

THE
DARWINS.

A DOMESTIC RADICAL ROMANCE

BY MRS. E. D. SLENKER,

Author of "Studying the Bible," "John's Way," and numerous Essays.

•

NEW YORK:
D. M. BENNETT, LIBERAL PUBLISHER,
141 EIGHTH ST., NEAR BROADWAY.

Rare Books
Cairns
PS
2859
S18
D3
1877

THE DARWINS.

CHAPTER I.

"Good morning, Jennie; I've run in to see if you would go with me to call upon the Darwins, who have lately moved to the Forks. None of the townspeople have been to see them yet, and as they are strangers in the vicinity, it is the duty of old citizens to make the first call."

"Very true, Edith, but I prefer not to cultivate their acquaintance, for my Sunday-school teacher told me last week that she heard the Darwins were Infidels; and she said that young people, whose opinions were not firmly fixed, should keep away from all such associates, and, moreover, that those who did go there were guilty of upholding them and consequently in a measure responsible for the prevalence of their ideas. So just take off your things and spend the afternoon with me and we will have a nice time playing euchre."

"I should really enjoy a few games with you, Jennie, but how comes it that you have taken to playing cards again when you all agreed to give it up the time the Church made such a fuss about it?"

"Oh! we knew there was no harm in playing, so we never quit at all, but were only private and quiet about it, just as our mothers are when they do a bit of sewing or baking on Sunday, if it happens to be more convenient, and no one knows about it."

"But, Jennie, you are aware that I do not approve of underhand doings, and believe that whatever cannot be done openly and above board had better not be done at all."

"Yes, Edith; I know you are powerful particular; but father and I often play at home, and ever so many more of the church-members do the same. Though father is a preacher, he isn't a bit foggyish."

"And you, Sue, how is it with your parents? Do they play and encourage you to do so?" said Edith, turning with a comical smile to Jennie's companion.

"Now, you know you are poking fun at me, Edith," said Sue, "Just fancy my pious paternal relative as much as touching one of those bits of pasteboard with a ten-foot pole! Such a faithful, consistent church-member as he is! Always with a Bible text ready for any occasion, and pious mottoes, representations of the crucifixion, death-bed scenes, and other holy pictures hanging all around our walls teaching us 'the way, the truth and the life.' He play cards! No indeed! Nor would he allow me to do it—but I have a will of my own, and don't mean to spend all my leisure time reading dry old books of sermons, Lives of Martyrs, or trashy Sunday-school volumes containing pictures of some ancient, antediluvian age. Old Mrs. Jones was reading one yesterday when I called there, and she said it was 'such a good book!' Bah! I wouldn't give a rusty copper for the whole box-ful. They are only the cast-off, dilapidated refuse of some New England Sunday-school, which the managers thereof thought 'good enough for the South,' but entirely 'too slow' for those who had evolved as they had;" and Sue

laughed a bitter, sarcastic little laugh as she concluded.

"And how came you to be so wise concerning those books?" asked Edith, smiling at the impetuous warmth with which her friend had spoken.

"Oh, I heard Rev. Mr. Dean telling his sister about it the other day, as I stood in the hall shaking the rain-drops off my dress preparatory to knocking at the door," said Sue. "I wasn't eaves-dropping either, for I'd scorn to do that, or any other real mean thing, if I do play cards and act underhandedly now and then. Mr. Dean was talking quite loud, and the door was ajar, so I couldn't help hearing."

"Well, I must be going if I intend making my call," said Edith, "I shall ask Myra Scott if she will not go with me."

"Oh, she'll be glad enough to go," said Jennie, "for she was talking about the Darwins only yesterday, and said she should like to see them just to know how real Infidels looked, talked, and acted in their homes. I have no doubt, for my own part, but that they are terrible folks and quarrel and fight among themselves like cats and dogs, and drink liquor and blaspheme and swear all the time, just as 'Old Tom Paine' did."

"It may be that they are not very nice people, Jennie," said Edith, "but I think I will call, this once at least, and see them—but as for Mr. Paine being so bad as we have always thought him, there must be some mistake about that. I've learned some new things about him lately; but I am in a hurry now and must go on, so we will leave the discussion of Mr. Paine for some other time."

"Well, be sure and call and tell us the news as you come back," said Sue.

"I will if I am home early enough."

"Oh! I fancy you will see plenty of the menagerie in a little while," said Jennie, laughingly, as she bade her friends good evening and commenced dealing the cards for euchre.

Perhaps I may as well pause here and introduce our young people more particularly. Edith May was a pleasant-faced girl and had an abundance of genial good nature and strong common sense. She was about twenty-eight years of age, and the only child of Widow May, who owned Rose Hill, one of the prettiest places in town. The widow also had a small income derived from some railroad shares, which, with Edith's wages as music teacher, not only gave them a comfortable living, but enabled them to materially assist those who were not so well off as themselves. Edith was not at all handsome, but there was such a winsome charm in her way and manners, and such a friendly cordiality in her greeting, that one always felt at ease in her presence; and her sensible, practical ideas made her a useful as well as an interesting companion; and therefore her society was sought for by young and old, and especially by those who were in trouble or difficulty of any sort.

Jennie Martin was the only child of Rev. Mr. Martin. She was passably good-looking, quick, bright and sharp, and was determined some day to make a mark in the world and be somebody, instead of merging her identity in that of a man, and feeling that he was always fancying himself head and shoulders above her in intelligence and capacity.

Sue Conway was the eldest of half a dozen children who surrounded the meagre board of old Deacon Slim, as he was characteristically called by his neighbors. The Deacon was a tall, lean, lank, sour-visaged old gentleman, and was very particular in the outward observance of church rules and discipline and a great stickler for Bible morality; but he was not a good man at heart, though few dared say as much, on account of the sacred (?) office he held, for he had been deacon of the Campbellite church of the village of P—— for some twenty years. His wife was a feeble, delicate woman who had slaved herself almost to death, to be cook, laundress, seamstress, wife, mother, and general housekeeper—all in one. Her sole aim in life was to try to please her grumbling, morose, and selfish husband and to care for her children and home; and had it not been for the thoughtful assistance of Sue, she would long ago have sunk under the accumulation of her manifold labors. Stout, healthy, and cheerful when she married, she was now a mere shadow, and seldom a smile passed over her wan visage. The Deacon was comfortably well off, but miserly and stingy in his provision for his family, and their home was bare and shabby in the extreme, therefore it was no wonder that Sue often rebelled against her environments and longed for better things. She was a smart, bright, intelligent girl. Her fair open forehead, with reddish-brown curls clustering about it, her rosy cheeks and dimpled chin, and the sweetest and bluest of blue eyes, made a pleasing picture to look at.

But she had been schooled in duplicity all the years of her life—being taught to care more for what people would say than for actual right or wrong,

and then everything was hidden from "father" that would make a fuss; and she well knew the Deacon himself did many mean things that he was careful his neighbors should not find out, lest they should discover the difference between his theory and practice, so altogether it was no wonder that our little friend Sue was something of a dissembler.

Myra Scott was a gay, sensible, good-looking sort of a girl about nineteen years of age. She was blunt spoken and very abrupt in her ways, and would tell unpleasant truths directly to a person's face in the frankest manner, and use sharp, cutting expressions, which, very naturally, often gave offense to those with whom she came in contact; but she was so perfectly honest and truthful, so good and kind at heart, and so loving and affectionate, that she soon healed the wounds she made, and was, in spite of all, a general favorite. Even those who were most hurt by her plain speeches were often compelled to own that they were benefited by seeing themselves as others saw them.

The Darwins were Connecticut Yankees, and had been living for some years in Tennessee, where they had been part owners of a small woollen-mill, but thinking they could do better, financially, in Virginia, they had bought the old mill-site at the Forks and moved there a few weeks previous to the commencement of our story.

CHAPTER II.

The day after Edith May had made her call on the new neighbors, she sent for Jennie and Sue to come and spend the afternoon with her, and as soon as they were all seated at the pleasant open grate, with the cheerful fire shining on their fresh young faces, Edith said: "Well, girls, I presume you are wanting to hear about my call, are you not?"

"Yes, indeed, we are," replied Sue. "We were really out of patience with you last night for not stopping as you went home."

"It was too late to call," said Edith, "and mother was alone, so I hurried right on, knowing my news would keep over and lose nothing by the delay, as your appetites would only be whetted up the sharper by anticipation, which is said to be better than reality. I found Myra all eagerness to go along, and we had such a lovely walk. We went through a bit of woods on the left; you know I never go along a bare road when I have fields and woods to choose from. We gathered ferns, mosses, mountain tea, Indian arrow-heads and other curiosities, till we had our baskets brim full and running over. Oh! how enjoyable are the mild, warm, sunny February days, coming as they do, right in the edge of spring, as the wind-up of Old Winter's reign! They seem like oases in a desert, brightening up the waste and giving all nature a joyous, cheerful hue. When we got in sight of the heretofore dilapidated Forks, lo!

what a change ! The old buildings had been repaired and painted, the fences fixed, and everything was neat, clean, and in good order. We passed up the walk to the front porch and rapped at the door, which was opened by a pleasant, intelligent-looking girl, who seemed about seventeen years of age. She greeted us politely, invited us to come in, and led the way to a nice, cosy little sitting-room, plainly but tastefully furnished, and looking very homelike and comfortable. Its only occupant was a lady about fifty-five years of age, who sat upon a low rocking-chair sewing carpet rags. She arose and welcomed us cordially, shaking hands as warmly as if we were old friends. I introduced Myra and myself, and said I presumed I was addressing Mrs. Darwin.

“ ‘Yes,’ said she, ‘that is my name, if you please, and,’—turning to the girl who had admitted us, ‘this is my daughter Minnie.’

“She asked us to remove our wraps and be seated by the stove, and then, as she resumed her sewing, she chatted away cheerfully about the various things which usually form the topic of conversation between strangers and new comers—the weather, how they like the country, the neighbors, etc. I never before saw a woman whom I admired at first sight as I did Mrs. Darwin. She was so motherly and kind, so genial, fresh, and charming, and so cordial, that in a few moments we felt as if we had known her a lifetime. She said we were her first callers from town, but that she had made the acquaintance of several of the neighbors around the Forks and found them kind, friendly, and sociable. ‘Indeed,’ she continued, ‘I am sure we shall have plenty of nice associates here, for I have

never lived in any place yet where there were not kind, good, interesting, and friendly people.' And I thought, as she spoke, that it was no marvel that one like her found friends everywhere, for it did not seem possible for any one to know and not love her. The heart was drawn out in spite of one's self by her earnest, sympathizing, kindly manner.

" 'Have you been up town yet?' I asked.

" 'No,' she replied, 'We have been so busy, and we have no acquaintances there to draw us, so we have delayed going, but if the weather continues nice, and nothing prevents, we shall take a walk up there next Sunday.'

" 'If you do, you must call and see mother and me,' said I, telling her where we lived and how to find the house. She said she should enjoy calling on us if she could get Mr. Darwin to come in, as, like most men, he was shy about entering strangers' houses.

" 'Then Myra, in her blunt way, spoke up and said, 'Why haven't you been over to church, Mrs. Darwin? We have two churches, Methodist and Campbellite, so you can have your choice, or, maybe you don't believe in either of them.' Mrs. Darwin smiled, and said that she had been brought up a Quaker, and of course she had a partiality for that plain, quiet, steady, sober people, though she thought there were good men and good women in all sects, and outside of them too.

" 'And so you are a Quaker, then,' said Myra. 'Oh! I do adore Quakers. I think they are the best people in all the world, though I never saw one before,' and she looked at Mrs. Darwin as if she was a natural curiosity of some sort, 'but,' she added,

'you don't say *thee* and *thou*, nor do you wear a kerchief folded across your breast, or drab-colored clothes.'

" 'Oh ! no,' said Mrs. Darwin, laughing, 'I don't pretend to be a real Quaker, though I love many of the dear old ways and thoughts. I never was one of the precise, straight-laced kind. I have a way of my own, you see, and do what I think is right and proper without following church fashions, or any other fashions, farther than it is convenient or desirable. I like individuality and independence as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others, or make one's self disagreeable or offensive.'

" 'That's precisely my way of thinking, I do hate this running after style, and straining every nerve to dress like other folks, which makes a company of men and women resemble a set of puppets in a show or a pile of candles made in one mould. I am glad to find we think so much alike, and that you are not really such a horrid, wicked Infidel as we heard you were, but that you talk and act just like other folks,' said Myra, in her blunt, explosive way, though I trod on her toes to give her a hint not to be so impolite. But Mrs. Darwin just smiled and said in her motherly, pleasant manner, 'I trust, my dear young lady, that you, and all others of our neighbors, will judge us by what we do and say, and not by what strangers, who know nothing of us, tell about us. Let our lives speak for us. The tree is known by its fruits, and men should be known by their deeds.' 'Yes, that's fair and candid,' said Myra, 'and I know we shall all like you ever so much. I am sure I do already.'

" Just then the door opened, and a tall, queenly-

looking girl of twenty years of age entered the room, and, as she came gracefully forward, Mrs. Darwin introduced her as her oldest daughter, Rose. Bowing, and smiling with her mother's cordial smile, she shook hands with us, and we were soon chatting together like old acquaintances. In a sunny window were a few pot-plants in full bloom—begonias, roses, verbenas, hyacinths, geraniums, fuchsias, and the old-fashioned hydrangea. As we got up to look at them more particularly, Rose said, apologetically, 'We have but few small plants this season, as we could not move many of them so far, but we carefully tend what we have so as to make them do their very best. I inherit my mother's passionate admiration of flowers, and feel lost if I do not have a few about me all the time.'

" 'Oh, yes,' said Minnie, 'Rose is almost crazy on the subject of flowers. Just wait till we have been here a year or two, and you will see them in every corner of the yard, and I should not wonder if she had some growing about the factory too.' Then she passed into an adjoining room and soon returned with a large portfolio, saying, 'Now, girls, if you are done looking at the real flowers I will show you some painted ones,' and taking out a pile of the most beautiful little sketches, she spread them before us. There were wild flowers of every shade and hue, and often a bit of the natural landscape surrounding them just as they grew in their native homes. Garden and hot-house flowers too, in all their gorgeous beauty, massed in groups and alone, each with the name beneath in beautifully illuminated script, and the place where found, together with the day and date and sometimes a few lines descriptive of the

occasion. I could have looked at them all day; I am so fond of paintings, especially of flowers, you know. Seeing how I admired them, Minnie insisted upon my acceptance of a little group of forget-me-nots as a token of friendship.

"See! here it is," and she took from the mantel-shelf a small picture in a rustic frame and handed it to the girls to look at. A little spring at the foot of a tall, gray old oak sent out a merry, laughing stream of bubbling, silvery water, and along its margin grew the tiny flowers, blue as the purest azure, and all around them the grass was just as green as grass could be, while halfway up the rock in a deep crevice grew a clump of birch bushes, and on the tip of one of the tallest twigs of the birch sat a robin apparently singing at the top of its voice. It was truly a gem, and joy and gladness beamed all over it.

"And is it a natural scene, Edith?" asked Sue.

"Oh, yes," replied Edith, "Minnie told me it grew within half a mile of their old home, and said she had sat by that spring many and many a time with some chosen friend or a book for a companion."

"I wonder she was willing to part with it, and to a stranger, too," said Jennie.

"She had several sketches of the same spot, or I presume she would not, nor would I have been willing to accept it had it been the only souvenir," said Edith; "but I'll go on with my story. We had just looked at the last picture when we heard the silvery tinkle of a little bell, and Rose got up and invited us to walk out to supper. We were surprised to find it was so late, and insisted we ought to start for home, but Rose said her mother would feel hurt unless we stayed, now that she had it all ready for us, so we

followed her to the large, pleasant dining-room, where we found a nice meal had been prepared for us by Mrs. Darwin, who had slipped out quietly while we were all admiring the flowers and pictures. Our walk had given us a good appetite and we enjoyed our supper very much, enlivened as it was by the cheerful talk of Mrs. Darwin and the girls. By the time we had eaten it was growing dark, so we hastily took our leave, inviting them to be sure and return our call at the earliest opportunity."

"And didn't you see Mr. Darwin, or Willie?" asked Sue.

"No. Mrs. Darwin apologized for their absence, saying they were busy fixing up the machinery in the factory so as to have it ready in time for the wool-clipping season, and said they seldom came in till it was too late to see to work any longer."

"Well, Edith," said Jennie, "I must confess I'm rather favorably impressed by what you say of the Darwins, and if I thought they would call on you Sunday, I would come over."

"Well, come anyhow; if they do not happen to be here, we'll practice that new song you wished to learn," said Edith.

"And poor me! I must stay at home and read 'Baxter's Call to the Unconverted,' or some other of the dry, musty, old volumes which compose the family library," said Sue. "I declare it's too bad! I wish there wasn't any Sunday at all."

"You had far better wish that everybody was at liberty to enjoy the day as they pleased, whether in work, recreation, or pleasure," said Edith seriously. "It is a pity your father is so strict with you, for I'm sure there is no harm in taking a walk, or calling

on a friend on Sunday, any more than on any other day. The Bible says the Sabbath was made for man, and surely we ought to be allowed to use it as we think best. But of course you will obey your father in all things reasonable as long as you remain under his roof."

"Well, I don't know about that. He is naturally so unreasonable that I never can tell when it is right for me to obey, and I sometimes think a few more years of such training as his will fit me for the lunatic asylum," replied Sue, with a sigh.

"No danger of that," said Edith, smiling. "As long as you jump over the traces as often as you have done of late, you will find enough outside amusement to keep your brain all right. It's none of my business, you know, but I am well aware who it is that rides over to N—— every few weeks and dances till the wee small hours, while her parents think her quietly sleeping in her little chamber."

"Yes, and a nice time there'll be some day about it, too. Bill and Sam—the twins, you know—were off skating one Sunday a few weeks ago, and the ice was so thin I was terribly uneasy about them, and when they came back I told them if they went again I'd tell father. They said, 'Tell away if you want to: we can tell things, too. You needn't think we don't know that you have been to five balls this winter.' I had to promise to keep quiet then; and so it goes all the time. It's one continual fuss about something or other, and a perpetual covering up and hiding, till I'm so sick of shams that I often wish that everybody had to live in literal glass houses without a curtain at all to them."

"It's a funny idea, Sue, but it would doubtless

vastly add to the morality of some of us if we knew our every act was thus laid open to public criticism," said Edith.

"A nice time we would have with father, though, in the glass house," remarked Sue, with a grimace. "He is always grumbling now from morning till night, and continually finding fault with some of us, and what would he do if he could see all that goes on!"

"I don't suppose he could well do more than grumble all the time," and Edith laughed archly and mischievously at her little troubled friend, though in her heart she really pitied and sympathized with her.

"Ah, me! I do so long for a few gleams of real sunshine in our home," said Sue, after a moment's pause. "You don't know how bare, cold, and desolate it looks after I have been to call on some friend, who, like yourself, lives in the very midst of brightness and beauty. Father will not even let us cultivate flowers. He says he will not have them in the way darkening all the windows; and out of doors he gives us no chance, for he pastures his horse right in the front yard, and pulls up every one we plant in the garden, saying we had better set a cabbage there, or put out a potato hill. And he will not allow us to play games—not even fox and geese. I do wonder if he was never young himself, that he insists on us having old heads on young shoulders?"

"What can't be bettered must be borne, and should be borne as cheerfully as possible for one's own sake, as well as for others," said Edith kindly. But had she chosen to do so, she could have made

Sue open her blue eyes wide with astonishment, for her mother and the Deacon had both spent their younger days in one of the southern counties of the State, and had, by chance, again drifted together at P——, members of the same church and the same community once more. Therefore Mrs. May knew all his antecedents, and had acquainted Edith with his former history. She had told her that the now sober and sedate old deacon had not only been wild and reckless in his earlier life, but absolutely lawless. He spent the Sabbath hours in all sorts of amusements; robbed orchards and water-melon patches; stole nuts, and everything else that was eatable; drank liquor to great excess; and, worse than all, he had seduced the only daughter of a poor widow and left her to raise *his* child as best she could, and to drag out the remainder of her life a sad, lonely, broken-hearted woman, neither maid, wife nor widow, and belonging to no class of society save to outcasts, with whom she refused to associate, preferring even isolation to further wrong-doing. But all this was kept quiet by Edith and her mother, for they could not see that any good would result from its being known, and therefore let things take their course, aware that right generally triumphs in the end, and the good things of life preponderate over the evil.

Sunday came, and as it was unusually mild, pleasant and warm, Edith and Jennie sat out in the little porch and watched for the expected visitors. They soon saw Mrs. Darwin coming up the garden walk accompanied by a tall, fine-looking gentleman whom she introduced to the girls as Mr. Darwin. Edith led them through the hall into the sitting-

room, where her mother, a pleasant-looking old lady, sat in a comfortable arm-chair reading a magazine. Edith presented her new friends, and soon after Jennie came in and was presented to Mr. Darwin. They all fell into a pleasant sociable chat, soon feeling like old acquaintances and real friends. After an hour or so, Edith slipped out and brought in a lunch of cakes, and cream, and apples and some water in a beautiful silver pitcher which she told her new friends she had received the day before from her class of pupils, who had given it as a testimonial of their good-will and esteem for one who had proved not only a good teacher but a true friend to each and all of them.

"Yes," said Mrs. May, with her motherly pride, "all Edith's pupils love her, and it seems as if they could not do enough to show their appreciation of her, and well they may, for she is mother, friend and companion to them. She grudges no labor or expense that will add to their happiness or improvement."

Edith blushed a bit at her mother's words, but soon recovering from her embarrassment she invited her guests to eat something after their walk. "Perhaps," said she, after all had been helped to a generous supply, "perhaps I ought to apologize for not treating you to wine, as it is so customary to do in this place, but temperance has always been one of my mother's hobbies and I have followed in her footsteps, only more so."

"No apology is needed," said Mrs. Darwin, "we, too, are strongly opposed to all kinds of spirituous liquors. We do not even make home-made wine, nor beer, nor cider. Some think us almost fanatical

on the subject, but if we *do* err I wish to err on the right side. Liquor has been the cause of so much misery and wretchedness in the world that I often wish the art of making it could be forgotten."

"It would soon be learned again," said Mr. Darwin, "for the juice of berries or fruit of any kind, if sweetened and left to stand awhile, will ferment and become alcoholic; therefore, if we wish to do away with strong drink we shall be obliged to try some other mode than forgetting how to make it."

"And what would be your plan, Mr. Darwin?" asked Edith, earnestly.

"Well, if liquor must be had, and it is useful for preserving specimens of curious animals and perhaps in many other arts, I should say, have it made by such persons as government should appoint. Have it made perfectly pure and unadulterated. Sell it at a stipulated price, so there would not be much profit accruing from it to the manufacturers, or any who should buy or sell it. Let those who make the liquor have regular wages, and let what little profit there might be go to the government, just as it does from the making of postage stamps or greenbacks. If no one could sell it for more than the government did there would be no motive for any one to traffic in it. Who will try to make money by buying and selling postage stamps?"

"But, Mr. Darwin, I don't see as your plan would better it much, for all could get it that wanted it, just as we all get stamps when we wish to," said Edith.

"True, but you see if people only got it in that way, and no one made money by it, there would be an end to all the rum-shops and other places of

temptation. Then education would do away with the rest in a very little while. Once get people generally to see that liquor is not food, strength, or nourishment, and entirely valueless as a remedial agent, and that it is moreover, really injurious to the system, both mentally and physically, and few would touch it."

"But, Mr. Darwin," said Jennie, "do you really think it does no good in any case as a medicine? Why, all our doctors use it and recommend it to their patients in numerous diseases, with, as they say, beneficial results."

"Yes, my young friend; I am aware they prescribe it only too often here in the South, because they have been wrongly taught, and do not realize the evils that result from its use. I read an article not long ago about the International Medical Congress held in Philadelphia in September, 1876, that proves the medical fraternity are rapidly finding out the inutility of liquor as a health-restorer. There were four hundred and eighty delegates, and many of the ablest scientists of the profession of this and other lands were in attendance; and stronger statements against the use of alcohol were never made on the temperance platform than were uttered by those medical men. A Scotchman said he believed it would be for the best interests of humanity if every drop of alcohol in the world was cast into the midst of the sea. Dr. Hunt, of New Jersey, disputed the claim of alcohol in every important particular. A letter from the National Temperance Union was read, amid a round of applause, and the points in the reply passed almost unanimously. The official answer rules alcohol out of its long-cherished place

as a tonic, for if it has no food value, how can it tone up the system? One of the delegates, speaking of this, said, 'It has the same relation to the human system that a whip has to an overworked horse; it may make him spring forward for a few moments, but it does not rest and refresh him, and reaction must follow.' A medical declaration published in London in 1872 says it is believed that the inconsiderate prescription of alcoholic liquors by medical men for their patients has given rise, in many instances, to the formation of intemperate habits; and the manifesto was signed by two hundred and fifty of the leading medical men of the United Kingdom. Indeed, the drug-shop has truly been called the parent of the dram-shop. In my old home in Connecticut, liquor has been ruled out of good society as a beverage; but here in the South I find but few families that do not keep it and use it, and many of them take it as a daily dram, and believe it to be really beneficial, and imagine they could not do without it. It seems to us Yankees, who come from a land where it is popularly tabooed, that we have gone back fifty years into the past again when we witness such a wholesale use of alcoholic stimulants as we find in many parts of the South; and we feel as if a great deal of the old work of regeneration was to be gone over again and re-done. The day will come when tea and coffee will follow alcohol into the mists of oblivion. They are all of one class as regards usefulness and health, only tea and coffee are less harmful in their effects both physically and morally, though equally worthless as real food and sustenance. But little drink of any sort should be taken with our meals. Nothing very hot

or very cold. A few sips of milk, *weak* tea or coffee, or cool water, is all that is necessary. Ice-water is never desirable, especially in hot weather. Dr. Foote, in his 'Plain Home Talk,' says, 'The thorough lubrication of the food with the saliva is necessary to promote digestion. Saliva is an alkali and, electrically speaking, a negative, while the gastric fluid in the stomach is an acid and a positive. When, therefore, food descends into the stomach only half masticated, and lubricated with some other fluid than saliva, digestion for some time is almost suspended, because the negative fluid is wanting to attract the immediate action of the positive fluid, and the presence of other liquids tends to dilute and destroy the power of the latter. In addition to this, the labor of the jaws and teeth is thrown upon the disabled stomach. If a person eats slowly, masticates thoroughly, and omits all drinks, Nature furnishes three or four ounces of salival fluid with which to moisten his food preparatory to its entrance into the stomach. No one requires liquids at the table. This habit is the result of fast eating.' But please excuse me, ladies," said Mr. Darwin, apologetically, "I did not mean to deliver a lecture on temperance. Your questions and looks of interest drew me out farther than is really polite, I fear."

"Oh, not at all," said Mrs. May. "We are delighted to find you are such a warm advocate of a cherished theory that we have held and maintained almost in isolation for so long, and you have told us many interesting facts that bear upon the subject."

"And I've made my last pint of wine or beer," said Jennie earnestly. "Father is a preacher, and

yet we make all the wine for communion purposes for our church here, and I know you do not believe it right to use wine even for that, for Mrs. May and Edith have often said they did not."

"You are right, Miss Jennie, as regards my belief in using alcoholic beverages for church purposes. I think many a reformed drunkard has had his old appetite revived by the taste of wine at the communion service. It is far better to use simple colored water, or unfermented wine, as they do at the North now in most churches."

"I think so, too, and shall use my influence with father to get him to propose it here," said Jennie.

"I wish you all success, my dear," said Mrs. Darwin, looking kindly upon the enthusiastic girl, who in her eagerness had risen to her feet and spoke with an animation and zeal that proved her every bit in earnest.

The time had flown so rapidly while engaged in discussing this interesting and important subject that it was now getting late, and the Darwins rose to take their leave. Edith and Jennie walked with them through the village, pointing out objects of interest, and telling who occupied the various houses. As they passed Dr. Scott's, Myra ran out and joined them, and her lively remarks gave variety and zest to the occasion. As they parted at the lane leading to the Forks, Edith begged Mrs. Darwin to tell Rose and Minnie to come and spend the day with her sometime during the next week.

"They will be very glad to do so," said Mrs. Darwin, "for when once the business season commences at the factory they will be too much confined to be able to go out often."

"Why, surely, they do not work in the factory!" said Myra, with surprise.

"Certainly they do," replied Mrs. Darwin; "and why not?"

"Oh, because factory girls are low and vulgar, and not fit to associate with respectable people," said Myra, bluntly.

"I trust that you will find Rose and Minnie just as agreeable, moral, and refined as if they did nothing but play upon the piano, read novels, and attend balls, parties, and sewing-circles," said Mrs. Darwin, pleasantly but earnestly.

"Oh, yes; certainly, certainly," said Myra, hastening to apologize for her rudeness. "I did not mean to say they were not real ladies, for they truly are; but you know I have always seen factory girls looked down upon and considered as unfit to be associated with by respectable people, and was therefore taken by surprise when you said Rose and Minnie worked in the mill. I do hope you will not be offended at me, for I am apt to say right out just what I think, and often hurt the feelings of my best friends in that way, though I do not mean to do so. I reverse the old adage, you see, and speak twice before I think, instead of thinking twice before I speak."

Mrs. Darwin told her she was not at all displeased at her frankness, and hoped she and Jennie and Edith would soon make them a visit.

"That we shall be sure to do," said the warm-hearted, impulsive girl, "for we all like you ever so much;" and with a cordial "good night" they parted.

As the girls walked homeward, Myra began wondering how it was that Rose and Minnie could be factory girls and be so refined, ladylike, and intelligent.

"Oh," said Edith, "it is easily explained: they have an intelligent home-circle, and use all the means they have to cultivate themselves. I have always thought if it had been necessary for me to go into some one's kitchen to work that I would have studied and endeavored to make something of myself, and never have given way to a low or vulgar habit. There is no reason why a kitchen girl should be less a lady than her employer. True, she has not the same advantages, but if she uses those she has, she need not fail of becoming truly refined and ladylike. But there comes Sue, and now if you will all go into our house, I'll tell you what I've lately learned about Mr. Paine—you remember speaking of him the other day."

With curiosity all aroused to know what could possibly be said in favor of "such a wretch," they eagerly accepted Edith's invitation, and were soon seated in a circle around her, waiting for her to commence. Taking a letter from a small box on the table, she said, "My uncle, Robert Moore, who is a sailor, was here some months ago on a visit, and I said something about Paine being so bad and wicked. He made no reply then, but two weeks ago I received a letter from him, which I will now read to you," and opening a closely-written sheet she read as follows:

"MY DEAR AND BELOVED NIECE: My special object in writing at this time is to enlighten you upon some points concerning the worst-abused man the world has ever known—Thomas Paine. Now, don't start in holy horror at the very mention of his name, for in spite of all the anathemas you have heard from the pulpit and press, from parents and Sunday-school teachers, and from hundreds of other sources. Mr. Paine was really a good man, and very good,

too. He was a philosopher, a savior, and a redeemer, just as much as were Christna, Buddha, Osiris, Alcides, Salvahana, Zoroaster, Yu, Bacchus, or Christ."

"Oh! please stop a moment, Edith," said Sue, "Your uncle surely don't mean that there ever was more than one crucified savior, does he?"

"It looks as if he did," replied Edith, "but I've thought so little about that part of his letter I haven't tried to make out what he did mean; but I know if he says there were other saviors it must be so, for he is a man who never speaks without being certain of his ground. But it is about Mr. Paine we now wish to hear," and she continued reading as follows :

"I do not speak without authority these things concerning Mr. Paine, for I have seen and talked with an old man who knew him well, and who spoke in very high terms of him as a neighbor, friend, and citizen, and this man was a Quaker, and of good standing in his society. He says Paine spent a pure and blameless life and one full of good deeds and great services to humanity. His thrilling words, written in the crisis of a nation's struggle for independence, did more to accomplish this great result than the efforts of any other single individual in the world. He gave *all* his available means to advance the cause of liberty and alleviate the woes of a suffering army. He was a warm friend of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Madison, Monroe, and many of the greatest and best men of his age. John Adams declared that even 'Washington's sword would have been wielded in vain had it not been supported by the pen of Paine.' 'His pen brought about unity of thought as well as men and money—the sinews of war—and independence was won by the sacred trinity of the council, the pen, and the sword. The names of Jefferson, Paine, and

Washington should not be separated by prejudice or bigotry.' The pulpit denounces him as illiterate, coarse, drunken, and vulgar, yet history says, 'Men of genius and men of high standing sought his acquaintance, and that acquaintance was soon converted into friendship by his conversational powers, the urbanity of his manners, and the goodness of his heart.' He came to this country 'to introduce a more elevated system of education in our female schools,' and therefore you women, my dear niece, should be especially careful how you malign and traduce one who labored for your elevation in the scale of humanity; one who wished to give you the only means that will ever raise you to an equality with your brother man—knowledge! No class of people possessing equal knowledge with another can ever be kept in social bondage by that other; so, if you wish for equality or power, if you desire to be somebody, by all means seek knowledge, and give those who would aid and have aided you all due credit. Paine's personal habits were those of a gentleman of that day. He used liquor as a common beverage, as people here in the South now do in many places, and as was then common where he lived. But he never used it to excess, for he was temperate in all things. He was one of the rare few who cultivate the mind and heart and feelings instead of giving undue license to the appetites and passions. Mr. Jarvis, an intimate friend of Paine, says, 'Few people are aware of the morals and decorum of Mr. Paine. He never used vulgar oaths, and even good-humoredly reproved those of his friends who did. I once advised him to recant, and publish his recantation as a hoax. He replied, Tom Paine never told a lie; and I never discovered in Mr. Paine even a prevarication.'

"The report of the Quakers who lived near him at New Rochelle is that he was a temperate, moral, religious, kindly old man, living at peace with all the world. When only eight years old, he heard an account of a sermon upon the atonement, on the

vulgar principle of God's anger being intercepted by the voluntary sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ; and he remarks to the effect that he could not help thinking that God, so represented, behaved very much like an angry and revengeful man. This was the simple origin of his free inquiry, which afterwards produced the first part of his 'Age of Reason,' a mild, philosophic work of much originality, and so clearly expressed that he who reads generally becomes a convert. And this mild work, the 'Age of Reason,' is, my dear Edith, the real cause and origin of all the cruel calumnies the world has circulated about the scholar, the philosopher, the hero, the scientist, the inventor, the humanitarian, and the savior—Thomas Paine. I have this book myself, and have read and re-read it, and was really surprised to find it so moral and pious, for, like you, I had heard the meanest things said of its author that could be said of any man. The book was written in defense of natural religion and in direct opposition to Atheism; though were Paine now living he would undoubtedly be an Atheist. And now, my dear girl, if you wish to know more about this good man, who was 'born five hundred years too soon for the comfort of his days,' and who is deserving of all the commendatory adjectives in the language, get Vale's life of the author-hero and satisfy yourself that he was even greater and better than I have been able, with my feeble pen, to portray him.

"Your affectionate uncle, ROBERT MOORE."

"Well, I am indeed surprised," said Jennie, drawing a long breath, as Edith closed the letter, folded it up, and carefully laid it back in the box. "I never had the least doubt that Mr. Paine was just as bad a man as ever lived, and that he fully deserved every anathema that has been uttered against him. This is the very first word I have heard in his defense from any one. It seems even now as if there must be some mistake about it. How

is it possible that all the world can be wrong and only Robert Moore right?"

"But, Jennie," said Edith "you forget that he quotes from others, and gives authorities and references. And you must also remember that it has been in the interest of the Church to make people believe him a bad man so as to keep them from reading his books; and the united labors of hundreds of thousands of pious zealots can effect great results when concentrated upon so small a thing as the life and morals of one man; the most intense effort being made by each and all to destroy every vestige of good in his record and to fill it up with the vilest substitutes they could."

"But, Edith, you do not mean to say that really good and pious people have willfully lied about Mr. Paine, do you?"

"Well, Jennie, it must be that they have. Look around this little village and see if you would put full confidence in the word of some of its most pious inhabitants if it was to their interest to deceive."

As Edith said this, the girls involuntarily thought of Deacon Conway, and even Sue could not help remembering how many times her father had been guilty of prevaricating and misrepresenting, to call it by no worse name. Had he not, to her certain knowledge, slipped a counterfeit two-dollar bill into the funds that were collected the week before to buy a new carpet for the church, and abstracted therefrom a genuine one for his own use? True, he did not see her, as she was hidden in a recess by the window, reading; but she knew he had the bad bill, for he had got it in change from a drover the day before, and had blessed the man high and low about

it when he discovered it. And when he left the room, Sue examined the collection funds and saw the identical two-dollar bill among them as she surmised she would.

"I am inclined to think, girls, that uncle Robert is about right concerning Mr. Paine, for he is a cautious man, and takes great care to arrive at the exact truth of all important matters, and besides he would never have written this to me, his favorite niece, unless he was absolutely certain of its truth," continued Edith.

"I'd like to read some of Paine's works," said Sue; "but wouldn't father look daggers at me if he heard me say so?"

"And I mean to go to Mrs. Darwin's and see if I can't get that book your uncle said was written in defense of religion and against Atheism, 'The Age of Reason' I think he called it," said Myra, with whom to wish was to do, if possible.

"Yes, that is the name of the book," said Edith; "but I hardly think it would be proper for you to go and ask for it. How do you know they keep such books? It may hurt Mrs. Darwin's feelings if you inquire there for it. You know we did not see or hear a thing while there on our visit that proved them to be Infidels."

"But Mrs. Darwin was raised a Quaker; and father says Quakers are half-Infidels, and maybe Mr. Darwin is a whole Infidel," said Myra, laughing, "though I doubt it, as they are such nice people."

"Paine has always been called an Infidel, and see how nice Edith's uncle has described him to be," said Jennie.

"It's a queer world, isn't it?" said Sue. "But

evening prayer-meeting will soon be out, and I must hurry home, for I don't want father to know I've been calling on Sunday, or he would give me a lecture, and perhaps make me read half a dozen chapters in the Bible as a punishment."

"And we too must go," said Myra and Jennie; and all went their various ways.

After they had left, Edith sat down, and for the dozenth time discussed with her mother the contents of her uncle's letter. She and Mrs. May were both members of the "Disciples," as they called themselves, and until of late they had never thought of questioning the truths of the doctrines they professed, but, like most people, took it for granted that while the different sects were, in the main, all on the right road to heaven, theirs was the only Biblical religion—the oldest, first, and best of them all, for did they not call themselves the "Christian Church," as much as to say there was no other church that was really Christian? And was not the whole Bible their creed? And only a few months ago did they not hear Brother P—— and Deacon S—— agreeing that there was not, and in the nature of things could not be, a real Infidel in the world; for how could any one doubt there must be a Creator to bring into existence all things and maintain order and regularity throughout nature?

"If I were you, Edith," said Mrs. May, "I would not trouble myself about Mr. Paine or his writings. It can do you no good, and may unsettle your faith and make you unhappy."

"It is too late now, mother, for me to consider these things, even were I willing thus to compromise with my conscience, for my doubts are aroused, and

I cannot stop short of knowing the real truth if it can be got at."

"But, my child, you have been happy believing in your God, Christ and the Bible, and why not continue on in the good old way? The poet shows good philosophy when he writes :

' So long as I can see a light, and revel in it's beam,
I care not if an anchorite can prove it all a dream.
So long as I can see a smile, and feel it warm me too,
It answers just as well the while as if it all were true.' "

"But not for me, mother. It may be pleasant and easy and nice to go on dreaming as long as you are asleep and know not the ideal from the real ; but I am awake now, and the great question for me is, What is true? and that question I'm going to solve if it shatters to ruin all the sweet dreams in which I have ever reveled, and leaves only hard, bare, cold realities, as you seem to fear it will. But don't let it trouble you, mother mine ; I mean to be good, true, honest, and sincere, and then it will really matter very little what my faith is, as far as a virtuous and upright life is concerned," and, with mutual "good nights," they sought tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.

CHAPTER III.

"GOOD EVENING," said a lively, cheery voice at the open door of Mrs. May's sitting-room, about two weeks after the reading of Uncle Robert's letter.

"Why, Myra," exclaimed Edith, "how you startled me! I was in a brown study over this sheet of new music, and never noticed you till you spoke so suddenly at my very elbow. But do come right in. I'm so glad to see you. It has been a long time for you to stay away, and I was thinking this afternoon that I'd have to come and hunt you up."

"I'm glad you think me worth that trouble," said Myra. "It is a real compliment, and I appreciate it all the more because I prize your good will above that of any one else in the whole town—always excepting dear old papa, you know."

"Thanks, Myra, for your good opinion. I am sure I value your society highly, and enjoy a chat with you more than with most other people, for I am certain that what you say is sincere and truthful, if it isn't all sugar and sweetness;" and Edith shook her head playfully at her impulsive, warm-hearted visitor. "And now," she continued, "do tell me what has kept you away so long?"

"Here is my apology," said Myra, handing her a small book, which upon opening she found to be the "Age of Reason." "And did you really go and get it?" asked Edith, in surprise.

"Certainly! And why not? I told you I should if they had it. I went the day after we were here at your house, and went alone, too, for one can talk more freely when alone, and besides there was no one there to tread on my toes," and Myra glanced at Edith mischievously.

Her friend smiled, and said she thought her failing was talking too freely at any time, whether alone or in company.

