

## THINK GENTLY.

"Think gently of the erring one,  
He is our brother yet,  
Heir of the same inheritance,  
Child of the self-same God;  
He hath but stumbled in the path  
We have in safety trod.  
"Forget not thou hast often sinned,  
And sinful yet may be.  
Deal gently with the erring one,  
As God has dealt with thee.  
Should friends misjudge, or foes  
Or brethren faithless prove,  
Then like thine own, be all our aim  
To conquer them by love."

## Serial.

## JIM, THE PARSON.

Author of "Brightside," "Hilda and I,"  
"Glenarchan," etc.

BY E. REDELL BENJAMIN.

CHAP. VIII.—SARAH DUFFY JUST MISSED IT.

The Burnside entertainments were always without formality; and when John had convinced himself that he had done and brought everything that could possibly be needed, had put on more wood, and signified to Miss Acton by placing his hand on the bell that would be within call, he reluctantly left the room. The serving of tea passed very pleasantly; and then, when Mr. Thornton rose to go, he asked if he might escort Miss Acton home. There was a look of intreaty that made Kate decline, with the excuse that the evening was not half over. The young pastor took his leave, convinced that Miss Acton distinctly refused to pass any part of the evening with him.

"If I could only see her alone," he sighed; but his time had not come.

"I did not behave well," said Kate; "but he has such a way of looking at me as if I were a problem."

"Are you quite sure you are not?" asked her friend, smiling.

"Quite. It was rather embarrassing to have given that collar to his sister. I did not realize it at first. Then his solemn description of that ridiculous woman—it was too much to endure. I am very matter of fact, no problem at all."

"Yes, dear, very; as much so as a star—for instance—you do your part in the great universe, steadily and truly; but you twinkle and wink, and hide behind clouds and come out again—and—"

Kate put her arms around her. "Not another word; you are the most fanciful being I ever saw. Now tell me plainly, whether you do not think Mr. Thornton might laugh occasionally?"

"I think a glint of a smile that passes over his face is the most perfect expression of appreciation I ever saw."

"You are non-committal to-night; come, drive home with me."

"The evening is not half over," was the answer.

CHAP. IX.—SHE WILL AND SHE WON'T.

Summer came: bright beautiful summer. Roses covered the porch and vines climbed the arches of the "grand piazza." The flower-decorated tea-table there, with its fruits and white rolls, the fair young girls who served in this Arcadia, made Mr. Montgomerie talk of Mr. Phoebus and his Greek Isle, and Mr. Thornton think hopefully of the coming Feast of Tabernacles. There being no road past the cottage, no passers-by disturbed their privacy, nor were there servants to comment upon a phrase of life they could not comprehend. Between the parlor and the stream Kate had raised a mound of flowers. Everything that was richly scented she planted there, surrounding the delicious odors with a border of heart's-ease.

"I love to see their darling little faces looking at me when I come to say 'Good morning,'" she explained; so the flowers turned to her with a smile, as she cared for their health and comfort, and open their eyes to watch her coming. To Mr. Thornton her morning service in her garden seemed as attractive as her evening song of life in the flower pavilion; for before as well as after his parish duties, he usually went to the cottage, under a vague impression that

a family of ladies might want something. Mrs. Herndon and John Brace thought the need was on the pastor's side; but people will talk, you know.

Kate had ceased to object to his gravity; the "glint of a smile" was full remuneration for her liveliest moods; his puzzled expression was becoming interesting. To him she was still a problem: he saw a rounded and beautiful character, a strong purpose, and a Christian life; and as he contemplated it with an expression of which Kate could not guess the meaning, the merriest and most musical of laughs would fairly startle him. "I wish May were here," was his hopeless thought. There were times, however, when Kate was serious, and many an earnest conversation helped them both. He called her "Kate" now, when they were alone, and she no longer avoided him. It vexed her occasionally, to hear the village gossip which connected their names; but she did not feel obliged to give up her friend, because busybodies called him her lover. She had heard all the missing incidents of his early life, and she and May were regular correspondents; the affair of the ermine collar had lost its embarrassments, so that during the summer the young couple became very well acquainted, "considering."

In the autumn Mr. Thornton was summoned to the death-bed of both his grandparents. They had served the Master together for fifty years, and together the passed the gate and entered the glory-land. All that was theirs on earth was left to "the children," excepting a provision for Sarah and Richard. These faithful servants had sometime before united their work and their fortunes. It was accomplished with characteristic brevity and straightforwardness. Richard said one day, "We've got to live together anyway; don't you think it's easier pullin' in one yoke?"

The wise virgin, who had secretly adored Richard for twenty years, and sewed for him for love, gave no evidence of her elation. She said composedly:

"I ain't pertickler. If it's best, it had better be. Just as you say, Richard."

"Well, I say it's best."

"Very well, I'm willin'," which direct assent closed the courtship. One afternoon after the house was "redd up," Richard put on his Sunday coat, and Sarah her new alpaca, and they were married. One endowed the other with his worldly goods, and the other sedately promised to obey. After this they took a walk in the graveyard, then returned and "got tea" as usual.

Sarah wondered a little if it would have been different if she had been younger, and Richard had one—promptly suppressed—memory of a blue-eyed girl, who was a matron then. These two thoughts constituted the romance of their wedding.

And yet—as I think it over—was there no romance, as Sarah ever afterwards tenderly protected the "alpaca" from spot or stain, and brushed the "Sunday coat" with a sort of reverence? Was there none in the feeling of pride with which Richard came to look upon his stately, gray-haired bride, and the way in which he called her wife.

The offer of the vestry to buy the parsonage was declined for the present, and Richard and Sarah left in charge. "Let everything stand as it is—the music-book on the organ, the knitting on the sofa, and the Bible open. Only dust them, Sarah, till we return."

Then May accepted the invitation to go to Burnside until her brother could find a suitable house. She thought she knew how Jip would bark, and how Polly would scream, and how the dear hostess would be standing on the piazza to welcome her. But May found that neither words nor letters had told her how she would be folded in loving arms, and how peace and rest would envelop her like a garment. No words could tell how care fled from a household where all were of one heart and one mind, nor how smooth was the path from which the presence of the Lady of Burnside removed all stones. "How I ever lived without you two

girls," exclaimed the old lady, "I cannot imagine," and May wondered that life had not seemed incomplete before she knew this "House Beautiful."

Below the cottage, farther down the stream, was a grove of pines. It was a favorite resort of Kate's in the hours when she needed solitude.

On Saturday morning she was gathering cones, and supposed her object was to prepare for instructing the children in cone work. When her basket was filled, she threw its contents, one by one, upon the glittering water. She was given to soliloquizing, and inquired of herself why she had done this?

A voice beside her answered: "I have not the faintest idea; your work has been fruitless, Kate. I heard you were gathering cones, and now they are floating on the stream." Kate did not start; she did not seem surprised that Mr. Thornton answered her; she moved a little that he might sit beside her.

(To be Continued.)

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