

' LISBETH

A Story of Two Worlds

BY

CARRIE E. S. TWING

AMANUENSIS FOR

"Bowles' Experiences in Spirit Life," "Contrasts," "Interviews,"
"Later Papers," "Out of the Depths into the Light,"
"Golden Gleams from Heavenly Lights," and
Haven's "Glimpses of Heaven"



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Sincerely Yours
Carrie E. S. Twining

TO
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE,
WHOSE GOD-GIVEN INSPIRATION, UNFAILING FAITH, AND WILLING SACRIFICE
OF SELF MADE HER NAME A GUIDING STAR TOWARD FREEDOM FOR
FOUR MILLION SOULS, AND WHO NOW, FROM THE HIGHER LIFE,
MUST STILL DESIRE FOR THE HUMAN RACE EMANCIPA-
TION FROM ALL BONDAGE, I MOST GRATEFULLY
DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

PREFACE.

NOT long ago I read in one of the best literary journals of the day the reply of one of our own modern story-writers to a critic who was finding fault with her representation of New England character, declaring it not true to life. With a kindly smile she said: "That is the way it came to me."

In the presentation of this book to a public already deluged with books, I, too, can say, "It is the way it came to me." These characters, which have brought out the highest and the lowest thought in different religious beliefs, have moved me, not I them. Daniel Doolittles are yet in life, teaching the lessons of fear instead of love. 'Lisbeths, too, are opening the way to the unseen, but not the unreal things of life. Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy are types which still exist, and even the Jane Macomers fill the waste-paper baskets in the offices of our leading journals.

No blow is dealt at any religion; it is only the cruelty and the bigotry that are aimed at. In fact, these characters who have dominated me have, in the main, selected from the formulas of known faiths the germ that

will live and bring in striking contrast Daniel Doolittle's Christianity without a Christ, and Mrs. Kellogg's life molded and shaped by the Christ principle.

As to the psychic features brought forth, nothing new is claimed. These phenomena are permeating the whole world. Heaven and earth have become so linked together, that even ignorance is slow to deny the possibility of communion with the dead. Our most sought-for divines acknowledge its truth, and are paving the way for a newer, larger, outlook than the world has had before. It is no longer the question of the age: "What do you believe?" but, "What is truth? Give us a knowledge of the law."

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'LISBETH.

A STORY OF TWO WORLDS.

CHAPTER I.

AUNT BETSY'S "DUTY."

UNCLE ISAAC and Aunt Betsy Barton were having an argument — not that it was anything new ; for the good people of M——, in the truly orthodox State of Connecticut, were used to the arguments of the not any too devoted couple. These arguments, had they been in a less pious family, would almost have seemed quarrels ; but when Uncle Isaac went no further than to tell Betsy she didn't "know any more than the dumb critters in the stable," it was considered just a pleasant little interview.

"I know my duty, Isaac, and I know the Lord will be on my side. I want to do well by my dead sister's child. It's a great deal to have an orphan on your hands, and when that orphan gets it into her head that she has got to go to singin'-school and spellin'-school and have some of them fool boys come home with her, *I* say, when I have the chance to marry her off to a good Orthodox minister that will hold her in check and may

be the means of her salvation, that I would fail in my duty if I didn't do it."

"But, Betsy, he's old enough to be her father, and, though he acts slick when he's round here, I don't believe the child would take a minute's comfort of her life. He owns up that he's over thirty-six, but don't say how much over, and she, purty little lamb, is only turned sixteen."

"Isaac, you shut up; you always was soft as dough where wimmen folks was concerned, and I guess it will be the safest plan to get her out of the house. I call it a good chance and I could trust a hull family in the hands of a man who has for his life-motto, 'In His Name'—all to the glory of God, Isaac, nothin' for self. You don't come across many such sanctified lives as that; and when one is willin' to take a young thoughtless girl into his tender keepin', for my part I'd rather spend my time thankin' God than fightin' ag'inst it."

"But 'Lisbeth don't *like* him, can't bear to stay where he is, turns pale when we mention his takin' to her, and is afraid of him anyway; and I know she *does* like George Green, and he is an only son and his folks are well-to-do."

"*Isaac Barton, will you keep still?*" Do you want that girl to go into that ungodly household? They don't go to meetin' once in a dog's age, and Mis' Green told Mis' Phelps that she thought it was wicked to preach about an everlastin' hell. I don't know what they can be thinkin' of. They are Abolishionists too; I heard her say once she would feed a runaway nigger if she knew she would be shut up in prison for it. You think more of the things of this world for 'Lisbeth than you do of

her eternal welfare." And Aunt Betsy, a tall angular woman, rolled her eyes heavenward as though inviting the aid of higher powers to help her in her scheme. "The Lord never gave me any children of my own, and I must do my duty by Sarah's child. Sarah was unsaved, and I don't mean her child shall be lost. I always blamed you about Sarah, Isaac. When she came here to die and was sick so long, you would never hold up before her the terrors of the law, but just talked easy like, until she died thinkin' she was as good as anybody."

"What a hand you are to rake up affairs, Betsy. You act as though you thought it was my duty to take that poor dyin' critter and cram religion down her throat."

"You've gone far enough, Isaac Barton, and now I say *stop*, STOP; do you *hear*?"

"'Spose I'll have to. I have got to go to the barn and do the chores;" and he shamled off (as Aunt Betsy called his manner of walking) to the back room and vented his ill humor on the pans that contained the apple and potato parings that had to be emptied into the swill.

The door to the back room opened suddenly and, like a ray of sunshine, came in Elizabeth Chapin, the subject of all this controversy. Her dark quilted hood did not conceal the bright sparkling face and the hair like gold that, though Aunt Betsy made her wet it back in sweetened water every morning to keep it from curling around her forehead, would escape from bondage and cluster around the white forehead. Her eyes were as blue as the sky, and her complexion one of those extremely deli-

cate ones that are so easily marred by sun or wind. This blustering March day, 'Lisbeth, as she was called, had a good store of freckles on hand. She stamped the snow from her coarse leather shoes, hung up her bonnet and shawl, and pinned her mittens carefully to her hood; then went quietly to where her uncle stood and said in a whisper: "Is she at it again?"

"Yes, she's at it again, poor lamb," said Uncle Isaac. Just then the door swung back and Aunt Betsy's shrill voice was heard:

"Didn't I hear 'Lisbeth come in? Oh, yes, you're here. What are you so shy about, 'Lisbeth? Come this minute and get some potatoes for supper. We only took a bite for our dinner and we need something hearty."

The young girl, almost irrepressible in the exuberance of her youth, lit the tallow candle and made her heavy shoes clatter on the stairs until Aunt Betsy cried out, "Well, Bedlam's let loose!" and then, "What's that you were singin'?"

'Lisbeth did not answer until she reached the kitchen. "It's just a little song I heard George Green singing."