"I know that, Edith; but it's my nature, and folks must take me as I am if they want me at all. I found Mrs. Darwin alone, so I had an excellent chance to say what I wished. 'Two are company, and three are none,' you know, when one wants a private chat. I didn't waste much time in compliments, but just bolted out my request, asking if they had any of Thomas Paine's books, and told her I had been wanting to read some of them, but did not know where to get any unless it was there. 'We have his works complete,' said Mrs. Darwin, looking at me soberly and seriously, 'but we never lend them to young people unless their parents allow them to read such books. We do not like to cause trouble in families, or to interfere in any way concerning people's private opinions, but are glad to lend any book we have to responsible persons.' 'Well, I'm responsible,' said I. 'I've only father to care what I read, and he lets me do as I please, as I am old enough to know right from wrong.' Mrs. Darwin laughed a merry, gleeful little laugh as I said this, and remarked that I was very fortunate in being able to distinguish between the two in every case. 'And, indeed,' said she, 'you are the first person I ever saw who was the happy possessor of this

desirable faculty,' and she looked at me in a curious, comical sort of a way, till all at once I began to perceive that she was paying me off for making a curiosity of her during my former visit, and then I ran up and kissed her, and told her she served me exactly right by paying me back in my own coin. She laughed merrily, and said it was too good an opportunity for a joke for her to allow it to pass unimproved. I said I was ready to take a joke or to give one, and was glad to see people unbend now and then. 'Yes,' said Mrs. Darwin, 'there is too much formality in the world, and too little fun, mirth, and innocent enjoyment. Smiles, cheerfulness, and sunniness of temper are the best health-builders in the world. They keep the heart fresh and young.' 'Ah! now I know why you don't seem old,' said I; 'you are too happy, pleasant, and cheerful to grow wrinkled and gray.' 'Perhaps you are right,' said she; 'I consider it a duty to my husband and children to look happy, and to be happy, and it is the duty of every one to carry sunshine with them wherever they go.' 'But,' said I, 'how can a body do that when they are as full of ups and downs as I am? Now, I am running over with joy one hour, and way down in the depths the next.' 'That is rather a drawback to continued sunshine,' said Mrs. Darwin, 'but one can do much by trying. Happiness grows by cultivation, and I think a strong determination to look upon the bright side of things will assist you materially in your efforts for sunny hours.' Then she went and got me the book, and I asked her if I might pass it to you after reading it. She was very willing, so I brought it along!"

"I am truly glad to have the privilege of perusing

it," said Edith, "and am obliged to you for your kindness in getting me the permission."

"Oh, that was pure selfishness on my part, for I wanted the benefit of your superior judgment," said Myra, laughing.

"And how did you like it?" asked Edith.

"Oh, splendidly! father and I both read it, and carefully compared it with the Bible all the way through, and the good old book came out the looser by each comparison. I tell you, Edith, Mr. Paine was smart, whether he was all the other good things or not. Mrs. Darwin also lent me Watson's 'Reply,' for she said it was always best to read both sides if one wished to be sure of the truth; and I am going to read that this week, while the other is fresh in my mind. I asked her if Mr. Darwin wasn't an Infidel? 'People call him so,' said she. 'And you and the children, are you all Infidels?' 'We all believe alike, and are all unbelievers in the mythologies of this or any past age,' said she, laughing. 'But don't you hate to be called Infidels?' said I. 'Oh, no! we are really proud of the name, for though given by our enemies as a term of reproach, to us it means free thought, liberty of speech, reform, truth, fact, science, and development, against creed, bigotry, superstition, myths, and uncertainties. To know a person as an Infidel is to know him as a thinker and reasoner, for it takes thought to enable, one to grow out of beliefs taught for generations, and grounded in one's mind from earliest childhood, till they become a part of the very being itself.' And I assure you, Edith, that Mrs. Darwin looked every inch a woman as she said all this in an earnest, enthusiastic manner. I felt she was just as sincere

as you or I could be in our belief, and as certain that she was right ; and the thought will come now and then, in spite of me, that she may be nearer right than any of us. Indeed, I feel now 'half seas over' since I read the 'Age of Reason,'" said Myra, laughing. "I can't read the Good Book with a bit of holy interest now, for it seems just like old stories, fables, and legends."

"It's no laughing matter, Myra, I am sure. Only think for how many generations that book has been the guide and stay of our race, and how it has been loved, worshiped, and idolized. Rivers of blood have been shed in its defense, and millions of money spent in its support. It is no light thing to think of its dethronement, even if it does embody some errors and misstatements.

"That good old Book of Life
For centuries has stood
Unarmed amid the strife
When the earth was drunk with blood

And wouldst thou scorn it now?
And have its truths forgot?
Skeptic, forbear thy blow!
Thy hand shall harm it not.

It's very name recalls
The happy hours of youth,
When in my grandsire's halls
I heard it's tales of truth.

I've seen his white hair flow
O'er that volume as he read;
But that was long ago;
The good old man is dead.

"It's a serious thing, Myra dear, to rob people of their idols and destroy their faith in all that has been most sacred to them. I, too, have been won-

dering and thinking much of late ; but the more I think, the more I tremble at the idea of going deeper beneath the surface of things so long held in reverence by all the civilized world. I love to see every one happy, joyous, and hopeful, and would bear a great deal rather than be the cause of inflicting sorrow or pain on a single individual. But should I by any means lose my faith in God and religion, I should then feel it my duty to teach and preach against both just as strongly as I have hitherto worked for their advancement, even though I knew I was giving pain rather than pleasure ; for I should be conscious that in the end truth would bring happiness—thorny though the road might be that led thereto.”

“ You are right in all you say, Edith. The question is a serious one, and I mean to study at it till I feel satisfied one way or the other ; but I must go, now, and get father’s supper,” said Myra, and bidding Edith “ good evening,” she hastened home, and was surprised on going in to find Mr. Darwin there talking with her father as if they were old friends. She shook hands with him, telling him she was glad he had come ; for her father had been wishing to make his acquaintance, but his professional practice left him very few hours of leisure for social visits with his neighbors.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Darwin, “ I was aware of that ; for I heard he had a wide practice, and as we are rarely any of us ill, I knew I should not be apt to see him unless I came on purpose. I find, too, that we are distantly related, as Mr. Scott’s grandfather was from my native town, and a cousin of my grandmother’s.”

"Oh, I'm glad of that," said Myra ; "for now we shall feel as if we had a claim on you, and can come and see you ever so often."

"You will always be very welcome," said Mr. Darwin. "We are plain, every-day people, and like to be sociable and friendly with our neighbors. The actual pleasures of life are made up mainly of little things, and social intercourse with those whose company is pleasant to us is one of the greatest of enjoyments."

"I always like to go where people talk sense," said Myra ; "and that is why I like to visit your family. They don't just gossip about their neighbors, and dress, and such little frivolities, but converse, as men do, of science, philosophy, and the more important things of life."

"You see, Mr. Darwin," said the doctor, smiling, "Myra is not like the generality of women. She has been brought up more as a boy would be, having only her father for teacher, companion, and associate, and a housekeeper to do the work till she was old enough to take charge herself ; and so she has grown to like men's ways in many respects better than she does those of her own sex, and she almost forgets sometimes that she is a gentle, loving woman," and the old man patted the curly head that rested upon his knee. "But she is a good girl, and a good housekeeper for all that, as you will see for yourself if you come here as often as I hope you will."

Myra now rose and prepared the supper, and the three drew their chairs about the little round table, and partook of the simple fare. Light bread, fresh butter, canned fruits, custard, apple jelly, sweet-cakes, and milk ; but all were the very best of their

kind, proving Myra to be, as her father had said, a thoroughly good housekeeper.

"We eat light suppers," said the doctor; "but few sorts at once, and but little in quantity, as sleep is much more refreshing when the stomach has but little to do."

"That is the correct doctrine, according to my way of thinking," said Mr. Darwin. "Some people say, eat but two meals a day, and no supper, but I never could think it a good plan to go so long without eating. Not only is one apt to over-eat at breakfast, after so protracted a fast, but as the stomach gets empty, the gastric juices begin to attack the membrane and coatings, and this causes irritation and often inflammation. I never hear of a child being punished by depriving it of a meal but I wish the ignorant parent could look with a physician's eye, and see the state of the little stomach which is suffering from need of its wonted nourishment. I long for the great and glorious day to come when all punishments shall forever cease, and men become wise, gentle, thoughtful, and good. The world is full of unavoidable aches and pains, and people have to undergo suffering enough without inflicting it upon themselves. There was a time when men thought that the more they crucified the flesh, the nearer they were to heaven; but now they have evolved beyond that, and the sooner they progress on past all desire to inflict wilful pain upon others, the better it will be for the world."

"I don't know but you are right, Mr. Darwin; but if you are, you will have man wiser than his maker, for God punishes the guilty here and hereafter."

"Are you sure of it?" asked Mr. Darwin, smiling.

"The Bible says so, and so we have always been taught," said Mr. Scott; "but as you do not believe in the Bible as a criterion of truth, nor in a god either, Myra tells me, perhaps you do not think there will be any future punishment. But you must own that the wicked are punished here, as we see evidence of that every day."

"I see no evidence of punishment in nature. It is only ignorant man that has ever punished, ever revenged himself upon his unfortunate fellows, and perhaps the lower animals, also, sometimes do something of the kind. But nature never does. If the wicked or wrong-doing meet with sorrow and misfortune, it is generally because of their having trampled upon the moral and physical laws of their being. We are taught that a thing is wrong, and whether it be wrong or not, if we only believe it to be so, we always suffer in conscience if we perpetrate the deed. Our associates find out our moral delinquency, and blame and shun us for it, and that afflicts us, even if they mete out no actual punishment for our offense. If we touch fire, it burns us, not as a punishment, but only as a necessity of the situation. If we should suffer no pain from excess of heat, we would be apt to maim or murder ourselves by too great an application of it, both inwardly and outwardly. Do you suppose the Brooklyn theatre was burned as a punishment to either actors, owners, or those who were there to enjoy the play? No! it was a natural sequence of causes that might have been remedied had proper caution been observed in regard to the danger of fire under such circumstances."

"You may be right, Mr. Darwin; but I confess I can't see how one can get along and never punish. Would you let a robber and murderer go free and escape all punishment for their crimes upon society?"

"Certainly I should, if I were sure they would 'go and sin no more,' for the past would be irremediable, and what would be the use of punishing for that which could not be undone again? You might say, to reform the criminal; but it has been ascertained that kindness has a far better effect upon wrong-doers than any form of punishment could possibly have; and it is certainly more pleasant to do good than harm, even to a man who has broken every moral and social law in the calendar. If the patient (for all who commit wilful wrongs are morally sick) be one from whom more overt acts of criminality are to be expected, it is best to put him in a place of confinement, not as a punishment, but as a safe-guard against future injuries he might perpetrate upon others. But even in this confinement he should be allowed every privilege that is possible, every means of enjoyment or improvement that is practicable; for what a man is, does not depend upon himself, but upon his nature and environments, so why punish him for the unavoidable?"

"And have you raised all three of your children, Mr. Darwin, upon this plan of no punishment?"

"I used to punish Willie and Rose when they were small, and they were often slapped, scolded, and otherwise abused, just as most children are by young and ignorant parents. But by the time Minnie was born we had grown wiser, and she has never known what it is to be punished, struck, or harshly

blamed ; and as a consequence of this, her disposition and temper are sweet, gentle, and tender, and love guides her every action."

"But how do you control them and keep them under subjection?"

"By persuasion, reason, and criticism. Wilful wrong they rarely do ; and if they err ignorantly, a knowledge of the better way, kindly presented, is all that is needed to induce them to do right in future."

"And just to think, father, how all the town have been talking about these good Darwins," said Myra. "Why they have called them everything that's bad, and accused them of all manner of crimes, simply because they were Infidels, and they thought unbelievers capable of any act of wrong or injustice, and felt certain that a good or noble impulse never stirred their hearts. I declare, it's a wicked shame how we have all been imposed upon by our preachers and leaders."

"And yet it is very natural, my young friend," said Mr. Darwin, smiling kindly upon his impetuous defender. "The words Infidel and Atheist have ever been associated in the minds of all pious people with vileness and wickedness. To talk of a good Infidel would seem as unreasonable as to talk of a good devil, yet real Infidels are as harmless, gentle, humane, and kind as any other class of people ; perhaps more so, for they do not set up as an ideal, a cross, angry, spiteful, vengeful God. You people here in the South have seen few, if any, real Atheists ; nor were you even aware of there actually being any, but rather thought them to be figments of the brain, created out of skeptics and doubters who had been

magnified into creatures worse than the reality, or which were thought to be worse. And then, bad people have often pretended to be unbelievers just out of pure bravado, thus bringing the name into contempt and ridicule."

"If you believe in no God," said Mr. Scott, "how do you account for the origin of all that exists?"

"If you believe in a God, how do you account for his origin?" asked Mr. Darwin, smiling. "To me it seems as easy to account for all else as for him."

"Oh," said Mr. Scott, "he is eternal and self-existent."

"Can you prove it?"

"Well, no! but you see it must be so, for we cannot conceive of a time when God was not."

"Nor when he was, in my opinion," said Mr. Darwin. "You believe in a self-existent God, yet can prove nothing concerning him. I believe in a self-existent universe, of which we can see and experience proofs every instant of our lives. True, we cannot explain its origin, or the origin of our race, but neither can you do so, nor can any other Theist, though there have been few systems of religion but what have pretended to do so, yet all have utterly and lamentably failed. In saying God made all things, you only make matters still worse by inventing a being whose origin you cannot explain. Even granting his existence, what light does that throw upon the origin of all else? Did he make all things out of nothing? For if made of already-existing materials, what need was there of him? Some Darwinians accept and some reject the God idea. The latter are, in my opinion, upon the firmest foun-

dation, for they are more free to search in all directions for solid facts, because they have no fear of depriving a god of existence by discovering no necessity why he should be. The believer says everything unknown and unexplainable is God—is the manifestation of an inscrutable power whose ways are unknowable ; but day by day science and knowledge are robbing God of his laurels, and accounting for more and more of these heretofore unknown mysteries, by proving that matter and motion, nature and its inherent laws, or principles, are all-sufficient ; and how much easier and more simple is the study of realities than that of myths—of what *is* than what is imagined. How much better it is to do than to pray. Prayer effects nothing ; work accomplishes all that is to be done. But really, it is time I was going. I hope, Mr. Scott, that you will think over these things, and search earnestly for facts and truths, for these alone can give real satisfaction to the mind of the true inquirer.”

“I don’t doubt, Mr. Darwin, but you will convert us both,” said Myra, rising and bringing him his hat ; “for we have been Painites ever since we read ‘The Age of Reason,’ and I feel almost godless now.”

Mr. Scott laughed as she said these words so earnestly, and remarked that he believed they had been like stoves filled with kindling, waiting for the match or spark of light to start them into a blaze, so readily had they accepted new ideas and followed him closely and understandingly in all he said.

“You are apt pupils,” continued he ; “and I hope you are willing to go on still further.”

“We want the truth,” said Myra and her father, simultaneously.

"And now, that we have had a taste of the tree of knowledge, we are not willing to give it up till we are fully satisfied," said Mr. Scott.

"Brother Bennett says knowledge does not grow on trees."

"And who is 'Brother Bennett'?" asked Myra.

"Why, he is editor of one of the sharpest little papers I ever read; a real gem of a sheet, that all who see fall in love with at once, and become regular Bennett-worshippers," said Mr. Darwin, laughing.

"And do you take it?"

"Yes, and will send you a few numbers, so that you can make its acquaintance, and read some of our ultra-Infidel literature, and that you may better understand our sentiments and opinions."

"Thanks; I shall be glad to get them," said Mr. Scott. "I am always open to conviction and ready to accept a truth, whether it goes for or against my previous opinions. This I have done in my professional studies, and am in consequence a sort of Independent in practice, that is, I belong to no regular school of medicine, but that of common sense. I grew out of the old into the new so gradually that I lost no practice by it; and my patients always feel the greatest confidence in my judgment, far more than I do myself, for none save a thoroughly educated physician knows how little can be known of the true science of medicine. We can aid and assist nature, but must rely on her to do the main part of the work."

"I am glad we agree so well on this all-important matter," said Mr. Darwin. "How to keep well is the first subject that should occupy all minds—well bodily, mentally, and morally. We were once

ardent advocates of the water-cure system, and studied Dr. Trall on every slight ailment, but we overdid the water treatment ; then we went back to nature and first principles, and now depend more upon keeping well than getting well. But really, I must go. So good-bye and good-night," and with a brisk, quick step he passed down the walk, while Myra and her father sat till far into the night talking over the new ideas, and discussing them in all their bearings.

CHAPTER IV.

"OH ! EDITH dear, do come to our house, we are in such a heap of trouble I don't know which way to turn, and I feel as if I were going crazy," said Sue Conway, as she ran up, panting and almost out of breath, to the garden gate, where Edith was busily engaged in raking off her flower-beds and putting them in order for spring time.

"Why Sue, what is the matter?" said Edith, laying down her rake, and going out to where Sue stood leaning against the fence weeping as if her heart would break. "Don't cry, darling, but come in and sit here on the steps, and tell me what the difficulty is, for you look as if you had lost your last friend," and Edith passed her arm around Sue's waist and drew her gently to the porch steps, where the two seated themselves, Edith taking her friend's hand and assuring her she would do all she could for her if she would only tell her what great affliction had fallen upon her, causing such bitter grief.

Struggling with herself for composure, Sue at last wiped away her tears, and said : "I am really ashamed, Edith, to let you know all the disgraceful facts ; but I must open my heart to some one or it will burst. Last night father came home in a state of great excitement, and told mother that as soon as the boys arrived they were to be at once sent to his room. Mother was alarmed, for she was well aware

of what was there in store for them, as she had had so many years' experience with father; she knew that when his anger was at such a white heat, whoever happened to be the offender never got off without a severe penalty. 'Oh, Charles! what have they done?' she asked, imploringly. 'It's no matter, and none of your business. You mind your concerns, and I'll mind mine. You spoil all the children with your petting and coaxing. But I'll let them know they'll not run over me. I'll show them who's master.' So saying, he entered his room, and pushing mother out, shut and locked the door. In about half an hour after, Bill and Sam came, looking around in a frightened manner, and shrinking as if in deadly fear, expecting to see their father's forbidding countenance. 'Oh, boys, what have you been doing?' asked mother and I, both in one breath. 'Nothing. Nothing that is wrong, only—' but before they could say more the door opened, and father came in and marched them both off to his room, and in a moment more the sound of the cruel whip rang through the house. Mother and I covered our ears with our hands to shut out the horrid noise. In half an hour more we heard the boys go to their room, and father came out and sat down to the supper table, reverently asking a blessing as usual. As soon as supper was over mother started for the stairs, but father forbade her going near the boys that night at her peril, and for three long hours she and I sat listening with strained ears for some sound from the chamber above, but all was still and silent, and we hoped they were asleep and had forgotten their trouble. About twelve o'clock father seemed to be resting so soundly that mother

ventured to get up very carefully, and speeding hastily up stairs, she struck a match, lit a lamp, and turned to the bed. Lo! it was empty. A glance round the room, then at the open window where a rope was dangling loosely, showed their means of exit, and she at once realized that they had run away. 'My God! my God!' she exclaimed, 'they're gone!' and fell heavily to the floor. Awakened by the noise, father and I rushed up stairs and after a time succeeded in bringing her to. Just then I saw a note pinned to the pillow, and hastily removing it I found it was addressed to mother. I handed it to her, but she said, 'Read it, Sue; I'm weak and agitated, and can't make out a letter of it!' Here it is, Edith. Look it over, and you will understand then, better than I can tell you, all the circumstances of the case."

Smoothing out the crumpled piece of paper, Edith read as follows :

"DEAR, DARLING MOTHER: It is just eleven o'clock. We have talked matters over, and concluded that it will be best for you and for us if we leave home. The village is wrapped in slumber. You, too, are doubtless asleep, for the house is still and silent. We write these lines to let you know we are going away. We cannot stand father's brutality any longer. We know the word 'brutal' is a hard word to write about our own father, but it is only too applicable. We have been cruelly whipped three times within a month, and for trifles that any other man would hardly think worth scolding about. Yesterday we were at Ben Holmes', six miles out in the country. Some other young people were there on a visit, and a game of ring-toss was proposed, so

we all went into the garden, and they had a nice play. We did not join in the game, but merely sat and looked on, for we knew father would be awful mad if we played such a thing on Sunday. Well, as it unfortunately happened, he had been down to look at a clearing on his farm, which his tenant had been burning off preparatory to putting tobacco in it, and he came back by the garden just as Bill was picking up one of the rings which had rolled down by his feet. He looked daggers at us, but simply saying, 'Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,' passed on. We knew we should 'catch Jessie' when we got home, though we had done no wrong save making a call on Sunday, and that was no worse than father himself had done, by going to see the clearing. We write you all the particulars, mother, so you may know the exact truth, for we are sure father will not tell you, as he refused to listen to us when we attempted to tell him that we were not playing, but merely looking on. He only said 'Stop your blab, and say no more. It is enough that you were visiting on the Lord's day, and I myself saw Bill with a ring in his hand.' So, mother dear, don't be grieved thinking we ran away from deserved punishment. We are sorry and sad at the thought of leaving you and the girls, and dear little baby Allie, but we cannot stand it to stay and be treated like brutes, and never have any pleasure unless we steal it, or any hope for the future. We are going to the Black Hills to dig gold and scalp Indians, and some day we shall come home rich; then we will build you a pretty cottage in the country, and you shall have everything nice and beautiful around you, and pretty flowers and clinging vines everywhere. We'll

just revel in beauty and plenty, and enjoy ourselves enough to make up for all the long days of waiting. Father may come, too, but he will not be boss there; and indeed, we could easily have mastered him last night, only we thought it better to suffer ourselves than to show such disrespect to him, and make you sorry by doing wrong. The only thing we regret is, that we came back home. We ought to have gone right off from where we were, but we hoped that father might listen to reason, and could not bear to leave you all while a possibility of living together in tolerable happiness remained. But now the die is cast, and we have resolved to try the world for ourselves, rather than put up with father's domineering, unreasonable conduct any longer. We are just eighteen to-day, and a glorious (?) birth-day celebration we have had, too. But we don't blame you, mother dear; you and Sue have always done all you could to make us good and happy. We have been wild, rude, and lawless, but never meant to grieve you; and should have been far better boys than we have, had father treated us kindly, leniently, and forbearingly. But he has been a perpetual 'thorn in the flesh;' and has grumbled at every cent spent upon us, and now you may tell him he can keep his money and his religion, too. We don't want either of them. We are going to be Infidels; not wicked ones, but good and kind like the Darwins. We shall never go to church or read that hateful old Bible any more. We have had enough of these things in regular doses all our lives. Now, mother darling, be good and patient, and don't take it hard. We shall write to you often, but not send our address, as we do not intend to give father

a chance to ever lay a finger on us again till we are twenty-one, and our own masters.

"Your affectionate sons, BILL and SAM."

Edith read this long letter in silence, and as she finished it she handed it to Sue, and said to the weeping girl: "Don't cry, darling, or take it so hard. Perhaps it will all turn out for the best. The boys are smart, strong, and healthy, and able to take care of themselves. Your father is not a pleasant man to live with, as you know only too well, and boys of their age always feel independent, and don't like to be put upon. You will soon get a letter from them, and find they are perhaps better off than they would be at home."

"Oh yes, Edith; I know that, and indeed I am glad they went—very glad, for they will not be whipped or abused now; for no one but a parent has a right to strike and beat a child, and I'm beginning to think they only take the right because they have the power to do so. I can see now how much better are the principles of the Darwins than are those of Christians. They say no one has a right to strike a child, and they never strike theirs or speak harshly to them, but treat them respectfully as equals and companions, while my poor brothers have been so often cruelly beaten just to satisfy father's whims and old Bible notions gotten from Solomon and other fogies of olden times, and mother and I have been so powerless to help them; only yesterday we baked a nice plum cake for their birthday supper, and they never even knew it. Oh! if they only had it now," and Sue burst into a fresh shower of tears at the thought.

"There, there; don't grieve, dear," said Edith,

gently and soothingly. "They will find plenty to eat on their way. The great world, hard and cold as it is called, is full of noble, generous, sympathizing spirits, and your brothers will find a welcome shelter under many a hospitable roof as they travel along on their way."

"I hope and believe they will," said Sue. "But I haven't told you all my troubles yet. Mother had another fainting fit while I was reading the letter to her, so deeply did its pathetic words affect her tender, loving spirit; and when it was finished she turned to father and said, 'Oh, Charles! do go and see if you can't find them! Oh, coax them to come back! My boys; my noble, good boys; my twins that I have nursed at my breast and cradled in my arms! Why don't you go? I can't live without my precious boys!' but father coolly turned on his heel and left the room, saying as he did so, 'The ungrateful, wicked, good-for-nothing wretches! let them go to the devil for all I care. How did they dare write such things about me, their father, and a deacon of the church, too? I'd turn them from the door this moment if they were to attempt to come back. I only hope God will curse—' 'Stop, Charles, stop!' said mother, shuddering and trembling. 'Don't curse our boys—your own flesh and blood,' and with a wild scream she fell senseless to the floor. We got her to bed but could not bring her to, and father had to go for Dr. Scott, and it was hours before he succeeded in bringing her to her senses. He said she had apparently received a very hard mental shock. 'And so she has,' said father; 'no matter now what caused it, only do what you can for her.' She at last grew easier, and

I hoped the worst was over, when all at once baby Allie was taken with spasms, and we fear it will die. The doctor says they are caused by the excitement mother had undergone affecting her milk, and Allie being naturally a very delicate child, it will be apt to go hard with her. Now, Edith, you know all the sad story, and I want you to go right home with me for I need a friend now more than I ever did in all my life. I left mother and Allie both asleep, and Myra and her father there ; and as they insisted on my taking a turn in the fresh air, I did so by coming to you."

"You did very right, dear, and I'll tell mother where I'm going, and then we'll go at once."

As she spoke, Mrs. May opened the door, and Edith told her she was going home with Sue to stay all night, as her mother and the baby were both sick. The two girls then hurried rapidly on their way, and were soon at the deacon's. As they entered, they saw Myra with the baby on her lap, while her father stood by, looking very grave and sad. Hastening forward, Sue eagerly inquired if Allie was worse.

"Yes, my dear," said the kind doctor, taking her hand in his and thus assuring her of his sympathy in her trouble. "Yes, my dear, she is much worse, and can live but a few moments longer."

"Oh, my darling little sister!" said Sue, sinking upon her knees and laying her face against that of the child. "Oh try, doctor, and do something for her!"

"She is past all help, my dear, and past all suffering too. See how quietly and peacefully she sleeps. She is smiling in her slumber, and all pain is forever gone from her."

"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be his holy name," said a solemn voice at the open door.

Sue looked up and saw her father, who came and looked sorrowfully down upon the face of his dying babe. This child had been his pet, and he had really loved it as much as his sordid, selfish heart could love anything. It was too young yet to be capable of angering him by want of due and humble submission, and it had been a remarkably good, pleasant, and cheerful babe, always smiling, crowing, and happy; so nothing had occurred to rouse the selfish antagonism of his nature towards it.

Sue shivered as she heard his words, for they sounded almost blasphemous in her ears as she thought to herself that it was he and not the Lord that had caused all the present anguish, sorrow, and misfortune. His own anger, brutality, and selfish meanness had made a shipwreck of the little domestic happiness that had ventured to find a presence beneath his roof.

Just then the baby opened its eyes, smiled, and stretched out its hands to Sue, who hastily rose to take it in her arms; but a sudden change passed across its countenance—a slight shiver, and all was over. As Myra gently and reverently laid the little form in the cradle, the door opened, and Mrs. Conway came staggering into the room. The doctor sprang forward to assist her, but, pushing him aside, she said, "I want my baby. What have they done with it? I've been asking for it all day, and no one will bring it." She stooped over the cradle, and as her eyes fell upon the little white face, she screamed out, "Merciful Providence! it's dead!"

And before any one could catch her, she fell across the cradle in a fit.

The doctor and her husband took her to her room and laid her on the bed, and as soon as they got a glimpse of her face they saw, by its gray, pinched appearance, that the shock had killed her. Sue was borne fainting from the room, and Myra followed to attend upon her. The deacon and doctor alone remained with the dead.

For a moment it seemed as if the veins in the forehead of the deacon would burst, so swollen and purple did they appear. All at once he broke out into a perfect torrent of blasphemy, rage, and malediction. He cursed God, his dead wife, his boys, and himself. He was perfectly wild and frantic with rage and horror. The doctor, seeing his condition, suffered him to go on till he somewhat exhausted himself, then attempted to reason with him and bring him to his senses; but it was of no use. He would hear nothing; and at last, when he had got tired of cursing, he all at once began to talk to his dead wife, calling on her to awake and come back, promising to be kind and good to her in future, and to try and make her home pleasant and happy. Then he grew solemn and grave, and began to talk to himself. "The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth.' Yes, yes, he loves me, and so he chastens me. He loved his only Son more yet, so he chastened him more than he has me. He had him crucified, and made him suffer for all the sins of all mankind. I have only a few *little* sins, so I ought not to suffer much. I have always asked forgiveness for all my sins and made atonement for them,

so I know this is not sent as a warning—only as chastening; therefore I'll try and bear it."

Just then his eyes fell upon a long, deep scar on his wife's arm. How well he remembered it!—one day when, in a rage, he had struck her with the sharp edge of a carving-knife because she had ventured to dispute his word about some trifle. How quickly she had bound it up, and told the children, on their return from school, that she had fallen and cut it on a piece of glass! Poor woman! she had borne many a blow from him; but she was now beyond it all, and his conscience gave him slight twinges as he thought over many incidents of their unhappy past, while sitting there in silence beside the cold, still form of her who had tried to be a good, faithful, loving wife to him.

The two girls, Meta and Ida, had been living out on the farm for a few weeks, and a messenger had been dispatched for them early in the morning. About three o'clock in the afternoon news was brought that the horse had run away, throwing them both down a steep embankment, killing Meta outright, and that Ida had died before they could get her home. The doctor, who had gone to the door in answer to the rap of the boy who brought the sad news, called Edith, and bade her keep Sue in her room till the bodies of the girls should be brought in, and then he would be with them, and assist in preparing her for the awful tidings. Ere long the litter arrived, and sympathizing neighbors flocked in, and kind hands prepared the four bodies for burial. They were laid side by side in the mother's bed. Not one word had the deacon said through it all. The doctor had gently told him of this last calamity before

the bodies arrived; but he sat as if turned to stone, and stared vacantly at all who addressed him. At last the old minister, Rev. Mr. Morton, came into the room, and, going up to him, placed his hand on his shoulder, and said, "My brother, let us pray."

"Pray!" said the deacon, bitterly, "pray! Why should I pray? Can prayers bring the dead to life? Can prayers restore what is irretrievably gone? Haven't I been deacon of your church for twenty long years, and faithfully performed the duties of my office? Haven't I led a true Christian life? And what is my reward?"

"The reward of all good deeds is sure and certain," said the minister, solemnly. "If not in this world, then in another will you be recompensed according to deeds done in the body. We are all poor, miserable sinners, and deserve little or nothing at His hands, and yet he gives us blessings innumerable every day of our lives."

"Yes, see how good and kind he has been to me," said the deacon, bitterly. "Infidels like Darwin can live surrounded by all that is beautiful, bright, and desirable, and life is but a continual pleasure to them; while I, God's holy servant, who have faithfully labored for years in his vineyard, must be 'chastened' because he loves me!"

"Brother, I fear you are not cherishing a contrite and humble spirit," said the minister. "He doeth all things well, and it is not for you or me to judge or criticise his will. I know your afflictions are severe; but he will give you strength if you ask it. The grace of God will be with you. You must learn to 'kiss the hand that wields the chastening rod.' 'Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in

thee,' for 'there is none I desire on earth but thee.' My brother, you have so often quoted these blessed sayings for others, why not take them now to your own heart?"

"Because they don't fit my case," said the deacon. "I am like Job, cursed beyond my strength; and all the man in me cries out in tribulation. You need not quote Scripture to me, for I have the whole book at my tongue's end, and I find no consolation in its false promises."

"Well, since you refuse all sympathy, I will leave you and call again in a few hours, trusting that you will then be better prepared for good advice."

CHAPTER V.

TWO WEEKS have passed since the last sad scenes of our story took place. The dead have been carried to their silent resting-place, and one by one the friends departed to their homes, leaving Sue and her father alone, save an old lady to cook and to do general housework, and be company for Sue. How empty and desolate the old barn of a house seemed! Every room, though haunted by memories of the past, and echoing, as it were, the voices and steps of loved ones now no more, was lone and desolate.

Poor Sue! She had been ill almost to death, and had hoped and prayed to die; but it was not to be; and now she was slowly recovering, and this sunny afternoon she had once more taken her old seat at the sitting-room window. Her father came and placed a stool under her feet, asking if she was comfortable. She answered gratefully that she was, for it was a rare thing for the selfish man to trouble himself about the comfort of others. He had been a hard father, an unloving husband, and a cold-hearted man all his life; but his grief at his wife's death and that of his babe had shown him to be not utterly heartless. But, looking on him as the cause of all that had occurred to blast their home, Sue could not regard him with anything like filial affection, though she tried to be kind and gentle, and pitied him for his too-evident unhappiness. Though he still kept

up his regular prayers and church duties, he had ceased to quote Scripture, or talk at all on the subject, save when necessity required it.

As they sat that pleasant afternoon, each wrapped in silent, moody thought, Edith came softly into the room and handed Sue a letter, saying, "It's from your brothers, I guess; and I hope it's good news, too dear—news that will cheer and brighten you up.

Sue took the letter eagerly, and hastily broke the seal, and read as follows:

"DEAR SISTER SUE: We wrote to mother before we left home, and now we write to you, though we mean it for all who care to hear from us. We are getting on bravely with our journey, and find so many kind, good, generous people all along our way that we have only stayed out one night, and then we slept on the lee side of a straw-stack, and as warm as need be. We generally cut wood and do little turns in payment for lodging and provision, wherever we can, as we do not like to take something for nothing. Last Saturday we stopped with a widow lady, who gave us ten dollars, saying she had designed it for charitable purposes and knew she could not bestow it where it would do more good than it would to us. We got a long ride on the railroad for that, which helped us along nicely. On Monday last we saved a child of three years from drowning, and the grateful mother kept us all night, gave us three dollars apiece, and filled our carpet-bags with provisions. She said she would gladly do more if she were able. We told her we did not want anything for a mere act of common humanity; but we had to take her presents, to satisfy, in some meas-

ure, her grateful heart. The next day we got a twelve-mile ride with an old farmer, who, when he heard our story, offered to take us home and keep us a few weeks on his farm, and if we were mutually pleased he would adopt us as his sons, as his two boys had been killed during the war, and he and his wife lived alone. But we told him we preferred going on to the Black Hills, as we wanted to get rich quickly, so as to help mother and the girls to get a pleasant home. He gave us twenty dollars, telling us we could pay him again when we 'made our pile.' We have his name and address, and shall return the money if we have luck. He said he was an Infidel, and that the little he had done for us must not be called a deed of Christianity, for Christ had no more to do with it than Mohammed or Confucius had, but that it was an offering of love and duty from man to his kind. He made us think of the Darwins; and as we enjoyed the grateful hospitality of his pleasant home, and heard the sound, sensible remarks of himself and wife, we felt more and more encouraged in our idea of some day believing as they do. We haven't read a word in the Bible, or made a single prayer, since we started, though there is generally a Bible in the rooms where we sleep. We talk a great deal about religion with everybody and with one another; and you would be surprised, Sue, to see how many different beliefs there are; and all the different sects seem to be sure that they only are right, and that all others are wrong. You, who have seen few but Campbellites and Methodists, do not realize that the great mass of the people are so split up into sects as they are. We often count as many as five different churches

in a small town that can hardly support one decently; and the whole of them are all the while disputing with one another about mere trifles, such as immersion or sprinkling, infant baptism, a real hell, and all conceivable sorts of subjects.

"But it is ten o'clock, and we must go to bed. We are staying to-night with a Mr. Brown, an old Quaker gentleman. His wife is a nice, motherly woman, and just as kind as kind can be. We do so admire the pleasant, friendly 'thee' and 'thou.' They seem almost as nice as Infidels.

"We send bushels of love to mother, and the girls, and baby Allie, and dear, darling Sue, and all who care for it. Your loving brothers,

"SAM AND BILL.

"P. S.—We send this fifty miles out of our way by a driver who has promised to mail it for us, as we don't mean father shall have the postmark to trace us by.

"S. AND B."

Sue passed the letter to Edith as she finished reading it, and whispered to her to lay it on the table when she should have read it, so that her father could have it if he wished. This being done, Edith went with Sue to her room, as she was beginning to be really tired with her long sitting up and the excitement of reading the news from her brothers. As they passed into the bedroom Sue glanced back, and saw her father slip the letter into his pocket and go to the library. She rejoiced at this mark of interest in the boys, and, cheered by the bright, hopeful words they had written and the kind sympathy of Edith, she sank into a deep, refreshing slumber.

Edith had hardly reached home when she saw Myra Scott coming up the garden walk, and, meet-

ing her at the door, gave her a hearty welcome. When they arrived at the little sitting-room, the girls sat down for a good talk. Edith told all about her call at Conway's and the letter from the boys. Then Myra, in her turn, told Edith what a feast she and her father had had in reading a lot of TRUTH SEEKER and Liberal tracts that Mr. Darwin had lent them.

"I've brought them over for you to read, dear Edith," she said, "for I never half enjoy a pleasure that is not shared by you. I know you will be interested in them, though you may not be as ready to accept all they say as father and I were. I tell you, THE TRUTH SEEKER is just splendid. We are going to send on money to-day for a year's subscription. We all want TRUTH, and I think this paper will help us to find it. It is honest, frank, and fearless in discussing all subjects, and we have literally fallen in love with its genial, pleasant, and clever editor and proprietor, Mr. Bennett. Mrs. Darwin says they have taken it ever since its first issue, and that they feel as if they and Bennett were all one family, and could hold all things in common. I begin to see now why those who think warmly and enthusiastically upon the same subjects, and have their whole hearts and souls in them, are apt to run into communism, just as the Essenes and early Christians did. I feel as if I could do all or anything to help Bennett to keep up this gem of a paper, which has done so much towards opening my eyes to truth and fact. Only just think what a change has come over me since you read your uncle's letter to us! Then we believed the Bible; now, for my part, I doubt it all! Well may it be said, 'We know not

what a day or an hour may bring forth'! We (father and I) have concluded to withdraw from the Church, and be free and independent. We have got our eyes so wide open that we find it impossible to shut them up any more, and it really seems like martyrdom to sit and hear the old 'platitudes and inanities' rehearsed week after week, and eat bread and drink wine under the pretense that they are the flesh and blood of Christ."

"I confess, Myra, that I am not much surprised that you are going to withdraw from us," said Edith; "for you know you and your father were always somewhat skeptical upon many points, and since the Darwins came, the subject of theology has been discussed so thoroughly that it is no marvel that you have developed into absolute antipathy to Christianity."

"Not exactly antipathy, Edith dear, for I have really enjoyed my membership among you too much to ever be able to actually dislike the old-time beliefs of my girlhood. The kindly greeting of 'Sister Myra' has always sounded sweet to my ear, when falling from the lips of those who were near and dear to me from all the loved associations of the past; and it will be hard now to see them pass me coldly by, or, perhaps, fling out a sarcasm or bitter taunt upon my new opinions and beliefs. But I shall do what I think is right, and fearlessly meet the consequences, trusting to retain some of my old friends—you, and the Darwins, and Jennie, and Sue—so I shall not be entirely alone. There is no turning back for me, you know, if I am once convinced that I am on the road to truth and right."

"That is so, Myra. You were always self-willed

and self-opinionated, but so honest and true-hearted that no one can help respecting and loving you," said Edith, warmly.

"Thank you for your kind, encouraging words," said Myra. "They are doubly valuable just now, when everything I have loved and valued most seems slipping away from me, and one cherished theory after another is being utterly demolished by the calm, philosophic, irresistible blows of fact and science.

"But, Edith dear, I must tell you something funny," said Myra, brightening up and speaking in her old impulsive way. "I was in to see Sue one day last week, and got to talking on religion with her father, and I told him plumply that I thought the Christian mythology was no more to be relied upon as being correct and true than were many other of the great mythologies of the world, either ancient or modern. You should have seen him glare and frown at me. If looks could kill, I should have been lifeless matter in less than no time.

"If these are your sentiments, Miss Myra," said he, in a stern, pompous tone, "I would advise you to keep them to yourself, and not be poisoning other people with them. If I ever hear of you talking in my daughter's presence again in such a blasphemous manner, I shall forbid her to associate with you. You are traveling in the footsteps of that bad, wicked, vile wretch, Tom Paine. You will please remember what a horrid death he died, recanting all his unbelief and atheism, and calling upon Christ to save him; and when his daughter came to him, asking him in which faith she should be reared, his or her mother's, he replied, 'In your mother's, my

child," thus showing by his actions in his last hours which belief he thought safest and best.'

"All pious lies, deacon, every one of them,' said I. 'I've seen real Infidels now, and read Infidel books and papers, and you can't stuff me any more with such nonsense as that. I've found out that Infidels are as consistent and as good, if not better, than Christians are. Paine was a good man, and was always doing and saying something for the benefit of others—something to make the world better, wiser, and happier. He wasn't an Atheist, either, but a Deist, and was loved and respected by all who knew him. He never thought of recanting his opinions. Nor did he ever have a daughter. It was a daughter of Ethan Allen who was said to have asked her father on *her* deathbed whether she should die in his or her mother's faith. But when history shows that Ethan Allen never lost a daughter during his lifetime, you will see that the whole story is a monstrous pious fraud.'

