

CONSIDER.

[Thoughts suggested by a Sermon preached by Dr. Hall.]
Do we ever stop to consider
How little a kind word may cost,
And if once the hasty word spoken,
One chance in our life we have lost?

Selected Serial.

MARGIE'S MISSION.

BY MARIE OLIVER.

Author of "Ruby Hamilton," "Old and New Friends," "Seba's Discipline," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD COUPLE.

Green is the grass about the door
And in the background. In the fore
A willow sweeps the mossed roof o'er.

Like a bridal pair they traversed
The unseen, mystic road
That leads to the beautiful city
Whose Builder and Maker is God.

Tobias Hale, or uncle Toby as the children called him, was one of the oldest of Daniel Morton's parishioners, being in his eightieth year.

Though age had deprived him of much physical strength, he was still able to attend to his daily duties (his mind being as vigorous as ever) and cultivate the little bit of ground given him by the good people of Maplewood, who had become endeared to him through his kindness of heart.

A basket-maker by trade, he was often employed to fashion for the village shops the fancy ware so attractive to the eyes of young misses and children; and this, together with the mites his good wife added to the family store from time to time, through her busy needles, kept them in the necessities of life, at the same time enabling them to assist those poorer than themselves.

Every man, woman and child in Maplewood, loved uncle Toby and his wife Kizzie; and they in turn respected each. But Ruth Morton had always been their favorite among the young people.

She had been a daily visitor at their cottage since old enough to run alone, twining herself closer and closer about their loving hearts as time rolled on. As she advanced towards girlhood, she found many ways of lightening the burdens of their daily lives, learning in return many a useful lesson, to be remembered in after years when the sods covered the faces of dear aunt Kizzie and uncle Toby, and other voices echoed through the little cottage.

For some few months it had been her custom to read a half-hour, two evenings a week, to the old couple journeying down life's hill together; as the eyes once bright as hers were growing dim, and words once plain enough, now appeared indistinct and far off.

Uncle Toby loved this half-hour at twilight. It was so pleasant to be able to lie back in his easy-chair and feel that the work of the day was done, and he had nothing to prevent him from listening to the young voice uttering words he so dearly loved.

Knowing this, Ruth went regularly to the little cottage down the lane, always sure of meeting uncle Toby at the door to welcome her, with aunt Kizzie peering over his shoulder, knitting in hand, her busy needles moving as rapidly in the dark as in the light.

It was always a mystery to Margie Morton how aunt Kizzie could see to knit in the dark, when she blundered so in other duties. Margie found many things to puzzle her

little brain as she tripped along through life's valleys.

Aunt Kizzie, knitting, taught Ruth many a lesson, chief of which was the fact, God works out his great plan during the night as well as the day, and that sometime it will reach completion, the same as aunt Kizzie's stocking.

Uncle Toby's cottage stood a little ways back from the main street. A lane ran to the left of it, and a gate opening out of it, led up to the door. The house was low. The roof so near the ground a child might climb up and pick the roses and morning-glories which aunt Kizzie had trained to hide the patched shingles. In summer time, aunt Kizzie was never without her roses and morning-glories.

On one side of the front door was the sitting-room. On the other the sunny kitchen with a bedroom leading out of it. These three rooms, together with the little attic where aunt Kizzie kept her fall herbs, and uncle Toby his basket splints, was the only home the worthy couple had known since the day they were made one. Here their only son had been born, here he had lived his brief life. Here he had died, and here Ruth Morton came to cheer the lives of the old couple she loved.

Uncle Toby was waiting in the doorway to welcome her. His quick ear had detected the click of the little gate, and as Ruth came up the walk, he put out his hand to draw her in.

"You are late, Ruth," he said, "but we're all ready for you," opening the door of the little sitting-room as she spoke. "Here's Ruth, mother. You can put away your knitting for a minute, can't you? She always a knittin' and a knittin'," he added, a hearty laugh shaking his portly figure. "I expects he's just shapin' the toe; but come right in."

Uncle Toby always reminded Ruth of a tumbler of jelly. His round form shook and quivered as jelly shakes on leaving the mould, while Margie declared he was far sweeter, and Margie certainly ought to know as she had a sweet tooth. Ruth was not quite as positive in her avowal as her little sister, but she was not loath to say she loved uncle Toby, and she followed him into the cosy little sitting-room very contentedly, where she found aunt Kizzie seated in her patch-covered rocking-chair, shaping off the toe of her stocking, just as uncle Toby said.

Oh, that dear old room! How often Ruth looked back to it in after years, and longed for its peace and quiet. The yellow painted floor, the huge fireplace with its neatly polished andirons and wooden settle near by; the tall clock in the corner, whose size had always held her in awe and admiration; the queer old-fashioned mirror with its tarnished frame half-hidden under asparagus boughs bright with scarlet berries, and the big patch-covered rocking-chair drawn close to the little cheery table holding the family Bible and aunt Kizzie's knitting work. How homelike it seemed! It was like a tender poem we pick up, read carefully with tear-wet eyes, then lay away to be looked at again next time the heart is tender. Ruth longed to stretch out both arms and take settle, chair, clock, and everything in. As it was, she only took aunt Kizzie and gave her a loving kiss.