"Sing it to me," said her aunt grimly, and 'Lisbeth, half choking with laughter, sang:

"Nellie Bly shuts her eye
When she goes to sleep,
But when she wakes up in the morn
Her eyes begin to peep."

"'Lisbeth Chapin! if that don't show me my duty plain and clear, nothin' ever will. We've got a chance of savin' your soul and we are going to do it, or *I* am; your uncle is as weak as a cat. Just to think of it!

When a minister like Daniel Doolittle will take an unregenerate girl like you into his keepin' as his wife, not one of us must stand in his way. He's goin' to come and stay two weeks and preach in the school-house, and I think by that time you will see that you ought to thank him instead of makin' fun of him, as I know you do. He will board right here and you will have a chance to get acquainted with him and see what is for your best good."

"Oh! Aunt Betsy, how can you ask me to marry that man? I should die in a week. The boys and girls all call him 'In His Name' instead of 'Doolittle.' He says it ever so much, and I just *won't* marry him."

"*Lisbeth Chapin*, not another word out of your mouth. I know what I am about. I see I've got to watch you and take care of you. You are a chip of the old block. Your mother had her way by runnin' away and gittin' married, and then your father got killed gallivantin' round, and she came here and died and left you to us, and I'm goin' to be minded, I am."

'Lisbeth said no more, but with a strange choking in her throat set the table, strained the milk and fed the big yellow cat, Jerry, who, Uncle Isaac said, knew more than some folks.

Aunt Betsy was grim as fate all through the meal and made no objection when 'Lisbeth went to her room under the eaves as soon as the dishes were washed.

Poor, lonely-hearted child; she had inherited from a gifted father the longings for a different life. She studied geography with intense interest, traveling in imagination to the places described and building air-

castles of a happy time when she could sing as loudly as she wanted to something besides

“There is a fountain filled with blood”

and kindred hymns. From her mother she inherited the gay, happy disposition so strangely in contrast with that of her sister Betsy.

Below stairs by the light of the tallow candle Uncle Isaac was turning the leaves of the Bible to read their evening lesson. At last he began :

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity —”

“Isaac Barton, you’ve skipped. Go right back to where that marker is.”

“But, Betsy, there’s nothin’ but hard names there and I wanted to git some comfort out’n it to-night.”

“That don’t make any difference, Isaac. There’s some folks will want to be comfortable in torment, but they can’t ; that ain’t what torment’s for.”

So Isaac turned back to the Old Testament and read the chapter, while Betsy prayed for the piercing darts of the Lord to touch all their hearts with the fire of his word, and went to bed with a sense of duty done, and Uncle Isaac thought of the young life to be laid on the altar of sacrifice.

CHAPTER II.

DANIEL DOOLITTLE.

THE Reverend Daniel Doolittle was not an ordinary man in any sense of the word. His early life had been spent near Plymouth, Mass., and he was often heard to say, "My principles are fixed. I am as immovable as the rock of our fathers;" then on second thought he would add, "not for my own glory, but all 'In His Name' do I stand firm." His father was a Congregationalist minister and he used to say proudly, "The ministerial blood in our family dates back as far as we have any record."

Daniel Doolittle never had any childhood; from the time he put on his first trousers, he was the "little man." His wonderful memory was the subject of conversation in many a home. "Little Daniel knows all the catechism," they would say. "Little Daniel can repeat part of his father's sermon," and little Daniel was looked upon as a marvel of piety and smartness. His two sisters were ordinary girls, showing no aptitude for anything in the particular line the doting parents desired, and when at the age of eleven, Katherine, the youngest, died of scarlet fever, little Daniel discussed it as he would a problem in arithmetic:

"We are all sorry about Katherine, but there's one thing about it, we know she is saved. Father says that

the Doolittles mostly are — all but one uncle, a sea captain, that used to doubt God's love because he made a hell."

At the age of seventeen Daniel's father died and soon after the only daughter, Annie, was married to a farmer living in the Connecticut valley. This left Daniel and his mother all alone and every effort of both mother and son was directed toward his education for the ministry.

"You've got a good start, Daniel," his mother proudly said to him, when he was installed over his first charge. You're smart yourself and then there's all your father's old sermons; not many young men have such a chance."

"There, mother, that will do. 'In His Name' I will do my own work. Father's sermons may do for reference sometimes, but I shall not steal even from my father."

But even with all the qualities supposed to be *sterling*, his work was not a success. His parishioners did not like his mother, and grumbled because he did not get married and have a bright home like other ministers for his congregation to visit. So short was his stay with his different charges that his mother was obliged to live with her daughter, much to her own discomfiture and that of her daughter's family.

"I could stand it," said poor Annie, "only we have Daniel for breakfast, and Daniel for dinner and supper too. I do believe mother looks upon me only as a matter of convenience, and for my part I shall be glad when Daniel gets married and makes a home for her."

I wish I could give you a pen picture of Daniel Doolittle as he appeared fifty years ago, his first night at the

school-house meeting. He had been in a little town not far away, so that many of the good people of M — had seen him. He had become acquainted with Isaac and Betsy Barton while at a church gathering in Hartford, and not then having a charge, he accompanied them home and made a prolonged visit, which was the beginning of poor 'Lisbeth's troubles. He had after his departure written the Bartons of his willingness to take 'Lisbeth for his own, and suggested a series of meetings in the school-house as being the best way to build up the church near by, and further his suit with the laughing but unwilling 'Lisbeth.

The night of his arrival at the Barton residence he presented the appearance of a man with a mission, and one who would fulfil it — nearly six feet tall, with narrow shoulders, long arms, which when down by his side seemed reaching for his feet; long thin legs, around which George Green used to say "his trousers flopped in the wind enough to make one homesick;" a long blue coat made "so thick that he would not have to wear a great coat much;" a wide stock that gave his thin neck the appearance of having been bandaged and the splints not taken off. His head, which I have left till the last, was by no means the least part of him. It would have done credit in size to his body had it been rounded out to suit his height, and was, in the main, well-shaped, the black hair brought from one side and smoothed down across his high forehead as though fastened there, heavy eyebrows that overshadowed black piercing eyes, a straight nose, straight lips without a hint of laughter in them, a heavy chin which caused little hollows in the cheeks because of the prominent cheek bones. Thus

Daniel Doolittle appeared to 'Lisbeth as she returned from school that March day.

"Come right in," said Aunt Betsy, as 'Lisbeth opened the back door, "and go in and see the minister; he is in the spare room with your uncle. He has asked about you twice and he ain't been here over an hour."

"Oh! Aunt Betsy, I don't want to go in; let me stay out here and get the supper."