"The old deacon fairly stamped with rage, and exclaimed, 'You are very pert and presumptuous, miss, to pretend to know more than I do, and I a deacon of the church and old enough to be your father! Perhaps you will deny your God and your blessed Savior next!'

"I shouldn't wonder, deacon, if I did,' said I, laughing, 'for I am beginning to see that the world has been immensely humbugged concerning gods and Bibleology. The credulous will swallow all sorts of "stretchers," if they are only read in sanctimonious tones from a god-book, or spoken by those who pretend to be mouthpieces of the Deity. They believe a man could live three days in the stomach

of a whale, immersed in the fermenting chyme and various other contents of that receptacle for digestible matters, and not a breath of pure air nor a particle of daylight to illumine the horrid scene. A hot, sweltering time he must have had of it, don't you think so?"

"Don't be too fast, girl; scientists now say the whale has a sort of bag in his throat, where Jonah stayed."

"Well, then, the Bible lies, deacon, for it expressly says he was three days in its belly. It's no use for you Christians to try to fix up this "portable pope of Christianity," with the idea that you can make it agree with fact and truth. The thing can't be done. A flat earth, with ends, corners, and jumping-off places; a universal deluge; mountains so lofty that you can see all parts of a round world; trees that will die by being cursed; dry bones that will become living men; fish that will bring money to pay one's taxes; asses that talk; witches that can call up ghosts of the departed—can never be made to tally with science, however hard you may try to reconcile them. Why, I knew a man—a county superintendent of schools, too—who refused to believe that the world was round or turned over; he insisted that if it were we would all fall off! Smart superintendent, wasn't he? He would never cover up early beans or cucumber or tomato plants, to keep them from being frost-bitten, lest he should be frustrating the designs of Divine Providence."

"This settled the old deacon. He got up and bounced out of the room, saying he had an engagement; and as he closed the door, Sue and I indulged in a hearty laugh. It did the poor thing good, too."

She doesn't seem at all like her old sunny self since the great family troubles—and it's no wonder, either. True, her home was never what it should have been; but, with a house full of love, life will be glad and happy, even if minor sorrows and annoyances do shadow it at times. But now she is so utterly alone that I begin seriously to fear for her health; it has been so poor since her mother's death, and she so rarely goes out, either. We must try and get her away from that, somehow, or the glum old deacon will kill her, he is so harsh and unsympathetic. But, really, I must be off. I promised father to go with him up the river to visit some patients to-night, and it is nearly time to start. Do you know, I'm getting to be quite a doctor. I've been called upon several times to prescribe for babies and small children when father happened to be absent, and I've succeeded so well that I am really encouraged. I've read, studied, and ridden with father on his rounds, and done so much nursing of the sick that I understand a great deal about the practice. I never give strong medicines nor attempt surgical cases; for you know I've had no regular course of instruction, nor have I a diploma. But I often get pay for my services—voluntary contributions from grateful parents whose children I've been enabled to restore to health. I earn it, and so feel right in accepting it. I have received ten dollars the past month, and I'm going to get a new book with four of them—Bennett's 'World's Sages, Thinkers, and Reformers.' Mrs. Darwin says it has the lives of living as well as dead thinkers, and I want to know some of them; so I shall write to-morrow for the book. I could borrow Darwin's, but I want one to keep and have all the

time for reference; and, besides, borrowing will not help Bennett to publish other books, and, you see, I'm thinking now, all the time, how I can best aid and abet the new cause I've so fallen in love with."

And Myra laughed her rich, gleeful, infectious laugh, as she gayly sped down the garden slope and flitted through the gate like some wild and willful sprite.

"Well, mother," said Edith, turning to Mrs. May, who had sat quietly sewing at the window, with her back to the girls, all this time, "well, mother, what do you think about it all? Do you approve of Myra and her father withdrawing from the Church and pursuing their investigations?"

"Certainly, Edith; it is best for them to do so, though I regret that we cannot have the old-time unity amongst us; but I see no alternative now but for them to go ahead. If convinced of their error, they will return, like wandering sheep, to the fold of God. I hope they will, too, though I much fear they will go on till they land where the Darwins are—in cold, blank Atheism. Anyhow, I admire their frank honesty in living out what they think. I've seen so much deceit and hypocrisy that my soul is fairly sick. Just to hear old Deacon Conway talk so saintly as he does in church, and when he is with the pious preachers, elders, brothers, and sisters, and then to think of all his past life, and how he has abused his helpless and defenseless family! Give me honesty; for, even though it be linked with Infidelity, it is preferable to meanness and duplicity dressed in saintly robes and sitting at God's right hand. Myra and her father are too useful, as well as too good and honest, to be shunned even by the

pious. They will have friends, let them believe as they will. The great world looks more to deeds than it does to creeds."

"Yes, mother, that is so; and I'm glad it is, for it proves the heart of man to be naturally good, and that his impulses are ever on the side of truth, right, and justice."

CHAPTER VI.

It was a lovely evening towards the last of April when Edith and Myra started to make a call upon the Darwins, whom they had not seen in some time. They had a lovely walk through beautiful green meadows, cool groves, and breezy orchards. Cherry, early apple, peach, plum, and pear trees were all in bloom, and scattering their pink and white petals like snowflakes in the air; and all along their pathway were bright and tiny flowers. The blue johnny-jump-up, the yellow five-finger, red columbine, scarlet wood-pink, jack-in-the-pulpit, and the pure white blood-root, with innumerable other floral gems, made the way short, bright, and beautiful, and by the time they arrived at the house their baskets were brimful and running over with their precious freight of floral treasures; and as they sat pleasantly chatting in Mrs. Darwin's sunny, cheerful sitting-room, they sorted and arranged them, each one dividing her collection into two equal parts, Myra giving one of hers to Rose, and Edith bestowing one of hers upon Mrs. Darwin, and laughingly telling Minnie she could draw and paint them for her share, which she subsequently did, making one of the loveliest sketches she had ever yet gotten up.

"I have brought back your papers, Mrs. Darwin," said Myra, "and am a thousand times obliged for them. We have sent on money for THE TRUTH SEEKER, and are going to try and get the whole list

of tracts, and all Bennett's other publications just as fast as they are issued. I'm going to read and study till I get to be as Infidel, as you are; and I only wish I could be like you in all things."

"Thank you, my dear, for the compliment," said Mrs. Darwin. "I hope you will be a great deal wiser and better than I am. You have a long life to look forward to, and in which to improve yourself, and if my precept or example be of any assistance to you, I shall be only too glad."

Just then a tall, good-looking young man entered the room, and Mrs. Darwin introduced him to the girls as "My son William." He was very cordial and friendly, and they were all soon feeling like old acquaintances. "Willie" told them he had been in Tennessee for some time, teaching a young man how to spin, and also acting as loom-boss, and consequently he had never made many acquaintances, as yet, in his new home. But now they had gotten through fixing up, and he should have a few weeks' vacation before wool came in, and should try and make up for lost time.

"I suppose you enjoyed your visit among your old Tennessee friends," said Myra.

"Oh, yes, indeed I did," replied Willie. "It seemed almost like leaving home a second time when I came away again."

"Perhaps you left your heart behind you," said Myra, laughing, "and that's why it was so hard for you to leave."

"Oh, no; I am heart-whole and fancy-free—or was till this evening," said Willie, bending an earnest, searching gaze upon the face of his lively, bantering questioner.

Myra's eyes sank beneath his inquiring glance, and her face became suffused with blushes. Edith, pitying her confusion, turned the conversation by asking Willie when they intended to start up the factory.

"We shall commence," said Willie, "as soon as we get any wool, which will not come till the middle of May, as it has to be sheared, washed, and dried, you know, and it is too cold yet to rob the poor sheep of their winter clothing. When we get to running, I presume you will all be in to see the sight, as a factory is something new here. Ours in Tennessee was a great curiosity. The machinery, while being put up, attracted a deal of attention, and when the "picker" began to tear up the great bunches of wool, nicer and faster than a roomful of women and children could do it, they all stood amazed. Then to see it carded, and a whole row of spindles spinning nice even threads all at once, was almost equal to magic. 'What will our women-folks do for work?' asked the old farmers; 'they will have nothing to do now but run about and gossip.' Some old ladies were really jealous, saying we had taken the very bread from their mouths by robbing them of their usual jobs of carding and spinning by hand. But we told them the world was full of work, and that they could find something to do if they looked about them; that it was hard, to be sure, to be left out in the cold by dumb, unfeeling machinery, but it would, in the end, benefit the whole country—just as the railroad had, though many old teamsters still grumbled at that innovation on 'the good old times' of hauling merchandise, etc., with horse and wagon. But when the looms came,

the excitement grew still greater, and eager crowds flocked in from far and near. Whole schools, with their teachers, picnic parties, and curiosity-seekers, all came to see the elephant. 'Why, it goes itself,' says one. 'It's got sense,' says another; and one old countryman solemnly ejaculated, 'The works of the Lord are wonderful, but the works of man are greater.' Some were afraid of us because we were Yankees, and others said they would not bring their wool to an Infidel factory; but all could see on which side their bread was buttered, and one after another yielded to the spell of the enchanter, which could give them more profit out of a pound of wool than any aforetime power had ever enabled them to extract from it, and on they came, with long white sacks thrown across the back of a horse—eight, ten, and a dozen at a time—so that we had to run day and night to keep up; and in less than a year you could see our goods on the backs of men, women, and boys all over the country. The old 'blue jeans' had given way to cassimeres of steel-gray, brown, and black; to stripes, plaids, and fancy colors. But I'm afraid I'm boring you with all this. I forget you are not of the trade, and that trade-talk may not interest you."

"Oh, but it does interest us," said Edith. "I never thought what an innovation a factory was before. You must have been really proud of all you accomplished, and you must have made lots of money, too."

"We *were* proud of what we did, that's true, and we had cause to be so. Father was the only one in all the establishment that knew the least thing about either the machinery or the manufacture of goods,

and he had to be eyes, ears, and brains for all; and it nearly wore him out. He had invested his all in the venture, and his partners, not appreciating his efforts, pulled against him, so he had them to fight as well as to run the business; and every patron wanted a 'good bargain,' and to pay as little as possible, and some wanted the *whole* weight of their wool in yarn, and others boasted that they actually got more weight in goods than they took there in wool, and so it cost them nothing, so cunningly had they lied and twisted about. Oh, it wasn't all sunshine, I assure you. We had to take all manner of truck, too, for pay, even to string beans and jelly made of clear cider boiled down. Still, we made a fair living, and sold out for enough to start us up here, and have the proud satisfaction of knowing we have benefited the world, besides. No less than three or four factories are now in full operation where there would have been none had we not opened the way. Our plan is always to do good work, and be frank and honest with our customers. We have many tough cases to deal with, but on the whole find it as profitable a business as most others, and perhaps no more laborious or difficult to engineer through."

The hours flew swiftly by, and it was nearly dark when the girls rose to leave. Willie walked up with them, he and Edith doing most of the talking, for Myra had all at once become shy and silent, answering only in monosyllables when spoken to. But her heart was full. She, who had never cared specially for any young man in her life, and had made it her boast that she was too sensible to fall in love, had been captured by the simple glance of a pair of blue

eyes which seemed to her deep wells of living light, life, and love.

Girl-like, she and Edith had often spoken of young Darwin, and jokingly said they should set their caps for him. But Myra, in her mind, had always fancied Edith would have the preference, as she was more staid and dignified, more refined and ladylike, and better suited in all ways to be the wife of a philosopher, such as she presumed the only son of Mr. Darwin would be, because of the way he would have been educated and trained by such parents as his.

Now, perhaps some of my readers may not think it perfectly proper or modest in our two heroines to be talking so freely of trying to "catch" this young stranger for a sweetheart. But remember this is a Radical story, written in a Radical age, and by one of the most radical of Radicals, who believes in showing up human nature and all other sorts of nature *just as they are*. Those who know the nature of girls know that they begin to think of beaux and sweethearts when very young, and that this is a natural consequence of their organization and training, and it is healthy, proper, and legitimate that they should do so. The sexes are the equivalents one of the other, and neither can be complete or perfect alone. Passable happiness may be enjoyed in single life, and perfect misery may result from an unfortunate marriage. But these exceptions do not affect the great whole, any more than would the annihilation of a drop of water perceptibly affect the depth of the Atlantic Ocean.

Myra walked on home with Edith, and then she and Willie retraced their steps till they reached her own door. Myra's silence seemed to have communi-

cated itself to Willie, for scarcely three words were spoken from the time they left Edith till they reached Mr. Scott's. As they stood a moment at the gate, Willie suddenly looked up and said:

"Several young people are going to take a walk next Sunday to see Mrs. Brown's flower-garden, and will not you and Edith go along?"

"Yes; we shall be glad to do so," said Myra; "for I hear her hyacinths, tulips, crown-imperials, and lots of other choice plants, are in full bloom. She has the finest flowers in all the country. Nothing inferior ever finds a place within her borders. Her tulips are as large and double as a cabbage-rose, and the hyacinths are just entrancing."

"But can you walk that far? It is fully three miles."

"Oh, yes. I am a physician's daughter, you know, and have studied hygiene, and am aware that walking is the healthiest kind of exercise, so practice the art all I can. Edith, too, is one of the sensible sort; and we generally take our walks together, so she is as good a pedestrian as I am. I suppose Rose and Minnie are good walkers, too; are they not?"

"Yes; my sisters can walk as far as I can, and with just as little fatigue, too; and few women of her age can outwalk mother."

"Or outdo her in any way," said Myra, warmly. "You have the loveliest and best mother in the world, Mr. Darwin."

"I know it, Miss Myra, and I appreciate her, too, and am proud that others do the same. It must be one of the greatest of trials to have a parent that one cannot venerate and respect. To be ashamed of a father or mother must be even harder than for

parents to be ashamed of their children. I don't see how a father or mother can ever do a mean or bad action, lest they shock the sensitive, loving spirits of those who look up to them as almost divine. But excuse me; I am keeping you out too late; so good-night and good-by."

Myra watched him till he turned the corner, then sighed and entered the house, where she found her father and Mr. Darwin discussing evolution. Her first impulse was to steal off to her room and muse over the new feelings that had crept into her heart, making life seem all at once a sacred and holy thing; but her father called to her to come and talk with them awhile; and, too kind and loving to wound him by a selfish refusal, she drew her low stool to his knee, and, leaning her head upon his lap, while his fingers threaded her soft curls, which were unfettered by chignon, hair-pins, or other disfiguring and worse than useless supplementaries, she said, "Well, father, and what shall I talk about? I'm sure Mr. Darwin will be much more interested in hearing you discuss evolution than in aught I could say—and, by the way, it's singular you happen to be called Darwin, isn't it?" said she, flashing her eyes upon their guest, with a merry smile at the conceit.

"Yes, it is quite an odd coincidence," said Mr. Darwin; "but the world is full of just such 'happen so's.' I know several men by the name of Paine, and every one Infidels; but no doubt there are Darwins who do not believe in evolution, and Paines who *do* believe in Christianity. Just as you came in, your father asked me if I believed man sprang from the monkey. I will now answer his question, by saying that I think man an evolution from neb-

ulæ on up through progressive grades of mineral, vegetable, and animal life, passing on through some portion, perhaps, of the monkey tribe to the highest development of that, and still progressing till he became more perfect than any other existing animal, and beginning to develop human traits, which, though at first but one degree above animals, yet in time he grew on and on till he reached his present status. So you see evolution is only unfolding and developing. Nothing was made in its full perfection all at once. All matter, with its powers and potencies, has existed from eternity. Space is endless, and full of worlds. It is full of matter, too, for there is no such thing as empty space. The infinite, the eternal, and the immortal are only applicable to such things as space, matter, life, heat, motion, etc., taken as a whole. All forms and identities are mortal, perishable, and finite. You ask, Who created the first form of life? I reply that life is only a form of force, and is just as naturally a consequence of what is as are heat and light. All that is is evolved from combinations of matter. Those who try to settle the theory of spontaneous generation only fail of proving the real fact because they destroy the conditions necessary to produce manifestations of life. They boil fluids, put them through certain chemical tests, and, in air-tight vessels, and under these unnatural conditions, they wonder why life is not evolved. The life *was* there, but they destroyed it. Let light and air enter, and life will inevitably return again. To live is just as natural as to die. Both are but simple results of certain operating causes. Worlds are formed from nebulæ. They pass through countless changes and vicissi-

tudes, develop with the circling years, and at last visible life is evolved or produced. Step by step it goes on, till the highest evolution it is capable of is reached, and then a moment's pause and retrogression begins. The world and all its productions begin to grow old and decay, till at last all seems to dry up and die out, and again countless ages roll along, bearing upon their wings the cold, dark, dead, desolate world, swinging like a black, lifeless ball in space, till it is dispersed, dissolved, and once more returned to nebula, or meets with some other equally relentless fate. Worlds are like the small objects which we see around us. A tree dies, and its component parts go to make portions of, perhaps, thousands of other objects, both living and dead—animals, insects, men, vegetables, soil, and who shall say what else? So of a world when it goes back to its atoms; these may remain in one nebula, or be scattered—who shall say where?—but never lost, never annihilated; for they are indestructible. They never began, and will never end."

"Well, Mr. Darwin," said Dr. Scott, "I begin now to understand very well how it is that you see no need for a God or Creator. If all is but one continual round of cause and effect, of development and decay—no beginning, no end; no creation, no annihilation—why try to go back to what has no back to it?"

"You reason correctly, my friend; and if you would like to read them, I will lend you Darwin's works," said his companion.

"I shall be glad to do so," replied the doctor; "and by the time Myra and I shall have read them I presume we shall be Darwinians;" and the old man

laughed the happy, contented laugh of a philosopher and an honest man—one who feels that life is full of good, and who means to make out of it all that he can, both for himself and for others about him.

“And you, Myra; do you think you will like to read the books?” asked Mr. Darwin.

“I always feel interested in anything father does,” said she, looking at the old man with affectionate reverence. “We always read together, you see, so that we can get all the good out of whatever we are interested in by talking it over as we go along.”

“Then, I’ll send the books the first chance,” said Mr. Darwin, as he rose to go.

“Thank you; but please don’t trouble yourself to send them; Myra can run down after them. She is always glad of an excuse to go to your house. She has quite fallen in love with your wife, and thinks there never was another such woman as she is.”

Myra laughed, and said she had never known what it was to have a mother of her own, and that Mrs. Darwin seemed so motherly that no one could help loving her. “And, indeed, I do wish she *was* my own mother,” said she, in her quick, impulsive way.

“I don’t see how that can be brought about,” said her father, with an arch smile, “unless you marry Willie, Mr. Darwin’s son. He is a fine-looking young fellow, too, and very agreeable. I brought him home with me from S—— yesterday, and the twelve-mile ride never seemed so short to me before; so I don’t think I will object if you wish to make his mother your own.”

Myra, all blushes and confusion, stammered out a

sort of an apology for her unfortunate impromptu speech; for to be taken up in this manner, and before Mr. Darwin, too, was more than she had bargained for.

"Well! well!" said the doctor; "if the girl isn't blushing!"

"Never mind your father's jokes, Myra, but you just come and see Mrs. Darwin as often as you please," said Mr. Darwin, who pitied her confusion and sought to alleviate it by taking it all as a matter of course. "I am proud to think you like my wife so well. Every mark of affection given her is precious to me, for she is my *better* half, you know; so of course I value praise given to her more than I should even if bestowed upon myself. But I must go, for I've two patients yet to visit before bed time."

CHAPTER VII.

"WHY, Jennie, what has come over you that you look so anxious and flustered this evening," said Edith, as she met that usually quiet, dignified young lady walking very rapidly towards her. "Your tears are falling fast as an April shower that is dropping from the skies! Come right in the house with me, and let us see if there is a balm in Gilead for your afflictions." And, linking her arm within that of her friend, she led the way up the pleasant garden walk to Rose Hill Mansion, and, going at once to her own little sitting-room, she seated Jennie in an easy-chair while she drew another close to her side, and, sitting in a listening attitude, said, "Now, dear, just open your mind and tell me all about your trouble. You know that I will do all I can to assist you and that your secrets will be as safe with me as in your own breast; and even if I cannot help you, it will be a relief for you to share your burden or sorrow with a true friend."

"Yes, Edith; I know that, and I know that you are a 'friend in need' to all your acquaintances, and, moreover, your advice is good and safe to follow. It is no personal affliction that is now troubling me," said Jennie, wiping her eyes, and speaking in low, earnest tones. "I come to you concerning my dear, darling Sue. You know she and I have always

been more than sisters to each other, and have shared every joy and pleasure together. Where one went the other went too, if possible. I love you and Myra, but Sue is my one special friend, and as dear to me as the apple of my eye. I have been away several days, and on returning last evening I inquired for her, and was told that she was in Baltimore, on a visit to her aunt. Well, this afternoon I passed through the back yard of their house as I was going across lots to Mrs. Barnes', and as I went through I cast a glance up at Sue's window, as I always do, and to my surprise saw her standing there, with her finger on her lips in token of silence. A moment more and she had pushed a roll of paper through a broken pane of glass, and, motioning me to pick it up, she disappeared. I hurried home, and, seeking the quiet sanctuary of my room, I hastily read the letter, which I now want you to read for yourself, and then we will consult as to what can be done for the poor thing."

Edith took the roll and read as follows:

"DEAR, DARLING JENNIE: My best beloved friend, I don't know how I shall get this to you, but will write it and have it ready for the first chance. About a week ago I received a letter from Charlie Flowers, telling me that his new house was completed and nicely furnished, and now that the nest was prepared he was ready for the bird. He said it was of no use to wait longer for father's consent, for it would never be given, and as I was now twenty-one, I ought to feel free to seek my own best and highest happiness; that I had sacrificed myself long enough on the altar of filial duty, considering the parent I had to do with, and that he would meet me

at Maple Grove the next day, and we would ride to Squire Floyd's and be married at once. 'I can safely promise,' said he, 'to give you a happier and more pleasant home than you have ever had beneath your father's roof, and as for him, he has money and means, and can hire all done that he needs; and, Sue, even you, darling, he doesn't seem to care for.' Oh! it is all true, Jennie, for I don't think father would miss me much, and I *know* Charlie would; so don't blame me for listening to his pleadings. He is a pretty fair lawyer, and his father is well off; all my father objects to is his, or their, religion. Old Mr. Flowers is a Universalist, and Charlie himself is nearly an Infidel. He never was pious, and since the Darwins came he has been reading their books and papers and talking with them till he is almost as liberal as they are. He is so frank and open that he talks to every one and in all places, and father heard him arguing in the store with Deacon Moss one day, and as Charlie beat the deacon on every point, father came home tearing mad, and said I should never speak to him again; and for two months past he has been trying to get me to marry old Elder Hobbs. 'What!' I hear you say, 'that canting old hypocrite?' Yes, Jennie, that disgusting old tobacco-box—you know he is forever chewing and spitting. I have never said a word to you about him, for I knew I'd soon be twenty-one, and hoped then that Charlie and I could marry and put an end to all such schemes; and, really, Jennie dear, I was ashamed to have you know that such a horrid old object was wanting to marry me. You see, the boys having run off, and I being the only child at home, he thought I would come in for all the property some

day, and it's that, more than any love for me, that induces the elder to persevere in his efforts, after all the repulses I've given him. I tell you, Jennie, I've had my own time with those two old men. But the stolen interviews with Charlie kept hope alive in my heart, and made such gloriously sunny spots in my life that its clouds all had silver linings, and I've been enabled to weather it along tolerably pleasantly till the following incident occurred and upset all our hopes and plans, for the present at least:

"The night of the same day in which I received Charlie's letter I was awakened by a noise in my room. It was bright moonlight. I raised my head and looked about me, and was surprised and startled at seeing father just drawing the letter from the pocket of my dress. I sprang from the bed and endeavored to gain possession of it, but he rudely pushed me away, saying he had seen Bob Smith give it to me, and, knowing he was Charlie's errand-boy, he was determined to know for himself what clandestine operations were going on. Putting the letter in his pocket, he left the room, locking the door after him. I waited in trembling anxiety for what was to follow, and in a short time heard his returning footsteps; and as he unlocked the door and entered the room, I knew, by his white lips and the trembling nervousness of his walk, that he was awfully angry. He had the terrible whip in his hand, and, appalled at the thought that he meant to use it upon me, I exclaimed, 'Oh, father! you surely will not whip me. Don't strike me, I pray, or you will murder me, as you did mother and Allie, for I am sure one stroke of that cruel lash will kill me.' 'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' said he, in sol-

emn tones; 'honor thy father and thy mother; obey your elders, is the advice of God's holy book; and I intend you *shall* honor me, vile baggage that you are! You would run off, would you? and with an Infidel, too! which is not only disobeying me, but the Bible itself, which bids us to have no fellowship with the ungodly. You need not bawl, or wring your hands, or plead to me. I know my duty, and shall do it now.' And he raised the whip as he spoke, and drew it heavily across my bare neck, and shoulders, cutting clear into the quivering flesh. I screamed and fainted; and when I came to, all was still and silent as the grave. I went back to bed and lay there, trembling and crying with pain and over my outraged feelings, till morning.

"'Tis now six days since all this occurred, and I haven't seen a living soul to whom I could speak or tell my troubles. Each day father opens the door, pushes in my 'rations' of bread and water; but he has never shown his face or spoken but once, and that was to say that as soon as I would promise to behave myself and marry the old elder, I should be free and be treated as a lady. Of course I prefer confinement to those terms, as I know this will have an ending some day. Charlie will not rest long without finding out where I am. Father must have deceived him in some way, or he would have been here long ago demanding my release on the plea of my majority's setting me clear of parental authority. I haven't seen a soul pass my window since I've been here, and I don't like to make an outcry, as it would cause a scandal, and besides, father says if I do, he will have me removed to the asylum on a plea of insanity, so I will bide my time, knowing that sooner

or later I shall see you go to Mrs Brown's, and you always pass through our back yard in going, you know ; and so I think I can attract your attention without making any noise—father's room joins mine and I wish to avoid all disturbance with him if possible. If I am once married I shall feel forever free from him, and shall build up a new life in a new home, and find that real happiness and peace for which my heart has long been aching. I was quite ill for a day or two from the blow father gave me and the consequent excitement, but I realized that if I wished to escape I must get well and strong, so I have roused myself up and tried to be hopeful and expectant. Now, Jennie darling, you must devise some plan to get this letter to Charlie at once, and he will find a way out of the difficulties that environ us. Don't wait for the mail, as it only goes once a week—send it by a careful special messenger who will see it given right into his hands. Consult at once with Edith, she is always a friend in need, and knows so much she will advise you how to manage. Yours lovingly and hopefully, SUE."

"Well, it is certainly a hard case," said Edith.
"And what do you propose to do about it."

"Why, have some one take the letter to Charlie at once. I can't ride a horse, you know, and if I could I can't leave father that long, as he has sprained his foot badly, and I have him to care for as well as do all the work, and three preachers are to be at our house to-night, too, so I hope you can go in my place. Poor Sue ! how she must have suffered. I can't help wishing her old brute of a father had to stand a few sharp cuts of that whip across his bare back, and then have it salted down as they used to

serve some of the poor slaves here in Dixie. He richly deserves it, and I believe I could do it myself with a right good will."

"Hush, Jennie, don't say such horrid things. I know you do not mean it. I'm sure if you saw him this moment undergoing the lash you would plead for his pardon out of pure humanity."

"I don't think I would, Edith; you do not know how I hate the old wretch. He isn't fit to live. I don't see why God lets such people exist. Why does he create men who he knows will be wicked and full of evil?"

"It does not look right, Jennie, and I begin to think perhaps Darwin is correct and man is not a creation but an evolution—that all things are developments—are effects of causes in matter itself, and that there is no great first cause, or overruling, guiding, and directing power."

"What? Do you think all is chance?"

"No, no, Jennie. Nothing can be otherwise than as it is. Nature always works by unchanging laws. Sue's father is a result of these inexorable laws and is rather to be pitied than blamed. But I must get a horse and go at once to Mr. Flowers with this letter, and perhaps before night we may have Sue released from durance vile."

"I hope so," said Jennie earnestly; "but I must go now to father, trusting you will do the best you can for poor Sue."

Edith found Charlie Flowers in his office at S——, and at once gave him Sue's letter. He was deeply moved at its perusal, and muttered frequent exclamations of anger and indignation as he read how cruelly Sue had been treated by her father. And he

mourned to think of the long days of loneliness and suffering she had endured while he had fancied her happily enjoying her visit.

"Here I have been," said he, "calm and contented, waiting for a letter from her all this time, and there was that hypocritical old scoundrel chuckling to himself, thinking how cleverly he had outwitted me. The cheating, lying, deceitful old humbug! Excuse me, Miss Edith, but you don't know how mean he has been. I was at the appointed rendezvous in good time and had waited about five minutes for Sue when a boy handed me a note from her. It said that she had concluded to visit her aunt in Baltimore, as she had promised her a gold watch and chain, a nice china tea set, and a white satin wedding dress if she would only come while she was free and single, as she was a man-hater and always preferred to associate with unmarried women, and that if she did not come before the wedding she need not come at all. Sue wrote that no promise of presents would have made her disappoint me, only that her father insisted she should go, and indeed almost forced her to do so. She craved my pardon for the temporary disappointment and delay, but promised she would write immediately after her arrival at her aunt's, and we would appoint a place to meet, and before we returned to her father's we would be indissolubly united. She closed by saying her father would take her to the depot early in the morning. I had not a thought but all was just as she represented it till you came, for I saw the deacon's covered carriage pass just as I got up the next morning, so how could I doubt, or be for a moment suspicious of foul play? But he must have forced Sue to write

this to me. Yet it is strange she did not tell that to Jennie in her letter—though, poor girl, she had so much to tell. And yet there is another mystery—if she did write it, she would have known why I did not come, and would not have wondered how her father had deceived me.”

“Oh! Sue did not write it! she never knew it was written at all. Mr. Conway is an expert at imitating handwriting, and he and Sue always did write so nearly alike few could tell the difference. You may depend upon it he has concocted and written the letter himself. He fancied Sue would soon give in and marry the old elder, and so has worked for that end. But he little knows woman’s nature if he thinks her will, spirit, and resolution can be broken by a few weeks’ confinement and a diet of bread and water. Any woman that is at all womanly in her feelings will suffer to the last extremity before she will give up the man she loves and marry one she loathes and detests. Suffering only makes her the more resolute and determined. A girl may love her God and adore her Savior, but she idolizes her lover, and places him far above all gods in the sanctuary of her affections, no matter how pious she may be. Her God and Savior only become reflections or idealized images of her lover, and in loving them she really loves him.”

“Well, Miss Edith, I wonder how it happens that, with a heart as full of love as yours is, you have never found your god yet to idolize.”

“He will be along some day,” said Edith, laughing, “If he does not, I’ll hunt him up. And now what’s to be done for Sue?”

“Oh! I’ve got that all contrived,” said Mr.

Flowers. "To-night is lodge night, and Mr. Conway is very particular in attendance, so he will be sure to go. He generally makes speeches, and the Masons flatter him, and he likes that; for, mean as he is, he is human, and not beyond enjoying praise, as it adds to his self-consequence. While he is off at the lodge we'll break into his prison house and 'let the oppressed go free.' You will go with us to Squire Floyd's, will you not? We want you as a witness as well as for company. Poor Sue will feel lonely enough, anyhow, marrying in such an off-hand way, but it's the best we can do."

"Certainly I'll go with you; and you must both come back and stay at our house all night. I have invited my pupils to a little festival and supper; and a wedding party will give *eclat* to the occasion."

"We shall be glad to come, and to-morrow afternoon we will all go to father's."

The plans all being laid, Edith returned home to attend to the remaining preparations for her party. She had all things prepared and was ready and waiting when Charlie drove up. The two walked quietly over to Conway's and arrived in sight of the house just as the deacon was turning the corner at the lane leading to the lodge. The front door stood open and the old housekeeper was sleeping in her chair. Edith quietly led the way up stairs to Sue's room, motioning Charlie to follow. By good luck the key hung on a nail outside the door, and in a moment more Sue was sobbing out her joy in Charlie's arms. Edith, ever thoughtful and considerate, strolled along the upper hallway to a little back porch where she sat quietly waiting till Sue should regain her composure and have a short private interview with

her lover. Fifteen minutes, then half an hour passed and still no voice came to recall her, and fearing they might not get off unless they made haste, Edith returned to Sue's room, and told her to hasten and get ready or Mr. Conway might return ere they left the house. "See," said she, holding out her watch, "it is over half an hour since we came."

"Half an hour? Why Edith, it is not five minutes," said Sue in surprise, and Charlie was sure it could not have been more than ten minutes, but a glance at the watch Edith held up convinced them that time had flown much faster than they had dreamed of, so Charlie now took his turn on the porch while Edith helped Sue to make a few changes in her dress, having thoughtfully improvised a suitable outfit from her own apparel for the occasion, ere she left home. Sue never looked prettier than she did after she had donned the snow-white dress with its pretty pink ribbons and soft frills of rich old lace about the neck and sleeves, and the slender gold bracelets (Charlie's wedding gift) clasping her round white arms. Her light sunny curls were all the head-dress she needed, and as the long, white veil fell about her, enveloping the whole in its misty folds, she looked like a bride indeed. Edith called Charlie to take one peep before throwing a large light shawl over her to shroud her from observation should they meet a passing traveler on the way to the carriage which had been left waiting at Rose Hill gate. Softly and lightly they sped down stairs, the old woman still slumbered, and mentally shaking the dust from their feet, they passed over the threshold out into the glad, free, world of nature. The carriage was soon gained, and all were swiftly

driven to Squire Floyd's, and a few moments more and the two were henceforward one. Sue said she would greatly have preferred that old Mr. Martin had performed the ceremony, but she knew he would not like to do it as he was aware how much her father was opposed to the marriage, but Charlie was better satisfied as it was. He said he did not want any preacher to pow-wow over him, and he was glad for one to be able to set an example that he hoped in time would become universal, that is to never give any Church official the privilege of interfering with any matter that should be the affair of civil and social law. "No one can marry us—that is, bind us really together—save our two selves," continued Charley, "and the only use of any law or ceremony is to make the act legally binding to satisfy the demands of society."

It was just ten o'clock in the evening when the little party drove up the lane and got out at Rose Hill Mansion, which was all one blaze of light; and at the sound of the carriage wheels out came the rush of pattering feet, and glad, happy faces and merry joy-greetings welcomed them. Jennie, Myra, and the two Darwin girls were there, and supper was all ready and waiting for them. Mrs. May had even baked a bride-cake during their absence. Nothing seemed wanting for perfect happiness. Mr. Flowers, being the only gentleman present, would have been somewhat embarrassed, perhaps, had he not been a lawyer, which class of people, you know, are not over-famed for diffidence.

The evening passed delightfully to all, and Sue felt that she was never half so happy in all her life. True, a slight shadow would now and then flit across

her fair face as she thought of her father and how much more pleasant it would have been could he have sanctioned her marriage and given them his blessing and countenance. But entire, perfect satisfaction is one of the unattainables; so why wish for or ever expect it? If all of us could have everything we wanted, life would become a vast field of idleness, inactivity, and *ennui*. No one would want anything more than he had, and all work, strife, competition, and labor would cease. The craving for what we have not is the source of all energy and ambition.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two weeks have flown by since the wedding. Sue and Charlie have been off on a short pleasure trip, flitting hither and thither as "happy as the birds." 'Tis now the day of their expected return. A little company of choice friends have met at the hospitable mansion of old Mr. Flowers to welcome back the bridal pair. Hark! there comes the train. The company crowd out upon the porch, each eager to be the first to greet the young couple. "Save the pieces!" cried Charley, as they swarmed about Sue, hugging and kissing her and asking all manner of questions about their trip.

The first noisy demonstrations over, she escaped from the eager, impetuous group, and, turning to Edith, asked where her dear, darling Jennie was.

"At home," said Edith; "you see, her father did not like her to come here, lest she might be tainted with Universalism."

"Oh, yes; he thinks it a dangerous malady, and fears it's catching," said Myra, laughing.

"And so it is," said Sue. "I've caught lots of it already, and mean to catch all I can, for it just pours the sunshine into my life; and I'm beginning to learn how much happiness it is possible to crowd into the little hours of one's life. I've got hold of the true thread of existence, and I mean to unwind the whole spool if I live long enough. You see, I shall have to grow fast and enjoy things immensely

so as to make up for lost time. Hell dropped out when universal salvation came in, and heaven came to earth when Charlie and I became one; so why should I not just revel in bliss? If religion makes all people as unhappy as it did me, and all men as cold, heartless, and selfish as it does father, the sooner it is rooted out of the world the better."

"And what has become of your father, Sue," asked Myra.

"I was just going to ask Edith that very question myself," said Sue, "for I've never heard a word from him all the time I've been away. You know we made such a flying trip we could leave no address for you to write to."

"Oh! then we know more than you do; and I can tell you beforehand that it isn't much good," said Myra, who never hesitated from any delicacy of feeling about telling unpleasant facts; not that she was a tattler, or fond of giving pain, but she was impulsive, frank, and thoughtless, and enjoyed a bit of gossip, as most people do, if they would confess it. "Now, you see, Sue, the morning after your marriage, Squire Floyd met your father walking up the street, and, being rather fond of a joke, and also, it must be owned, feeling a little glad of a chance to show the old man how nicely he had been outwitted, he walked up to him and congratulated him upon his daughter's having made so good a match. Looking at the squire in amazement, the deacon asked what he meant. 'I mean the marriage of your daughter to Charlie Flowers, of course,' said Mr. Floyd, smiling. 'Why, he is the most talented lawyer in the whole country, and has already established a good paying business in the town of S—',

where he lives. Ah, Mr. Conway, you have a son-in-law to be proud of. But, come to think of it,' continued the squire, with a roguish twinkle in his eye, 'I do remember now that you were somewhat opposed to the match; but what is done can't be undone, so I trust that you will make the best of it. They were really the finest-looking couple I ever married.' 'So *you* did the job, did you? Well, my curse be upon you for it; and may you go to hell, where my infatuated daughter will surely go, now that she has entered that cursed Infidel family.' And the old man turned on his heel and strode back to his home, to find it but too true, that the bird which he thought so securely caged had indeed forever escaped his toils. The old housekeeper said he raved and tore about like a madman, and ordered her at once to leave the house for thus sleeping at her post and neglecting the welfare of his dear insane daughter—for he had caused the simple old dame to believe Sue was crazy, so as to make her not only afraid to let her out, but to keep her from listening to any appeal Sue might make her. That night old Deacon Slim disappeared, and has never been heard of since. The house is locked up, and all is silent as the grave."

"Poor father!" said Sue. "I hope some day he will see that he is not following the true road to happiness and goodness."

"He is badly organized, and cannot help what he does," said Myra. "He evolutes backward—retrogrades, as Darwin tells us some nations under adverse circumstances do. He has always had his own way too much. 'Power creates tyrants, and tyrants develop into all manner of vile ways.'"

"'While there is life there is hope;' so let's hope for the best," said Edith, cheerfully. "We will all enjoy the now and to-day, and think of brighter things."

"Yes; that's true philosophy," said Myra, always quick to grasp a truth. "We'll just offer up a prayer that Mr. Conway may turn Infidel and reform his ways, and then say good-by to all thoughts concerning him for the present."

"If I'm anything of a prophet," whispered Willie Darwin just then in the ear of Myra, "I predict that there is not enough of the milk of human kindness in his wizened-up old body to make a good Infidel out of."

Myra laughed heartily at the idea, and agreed with him entirely, and said that if she ever joined the Liberal ranks she didn't want any such trash as Deacon Slim to be found there.

"I think you two are selfishly having all the fun to yourselves," said Sue, turning to Willie and Myra, who sat just behind her. "Come, let us hear some of it, so we can laugh, too."

"Oh, it's only some of Will's wicked Infidelity," said Myra, "and I'm not going to shock ears polite by repeating it." And she tried to look grave and sober, though her eyes were dancing with fun and merriment.

About an hour before the company broke up, Sue asked Edith to walk out on the back porch with her; and when they had seated themselves upon the little low bench that ran along the end of it, Sue turned to her friend and said, "You can't guess, Edith, what I have brought you."

"No, not unless it be a sweetheart," said Edith,

smiling. "You are always wishing me to have one, so perhaps you have stumbled upon the *rara avis* since you have been away."

"And so I have, and no joke about it. You guessed it right cleverly; now just come into the hall to the lamp, and I'll show him to you."

"All right," said Edith; "but I shall not promise you to fall in love with him, or his picture, for that is what you have brought, I presume."

"Yes; and now take a good look at it," said Sue, as she handed her friend a folded paper.

Edith unwrapped it, and took a step forward to where the light could fall full upon it. A good face—yes, a grand and noble one—a broad, square forehead; dark chestnut hair, just wavy enough not to seem stiff; eyes deep, dark blue, and fathomless as the ocean depths; beard decidedly auburn, but full, rich, and handsome. Every feature bespoke intelligence, character, and determination. Several moments passed, and Edith still stood, as it were, spellbound, gazing as if entranced and fascinated upon the picture.