"I am later than usual," she said, "but I could not very well come before. How are you feeling, aunt Kizzie? Is your rheumatism better? But I needn't ask. You always say it is."

Aunt Kizzie was busy in removing Ruth's hat, and shading the little lamp just right for the young eyes looking up at her.

"Oh, my rheumatiz is better," she said. "To be sure I have a twinge now and then, but it is only to remind me I am not as young as I was once. Just as we have to have ups and downs in this world to let us know we are learning the lessons of life. How are you, dear child? And how is your father and the little ones?"

"Ah well, aunt Kizzie," said Ruth slowly, wondering if it was as well with her as with the rest.

Uncle Toby was quick to note the

change in the young voice, and the shadow on the fair face. He stopped stroking the old tortoise-shell cat who had climbed on the arm of his chair, to look at Ruth.

"Ruth," he said, "I wish you would read the fourteenth chapter of St. John to-night."

Ruth idly turned the leaves of the Bible lying on the stand before her. How often when a child had she stolen to aunt Kizzie's knee to be shown its sacred pictures. Now, each brought back some bit of the past to her, and made her heart beat, and her eyes fill. She was in tender mood that night.

Uncle Toby leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. The old cat folded her paws in towards her breast and purred a sleepy song to the kitten watching her softly waving tail with roguish eyes. Aunt Kizzie put up her knitting, and Ruth began the chapter in her smooth, even voice, "Let not your heart be troubled."

How the blessed words soothed and comforted her. How they lifted her out of self into the fulness of God's great love. She laid her head on the open page and burst into tears.

"Oh! Uncle Toby," she said, "that chapter has done me so much good."

"I thought it would." Uncle Toby reached over and stroked the bowed head.

"Why?" Ruth looked up with wondering eyes. "How did you know I needed comfort?"

Aunt Kizzie wiped away the tears which had risen in sympathy.

"Father has watched the shadows drifting across the hills too long for him to fail to recognize one when it comes," she said. "Come here, Ruth, and tell us what your trouble is. Has anything gone wrong at school today? Don't be afraid to speak. We are put here to help bear one another's burdens."

"I'm not afraid," said Ruth, wiping her eyes. "You have carried me across too many weak bridges for me to lose faith in you. It is not much, and what there was this chapter has helped clear away. I was thinking of Lois, aunt Kizzie—of her beautiful home, and those things which make life attractive. I believe I was a little envious of her good fortune, till I read the words; 'I go to prepare a mansion for you.' Then I began to see how wicked I'd been. I believe you had a purpose in giving me that chapter to read, uncle Toby."

She could not bring herself to relate the story of Lois's wrong doing, even to these faithful friends. Her father knew it. God knew it, and to honest-hearted Ruth, that was enough.

Her sober face convinced loving aunt Kizzie that there was trouble of a more serious nature than that of envy, but she would not force her confidence. She took up her knitting again, and knit a round or two in silence. Then she looked at Ruth over the rim of her spectacles.

"Ruth," she said, "did you ever think you were the daughter of a King, and are entitled to a share in the many mansions he has gone to prepare? It seems to me if you would only stop and think of this whenever little things come up to dishearten and vex you, they would take wings and fly away."

"Mother always hits just right," said uncle Toby, looking affectionately into the placid face which had smiled back at him for over fifty years. "Think of it, Ruth! A King's daughter!"

"I never thought of it before," said Ruth with deepening eyes. "You have given me a new idea, aunt Kizzie, and it is not the first one. I will try and keep it in mind. I wish I could tell you my trouble," she added, laying her head on the trembling hand, and looking up into the wrinkled face shaded by soft, white curls.

Margie used to say aunt Kizzie's cheeks looked as if they were cut up into little canals, through which tears might run at will. They started now, and following one of the many wrinkles, fell on Ruth's forehead. She wiped them off and nestled closer. The rays of the lamp shone through the open window, and lay across the orchard beyond, bringing the thickly

blossomed apple-trees into bold relief. Ruth lifted her head.

"Uncle Toby," she said, "there is one thing which perplexes me. Why does God let all our bright things die? Just see how beautiful your trees look, and then think how bare and cheerless they will be in a few months from now. It is so with everything in this world. Nothing stays. Everything goes. We enjoy it awhile, and when we seem to need it most, we find it gone;" thinking of her last confidence in Lois.

To be continued.

Britain's Greatness.

AN AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC JOURNAL'S TESTIMONY.