"Of course you'll get the supper, but not until you have paid your respects to him. Now, I will see if I can be minded in my own house;" and 'Lisbeth, to avoid the deluge of words sure to follow, passed forward into the spare room, the room with a carpet that Aunt Betsy had often repented getting because she felt it a sign of vanity; but Uncle Isaac had said he was bound not to be harassed all the time "by the things that was under his feet," and advised her, now she had got it, to either send it to the missionaries or shut up. When 'Lisbeth, half defiant and half afraid, offered her hand to Daniel Doolittle, he continued to hold it, questioning her in the meantime about her soul's welfare.

"'Lisbeth, did my former visit here leave any impression upon you that has made you desire to flee from the wrath to come? Have you felt that you are a worm of the dust dependent on God's mercy for salvation?"

"I never felt like a worm," said 'Lisbeth, jerking her hand away and fleeing to the kitchen, while Aunt Betsy said:

"Land sakes alive! what will she say next?" and Uncle Isaac, deciding he must go and do the chores, followed her and whispered: "Wasn't you a little rough on the minister?"

"No, I wasn't," replied 'Lisbeth; "he squeezed my hand all the time he was talking religion, and oh! the look of his eyes made me sick to my stomach."

"Well! well! I don't know what to do," said the poor worried man, as he got ready for his work; "your Aunt Betsy is so set in her way, 'Lisbeth, that I don't know but she would marry you to him in your sleep."

"Well, I guess she won't, nor when I am awake either. I would feel good, wouldn't I, always having to go round with a man that I should need swifts to wind his legs and arms up on for fear they would be all over the house."

"Tut, tut, 'Lisbeth; he didn't make himself, and you shouldn't talk that way. Maybe you will like him better—but I don't want her to," he added as he stepped out of the door.

Supper over, the dishes washed and the fire in the spare room covered with ashes so it could be rebuilt to warm the spare bedroom on their return, it was time to repair to the school-house, about half a mile away. Already the candle was lit in the perforated tin lantern and two candles done up in a paper, while Uncle Isaac carried two iron candlesticks to place them in on their arrival.

Daniel Doolittle, with his Bible and hymn-book, stepped out by the side of 'Lisbeth, but she soon distanced him and caught up with the Green family just ahead of them.

"Have you made her a subject of prayer?" said Aunt Betsy to the minister.

"Yes, I *have*," said he, "but I do not expect to accomplish much until she has heard me preach and had

the advantage of what lessons I can give her in your home. I hope that nothing I say to her will offend you, Sister Barton, as I shall only do that which I believe to be right."

"Mercy ! no ; say what you want to for all of me, but you will have to be careful with Isaac ; he doesn't seem to 'abound in grace' as I wish he did, and somehow skips his duty every once in a while. I have often wished I was the head of the house and had the chance he does to do work in meetin' ; but you know women must keep silence in the churches, though for my part I can't see what difference it would make in a country prayer-meetin'."

"Well, Mrs. Barton, your idea only emphasizes the necessity of choosing a husband carefully, one who *can* represent a woman in the house and in the church, one of whom the wife can 'inquire diligently' and find out the truth."

"What in the world is makin' Isaac fall behind so?" said Aunt Betsy, stopping to listen, and on the still night air were borne to her these words :

"Go home, Jerry, you consarned old cat ; you go home ; you can't go to meetin' ; you'll make the young folks laugh."

In the meantime Jerry was chasing the snowballs Uncle Isaac threw at him, seeming to think it great fun.

"Betsy, go on. I have got to go home with this critter," said Uncle Isaac, and he was soon lost to view in the darkness.

"He will be late now to meetin'," said Aunt Betsy fretfully, "all along o' that cat. He thinks that cat is just right, and so does 'Lisbeth."

“Yes, I have noticed that fact with sorrow. I have seen that cat fed meat and milk, good new milk, and I have said in my soul, ‘our missionaries starving in far off China and a big yellow cat faring luxuriously in the home of Christian people.’”

“Well, I never thought of that,” said Aunt Betsy in an undertone. “Oh! how we do sin every day and not know it.”

CHAPTER III.

THE REVIVAL MEETING.

THE dim light from the tallow candles shone over the faces of old and young, giving a halo to age and an added grace to youth.

Behind the rude wooden desk, with two candles to light up the darkness, stood the preacher :

“ We will first sing the good old hymn :

“ ‘ A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify ;
A never-dying soul to save,
, And fit it for the sky.’ ”

Old and young joined in singing the hymn. There was no hesitation ; the young sang it cheerfully — the old sang with an emphasis upon “ *never-dying soul to save* ” that spoiled the harmony. Then came the prayer, as solemn and doleful as though there was to be a funeral instead of what should be the gospel of good tidings ; then the text from the last chapter of Malachi :

“ For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

As the last words of the text were given, Uncle Isaac came into the school-house stumbling, as he entered, over a stick of wood that chanced to be in the way, and

diverting much from the solemnity of the occasion by handing to Aunt Betsy the iron candlesticks, that had been given into his keeping (the want of which had rendered Aunt Betsy's candles useless), at the same time whispering loud enough to be heard over the room, "I had to go back home with that dumb cat."

"I'll have that cat put out of the way; see if I don't," whispered Aunt Betsy to 'Lisbeth. She had insisted on 'Lisbeth sitting beside her to keep her away from that "Green tribe."

At last the services were continued.

It has before been remarked that Daniel Doolittle was not an ordinary man, and the power which he put into that sermon showed in what direction his talents lay. So graphically did he describe the day that should burn as an oven, and its possible nearness, the terrible condition of the unsaved and the necessity of prompt action before it was everlastingly too late, that faces grew pale, and terror was depicted upon many a young countenance.

"How will that day come?" said he. "In storm and tempest? Ah, no! As in a dream I see a May morning. The sky is bright, the birds are singing, the laborer is in the field, the housewife busy in the home, the maiden singing at her task, the young man in thought building up a future home with a loved one by his side, the little children trying to reach the apple blossoms upon the trees, the nursing infant asleep in its cradle — the stillness is broken by the children's cry: 'Mother! Mother! there's fire all around.' The earth cracks open, and sheets of flame are coming through, drying the freshly plowed earth in an instant and burning it as stubble.

The man in the field cannot get to the house. The mother finds great balls of fire between herself and her children, and, clasping her babe to her breast, is burned in the ruins of a once happy home. Great cities crumble. The universal fire is upon them; no one has set it; it comes from the bowels of the earth and finds fuel to feed the flames in the palaces men have builded and in the huts of the half-starving poor.

“All will be destroyed but the children of God, and they will be caught up into the heavens without suffering, and, far from harm’s way, will look down and see their neighbors, maybe some of their own household, reaching up arms for help. But no one will be permitted to help them. Floating back on clouds of flame and smoke will come the answer — You have sinned away the day of grace; your punishment is eternal. Is there one here to-night who wishes to escape from this terrible destruction, one who desires his or her calling or election to be made sure? If so, you will arise for prayers.”