Sue watched her eagerly, and, quivering all over with suppressed merriment and excitement, she found herself unable longer to keep silent and exclaimed in a tragic-comic doleful voice: "Farewell, Edith, friend of my girlhood! Thou art gone—forever gone! I shall never, never see thee more! Ah! ah, fatal picture, why did I bring thee?"

"Oh, Sue, do stop your bantering nonsense," said Edith, pettishly, "I don't see as marriage has sobered you down one bit."

"Sobered me? No indeed, I should hope not! Why it has just intoxicated me completely. I feel

like a butterfly which has escaped from its entombment in the dark, gloomy cell of the cocoon into the glad, bright, free outside world of brightness, joy, and beauty. Why, I am so happy I scarce feel that I touch the ground as I walk, and I burst out singing every few moments, and sing inside of me all the time! Sobered me! I've had enough of soberness to last me one lifetime at least;" and clouds flitted across the fair young face as she thought of all the dark, dreary past, and its sore trials and bitter sorrows.

"Oh! do forgive me, Sue darling; I did not mean to chide you. I want you to be just as happy as you can. You don't know how it rejoices us to see you so merry and glad—such a perfect little sunbeam. Your playful bantering somehow touched a chord that jarred unpleasantly, and I spoke petulantly and impatiently on the impulse of the moment. So please forgive and forget."

"Yes, yes, it is all right, Edith; but you will keep the picture, will you not?"

"Why should I? I shall, perhaps, never see the original, and if I should, he might not please me as his shadowed resemblance here does."

"Oh yes, you will see him, Edith, for he is to be here in September on business, and will stay a week at our house, and I'm going to turn match-maker then, and make the grandest match this little town ever knew." And Sue laughed a sunny, girlish laugh as she danced across the floor. "But, Edith," she continued, looking earnestly at her friend, "you haven't asked me a single question yet as to how and where I made his acquaintance, or a thing about him. Have you no curiosity at all?"

"Certainly I have, you little witch. So just come back on the porch, and tell me all you want to, for I know you are aching to do so."

"Well," said Sue, as they were once more seated, "you see it was when we were in O——. There is a large pond or lake there near the hotel, and one day we took a sail in a little row-boat, and I was feeling my very best, so full of life and fun I couldn't sit still, and somehow in stepping about I upset the boat. Charlie couldn't swim a stroke, and we were some little distance from the shore. I had sunk the second time, when I felt a strong arm grasp me, and that is the last I remember till I found myself lying on a sofa in a strange room. An old lady sat by my side bathing my face with cologne. Starting up suddenly I exclaimed, 'Where is Charlie?' 'He is safe, my dear,' said the lady. 'Pray compose yourself, and as soon as you feel able you shall put on some dry clothes and he shall come in and see you.' 'And who was it that took me out of the water just as I was thinking I had seen the last glimpse of Charlie and the bright, beautiful world?' said I, shuddering at my narrow escape. 'It was my son, Sisson Williams,' she replied. 'He saw you upset, and, fearing one if not both of you might drown, plunged in and swam to the rescue. He first brought you ashore, and then went back for your husband and the boat to which he was still clinging.' 'Oh! pray let me dress quickly,' said I, 'that I may see and thank our preserver.' 'Have patience, and it will not be long ere you shall be made presentable,' said the good woman, smiling and assisting me to make my toilet in a suit of her clothes, which were a world too big and long, but

with a soft, light, pink shawl over all, it did not look in the least unbecoming. You see, I've grown proud of my good looks, Edith, since I've some one to admire me.' And she laughed as she continued, 'The sound of approaching steps was followed by a rap at the door, and in a moment I was laughing and crying in Charlie's arms, while he reproached himself for taking his precious wife on the water when aware that he was so helpless as to not know how to swim. 'Never mind; it is all my fault,' said I. And then turning towards the young gentleman, I said, 'And this is Mr. Williams, is it? And our preserver? Oh, how can I thank you?' 'It was but an act of common humanity,' said he, 'that cost me only a wetting, so do not feel under any obligation, but allow me to say the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mrs. Flowers is enough to recompense me for greater exertions than that.' And now, I suppose, you want to know how he looked. He was the grandest and handsomest man I ever saw in all my life. Oh, yes! Charlie is good-looking, nice, and all that, but Mr. Williams is one of nature's own noblemen. He is large, with broad, square shoulders, and is tall and straight as an arrow, and when he is pleased, a smile of ineffable tenderness beams from his countenance, while his eyes—well I cannot describe them. They are the deepest, clearest, and most beautiful eyes I ever saw. You must have felt their magic influence as you looked at his picture for I did every time I saw it. I am sure if I had not been already in love, and a married woman, I'd have fallen in love with him at once. Yet I mistrust I should have felt more of awe and reverence than of real wifely affection, for he is so immeasura-

bly my superior in all things. I don't believe he could do a mean thing, or a wrong one; and oh, Edith, how he can talk! I could listen to him forever; and he is a splendid musician—a heap better one than even you are, and that is no small praise, either, for you know you stand well in that line. He sings like a nightingale too, and I am just aching to hear you and him in a duet. We saw him several times during our stay in O——, and when we were coming away I told him I was going to hunt him up a wife in recompense for his saving my life. He laughed, and said he had been looking for one for years. You see he is thirty-five years old, but he looks as young as Charlie. I have told him lots about you, and he will be all ready to like you, and the rest will soon follow. I begged the picture as a keepsake of my preserver, but I meant it for you all the time.”

“Well, your little romance is very nice, Sue, and I'm grateful to him for saving to us the life of our little sunbeam, but as for the rest ‘there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.’”

“Aye, there'll be none here,” said Sue, as the two returned to the company, who had made several ineffectual searches for the missing bride and for their favorite, Edith.

One day, about three weeks after Sue's return from her bridal trip, she was sitting with her friend Jennie in the cozy parlor at the parsonage. The two had talked over all the little nothings that usually pass between very intimate friends, when a longer pause than common was interrupted by Jennie, who said: “Sue, I'm going to tell you a little bit of a secret, but I want you to keep it to yourself, and as

it concerns no one but me, you can safely promise to do so."

"Of course I'll never tell any one," said Sue, laughing. "Did you ever see a woman who would not make all sorts of promises for the sake of getting at a secret?"

"Why, yes; there's Mrs. Darwin, Sue; you know she never will promise not to tell, for she says she might tell incidentally, or might feel it a duty to divulge it, so when we want to tell her a thing, all she will say is that she never tells things to make mischief or trouble, and will be as discreet about it as she can, and we all feel safer to tell her than we do to tell others who promise so much, then run right off and tell every word to some confidant under the same strict injunctions of secrecy, then she goes and tells it to her friend, and so it is repeated again and again till it's all over town, and the first revealer of it wonders how in the world it got out."

"Well, 'pon honor, Jennie, I'll tell no one but Charlie, and he's half of me," said Sue, laughing merrily at the conceit.

"Oh, men don't gossip, so I'm not afraid of him," said Jennie.

"You don't know men as well as I do," said wise little Sue; "Charlie don't gossip, it is true; he is a good man, and a lawyer besides, so there are two reasons why he holds his tongue; but I know men can beat women all to pieces at that delightful occupation when they get at it. You just ought to have heard the long lists of petty scandals and tales my brothers used to bring home some rainy afternoons when they had been listening to the store loungers. 'Little pitchers have big ears,' you know;

and I've heard father and Deacon Smart tell more gossip in an hour than a regular tea-party of old maids would in a whole evening. Oh, no, of course I did not hear it honorably. Honor was something father never taught us. It was only appearances he cared for; so when he was entertaining a chatty caller, I used often to take my sewing and sit near the study door in the hall, and have a nice time hearing all about the neighbors. I'll bet I know more bits of private history than I could tell in an age, if I was one of that sort, but bad as I was, I never did like to tell things that would injure others. I thought there was suffering enough in the world anyhow. I didn't know then how nice a world it might be if people only lived right. I'm a better girl now than I was then. Charlie is making me all over again, and I am now, oh ! so happy. We two could live nicely in that glass house we girls were once talking of, for we never do anything we are not willing the whole world should see. But that grand secret, Jennie? I'm all curiosity to hear it."

"Well, if you are sure you can keep from talking just one moment, I'll tell it," said Jennie.

"Go on, then ; I'm mum," said Sue, pressing her lips tightly together, and bending forward in a listening attitude.

"I've lost my religion," said Jennie, in a half-serious, half-comic tone.

"Lost it? What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, Sue. I've lost my religion—lost my belief in Christianity ; and in such an odd way. A middle-aged man came here two weeks ago to talk with father, and, as it happened, I was in the little room off the study and heard it all. It is

so rarely any one goes into that room that father had no thought of my being there. You know he never likes me to hear any arguments on religion, as he says it unsettles one's faith. The man introduced himself by saying he was Mr. Lusk, and lived on the Bradford place down by the factory. That he had been in Tennessee settling up his father's estate ever since he moved his family here, some three months ago; and so had never made the acquaintance of Mr. Martin. 'But,' said he, 'I hearn you was a good man, so I thought I'd come and see you, and get you to settle a knotty p'int or two for me. I ain't much on larnin', I aint, fur I've had to work fit to kill myself, to keep my little family from starving, but now I've got money that father left, enough to pay for a home, and I'm going to see to the brain part next. That's Mrs. Lusk's way, my wife, sir; her motto is "Body fust, and brain next," and it's a pretty good one, too, fur as I kin see. But to come to the p'int. I wuz inter Mr. Scott's a week or two ago, and I picked up a book and read sum-thing that sot me ter thinkin'. I jist copied it off, as I didn't like ter tackle Mr. Scott about it, and his bizness is to doctor bodies, and yours to tend to souls. Wal, here is what I read, and I want you to tell me if it's true or no: "The Cushites who inhabited Arabia, India, and western Asia to the Mediterranean, and extensive regions of Africa, were highly-gifted, civilized, and enlightened nations, and though existing fully eight thousand years before Christ, were by no means the first inhabitants of the earth." There now, what do you say ter that? Is it true or no? Was there men who lived so long before Adam as these Cushites are said to

have done? If so, I want ter know it. I never studied religion much, but thought it must be true 'cause everybody believed it. But since I cum here I find there is good people that say it's all humbug, leastwise some sez Mr. Darwin's family don't believe the fust word of it. They ain't mean folks, neither, like preachers sez Infiddles is—for Mrs. Darwin is a rale good neighbor, my wife sez, and all the children like her, and them as children likes is always good, yer know. Now, if Adam wasn't the fust man, and Eve wasn't made out of his rib-bone, and Cain and Abel didn't have a religious quarrel over their offerings, and Cain didn't murder his brother in a religious row, I don't want my children to be taught such lies in Sunday-school.'

"Father just sat quietly and patiently till the man was through, and then said, 'My brother, if you take up the question in such a spirit of defiance as this, I fear I can do you little good. The whole Christian world has long ago settled these questions for us. The greatest intellects of the day have pronounced the holy Bible to be God's word, and being his word, it must be true. No matter what seeming evidence there may be against its statements, they must all be false if they cannot be made to coincide with that holy and divine record. I have read of these Cushites; and the ancient ruins and monuments, and the descriptions all seem to prove them to be older than Adam, but we must learn to mistrust our own senses when they go against aught that God himself has revealed to us in his holy word. Even Jesus Christ, mild, gentle, and good as he was, tells us plainly to believe or be damned. There is no alternative for us, so why risk your

eternal salvation by prying into things that does not concern you? I know it is the general practice of those belonging to our Church to argue, debate, and reason with all who differ from them in point of belief. We are so sure we are right that we fear not to face even the smartest in the Infidel ranks. But I am growing wise as I grow old. I look back to the years of my early manhood, and I see a great change and a wide departure from the dear and beloved truths taught at that time in our churches. We must keep the first principles and preach these principles just as we did then, if we would retain a full belief in them. Many of our most intelligent preachers have taken up with new notions—evoluted, they say, and become progressive—but alas! they have not evolved towards salvation or God's truths, and my soul is prophetic of the end. Little by little they let go of the divine guide and trust to worldly wisdom, and when too late they will find themselves stranded on a desert isle.' 'In hell, I suppose you mean parson, but if, as Mr. Darwin thinks, there ain't any hell, what then?' 'It is best to be on the safe side, my brother,' said father solemnly. 'But if a man can't believe, do you think God would put him in a hell for it? if you do, I say I don't think I can love such a God. If my children could not believe me, or believe what I commanded them to, would I put them in the fire? no, sir; I'd jist try and be so true and good that they'd haf ter believe in me. Mr. Darwin tells my wife that if folks want love, honor, and respect, they must arn it, and deserve it, and so I say if God wants to be loved and believed he must make himself known to us, so we can see if he is worth it.'

“‘You blaspheme the Most High by such talk, and I must insist that you use no more such irreverent language in my presence,’ said my father, severely. ‘God has given us all the knowledge we need of him in the Bible, and if you cannot find enough in that sacred Word to convince you, I shall be compelled to see you go to everlasting perdition. Let us pray.’ ‘Prayin’ ain’t no use, parson—I never knowed a prayer to be answered yit, and I can’t waste no more time now, so good-bye,’ and he left the room, while father sighed and commenced writing his next Sunday’s discourse, and when he preached it the ensuing Sabbath, I could see Mr. Lusk popping up in it every little while. If father made no impression on him, I saw that he did on father.

“Well, as I said, this was two weeks ago, Sue, and in these fourteen eventful days I have crossed the Rubicon. I went that very afternoon to see Edith, and told her of Mr. Lusk’s visit, and of my determination to know for myself what the other side had to say. You see I always refused to read any of the books the Darwins lent the rest of you, for I did not like to do so against my father’s wishes or knowledge, and I had so much else to do, and to read, and to think about, that I was well content as it was. But there are always epochs in life that start us upon new roads, and the events of that fateful afternoon Mr. Lusk came to the parsonage, and so strongly, forcibly, yet simply, expressed his determination to find out the real truth, decided me to go and do likewise. I told Edith all this, and asked her to lend me the ‘Age of Reason.’ She was as I said not yet twenty-one; she

did not feel justified in doing it, as she knew my father would be so opposed to my having it. 'Well,' said I, 'to absolve you from all complicity in the act, I here take forcible possession of it;' and suiting the action to the word I slipped the book into my pocket. Edith laughed, and said I was very presumptuous to help myself in that way to her property. I took it home and read it thoroughly, and with a genuine desire to know the truth; and as all who have done this usually fall in with Paine's views, I found myself no exception. I was convinced that the Bible was a man-made book, and a collection of fables, stories, and old opinions, also of old maxims mixed in with ancient poems and heathen literature. But I did not stop there. I got Myra to go to Mr. Darwin's and get me the best Infidel book they had—you know she isn't as scrupulous about honor and all that as you are—so she went and brought me Taylor's 'Diegesis'—a book few girls would care to read. But I have been father's boy, you know, and had read so much on theology that my mind was prepared for a thorough investigation of the whole subject. I had bound Myra to secrecy, and she got the book as if for herself, as I prefer to keep my present opinions a secret as long as I can. Myra is wild and willful, but true as steel, so I do not fear that she will betray any confidence I repose in her. But to my story: I found Taylor a perfect mine of knowledge. He begins at the very root of the whole question of Christianity, traces its foundation and gradual growth step by step, showing it has not a particle of fact or reality about it; he shows that it was created out of pure myth, and built up by one continuous system of fraud, decep-

tion, and falsehood. Every ancient author he proves to be a false chronicler, or to have had lies forged and interpolated into his works. He shows that this very religion called Christianity existed ages before Christ was ever heard of, and that divine saviors, too, were known in other nations and countries, and were older than ours, and just as good, holy, and wise. He tells how the Bible was got up, and shows that whole chapters have been added to it—interpolated since by pious zealots—and others altered and changed; he shows that nearly all of the most learned and Christian authors made numerous damaging admissions of a most fatal character concerning the whole subject; and in concluding his discussion of the 'External Evidence,' he says: 'Here is distress, indeed! To pursue the evidences of the Christian religion, after we have seen its incomparably most learned and able advocates thus striking on the shoals of reckless sophistry; after we have driven the strugglers for a grasp on historical fact to the last trick of gathering together such *thousand riles off* may-be's of mere possible allusion, and then showing us the lettered backs of their huge collections as "Volumes of Evidence," would be driving the drift.'

"Any one who can believe Christianity to be a true system of religion, after reading Rev. Robert Taylor, must have a very pitiable sort of credulity. I confess he has shattered all that was left of my belief, after I had read Paine. I have not given up God or immortality though. I still think there is proof of life to come, and that a good God rules and governs all things."

"There may be," said Sue; "still I begin to be

rather shaky about it all. But since I have given up hell and its horrors, I don't worry about the rest. Whatever it may be, I feel that I shall meet my just deserts, and justice is all I ask of God or man."

"I am with you there, Sue; and now I must run out and get dinner ready, as father will soon be home."

CHAPTER IX.

"OH ! Edith, you can't guess what news I have brought you," said Myra, as full of girlish excitement she sprang up the porch steps, two at a time, swinging her sun-hat in her hand, and with her curls flying in the wind.

"Well, if I can't guess, you will doubtless be kind enough to tell me, for I see you are just aching to pour it all out," said Edith, smiling.

"So I am, and no wonder either, for it is as interesting as a novel. You know I went to B—— for a few weeks to visit my aunt. While I was there cousin Norman came home from college, and we renewed our old-time boy and girl friendship, told one another all our thoughts and little secrets just as true friends always do. I am naturally very communicative and cousin Norman is just like me in that respect, so we had nice long talks together. I confessed my partiality for Willie Darwin one twilight evening, as we sat talking on the low back porch, and told him all about the family, how good and true they all were, and how wise, intelligent, and refined, and how we had not only grown to love them as friends and neighbors, but that many of us had actually adopted their Infidel opinions and cast off the myths, fables, Bible creeds, and ideas we had held so dear and sacred, and had taken reason and common sense as our guide to truth, depending upon a scientific analysis of the laws of matter and force

for a solution of the vexed question as to the how and wherefore of all that is. Norman listened quietly to my story, signifying his interest by asking just questions enough to fully draw me out. I closed by saying, 'Now, cousin mine, I think you are just the man for Rose Darwin. She is the best, smartest, and prettiest girl I ever saw. I am sure you would fall in love with her at first sight.' Norman smiled, and said I was greatly mistaken about that. He said his heart was already given away and to a maiden who was just as nice, pretty, and good as any girl could be; one who possessed all the womanly virtues and perfections in the superlative degree.

"I was awfully disappointed, for I had been building up a nice little romance about my two favorites, and I did hate to have it fall to the ground. Seeing my downcast looks, Norman smiled curiously and asked if I did not want to see his chosen one. 'Of course I do,' said I; 'but I tell you right here I am not going to think she can equal my friend Rose in any particular.'

"He took from his pocket a small album, and opening it said, 'Look, cousin Myra, and take back your hasty words, and own I am right in my encomiums upon the lady of my choice.'

"I glanced at the pictured face, and saw Rose's own smiling countenance before me. 'Why Norman, it's Rose herself,' said I in astonishment. 'And is it really she whom you love? Where did you ever see her? Do tell me all about it. Oh! I'm so glad, so happy, I could almost hug you for her right on the spot.'

"'I shan't object to that,' said Norman, smiling,

‘though I am no believer in substitutes, vicarious atonement, and all that.’ ‘But you are not telling me, Norman. Don’t you see I’m all curiosity?’ said I. ‘Yes, I see it plain enough—so I’ll confess all about it,’ and he related his ‘experience’ in the following words, as nearly as I can repeat them :

“ ‘About six months ago, while I was at school, I went to see an artist to have some photographs taken, and while looking over the pictures in his show-case, I came across this one. Its beauty, and a something peculiarly attractive about the expression and features, interested me so much that I inquired of the artist who it was. He said it was the likeness of a factory girl in Tennessee, by the name of Rose Darwin, and that was all he knew about her, but he sold me the picture, and wrote her name and address on the back of it. I happened to have a correspondent in the same town, a young lady whom I had befriended in many ways, and to her I wrote inquiring if she knew Rose. She replied she did, and was under great obligations to her for many kindnesses, and that she and Rose were special friends, and that she esteemed the whole family greatly. She said they were superior people, but were unfortunately Infidels, and that had been a great drawback to their social standing in society, but that they were generally liked and respected, and had left a good record there, both morally and financially, and many true friends, as well as some converts to their peculiar opinions and sentiments. She sent me their present address, and I wrote to Rose at once requesting the pleasure of her correspondence, referring her to her friend Miss B—— for credentials as to my character and standing in

society, and I offered to send her any further testimonials she might require from this place. She seemed pleased with the idea of thus making a written friendship, and said she thought we might make it mutually improving, even if nothing further came of it. Well, to make a long story short, we have been writing semi-weekly letters to each other for nearly six months, and I believe are better acquainted as regards each others minds, feelings, opinions, hopes, and aspirations, than people generally are who live near neighbors all their lives, for one speaks so much more frankly and openly in a letter than in oral conversation—there is more freedom and less embarrassment about it. I am anxious now to make her personal acquaintance, and I shall start in a few weeks for your place. I would go right along with you, Myra, but have some business that will detain me here a while yet, but you and I will enjoy the meeting all the more for a short parting.' I said I did not look for much of his society, considering the greater claims and stronger attractions of Rose. 'Well, you can console yourself with Willie then, and we shall all be mutually pleased,' said Norman, and the conference then ended by mutual promises of 'everlasting secrecy,' for you see he did not want the gossips to get hold of his story until he was sure all would be settled satisfactorily, and besides it would have been so embarrassing to Rose, and that is why I've kept quiet all these weeks, and have not even told father or you, which is doing well for a chatterbox like me. But Norman came a few days ago, and last night he was at our house and told me it was all settled, and that he and Rose were to be married in two months. So I just came over on

purpose to tell you all about it. I must pour myself out now and then, and as you are the general confidant among us girls, we all come to you with our joys and troubles. No one seems to enter as really and sympathizingly into the plans and hopes of everybody as you do, except Mrs. Darwin. But she is a married woman, and we don't feel quite as free to talk of such things to old folks, you know. But I am not done yet, Edith. Norman gave me some letters which I am going to read to you, as they are a part of the romance I've been telling you. One always does enjoy a real-life story so much better than made-up novels in books, and I know you appreciate this one as well as I do."

"Are you sure, Myra, your friends would be willing for me to hear the letters?" said Edith.

"Of course they would, you conscientious, scrupulous old goose you. Rose isn't one of the prudish, mock-modest sentimentalists; she is plain, sensible, and practical. Refined, true, and ladylike, but not forever blushing, casting down her eyes, talking of her sensibility and all that. She is a real woman all over, and she has a heart overflowing with love, sympathy, and tenderness, and is not ashamed to let it be known either. She says the day has gone by when all letters wound up with the formula, 'Don't show this to anybody for the world,' though it was only a simple statement of the health and condition of the weather. But just go on with your sewing, Edith, and listen while I read the letter;' and so while her friend plied the busy needle, Myra read as follows:

"DEAR FRIEND NORMAN: I know you think it has been a long time since I wrote you any

Tennessee news, but my eyes have been too weak to allow of my reading or writing. However, this morning I received such a nice letter from your Rose, that I drop you a line simply to inclose it, and I know it will please you to read the appreciative words she has written about you. 'Do as you would be done by' is sound advice, and in following it I send this to you. Rose will not care, for she is so soon intending to give you all of herself, she will not mind my forestalling her a bit by sending you one more peep into the secret chambers of her heart's record. It might be too much for you to get her all at once, so this will help divide the blessing ! If I were a man and Rose were not an Infidel, I should be tempted to try and cut you out, for I never saw a girl I liked half so well.'

"The rest is of no importance," said Myra, "so I'll let it go, and read dear, darling Rose's," and she opened the inclosure and read :

"MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND EMMA: You may think it strange that I have written so little to you about your old acquaintance, Mr. Norman Leonard, but I presume he has told you of our correspondence and mutual affection, and all that. I have been so busy that I have neglected all my far-off friends in the letter line, save *him*; but I am going to give you the whole story in a nut-shell, in answer to your question as to how my romance comes on. You remember our agreement, that last nice long talk we had under the great walnut-tree beyond the factory, when we agreed that the one who married first was to have the services of the other as bridesmaid on the important occasion, and you jokingly said you should expect to see me in Tennessee in about a year

from that time, for you had got tired of single life, and were going to try and get the young preacher who was on the circuit, and who was such a charming singer; but you said there was little chance of my finding a congenial spirit, as Infidels were like hens' teeth—very few and very rare—but if you did not get Rev. Mr. Souls, you could easily find some good Christian among all the church members of the pious little town. I thought, too, at that time, that the chances were all in your favor, and have been looking for the expected invitation from you telling me to come on and fulfill my promise; but it seems I am to be the first to wear the honors of wifehood, after all; and so I wish to claim your presence here on the 12th of September to congratulate me on having won a prize in the matrimonial lottery such as falls to very few who enter the lists. You cannot dream, dear Emma, how I have enjoyed corresponding with him. You know in all my Tennessee life I never met a single Infidel, nor have I seen one since I came here, save ourselves; and I began to think that if I waited for Fortune to send one along, I might be old and antiquated ere I saw that blessed day. I have always thought a single life but half a life, and an unnatural one at that, and, besides, I must own to an almost undue fondness for the society of the opposite sex. I have craved the company of men from a child; not that I think them better than women, but because they are more intelligent, taking them as a class; they have always had superior opportunities, been put first and allowed the general control and 'say so,' until women have grown to look up to them as almost gods. The day is not far distant when this will be all changed, and

the two become, in every respect, equals; and after that I think woman will gradually improve her advantages until she progresses on beyond man, and leaves him to stand back as an inferior being, who will look up to womanhood and motherhood as the crown and summit of all cultured, refined, and elevated humanity.

“But I did not mean to mount my hobby, for you already know well my ideas upon this subject, and I have something of more interest to us personally to talk about now. Those letters of Norman have been a rare intellectual feast to me. It was such a joy to see my best thoughts echoed by another, and all my pet theories and likings acknowledged, talked about, and accepted as dear and precious truths. Then he wrote me such charming descriptions of his walks about the city, visits to places of interest, and dishing them with sharp, piquant hits at the mythologies of the age and their advocates. And I so much enjoyed his talks and criticisms on the books he read, many of which he forwarded to me, and I read them with a double pleasure because of the penciled passages marked especially for me. Love is intensely selfish, dear Emma, but it is a beautiful and exquisite selfishness, that we all value and prize. You will feel and realize this when you find that ‘true Christian’ and lose your very identity in him. Norman, as you know, is nearly thirty; but added years have given him added knowledge and wisdom. He has dived deeper, gone further, and experienced so much more than I have that he is a perfect mine of treasures, from which I can daily and hourly draw a wealth of precious information. I have seen other girls walking out with their lovers, talking lots of

nonsense, flirting and laughing, and living mere common-place existences, and I hugged to myself the knowledge that I was having an intellectual feast with my love-drama that caused its pleasures to so much excel theirs that they seemed to stand only on the lowest round of the great ladder of the evolution of real love and harmonious sympathy, while I was mounting towards its very summit, and felt as if I could stand upon the apex and spring off into the great boundless ocean of love for all humanity, and of admiration and good will for all my kind. Never, dear Emma, will you realize how much the heart is capable of loving until you find your true ideal—one whom you can worship more, far more than any person ever could adore mythical saint, angel, or deity, because this living, loving, breathing, real *he* will be an actual identity, and all your own. You wondered if Norman and myself would be as mutually pleased with each other, when we met, as we had anticipated we should. Of course for a few hours we felt that natural reserve which people under such circumstances would be apt to experience, but I was not at all disappointed in his appearance. His grand, noble, and truly intellectual countenance was far superior to its pictured semblance. In a short time our embarrassment wore off and we felt entirely at ease, and hardly realized that we had so lately met for the first time. As days passed by we cemented the written love by bonds that can never be broken while life lasts. I had fancied it impossible that I could feel a deeper affection for him than I did while we were only correspondents; but love is a plant that is continually growing by what it feeds upon. The capacity of the heart for

this feeling is boundless and immeasurable. But doubtless I am wearying you with all this selfish description of my feelings, so I will close by hoping you will come and make good your promise, and thus give to me one more drop of joy to fill up my already overflowing cup of happiness. Truly and lovingly your friend,

ROSE DARWIN."

"There!" said Myra, as she concluded the reading of the letter; "isn't that a good sample of love and philosophy well mixed together, and aren't you glad I brought it?"

"Yes, Myra, I am pleased to hear such beautiful sentiments as our Rose has here written, and to know there is such pure affection and true nobility in the world. It is always a gratification to know of what intimately concerns the happiness of those near and dear to us, and therefore I am glad to have heard the letters read. I do hope Rose will be as happy as she anticipates. Life has bright and sunny hours, many, very many of them, still storms and clouds must come to all."

"Yes, that is inevitable; but I know Norman so well that I am certain he will make one of the very best of husbands. He is not one to promise lightly. I mind a few lines he wrote at the close of a letter which he sent Rose, while I was at his mother's. In speaking of what he hoped for their future, he said:

"I do not promise that our life,
Shall know no shade of thought on brow;
For human life and mortal strife
Would mock the falsehood of such a vow.
But when the clouds of pain and care
Shall teach us we are not divine,
My deepest sorrows thou shalt share,

And I will strive to lighten thine.
We love each other ; but perchance,
The murmurs of dissent may rise,
Fierce words may chase the tender glance,
And angry passions light our eyes;
But we will learn to check the frown,
To reason, rather than to blame.
The wisest have their faults to own,
And you and I, Rose, have the same.'"

"That is good philosophy, Myra, if they will only keep to it, and we will hope and trust they may."

CHAPTER X.

"Here we are, all together once more, Myra, Sue, Jennie, Rose, Minnie, and myself," said Edith, as she glanced around the little circle, which was sitting in the pleasant grassy garden of Rose Hill mansion on a warm sunny day in early March, more than a year after the commencement of our story. "It really seems like old times to have you all here, and to feel as if we were girls together again, though two are now matrons instead of maids."

"But we do not feel a day older for that, do we, Rose?" said Sue, looking up at her companion with a cheerful, happy smile. "I am sure I have been growing younger every day since I was married, and happier too; and Rose has heretofore seemed the very impersonation of bliss, though I must own she looks a bit sad and thoughtful to-day; perhaps like the generality of people she has a skeleton in her closet, but if so, I trust it is a 'weenty teenty' one, that will not shadow her life much. Now, you all know mine is the thought of my father, and all he has done, and the wondering as to where he is; whether he is ill or suffering, or, perhaps, what is worse still, doing something wrong or ignoble. I've never heard a word from him since the news you told me when I came home from my bridal trip. I heard from Sam and Bill though, last week, and was able to write to them for the first time since they left home. They had not even heard of the death

of mother and sisters till about a month ago, when they met one of our old neighbors, Mr. Carney, in Ohio, and he told them all the sad tale, which so shocked them that it was days before they had any heart to go to work again. They had heretofore worked so cheerfully, hoping to do so much for dear mother ; and to find that all were dead but me, and I married, and so they had only themselves left to do for, was a great damper on them ; but youth is naturally cheerful and hopeful, and knowing it was useless to mourn over the inevitable, they finally resumed their labors, resolving to make the best of what was still left them, and to grow up into good, industrious, intelligent men, and be a credit to the world and to themselves. They never got to Pike's Peak at all. They met so many tramps returning from there, and they all told such dismal tales of suffering and destitution, that they gave up the idea and settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, where they were lucky enough to get a clerkship in a merchant store near each other, and board at a private house with a Mrs. Dean and her two daughters, who are lively, cheerful, intelligent girls, and, strange to say, twins, and nearly their own age. They had been there several months when they last wrote, and began to feel almost as if they were members of the family. Mrs. Dean teaches a select school evenings, and my brothers attend steadily, and they are improving fast. Mathematics is Bill's specialty, while Sam is an enthusiast in botany. Now, if I could only hear from father."

"Suppose it was not good news, Sue, wouldn't you rather not know it then?" said Edith.

"Well, I don't know but I am better off in my

ignorance ; still if you *do* know aught of him, and I think from your looks you do, I hope you will tell me, let it be what it may."

"My news is not good, that is true, but it will be pleasanter for you to hear it just as it is, and while you are among friends, than to have a garbled account of it from idle gossips," said Edith ; "and hear it you will sooner or later, for he is, or was lately, in the same town where the Flat family moved to when they went from here last Fall, and the Flats are inveterate gossips and write to their relatives here all that happens ; so it's no use to try to keep anything back out of consideration for your feelings, Sue. We are all friends together, and so I'll begin at the beginning, and tell you the whole story."

Then Edith told how her mother and the deacon had been old acquaintances ; and she told of his early life, and how he had won the affections of Lena Brown, the only daughter of Widow Brown, and had left her to mourn over a wrecked life and blasted hopes, with his child to rear and educate, while he had moved away to this place, and had all these long years passed for a good, honorable, and pious deacon—a man among men—who carried his head as high as if no dark stains smirched his life-record. "My mother, too," continued Edith, "also moved here soon after the deacon did, but she always kept up a regular correspondence with Mrs. Brown, who was her dearest friend, and yesterday she received a letter from her, which I will now read to you as the sequel to my little story," and she opened the missive and read as follows :

“MY OLD, WELL-BELOVED, AND TRUE FRIEND, DORA: For nearly a year I have not written to you, for during that time my life has passed so quietly and peacefully that I have felt too happy to think of aught but present pleasures and the sweet, sunny now. Ten months ago I wrote to you of the marriage of my daughter Lena, and since that happy event I have been so tenderly cared for by her and her noble and estimable husband, and have been looked up to as the beloved and honored head of the family—as one whom they both seem to think nothing can be too good for—that I have neglected even you, my oldest and best friend. It seemed so pleasant to be respected and cared for—looked up to and deferred to, after all the years of shame and disgrace, humiliation and scorn I have borne, and the trials, sufferings, and struggles with bitter poverty and even utter want and destitution I have endured—that when the change came, I gave myself up to the exquisite luxury of all my numerous joys and blisses; and so the days sped by as on angels’ wings. But a strange event has occurred of late that has so vividly brought back all the old times, that I must tell you about it. Some two months ago word was given out here in the church that Rev. Henry Frost Conrad would hold a revival meeting for a few weeks. Well, he came, and people flocked in crowds from far and near to hear him. His sermons were pronounced to be not only perfectly sound and doctrinal, but also full of pure, noble, and lofty sentiments, of beautiful imagery, passionate appeal, and wonderful word-picturing. Nothing like them had ever been heard here before. They were filled with classical allusions, scientific, ethical,

poetical, esthetic, and all other subjects of information and interest. He seemed to draw from an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge, as well as of spiritual power and wisdom. They were reported for the local press, and even read better than they sounded from the speaker's lips. But somehow in private conversation he failed to carry out the favorable impression made by his public preaching. He was reserved and quiet, quoted Scripture, and talked only pious nothings when he could be drawn into conversation at all. Not a single sentence of the pulpit eloquence that all so admired could be drawn from him. He made great numbers of converts for the church, and was feasted and feted among the brethren and sisters, and won golden honors as well as greenbacks, as he was an adept at begging for the "cause of Christ" as he called it. There were many thrilling appeals in his sermons that would draw money from even a constitutional miser. All this time I had never been to church, though Lena and Lester had attended almost constantly. One evening I concluded to go and hear the man whose name was in all mouths. We got there early, and when preliminary services were over, a tall, slim, scraggy-looking man got up and commenced his discourse. The words were well chosen, and the subject-matter of the whole sermon was intensely interesting as well as highly instructive. He seemed to understand perfectly ancient as well as modern history, and the men and manners of all nations, and their literature, arts, and sciences, and embodied more substance in fewer and better chosen words than any man I ever heard, and wove a magic chain of sentiment, beauty, reasoning, and earnest appeal, that was perfectly

charming—or would have been had the man and his manner been more appropriate to what he uttered. Somehow it impressed me as not coming from the heart. It seemed like a lesson repeated by one who does not appreciate or understand it. There was a look about the man that was false and hollow, and now and then a tone of his voice would fall upon my ear that caused some chord of memory to thrill and vibrate, as it were, to a touch of the past. I felt some one gently pull my sleeve as I passed down the aisle of the church, after service, and looking around, saw the preacher with his finger upon his lip as a token of silence. He slipped a note into my hand, and hurriedly turned away. Wondering what it could mean I put it in my pocket, and as soon as I got home, went to my own room, turned the key in the door, opened the letter and read these lines : ‘MY DEAR, DARLING CARRIE : After all these cruel years we meet once more, and the old-time love for you, my darling, burns fiercely in my veins. My heart has been calling for you continually, daily and hourly, ever since our miserable parting. I own all my folly and wrong-doing towards you, dearest, but oh ! remember, my own, what a wild and reckless boy I then was. I loved you all the time to distraction, though I ran off in that fit of jealous pique and married Miss Simms whom I had met frequently at her uncle’s here. I never loved her, but only married her to spite you, and found out when too late that I had wrecked the happiness of all three of us. But, darling, I know your loving woman’s heart will forget and forgive all this when I tell you that though I had placed an insuperable bar between us I never once forgot you, and now that a merciful

God has once more given me my freedom, by taking to himself the woman I called wife, my heart again seeks its one single true mate. Since I've been here I've watched and hoped each night for your coming; and as I poured out the words of holy inspiration in the ears of the great crowd before me, my eyes sought in vain the one form that I longed for, the one beloved face I have so long worshiped. At last you came, and I saw you looking so young, so happy, so fair, and so like your old self, that the long twenty years since we parted seemed to fade away like mist before the morning sun, and I rejoiced that a bright future was opening before me. I had brought each night my best and choicest sermon, but waited till you should come ere I preached it; and at last when you came, and I watched you with a proud joy drink in the words of heavenly wisdom that fell from my lips, I said to myself, *She is mine!* I feel that in preaching I have found my vocation. I have cleared two hundred dollars since I've been here, and my property at home is worth \$10,000, so you see we can travel till we are tired, and I shall win for us glory, honor and money; and when we wish for home joys we can go to some sunny clime where we will build up a new home, and none can trouble us concerning our past. I might win younger and fairer maidens, but to me there is no one so dear as the Carrie of my boyhood. Write me one word, darling, and I will fly on the wings of love to your side and we will never part again. Your own devoted, HENRY CONWAY. P. S.—You may wonder why I am here under a different name. It was all a mistake of the gentleman who wrote for me a letter of introduction, and I was glad of it, as it gave me

a better opportunity to speak with effect, for had my hearers known me as the wild lad who once dwelt amongst them they might have been prejudiced against me. H. F. C.'

"To tell you, my dear Dora, that I was astonished and indignant would be but the merest shadow of what I really felt. The mean, contemptible, selfish wretch! Did he imagine that after all these years of desertion, while he was rolling in wealth, and I and my babe drinking to the dregs the cup of poverty, I could, at a few pleading words, forgive and forget? Could he believe that idolatrous love, such as I once felt for him, could ever be kindled after it had been so completely killed out by his cruel, heartless, selfish conduct? Did I not know too well that he married Miss Simms instead of me, because she owned six thousand dollars and I had not a cent? I know that he did once love me, but it was a wild and careless love like his reckless nature, though it was all he was capable of, and doubtless he thinks he loves me yet, and maybe does as much as such as he can love. And just see how complacently he talks—just as if he had but to open his arms and I would fall into them at once. His dried-up, wizened old frame is but an outward picture of the inward man. He is contemptible in every sense of the word. I should feel it, even had I not known all his manners to his family during the many years he has "honored" your town with his presence. Had he dreamed that you and I corresponded he would never have come back here or sought me out. I am certain of that. His religion is as shallow as his love. His sermons are an intellectual feast, but I know him too well to believe they are his true senti-

ments. He could not feel them, for his soul is too shallow for a deep thought to find permanent lodgment therein. But enough of him. I shall write him a scathing letter that will take a little of the self-complacency out of him, or I am no judge.

"Yours as ever, CARRIE LENA BROWN.

"P. S. 'Tis two days since I penned the above, and as I have neglected to mail it, I open the letter too add the denouement. You remember that wild and wilful sprite, Hetty Cooper, that I wrote you about last summer. She is now chambermaid at the hotel here. She had charge of Mr. Conway's room, and he had made quite a pet of her, giving her little presents, and, preacher-like, a kiss now and then to keep in her good graces, so that she would run errands and do little extra jobs for him. Well, the night after he gave me the letter he offended her in some way, and the next morning while he was at church preaching his Sunday sermon, she opened his trunk, which for a miracle he had forgotten to lock, and got to rummaging among his papers, and at the very bottom of the trunk she found a large package carefully tied up, which on opening proved to be sermons, all filed and numbered, and each one signed with the name of Luther S——, who, you remember was a talented young student of the University at B——, and was killed on the cars a few months after he graduated. He was just starting to take charge of a congregation in West Virginia, and consequently had all the sermons he had ever written (and he was an enthusiastic writer) along with him. As it happened, Hetty was his cousin, and knew all about the circumstances, and that the hand-bag of sermons was never found. She surmised at once that

Mr. Conway had somehow obtained possession of them and was memorizing and preaching them as his own productions. She was not only offended at the deacon, but desirous also of having the sermons credited to her cousin, so she went at once to Rev. Mr. Booth and told him of her discovery ; and after evening service Mr. Booth invited Conway to his house, telling him he had some important business with him. When he came he told him of Hetty's discovery, and added that for some time he had suspected something wrong about him, because of the great difference between his common conversation and public speaking. 'And,' continued he, 'I had written to two of your pretended endorsers, and last night's mail brought me word that they had neither of them ever given a man answering to your description a letter of introduction to any church in the country, and I am, therefore, compelled to think you guilty of forgery and the basest deception. I shall be compelled to expose the whole transaction at our next meeting, and you ought, besides, to be handed over to the civil law which you have so flagrantly violated, but for the honor of the church I give you twenty-four hours in which to leave the county, and if I hear of you continuing your nefarious practices in any other place, I shall surely deliver you up to the tender mercies of the law.' Mr. Booth said the wretch just wilted down and left without a word, and in two hours he had his arrangements all made and quitted the town for parts unknown."

