

Youths' Department.

CHRISTIAN LOVE AND LOYALTY;
OR, THE REBEL RECLAIMED.THE MYSTERIOUS ERRAND.
Doth not behave itself unseemly.

At the social meal, Jaspas Abramson was unusually silent and absent. Perhaps he was thinking of his interview with his brother; perhaps private anxieties and cares were pressing upon him, for he who was usually talkative and lively scarcely opened his lips. He helped himself from the dish before him, without asking others if they would partake of it, and then sat for minutes with the heaped plate before him, forgetting to taste the food. Liberia had twice to address her father, before she could gain his attention, and then he turned towards her with a bewildered start, as if she had roused him from sleep.

Liberia was impatient for the end of the meal, not only because her father's silence and gloom oppressed her, but because the shades of evening had now closed in, and she was eager to keep her appointment with Judith. She coughed, fidgeted, tried to hurry her parent, who lingered long at the table; and at last, her patience being quite worn out, rose and quietly slipped out of the room.

The iron gate of the shrubbery, open during the day, was always locked at sunset; but as the key hung in the hall, it offered no obstruction to Liberia. She was soon gliding along the gravel path bordered with dark bushes, with a dull sky above her, where here and there, through rifts in the cloudy canopy, glimmered a twinkling star. The heart of Jaspas's daughter beat a little faster than usual as she turned the large key in the lock, and pushed open the heavy gate, which, creaking on its hinges, seemed to resist her exit. Though Judith's cottage was so near that Liberia, even in that faint light, could trace its outline cutting the straight horizon line of the sea, and indistinct as both appeared, she felt that it was an adventurous thing to quit the shelter of her father's grounds, and go without any protection to a smuggler's dwelling on the beach. Liberia hoped that no one would see her from the village, whose glimmering lights she left on the right, as she took her way to the left, crunching down the ridges of pebbles which lined that part of the bay.

But Liberia delighted in an adventure, and the very fact of a pleasure being a forbidden one, made her more eagerly pursue it. This was partly owing to her neglected education—the total want of that discipline which forms the mind, controls the reason, and brings the passions into control; and partly from the wilfulness of her own wild and headstrong nature. Liberia prided herself on her freedom from "slavish notions," her courage and independence. Even in regard to her father, she disliked the idea of subjection. Liberia loved her parent affectionately—she believed that she loved him devotedly—she believed that for him, as for her king, she would willingly give her life. But it is far more easy to talk of dying when our courage is not likely to be put to the proof, than to use daily self-denial in what appears to be trivial things.

And if it was thus with Liberia's loyalty and filial duty, yet more striking was the contrast in religion between her profession and practice. Faith was something which Liberia knew that she ought to possess; but it was a cold, dead faith, which had no power to direct her actions or to humble her heart. It was not the faith which lays hold on salvation. In her present night expedition Liberia did not ask herself whether she might not be doing that which was opposed to her duty to her parent, her loyalty to her king, her obedience to the law of her God; she thought merely of the pleasant excitement of an adventure, the acquisition of what she coveted, the indulgence of her own inclination. Obedience is the best test of love; true obedience must include self-denial; but obedience and self-denial were unknown to the headstrong Liberia.

The fisherman's cottage was reached. There were shutters to the windows, which were closed, so that no light was visible from without. Liberia went around to the front, which faced the sea, whose hissing moan, as each little wave broke and retired over the pebbles, sounded like a sigh from nature, rising through the stillness of the night. Liberia tapped at the door—no answer from within. Then a sense of loneliness came over the girl, and she felt that the sea-breeze was chilling. Liberia was almost inclined to return at once to the Castle, but this her pride forbade. She tapped again, and more loudly; and then was certain that she heard the noise of some one moving in the cottage. Presently a bolt was withdrawn, and the door was slowly opened just far enough to permit Judith to peer into the darkness without letting much of her own form be seen.

"Who be's there?" asked her harsh, croaking voice.

"I, Miss Abramson," was Liberia's reply; "don't keep me out here in the cold."

"Are ye alone?" said the woman; and on Liberia's answering in the affirmative, Judith Wayland admitted her into the cottage.

It was a relief to the young lady to find that it was occupied only by the old woman; but the aspect of the place was by no means inviting. Liberia had visited it on a former occasion, when soft moonlight had streamed in on a tempting display of satins and silks, delicate gloves and exquisite lace; now nothing of the kind was to be seen. The cottage was close, and smelt strongly of spirits and fish; strings of the latter hung from the smoky rafters; heaps of nets yet damp with salt water encumbered the floor; an old sail, thrown carelessly into a corner, might indeed conceal some smuggled goods, but one could scarcely look for anything costly or delicate in a place so dirty and mean. Liberia could, however, see nothing distinctly, as the only light came from one tallow candle, which flickered and guttered as the opening of the door let in a draught of air from the sea.

"You told me that the boat had come in," said Liberia, looking around her in disgust.

"Ay, ay," answered the woman, nodding her head as she closed the door.

"Where is your son?" asked Miss Abramson.

"He couldn't bide here,—he had to make off—the sharks were on the scent," answered old Judith, in a low, hoarse whisper.

"Had he brought anything from France?"

"Ay, ay, Brandy!" said the old woman, laying her skinny finger on her wrinkled lips, and nodding again as she spoke.

"Brandy?" repeated Liberia, becoming painfully aware how unseemly indeed it was to be in such company, in such a place, and at such an hour. She was afraid to say aloud all that she felt, but inquired with some displeasure in her tone, "Why did you bring me here, Judith?"

You told me that you had something to show me."

The cross repeated her "ay, ay," and hobbled up to the sail. Fumbling under it with her hand, she drew out something which seemed to be a basket.

"I wish," thought Liberia, "that I were fairly out of this scrape. No one shall ever persuade me to come here again after dark."

"Neither me nor my son could venture too many times to this place," said Judith, as, holding the basket, she hobbled back to her guest: "I thought as how you would carry this to the Squire, and say nothing about it to no one."

(To be continued.)

THE CAUSE OF IT.

For several hours yesterday I heard the bring of heavy guns. To-day I learned the cause of it. A party had gone up the river. It was a beautiful day, and the water was so quiet that they might have had a very pleasant time if one of their number had not been just enough intoxicated to be very mischievous. When his reeling motions caused the boat to rock, he enjoyed greatly the consternation of his companions. What a sad sight, to see a strong man in a drunken fit. Think how bad a thing that must be that can make a man enjoy the terror he causes.

Among the most terrified was the man's poor wife. Think of it, to see her husband drunk, and to be endangered by his drunken doings. Vainly she begged him again and again not to put them in so much danger. His head was not clear enough to see the consequences of his recklessness, and his answer to her entreaties was to climb the mast. In such a boat the consequence was an oversetting. Overcome by terror, his wife instantly sunk, and did not rise again. The others were rescued.

Doubtless that plunge into the water and its fearful results sobered the man; but in the jail that night there were sad thoughts for him. He must answer for a fearful crime. In a drunken fit he had caused the death of his own wife; do you think he could ever outlive that thought? He did not mean it, yet the deed was done. His children were motherless through him. Do you think he can ever lift the cup to his lips again, at least without shuddering? Oh, if he had shuddered before he ever tasted it, and so turned away. Boys, if it is ever presented to you, turn from it.—*Am. Messenger.*

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