Although there was a deathly stillness in the room, only one arose at the minister’s bidding, and she was one who, Aunt Betsy said, was in the habit of “gittin’ religion every year at different meetin’s.” But that the Rev. Doolittle had made a great impression was apparent from the frightened faces looking at him.

He prayed, and asked one of the elders to pray for the woman who had arisen, and before dismissing the meeting said that he was sure of a harvest of souls, that he was laboring “In His Name” and expected rich fruitage from his labors.

It was a silent company that left the school-house that night. ’Lisbeth, with a white, scared face, kept

close to her Aunt Betsy. The minister tried to keep pace with Uncle Isaac, who carried the lantern, but was not successful in getting him to talk, only when he told him that he thought of asking him to pray for the woman who had arisen for prayers, Uncle Isaac replied he was "glad he didn't, for if his memory served him right, they had had a spell of prayin' for her every year for ten years."

When the house was reached and the door opened, yellow Jerry, with a bound, landed on Uncle Isaac's shoulders, knocking the candles from Aunt Betsy's hand.

"Well, I never! Isaac Barton, *what* will you do next — shut that cat up in the spare room maybe — why didn't you put him in the barn with the cattle?"

"'Cause I didn't want to; he needs a warm place as well as folks" — then Uncle Isaac pulled 'Lisbeth's gown and said in a low voice, "Come."

'Lisbeth followed him to the back room, which in winter was used for the storing of wood, and looking all around to see that no one would hear him, he said, "'Lisbeth, don't be scart; he overdid the thing about the fire, and it won't come in our day anyway — why it would take a power of a time to bile our pond and the swale dry enough to burn, so chirk up and look like yourself."

Just then in shrill tones, "'Lisbeth! 'Lisbeth!" was heard, "where be you? Come and rake the ashes off from the fire in the spare room, and put some wood on, and turn down the coverlet on the minister's bed. Hurry up, now, before we have prayers."

The bright light from the living-room fireplace shone

upon the faces of the little group — Uncle Isaac in the corner with one hand slyly caressing old Jerry; Aunt Betsy in her straight-backed chair, grim as fate; 'Lisbeth, with a troubled looking face and great questioning eyes, fixed as though fascinated upon the face of Daniel Doolittle, who, with his long arms reached toward the fire, was rubbing his hands softly, gazing in the meantime toward 'Lisbeth.

"It was a blessed meetin'," said Aunt Betsy. "It seems in such a meetin' my soul could run and be glorified, and I know it is an openin' door for sinners."

"Oh, yes! I think great good can be accomplished. Do you not, Brother Barton?"

"Well, I don't know; but 'cordin' as I think, you will have to be a little softer like in your preachin'. When my cattle are scart into any place, they are there just 'cause they are *scart*; but when they see there's a feast then they come and stay and like it. The Lord spent some of the time thunderin' on Sinai, but not all of it. He had time to whisper in that 'still small voice,' and Christ, when he came, preached great sermons in little stories like and told folks not to pray to be heerd of men, but keep quiet about it."

"Isaac Barton, what is the matter of you, talkin' in that way before this unsaved child; have you lost your senses?"

"Maybe I have," said Uncle Isaac meekly. "I don't know."

"Brother Doolittle," said Aunt Betsy, "won't you have a bite to eat before we have prayers?"

"Well! yes; I think I need it, and if Miss 'Lisbeth

will let me go with her to draw some cider I'll drink a mug of it and eat a doughnut."

"'Lisbeth! here's the pitcher, and he'll carry the candle; go right along," said Aunt Betsy.

Tremblingly 'Lisbeth went down the stairs, past the potato and apple bins, until they reached the cider barrel. Mr. Doolittle set the candle down on the cellar bottom and in reaching for the pitcher grasped 'Lisbeth's hand, and fixing his dark piercing eyes upon her, said, "Poor, cold little hand. I want to save its owner from destruction. Will she be saved?"

"Oh! don't talk so; let me alone or I shall die," said the young girl, bursting into tears, and her companion, quite unmoved, drew the cider and ascended the stairs, the girl following him.

"I am sick and want to go to bed," declared 'Lisbeth, as soon as she had regained the kitchen, and a look from Mr. Doolittle caused Aunt Betsy to give consent.

"Friends," said the minister, "you have great cause to rejoice; your niece is under conviction and it will not be a great while before you may feel at rest about her, unless my brother here tries to ease up the truth as he did to-night. I fairly trembled for 'Lisbeth when he was talking, but the impression I have made upon her to-night 'In His Name' cannot be easily obliterated. Shall I pray, or will you, Brother Barton?"

"I guess you had better," replied Uncle Isaac. The prayer would have been most impressive had it not been for a sad interruption. Old Jerry, seeing the fingertips of the praying man gleaming white above his shoulders as he gesticulated in prayer, felt it was a case for his investigation, and giving a leap from the chair

where he had been sleeping, landed on the surprised minister's shoulders, and, frightened at the lack of breadth for standing room, caught one claw in the black stock and the other in the stiff upright collar, whose points came nearly to his cheeks. With an exclamation not in the prayer, Mr. Doolittle threw the cat from him toward the fireplace, while Uncle Isaac's first remark was, "Old Jerry, be you hurt?"

"Isaac Barton, we have been talkin' about that cat, and now I am more than ever of the mind he must be put out of the way."

"Yes, he seems a dangerous animal," said the minister, trying to make his turned-down collar assume the right position, and searching for the marks of Jerry's claws in his stock. "I was telling Sister Barton I looked with wonder upon your feeding that cat, that could hunt his own food, on meat and milk when our missionaries are starving in far away China."

"Well!" said Uncle Isaac, with a sly twinkle in his eyes, "I sha'n't starve the cat, but I'll promise to furnish just as much milk and meat every day for the missionaries as I give Jerry, if any one will take the contract of gettin' it to them while it's fresh."

CHAPTER IV.

PUMPKIN PIE FOR LUNCHEON.

“**BE** up and doin’,” was Aunt Betsy’s motto ; and so, no matter what the time of year, whether it was Sunday or week day, at half-past four in the morning every one in the Barton household must be stirring.

Uncle Isaac used to suggest that it was a great waste of firewood and candles, but Aunt Betsy declared that laziness was a sin, and would throw her head back and in the most emphatic way, quote “ ‘ A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more foldin’ of the hands in sleep.’ That’s what you want, Isaac Barton, and it’s what you ain’t goin’ to get if I can *hender* it,” and she did hinder it.

On this particular morning Uncle Isaac had an extra duty to perform, for the fire must be started in the spare room. As ‘Lisbeth passed him silently and with compressed lips, he slyly whispered, “ The minister believes in fire, so I have been makin’ it hot for him.”

In those days, in many country places, there were no conveniences for bathing even in the spare bedrooms, so the minister came into the kitchen and washed in a little iron kettle that stood on a low shelf, over which the large roller towel hung ; then crossing the room combed his hair before a small looking-glass not far from the table. Having wet his hair with soapsuds it looked

very smooth and shining. This completed, he turned to Aunt Betsy and said :

"It would be better if all those windows were not so closely corked with rags. It was so hot I could hardly get a breath of air."