"This is all that she wrote concerning your father, Sue, but it is enough to show you that he is well and living in clover. The church there is a wealthy one, and the sermons he stole were so fine that he had no

difficulty in making large collections. His new converts had made up several nice amounts from time to time, as many of them had been wild, reckless, and drinking men, and they felt truly grateful to him for being the agent by which they were turned from their bad ways into paths of peace and happiness. In speaking of the good that was done through Mr. Conway's ministrations at that place, Miss Brown says: 'I feel that a great work has been done here, and hope that the reforms will be permanent. That the Church does much good I am forced to own, but I question whether it does not do far more of evil by fostering falsehood, deception, and hypocrisy—by teaching known error in the idea that good will result from it. I am no Christian, as you are aware, Dora, for I lost all my religion—all my faith in a kind father's love and care, in his heavenly mercy and tender protection—during my years of trial and suffering, when love, trust, and even common charity were denied me, and I was left to battle alone with sickness, shame, poverty, and sorrow! My aged mother died of the calumny and disgrace which covered a name that for countless generations had been pure, spotless, and unstained. Oh, Dora! I feel almost wild even now, when I think of the passionate prayers I put up to what I imagined to be a great, good, and just being. Prayers for the precious life of my beloved mother; prayers for the happiness of my faithless lover; prayers for the death of my unborn babe; prayers for my own death after its birth; prayers uttered in intense agony at the thought that the helpless, innocent child was doomed because of its illegitimacy, to suffer the extreme torments of an endless hell through-

out all the ages yet to come ; to suffer in anguish inconceivable, simply because of my own sin, and the sin of its heartless father. And should she live to become a mother, all her children and children's children, 'even to the tenth generation,' must endure, for billions and billions of quintillions of eons of ages, torments which no fear can picture or describe. 'The bastard shall not enter the kingdom of heaven,' rang into my ears for months and years. I said to myself, There are only sheep and goats, only heaven and hell, only two alternatives, and my poor little child has not a straw of hope to cling to. Oh! I shudder to think of all this, even now that it has become so entirely a thing of the past. Is it any wonder that my faith in a kind, overruling providence was at last shaken? That I gradually lost my hold upon Christianity and the Bible, and learned to believe in nothing outside of nature and its material agencies? But I must stop, or my P. S. will be longer than my letter. The coming of Mr. Conway to this place, and again acting out his base, hypocritical, lying nature, has so stirred up and awakened thoughts of the past, that I can hardly help pouring them all into your sympathizing bosom, my old and dear friend. I know you rejoice with me that the shadow has at last been lifted. My daughter has grown up to be a good and lovely woman, honest and truthful notwithstanding the elements of baseness she must have inherited from her father. I see her happy, loved, and respected, and find with her and her noble, true-hearted husband, peace, happiness, and contentment, so that my life now flows on in a calm, peaceful current. As of old, I am your loving friend,

CARRIE LENA BROWN."

As Edith concluded the letter, Sue heaved a sad sigh, and was for a moment silent. Then suddenly sitting up firm and erect she said: "I am grieved and sorry that it is possible for human nature to be so degraded and vile, so mean and contemptible, and that I must call such a man by the holy and revered name of father, but what is, cannot be helped, and all I can do is to wait and hope. Perhaps something may some day awaken his better nature, if he has any, and he may be able to retrieve some of his past."

"Yes," said Edith, "we will hope for the best. And now, to change the topic of conversation, we will coax Rose to tell us why she seems to be resting under a cloud. We know it is not because of any disgrace or unhappiness in her own pleasant, cozy, little home, or in that of her kind, useful, and respected parents, so we will hope she may be induced to unburden her heart, and by sharing divide her sorrows. If we only write down our troubles in a private diary it relieves them; and to tell them to a friend always lightens the burthen, so to tell them to a whole circle of friends will, maybe, scatter them to the winds."

Rose smiled, and said she was ready to confess, and that maybe her story might serve to "point a moral or adorn a tale," though the actors therein were strangers personally to them all. "You remember, girls, how disappointed I was that my Tennessee friend, Miss Emma B——, could not come to my wedding; and how surprised I was that she only sent a short note, saying it was impossible for her to fulfill her promise, asked me to excuse her, etc. The note was so cool I was really hurt about it, as we

had always been such warm friends. Well, last night I received a long letter from her, and as we are all friends together, I will read it for you."

As Rose spoke she unfolded a large, closely-written sheet and read as follows :

"MY DEAR, DARLING, TRUE FRIEND : I have apparently acted shabbily towards you in not fulfilling my agreement to be at your wedding according to promise, but I know your kind heart will pardon me when you hear my sad story. I must tell my troubles to some one, or I shall die. I will make a clean breast of it to you, and you shall then advise me what to do. When we made our compact you little thought I was already engaged to be married, or that when I was talking to you of finding a good pious man to love, that I had already made my selection. It was really a fact, dear Rose, but I did not dare let you suspect it, for he had expressly enjoined it upon me that I should not let any one know that he was anything more than a commonplace acquaintance of mine. We rarely met at that time save at parties, public gatherings, or at church, so it was easy to keep our secret. But I am ahead of my story, and will go back and tell you who this *he* was. You remember the young Methodist preacher who was on this circuit when you left for Virginia ? Well, he had been my lover, and we were engaged before you moved from here; but no one knew it save our two selves. He often met me when I would be walking out, and sometimes waited on me home from a party or evening meeting, just as he did lots of the other young ladies, who were all proud of the attention of the smart young preacher. Whenever he was alone with me he was very loving

and affectionate, and told me I was the only girl he ever saw whom he felt as if he could really love and care for. But in the presence of others he was cold, indifferent, and generally devoted to some one else; to blind people, *he* said, and I was only too ready to believe him. You remember the night we all took a boat-ride in the new boat, and Lulu fell out and came near drowning? Well, he went home with me that night, and, as it was late when we got there, all were in bed, and we sat on the porch till nearly daybreak; and then it was that he first told me he loved me; but added that his uncle was determined he should marry a protegee of his own, and would disinherit him unless he seemed to fall in with his desires; but that he was on his death-bed, and that as soon as he died he would then be his own master and heir to large property, and I should be made a real lady and be able to dress in silks and wear diamonds, also, if I wished. Soon after you left here, he commenced coming to see me once or twice a week, at eleven o'clock at night, when all the house, save myself, would be wrapped in slumber. My bed-room door opens on a back porch, and I would slip quietly out, and we would spend several hours in the sweet dalliance that lovers always enjoy so well. I grew to love him with that passionate worship that only a young, lonely, love-stricken girl can experience, who has never before let her heart go out towards one of the opposite sex. I thought him the perfect embodiment of all manly perfections, and pure, holy, and sinless as the angels above. When he preached, I listened with all my heart in my eyes. I knew, in my inmost mind, that no other man had ever spoken such eloquent, earnest, and all-

convincing words. I am certain that he could not have advanced any dogma, however absurd, that I should not have at once accepted as God's own truths; that he was divinely inspired, I never once doubted; or that he had higher and holier truths revealed to him from the pure fountain of all truths than any other man had ever received. Handsome as Apollo's own self, agreeable, winning, and really talented besides, he had everything in his favor. I never, during our whole acquaintance, missed hearing a single one of his sermons; and, as I learned to love him more and more each day, so did each succeeding sermon seem more and more as if uttered especially for me, they embodied so many of the ideas, sentiments, and very expressions of our dear, sweet talks that I felt that I was in his mind as he wrote, and as he preached them; and this delicate, subtle flattery was very precious to me, and I fed upon it till I was perfectly intoxicated with love and bliss unutterable.

"I no longer wonder, in view of my dear-bought experience, that preachers have so many lovers and admirers among women. They have the very best chance in the world to work upon our feelings and ingratiate themselves into our affections, both by preaching in public and counseling in private. They are always objects of veneration, reverence, and respect to all around them, for are they not mouth-pieces of the Almighty himself? a sort of railway between heaven and earth, bringing, to a sin-cursed world, messages of love, mercy, and hope?

"Well, to make a long story short, he pleaded, coaxed, and persuaded. I loved, worshiped, adored, and fell. He promised marriage as soon as he was

free to do as he wished, and called our love a pure, sacred, and holy thing; and told me that, as he was a preacher, he could legally marry himself, and actually went through a sort of ceremony to that effect, and my conscience was, therefore, at rest, though I still feared and dreaded the world should discover our intimacy and think evil of us. I tried not to hope his uncle's days might be shortened, yet I now know that I did hope and long for him to die; and, if wishes are prayers, I was guilty of praying for his death, so that our marriage might be legally acknowledged and we might be together always and forever, and I might claim my idol, with a proud exultation, before God and man, as *my own*.

"At last he was called to another circuit, and I was in despair at the idea of separation and at the thought of being left in my situation to battle with loneliness and the dread of what might happen should my secret be discovered prematurely, for I was to become a mother in a few months. He said he would come for me in two weeks, as his uncle could not live many days longer; so I resigned myself to the fiat of the inevitable, and saw him ride off, proudly watching him as he bowed his farewells at each house he passed, till a bend in the road hid him from my view.

"One, two, three weeks passed, and no letter from him. I was almost crazy with anxiety and suspense, fearing he was ill, or, perhaps, dead. At last a letter came. The hand was disguised, but I knew too well the dear and loved characters to be deceived. I hurried to my room, locked the door, and tore it open. How I ever read it I cannot tell, but I did read every word before I stopped, even to shed

a tear. He began by telling me at once that all was over between us; that our marriage was only a farce, and I had been a goose to think it could be anything else; that his uncle was dead, and he had married the sweetheart of his boyhood, whom he had always loved and intended to marry as soon as he got his inheritance; that she was a lady, and beautiful as an angel; a poetess, and worth fifty thousand dollars in her own right. He said he had never really loved me, but that he was pleased with my pretty face and girlish innocence, and my society had served to while away a dull year; and, to cover any disappointment, he sent me five hundred dollars. He said that money would heal all wounds, and I could go to some obscure place, get rid of my child, and come back none the worse for our little intrigue. He even sent me some medicine, with directions how to use it, that it might produce an abortion. It was the coldest, cruelest, and most heartless letter I ever read; and, passionately as I had loved him, I felt every spark of affection die out before I reached the end of the sheet. It was simply signed 'A.,' which was the middle letter of his initials; and inclosed was a blue ribbon that he had once playfully taken from my neck and tied in his button hole. There was nothing to betray the writer in it at all, should a stranger see it; but, even had there been, he need not have feared I should ever make use of it. I felt no desire for revenge—no jealousy of her who had become his wife. I did not care even to send him one word in return. I only felt that he was a mean, contemptible hypocrite, a villainous scoundrel, and a heartless wretch. I had loved an ideal. I despised the real. I remembered, even at that moment of

calm despair, how I had often sang for him the lines of Moore:

“ ‘I know not, I ask not, if guilt’s in thy heart,
I know that I love thee whatever thou art’ ”

“ But now I knew the lines were not the utterance of a true and noble soul—of one that could only *love* the pure, the true, and the really beautiful. ‘Whatever thou art!’ Could I ever love such a detestable hypocrite and would-be murderer as this vile man had proved to be? No! a thousand times no! I might pity him, I might even aid and assist him in his need, or care for him in sickness, but love, respect, or affection I could never more feel for him.

“ I pass over the trial of confessing my condition to my friends, and of my expulsion from the church; suffice it to say I refused to reveal to any one the name of my false lover, whose identity has never even been suspected, so careful had he been to cover all his tracks as he went along. The money he sent I felt I had a right to, and at once put four hundred and fifty dollars of it on interest, retaining the other fifty to pay my expenses through child-birth. My babe is a little girl, and is three weeks old to-day. I want to name her Rose, but fear you would feel it a disgrace to have the poor little ‘come-by-chance’ called after you, so I only call her ‘baby’ as yet. Perhaps you wonder why I did not leave home, as *he* advised me to, even if I decided to let my child live. Well, I have, as you know, always believed in being just what I am. I never deceived or tried to seem aught but what I was, and, if I did wrong, I faced it boldly. I think those that have nothing hidden are, by far, the happiest people, for they are never afraid of being found out or talked about.

True, I did consent to and aid in keeping our love secret, but not because I cared or wished to hide it. I did it, as I have said before, for *his* sake and at his *command*. But live a whole life of deception I never will. I did not betray my lover's name, because it could do no possible good. He is married, and will probably deceive no more innocent girls; and for his wife's sake, if for nothing else, I will be silent.

Please burn this when read, or, at least, let no one see it who will be apt to make mischief from it. I send you my best wishes, and rejoice in your happiness.

Yours as ever (if you will),

"TENNESSEE."

"Poor girl," said Edith; "she is truly to be pitied; yet I should rather be in her place than in that of his wife. To be tied, *for life*, to such a man would be the worst kind of martyrdom."

"I wouldn't stay tied," said Myra. "If I found out that my husband (granting I had one) was such a heartless wretch as that no power on earth could compel me to endure his constant companionship or force me to become the mother of his children."

"Suppose you could not get a divorce from him, what would you do then?" said Jennie. "Would you live alone all your life and be a mere nobody?"

"No, I would not be a nobody, for I'd study my profession and turn out one of the best doctors in all the country. I am studying it now all I can; but in a case like that, it should be the one object of my life, and I would bend every energy of mind and body to it. Sometimes I think it would be well for our sex if there was less marrying done; less weight given to love and domestic ties, and girls

would strive to become something more than wives and mothers. Not but that these are grand and noble things in themselves, but as long as we women live so much in our affections alone, just so long will we find among us precisely such victims as your Tennessee friend. We must have higher aims than merely trying to win romantic lovers, who will pet and coddle us, and make of us toys and household drudges, just as their nature and circumstances incline them."

"No danger that any one will ever make a toy or a drudge of you, Myra," said Edith, laughing. "You are too independent, and have too much personality to ever be merged into any identity save your own."

"Well, we've all had sober, serious, and philosophical talk enough for one sitting," said Minnie, "and I guess I'll make a diversion by reading for you a short composition written by sister Rose while we were in Tennessee. I found it yesterday in an old box of letters, and, as none of you have ever seen it, I know it will amuse you. It was published in the paper there at the time, but will be new to all 'you uns;' and, as it is near garden-making time, will be appropriate to the season. You see, the Tennessee people are great believers in signs, moon theories, etc., and many of them consult the almanac when they make gardens, make soap, cut timber, or even haul out manure. But here goes," and Minnie read as follows:

"Having, all my life, been an unbeliever in moon theories and 'old women's' whims, as I, in my ignorance, deemed them, in regard to setting out onions, planting potatoes, melons, cucumbers, etc., and

sowing vegetable and flower seeds according to the almanac signs, and in the light and dark of the moon, I at last resolved for once to go precisely according to these signs and theories, and thus practically prove them to be of no account.

“So, having engaged the services of a competent astronomer, who was an astrologer and medical almanac maker—one of that kind who always “truthfully” predict the sort of weather the coming year will give us—to calculate to an instant the precise time when such and such plants should be set out, and vegetables put in the ground, and seeds sown to produce the most desirable results, I had my assistants stationed at different parts of the garden, where the soil had been previously prepared to receive each sort of seed. The astronomer was placed in the centre, watch in hand, and, at the exact point of time desired, the signal was given, and each one sowed, planted, or set out his allotted part. I am obliged to confess myself actually astounded at the results which followed. They have carried my convictions *en masse* clear over to the other side of the question. Why, in some instances, the seeds hardly touched the earth ere they began to germinate and sprout; and some sorts, which are quicker in coming up than others, actually began to swell before they reached the ground; and we had to cover them in a ‘jiffy,’ lest they should grow in mid-air.

“During the night succeeding this famous garden-making we were hardly able to get any sleep at all on account of the noise, hubbub, and commotion caused by the rapid shooting up of the plants, which came out of the ground with such a sudden plunge that they sent small rocks and clods of earth flying

hither and thither, keeping up a continuous and tumultuous clatter. By daylight everything was up, and as far advanced in growth as is generally the case in six weeks after planting. We dug a mess of early rose potatoes for breakfast, for dinner had cucumbers, radishes, and May peas, while the supper table was garnished with 'string beans,' and 'roasted ears.' Such vegetables to bear I never saw! One hill of potatoes furnished us with a sufficiency of that staple of Paddy's favorite food to last us for a month. The stalks of corn grew thirty feet high, and had ears two feet in length all the way along from top to bottom. Parsnips and carrots penetrated so deep in the earth that they were cooked all ready for the table by its central fires. And the squashes, of which we planted the Hubbard variety, grew to enormous proportions; the rinds were eighteen inches thick, and, after using the edible part, we made of them chicken coops and pig-pens, cutting out holes to let in air and light. One mammoth specimen outstripped all the rest, and acquired such extraordinary dimensions that we had serious thoughts of converting it into a dwelling house or public lecture hall. To tell you the tenth part of all the surprising results of 'planting in the signs,' would tax your time and patience, so I will close by relating a part of the history of one bean, which almost rivals that famous one of 'Jack, the Giant-Killer.'

"Now, this bean we happened to plant in a peculiarly rich spot, and more nearly upon the precise instant in which all the signs were at the best possible juncture. The very first day the bean reached to the top of a pole sixty feet long (for we pre

pared for every emergency we could foresee, and had, consequently, got the longest pole we could), and then, instead of the top falling down and feeling around for something to cling to, as this species of plants usually do, it kept straight on up, winding round and round upon itself, making a pole, as it were, of its entwined tendrils. On, on, up, up it went, straight as a die, day after day, till the top was lost in the clouds. The whole vine, from top to bottom, was covered with beans, each pod three and a half yards long, and looking like a great string of green snakes. When this vine was about two weeks old we went early one morning to look at the garden, and away up, almost beyond the reach of vision, we saw something bright and shining apparently sitting among the leaves of the vine. Of course, we were on the 'qui vive' to know what it could be, supposing it some new production of the wonderful vine. In about half an hour it began to move, as if waking up out of a sound sleep, and then all at once, by a series of short flights and agile leaps, it came down to the bottom and stood upon the ground beside us. Language is entirely inadequate to portray the exquisite beauty of this lovely being who thus suddenly made its advent among us. It bore the appearance of a boy of some ten or twelve years of age; the eyes were of a deep blue, and wonderfully soft, sweet, and tender; the hair, of a bright golden hue, fell in graceful curls about his neck and shoulders; the face was perfect in regularity of features, and more beautiful than 'poet ever dreamed of or artist ever painted,' and was lit up with the brightest, rarest intellectuality, and love, gentleness, and amiability beamed from every linea-

ment. The whole body was covered with a coat of soft, silken, bright, waving hair, more beautiful than any garment ever devised by human skill or ingenuity. The hands and face alone were naked, and the skin of these was of a clear, transparent whiteness, tinged with the loveliest rose-hue color of health; and over and around this lovely creature waved, glimmered and shimmered an arora of clear, soft, radiant lightness from which the most delicious perfume was wafted on every side. As we stood gazing in bewilderment of amazement and admiration, it meanwhile looking with curiosity upon us and its new surroundings, all at once there broke upon the air the most ravishing and enchanting music we had ever heard. This beautiful inhabitant of some fairy realm was evidently addressing us in its own native language; but finding that it failed to make itself understood, it again became silent; then we questioned it by signs as to whether it had come from the moon, pointing to that luminary, which was yet above the horizon. Seeming to comprehend the query, it made a motion of dissent and directed our attention to a spot a little to the right of the place where the moon was, intimating, as near as we could understand, that it had come from a planet situated in that direction. While we were yet gazing upon the place pointed out, our strange companion assumed a listening attitude, uttered a loud clear note of melody, sprang up the vine, and with a few flying leaps went almost beyond our sight, while far above it we could see a faint glimpse of light, resembling that which surrounded our late visitant, and we heard an almost inaudible note of an exquisite musical refrain, which we supposed to

be a call from a friend of this lovely youthful wanderer, who was seeking to lure it back to its native home 'beyond the skies,' where humanity has evidently progressed very much farther on towards perfection than it has upon our own younger planet.

"Patiently awaiting further developments, I remain a true, sincere, and bona fide believer in all the signs in all the almanacs that have ever been or ever will be printed.

ROSE DARWIN.

"*Factoryville*, April, 187-."

"That piece makes me think of one I wrote for our Virginia paper here," said Edith, "only mine was just contrary to it. I'll run in and get it, as it will be a good supplement to it."

So Edith went into the house, and soon returned with a scrap-book, in which were neatly pasted all the articles she had ever written for the press, as well as the notices, comments, editorial puffs, etc., which she had received. For you must know our Edith was an authoress as well as a music teacher. Opening the book, and turning a few leaves, she said, "Here it is," and read as follows:

"SIGNS AND MOON THEORIES.—A PERSONAL

"EXPERIENCE.

" 'Oh, merry spring hath pleasant hours,
And dreamily they glide,
As if they floated like the leaves,
Upon a silver tide.'

As the warm, sunny, spring days come now and then, dropping, as it were, right out of Paradise, everybody is on the *qui vive* about garden-making, running and sending hither and thither for all varieties of seeds, searching almanacs and consulting

wise old grandmothers as to the right sign or best phase of the moon in which to plant them.

"Now, being rather fond of experimenting, and 'going back on' old foggy notions, I got a brilliant idea in my head, one spring, that I would go precisely contrary to all these old, 'true,' and well-known signs, and see what would be the consequences. Well, the results were so extraordinarily surprising that I will relate a few of them for the benefit of future skeptics, doubters, and would-be wiseacres.

"The cabbage and lettuce, not being perceptibly affected by signs, did very well, but the peas would insist on running along the ground instead of climbing up my nice rows of brush, and every pod persistently worked its way down into the earth and took root, so that we hadn't a single pea to eat all that season.

"The onions all ran up to stalks, some higher than the tree tops, and the roots ran equally as deep in the ground. Hoping to find tubers or bulbs proportionate, we dug one up with infinite labor and toil, but not an onion rewarded our search, so that we had none of this fragrant but healthy esculent wherewith to grace our board. The cucumber vines bore none but male flowers, and the vines themselves ran so luxuriantly that it took half an hour every morning to trim them up sufficiently to keep them within their own allotted space. We tried to pull them up after finding them so barren; but it was no use, the roots grew in proportion to the vines, and were, consequently, inextricable; but the surplus tops, which were daily cut, made us twenty loads of good manure; so that crop paid.

"The bean patch became such a thicket of barren, tangled, worthless vines that we made it a daily task to call into service all the lamps, candles, and lanterns, and collect together every unoccupied person on the premises to explore them for lost chickens, dogs, cats, and even children. Our little toddler of two years old was lost for twenty-four hours, and, when found, was so wound about with vines that it took half a day to cut her loose; her mouth was so bound up that she couldn't even cry aloud, and it was a week before she got well of the deep gashes cut into her flesh by the intertwining tendrils.

"We called in a lot of neighbors one day and cut the whole patch down, but we found that a dozen new ones came up in the place of every one that we cut down; so we never tried that experiment over again, but waited for the frosts of winter to exterminate it; but it persisted in living on until one cold night when the mercury went forty degrees below zero, and that finished it; so we had a regular jubilee over its demise.

"Our potatoes not being in the sign which makes things grow *down*, but in that which tends to produce tops, grew into large shrubs, which bore on their branches huge green colored tubers, the sun having the effect of thus changing the natural hue, and, as a consequence, converting them into rank poison. Tomatoes, on the contrary, grew under ground and were of a dull, brown color, and had a horrid ugly flavor and an earthy taste, so that even the pigs refused to eat them.

"Our cabbage-plants, which grew beautifully in the seed-bed, being transplanted precisely in the wrong time of the moon, all ran up to stalks, some of them

growing forty feet in height, and what few leaves grew upon them all turned downwards for fear of making heads.

"The carrots, parsnips, beets, radishes, and salsify had fine sprangley roots like grass, while the tops thrived luxuriantly, and everything else acted in a like contrary manner.

"I remember we set out a peach-tree, in the old of the moon, just for an experiment. Well, we thought nothing more about it till one day in the following September, when we were all sitting on the piazza taking a quiet 'nooning,' we were suddenly startled by hearing an unusual, yet musical, sound in that part of the garden. We hurried to the spot, and were astonished at a most singular metamorphosis; every branch and limb of that peach-tree had been converted into roots and rootlets, and the extreme end of each one of these had its mouth wide open, and from every mouth darted golden flames, and from these flames issued low, sweet, harmonious strains of the most entrancing and intoxicating music. The ground beneath the tree was agitated like a boiling cauldron of sea-green silk, and every spear of grass was tipped with rosy flames which emitted the sweetest and most exquisite fragrance. Not daring to trust ourselves upon the soft, heaving ground beneath the tree, we threw a rope over the top of the tree and drew it from the soil; and, to our surprise, we found the whilom roots had all become branches full of leaves of every shape, color, and hue, and loaded down with the loveliest and most beautiful fruit imagination could conceive of. They were larger than our largest apples, perfectly round, and transparent as the purest crystal, and vicing with the

rainbow in hue. In taste, they seemed to be a mixture of the best part of the pear, plum, pineapple, and strawberry. The fragrance was sweeter than all the perfumes of Araby condensed and commingled into one. We had hardly eaten, each of us, one of these delicious peaches, when we were startled by a loud report, and all at once the tree seemed to be converted into thin air, and disappeared, root, leaf, branch, and body, from our view. I think it must have been 'forbidden fruit,' so quickly was it taken from us; but our 'eyes were opened' to the folly of going any more in opposition to the 'signs and moon theories,' and forever henceforward we shall feel obliged to 'carry the stone in one end of the sack,' as our fathers did before us, and believe in all those unfailing 'truthful' signs which we have so conclusively proved by the rule of contraries."

The reading of these humorous burlesques started the little group off on a lively discussion as to the reality of moon theories, signs, etc.; and, strange to say, there was not a believer amongst them. Edith said her mother used to be a great hand to plant in the signs, and always consulted the almanac, even when planting flower-seeds. She said if one wanted double flowers, they must plant when the sign was in *the twins*, and for vines to *run up*, it must be in *the head*, etc.

Myra said she meant to try the plan of doing everything in exact opposition to all signs. She thought it such a good argument against the old-time belief.

"You see girls," said she, "there are so many people, even in this enlightened age, who take a

thing for granted when other folks believe it, that they seldom try to examine for themselves whether it is true or not. Like young robins, they open their knowledge-boxes, or rather gudgeon-boxes, and swallow whatever is put therein, myth, fable, fiction, fact, or any other sort of mental pabulum, be it nutritious food, dry sawdust, or rank poison; and, to sort of nullify all this, it is necessary that some one should *act*, as well as talk; and this is why I try in all ways to live right out my creed, faith, and belief in *actual works*."

A short pause occurred in the conversation, which was broken by Jennie, who said she believed she would now do her part towards the general entertainment by reading a letter which she had that day written to a friend to whom she had lent Ingersoll's "Lecture on Ghosts." "When the paper was returned to me," said she, "these words were written on its margin :"

"Ingersoll confesses he *knows nothing* of what disposition is made of man after death; and that it is no more wonderful that man should live again than that he now lives; and if he knows *precisely nothing*, why is he, and all others like him, eternally carping about a thing which he himself admits he knows nothing about? M."

"To this I wrote the following reply :

"FRIEND M.: Though I am an Infidel of only a few month's standing, yet I had been studying one side so much that I had it all pretty well digested, so my mind was all ready for the quick digestion of the opposite side. Just as soon as I saw there was real argument and absolute fact on the side of Infidelity, I at once began to read and investi-

gate, and, consequently, I have grown faster than many do who care little about such subjects, and therefore study neither side particularly. I don't wonder you were surprised at finding my father's daughter endorsing such broad views as those of Ingersoll. But endorse them I do, and I will defend them if I can. Now, as to his confession that he knows nothing about the future, that is the one best reason why we should talk, study, and think about the subject. That is the only way we can learn.

"I admire and accept nearly every statement Ingersoll has made in his lectures, though I do differ a little with him as regards the point that it is not more wonderful that a man should live again, than it is that he now lives. I think it is vastly more wonderful. All events that are common and usual we accept as every-day occurrences. 'Man now lives,' and he has lived as far back as we can trace his descent. We find no nation so old that we cannot go back beyond it to a civilization still older. Millions and millions of years may have smiled upon human beings who trod the earth in ages gone by, so that men 'have lived' is not to be wondered at. But we do not know of a single individual identity, of any organism, animal, vegetable, or insect, bird, fish, or flower that has ever lived after it was entirely dead. It is true that people have, in all ages, pretended to restore the dead to life; but cut a man in halves, remove his heart or any vital portion of his body, and no power in all the universe can restore life to that individual. It has never been done, and all science shows how utterly impossible it would be to do it, and this is why we refuse to believe it can be done. This is why we demand of Spiritualists

more and better proof that they can materialize individuals, fruit, flowers, gems, or jewels than they have yet given us. The living organisms that are about us when they die may leave behind them the germs and seeds of future earthly existences similar to themselves, but the individual identity of each one is *forever gone* when death cuts the silver cord, and that which was before an organized existence becomes mere disorganized matter ready to develop into new forms and arrangements according to circumstances and environments. We know nothing of the future, it is true, and what little evidence we think we have is negative evidence, but until the affirmative is proven that stands good, and as yet this has never been done. If there be a life to come, why should we worry about it? To believe or disbelieve in it cannot alter the result. The present is ours to make the most and best of that we can. If we live again, we shall be as happy as we deserve to be, and who wants more than he merits or earns? Ingersoll has carefully weighed the evidence, known facts as well as Scriptural "evidence," and he confesses his ignorance like a man. But you believers take the evidence of dead ghosts, written in a big book, and the *opinions* of your fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, and say "man lives again;" but have you real knowledge, or is it only guesswork and say so? Is it a sign of ignorance to inquire and doubt? Is not all progress born of skepticism, doubt, and unbelief? Is it knowledge to blandly affirm and dogmatically assert? Is not real wisdom modest and retiring? Does the scholar and scientist say, "Believe my facts or be damned?" No; he quietly goes to work and *proves* the world

to be round, the day and night to be caused by its diurnal revolution ; he *proves* that man has existed for millions of years upon the face of the earth, and that billions of eons of ages rolled away after the world was a globe, before any living organism could exist upon it.

“ The bold astronomer, Galileo, was persecuted and forced to recant, but the world still rolled on, and the spoken fact remained for future astronomers to build upon. Geologists were hooted at, sneered at, and put down, but the *facts* lived, and old theology set her wits at work, molded over the dogmas, and said the good book never denied what she once swore it asserted. She stretched the six days of creation into six long periods of time, and all went along smoothly again. Thus, step by step, the scientist goes on proving his facts, and for each one proved theology has to alter and amend her old plan to make it coincide with actual known facts. The true child of nature always reasons and experiments. The theologian rests his proofs upon testimony. The Indians in Omaha when told by a missionary some years since that their corn would not amount to anything if they planted it upon the sabbath, did not stand to argue the point or refer to the dead ghosts of their ancestors for testimony to the contrary, but quietly planted, hoed, and worked a certain field of the cereal wholly on the sabbath, and as they spent one whole day in seven on that special field, it was larger and finer than any other corn they had, thus demonstrating not only that the missionary was wrong, but that it was labor, skill, and care that produced good crops, and not any supernatural agency. And now in conclusion, please

let me say that till you can find something more debatable against Mr. Ingersoll than this simple confession of ignorance about the unknowable, I hope you will not carp or cavil at him any more. If all men were as good, kind, generous, and happy as Ingersoll is, the world would be far better off."

"Well, Jenny," said Rose, "I think you have evolved immensely considering how short a time has passed since you took the first step. And what does your father say to it?"

"Why, father has been North, you know, at his sister's nearly ever since I began to grow in truth, and I have thus far said nothing to him on the subject. But I am thinking of writing to him to-morrow and telling him all about it, for I want him to get over the first shock of the discovery before I see him. I can tell him better on paper, for I shall not be so embarrassed by his sad, stern glance. He is a good, kind father, but you know he is strict and stern. Aunt Mary, who is staying with me, knows all about the new departure I have taken, and what is better still, has kept even pace with me. She is mother's only sister and is naturally liberal, and she says mother was, too, but was so quiet about it that father never discovered it. So you see I inherit Liberal tendencies and only needed a spark to set me off. But it is nearly dark and I must go home."

"Yes, and I too," said Myra, and the little group was soon scattered, never all to meet again.

CHAPTER XL

"What art thou death, that we should fear?
The shadow of a shade!
What's in thy name, to meet the ear,
Of which to be afraid?"

"Thou art not care, thou art not pain.
But thou art rest and peace;
'Tis thou canst make our sorrows vain
And bid our torments cease."

LIFE is not all sunshine, for though joy and happiness are the birthright of every one that lives, yet sorrow, too, must come with its train of mourning and its saddened weepers. Death! What gentle, tender, loving heart ever hears the word unmoved? Life is such a dear and precious boon that we cling to it with tireless tenacity. The lame, the sick, and the blind, the idiot and the lunatic—all, as a general thing, prize and value life, and are loth to part with it. A very few do, it is true, voluntarily take away their own lives, but it is usually done in a fit of frenzy, or by those who are laboring under morbid melancholy. To die is as natural as it is to live, yet death is one of the saddest things in life. Not to those who are dying, for while hope remains they are hopeful, and when hope is entirely gone, and vitality too is at a low ebb, few care for aught but "rest and peace." But those who are left behind feel the loss daily and hourly, and a great void is created in the heart that nothing but the

gentle healing ministrations of time can ever fill. 'Tis nature's fiat, her stern decree, that compels all who live to undergo the dread ordeal of seeing beloved friends one by one drop away, and pass *forever* from the sight. And by and by those who are left must go too and be seen no more.

The lovely and tender flower fades and falls. The lofty and noble oak of the forest yields up its life to the stern destroyer; bird, beast, and reptile, each and all, has its allotted time to live, mature, decay and die; and shall man, proud man, be exempt from this common fate of all? No! he too must bend to the inevitable and see himself blotted out from the face of the earth, and in a little time from the memory of all earth's coming race. Our theme is not a pleasant one, yet as it is the lot of all to die, and as death fills up a portion of the record leaves of every book of life, we do not feel justified in passing over in silence this important subject, and in these chroniclings of things as they are.

In our last chapter we remarked that the little company of girls who have formed the central pictures in the warp and woof of our story, would never all meet together again. All well; all strong, robust, and seemingly quite impervious to death's cruel shafts, and each one feeling the healthful blood bounding and coursing vigorously through their veins, they naturally expected a long lease of life, strength, and happiness. Man proposes, but fate and circumstances dispose.

Three months have passed, and hot July with burning suns, sultry breath, and cooling showers has come, and on her death-bed is lying the beautiful, the sweet, and the gentle Minnie Darwin, while all

around her stand weeping friends and mourning relatives. At a little distance from the bed sits good old Dr. Scott, who, having done all that human skill could do to mitigate the sufferings of one whom even his great and acknowledged ability was unable to cure; is now looking across the grassy lawn to the blue mountains in the far distance, and pondering upon the many scenes of sickness, sorrow, and death through which he had passed while practicing his profession as physician during the many long years of his life. How much he had accomplished only himself knew, and yet how little it all seemed, when he reflected upon the paths that yet remained untrod and unknown. The cureless cases, the victims that death claimed in spite of his skill, were so many, that he felt sad and sick for poor, ignorant, helpless humanity.

He thought of the days, in the not so far off past, when he believed in a wise and beneficent Providence, and had so often prayed for added skill and increased knowledge that he might be enabled to save one whom God had apparently doomed, and he remembered how he had thought, impiously thought, that were *he* the all-powerful what a joy it would be to become a ministering angel to all the sick and suffering, and how he wondered that a "good father" could be so hard and unsympathetic. 'Tis true he now found Nature was still more relentless than any god was ever thought to be, but he also knew that a right knowledge of her powers and of physiology and hygiene would give in reality a greater healing gift to the well-taught and investigating physician than he had once fancied could be won by prayers to the fetich of his imagination.

Death under any circumstances is a sad occurrence, but to be suddenly stricken down while in the proud consciousness of full health and strength, and to realize that in all the wide universe there is no power competent to save, no chance for life ; to realize that no skill, no tender loving care, can arrest or check the swift coming steps of the relentless destroyer is terrible indeed.

Only a few days ago our Minnie was the picture of youth, health, and happiness, and now a few hours was all that remained to her of life. She had quit work early on Saturday afternoon, and gone to Grove Hill to get some wild flowers. It was only half a mile from home, so she started off alone and in the highest spirits, for it was so nice to enjoy the glad, free out-of-doors, and breathe the pure, clean, fresh air after being cooped up all the week in the dusty factory.

She had just climbed the hill, and was passing over its brow to the other side, where a small spring ran out from under a mossy rock, when on going by a little negro cabin near the spring, out from the door sprang a Spitz dog, and before she realized its intention its sharp teeth were fastened in her leg.

Minnie gave one scream and fainted. She was subject to fainting fits, having inherited the weakness from her paternal grandmother.

There was no one in the hut but two small children, who, when they saw the dog bite Minnie, hurriedly shut the door, lest it might bite them. The dog had been found a few weeks before by the negro who owned the hut, and he insisted on keeping it, even against the protestations of the town people, who were all afraid of it, having heard so much of

the danger of rabies from the bite of the Spitz dog. Only that very afternoon had good Dr. Scott offered the man ten dollars for the dog, preferring to pay that much for the privilege of killing the venomous little beast, rather than have human life put in jeopardy by his presence in their midst.

It was a long time ere Minnie came to, and it was dark when she got home. She met her father coming to search for her. She hated to tell the family what had happened, but she knew the danger was imminent, and if help was to be had it must be quickly given. Mrs. Darwin, shocked, frightened, and alarmed as she was, applied all the remedies she could think of, while Mr. Darwin hurried off for the doctor.

The good old man soon arrived, and did everything he could, but the bite was a bad one, and just where the virus could enter at once into the circulation, and he therefore knew that if the dog was really mad there was but little hope for the poor girl's life.

We pass over all the anxiety of the next few days, and the terrible sufferings poor Minnie endured when the dreadful paroxysms set in that generally occur in such cases towards the last of the disease.

The dog was found to be really mad, and was shot at once, as well as were two hogs and a cow which it had also bitten.

All that medical skill could do to relieve Minnie, and dull the keen edge of her suffering, by giving her anodynes, was done, and sympathy, love, and care surrounded her on all sides. She was gentle, patient, and uncomplaining whenever she had control of her faculties, and said all she could to soothe

the grief of her dear friends and beloved relatives. Great was the anguish of them all to think she must suffer and die there, before their eyes, and all of them so utterly powerless to aid or help her in her dire need, or prolong even for one brief day the beautiful, sweet life which they felt to be doubly precious to them now that it was passing so swiftly away.

Minnie was her father's pet, and what he suffered during her illness no pen can tell. His baby, as he called her—his bright, beautiful, gentle darling, who had never given him a moment's real sorrow during all the pleasant years of her young life!—she was so good, so tender, loving, and affectionate!—how could he give her up? And Mrs. Darwin, always sympathizing, gentle, and consoling to others who had need of her ministrations in sorrow, sickness, or trouble—how her loving heart was wrung, and her affectionate soul tortured with anguish, no one knew, no one dreamed. Mindful always of others, she carefully repressed all outward show of grief whenever it was possible to do so, and strove with all her loving woman's nature to do her duty in this solemn hour of her supremest anguish. Oh! the depths of a mother's holy, self-sacrificing love! It is fathomless, boundless, and immeasurable. To see the child she has nourished at her breast, who has slept for years in her bosom, whose every breath she has watched, whose every ailment she has tried to soothe, whose steps she has tenderly guided, whose tongue she has fondly taught to lisp sweet, loving words, and whose mind she has fashioned and formed, so that its every thought is as clear to her comprehension as the noon-day sun—can any one save a mother who has thus

loved and lost conceive of the bitter woe and almost hopeless misery of such a mother as Mrs. Darwin, when she saw her darling thus slowly but surely passing away from her forever? Calm, thoughtful, and considerate as she was, or as she forced herself to appear, there were times when she would steal away from all the sorrow-stricken household, and, entering her chamber, would lock the door and throw herself upon the floor in a perfect abandonment of grief and anguish. Suppressed sobs and convulsive shudders racked her frame, while tears poured in torrents from her eyes. Sometimes she would return from these ebullitions of pent-up agony, looking so patient, calm, and resigned, so apparently rested and refreshed, that they all supposed she had indulged in a short sleep, and had awoke with the burden partly lifted from her spirit. At other times the overwhelming, surging waves of sorrow would sweep across her soul, and burn and sear into her brain, till she would think she must go raging mad, loose all control of her mind, and become a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. Long months afterwards she told her husband how she had often ran off in some corner by herself, and made faces, and jeered, mocked, and jibed, till realizing that her mind was tottering upon its brink, she would, by a strong effort of the will, call back reason, philosophy, and common sense, and once more return to duty and the beloved ones who awaited the presence of the mother—she who was first in all hearts, and who alone was the real main-spring of home.

