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THE STRANGER.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

Mrs. Parsons was busy with her needle whe one of her neighbors came in.

"Well, the little place is taken at last," sai the visitor ; " but by whom do you think ?"

" Dear knows," said Mrs. Parsons, looking up from her work.

"A young woman-a very young woman," re peated the gossip, with emphasis, and pretty ; then added in a lower voice, "she has a littl child with her."

" She is a stranger here, then."

" Of course, an entire stranger, from the cit -brought such a bit of furniture ! Mrs. Daviof whom she hires, said she didu't exactly lik her looks : there was something so easy and for ward in her manner. Besides, she thought sh acted as if there was trouble on her mind.

" Poor thing ! she may be a widow," said he listener.

" Mrs. Davis thinks not," replied the other with a peculiar smile ; " and Mrs. Davis is no one that speaks without reflection. She said sh had a very singular way with her. The chill called ber aunty."

"We never should judge from appearances, said Mrs. Parsons, rolling her work up. " How the days fly ! I must be getting tea, for the new minister is coming to-day."

The caller departed ; but she had left seed fo thought.

The "little place" was a tiny cottage that ha been long empty and much talked about, as it be longed to disputed property. It was scarcel more than a shed, but there was something pice turesque in all its surroundings. Rose-bushet chimbed the white-washed wall, and blushint flowers hung from the very roof. A splendid eln whose branches held I know not how many bir homes, completely overshadowed it. Its thref small windows were soon neatly draped, the full niture placed in order, and a sweet, pensive face singularly lovely in its dead pallor-for there was never the shadow of color in the cheeks-its lust trous dark eyes and hair of raven blackness; might be seen in the bonny little garden at times as the new comer walked with the child.

The little one was evidently sickly; her fac was wan and thin, her bright eyes unnaturall large, her limbs were not rounded ; her hand! were very small and waxen.

In some way Mrs. Davis' unfavourable impres sion got abroad. There were covert speeche and quiet sneers. Why did she keep herself s secladed ? Why did she hold her head so haugh tily? Why did she never speak to the neighbors They did not know the sensitive heart of th stranger : nor could they tell if its springs ha been broken up by sharp sorrow. They only knew that she was strange ; and that Mrs. Davis the leader in the village, did not like her.

The pale face of the child, with its whitish gold curls blown by the breeze, made a beautiful picture at the cottage door-in truth, it was not marred by the presence of the aunt,-mother some choose maliciously to call her.

So the days passed and the summer came to close. The child grew stronger; the country air was blowing strength over the frail limbsthe flowers infused fragrance in her breath, bright ness in her limbs that were rounding softly. Sh

tage-parlor. The table had been cleared, the work-basket taken out, and the child was called to be undressed.

1.1

your checks ?" asked the child, pointing the small forefinger at the blazing signal of disease. " Aunty don't know, dear," was the faint response.

" And what makes you hold your side so ? Is aunty going to die, like mother ?"

" O'I Leila don't !" cried the woman, snatching her up; and pillowing her eyes upon the child's shoulder, she burst into a fit of passionate weeping.

The child was as still as death. She had aimed her little random shaft, and the result had frightened her. She grew pale, and shivered, for she was still only a pale little leaf shaken by the lightest breeze.

" Don't mind me, darling," cried her aunt, lift ing her drenched face ; "aunty felt bad just then, and foolish, so she cried. She should be ashamed of herself," she added, kissing the white face, for she has startled her little treasure. Come -come-cheer up, or I shall be frightened, too smile dear, and annty will bring you something nice from the city to-morrow.

The child, reassured, soon lost the scared, blan ched look, and in a few moments was laughing and talking to her aunt, her little cheek sunker deep in the soft pillow. An hour later the woman lifted herself wearily from her chair. The tear had been falling silently for a long time, and the sighs with which they alternated now and the were very piteous.

" To die, and leave her! Who with, my God who with ?" and her streaming eyes were raise heavenward., "O, my Father, strengthen mestrengthen me, or send me a friend ; for O, I an very lonely, and I am dying."

And were not God's angels sent down in an swer to that yearning cry? She could not se the splendor falling from their presence. She die not hear the soft whispers of love and sympathy that wafted softly into her throbbing brain, bu an infinite, soothing quiet stele through all he frame, and into her very soul. The tears ceased to flow, the pitiful sobbing sighs were still, th heart had received its mysterious answer, and rested on the promises of God.

Still, it looked very dark for her the next day and the next; for the hectic fever increased, and the little strength departed, while the pulses c her temples beat till their throbs seemed lik drum-strokes. Wearily she prepared the simple meal, wearily confessed that the toiling walk mus not be ventured upon to-day.

It was perhaps nine o'clock of the morning following. Miss Blakely had risen, but her strength failing, she had thrown herself upon her couclagain, almost in despair.

" Leila, dear," she said to the little child, who was playing in her usual noiseless manner, "d you know where the nice white house is, where the flowers grow ?"

"Yes, aunty," said the child.

"If I put your little bonnet and cape on, can you go there for me ?"

" O, yes, aunty," cried the child, with sparkling

Not long after, little Leila was heard coming up the walk, but not alone. Kind eyes looke into hers, a gentle grasp held her tiny palm. Th door opened.