"That's just like Isaac ; he is always over-doin' things. He's a great cross, Isaac is," and later on when she found the room and bedroom were both hot enough to "roast niggers " she declared she or 'Lisbeth must 'tend to that fire, for it was just as bad to roast company as it would be to freeze them.

For years there had been a warfare between Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy as to the expediency of going to the barn to do the chores before breakfast during the winter season, Uncle Isaac stoutly maintaining that there wasn't any reason why the *other* animals should be waked up because those in the house had to be.

At the breakfast table after the giving of thanks was the first time the minister had succeeded in catching the eye of 'Lisbeth. Bending forward and looking her full in the face, he said, "'Lisbeth, you have great reason to be thankful that your life is still spared and you are on interceding terms with God."

Instead of her usual hasty response, she simply said, "Good morning," her eyes looking as dreamy as though she had hardly awakened from sleep. Uncle Isaac noticed it and sighed, while Aunt Betsy, sure that 'Lisbeth must be under conviction, told her that she must try to eat something, and recommended sausage as "very strengthenin'."

'Lisbeth went to her room after washing the dishes, and opening the window inhaled the cold March air,

saying to herself, "What is the matter with me ; I feel dead when I am alive." Mechanically she prepared for school, forgetting to put up any dinner for herself, and slipped quietly out of the back door. About half way, she was met by the laughing George Green, who asked her in a most ludicrous way if she had made up her mind "to flee from the wrath to come."

"Don't, George ; don't talk so," said she, passing her hand wearily over her forehead. "Isn't it all horrible, the thought of such punishment and that we may have to burn here and hereafter too, if the world should burn before we die. How fearful it would be ! I couldn't sleep last night, till some one seemed to whisper to me, 'Go to sleep, my child,' and I did go to sleep and dreamed of my mother, and she told me about Heaven, but just as soon as I saw Mr. Doolittle this morning, I believed it all again, every word of it. I am just miserable," and she burst out crying.

"There, 'Lisbeth, don't cry. I didn't mean to make you feel badly ; you know I didn't ; but it did seem to me you would have too much sense to take that sermon to heart. Uncle Jim came yesterday and he said on the ship where he is mate was a man who said he believed in a religion that would make the love of God crowd hell out — and that he had Bible for it — that salvation was universal, that the Bible said, 'as in Adam we all die, so in Christ are we all made alive.' It's something like that anyway and it means you can't help being saved — you're bound to be. The debt was paid when Christ died on the cross, though I never could understand what debt I could owe for something that a man and woman did thousands of years ago. Now, what if

my great, great, greatest grandfather killed a man two hundred years ago on the high seas, *I* didn't kill that man, did I? It isn't sense to blame me for what was done before I was ever thought of. I think just so about that old affair of Adam and Eve and don't see any sense in all creation being punished for what they did. I'm willing to stand up and take a square punishment for all I do, but I don't want to go back to the beginning and take it all the way down. No, I don't."

"George, I should have laughed yesterday at what you are saying now, but to-day everything seems wicked to me, and when that man looks at me it seems as though he knew everything I had ever thought."

There was a depressed condition in the school that day — the life seemed to have all gone out of it, and the teacher, a strict orthodox, opened the school with a prayer that begged of God to let conviction rest on every soul: "What are books, what is knowledge, what is anything, O Lord! compared to the saving of souls? Let Thy Spirit overshadow this school-room until every soul is reconciled to Thee."

Some of the younger ones, not feeling the solemnity of the occasion, indulged in a whispered conversation, which brought down the wrath of the teacher upon them in a whipping. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," quoted this self-righteous man, as the dismal wails of the children cast an added gloom over the place.

George Green declared at night it seemed as though a graveyard mould had settled over everything since "In His Name" Doolittle had come into the neighborhood.

In the meantime at the Barton home, Aunt Betsy

discovered that 'Lisbeth had gone without her dinner, and was told by Brother Doolittle that he hailed it as a sign she was seeking salvation. "It will do her good to fast at this time," said he. "People must not be made to feel too comfortable physically when the knowledge of their great guilt comes upon them, and body and soul must be under the great burden of sin. I was sorry when you encouraged her to eat that sausage this morning. You cannot be too careful when people have such symptoms as 'Lisbeth has."

"I hope to gracious I didn't do anything to keep her back," said Aunt Betsy, with a scared face. "I want to do my duty by my dead sister's child. If I had had any help from Isaac, it wouldn't have been put off till this time, her gittin' religion."

Uncle Isaac was not in the best mood possible; he had just let Jerry in, and Jerry had had no breakfast. He looked in the dish and knew the cat had had no milk — not even the scrapings from the plates had been put there — and he, looking up from the fire, said that he was as good a man as he could be under the circumstances, and he thought there were lots of worse girls than 'Lisbeth, and for his part he didn't understand these new notions, such as girls starving to keep them under conviction, and cats starving to send money to the missionaries. A withering look from Aunt Betsy stopped Uncle Isaac from further remarks, and Brother Doolittle said in his sweetest tones:

"Won't you both go into the spare room while I read you from my collection of texts that which I expect to speak upon here?" Aunt Betsy arose at once to follow Mr. Doolittle, while Uncle Isaac excused himself

by saying he had a good many things to see to, getting the tools ready for the hired man, who was coming the first of the next month.

No sooner was the door of the spare room closed than Uncle Isaac went to the pantry, with one hand brought out a large slice of corned beef, with the other hand the milk pitcher, and with a good many whispered words to Jerry, began feeding him. "There! stuff yourself, old fellar—you'll catch a rat just the same, won't you, catch him for fun if nothin' else—there, that's right; eat it all up—you was hungry, wasn't ye?"—but another thought then struck him—there was poor 'Lisbeth, who had eaten no breakfast to speak of and had taken no dinner. He went back into the pantry, and in his haste not to be caught in his foolishness, took two pieces of pumpkin pie, placed them together, did them up in a little piece of paper, put them in his coat pocket and started for the barn. While there, he sat down to shell some corn for the chickens, little thinking he was sitting on the pie, then went a roundabout way to the school-house and called 'Lisbeth out.

"What's the matter, Uncle Isaac?" said she, as she saw him trying to get something from his pocket—something mixed with brown paper, a red handkerchief, three nails and two bag strings.

"Why, 'Lisbeth, I thought I'd bring ye some dinner, but I guess it's spilt after all."

'Lisbeth laughed in the old way, laughed until the echoes reached the school-room, and one after another looked up from their books and smiled from very sympathy—but seeing her uncle's sober face, she

said, "Don't mind, Uncle, one bit. It's better than a good meal to know you thought of me ; it will make me happier all day long."