“What is home without a mother?” are light words, and lightly spoken, but oh! so vividly real when Mother is mother no more, and Death claims

her as his prey. Love your mothers, ye who have them, for of all loves, the mother-love is the strongest, faithfulest, and most self-sacrificing and all enduring, the most patient and forgiving, the most sure and reliable.

It was hard—oh! so hard—but nobly, bravely, and earnestly she battled with her grief—she fought the good fight, and came out conquerer over herself. She felt how utterly useless it was to “kick against the pricks.” She knew how impotent is man when he attempts to rebel against fate—against the *must be*. But oh! none realized more than she did how hard it was to say, Not my will, thou unrelenting spirit of Nature, but thine be done. Thou art a gentle, loving mother, but a severe, cruel, pitiless mistress. Thou givest life, and fillest the world with bliss unutterable, but just as freely dost thou shower upon us want, woe, misery, and pain; yet have I that within me which outrides the wind and the storm, and surmounts every obstacle which thou placest in my path. My idols thou mayst shatter, if thou must; I will build for myself new shrines, where my soul shall find rest, and my heart meet its requirements. So long as life shall last, Hope shall be my guiding star, and Despair shall not dwell within me. I will *be* good, and *do* good, and these two things always bring peace and quiet to the weary and way-worn!

This, my dear readers, is a woman's story, and it is of a woman's grief, therefore, that we have drawn the most vivid picture—and no ideal one, either, strange as it may read. Let the loving, tender mother who has passed through some fiery ordeal record faithfully her heart's emotions during her

trial hours, and she will find the picture all too feebly drawn and too dimly colored. She will recognize, with a kindred feeling of keen appreciativeness, the words of the poet—words that ran through and through the brain of poor Mrs. Darwin, time and again, as she fought through her great agony:

“ Oh, my thoughts! why will ye rave thus wildly
In your pent-up cells, and fret your never
Weary wings against your iron-bound prison?
Why will ye not be gentle, calm, and quiet,
Like my own outward self, and not foam like
The untiring sea against its rock-bound shores?

“ Hard, nay, fiercely, have ye striven to burst
The bars of reason, and rove unfettered
Through delirious space, and pierce the regions
Of insanity; and hard, but vainly,
Have I pressed my hands upon my aching
Head, to still its burning throbbings; but as
Well might I say to the soaring eagle,
‘Cease thy flight!’ or to the ocean, ‘Cease thy murmur-
ings!’
As to knell the agony of a half-crazed brain.
Rave on! rave on! my thoughts.
Ye can but drink bitter draughts of memory from the
Anguish-riven past! Ye can but break what
Is already broken—my bleeding heart!”

The Christian may boast of the consolations of religion when sorrow and tribulation come, and the Infidel may resort to philosophy; but Nature, ever imperious in her exactions, demands of each living soul her tribute of tears, sorrow, and wretchedness whenever an irretrievable loss, such as the sudden death of a cherished and beloved one, occurs, or when one dearer than the heart's blood steps aside from virtue's path and commits a dastard's crime,

that shows an inward depravity of which we had not dreamed, or some weakness that could not withstand temptation.

“The heart that is soonest alive to the flowers
Is always the first to be touched by the thorns.”

As we have remarked, the first great agony over, Mrs. Darwin resolutely set to work and conquered herself, subjected her heart to philosophy's stern rule, and came out from the furnace of affliction “all the purer from the fiercer fire.” Always tender, gentle, and loving, she became now almost sweetly humble and angelic. She talked to her darling, in her moments of comparative ease, and told her what a joy and blessing she had always been, and how sweet and pleasant it would be, in the lonely hours that must come, to think of the time when they were an unbroken household. Rose had now her own little world, and a husband, who claimed the first place in her thoughts. Willie, dear, good boy as he was and always would be, was no longer *wholly* hers. Another was winning him from the sweet old home-ties, and usurping his warmest, truest affections; and so, “Minnie, darling Minnie.” she continued, “I have but you, of all my children, to look to as mine only. Yes, love is selfish, very selfish and exacting, but it is unutterably sweet and precious. We build us a shrine and place therein our idol, and worship it; but lo! a sudden unforeseen calamity overtakes us, and the shrine at which we bent is empty. The jewel that lay upon it is stolen from us, and we are heart-broken. But oh! my baby-girl, amid all my affliction the dear, sweet thought comes to cheer me that no stain has ever

rested upon the record-leaves of thy young life. And for thee death has no terrors, the future no fears. Whatever I may grieve for, I have this to cheer me—that thy life has been bright, fair, pleasant, and industriously happy. We have all done our duty by thee as well as we knew how, and so there will be no sting remaining to us of the thought of *lost opportunities*—of regrets that we had not done well by thee.”

And Minnie would tell her mother how bright and happy her days had ever been, and how sweet and pleasant had been her dreams by night, and that, dearly as she had loved all the precious home circle, no one, not even her beloved father, had ever stolen so deeply into her heart as had her darling mamma. “You are my first love, and my last, and never seemed to me so good and lovable as you do now, in this sad parting hour. I know you will miss me more than all the rest can, but I am so glad I have seen the first bitterness of the dread parting pass away. The eyes of the dying see clearly, mother, and I have seen the terrible throes of anguish that have racked and tortured you, till my heart has bled for you. But oh! I am so glad to see the beautiful calm resignation that has taken their place, and rejoice to feel that the bitterness of death is over, and you can bid me good-bye with a patient composure and a quiet calmness.”

One day a pious old lady came in. She had been a near neighbor to them and a constant visitor ever since they had moved to the Forks, but she had never talked to them about their peculiar doctrines, for she was a real lady, and therefore avoided what she feared might be an unpleasant subject. But she

had become tenderly attached to Minnie, whose bright, girlish, loving ways always attracted the old. As she sat by Minnie's side, gazing upon the fair young face that was so soon to be shut out from her gaze, she could no longer restrain her anxiety, and so she said, "Minnie, my dear girl, I have a duty to perform, and must beg your pardon if I offend you. I cannot feel conscience-clear if I do not say a few words to you on the one vital subject that is so important to us all. I must ask you if you do not have some fears, some dread of what eternity may have in store for you. I know your family do not believe in God or the holy Bible, but hitherto they have all been well and strong, and have felt, perhaps, sufficient unto themselves; but now that you are so soon to meet the great Judge of all the earth, does not your heart sink within you at the thought of what may be? Oh, my beloved young friend, can you not, here on your dying bed, confess Christ and accept of his mercy? I cannot bear to think of what your fate may be should you go thus unbelieving and uncaring into that dread presence 'who judgeth the quick and the dead.'"

"Dear grandma," said Minnie, who always delighted in pet names for her chosen friends, "dear grandma, I am not at all afraid to pass out into the 'unknown dark.' It is only a going to sleep forever, instead of for a few hours, as I have hitherto done. Should you assure me that there was a *dinotherium* in our cellar, I should not feel a bit more sure you were deceived—nay, not as certain of it as I am that the whole system of Christian mythology is a myth and a fable. I would not hurt your feelings, my dear old friend, but I speak thus plainly so that you

may understand what I mean. It would be just as impossible for you to convince me of the truth of all the Christian myths as it would for me to convince you that the old Greek and Roman deities ever existed, or still exist; that on the summit of the snow-clad mountain of Olympus dwelt Jupiter, or Jove, the supreme god of the heathens—the governor of heaven and earth—and his beautiful wife Juno, the peerless queen of heaven and the mother-protectress of all womankind; Apollo, the god of life, light, and the arts; Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, who sprang from the head of Jupiter ('a goddess armed,' and wiser than any other of her kind); and fair Ceres, 'the goddess of grist;' Diana, who 'wouldn't be kissed;' and all the rest of the long train of once-worshiped beings, who ate ambrosia, drank nectar, and lived, loved, and married, gossiped, warred, and hated, just as mortal men and women do. Our classical poems and all ancient history are full of the sayings and doings of these gods; and why should you claim for your mythology implicit belief, and not accord it to this older mythology, which had a longer existence and a greater train of believers than yours has, or will ever have? Dear grandma, I know your faith is dear to you, and I do not want to shake it, but I do want to show you that for me it has no shadow of ground for belief. I want to show you that I do not reject it out of a spirit of bravado, which would ill become me here in my last hours as a dweller with you, but that I have carefully revolved the whole subject in my mind, and am satisfied that all religions are only myths and superstitions; that matter, with its forces is the all in all. I have no more fear or thoughts of

the future than you would have of going into your bedchamber to-night and lying down to sleep. You would not believe it if some one were to solemnly assure you that you would awake in the morning in a land where elves, fairies, and spirits do abide, or that you would find yourself in Pluto's dreary realm, where the unhappy shades were once supposed to wander. I know there is much that is beautiful and good in all these mythologies—all religions have the element of goodness in them; but in time all are outgrown, are cast off like old clothes, and the truth and goodness that was embodied in them are transferred to their successor, and from this new favorite on to the next; and so it will be through all the ages to come. No system of ethics, philosophy, or religion can stand forever, because none of them are entirely true or perfect. You may wonder, my dear old friend, that a girl like me should talk so earnestly about things such as these; but we (our family) all love mythology as a science; we like to trace the growth and development of the different nations through their mythologies or beliefs. Perhaps you are too old to change your opinions, or to care to do so; but, if at any time you do want to read up the subject of ancient faiths, father will give you some books, and aid your researches after truth. I thank you for your love and kindness, and hope you will not think hard of me for my plain talk. I have said what I have to you because you are a good woman, and when people ask you how I, the daughter of the noted Infidel Mr. Darwin, and myself always an Infidel, died, you will tell them the real truth, and not change, or misrepresent my words."

All this was spoken at intervals, as Minnie felt

strength to talk; and we have here registered it as proof that no faith is easier to live by than faith in what is seen and known—nor, consequently, to die by.

The death-bed and funeral we pass over, simply remarking that all was quiet, solemn, and decorous. There were no loud demonstrations of grief; no meeting save a small gathering at the home. A few words were spoken by the father, and then, at the grave, the following lines, which had been previously altered from a favorite funeral song for this solemn occasion, were sung by the assembled friends, the family of Mr. Darwin also joining their voices with the rest:

“ Farewell, sister! we have loved thee,

Rest now on thy bed of clay;

Clouds are floating high above thee,

And breezes waft our songs away.

Sad, we give thee to the number

Laid in yonder darksome halls;

And above thy peaceful slumber

Many a shower of sorrow falls.

Thou canst not hear our plaintive notes,

Lowly breathed in sad’ning song.

Bleeding hearts are all around thee,

For our love was pure and strong.

Farewell, sister! ne’er we’ll meet thee

As we journey to and fro;

Ne’er again in joy we’ll greet thee,

Or thy welcome presence know.

But in tender hearts thou’lt find

Thy loved name shall treasured be,

As there, in sacred halls enshrined,

Are dear memories of thee.

Here, by thy last sweet resting-place,

Oft our wandering steps shall stray.

In fancy’s dream we’ll see thy face,

Pleasant as the summer’s day.”

Thousands and tens of thousands of pages of books and other periodicals have been devoted to telling of the noble traits and the great benefits to man which have been derived from his association with and the companionship of dogs. And right here, at the close of poor Minnie's brief, bright life-page, and its abrupt termination by a dog-bite, I wish to enter my protest against dogs as a useless encumbrance, a dead weight, and a great evil upon the community. In the first place, no man or woman has a moral right to keep a nuisance—to keep any animal that he can't keep at home, that will forage its living off others; that will take the bread from his children's mouths, and, worse than all, breed disease and death in the community. The sheep killed each year are worth ten times more than all the dogs that ever lived; and the human life that has been sacrificed to dog-bites is of a thousand million times more value than the sheep were. Then there is the fear of dogs that is felt all over the land. There are few of us who have not felt our hearts jump into our throats, at some time or other, from hearing the sudden bark of a dog near us in some lone spot, or where we felt as if we were helplessly exposed to his sharp teeth. And fear, real fear, is one of the most terrible of human sufferings, and often turns the hair snow-white in a few short moments.

Some four years ago I read in *The Oneida Circular* an article on dogs that made such an impression on me that I have rarely touched a dog since, or allowed one to come on the premises. I will give extracts from it, as it was a regular scientific article, and therefore worthy of credence and preservation :

"According to Professor Verrill there are twenty-five different kinds of parasites which find a home in the various organs of the dog. There are only three that are very destructive and common among domestic animals. These are found in their mature state only in the dog, but occur in the larval state in sheep, cattle, and man.

"It is perfectly safe to say that at least twenty-five sheep are killed by parasites derived from dogs for every one killed by the teeth of dogs, and that more than fifty persons die from the same parasites for every one that dies of hydrophobia. And yet the heedless practice of fondling such animals goes on from day to day, and from year to year. The loss of human life alone, to say nothing of the amount of suffering caused every year by these diseases, more than counterbalances all the good that all the dogs in the civilized world can possibly do. This may seem to be an exaggerated statement, but we are compelled to believe it by the statistics which follow:

"Dr. Krabbe found the echinoccus tape-worm in twenty-eight out of one hundred Icelandic dogs which he examined. In England this parasite is well known, and measures are constantly employed to prevent its increase. The hunting hounds undergo a course of medical treatment once in three months for the purpose of removing it; yet, in spite of these precautions, it is estimated that five hundred persons die annually in Great Britain from this parasite alone.

"Dr. Krabbe states that in Iceland, where the conditions for the rapid increase and perpetuation of this parasite are most favorable, there are at all

times about eighteen hundred patients suffering with severe forms of this parasitic disease—a number equal to about one-fortieth of all the inhabitants. In some districts the proportion of diseased persons is said to be one in every seven, while scarcely a family can be found without two or more cases. It is estimated that one-sixth of all the deaths in Iceland are due to the diseases caused by this parasite.

“The *tænia echinoccus*, or, as it is commonly called, the echinoccus is the only parasite of the dog which is dangerous to man. To get a clear idea of its life and development we will begin our observation of it where it most frequently presents itself. This is in the form of tumors in sheep, pigs, horses, cattle, and man. These tumors occur in various forms and sizes; some are simple, others are made up of an aggregation of small tumors. In their simplest form, or when young, these tumors contain a roundish cyst or membranous sac inclosing a watery fluid. More frequently the cysts become compound by a process of budding, either upon the outside or inside, or both without and within the membrane of the original cyst, so that its size goes on increasing indefinitely until it sometimes becomes as large as a child's head. If the membrane of one of the cysts be examined when fresh with a microscope there will be seen attached to it by means of slender stalks numbers of small oval or rounded heads looking something like fruit on a miniature plant. These heads line the membrane both internally and externally, and by a process of budding develop new cysts which in their turn produce buds. Each of the oval heads is a hollow sac, which contains the real head of the young tape-worm. As long as these

cysts remain in a living animal new heads are constantly forming, so that if the animal or man live long enough to develop a large tumor, it will finally contain many thousands of these minute tape-worm heads.

"If at any time a dog eat any part of an animal containing such tumors, and swallow either the cyst or the detached heads, the inclosing membrane will be digested and the heads liberated. These soon fasten themselves by means of small hooks to the living membrane of the intestine, and there attain their full size, which is only about one-eighth of an inch. Unlike the beef and pork tape-worm, which becomes long, with hundreds of joints, this has but three joints when mature. The last joint, which is much the largest, contains both male and female organs, and is capable of self-impregnation. After this has matured and discharged its eggs, the next two develop and discharge their eggs in like manner. A dog in this condition is constantly discharging and scattering thousands and millions of the extremely minute eggs of this worm wherever he goes. They are scattered among the grass in the fields and pastures; they get into the water of brooks and springs; they are liable to adhere to fruit which has fallen, or to lettuce and other garden vegetables.

"These eggs, when taken into the stomach of an animal or a man, are acted upon by the gastric juice, and immediately hatch. The embryo is a very minute worm, different from the parent, and provided with hooks, by means of which it bores its way through the lining of the intestines into the blood-vessels, and entering the circulation is carried to all parts of

the body, where it develops into the peculiar cysts and tumors which I have described. Dr. Cobbold has calculated the number of progeny that might proceed from one egg during a generative cycle, and it amounts to the enormous sum of one hundred and fifty billions !

“These tumors, as before remarked, occur in various organs of the body. When lodged in the brain they are most dangerous, soon causing insanity and death by their rapid growth. When they occur in the lungs and liver they often prove fatal. When the lodgment is in the vesicles or near the exterior of the body they may be removed by a surgical operation. When in the internal organs there is generally no remedy. The true nature of the diseases caused by this parasite is seldom known until after the death of the patient, when a microscopic examination reveals the truth.”

CHAPTER XII.

Leaving the sorrowing, yet patiently resigned family of the Darwins to find solace for their loss in clinging yet closer to the joys that still remained, and in building up little by little new shrines upon which to lay the sweet and holy offerings of love, we will now take up the thread of Jennie Martin's web of life, and see whereunto it leads. She is one destined by force of circumstances to live a varied and useful life, one full of duties, of work, and of blessing to her kind. As a wife and mother, she will never know the sweet, womanly joys and blisses, cares and anxieties that most of her sex accept as the only inevitable end for which they were created. But as holy, natural, and happifying as the marital relations are, it is not every woman's duty to enter upon them; nor should the whole end of her girlish aims be directed to winning a companion for life. The great world has need of something more from woman than the mere duty of making a home happy for some man and rearing his children. The female element is needed throughout all the social, moral, intellectual, and governmental departments of our land. Woman is needed in the full vigor, enthusiasm, and magnetism of her youthfulness. She is needed before she has spent her *best* days in brooding over a family of dependent little ones whom she can never rear as they should be, for the very reason that her own mother was too

young, too immature, too unlearned to train her own mind into paths of knowledge, science, and true culture. No woman can rear and train a family and educate them and herself at the same time, especially if she has the thousand multifarious cares and duties of household labor to perform, as well as the family sewing, gardening, poultry-yard, etc., etc., to attend to. Of course our Jennie did not realize all this in its fullest sense, but when a mere girl she had read a few strong articles on woman's rights, and they had so impressed her that she had learned even then to ignore the command that is so often hurled at poor overburdened mothers who so piteously beg for a rest from too frequent child-bearing (the holy word of God says to every one of his children, "Increase, multiply, and replenish the earth").

Jennie having become convinced that she was now sufficiently well grounded in her new opinions to be able to give her father good reasons for holding them, wrote to him and in as gentle a manner as possible informed him of her "fall from grace," told him that the date of her doubts was from the afternoon when she had heard the conversation between Mr. Lusk and himself about the Cushites. She told him that her aunt Mary believed just as she did, and that they had been reading all the Liberal books they could get, all the best ones especially, and that her aunt had subscribed to THE TRUTH SEEKER, an Infidel paper, and that she had now come to the conclusion that it was best to tell him, and to ask him to give her every argument in favor of religion that he could, so that if it was possible for her to ever believe again, he might be the one to win her

back. She knew in her own mind that no one *could* ever make her believe any more in the old myths, fables, and traditions, but she thought that it would not fall with such a stunning force upon her father to know that she had become an Infidel if he could be made to think there was a chance of his arguing her out of her new opinions. She knew her father was a stern man, but a very just one. She knew it would be a hard and severe blow to him, but he must know it some time, and she preferred he should hear of it while away, rather than have him come home and talk with her face to face while the sorrow was strongest upon him. She had never willingly grieved him in all her life, and she felt that if she met his sad, sorrowing countenance as she told him of her Infidelity, it would be almost more than she could bear. She knew, too, she could write things she would not have the heart to say, and that they could both talk more freely on paper than they could face to face.

When her letter was done she read it to her aunt Mary, who pronounced it "very good," and just what was the best to have been said. She sent it off and then waited with anxious impatience for the reply, and when it came she went to her room to read it, for she could not bear that even her dear aunt should witness her conflict of emotions as she perused what she felt would be a great burthen of sorrow and wailing from the innermost depths of the good old man's heart.

She tremblingly tore off the envelope, and read as follows :

O MY DEAR, DARLING, UNFORTUNATE CHILD ! O ! I'm miserable ! What have I done that this horror

should fall upon me in my old age? Can it be possible that the God I have so long served, loved, and worshiped has sent upon me this direful, awful, terrible affliction? My child whom I have guarded as the apple of my eye! my darling whom I have kept from all taint of unbelief! my child! my own child! O how my heart throbs and beats with anguish for thee. What can I do? what can I say? O God! help thou me in this awful hour of supremest woe! My soul is sick and faint within me. O Jennie, Jennie, beloved child, my darling dead wife, how could you so grieve, shock, and horrify me? For hours and hours after receiving your letter I sat as one stunned and dead. I have thought till thought was the direst agony; I have revolved and revolved in my heart every argument I could think of. O! how can I convert you once more back to the pure, loving Gospel truths of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? O! have I lived to see my child deny her Creator and turn against her blessed Savior and Redeemer? It cannot be. It is a dream, a delusion, a wicked snare of the devil to tempt me to 'curse God and die.' It is all a hallucination, and I shall, I must, I *will* rouse myself from it. . . . Am I awake? O, yes, it is not quite so bad as I feared. My child! my child! I have just had such a horrid, horrid vision, and I believe God sent it as a warning to you.

"Just as I had written the last word of the foregoing sentence, I dropped on my knees to pray to the Lord to help me say something that would turn you once more in his blessed ways, and suddenly I seemed to be standing on the brink of a great gulf of lurid darkness, of indescribable blackness, and yet

somehow illuminated with a death-like, corpse-like phosphorescence. I looked down into the fathomless abyss with a strange yearning, longing gaze, and all at once my eyes seemed to be touched with a supernatural magnetism, and I saw clearly, O such horrid sights, such woe unutterable that my pen could never, never describe it. Suffice it to say, that amidst all that foul, unseemly horde of earth's foulest offscouring I saw you, my child, my heart's darling, and all around you were the horrid, loathsome forms of drunken, lecherous, beastly, disgusting beings, too foul, too awful to be called men, and they were caressing with their bloated lips and filthy hands your beautiful limbs and sweet mouth that no unholy touch had ever before profaned. O! never, never shall I forget the supreme agony that was imprinted upon your anguished, upturned face as your eyes met mine. You shrieked out in wild, imploring tones for me to save you. But alas! I was too infinitely distant from you to do aught but look and weep. It was too late! No power on earth or in heaven could save you. The die was cast. You had rejected the Savior, and now he had forever and forever forsaken you. You did not accept him when he was willing to listen to you, and now it was vain to plead and pray for mercy or to expect aid from God or man. Once more your anguished, pleading, terror-stricken voice fell upon my ear, thrilling my soul with a death-like agony such as no mortal man could bear and live. I fell to the ground (or seemed to) as if shot by an unseen hand, and a merciful oblivion veiled all sights and sounds from my senses.

"I think it must have been hours ere I came to,

for I have no idea of the time as it passed from the moment of first getting your letter till I awoke from that sleep of apparent death. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the letter came, and when I revived it was midnight and all was dark around me. I for a moment thought I had fallen into the horrid abyss that had apparently yawned at my feet, but as soon as I began to fully recover I saw by the glimmer of a street-lamp through the half-closed blinds that I was really here in my room, and that all hope was not quite gone. O, my darling! what can I do, what can I say to help you at this fatal, fatal crisis? Now, *now*, is the accepted time. O listen ere it is too late. O that you could see as I saw the awful fate that will surely be yours if you do not turn once more to the blessed Savior who suffered, bled, and died for you!

“‘Argue,’ how can I argue? What can I say that I have not said a thousand times over in the pulpit, as well as in the sacred sanctuary of home? Have we not read together God’s holy word and the lives and writings of all the holy fathers and the sainted martyrs, and of pious, good men who have given all for God and his cause? But I’ll try. I’ll do anything you ask, vain though I feel it would be. Write all you wish, pour out every Infidel argument you can, I’ll combat them one by one with the holy strength of a father’s love. I’ll pray to God and the blessed Redeemer to help me. I must, I will save you from the snares Satan has set for your soul. I would come home at once and pray with you, but my sister is not expected to live the week out. I am her only brother, and she says she cannot part with me till death severs us. But I may be

able to write something that will do you more good than even personal conversation will."

All this and much more he wrote, but here is enough to show that the old man was a true believer in the doctrines he preached; that he was honest and sincere and really suffered all the horror and anguish he would have felt had he actually passed through earthly terrors such as his imagination pictured for his child's future. There are many true believers who make religion as much a reality to their minds as is their daily actual life. And to such it is awful to think of what will be the fate of those who reject and disbelieve.

If all the agony that has been endured by true believers, from the fear that they might not have done the will of their God, and may be doomed to an eternal, everlasting hell, could be realized by the world, it would look upon the Christian religion as a more horrid pestilence than the cholera or the black death.

We will not trouble our readers by repeating all the arguments that were brought up by Edith, and attempted to be refuted by her father. Suffice it to say the old ground that has so often been gone over by Christian and Infidel debates was all traversed and thoroughly discussed. As Mr. Martin's sister slowly passed day by day from life to death, and on the very evening she died, Mr. Martin received this last, final, closing letter from Jennie.

"DEAR, DEAR FATHER: There are many things in your last epistle that led me to hope you were becoming resigned to what is inevitable. If I have failed to convince you that all religions are myths, I have at least shown you conclusively that there is

not, and cannot be, a literal burning hell, or a real place of torment. That horror removed from your mind, I feel as if we could find rest, peace, and happiness together, even if we do not believe alike. Now I am going to answer a few points in your last, and remember I talk not as a child to a parent, but as a debater to an opponent. I mean no personal disrespect, for I love and honor you more than I did when I believed just as you do, for I see now the great, vast, deep fountain of my father's love for his child, as I never realized it in the old days. But I wish to give you my reasons for what I think, and to show you how impossible it is that I can ever change back again.

In the first place you say, 'It will not do to be constantly objecting to everything if we would find truth. We should see both sides if acceptance or rejection be fraught with danger.'

"But father, it is only by 'objecting' to the unreasonable and improbable, and by ceasing to be credulous and gullable, that real truth is ever sifted out from romance, error, legend, fable, and myth. How did Protestants ever come out from Catholics but by 'objecting.' How does any science ever perfect itself but by 'objecting' to and eliminating from itself all that is erroneous and unscientific? How was paganism and the mythology of the Greeks and Romans supplanted by Christian mythology but by 'objecting' to their glaring mistakes and false historical accounts?

"How can you hold to your peculiar belief but by objecting to that of every other sect, as well as to the philosophy of Atheism itself? How can any one believe as he does but by objecting to all that

conflicts with his own ideas? It is time this negation and objection business was thrown overboard. We Infidels do not 'object' or 'negate' one iota more than you do. I defy you to prove that I make one more 'objection' to your belief than you do to mine. And as to seeing 'both sides,' who is more ready to do this than Infidels? Who is it that objects to giving 'both sides' a hearing in pulpit and press? Who is it that makes laws to bind Infidels in bonds lest 'both sides' have a fair show? Who is it that compels Infidels to pay for the making of pious laws and the support of pious law-makers? Who confine, imprison, blackmail, and misuse, even to the death, noble, true, self-sacrificing men, such as those who have been the victims of Anthony the Sneak? Who is it that compels Infidels to pay taxes on millions of dollars' worth of church property where only 'one side' is heard and the other foully and often ignorantly misrepresented? Who is it that wants their God and Jesus in the Constitution, so as to kill, if possible, all sides but their own? We Infidels demand perfect freedom to discuss all questions—Atheistical, religious, social, political, and financial; anything that is fit to be is fit to be discussed in a proper and decent manner. But you Christians have always been enforcing gag laws on all who dared to look over your theological bars into the broad fields of reason, common sense, worldly pleasure, and earthly happiness.

"We Infidels *ask* for discussion; we give all inducements possible for theologians to come and talk to and with us. We ask you to show us all the flaws you can in our reasoning. If we are wrong, we ask to be put right. I assure you I have seen

far more of 'both sides' than it is possible for you to have done; for I have *lived* on both sides. I have been all the way along from Methodism to Universalism and Deism, and then out into the glad, free expanse of enlightened, glorious, and happifying Atheism. Don't you remember, father, when I read those pious Methodist books that used to be in the library here, how like a little Methodist I became, and how that wore off in time and I grew up in your belief, and clung to it faithfully till the first real doubt came—that fateful afternoon when I heard you and Mr. Lusk debate the Cushites; then I commenced reading and evolving slowly but surely, till at last I reached the ground whereon I now stand?

"You say, 'There is a God, for Christ reveals him.' I say, and say in all earnestness, that I wish you to prove it. I deny it entirely; so please prove that there ever was a God to have a son. Prove the Bible to be anything more than a book of fables, stories, songs, proverbs, exhortations, and unreliable history! As to your witnesses, I refuse to take them. I do not know what parts, if any, of all they are said to have written they really did write. I do not know what is forgery, interpolation, fixed up, or changed, and what is wholly spurious. I must have better proof than those five unreliable witnesses of the Bible. What court of justice is there in all this land that would take an unsigned, unwitnessed paper, and printed at that, as testimony to a miracle!

"You say, 'Epithets are not arguments.' No; nor is Bible-proof good 'testimony.' I want proof outside of divine revelation or Homer. I want plain common sense and reasonable facts. Give me only barely one proof that there is a God, and then

I am prepared to go ahead on other points; just a single one is all I ask for—one proof not based upon Bible testimony, but upon scientific, demonstrated knowledge.

“You still refer me, again and again, to the New Testament for a definition of a ‘true Christian.’ Well I’ll look at it a bit, and see what it says. ‘If, thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out’ (ear-mark No. 1); ‘Swear not at all’—take no oaths in court (No. 2); ‘Let your communication be yea and nay.’ No ‘My Lord,’ ‘Excellency,’ ‘Sir,’ nor anything but simple yes and no (No. 3); ‘Resist not evil.’ If knocked down, get up again and love your enemy. If thieves come, resist them not (No. 4); ‘If any man [at law] take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.’ Oh, how nice No. 5 is! ‘If a man compel thee to go a mile, go twain;’ ‘From him that would borrow of thee, turn not thee away’ (No. 6 and 7 say, Run wherever asked, and lend all you have. Good advice; but where is the follower?); ‘Be ye perfect.’ Can’t do it (No. 8); ‘Lay up not treasures on earth.’ Try it, and see where progress and refinement and happiness will be (No. 9); ‘Take no thought for the morrow.’ Human life would soon be extinct were this to be done by all (No. 10); ‘Every one that asketh receiveth.’ Not so (No. 11); ‘Let the dead bury the dead.’ Try it (No. 12); Scold and blame the wind and sea, and make ‘a great calm.’ Impossible to follow him there (No. 13); Drive devils out of people into other men’s swine and kill them. Another lovely feat is No. 14. ‘Heal all manner of disease.’ Can’t do it (No. 15); Deliver up your brother or parent who does not believe, and cause them to be put to death. What

believer does this, or could^d do it? (No. 16); Feed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, and have lots left after the banquet (No. 17); Walk on the sea (No. 18); 'If I agree, . . . it shall be done.' 'Anything,' mind. Well, let two pious Christians agree to pray that a new, correct, reliable, historical Bible, right from kingdom come, may be given into their keeping. Would they get it? No. 19 is a failure worse than all that precedes it. Let them build a dam of one solid rock across our river here, through asking; then I'll say they are indeed 'true Christians.'

"A true Christian ought to do all these nineteen things, for they have the promise of being able to do 'greater things' than Christ ever did. They must be celibates, too, if they can by any possibility keep their natural passions under control. Hate your children, parents, and wife; curse fruit trees that do not bear out of season; denounce all who do not receive your doctrine (Matt. x, 13; xi, 24); do as you *are* done by, and not as you *would be* done by ('Whosoever shall deny me, him will I also deny'); make no end of false promises, as, 'This generation shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled. . . . Whatsoever is asked for believing shall be received,' are only two of these numerous broken promises—or false ones, rather. Bless the poor and curse the rich indiscriminately, regardless of the goodness and virtue or vice and crime in them, but simply because they are financially as they are. Send all to hell who do not believe as you do. Have your enemies all killed before you—nice, isn't it! Teach that 'In Adam's fall we sinned all,' and that eating a bit of fruit 'brought death into the world

and all our woe;' that otherwise all that were born would have lived on forever, happy and sinless, naked and ignorant! Believe in an endless burning hell. Touch not a sword, lest you die by a sword; and yet, if you have none, sell your garment and buy one. Can even a 'true Christian' do all these things?

" 'They shall speak with new tongues.' Let one come here and talk a little in these 'new tongues.' Any one of your many 'dipped' converts will do as a test. If he talks Dutch, Mrs. Shy will understand; if Spanish, aunt Mary will comprehend a little of it; and plain common sense I will try to understand. 'Take up serpents.' Find the Christian and I'll find the 'rattler.' 'Drink any deadly thing.' Let one try a bit of prussic acid if he dares. 'Lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' Why any need of a death, then, in a Christian family, save from pure old age? 'Cast mountains into the sea by faith.' I'll believe this when I see a 'true Christian' do it. Call ignorant people who differ from you—or wise ones either—'fools,' 'vipers,' 'Satan,' etc., etc. Altogether lovely! 'Resist not evil,' yet scourge money changers out of the temple. That is, use force and compulsion, rather than argument, persuasion, and love, to effect your desires and purposes.

"There! that is Bible Christianity, and directly from its choicest writers, and it is all legitimately deduced from texts and verses which I can mention, if necessary. Now, try and live it out. Show me any one who ever did live it out or ever can do so. Please show me wherein I have misrepresented one iota in all these ear-marks of true Christianity. I do not deny that there is a good side also shown up;

but these things I quote are just as much Christianity as is the portion you generally show forth. And I declare them bad doctrine, and as such they prove Christianity to be a bad thing. If true, a man might upset the world, cast a mountain into our mill-dam by faith, and ruin all the business men here; send devils into our hogs, and do—oh! such mean things. I rejoice that prayer and faith are really not such effective weapons as the pious old ‘school-book’ says they are.

“But since searching the ‘record,’ I find it harder than ever to decide what a ‘true Christian’ is, or how there can possibly be one. You have asked me often what objection I had to a ‘true Christian,’ and referred me to the Bible for a description of one, and I have honestly and fairly shown up such points as I object to in that definition of one; and now I will rest my case till we meet, which I hope will be very, very soon.

“Your loving, affectionate daughter, JENNIE.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Now we will take up a few threads in the love-life of our Edith, and see what came of the little romance Sue had gotten up for her during her bridal trip. Mr. Williams, the gentleman whose photograph had made so favorable an impression on Edith, had passed through the town of S—— about three months after Sue's and Charlie's return from O—— (his mother's home and his own), and he stopped at Flowers' and spent a day or two there, renewing the pleasant acquaintance so auspiciously begun in the waters of the little lake. Sue, who had been advised of his coming, had invited Edith there to spend the day; and, being fond of the society of her lively little friend and that of her good, noble, and intellectual husband, Edith had gladly accepted the invitation, though not aware whom she was to meet there. The day passed very pleasantly to them all. Mr. Williams and Edith sang together, and in the sweet concord of sounds they felt that intense joy that only the true lover of music can appreciate. Neither of them had ever before met any one whose voice harmonized so completely with their own; and they found their views to be alike upon so many subjects that the day was gone almost before they realized it. When Edith's horse was brought up for her to go home, Mr. Williams insisted on riding with her, saying his pony had been standing in the stable all day, and needed exercise. Sue stood in

the door and watched them off with a wise, knowing smile, as much as to say, "My plans are all working right;" and indeed such seemed to be the case, as it was in the wee, small hours of the morning when Mr. Williams got back to Flowers' and sought his pillow—not to sleep, but to think and dream of Edith.

He had won her promise to correspond with him and this correspondence had been of great interest, and also a means of improvement to them both. But of late a little cloud had been slowly gathering in the horizon, and it seemed as though a storm might some day overwhelm them with its desolating power and destroy the bright air-castles they had been so carefully rearing. What this cloud was will be seen by the following extract from one of Mr. Williams' letters:

"MY OWN DEAR EDITH: I have many times noticed in your letters passages, strong and eloquent, in which you have portrayed your dislike to the use of tobacco; and in your last letter you say you would never marry a man who smoked or chewed. It is very humiliating to me to be obliged to confess that I do both these things, and have done so ever since I was ten years old. My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all smoked and chewed, and every male relative I have uses tobacco. I have tried again and again to give it up, especially since I found you are so opposed to its use. But it is all around me; I smell the delicious perfume of the cigar, and my good resolves are all as naught. I see a man take a chew, and my mouth waters, and every nerve in me cries out for it, and I yield. You don't know, Edith, what a slave a man is to the

tobacco habit when once it is thoroughly formed—at least when one has used it as long as I have, and inherited so strong an appetite for it. But I am trying once more—making a last final effort to give it up. I am a man of powerful will, but, alas! of powerful appetites and passions as well. I may conquer, and I may not. Time alone will tell which is victorious, myself or my longings for the ‘vile weed’ you so stigmatize.”

All this, and much more, he wrote, and Edith, who had never dreamed that her hero was a “tobacco worm,” was stunned and bewildered at the sudden calamity. She felt that her life’s happiness was at stake. She could not give him up, and yet she could not marry him if he continued the use of tobacco in any form. She had always called it her pet weakness, this antipathy to the vile weed. She could not bear a tobacco breath, or to smell the smoke from a cigar, or, what was worse yet, an old short black pipe. If compelled for a time to inhale tobacco smoke by being in company with some one who was so inconsiderate as to smoke in the presence of those who never use tobacco, she generally had a fit of sick headache after it; and there was her mother, too, who hated it as badly as she did; and as one home was to be theirs, she, too, must be thought of. All night she lay and wrestled with her thoughts, revolving the subject in every possible way; and at last she came to the conclusion that she would write a series of arguments against tobacco, and tell of its effects upon the mind and body, and describe the disgusting appearance of those who used it as they seemed to one who seldom saw them.

I will not weary the reader with all she wrote, but

simply give her main argument against its use and its evil results :

“The first and strongest objection I have, my dear friend, to your use of tobacco is its effect upon your bodily health. It is a rank poison, and only persistent effort will enable one to learn its use. In time the system adapts itself to the innovation, just as it would to that of arsenic, and then it begins to crave the stimulus, precisely as the constitutions of those who have become slaves to strong tea and coffee crave their accustomed invigorators. Tobacco lowers the general tone of the whole physical and mental system. No man who uses it can be perfectly well or happy. The spirits will feel depressed, and all the natural jubilation of pure, healthy, happy humanity will be lost. He may think he feels well, but it is because he has forgotten what real health is. Then its use predisposes to consumption and cancer, as well as many other diseases.

“At a polytechnic school in Paris one of the professors inquired into the habits of one hundred and sixty students there. He found that one hundred and two were smokers and fifty-eight never used the weed, and that in each grade of the school the students who did not smoke outranked those who did, and the scholarship of the smokers steadily deteriorated as the smoking continued; and at last tobacco was forbidden to students as being injurious to physical and mental development. It is always considered as a low and vulgar habit. Clergymen generally use it under protest, and feel criminal in doing so at all, for they know that they are considered to be guides and leaders of the people, and that it is their highest duty to be living examples in their

every-day conduct and behavior. The president of a great nation like ours should never smoke, chew, or drink. No teacher or parent should be guilty of these habits, for they are leaders and guides, and they cannot guide with a full heart and earnest spirit unless they first walk therein themselves.

"Dr. Prince, formerly Superintendent of the Northampton Lunatic Asylum, was cited as saying that nearly half the patients at that institution came there from its use. Nearly every one will agree that tobacco is a bad thing to use, but an excellent one to sell, and the money it brings into the South is one great plea here in its favor. But no really conscientious person would care to make money by raising and selling that which is an injury to his race. Henry Ward Beecher, who has uttered many good and true things, says: 'The highest type of manliness involves personal cleanliness, self-denial of injurious indulgences, and a scrupulous regard for the comfort of others—three elements not easily combined with chewing, smoking, and spitting.'

"Helen Nash says, 'Think of it! There is no law to free a sensitive woman from her bondage to a man so wrapped up in his selfish lust as to make himself an object of loathing to his wife, and risk entailing upon his helpless children the curse of abnormal nervous organizations that will send them into all sorts of excesses to render foul and stagnant the sweet springs of existence, and cast over the fair face of nature a clouded veil of tobacco smoke. As well foul the system, and render one's self offensive by the habitual use of onions, garlic, or Limberger cheese, and expect to be tolerated in decent company. No doubt the other side will say that unre

strained tirade is no argument. I know that as well as they. But where centuries of argument has failed to imbue men with a sense of the gross impropriety, not to say evil, of a habit, 'tis time women, who are the victims of the curse, attempt to manifest a tithe of the disgust they feel. I admit I can't find language to express mine. There will have to be a new string of cussin invented before I can convey my detestation of that weed of tophet, tobacco.'

"These are strong words, my friend, but I feel them to my innermost. I have realized just such a disgust as this when forced to inhale the foul breath of some old tobacco-chewer and smoker, and not always that of a man either, for fair woman often smokes, chews, rubs, snuffs, etc., here in the sunny South. Now I will give you a list of strong reasons for eschewing the weed, which were advanced by a British anti-tobacco society in London. They are so forcible that everyone should read them. Those who use tobacco, that they may realize its evils; those who do not, that they may not form the habit in future, and others should read that they may obtain effective arguments against its use for those who are its victims.

