

The Family Circle.

The Two Homes; or, Earning and Spending.

CHAPTER XIV. (Continued). SETTLEMENT IN LIFE.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

When Alonzo reached his aunt's house, he was much disappointed to find that, instead of pleasant associates in her family, there were only two large, rude-looking girls, and a boy many years younger than himself.

The first news Mr. Stearns received from his son, was this fact contained in a letter; but it came after she had gone, and only served to increase his thankfulness that he had been preserved from so dreadful an evil.

Alonzo also stated that he was doing well, though wages were very low; that so far he had held to his promise not to drink any kind of liquor; that indeed he had no temptation to do so, as there was not a rum-shop in the town.

Upon the receipt of this letter, the father was so much delighted that he went directly to impart the good tidings to his friend Mr. Appleton, and ask his advice with reference to the boy's immediate return, for the sake of going into business with him.

Mr. Stearns therefore wrote his son that Mrs. Washburn had sometime previous left his house, expressing great pleasure in hearing so good an account of his prospects, and enclosing two ten-dollar bills, with promises of doing well by him if he continued industrious and sober.

"I have opened my letter to tell you that Jim Morrison, who used to be with you at Turner's, was found dead last night in the street. He had been drinking freely, and it is supposed he died in a fit, trying to reach home."

"My dear boy, I have at last begun to pray; and every night, before I go to bed, I ask God to help you keep the promise you made to your dying brother."

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." MOTHER'S DEATH.

"Dear Agnes," murmured the mother, "you have been a good child. Tell James, I am sure one who has made so loving a daughter, will make an affectionate, dutiful wife."

The weeping youth gently lifted her shoulders, and let her head rest upon his arm. The agonized husband sank on the floor before her, but it was a full minute before he could lift his pale, haggard face to hers.

"Can't you give me up, Henry? Jesus, my Saviour, calls me, and I have no sorrow except at leaving you?"

"O God," cried the poor man in an agony of grief, "put underneath me thine everlasting arm! Support me, or I shall sink! My beloved wife, my darling Susy, how can I walk through the rest of my life's journey unless you are by my side."

"Tell Harry I send him my blessing." Then folding her hands peacefully upon her breast, and with the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," her freed soul burst from its tenement of clay, and fled away to rest forever in the bosom of her Lord.

Thus tenderly did the Saviour lead this sheep of his flock home to his heavenly fold.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and he will not cast away his people, nor will he utterly forget his covenant with them."

After the painful separation recorded in the last chapter, it was often said of Mr. Appleton that he was more than ever devoted to the service of God. He became doubly watchful over himself, sometimes saying to Agnes, with a quivering lip—

"I used to feel safe; knowing that when I strayed your mother would gently point out my error."

He enlarged the stream of his sympathies and his benevolence, and was always ready to weep with those who wept, though for a long time he could hardly be said to rejoice even with those that rejoiced.

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