"'Lisbeth, I want to say something else — I am an orthodox and a church member. I want you to have religion, but I don't want you to be scart into it nor into marryin' a fellow that you would take no more comfort with than you would with a tombstone."

"Oh, Uncle ! I feel as though I had just waked up from having the nightmare. I hope I won't have it again."

Her uncle started to go, but turned back and said,

"'Lisbeth, I guess you will have to clean up my pocket — I never knew there was so much in two pieces of pie, but don't tell your aunt ; she don't know I'm down here."

'Lisbeth took back with her to the shadowed school-room a little gleam of sunshine ; the loving thoughtfulness of her uncle had brought her cheer.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVERSION AND ENGAGEMENT.

To attempt to describe the proceedings for the two weeks of Mr. Doolittle's stay would take too much time and space. Suffice it to say there had been a great awakening and many new members added to the village church from the school district where the revival services had been held. That the minister had a strange influence over most people with whom he came in contact was very apparent, especially women and young girls, and some hard cases among the men, hitherto drunken and profane, had testified to a change of heart. Great good had been accomplished. Inquiry meetings had been organized in some of the houses near the school-house to find out the state of mind of the girls and women who had arisen for prayers, and the low responses made to the inquiries of the minister were hailed with delight, as one after another told of the time when the light began to dawn upon them.

Among those present at one of these meetings was 'Lisbeth, no longer the laughing 'Lisbeth, but a subdued, dreamy girl with, oftentimes, a frightened look on her face.

"'Lisbeth, will you tell us when you first felt yourself saved, or rather when you felt yourself a sinner? The one is as necessary as the other," he remarked.

"I can hardly tell, but still I felt that your sermons were for me, that you knew my life, and was preaching right to me, and sometimes I felt like pinching myself to see if I was alive. There was such a dead weight at my heart, but when you preached that sermon all on Christ's love, then my soul got out of prison and I was happier, but somehow I feel more sure of everything about religion when I am near you." Aunt Betsy's sharp elbow stuck into 'Lisbeth's side, and she whispered in a voice not any too low, "Shut up! don't be sickish about it; everybody knows you are as good as engaged."

"Oh! I didn't think of that," said poor 'Lisbeth, with a moan. "I *didn't* think. I was just thinking of my soul."

There were several others at the inquiry meeting who expressed their willingness to leave the sins of the past and go no more down by the cold streams of Babylon. They then repaired to the school-house, where there was a prayer-meeting in which the men only took part. They stood while praying, and many a prayer ascended to God that night for the new converts who had come into the fold. One of the new converts, a man who had been the clown of the neighborhood, half arose to pray, but Uncle Isaac pulled him down and whispered,

"Hadn't you better wait? You may get in wrong words."

"I'll be careful, but I must pray," said the enthusiastic man, and such a prayer, half thanksgiving for his redemption, half promises that seemed like making a contract with God. He informed his Maker how much worse he had been than any one knew of, and said he,

"Lord, you yourself don't know what a rascal I have been. I have defrauded, I have taken your name in vain, I have lied about the women folks, I haven't paid my debts; but I am saved now, thanks be to Doolittle and the Trinity." Men and women who had their hands to their foreheads during the prayer shook perceptibly with laughter. George Green followed Silas Stebbins (the one who had just been offering prayer) to the door at the close of the meeting, and said, "Sile, you are owing us a little debt and we know it's hard times for money, but I thought I would ask you if you would come and help a few days chopping; father wants to get a few acres cleared pretty bad this spring."

"Well! I don't know how it'll be," said Silas slowly. "I've got into this new idee and I'd like to see how I can make it work doin' a little preachin' myself. I know I couldn't be a real minister, for I haven't the eddication, but I could get the soil ready for the ministers when they come along."

"So," said George's Uncle Jim, "then you didn't mean what you told the Lord to-night, that you would make the 'crooked places straight.' You owe debts and you ought to pay them."

"Oh, well, if I go to fussin' about the past I shall get back in the 'bonds of eniquity again.' I said I had turned over a new leaf and I hev, and them old debts don't belong to my *new leaf*. *Can't you see?*"

But there was a work done for some in the old school-house that illuminated their whole lives and made them willing workers in every good cause.

Uncle Isaac philosophized to Jerry in the barn the next day in words something like these: "Jerry, true re-

ligion is the same every day in the week, but it don't fit all people alike. Some take it deep down in their hearts, and you would never know they had got it by the way they talk, but they just keep doin'. There's Mis' Rice, Jerry, hasn't opened her mouth in the inquiry meetin' and hasn't attended half the meetin's anyway, because she has sat up every other night with that no-account Furbush's wife, who's got the fever, and they do say, Jerry, that she has taken pervision over there and clothes when she is poor herself. My opinion is — ”

“Isaac Barton, who in the world be you talkin' to? What! that old cat; you are makin' a heathen idol of that cat. Go right off and kill me two chickens and be sure you don't get pullets; they will lay as soon as it comes a little warmer. I said stop mumblin' to that cat; you act like a lunatic. You ought to be rejoicin' that 'Lisbeth is saved and goin' to marry such a good man as the minister instead of spendin' your time talkin' to cats.”

“Well, Betsy, whatever it is that's come over 'Lisbeth, I know one thing — we've lost her. She acts so strange like, and I have seen the minister just stand and look at her, and she would go to him and say, ‘Do you want me?’ I don't call that any credit to the girl, even if he is a minister, actin' as though she didn't know anything but Doolittle and religion, and I have made up my mind it's mostly Doolittle. She don't treat her young friends decent if he's anywhere in sight or hearin', and for my part I don't like it. 'Tain't like our 'Lisbeth we used to have, to be all lost in a man, nothin' of herself.”

"Isaac," said Betsy, as she leaned against the sweet-scented hay, "that's what a woman ought to be, lost in her husband, considerin' him the head; but, Isaac, how can I obey Scripture about you when you're the weaker vessel?"

"Well! you needn't, Betsy. I'd feel bad to have ye lost in me. I don't like lost folks."

"Isaac, sometimes I think you ain't one of the elect. Now have you any evidence that you can bring out?"

"Nothin' to brag of, Betsy; only this — I want to be like Christ. I don't care much for all the doctrines and catechisms, but as I read about that man who was born in a manger and worked in a carpenter shop, and just kept on doin' and doin', and lovin' and lovin', hardly ever sassin' back — I just want to be like him," and Uncle Isaac wiped a tear from his face with his coat sleeve. Aunt Betsy, wonderfully subdued, started for the house.

"You ain't the worst man that ever lived, Isaac Barton," said she.