"The British Anti-Tobacco Society published a short paper, written by a physician of high standing and extensive practice in London, in which is said, 'The habit of smoking tobacco has given rise to the following ill effects, which have come under my observation in numerous instances, and that of all the medical men with whom I am acquainted. I shall state the bad effects of this poison categorically, premising that chewing tobacco is the most injuri-

ous, smoking not much less so, and snuffing least, although also most decidedly injurious. As smoking holds a middle position of these three injurious habits, or vices, especially when adopted by the young, I shall therefore make it represent the others.

“1. Smoking weakens the digestive and assimilating functions, impairs the due elaboration of the chyle and of the blood, and prevents a healthy nutrition of the several structures of the body. Hence result, especially in young persons, an arrest of the growth of the body, low stature, a pallid and sallow hue of the surface, an insufficient and an unhealthy supply of the blood, weak bodily powers, and, in many instances, complete emasculation, or inability of procreation. In persons more advanced in life, these effects supervene at last, and with a celerity in proportion to the extent to which this vile habit is carried.

“2. Smoking generates thirst and vital depression, and to remove these the use of stimulating liquors is resorted to, and often carried to a most injurious extent. These two of the most debasing habits and vices to which human nature can be degraded, are indulged in to the injury of the individual thus addicted, to the shortening of his life, and to the injury and ruin of his offspring, if, indeed, he still retain his procreative powers—a very doubtful result—and the more doubtful when both vices are united in one person.

“3. Smoking tobacco weakens the nervous powers; favors a dreamy, imaginative, and imbecile state of existence; produces indolence and incapability of manly or continued exertion; and sinks its vo-

tary into a state of careless or maudlin inactivity, and selfish enjoyment of his vice. He ultimately becomes partially, but generally, paralyzed in mind and body; he is subject to tremors and numerous nervous ailments; and has recourse to stimulants for their relief. These his vices cannot abate, however indulged in, and he ultimately dies a driveling idiot, an imbecile paralytic, or a sufferer from internal organic disease, at an age many years short of the average duration of life. These results are not always prevented by relinquishing the habit, after a long continuance, or a very early adoption of it. These injurious effects often do not appear until very late in life.

“‘4. The tobacco-smoker, especially if he commences the habit very early in life, and carries it to excess, loses his procreative powers. If he have children, they are generally stunted in growth or deformed in shape; are incapable of struggling through the diseases incidental to children, and die prematurely. And thus the vices of the parent are visited upon the children, even before they reach the second or third generation.’

“Dr. Pidduck, in the *London Lancet*, says: ‘In no instance is the sin of the father more strikingly visited upon the children than in the sin of tobacco-smoking; the enervation, the hypochondriasis, the hysteria, the insanity, the dwarfish deformities, the consumption, the suffering lives and early deaths of the children of inveterate smokers, bear ample testimony to the feebleness and unsoundness of the constitution transmitted by this pernicious habit.

“‘Nearly every eminent physician and surgeon, both in Europe and America, who, during the last

three hundred years, has investigated the effects of tobacco upon the human system, has uttered strong language against its use. Many cases of dyspepsia, diseased liver, congestion of the brain, paralysis of the motor nerves, blindness, nervousness, and insanity have been reported, and many of them have proved fatal. A large number of most loathsome and fatal local diseases resulting from smoking are reported, such as cancerous sores on the lips, mouth, and tongue. From the heat of the pipe or cigar small blisters or wart-like pimples are formed upon the tongue, and become cancerous. In some cases, after several painful and unsuccessful excisions of portions of the tongue and mouth of the most intense sufferers, these victims of a tobacco appetite languish and die.'

“The habit of using tobacco is at war with temperance, for it is really an intoxicant as well as an incentive to drunkenness. It is essentially filthy, no matter how careful one may be in its use. The lips of a tobacco-chewer or habitual smoker are swelled and saturated with a disgusting poison; the gums are spongy and tender, and the whole mouth and throat affected by its use.

“The habit injures the voice. The smoker articulates huskily. The chewer often croaks. The snuffer speaks through his nose.

“The habit is costly. Official statistics show that more money was spent for tobacco in the United States during 1871 than for bread—the staff of life. \$350,000,000 for tobacco in its various forms. \$200,000,000 for flour within the year.

“The habit often lowers the self-respect of

those who practice it. 'I love my pipe,' said a gentleman, 'but I despise myself for using it.'

"The habit disturbs the regular pulsation of the heart. Tobacco users are thus in constant danger. Many fall dead suddenly.

"The habit weakens the mind. It enfeebles the memory, paralyzes the will, produces morbid irritability, diseases the imagination, deadens the moral sensibilities, and is, therefore, an 'assault and battery' on the nervous system, the intellect, and the soul.

"The habit is a rebellion against conscience. Those who indulge in it know that it wastes time, money, strength, and life, and tramples on the laws of nature.

"The habit is as contagious as the cholera. Every mature smoker or chewer infects dozens of youths with a desire to follow his pernicious example. Thus the evil spreads. Dr. J. R. Munroe says:

"The *nicotiana tabacum*, the tobacco plant, should be destroyed. It should be razed from the face of the earth. It should be one of the heinous offenses to cultivate it or permit it to grow. It is wholly noxious, teetotally poisonous, utterly useless, altogether villainous, has not one redeeming trait or quality, and its use affords the only positive evidence we have of total depravity," and statistics of last year say, 27,000,000 pounds of tobacco and nearly 2,000,000,000 of cigars were smoked, snuffed, and chewed in this country—an increase of about 8,000,000 pounds of tobacco and 50,000,000 cigars as compared with the year previous."

When Edith had written to her friend all these and a great many more arguments against tobacco

and reasons why it should not be used, she said, in conclusion:

“Now, my best friend, I hope you will be a friend to yourself and persevere in your efforts to free yourself forever from your worst enemy. I will remain single during my life before I will link my life with any one who is so unfortunate as to have contracted this habit without power to overcome it. But I know you *can* conquer yourself; so I wait in hope. If one year from to-day you can tell me that not once in the whole twelve months have you smoked or taken a chew, I shall then believe a radical cure has been effected, and will then consent to share your lot in life, for better or for worse. I saw a simple cure in a tiny tract not long since. It may be efficacious, and if not, can do no harm. We all know sweating will cure fever and ague and many other malarious diseases, and even, it is said, mad-dog bites; and why not the tobacco fever? But be sure, if you do sweat yourself, to put a cloth wet with cold water on your head at the time. Here comes the cure:

“‘But if you really are so enslaved that you can’t break your chains, I will help you a little. Stop to-night; don’t use any to-morrow. The first day will not be so very hard. You can get on pretty well the first day, as everybody knows who has been through the mill, as I have been. The second day is pretty bad. In the afternoon of the second day your memory is a little doubtful; you can’t exactly say whether it was one brother or three brothers that came over; you can’t exactly say whether your grandfather came from the East or the West when he settled here. But be patient the second day.

The third morning comes the tug. Now go and take an old-fashioned alcohol sweat. Place an alcohol lamp under your chair, put a blanket over your shoulders, and sweat until your skin is fairly parboiled. Then you will be just as comfortable for one day as you could wish. There is no dryness of the mouth, no disturbance of the secretions. You are perfectly comfortable for one day. The next day you are in trouble again, but not so bad as the day before. Take another sweat; take even a third, or a fourth one. Sweating does not hurt people; sometimes it is good for them. Take three or four thorough sweats, and then you will go off under easy sail, and will have no further trouble from your enemy.'

"There! I've given you facts, arguments, statistics, cures, etc., and now we will leave dry details and wind up with a pretty little parable, and drop the subject, I hope forevermore, between you and me:

"Then shall the kingdom of Satan be likened to a grain of tobacco-seed; which, though exceedingly small, being cast into the ground, grew, and became a great plant, and spread its leaves rank and broad, so that huge and vile worms found a habitation thereon. And it came to pass, in the course of time, that the sons of men looked upon it, and thought it beautiful to look upon, and much to be desired to make lads look big and manly. So they put forth their hand, and did chew thereof. And some it made sick, and others to vomit most filthily. And it further came to pass that those who chewed it became weak and unmanly, and said, We are enslaved, and cannot cease from chewing it. And the mouths

of all that were enslaved became foul, and they were seized with a violent spitting; and they did spit even in ladies' parlors, and in the house of the Lord of Hosts. And the saints of the Most High were greatly plagued thereby. And in the course of time it came also to pass that others snuffed it; and they were taken suddenly with fits, and they did sneeze with a great and mighty sneeze, insomuch that their eyes were filled with tears, and they did look exceedingly silly. And yet others cunningly wrought the leaves thereof into rolls, and did set fire to one end thereof, and did look very grave and calf-like; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.

“And the cultivation thereof became a great and mighty business in the earth; and the merchantmen waxed rich by the commerce thereof. And it came to pass that the saints of the Most High defiled themselves therewith: even the poor, who could not buy shoes, nor bread, nor books for their little ones, spent their money for it. And the Lord was greatly displeased therewith, and said, Wherefore this waste; and why do these little ones lack bread, and shoes, and books? Turn now your fields into corn and wheat, and put this evil thing far from you; and be separate, and defile not yourselves any more; and I will bless you, and cause my face to shine upon you.

“But with one accord they all exclaimed, We cannot cease from chewing, snuffing, and puffing; we are slaves.”

CHAPTER XIV.

"Dear Edith," said Sue, coming hastily, one pleasant afternoon, into the cool, vine-shaded little sitting-room of her friend; "Dear Edith, I heard that your mother had received another letter from her old friend Carrie Lena Brown, and that it contained news of my father; so I rode over with all speed to hear what it was. I know it is not good news, else my informant would have told me instead of referring me to you."

"Yes, Sue, mother did get a letter; but I would not read it if I were you. It will make you feel bad, and can do no possible good. I will tell you all you need to know, and let that suffice."

"No, Edith; I could never rest without knowing all, and therefore, if there is nothing of a private nature in the letter, I beg you will let me have it. I am prepared for the worst, as I heard he was dead. Though he was my father, yet I cannot really grieve, for now I know I shall never hear any more of his evil deeds, even if all hope of his becoming a better man is gone. I'm so glad I no longer believe in a place of torment for those unfortunately organized ones who find it so impossible to do right. Oh! how awful it would be if I thought as I once did—that all such as he would be compelled to suffer inconceivable fiery tortures during an endless eternity, with no hope of a reprieve—never, never, never!"

"Well, since you will be apt to hear, in time, at

least a garbled account of your father's last days, I will get the letter of Miss Brown for you (mother always called her "Mrs.," out of courtesy for her situation, but I prefer plain fact, if it does seem a bit hard to bear; so I say "Miss;" though why men, whether they become fathers or not, always remain simple "Mr.," while once a woman becomes some man's *property*, whether she ever is a mother or not, she is marked by a different epithet, I can't tell, unless it is to show the balance of mankind that she is *appropriated*.) But here I am philosophizing, while you are all anxiety. Somehow I don't like to be a peddler of ill news, even when I know it is better for you to hear it direct than as you otherwise will."

Edith got the letter for her friend, and then considerably left her, on pretense of speaking to her mother, to read it by herself; and as she slowly and sadly unfolds the paper, we will glance over it as she reads:

"Well, my own dear Dora, I have told you all the general news, and now I will give you the last sad scene of the drama of my youthful days. It is finished, and all is over, and when I have told you the finale I hope never to be obliged to recur to it again. You may do as you think best about informing his children of what I write. You remember my telling you of the sudden departure of Deacon Conway from this place after his deception concerning those stolen sermons. Well, I sent him my letter that I told you of, the day before he left, and hoped he would once more drop out of my life, and for good and all. But two weeks ago I went to see a friend at L——, about one hundred miles east of here, and

while there she and I took one of those pleasant walks in the woods I have always so enjoyed, and we came upon a small foot-path leading to a little spring. As I was dipping up some water in a leaf-cup, I was startled by hearing a groan, as of a person in distress. Peering through the bushes at my right, I saw the form of a man stretched upon the ground, and, hastening to the spot, I said, 'Can I do anything for you, sir?—you seem in distress.' At the sound of my voice he raised his face from the ground, and, looking up, disclosed the countenance of Charles Henry Conway. But oh! how changed! He seemed to have fallen away till only the dry skin was drawn over the bones, and death had stamped its seal on every feature. 'Water! water!' was all he could say. My friend hastened to bring some, and when he had with difficulty swallowed it he seemed to revive somewhat, and said, 'Oh! is it you, dear Carrie? And did God send you here to soothe my last hours? Four days have I lain here alone and dying, and oh! what horrible thoughts I have endured! And every night Satan comes to gloat over his expected prey. He taunts me, and casts up everything I have ever done, and defies me to show him one clean page on all my life-record, or one good, noble, true action. But, Carrie, *you* remember me when I was not all bad. You know how we used to roam those beautiful woods back of your home, hand in hand, and talk of good, true, and noble purposes. But somehow those good spells were very short, and the bad in me grew and increased daily, and after I left you, my pure guiding-star, I lost my only hold upon true goodness, and became a heartless, selfish hypocrite. Yet I believed

in my religion. That was not hypocrisy. I somehow thought that by my prayers, and reading God's Word, and building up his Church, I could doubly atone, in his eyes, for all the sins I might do. But now that it is too late, I see how I have wasted my life and caused sorrow and unhappiness to all those whom I should have blessed. I've had time to think since I've lain here suffering and helpless, but what good has it done? I am doomed, doomed! I feel already the fires of hell burning and scorching my very vitals, and the red-hot prongs of the demon's fork tossing me about in that horrid, hissing, burning lake.' He fainted as he said the last words, and we brought water and once more revived him. He opened his eyes, smiled, and handed me a letter, saying, 'I have written this for you as I lay here dying. It will tell you why I am here and thus—— But look! see! There he comes—Satan himself! He holds out his hand to me and smiles triumphantly. Yes! yes! I am yours.' And with these words he extended his feeble, trembling arm, and seemed to lay his cold, clammy fingers into some imaginary palm; then, with a wild scream and a convulsive shudder, his life went out from him forever.

"Of course we had his body taken to the house, and at the inquest I briefly told the story of our finding him dying, and that he had seemed in great mental and bodily distress, but had passed away before either of us had thought to ask him why he was there or how he happened to be in such a condition. He had been heard quarreling with a tramp some days before, and it was supposed he received his death-wound afterwards from this man, who had met or lured him to this lonely spot. I said nothing

of my letter, as it would do no good—only showed it to my friend, who promised never to reveal the secret. To you I will just briefly tell the substance of it, and a few facts I gathered afterwards from the brother, as the letter is burned now, and I can only speak from memory.

“It seems that he had been boarding for a few weeks, while carrying on a revival meeting, at a widow’s. The widow had but two children—a son of nineteen and a daughter of twenty-four. The daughter was an imbecile, almost an idiot, as regards mental development. But she was a plump, rosy-cheeked girl—rather pretty, so far as regular features went—and was unusually warm-hearted and affectionate in disposition. She was, like many of this class of unfortunates, unduly fond of the opposite sex, but had always been carefully watched and guarded by her mother and brother from all contact with strangers who might, mayhap, do her harm. The neighbors all treated her with respect, and any one of them who would have wronged her, in word or deed, would have fared ill at the hands of his townsmen.

“Mr. Conway had not been boarding there many days before it was observed that Margaret, this imbecile daughter, was trying to ingratiate herself into his affections. She would run and wait on him, hang around his chair, comb his hair, and in many childish, artless ways court his attention. A little bouquet of fresh flowers was always ready for his button-hole or lying by his plate. But the deacon was so dignified, reticent, and reserved, so pious, holy, and sanctimonious, so full of apt Scripture quotations, and altogether so proper a person, and, be-

sides, old enough to be her father, that no one feared any evil results from her attentions to him, though her mother several times apologized for her and hoped she was not intrusive. 'Oh, no, madam; not at all. Jesus, you know, said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and this girl is but a child in mind, and I like to have her about me,' said the deacon, in solemn tones. So she was left to do as she would, the deacon apparently taking no notice of her more than he would of a small child or a frolicsome kitten; but when the two happened for a moment to be alone, he would beckon her to him, take her on his lap, and hug, kiss, and fondle her, till all the little soul or mind she had was glowing with passionate ardor for him. And some sort of instinct taught her to conceal all this in the presence of others, and be to him only as a simple child.

"He used often to go to the spring where we found him, for the medicinal water, as it was called, and Margaret would plead to go along. At last the deacon said, one day, 'Let her go, madam, if she wants to. I'll see that she comes to no harm. She will be as safe with me as if she was my own child.' So she was suffered to go; and after that they went almost daily, but never staid long, and all was supposed to be right; and, indeed, how could they dream of wrong in so good a man! Was not the whole country ringing with the fame of his sermons (those same ones that he preached at your place, as he had many of them by heart), and did not God's own glory rest on his brow? But the brother of the girl several times caught the deacon's eye resting on his sister in a way he did not like, and a sudden move-

ment when he would enter the room where they were alone together would rouse a thought that something was between them; and at last he resolved to watch them one afternoon as they went to the spring, and so followed them at a safe distance, and saw them enter the little dell where we found him dying. The brother quietly drew within hearing distance, and soon saw and heard enough to realize that his poor demented sister was indeed the victim of a lecherous old scoundrel. His young blood was all on fire, and, drawing his pocket-knife, with its long, keen blade he stabbed him in the side, exclaiming, 'Die, thou hoary-headed old sinner! and may all the fiends in hell torment you for this dastardly betrayal of confidence, this foul wrong to one who already suffers under the wrath of a great and just God'—for it seems that when the girl was a mere child she had one day set her little foot on the family Bible and said it was no holier than an almanac, and hardly had the words been uttered when a big snake crawled up from between the hearthstones, and, winding around that blasphemous foot, reared its head till it looked her in the eye; whereat she screamed, fainted, and fell as one dead; and when she recovered, her reason seemed, as it were, dulled and blunted forever.

"As the brother finished his exclamation, he snatched his sister from the bleeding and apparently dying man, and hurried her home. He said nothing to his mother of what had happened, and when asked why Mr. Conway did not return with them, said he preferred staying a while, and it might be that he would not be back for some days, as he spoke of going to a distant town; meanwhile he had charged Margaret to say nothing of what had happened, or

he would kill her. And so it was that the man was left alone all those four long days, to suffer, and think, and regret what might have been.

"Margaret's brother came to see me after the funeral, and between us we agreed that silence would be our proper course; so you will use discretion in mentioning what I have written to you. I have given no names or places that would criminate him; still, were it known that I could tell who the murderer was, I might be compelled to do so. It was a hasty act, and only in a case of life or death is any one justified in taking the law in his own hands. Conway was the father of my child, but his after-conduct killed every spark of love for him out of my heart; and if I do not sorrow that he is gone, I can say I pity his long, sorrowful vigil and awful death of horror, fear, and remorse."

As Sue finished reading this chapter of sorrows, she shed a few natural tears of grief; not so much for the father that was gone as at the thought of the bad, wicked, evil life he had lived. As Edith came in, she handed her the letter, saying, "Thank you, dear; I am grieved and sorry that all this should be, but it is past recall, and cannot now be helped; so I will try to forget all, save the fact that henceforth anxiety concerning him is at rest. I have Charlie, and you, and a whole host of good, true friends, and I am daily learning more and more of the world's capabilities for giving us joy, bliss, hope, love, and all other good things. I shall simply send my brothers the paper containing the account of my father's death, supposably at the hands of a tramp, write to them what is proper to the occasion, and then let oblivion's pall cover the whole scene."

CHAPTER XV.

AUGUST, with its fields of ripening corn, has come, and already many of the leaves upon the trees are showing autumnal tints and dropping silently from the parent limb, to wither, die, and pass away forever. How brief and fleeting is all individual existence! yet how dear and precious life is to us all—how full of bright hopes, sweet anticipations, and glorious aspirations! 'Tis a great thing to have lived and known how much there is to live for; to feel that though for us life's sunny dream will soon be o'er, the world will still be filled with countless millions who will feel as we feel and rejoice as we rejoice; that as the race grows older it will grow wiser and happier, and, though pain and sorrow must come to all, they will grow less and less as the years roll on and man learns how to live rightly and happily.

Not one leaf had yet faded on the grand old tree that stood in the grassy yard at Rose Hill Mansion. Its broad, sheltering arms seemed stretched out as in a sweet benediction over the little group of girls who were once more gathered beneath its shade—Rose, Edith, Jennie, Myra, and Sue. The sunshine gleamed through the interlacing branches and fell upon the bright dresses and still brighter faces of the pleasant family circle—for they all declared themselves of one family, since all had become of one belief and one mind upon the important topics

of the day, even the politics and the social question itself. Each member of the little group was busily employed in some feminine needle-work, and the tongues were as busy as the fingers; but finally all seemed talked out, and there was a lull of utter quiet, which was at last broken by Myra, who said, in her usual blunt, outspoken way, "Well, girls, we have had Quaker-meeting long enough, and now I vote we each do something towards filling up the fleeting hours interestingly."

"All right," said Edith; "now suppose you start the ball a-rolling."

"No," said Myra; "I claim the right to be last, since it is my motion."

"I'll begin myself," said Rose, rolling up her sewing and taking from her pocket a letter. "I brought this along on purpose to read to you. It is from my Tennessee friend, who was so unfortunate as to become the victim of a scoundrel's heartlessness. Dear little Minnie! How earnestly she did sympathize with her, and how she longed to go and comfort her! I wish she was here now to rejoice in Emma's joy. Oh, Minnie! Minnie! The thought of my darling is so strong in my mind as I sit here, where we have all met together so often! Excuse me for this involuntary heart-cry, dear friends, for I could not help it. I know well that lamentation is of no avail, and that we should never nurse our grief; and I do not; but I sometimes feel such an intense longing for my only sister, my sweet, gentle Minnie, that I can't keep back the great rush of tears, sobs, and grievings. And now I've got you all weeping, and our joy is turned to woe. Dear Minnie, we miss thee, but we grieve not as those

grieve who have bitter thoughts mingling with their sorrow. All our thoughts of thee are sweet and lovely, as thou thyself wert. I do not remember one act of her young life that I would wish blotted out. Raised in an atmosphere of pure love—ah, yes, girls, she was almost perfect. She seemed to develop into a being of exquisite harmony and beauty. Oh, what a glorious woman she would have made! But she is gone, and only a sweet memory is ours.

“But here is the letter I was going to read,” continued Rose, brushing away her tears and bravely subduing her grief, that she might help to make bright the passing hours to her companions, and in the act becoming herself interested, and for the time forgetful of her sorrows.

She unfolded the letter, and read as follows :

“JONESEORO, TENN.

“MY DEAR ROSE: I have turned over another leaf in the book of my life, and love, hope, and joy flash out from its pages. You will be surprised to hear that I am to be married. Yes, I, who had expected to be an outcast, as it were, all my life, am beloved by a good, true, and noble man—aye, and respected and honored, too. He tells me that he does not think an iota less of me for what I have done and suffered. He says a rose is no less sweet to him because another has inhaled its fragrance; that my beauty is no less precious to him because another once praised it, or my caresses less charming and sweet because I once gave them to another; that so long as I love and respect him and do my duty in life henceforth, it matters not who has shared the past with me. That he loves me is certain; that I worship him I am no less sure. He says he has seen

enough of me to know that my soul is pure, and all my impulses are for good; that even the trial I have passed through has but refined, purified, and ennobled me, and I really think it has. I feel as if I had come through fire, and all the dross of evil passion and sinful selfishness had fallen off from me forever. I feel that I am even worthy of him, though it surprises me that he thinks so; for most men are so scrupulous concerning a woman's virtue, as they call it—just as if an honest, pure love could ever tarnish any woman's real goodness! Oh! I am glad, so glad, for my little Rose that she has a father; for he has legally adopted her, and she, as well as myself, will bear his name—Franklin; yes, that honored name, the name of the good old philosopher, will soon be mine, as it is already little Rose Darwin's—your namesake, yours by special request. Oh! darling Rose, precious friend! you can never know how I wept for joy when I read your kind, sensible, practical, loving, tender letter in reply to the one announcing to you my misfortune. 'Name her Rose—I ask it as a special favor—Rose Darwin.' I read the words over and over, till they sank in a sweet soothing way down into my soul; and oh! how I blessed you, darling, for that gentle imperativeness that told me you still felt that I was worthy to be your friend! Rose Darwin Franklin: may she be an honor to the name that honors her.

"But I haven't told you how or where we met—Horace Franklin and I. When Rose was six weeks old, I received a letter from my Aunt Celia in Jonesboro asking me to spend some months with her, as she was a lone woman and wanted to take some boarders, and thought it proper to have the company

of some woman, and more pleasant, too. I might have passed there as a young widow, but I scorned to be anything but my real self, and so I let Aunt Celia tell all who had need to know it my simple story, and somehow I believe I stood none the less fair on that account. I was at once taken into society and well treated everywhere. Aunt Celia says it was because I was really intelligent, interesting, and attractive, and naturally modest and well appearing. Anyhow, I soon began to enjoy myself and feel as if a great load had been lifted from my spirit. My baby is a general favorite, and Aunt Celia almost worships it. Our first boarder was Horace Franklin; he was an invalid, just recovering from a long illness, and needed a great deal of attention and amusing. I am a good reader, you know, and I used to read for hours to him. One day he asked me if I had ever read any Infidel papers. I said no, but I had once known an Infidel family, and then I told him all about 'the Darwins,' and about your naming my Rose. He listened with great interest, and said, 'If Rose was not married I don't know but I'd try to get her. You have certainly pictured her as one of earth's angels.' When I was through telling him of 'you uns,' he said, 'Well, since you love Infidels, I presume you are not afraid to read what they say on paper.' 'Oh, no,' said I; 'I've gotten bravely over my penchant for piety since I was so deceived by one of God's own mouthpieces. I tell you, Mr. Franklin, I have done a world of thinking of late, and when I found all my prayers, pleadings, and agonizings to my Maker, my Father, and best friend—as I then termed what I called God—were of no avail to either bring my lover back to me or take

from me the shame of what was called a dishonorable motherhood, I lost faith in any God at all. I knew I was really pure and innocent of all intentional sin; that I had been seduced from the right by one old in the ways of iniquity, and yet bearing on his brow the honors of years of effectual labor in the vineyard of the Lord. If so bad a man could be a beloved brother in the Church, I wanted no lot or parcel in it. I am ripe now for conversion to any belief that is true and reasonable. So if you want me to read Infidelity, I am ready to do so.' 'Go, then, and bring me that package of papers that came to-day. I've been sick all the season, you know, and have got behindhand in my reading.' I took him the papers, and he opened them, ran them over, and, showing me a "Letter from the Devil," said, 'Please read that first. This is where I left off, and I'm sure you will appreciate it, for it is full of sound sense, as well as wit and humor.'

"You remember it, Rose, of course—where Jah and Luce start out with their big bags to go to opposite ends of space and fill them with nothing, and meet again midway and mix the two bags of nothing continually and unceasingly till a thin, attenuated something is produced. Oh, I never realized before how ridiculous the idea was of making all that is from nothing.

"We read that pile of TRUTH SEEKERS—or I read while he talked and commented—day after day, till the writers all seemed special friends.

"I guess you will think I've struck up a sudden match, Rose; but remember we have been together all the time for six weeks, save the few hours devoted to sleep, or when I was busy in some other part of

the house. I was installed as hired nurse for him, you see; so I was in a situation where it was my business to be with him, and business soon became a pleasure, and the pleasure is now my heart's purest delight. He is so he can take short walks in the yard, and says in a few days we will ride out to his residence in the country, some two miles distant. He owns a nice house and farm, and we shall be—oh! so happy. Aunt Celia is to live with us, and we will be a nice family circle. He has a nephew three years old that he has adopted, and this boy will be a good playmate for little Rose. If only auntie could find a suitable companion, how complete would all our arrangements be! But she says she will never marry; that she intends some day to have a little home of her own, and choose some good woman to share it with her. And Horace says that is next best to being married; that a lone life is apt to be a selfish life; that to divide our hearts and homes with many is to make us generous in disposition, charitable in thought, and gentle, loving, and kind in our natures.

“Oh, yes, I am happy, dear Rose, and my future is full of bright prospects and golden opportunities. I hope I shall improve them and make glad and joyous the home of the man who has put his happiness in my keeping. It is a responsible position, dear Rose, to assume the happiness of a household as a wife must do. You realize this, I know, by all you have written me; and I do, too. But I shall strive, as woman never strove yet, to do my full duty to him, to myself, and to our children, our household, and our neighbors. How wide one's influence is! How much we can do for good or for ill! ‘May you be

happy' is only a wish; but to try and create happiness for others—ah! that is life as it should be.

“Good-bye, darling. I know that you rejoice with me in my love and my hopes.

“I am, as ever, yours truly, EMMA.”

“Oh, I am so glad,” said Myra. “I have so pitied that poor girl. But I see she is not made of that soft, yielding, namby-pamby nature that at the first rough blast of fortune sinks into helpless, tearful grief and lamentation; that gives up all because one venture has failed. Good for her! I glory in one woman who has sense enough to be happy even under a ban; and I rejoice to find that *rara avis*, a man who can esteem a woman all the same after another has cast her away as a worthless, neglected, crushed flower, whose perfume he had inhaled till weary of it; then it was carelessly dropped and forgotten. I know Emma will make a better wife and mother than half the girls will whom the world thinks her betters. She will win respect and honor, too, and be everywhere loved and admired for her goodness and plain, practical common sense. All this I prophesy for her, and you know I am something of a prophet, girls, and you will see this one fulfilled to the letter.”

“I shall tell her of your kind prophecy when I answer this,” said Rose, smiling and patting her friend on her shoulder. “It will help her to do battle with much that will inevitably come upon one in her peculiar position. A word of appreciation and encouragement is of great assistance to one who struggles under difficulties and the frowns of Mrs. Grundy.”

"I know we all feel glad for Emma, and glad for you, Rose, too, that your dear friend is once more so happy," said Sue. "And now, for my part, I'll tell you about my last news from my brothers; and it is pleasant news, too. They both have an increase of wages, and are still studying and improving themselves. Bill won the prize in algebra that was offered by Squire Brown, and several schools competed for it, too. It was a large edition of Shakspeare's writings; just what he had long been wanting. And Bill has the finest flower-garden in all the town; and what's better yet, he can tell the name, characteristics, etc., of every flower in it. They have joined a reading-club, and Mrs. Dean and the girls attend with them twice a week. They write that they are the happiest family in all the world. But I know they are not happier than Charlie and I are."

"Nor Norman and I," said Rose, laughing.

"And somebody else is happy enough," said Myra, laughing and blushing, as she thought of the hours spent with Willie Darwin. "And now it is your turn," said Myra to quiet, sensible Jennie Martin, who sat next to her.

"And I haven't much to say that will make a story," said Jennie; "but I will tell you of myself, and how I have progressed in the conversion of father. 'It is hard teaching an old dog new tricks,' says the proverb; and I find it only too true when one tries to change a whole lifetime of thought. I have coaxed him to read several good books—'Taylor's Diegesis,' 'The Sixteen Crucified Saviors,' 'Volney's Ruins,' and all of Paine's works; and one would think a careful perusal of these would convert

any sane, honest man. But somehow he still seems to think *real* Christianity is a good thing, whether it is true or not. Last week I sent and bought D. M. Bennett's 'Champions of the Church,' and we are now reading it aloud together, and I can see that this book is making him wince harder than any one we have yet read. We have only got through with the Introduction, which comprises in itself matter enough for several large volumes; Jesus, who is handled without gloves; 'Paul and the Evangelists,' and the 'Early Fathers;' and are now in the heart of 'Constantine the Great'—and he *was* great in wrong and iniquity, and bold and unscrupulous in his means, when striving for power, honor, or fame. I can see father seems much shaken as we read of this man, who was 'the first Christian emperor'—the first who won and wielded the power that has made Christianity the law of the land. You have all read that this emperor was converted to Christianity by a vision of the cross—'by the appearance in the clouds of the grand imperial standard surmounted by a large Greek R, with a cross of certain Greek words which signified "By this sign thou shalt conquer."' Well, 'The Champions' says this vision is related by Eusebius, and if we have no better authority than this noted falsifier for this tale, it will not make many believers. I see father has lost faith in Eusebius and all his writings since he read 'Taylor's Diegesis.' He says as so much he wrote is doubtful, and we have no means of knowing the true from the false, he don't care to take him as authority at all. 'The Champions' calls this Constantine an 'imperial paricide,' and blames him for being one prime cause

of all the horrors that have since been perpetrated under the name of the religion he established."

"Yes," said Myra, "he was a bad man; and you will find more horrible things in that book, enacted in the name of 'the religion of peace,' than in any volume you ever read. I have gone all through it, and I tell you I felt sometimes as if I wished I had hold of some of those old popes and inquisitors, and could give them a taste of the suffering and torture they inflicted upon the poor victims who were in their cruel clutches. I tell you what, girls, if I was rich I'd have that book reprinted and illustrated with chromos of every horrid implement of torture and every great historical scene of war and bloodshed that Christianity has inaugurated, and I'd have the portrait of every 'champion' made just when he was doing his vilest deed, and thus would I send them down to posterity as 'giving glad tidings of great joy' to the world. I would distribute the books gratuitously, and they would kill, at one single stroke, every feeling of love, respect, and veneration that still lingered in the mind of any good, true man or woman for Christianity as it really is."

"I believe it would," said Rose. "But as you are unable to do this big thing, and none of us can accomplish miracles, we will all do our *littles*; and as 'many littles make a mickle,' we will still do much good work in a small way. I propose, as one step, that we each set about it to liberalize all that we can, one individual in this place. I shall take Mr. Lusk, as I have been working on him some time and have made considerable progress, and the rest of you may each select whom you please, and give them all they will read of Liberal books, tracts, and papers,

and offer to argue with them, by letters, the subject of Christianity. Tell them if religion be true it will stand all tests ; and if false, no reasonable person should care to believe longer in it."

"Good !" exclaimed the girls in a full chorus.

"We'll try it," said Sue, "and in four months we'll report progress at this place."

"Or rather in Edith's room," said thoughtful Jennie, "as by that time it may be too cool for us to need the shade of this grand old tree."

"And now it's Edith's turn to amuse, interest, or instruct us," said Myra, who was usually the moving spirit of the little group.

"I think I'll sing for you a couple of songs from 'The Truth Seeker Collection,' to music of my own," said Edith "if that will fill the bill."

They all said they should be delighted, and so she went in and got the book and turned to "The Yankee Girl," page 559, which she rendered so beautifully and musically that they thought it the greatest treat they had had in a long time.

"I used to love those lines when I was a child," said Rose. "I've heard my mother sing them to us children so often, I never think of them but I seem to hear her voice and see her as she sat in her favorite corner, singing for us in the dear, mother-like, melodious sweetness that will never be forgotten while life lasts. I often think mothers should choose carefully the songs they sing for their little ones, for they make life-long impressions."

"That's so," said Edith, "for I never hear 'The Orphans,' commencing—

" 'My chaise the village inn did gain,'

but I think of mother. It was always her cradle-song for me, and for years she sang it over and over again, and, child-like, the better I knew it myself the sweeter it sounded from her lips."

"My father is no musician," said Jennie, "but he used to sing 'Robin Redbreast' to me, and I feel now as if I could engrave the lines in golden letters and always keep them hanging in my room, simple as they are, in sweet memory of the days of childhood."

"I don't think I ever heard them," said Sue. "If not too long, will you repeat them?"

"Gladly," said Jennie; and she sang as follows:

"Little bird with bosom red,
Welcome to my humble shed;
Daily near my table steal
Where I pick my scanty meal;
Doubt not, little though there be,
I will cast a crumb to thee—
Well rewarded if I spy
Pleasure in thy glancing eye,
See thee when thou eat'st thy fill,
Plume thy breast, and wipe thy bill.
Come, my feathered friend, again—
Well thou know'st the broken pane."

"I don't suppose any of you see much beauty in them," said Jennie, when she concluded the simple ditty; "but I assure you each word has a charm for me, and I can see the broken pane just as plain as can be."

"And now, Edith, for your other song," said Myra.

"Here it is, on page 577—'A Respectable Lie.'"

"I might have known you would select that,"

said Myra; "you are such a goosey about prevaricating and falsifying."

"Blessings on my good mother for it," said Edith. "She never told me an untruth or deceived me in any way, and taught me an intense love and admiration for pure, honest, unadulterated truth from my babyhood. So, you see, I should falsify my whole training if I did not speak the thing which is."

"Isn't it a blessing that there are so many good mothers!" said Rose.

"Indeed it is," said Myra. "I never knew mine, but father so often quotes her sayings, and has told me so much of her goodness, that I know she was just perfection itself; and I take after her, you see."

"In some things, no doubt," said Jennie. "But I see Edith is ready to sing, so your busy tongue may rest a bit."

Myra took the advice pleasantly, and all listened as Edith's musical voice gave melody to the excellent words of the song. There was a little demur at the evident Spiritualism embodied in the closing lines, but otherwise it was declared excellent, one verse in particular:

"The Day-star is shining on high,
And Science comes in with her conquering legions,
And every respectable, time-honored lie
Will fly from her face to the mythical regions.
The soul shall no longer with terror behold
The red waves of wrath that leap up to engulf her,
For science ignores the existence of hell,
And chemistry finds better uses for sulphur."

"We'll change *soul* to *mind*, and it's complete," said Myra.

"Yes, and now it's your turn," said Rose. "And

I've only a reply I wrote to a reverend who sent me a sharp article (as he thought) concerning some of our dead Infidel heroes," said Myra.

"I do think it is real mean of Christians to get up such falsehoods about Infidels as they do in the pulpit and in their pious papers. They turn and twist the most innocent actions of good men, and then color them up and add untruth here and there till an awful crime against morality is made to appear; then it is tracted, preached up, and fulminated from every church organ in the country. It does seem hard that a man must be made to appear vile and criminal simply because he cannot believe what to him seems incredible. And if we Infidels go to work and hunt up evinces, proofs, and facts, and kill all these scandals dead, it will be but a few years, or may be months, ere they are again resurrected by some one who is more zealous than wise or scrupulous, and again the story is published and sent on its rounds, only to be again refuted, nailed, and killed. There are few living Infidels who have not suffered from misrepresentation and wilful slander, but they can live it down, or bring living witnesses of its falsehood, while our dead heroes must have their bright records stained, tarnished, and blurred all over with foul slimes, and we able to do so little to defend them. The pulpit has aptly been called 'the coward's castle.' And pious publications *know too well* that Infidel defense once admitted to their columns, few chances would be left for sensational incidents concerning Infidels; and they realize also that hell destroyed, and Infidels really moral, would knock the props from under godology at once.

"But girls, I'll get my breath again and then read

you what has so excited me ; here is the article in *The Christian Review*—Bro. Franklin's pious Ohio paper. And this stuff is about as true as were his tales of converted Infidels that he used to rehearse to his hearers when he was at this place a few years ago, and the author carefully hides his identity under the general name 'A Disciple.' Of Hume he can only say that the old philosopher gives utterance to this sentiment : 'Doubt, uncertainty, and suspense of judgment appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject,' *i. e.*, the future life. And this is certainly fair and honest reasoning. Had Hume lived till to-day, he would have advanced into pure Atheism, and felt that 'one world at a time' was enough. And *one* was all that it needed man to know of. Of Rousseau he writes : 'He eulogized Christ,' and said 'The life and death of Jesus were those of a God.'

"This may be true, and if it be, it only proves the man was not a real unbeliever when he said it, and perhaps at no time. Many are Infidels in the eyes of the pious who only doubt certain points of doctrine and yet accept a God, and even the son of a God as real identities. Hobbs says, 'I am about to take a leap in the dark.' Is not that what every Christian does? All who are not certain in their own minds concerning the future, 'take a leap in the dark.' Those who are certain, may be all wrong, but yet not feel that they are 'in the dark.' Fancy and feeling are all the difference. Two travelers are journeying towards an unknown island. One believes it to be a perfect paradise, the other thinks it only a common, every-day world, while a third comes from the opposite direction, and believes there is no island

at all. A pilot-boat (Death on board) meets them, blindfolds each in turn, then takes them shoreward. The first leaps from the boat full of faith, hope, and belief; he finds what? According to his belief, a heaven. According to the belief of No. 2, a world similar to this; and No. 3 ends all in eternal oblivion. It is really 'a leap in the dark' for them all, though in fact the Infidel has philosophy, reason, common sense, and negative proof all on his side. The world has been measured, its oceans explored and thoroughly canvassed, till scientific research proves there is really no room for such an island (a heaven), and no place in all the wide domains where such a vast region could be located.

"The dying Paine said to his female attendant, 'If ever the devil had an agent on earth, I have been one.' And when this woman was asked what she thought of the 'Age of Reason,' she answered, that, 'from a conviction of its evil tendency she had burned it,' and Paine replied, 'I wish all its readers had been as wise.' Now all this is pure calumny. The real friends of Paine deny it, and prove that women were hired and bribed to tell these lies. Living witnesses can swear to this as a fact. And if Paine ever called on the Lord or Jesus in his death agony to help him, it may have been done as many now call upon Jupiter, and swear by that heathen deity; though why should not Paine call upon God when he did believe in a wise, kind, beneficent creator? He was no Atheist, but a pure Deist who revered his God too highly to believe him guilty of all the vile actions and deeds the Bible writers ascribe to him. Again, when a man is crazed with pain or insane, he might use the 'played-

out' expression of his youth from weakness or loss of reason. The dying often babble of childish things, and are, in fancy, once more children in thought and feeling.