" I received your note by the hands of this lit tle messenger," said the young pastor, gazing sor rowfully at the wasted face before him " O, sir, I am so glad ! I hardly dared to thin! should ever have a friend again. You have comto comfort a broken heart. I know what they think of me. Their coldness and their sneer have crushed me. I am all alone. My brothe was killed in battle, and so was-was-one other, she said, the crimson rushing over her brow,one who was to have been my husband. My sis ter and I were left alone, with this, my sister' child. We were loyal citizens of a Souther State, and taking what litle means we had, cam this way. My sister died in my arms, in the mids of strangers. This babe was very ill at the time and O, sir, the world was dark. The country wa recommended for Leila. I came out here. Th little money I had kept us for some time, but, si if only one had but come to me as a friend. saw from the first I was suspected, and it harden ed me. It was wrong, but womanly pride wa outraged, and it was cruel-it was cowardly t judge me. Nobody sought me. I would no meet their cold glances by any advances, and s I secluded myself. But now I feel that I shall soon die. I must have the consolation of religion. I must find a friend and protector for my poc darling. O, sir, it is hard, very hard, to suffer a I have suffered." Her sobs choked her utterance The young minister found himself crying like child. So youthful, so beautiful, so stricken an suffering! His conscience rebuked him. He, too. had helped, unconsciously, to immolate this poc victim. Well, the aid, the flowers, the refreshments, th condolence, the repentance, all came too late, The hectic deepened, the cough sounded mor and more hollow, the bright eyes glittered wit unearthly fire. She talked freely of her past, re joicingly of her future. She had known the lux ury of wealth, she had been thrown, with a heat shattered and bleeding, from the pinnacle of hap piness. There were promises in plenty, now. The chilcould have the choice of a dozen homes. O, it the kind word, the sweet smile had come a littl sooner. But perhaps God willed it otherwise.) is certain that many an eye moistened, many heart felt a sharp twinge of remorse, as the littl gravestone gleamed whitely from the neat enclo sure-the garden of the dead-on which was simply recorded the stranger's name .- Watchman and Reflector.

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hat he has per recent arrivals completed his Spring and Summer importations, and has now on hand a very large stock of Clothing, Gents'. FURNISHING GOODS, &c., which

romped occasionally with a milk-white goat, that was one of the surroundings of the little cottage

But the other face seemed to grow thinner and sadder as the child waxed rosier. Did the zephyrs bring to her ear the whispers of scandal Did the averted faces sting her sensitive soul ? Di she by intuition feel that the villagers asked d one another if she felt herself better or worse than they ?

Most of the inhabitants inclined to the latted opinion, and Miss Blakely, as her name was soo t known to be, was not only the observed of all observers, but the talked of of all gossips.

There were plenty of gossips in the village-they were as thick as ears of corn in harvest Gradually from guessings and surmisings, a stor came to be circulated extremely prejudicial to th new comer. Nobody inquired as to proofs; no body gave her the benefit of a doubt, and in tim those who had been inclined to make advance grew cold and distant, and turned their virtuou glances away.

Mrs. Parsons, with whom the young ministel boarded, was one of these. Naturally a good hearted-woman, she had not allowed rnmor t prejudice her for a long time, but almost befor she knew it, she, too, was infected, and grew t dislike the stranger, without being able to giv! any other reason than-" They say.'

The young minister knew nothing about the disaffection for a long time. It was brought to hit notice at a tea party, and the next day he ques tioned Mrs. Parsons.

"I don't know, indeed, who she is," said hit hostess, coloring painfully ; "still I have not car red to make her acquaintance-for-there ar! stories afloat-and"-

"She has never been to church, I believe," said the minister, looking up from his book, "Perhaps she wants a little attention ; she has I soul to be saved, whoever she is, and ought no to live like a heathen in the midst of christia privileges."

"I know," responded Mrs. Parsons ; "but"-

" Do you think I had better call?" The minister was very young, or he would hav asked counsel of no one in the matter, particularly a prejudiced woman. He was very young, a good, fervent, praying servant of the cross, bul impulsive, handsome, and sometimes thought

Mrs. Parsons was old enough to be his mother. " If you were my son," she said, " I would not counsel you to go.' " But why ?"

She kept her eyes fixed on the work in he hand,

" I-don't know as I can exactly tell. Ther are reports not in her favor. 1 am afraid "---" But is it right to neglect any one in this mat

ter? Suppose her erring-may she not be repent-ant? It don't seem the Christian spirit-it is' Christ-like. Some of you sisters ought to attento it."

" Well, perhaps so ; and I'll try and bear it i mind. It would be no harm for me to call, I sup-

pose, so make yourself easy about it." No doubt that the good woman felt in her hea that she would call, but with another day cam doubts and queries of what would be said. Sh did not like to be seen going where nobody els went-she was icarful of how she might be recei ved-and if those dreadful stories should be tru -she shuddered as she thought of it.

" I'll put it off to some evening," she decided and thus kept putting it off till gradually the dut faded from her miud, and the work was negleci-ed. Meanwhile the winter passed and the sum-mer came again. And now the village was shock mer came again. And now the village was shock ed by new gossip. The woman went somewher every day and left that poor little child alone -yes, all that day long, to amuse herself. It was cruel, it was barbarous. Suppose the child shoul play with fire, get burned, or drowned, and a none of these things happened, it is possible tha the gossips were disappointed. The little chill was seen in the garden with her wooden dol her cricket and her goat—the latter always cam

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