Yes, 'Lisbeth was to marry Daniel Doolittle. The subject of love had never come up between them. 'Lisbeth would do as he said and be a great help to him, and 'Lisbeth would echo his thoughts and words, and come to believe that he was marrying her, as he did everything else, "In His Name." The fame of the late revival spread abroad, Mr. Doolittle had several trial calls, and at last made arrangements in the then small village of W ——, Connecticut, to be pastor of the church there. He went to visit his sister and mother, and told them of his marriage, which would take place in June, and of his engagement to preach for a year, and longer

if he liked the people. He did not in the least bring into consideration the question as to whether they would like him.

"I am very glad, Daniel, that you have been so blessed. I will get ready as fast as I can, so as to have your house all in order when you bring your wife there."

"Oh! Ah! Why, mother, I thought sister would want you here," said the son, very much taken aback.

"Oh, no," said Annie, "I would not rob you of mother's help, and I shall get along. You know mother has always said that she would be with you in the work of saving souls."

"Yes; and, children, it isn't that entirely, but Daniel is going to have a young wife, and she may need over-seeing a little. Daniel, you know back-bone is needed in dealing with young women; they need counsel, and 'Lisbeth may not have had the best chance in the world."

"I don't know, I'm sure. I do know, mother, that my expected wife has been with very good people, but if she had been as she was when I first began to pay attention to her, I should have needed your help more than I do now. Now, however, I have only to think, and she seems to know what I want and comes right to me. She will be a great help in my work, and as near as I can make out, she will inherit all the property of the old folks where she lives."

"Are they rich, Daniel?" inquired the mother, fairly catching her breath.

"Yes; well-to-do folks."

"How old are they?" asked Annie.

“ Well, I can't say as to that; pretty well along in years.”

“ Oh! well, they will miss her very much, Daniel. Didn't you tell me that one or both of them had very poor health? ”

“ No! I did not,” said Daniel, as he started out of the room. “ They're well enough.”

CHAPTER VI.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING.

APRIL and May seemed to 'Lisbeth to pass more rapidly than any two months of her life had ever passed before. Every moment was crowded full of work, and Aunt Betsy even hired a Miss Macomber to help quilt and do other work, for 'Lisbeth was going to be married to the minister, and she wanted her "to go decent." So things belonging to her mother and grandmother were overhauled; woolen sheets, linen sheets, and pillow cases were taken from their hiding places and washed. Aunt Betsy decided that five good linen sheets would be enough, for she reasoned that old Mis' Doolittle would bring all of her bedding, and that between them there would be enough to fix up a spare bed. 'Lisbeth had pieced a nine-patch, and an album quilt, and they must be quilted.

The album quilt had all the names of the donors of the blocks written on the white centre, and Aunt Betsy said in a most pathetic way, it would remind 'Lisbeth of old friends and home when she was far away. Thirty miles seemed a great distance to Aunt Betsy, but she concluded Uncle Isaac and she would be able to go there as often as once a year.

Miss Macomber was quite a character in her way. Aunt Betsy said she was well enough, only she was

given to making poetry every time any of the neighbors died; and she honestly hoped to outlive Jane, for she didn't want poetry written about her, living or dead.

Jane Macomber was at that time fifty-five years old, but tried every one by her girlish ways. She suffered agonies nights with the bent tins so near her head, but insisted that her hair clustered so she could not comb it out straight, and that in putting it up in tins she was only assisting nature a little. She owned in a whisper to having read "Alonzo and Melissa" through twenty times, so she knew it most by heart. She was tall and angular, without an ounce of extra flesh on her bones. Her red cheeks, just little spots about as large as a copper cent, were a long time considered an indication of consumption, but at last the horrible truth got out somehow, that a lady from Boston had died there, and had left a red saucer that the paint would come off from, and that Jane put it on her cheeks. Aunt Betsy used to say that if she could "git hold of Jane Macomber's red sasser she would destroy it if she had to go to jail for it;" but Uncle Isaac would say, "If the sasser is her'n, whose business is it, I would like to know?"

Jane lived in a "frame of mind" in which she *would not* be disturbed by any unkind remarks. If people abused her, and told her just what they thought of her, she would say, "I am glad to see you in that frame of mind. It gives food for thought, and I will put you as you stand there, majestic and accusing, in my verses that will be in my forthcoming book." She had threatened thus immortalizing people until they had a fear of her, and let her alone unless some such occasion as the

present occurred, when her skill was required to do some particular work.

'Lisbeth was unusually silent this morning, and sitting opposite Jane in her changeable linsey woolsey gown, made a sweet picture for a poem.

"'Lisbeth, is thy mind wandering in fields of bliss, or why is it thou art silent?"

'Lisbeth looked up wearily, and sighing, said, "I don't know anything about bliss and I guess I shan't till I get to Heaven, but I have a great deal to think about. Sometimes, Jane, I do not know whether I have done right in promising to marry Daniel Doolittle or not. I want to do right, but when he is away I have strange misgivings."

"'Lisbeth, I have mistrusted he was not the star of your soul, and I have felt for you; and, 'Lisbeth, if I was in your place I would tell him so. But as he needs a wife, couldn't you make a transfer to me? We are nearer of an age, at least in appearances, than you and he are, and my soul goes out to meet his soul. I always know when the poetry wells up in me that there would be a kindred feeling about life's great responsibilities. I knew I could love him when I looked into his dark eyes, and composed this verse right off, and it won't have to be changed at all to go into my book:

'Oh, Daniel Doolittle, thy glorious soul
Will touch my heart while ages roll,
And be to me a wondrous light,
That will make both earth and heaven bright !'

Oh ! how I could love that man !"

"But," said the matter of fact 'Lisbeth, "though I don't feel at all as you do, I shall have to do as I promised and be his wife."

Jane sighed and was silent for some time. At last she said, "I feel like saying to myself, 'Jane, you poor, poor girl, how long will it be thus?' This is the fifth disappointment I have had, but the dawning of my day will come."

"'Lisbeth, I wish you would get the dinner and let me quilt awhile. I've worked like a dog all the mornin' and the turnips are not cleaned yet for the biled dinner. There, it's runnin' over, 'Lisbeth; swing the crane out and turn the pork over. Likely as 'not the rhind side is stickin' to the bottom of the pot."

'Lisbeth, who was thinking of Jane's proposition to turn over Mr. Doolittle to her, looked more like her old self than she had in weeks. A merry gleam was in her eyes and her step was as light as in the old days. Uncle Isaac, coming in to get some seed beans to plant in the garden, said, "It looks as though 'Lisbeth had got back," and 'Lisbeth quickly told him of Jane's desire to take her place.

"I wish to goodness she would! They would be a pair to be proud of. He could preach and she could compose hymns to sing," and Uncle Isaac went into the garden to plant his shell beans without noticing Aunt Betsy's shrill scream that he would be just wasting the seed beans if he planted them the first of June.

'Lisbeth walked to the Corners that night because she had to get some tea for Aunt Betsy and she was rather expecting a letter from Mr. Doolittle. She found the letter in the office. George Green was there, and kept begging 'Lisbeth to read her letter on the way home, but she would not.