"As to all this tirade about Madame Bonneville, they are proved lies. She went to law about the calumny, and got damages too, though the judge himself 'thought the lies were useful though false,' 'on account of the religious opinions of Paine, which were thus discouraged.' If a Christian judge can in this way prejudice a jury against known facts because he thinks the false statements will advance the cause of Christ, what may we not expect from penny-a-liners all over the world? But the day has come when all beliefs are being tested in the crucible of science, and only fact and truth will come out victorious and triumphant."

"I guess your pa has not made much out of you this time," said Edith; "but come in, girls, mother signals that supper is ready."

CHAPTER XVI.

"December comes ! The last, the worst,
The latest of the twelve is here ;
I list its moan, I hear its shriek—
The requiem of the dying year.
Ply well the fire—peace dwells within—
And hearts of friends are closer knit,
As gath'ring in bright festive groups
Around the cheerful blaze they sit."

THE four allotted months have passed away and once more our lively, cheery little band of Liberals have met together according to promise, at Rose Hill Mansion, and are seated by the cozy, cheerful fire of the open grate in Edith's pleasant little sitting-room. Social, kindly greetings have been exchanged and bits of neighborhood gossip discussed, and at last came a lull in the chatter of busy tongues, and Edith brought in a great pan of rosy-cheeked apples and a plate of pears. When these had done full duty toward satisfying the healthy young appetites, Myra spoke up and said, "Now, Rose, please give us your experience as disseminator of facts *vs.* fiction and reality *vs.* myths, and let us know how you have succeeded in converting Mr. Lusk from the error of his ways."

"Well," said Rose, smiling, "I think I have no reason to be dissatisfied. Four months is not long to work in, but as I told you before, I had already prepared the way by lending him TRUTH SEEKERS and tracts, and so after our agreement I went at

it in good earnest and got him to read 'Graves' Crucified Saviors,' Bennett's various discussions, and 'Volney's Ruins,' and by that time he did not need any more help. He has improved rapidly since he has had time to study, and all his family have gone along with him. He subscribed for *THE TRUTH SEEKER* last week, and one year of that will eliminate the last particle of theology and mythology from his mind that is now remaining in it. But I did not stop with Mr. Lusk, for I started up a correspondence with a lady and a gentleman besides. The latter is a preacher, and so my correspondence with him is really improving to me, as he is well posted on his side, and can therefore all the better comprehend my arguments, and see when his are demolished. I will give you just one page of my reply to his last letter for a sample as to how our correspondence is progressing and what we talk about. You will see that I use Quaker phraseology somewhat, having been used to writing that way more or less all my life." And thus saying, Rose read as follows:

"Friend David, thee says: 'You laud "Tom Paine," and yet he can surely be convicted of knowing deception, if not of downright lying from his own book.'

"Now if this be so, will thee please tell me where it may be found?

"I have always believed Mr. Paine to be better than the average of men—purer, nobler, and far less selfish. I have esteemed him as one who scorned to lie, and who was willing to sacrifice much for what he believed to be truth.

"If I can be convinced by any proof of thine that

he was not morally good and true, I shall cease to praise his character henceforward and forever. True, that will not affect his statement as regards the Bible or religion, but it will go far to show that he was quite fallible in his own person; still I doubt very much thy ability to do what thee offers to do, that is, 'show this to be so.' Thee says, 'If Paine be a liar or deceiver, why do you praise him?'

" 'If,' there is the point. I think it is all, and nothing else, so I wait for proof. I would no sooner indorse the character of a bad Infidel than I would that of a bad Christian, and I believe I would sooner see the former go to the wall from very shame of having such ones found in our ranks. I never indorsed or in any way encouraged Mr. Wilbur after I believed him guilty of falsehood. I admired his ideas upon some subjects, but despised the man. I am personally acquainted with some Infidels whose lives are not moral or good; and I have no more charity for the shortcomings of these than I have for those of Christians who do not believe theologically as I do."

"We Infidels do not profess to be 'washed in the blood of the Lamb,' or to be 'baptized into Christ,' thus getting purified from 'original sin;' but we claim to have inherited tendencies towards evil-doing, and know that we are liable to err. We make no pretensions to being 'lights,' 'guides,' and all that, but simply try to do as nearly as we can what we think right, and do not offer a premium for sin by promising, under certain circumstances and conditions, to remit and forgive it, for we know we must accept the legitimate consequence of every act of our lives, and that not one wrong deed can ever

be atoned for. We realize that each evil act leaves its mark indelibly impressed upon the record-leaves of our book of life.

"I appreciate thy kind wish to do something 'for my soul's sake' just as much as if thee wished me any real good or real blessing, for I know thee is in earnest and means it. But to me the wish would sound just as reasonable if thee had said, 'I wish you to believe for the sake of the eternal happiness of the central drop of water in yonder mill-dam.' I am just as certain that that drop of water will be eternally happy or miserable as that my soul will, and even more so; for the drop of water is a real entity, whereas soul is nothing.

"As to 'will not believe,' please render it 'cannot believe.' The will does not influence belief. Thee could not disbelieve in the resurrection of Jesus, with thy present feelings and evidences, if thee *willed* to do so ever so hard. In fact, thee could not even will at all. Thee is compelled, by thy organization, training, and evidences, to believe precisely as thee does believe. Could I believe that the veritable lamp of Aladdin was hidden in some cave of the Virginia mountains if I *willed* to do so ever so hard? Could I will to believe it? No; for I am certain it is not there, because it never could have existed. And it is precisely as impossible for me to believe in all the theological paraphernalia which thee has such faith in, because I know that, like that lamp, they are all myths and impossibilities. And why, then, condemn me for what I *cannot* believe? Thee says I have 'turned the testimonies aside on the slightest suspicion.' Can I help that when to me they are not testimonies at all? How much

weight does thee allow to the testimony which is given to prove the wonderful miracles which are said to have occurred amongst the Mormons, Spiritualists, and Catholics, and which can be testified to by living witnesses—hundreds and thousands of them, many of whom would die to prove the truth of what they think they saw? And there are millions of miracles that are claimed to have taken place during the early ages of Christianity, and the testimony to all of these thee ‘casts aside on the slightest suspicion,’ because thee knows that, in the nature of things, it cannot be true.

“Arnold says that you ‘construct a magnified and non-natural man, by dropping out all that in man seems a source of weakness, and inserting its contrary, and by heightening to the very utmost all that in man seems a source of strength, such as his thought and love, and then call it God. The objection to the magnified man and to the men etherealized (angels) is one and the same: we have absolutely no experience whatever of either the one or the other. . . . The reasons drawn from miracles one cannot but dismiss with tenderness, for they belong to a great and splendid whole—a beautiful and powerful fairy-tale, which was long believed without question, and which has given comfort and joy to thousands. And one abandons them with a kind of unwilling disenchantment.’

“Does not thee see, then, friend David, that all of the whole chain of theological belief is, as Arnold says, ‘a fairy-tale’—not all ‘beautiful,’ though, for dark shadows are reflected upon it by thoughts of hell and its torments, and the hell upon earth that millions have endured under its bigotry and tyranny.

But the loving memories, sweet hopes, and precious thoughts that have clustered for ages around this 'fairy-tale' have cast a glamur over many and many a mind that might else have detected its fallacies and falsehoods."

"But I shall weary you, girls, if I read longer; so I will now tell you a little about my lady correspondent; and then give way to one of the rest. I have been writing to Miss Pansie for several years. She lives in California now, but lived in Tennessee when we were there. We have heretofore quietly ignored the subject of religion in our correspondence; she, because she was afraid she might hear something that would upset her faith; and I, because I never like to bore any one on a topic they do not care to talk upon. But we Infidels have too long simply acted upon the defensive. Now, since the scandalous proceedings of Comstock and other fanatics, I think it is time we became aggressive; that is, each one of us must take up the work individually, and do all we can to spread and circulate the principles of Freethought, supply all who will read with tracts, books, and papers, and coax others and still others to talk, read, and write upon the great and all-important theme. We must work while it is yet day if we would save the liberties we now have or obtain our full rights under the law. I think I shall not be able to make much impression upon Miss Pansie. She is one of the too numerous class of women who do not want to know anything but 'Christ and him crucified.' In her last letter she says:

"Some persons have thought more on this subject than was good for them—have thought till they hardly knew what they did think; but I am very

certain that I am not going to let this little brain of mine take in more at a time than it can digest. Nothing on earth makes me madder than to hear an Infidel run down Christianity. I know that neither you nor any one else can alter my belief. I know that God did some things in olden times which seem strange to us, but he knows his business a great deal better than we do, and I am willing to leave it all to him. I feel that, if I were to read anything against him, he would feel like forsaking me entirely."

"Her last argument reminds me of what our partner's wife, Mrs. L——, once said when Mr. Darwin offered to fix her sewing-machine on Sunday. 'Oh, no! I'm afraid it would never sew another stitch for me if you do it on the Lord's day,' was her plea. I shall not give up all hope of Miss Pansie, however, but will drop a hint here and a thought there, and so work gradually towards the great end in view."

As Rose concluded her narrative, Jennie said she would now tell her little story, and, laying aside her sewing (for the girls were none of them idlers, and when one was talking or reading the rest were generally sewing, knitting, or crocheting), Jennie spoke as follows:

"In the first place, I want you to congratulate me, all of you, for I've completed the conversion of my dear father. It has been a blessed four months' labor with me, and no missionary ever worked harder or more faithfully than I have; and exceeding great has been my reward. It is hard to change the opinions of the old, as you all know, and father had such an intense love for his religion that it was like tearing away the very foundations of his existence. His clerical brethren have been doing all they could to

keep him in the fold, but his great honesty and devotion to truth have brought him out safely. Once assured that there were flaws in his belief, he set seriously about it to separate the true from the false; and whoever does this rarely fails to land where we all did—on the shores of Atheism. Long, long ago Pascal said to the Jesuits, ‘The world is getting mistrustful, and no longer believes things unless they are evident to it;’ and this is daily growing to be more and more a fact. People do not swallow all manner of miracles as they once did. Father says he is satisfied now that all gods are but a gradual development; that from worshiping many material, visible objects men passed on to adoring the sum and substance of all things in the one great source of light, heat, and life—the sun; and from this sun-worship grew and developed a worship of the great invisible spirit, as they termed it; and this is now being resolved into *nothingness* by scientific scrutiny and research, and ere long we shall see the great masses of the civilized races settling down upon the hard-pan of fact and reality.

“So you see, girls, he is just where I have tried to lead him; and oh! am I not rejoiced! I have been trying also to get neighbor Mills to read and think for himself a little. You know he is a hot-headed, enthusiastic Methodist, and is always arguing with all who do not believe as he does. He flatly refused at first to read any tracts or papers that were Infidel in tendency. But I told him he was so good at fighting all other denominations and proving the supremacy of his own, that I thought he ought to be willing to take one round with an Infidel, especially when his opponent was only a girl. He laughed

then, and said he would read just one book to please me. 'And will you criticise it for me, and say what you do not believe in it, and why?' said I. 'Yes, I'll do that too,' he replied. And so I gave him 'Bennett's Thirty Discussions.' And yesterday I received this letter from him, which I will read to you:

"'FRIEND JENNIE: I am afraid you will have much to answer for. It is now over three months since I received that book from you. I commenced at the first page and read the "Discussion on Prayer." I was greatly disturbed by it, I tell you. The man seemed honest, but so blasphemous! He shocked me terribly by talking as he did about Moses and the Midianites, and calling the Bible-God "fickle, changeable, cruel, and malicious." Then I read "The Snake Story," "The Flood," etc., and by this time I had got so muddled up that I put the book away and went at the Bible; but I couldn't make the old volume read right any more. Somehow your Mr. Bennett had spoiled the whole of it by his searching comments and queries. However, I prayed and read, and read and prayed, and when I had got in a good frame of mind again, and thought I could stand it, I took up Bennett once more. His "Arraignment of Priestcraft" gave me food for thought for a whole week. Then I got on "Elder Shelton" and "The Flood," and before I had finished that I just gave right up and said I would no longer try to smother my convictions, even if they led me into Atheism itself; and I really think I have lost my belief in a personal God and a Savior. Sometimes I think it is all a dream; then, again, I find myself wondering if I am not really on the road to hell, and

if it is not all the work of the arch-fiend himself. I hear your father has also turned Infidel; and I am coming over to your house next Sunday to ask you both innumerable questions, which, if you can answer satisfactorily, will, I trust, lead me out of the tangle. If I can see and understand how the world can exist without a creator, and how things can be as they are, and all move along harmoniously while there is no hand at the helm, then I may be able to accept Atheism. But, Miss Jennie, I have one great stumbling-block to encounter—that is my wife. She is such a stanch church-member, and her whole heart is in her church. I fear she will almost go crazy if she finds out that I no longer believe in Christianity. I hope you will, therefore, keep all this from her till I really know what I do believe. Then we will enlighten her by degrees, and maybe lead her along slowly to—well, where I shall be. Sunday will, I hope, decide that. Till then, anxiously

“ ‘Yours, JOHN MILLS.’ ”

“You have done miracles,” said Myra, as Jennie finished her letter. “It takes preachers’ children to convert believers in myths into believers in common sense realities; and now we will hear from Sue.”

“You won’t hear much, then,” said the little woman thus appealed to. “You see, I tried to do too much, and didn’t accomplish anything at all. Charlie gave me ten dollars, and I bought a lot of tracts, and stamps, and stationery, and sat down and wrote to six of my old school-girl companions and sent a package of tracts to each one. Well, three of them sent my letters and tracts back; two of them coldly answered that they would prefer not to correspond on religion, and said they had burned

the tracts; and the other one said she was already an Infidel. By this time two months had gone by, then I began missionarying at home by calling on my neighbors and talking and reading to them, and struck up a correspondence with one or two, but accomplished nothing at all, save getting three subscribers to *THE TRUTH SEEKER*."

"Well, *that* is something," said Rose. "Every subscriber to that paper becomes a fountain from which start numerous streams of living light. You see, whoever reads it almost invariably learns to like it, and just as soon as he becomes imbued with its spirit he commences lending it, mailing off copies here and there, and, ere long, establishes minor fountains in various localities, which also send out streams in still other directions. I know this to be a fact from experience with our one copy. I can point out so many places where it has made little depots of light—little nucleuses from which emanate new Liberals and new truth lovers. You have done more than you think, Susie, by getting those three subscribers."

"It's your turn now, Edith," said Myra.

"Well," said Edith, "I found two good correspondents, both Campbellite preachers, and have sent them lots of tracts and papers, and wrote them four letters apiece, and received as many replies, but neither of them seems to be at all inclined to feel beaten in the argument. But I think I have greatly improved myself by the correspondence; for I have had to read, and hunt testimony, and combat arguments, and bestir myself considerable to keep the upper hand of them. Perhaps they would say I had not done it, anyhow; but I have read the letters of

both, and my replies, to members of their church here, and all tell me I completely use them up, not that I claim any great merit for doing so, for, with truth on my side, it would be a signal disgrace not to have the best of the argument.

"As letter-reading has always been one of our pet amusements, as well as a means of much good information, I will read my last reply to Mr. Bush, as I happen to have it with me," and Edith drew a closely-written sheet from the envelope, and read as follows:

"FRIEND BUSH: As you object to being called Rev., I address you in Mrs. Darwin's kindly, familiar style—simply as 'friend.' And now, in answer to your question as to whether I believe Paul had an existence, I will say that I have no particular reason to doubt that there was a Paul who lived about the time the Bible Paul is said to have existed, and whose biography may be, in some respects, therein correctly written. But there is much that is unknown about him. It is not certain that he was a Roman citizen, nor is it certain that he was so unfriendly towards women, and all his life remained a cross-grained, sour old bachelor, without due personal cause or reasons. It is said that he only became a Christian because Gamaliel, whose disciple he was, refused him his daughter in marriage. The story of his ascension to the third heaven is very mythical; and as for 'dates,' the learned 'have searched in vain for the year and the day in which St. Paul assisted to stone St. Stephen and to guard the mantles of his executioners.' They also dispute the year in which he was thrown from his horse and saw that miraculous light at mid-day,

and supposed he heard a 'celestial voice' exclaiming, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Nor do they know the year of his death, or the 'date' of any of his letters, many of which have been thrown away as spurious. Though some good and wise sayings are attributed to 'this frothy-spouted Paul,' I was never one of his admirers, for he is rabid and uncharitable—the Bible pictures him as 'breathing threatenings and slaughter'—and his writings have done more to keep woman from being educated and prepared for her proper sphere than have all other hindrances for the last thousand years. He was hawk-nosed, bald-headed, crooked-legged, dumpy, and fat; but this was his misfortune, not his fault, though doubtless it was one cause that kept from him the love of woman and rendered him morose and cynical towards the sex which is ever an admirer of the beautiful, the great, and the noble. But then he was 'full of the grace of the Lord,' and that should have made them blind to all other defects. But it is not our sex alone that Paul depreciates, but he even attempts to lower Christ himself, calling him inferior even to the angels—'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.' How do you adorers of Jesus like this—he whom you love better than your God to be thus placed beneath common angels? You who pretend he is equal with God himself? Paul also makes all true Christians to be 'children of God and joint heirs with Christ'—equal with him in heirship of all things and in all qualities. Nor do I believe the history that records of Paul the fact that after his head was struck off by the executioner it did, with a loud and distinct voice, utter forth, in He-

brew, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, while, instead of blood, it was nought but a stream of pure milk that flowed from his veins, so that the milky wave flowed all over the executioner's arm.'

"In a church at Rome, not long since, and, for all I know, at this day, they show a place, called the 'Three Fountains,' as the identical spot where 'the milk spouted forth from his apostolic arteries, and where his head, after it had done speaking, took three jumps, to the honor of the Trinity, and at each spot on which it jumped there instantly sprung up a spring of living water, which retains at this day a plain and distinct *taste of milk*.' Yet these historical statements, pious and holy men solemnly assure us, are reliable and true. But, as I have before said, I prefer science to history, and science has never yet shown that a god can speak, a man be caught up to the third heaven, or even a first heaven, or that any man ever had his veins filled with milk, which did duty as blood.

"You inquire what imperfection I can mark in a real Christian. Please define what constitutes a 'real Christian,' and then I will judge of his perfection.

"'Why reject the Roman and Jewish history of Jesus?' is your next query. I ask, why reject the history of 'the man in the moon,' or the story of 'Pocahontas?' Are not both as well substantiated as this story of Jesus? Do we not often find mention in books of this wonderful man? though sometimes he is called a woman who was banished there for gathering a few sticks of wood on Sunday; and it is not very long since everybody believed in Pocahontas as the savior of Captain Smith.

“And now for your remarks upon Essenism. It is impossible to specify particularly what individual Christians were changed from Essenism to Christianity, as the two sects seem to have become merged into one another at the time when Christianity first became known as a sect, and Essenism disappeared forever at the same period. It is so long ago that little can be told of the particulars, but we do know that the tenets, ideas, principles, rites, and ceremonies of the two were so nearly similar that there is no dividing line. After throwing out the spurious passage in Josephus, we find no mention in all his works of Christians, yet he wrote about at the time when the doctrines of Christianity were first openly taught, and he surely would have mentioned them, when he was speaking of the other religions thereabout, had they then been known as Christians. But he does speak of the Essenes, and describes them precisely as you describe the first Christians; as being opposed to marriage, and living single lives, as Paul and Christ are said to have done; as despising riches; being communists; having no continued abiding place; giving to every one that had need, and (if he be a church member) saying grace before meat; being ministers of peace; taking no oaths, except when a new member is admitted, then ‘he is obliged to take tremendous oaths, doctrinally.’ They honored God and Moses, obeyed their elders, rested on the seventh day, even to making no fires, were abstemious in diet, simple in dress, prayed in secret, and had secret doctrines, which were taught only to the initiated.

“De Quincy says, ‘If they were Christians without Christ, then Christianity was invented by man.’

"Philo Judeus was born at Alexandria about twenty years before the Christian era, and he, too, fails to mention the Christians, though he gives a long account of the Essenes in language similar to that of Josephus, making them to be Christians in belief and act, but not in name. Pliny also describes the Essenes; but as he died A. D. 79 he could not have spoken of real Christians when he did so, as he says 'they had subsisted through the lapse of centuries,' and, a century before him, Christ was not in existence, save as a third part of the Father.

"When we consider the low state of morals and the warlike disposition of the people at the time when Christianity first became known, and then read of the pure morality inculcated by the Christians as compared with the conduct of those surrounding them, is it not certain proof that they were only evolved Essenes? Goodness, morality, and purity are of slow growth, and they cannot be jumped into at once like a new suit of clothes, but must be incorporated into the mentality by long continued endeavors. Therefore it is evident that the first Christians were not ignorant fishermen, as is pretended, but in reality Essenes and philosophers, moralists and thinkers, many of whose thoughts are far in advance of even this enlightened age and generation.

" 'The gods,' says Xenophanes, 'did not from the first show to men all things; but in time, by searching, men came to a discovery of the better.' And that *better*, in my humble judgment, is real scientific knowledge. But perhaps, friend Bush, I am taking up too much of your valuable time by writing so

long a letter, so I will abruptly close and subscribe myself Yours *not* in Christ, EDITH MAY."

"I think you have been studying Rev. Robert Taylor pretty severely, haven't you?" asked Rose, as Edith closed her letter.

"Yes; I have read him and Voltaire both, and several other authors; and the more I read, the more I marvel how any one who studies the *past* of Christianity can have a grain of faith in it. I don't wonder that so many students of theology fail to make preachers. They learn too much of the nature of the whole thing to have faith in any of it, and a conscientious man would sooner starve than teach what he knows is false. And now, Myra, it is your turn."

"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excelleth them all," said our merry friend, laughing. "I started off the morning after our compact on a lecturing tour, and in the course of it I delivered over one hundred lectures, mixing physiology, Liberalism, and sociology in every one, and at the close of each meeting I sold Liberal books, papers, and tracts, and got subscriptions to half a dozen different Intidel papers, giving the preference to our favorite TRUTH SEEKER, of course. I got home last night, and find I have sold ninety dollars' worth of books, got two hundred subscriptions to papers, sold and given away thirty dollars' worth of tracts, and have cleared just twenty dollars more than my expenses, and that will just pay my own subscription to the various papers I take. Besides all the rest, I have picked up some twenty correspondents on my tour, some of them awful pious, some inquirers, and some real come-outers, who write because it is good, for

truth-seekers to exchange experiences and encourage and enthuse each other by so doing."

"I think we have all done wonders," said Rose ; "and I hope it will encourage us to continue our labors as long as men believe in the preternatural and supernatural, in gods made out of ideals, in posthumous rewards and punishments, in faiths they dare not examine, in fables and legends of old, effete, and barbarous ages, and denounce inquiry and investigation concerning these things as being sinful, wrong, and wicked."

"Yes," said Edith, "I, too, hope we shall all be lifetime-workers in whatever cause seems most to need our aid. Let each of us now choose our winter's work in this line. Shall we?"

"Agreed," said each and all.

"I will add an hour of scientific teaching in natural history to each music lesson I give," said Edith, "and ground my pupils in the known facts concerning animal and vegetable life, and gradually teach them the theory of development. I have Darwin and Hæckel pretty well by heart, and think I can do some good work that way. My friend Sisson Williams is coming twice a month to deliver lectures for me on the subject, and I think that will be an inducement for the parents to attend also, for, as you all know, he has a real gift for oratory."

"And how does he succeed in conquering his habit of tobacco-using," asked Myra, blunt and plain as of old.

"Oh ! I have strong hopes of him," said Edith. "He tells me he has sweat it all out of him, and thinks he shall never crave it any more, beyond his ability to conquer his desires."

"I am truly glad of it," said Myra. "Whoever conquers a bad habit does the noblest and best work for himself possible, and also encourages others to do likewise. A lecturer, preacher of truth, or any one who attempts to guide others, should be especially free from all acknowledged evil habits. So for his own sake as a man and a public advocate of our cause, and for your sake, dear Edith, as one who hopes to share his fate and fortune, I am truly glad it is well with him."

"I shall write a series of articles on Woman's Equality," said Jennie, "and shall take up an advanced position upon the subject. I shall make it my life-work to place my sex upon a full equality with man, and perhaps elevate her above him in the scale of humanity, where she shall no longer be simply mother, sister, and wife, but the great head and source of continued human existence—the last, best, and noblest development of our earth. She shall be mistress of herself, guide, teacher, and instructress of her children, and shall become a mother only when she desires so to be."

"Yours will be truly a great work, Jennie," said Rose. "I am afraid an up-hill one, too."

"That is what I like," answered Jennie. "I want opposition ; it fires me up and strengthens my position."

"But how about Comstock?"

"Oh, I do not fear him or his backers. I shall use proper, correct, and scientific language in speaking of these things, and be courteous and kind to all, and then risk the consequences. If I am fined and imprisoned for telling my honest opinions upon one of the greatest and most important subjects of

the day, I shall make the best of it, that is all. I shall write and talk on all the great reforms, but this one of sociology is to be my main working field, and I hope to accomplish much in it."

"And I," said Sue, "have chosen temperance as my winter's work. I shall talk, write, and practice it. Temperance, first as regards all spirituous liquors, and then temperance in all things."

"You have a large field to work in," said Myra, laughing. "Are you not afraid of being lost amongst the bushes?"

"Not a bit; for Charlie would find me, let me go where I would," said Sue. "I'm little, it is true, but I can do big things if I try. There are four rum-shops in our town, and I'm going to have the last one of them shut up by spring. Charlie is going to help me, and he knows all I don't know, so how can we fail?"

And right here let me tell you, dear reader, she did not fail. Few do fail when they go to work with full hearts and willing hands in a good cause.

"I shall make another lecturing tour," said Myra, and sell books, papers, and tracts, and get new subscribers to our papers. I think I can make it pay in all ways. Father is going to visit his old home, where he was brought up, in York state, so he will not need me. We shall close up the house, and each be at full liberty to follow the bent of our inclinations."

"And what will Willie do?" asked Sue.

"Why, keep on working in the factory, of course," said Myra.

"Oh! I meant what will he do without his inseparable companion, for you have, to my certain

knowledge, been together five nights out of a week for months past," said Sue, teasingly.

"Well, haven't you and Charlie been together seven nights out of a week and a dozen times a day as well?"

"Oh! but we are married folks, and have to be together," said Sue."

"And we like each other's society, and so meet when we can," said Myra, laughing. "But I'm going, anyhow; and if 'absence conquers love,' it must be; but I have all *faith*, and so shall live on hope."

"Yes, Willie is too sensible to want to keep you from doing a good work," said Edith, "and you will enjoy corresponding, and finally a reunion, all the better for the parting."

"And now what shall you do, Rose?" asked Myra, turning to that representative of the Darwin family.

"I shall attend to my household affairs first, cooking, sewing, knitting, etc., do my part towards keeping up a friendly social feeling amongst our neighbors by visiting them in their homes and showing an interest in them and their aims and pursuits, write upon various reforms for my pet papers, and help to get up a library association and reading-room for our village," said Rose.

"I vote that we write to each other once a month, all of us," said Myra, "and tell our little experiences and suggest and receive advice from each other."

To this all agreed.

And now having followed out the workings of the precious seeds of Liberalism as sown by the small and uninfluential family of the Darwins

thus far, and seen our favorite heroines all develop into enthusiastic, earnest workers for the highest good of humanity, and having moored all the incidental characters in safe and happy harbors, save the few who have passed away forever, we will now bid our readers a kind and affectionate adieu.

Life's golden hours! How fast they fly!
Work while the sun shines bright on high;
Work while thy strength is in its prime,
And for the right, work all the time.
The seeds of truth sow far and wide,
And in the labor take due pride;
Build on foundations firm and sure,
And live a life that's good and pure.
Example from "The Darwins" take,
And love the truth for truth's own sake.
Go! seek the highest good of all—
Attend to Duty's slightest call.
Bend every circumstance you can
To make a heaven on earth for man;
And equal rights to woman give,
Then you a happy life will live.

THE TRUTH SEEKER LIBRARY.

THE WORLD'S SAGES, THINKERS AND REFORMERS. Containing sketches of some three hundred of the most distinguished Philosophers and Teachers that have lived in the world, beginning with Menu and coming down to the present time. By D. M. Bennett. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Over 1100 pages. Crown-octavo. Cloth, \$3.00; Leather, \$4.00; Morocco with gilt edges, \$4.50.

THE CHAMPIONS OF THE CHURCH, BEING BIOGRAPHICAL sketches of Eminent Christians from the earliest to the latest times. Soon to appear. It will contain full accounts of Christian wars, persecutions, tyranny, and wrongs, for more than fifteen hundred years, making in the aggregate a full Church history. By D. M. Bennett. Over 1000 pages. Crown-octavo. Cloth, \$3.00; Leather, \$4.00; Morocco, gilt edges, \$4.50.

ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF. By Viscount Amberley, son of Lord John Russell, twice Premier of England. An elaborate examination into the faiths of the world, the sacred writings, the sacraments and religious ceremonies, the principal Saviors, Messiahs, Redeemers and Great Teachers that have appeared in the past. Complete in one volume, crown octavo, from the London edition. Cloth, \$3.00; Leather, \$4.00; Morocco and gilt edges, \$4.50.

THE GREAT WORKS OF THOMAS PAINE, Complete, containing his theological writings and his chief political works. It contains Common Sense, The Crisis, The Rights of Man, The Age of Reason, The Examination of Prophecies, Reply to Bishop Llandaff, Letter to Mr. Erskine, Letter to Camille Jordan, an Essay on Dreams, of the Religion of Deism, etc. with a Life of Paine by Calvin Blanchard, and a steel-plate engraving of Paine. In one volume, crown-octavo. Cloth, \$3.00; Leather, \$4.00; Morocco and gilt edges, \$4.50.

SUPERNATURAL RELIGION. By Prof. W. K. Clifford, F.R.S. This remarkable and very able work was published anonymously in London, in three volumes, octavo, and doubtless excited more attention and criticism from theologians than any similar work that has appeared for the last century. It is unquestionably the ablest examination into the claims of Supernatural and Revealed Religion of any work that has as yet appeared. It exhausts the subjects of Miracles, The Synoptic Gospels, The Fourth Gospel, The Acts of the Apostles, The Resurrection, and the Ascension, and contains full replies to the author's critics. Published complete in one volume, from the last London edition, including Greek and Hebrew quotations. The English edition cost \$12.50. The price of this complete edition, in cloth, \$3.50; leather, red edges, \$4.50; morocco, gilt edges, \$5. The five volumes here designated sent by mail, in cloth, at \$12.50. By express, \$11; in leather, by mail, \$15; by express, \$12.50. Morocco and gilt, by mail, \$20; by express, \$12.

Biographical Sketches of Eminent Christians.

A COMPANION BOOK OR COUNTERPART TO "THE WORLD'S
SAGES, INFIDELS AND THINKERS.

Will be issued early in 1877. Containing a correct history of such distinguished ornaments of the Church as St. Paul, Eusebius, Constantine, St. Cyril, Clovis, Pepin, Charlemagne, Irene, Pope Joan, John XII., John XIII., Alexander I., Alexander III., Innocent III., Boniface VIII., Benedict XII., John XXII., John XXIII., Alexander VI., and some fifty others of the Popes; Godfrey of Bouillon, Guy Lusignan, Simon Montfort, St. Dominic, Peter the Cruel, Sigismund, Louis XI. of France, Loyola, Ojeda, Torquemada, Luther, Calvin, Munzer, Ferdinand and Isabella, Cortez, Pizarro, Henry VIII. of England, Bloody Mary, Alva, Cranmer, Elizabeth, Charles IX. of France, Catherine de Medici, Philip II. of Spain, Guy Fawkes, Oliver Cromwell, Jeffrey, Charles II., Louis XIV. of France, John Graham, (Claverhouse), James II., Parris, Cotton Mather, Ephraim K. Avery, Bishop Onderdonk, L. D. Huston, Henry Ward Beecher, Anthony Comstock, and hosts of others of the same fraternity, including wily, designing, libidinous, lecherous fathers, bishops, priests and pastors for many centuries.

A full history is given of the bloody wars of Christianity, which have been inhumanly waged to spread its rule. The wars of the Crusades; the terrible operations for hundreds of years of the Holy Inquisition with its *auto-da-fe*; the merciless persecutions and exterminations of the Vaudois, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Moors and Jews of Spain, the Huguenots of France, the Protestant Netherlands, the Independents, Quakers and Dissenters of England; the Quakers and witches of New England. It contains a history of Jesuitism for three centuries; of the granting and selling of indulgences by the Church, to commit all kinds of crimes and immoralities, as well as culpable defections of recent date. The biographical portion is preceded by a historical examination into the authenticity of ancient Jewish History, showing that the part of it anterior to the Babylonish captivity, is wholly unauthentic and mythical; of Primitive Christianity—its origin, its semblance to pre-existent systems of religion, its adoption of Pagan rites, its political growth and influence. The whole based upon Christian authorities.

BY D. M. BENNETT,

Editor of "The Truth Seeker."

One thousand pages or more, making a volume of the size and style of "The World's Sages, Infidels, and Thinkers."

In cloth,	3 00
Arabesque, colored leather and red burnished edges,	4 00
Morocco, gilt edges and worked head-bands,	4 50

Post-paid, by mail. Those wishing a copy of this volume as soon as issued, will please notify the author and publisher at an early date.

D. M. BENNETT,

LIBERAL AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING HOUSE,

Science Hall, 141 Eighth St., New York.

THE TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS.

Containing two pages each of short, sharp, terse, trenchant reading matter well suited for circulation among friends, neighbors, enquirers, and all disposed to read, and who would not care to undertake a book or a lengthy essay. They help materially to diffuse the Truth, and with a great saving of time and breath.

Christian devotees have long bored us with religious tracts, and it is time for us to return the compliment, and to give them something worthy of being read.

The following are the titles and numbers of

THE TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS.

1. Godliness and Manliness. 2. Is the Bible the Word of God? 3. Divinity of Christianity. 4. The Grand Plan of Salvation. 5. Christian Confessions. 6. Thirty-six Questions. 7. Christian Frauds. 8. The Light of the Gospel. 9. Christianity Briefly Considered. 10. The Bible and Liberty. 11. Safest to Believe. 12. The Bible and the Fagot. 13. Infidelity Vindicated. 14. Christian Missions. 15. The Story of the Cross Simply Stated. 16. Godly Guardianship. 17. An Impending Crisis. 18. Christians Easily Believe. 19. What Science has Done. 20. Why does not God Kill the Devil? 21. New Testament Beauties. 22. Extracts from Shelley. 23. The Bible Not a True Witness. 24. The Christian's Creed. 25. God in a Nutshell. 26. Fraternity of Jesus Christ. 27. Testimonials to the Merits of Thomas Paine. 28. Christian Admissions against the Scriptures. 29. The Gospel according to St. Thomas. 30. Truth the Most Valuable Treasure. 31. The Bible Picture of Jehovah. 32. The Eternity of Matter.

Sent assorted as desired, post-paid, at 4 cts. per dozen; 8 cts. for the entire assortment; 25 cts. per hundred, or \$2.00 per thousand.

Let them be distributed freely in every town, village and neighborhood! Let every person be brought to the knowledge of the truth. Address,

D. M. BENNETT,
LIBERAL AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING HOUSE,

BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, CIRCULARS, LETTER-HEADS,

BILL-HEADS, CARDS, ENVELOPES, AND

JOB PRINTING OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS

Neatly executed, at the lowest prices, and sent by Mail or Express to all parts of the country.

CHRISTIANITY AND INFIDELITY;

A JOINT DISCUSSION BETWEEN

REV. J. H. HUMPHREY, Presbyterian Clergyman,
OF NEW YORK, AND

D. M. BENNETT, Editor of The Truth Seeker.

It was conducted in the columns of The Truth Seeker, a letter alternately from each contestant appearing each week, beginning April 7, 1877, and closing Sept. 29, 1877, thus continuing just six months, giving thirteen letters from Humphrey and thirteen replies by Bennett.

The subjects discussed were as follows:

PART I.—*The relative services of Christianity and Infidelity to American Liberty.*

PART II.—*The relative services of Christianity and Infidelity to Learning and Science.*

PART III.—*Is there a stronger probability that the Bible is divine than that Infidelity is true?*

The discussion has excited a large share of interest, both among believers and unbelievers; and as both sides are fairly presented, it is suited to readers of all shades of opinion.

The New York *Advocate*, a paper having a very extensive circulation, in speaking of the volume, says, "Perhaps a more able and exhaustive presentation of both sides of the great questions which have agitated the civilized world for centuries has never been made. At any rate, in this volume will be found a perfect magazine or storehouse of arguments, *pro* and *con*, which every intelligent man and woman should peruse with candor and with a earnest desire to arrive at sound conclusions on themes of the highest importance to all mankind. . . . Light is what we need. Let the controversies proceed. Let the blows descend upon the error-dispelling anvil. Let the sparks fly in all directions from the heated steel. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is what the people demand on all the great questions of the day, whether of Finance, Science, Politics, or Religion, and discussion will elicit it." Let every person who feels the slightest interest in theological questions, whether on one side or the other, read the Humphrey-Bennett Discussion.

A thick 12mo volume, of about 550 pages, well bound, sent, post-paid, to any address for the low price of one dollar.

Address

D. M. BENNETT

THE PRO AND CON OF SUPERNATURAL RELIGION:

OR,

An Answer to the Question: "Have we a Supernaturally Revealed, Infallibly Inspired, and Miraculously Attested Religion in the World?"

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I. A brief history of the four great Religions claiming a Supernatural origin—Paganism, Judaism, Christianity and Moham-medanism.

PART II. Review of the arguments in favor of Supernatural Religion.

PART III. Statement of the arguments against Supernatural Religion.

PART IV. Particular remarks on the Supernatural origin of Christianity, and statement of the views of Rationalists on Inspiration, Revelation and Religion.

BY E. E. GUILD.

TOGETHER WITH A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

There is no human religion outside of human nature.

The different forms of religion contain the elements of one universal religion, and are but different phases of the religion of humanity.

Describe to me the God whom you worship, and I see in that description a reflex image of yourself.

This is an able, argumentative, clear, and logical examination of the questions discussed. It presents fairly the opposing arguments and gives due consideration to every side of the subject.

Every liberal can afford to own this little work, and it will be found a valuable acquisition to his library.

120 pp. In paper, 40 cts.; cloth, 75 cts. Postpaid by mail.

New York

THE TRUTH SEEKER

Is the largest, boldest, and cheapest Radical paper published in the world. Devoted to Science, Reform, Progress, and Human Happiness. It earnestly seeks the truth and does not fear to avow it when found. It has no confidence in the myths, theological fables, and superstitions which have cursed the world for thousands of years. It is not a friend to kingcraft, priestcraft, or tyranny of any kind. It advocates mental and physical freedom—especially freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of the mails, sternly opposing any infringement of these constitutional rights of the people.

Price, including postage, \$3.00 per year, or 25 cents per month. Sent on trial to new names for 50 cents for three months. Sixteen large pages, published weekly. Try it three months.

RADICAL PUBLICATIONS.

The Truth Seeker Library.—All large octavo volumes of a thousand pages each. Cloth, \$3.00; leather and red edges, \$4.00; morocco and gilt edges, \$4.50. If the whole five are taken and sent by express, 25 per cent is deducted. The books are, The World's Sages, Thinkers, and Reformers, The Champions of the Church, Thomas Paine's Great Works (theological and political), Lord Amberley's Analysis of Religious Belief, and Supernatural Religion, by Prof. W. K. Clifford. The latter is \$4.00, \$5.00, and \$5.50.

Other Radical Works.—Greg's Creed of Christendom, \$1.50; Paine's Political and Theological Works, published separately, \$1.50 each; Thirty Discussions, etc., 75 cents and \$1; Truth Seeker Tracts, five volumes of 500 pages each, 60 cents and \$1—by the set, 50 cents and 75 cents; Humphrey Bennett Discussion, \$1; Bennett-Teed Discussion, 30 cents and 50 cents; Interrogatories to Jehovah, 50 cents and 75 cents; Burgess-Underwood Debate, 50 cents and 80 cents; Underwood-Marple's Debate, 35 cents and 60 cents; Addresses and Proceedings at the Watkins Convention, \$1 25; Truth Seeker Collection, 75 cents; Dr. J. Simm's System of Physiognomy, 8vo, \$3, \$4, and \$4.50; Heathens of the Heath, \$1 and \$1.50; The Darvins, 50 cents and 75 cents; Amberley's Life of Jesus, 35 cents and 60 cents; Career of Religious Ideas, 50 cents and 75 cents; Holy Bible Abridged, 30 cents and 50 cents; Holy Cross Series, thirteen numbers, anti-papal, 10 cents to 50 cents and 75 cents; Influence of Christianity on Civilization, 25 cents; Last Will and Testament of Jean Meslier, a Catholic priest, 25 cents; Chronicles of Simon Christianus, 25 cents; Religion not History, 25 cents; Resurrection of Jesus, 25 cents; Bell's Life of Jesus, 15 cents; Christianity and Materialism, 15 cents; Anthony Comstock: his Career of Cruelty and Crime, 25 cents; Sepher Toldoth Jeschu, the Book of the Generation of Jesus, 20 cents; The Jamieson-Ditzler Debate, 50 cents and 75 cents; What Liberalism offers in the place of Christianity, 10 cents; Truth Seeker Tracts, nearly two hundred varieties, from 1 cent to 10 cents each; Truth Seeker Leaflets, thirty-two kinds, 8 cents per set, 25 cents per hundred, \$2 per thousand. Radical and miscellaneous books of all kinds furnished to order. Send for a catalogue. Address, **D. M. BENNETT, 141 Eighth street, New York.**