts have
been touched. Three of our young
people will come into the church this
afternoon on confession of faith. There
are many others who feel that they
ought to take their places with the
people of God; almost persuaded—yet
they hesitate. Shall I tell you frankly
why? One young man says:

"Father is going to attend to these
things by-and-by; I think I'll wait for
him."

"Another excuse is that some of my
congregation say they 'can be as good
Christians out of the church as in it.'
I could go on repeating excuses, but
these will suffice. Pardon me if I
speak plainly, it is you Holder-on, for
years near the Kingdom, who keep
others out by your inaction and in-
difference."

He continued with increased fervor,
showing the need of immediate action,
their great responsibility, and the con-
sequences that would result hereafter
if they hindered any from coming into
the Kingdom.

The pastor's words came home to
that audience with great power. Many
said afterwards that they could see
themselves sitting contentedly in the
shell of the dark old boiler and "hold-
ing on."

The next Wednesday evening the
prayer-meeting was crowded. A re-
vival followed. And those who came
out into the sunshine of a happy Chris-
tian experience wondered how they
ever were content to be simply "hold-
ers-on" in the church.—Observer.

QUIET WORKERS.

Christ's lowly, quiet workers uncon-
sciously bless the world. They come
out every morning from the presence
of God, and go to their business or
their household work. And all day
long they toil, they drop gentle words
from their lips, and scatter little seeds
of kindness about them, and to-morrow
flowers of God spring up in the dusty
streets of earth, and along the hard
path of toil on which their feet tread.
More than once, in the Scriptures, the
lives of God's people in the world are
compared in their influence to the dew.
There may be other points of analogy,
but especially noteworthy is the quiet
manner in which dew performs its
ministry. It falls silently and imper-
ceptibly. It makes no noise; no one
hears it dropping. It chooses the dark-
ness of night, when man is sleeping,
and when no one can witness its beauti-
ful work. It covers the leaves with
clusters of pearls; it steals into the
bosom of flowers, and leaves a new
cupful of sweetness there. It pours
itself down among the grass and tender
herbs and plants, and in the morning
there is fresh beauty everywhere. The
fields look greener, and the flowers are
more fragrant; all life sparkles with
new splendor. And is there no lesson
here as to the manner in which we
should do good in this world? Should
we not scatter blessings so silently, so
sweetly, yet secretly that no one should
know what hand dropped them? God
help us for his dear Son's sake.—M.
A. Getchell.

RANDOM READINGS.

Every duty we omit obscures some
duty we should have known.

It is a sad thing to be often eating
of the tree of knowledge, but never to
taste of the tree of life.

Every boundary-line looks across to
the unbounded, and every pulse of life
takes hint of the life everlasting.

The leading principles in Christianity
which distinguishes it from deism is
the doctrine of our corrupt and lost
estate.

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.



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