The Chicago Herald says: Let us not delude ourselves with fictitious greatness. There is another country at whose greatness we may well pause for contemplation. Its area exceeds eight and a half million square miles. The basis of its power is not land, but water. Its greatness is maritime, and its coast line is twenty-eight thousand five hundred miles long. It lies on both sides of the equator, and its boundaries touch the extremes of heat and cold. Its uncultivated area, which can be made to feed unborn millions without the help of the United States, covers millions of square miles. It contains one hundred thousand square miles of forest, which are being ruthlessly sacrificed. Its population amounts to 315,000,000 souls, including pretty nearly all the races known to man. Its revenue for government amounts to more than a thousand million dollars annually only one fourth of which is levied in direct taxation. It has nearly a million men under arms. It has one policeman for every sixteen square miles of its entire area. Its 246 war vessels are all in commission, not rotting in harbors. Its merchant navy consists of 30,000 ships, manned by 270,000 sailors. Its sea going tonnage amounts to eight and a half millions. It surpasses in steamers all other powers on the globe, and nearly equals their combined total in sailing vessels. Forty nine per cent. of the carrying powers of the world is under its flag. Nearly half the entire yearly cargo of the world is under that flag. More than half the ship earnings from freights and passengers belong to it. Two-thirds of the tonnage annually built belongs to it. The banks of that empire transact one-third the business of the entire world. Its manufacturers comprise one-third those of all Europe. It uses 30 per cent. of the horse power. Its enormous debt, which it uses as the most profitable investment of its own earnings, amounts to only nine per cent. of its wealth. It is the wealthiest state in the world, and its wealth has been made by its exports. Its name is Great Britain, and it abandoned, after a full and fair trial, the economic policy to which the United States fatuously clings. It sends its ships to every port; it asked no tax on articles offered in exchange, and the cargoes its ships carried back to their wharves enriched it as much as those they had borne away.

The Summer is Come.

The birds with us once more. Nature garbed in the brightest green brings joy to those who hate the cold and dreariness of winter. But summer brings with her many other things besides green fields and singing birds. Corns sprout and grow just as if mother earth had a share in nurturing them, and no person wants them. Go, then, to the nearest drug store and buy a bottle of the great and only sure cure—PAINLESS CORN EXTRACTOR. A few days will relieve you of them. N. C. Polson & Co., proprietors, Kingston.

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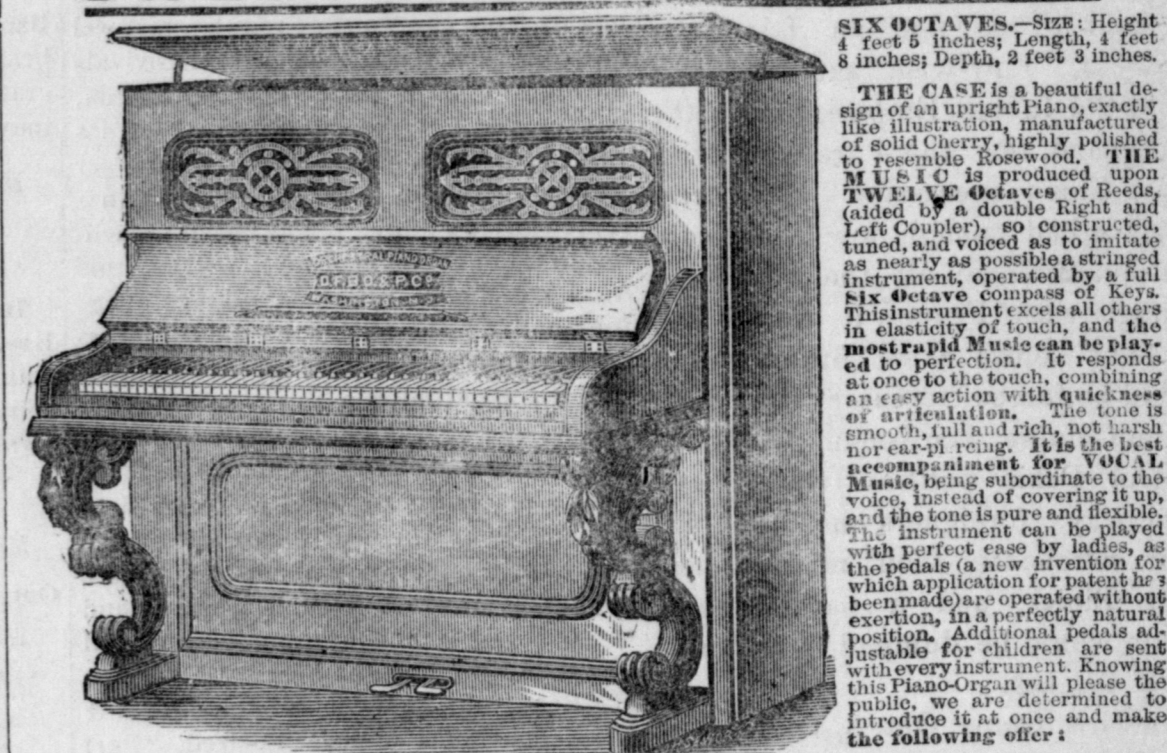
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