“Why do you ask me to do that, George?”

“Because, if I can see you read a letter from that man I can tell by your face if you love him. You were a young girl when he came into the neighborhood, and he has changed you into an old woman. It isn't religion that has changed you, 'Lisbeth, it's that man's power over you. I used to look forward to the time when I thought you were old enough to listen and I old enough to tell you what I hoped for the future; but that is all in the past. I hope you will be happy, 'Lisbeth.”

“Thank you, George,” said the girl, and then turned into her uncle's yard. She lingered awhile looking at the lilac blossoms and thinking she would have flowers in the yard of her new home; then remembering her letter, she went to her room to read it. It ran as follows:

“ESTEEMED FRIEND: I take my pen in hand to address you, because I think it is best we should have a perfect understanding.

“In making you my wife, I am lifting you from your low conditions and bringing you into an atmosphere of mental and intellectual vigor that you are not accustomed to. If in this change I shall find it expedient to criticise or rebuke you, I trust you will take it as a token of my deep interest in you, and not resort to tears. I write to you plainly. Neither my mother nor myself can look upon the weakness of tears, excepting in the event of a death in the family, with any degree of allowance, and even then, such exhibitions of weakness must be for only a brief season. Another thing — hasty speech or laughter is not becoming in a minister's wife. When I am working as I am, ‘In His Name,’ all frivolity must cease.

“My mother is already in the home that we are to occupy, arranging things that she deemed best to bring (which are not many), as she thought it probable that your aunt would insist on filling the house up pretty well. But, 'Lisbeth, there's one thing I have made an especial subject of prayer—whether it is best to have a cooking stove instead of using the old fireplace. First, the expense of it is considerable; second, it does seem there might be danger from fire being so confined, and thirdly, I wondered if it would not be placing a temptation in your way to make other work lighter because you are favored in the cooking. I do not want to place any temptations in your way that will make you indolent. That is one of the sins against righteousness. I expect to shape your course. I want to have your life a reflection of my own, and both of us in the image of God.

“My regard for you is as great as I ever had for a female—do not take this in a way to feel flattered, but rather thank God that you have been able to awaken in my soul this state of feeling for you. My mother will live with us; her advice will be invaluable. She is a most devoted Christian and will teach you how to lead the female prayer-meetings which will be at our house every Wednesday afternoon.

“Excuse me if I set the day for our marriage, as the month has been named but not the day. We will be married at your uncle's Wednesday afternoon, June 7th, and start for W—early Thursday morning. We may be able to ride on the load of goods your uncle will send over, and that will save hiring another horse to bring us. I think by starting *very* early we can drive the distance in a day.

"We shall be at our home on Friday to put things to rights and on Saturday I shall work hard on my sermon for Sunday. I think the sermon on the Sabbath following our marriage ought to be one of peace and thanksgiving, so I shall 'In His Name' prepare such a sermon.

"I shall come in the stage to the Corners and walk the rest of the way.

"Tell your uncle and aunt that I rather they would not make much of a wedding or have much expense about the affair anyway. I think if your aunt thinks it over she will be willing to make an estimate of what it would cost to have the usual wedding, and place two-thirds of that sum in my hands to be used in supporting you, and the other third for the expense she will really be put to.

"Praying that you still fear the Lord and are striving against temptation,

"I am your affectionate well-wisher,

"DANIEL DOOLITTLE."

Half laughing, half crying, 'Lisbeth took the letter to the living-room to read to her uncle and aunt.

"That is a long letter, 'Lisbeth; it shows how much he must think of you — a foolscap sheet of paper all full only the sealing side. He used two wafers too."

Uncle Isaac, holding his old friend Jerry close to him, said, "Betsy, why don't ye let her read it to us and not be talkin' all day" — and 'Lisbeth read the strange love-letter. When she came to the change from low conditions, Aunt Betsy interrupted: "Low conditions! That's a great thing to say about folks that have waited on him for two weeks and over, and made him as com-

fortable as they could. Why he even had my best bed quilt to sleep under — the turkey-red and green one, and I put on preserves for dinner once." And when the letter was finished and she heard his plans for the wedding, she declared she would not change her plans for a thousand Doolittles.

Uncle Isaac laughed, and asked her if she wasn't getting sick of the bargain she had made for 'Lisbeth, at which she declared it was the best thing in the world for the child. "But, 'Lisbeth, you can say your soul is your own, can't ye, if ye do marry a minister?"

"I don't know," replied 'Lisbeth. "I feel entirely sold out."

"Poor little lamb," said Uncle Isaac. "If your mother knew what you are going to do, she would want to leave heaven and return to earth and help ye."

"Uncle Isaac," said 'Lisbeth, going up to him and putting her arm around his neck, "I believe mother does know, for she comes every night, and last night she shook her head sorry like. I suppose it's a dream, but it seems when I am awake —"

"'Lisbeth Chapin, what's that you are whisperin'? I don't like no such privacy for my part. I am afraid you'll have trouble with that old Mis' Doolittle, and if ye do, just let me know and I'll get Jane Macomber to keep house for Isaac, and I will come over and see which will beat."

"No, you won't either," said Uncle Isaac. "My stomach ain't regulated so I can live on poetry."

"How many days will Jane help us, Aunt Betsy?" asked 'Lisbeth. "She almost makes me wild with her talk."

“About two days longer, and I guess I can manage the rest.”

’Lisbeth sat at her window a long time that night, looking at the stars in the June sky, but no thought came to her that she could change the course marked out. It was to be. If she did her duty as a minister’s wife, she would surely escape hell.

“Oh, why is it that everything looks so beautiful, and still the one that made the earth has planned its destruction?” And she went to bed with a heart hunger never felt before.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WEDDING.

THE fatal day in June came when 'Lisbeth was to be led to the altar of sacrifice. Aunt Betsy had acceded to Mr. Doolittle's advice enough not to invite a large wedding party, but utterly refused to place any money in his hands.

"If he gits *her*, and what I give her, that's enough," said she, and the few who were invited felt it a very solemn occasion. Aunt Betsy would have George Green there. She thought it would be a lesson to him, and it was. He said there was only one thing lacking, and that was, they did not sing "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound." 'Lisbeth's grey poplin gown accentuated her pallor. Nothing was allowed that gave the least color to her wardrobe. Her leg-of-mutton sleeve stood out stiffly, and the lace at the throat was the only attempt at ornament.

Jane Macomber was there with her "bruised and oft-times bleeding heart," and had a poem for the occasion, which produced the usual effect. Some said, "What nice verses Jane can write," and others said nothing — for she made words rhyme that did not seem to be neighbors, and indulged in so much "poetic license," that it took a very strong imagination to see either rhyme or reason in her productions. Jane had to wash

the dishes after the repast, notwithstanding it was her "fifth disappointment," but she did it with a good grace, and went on dreaming of the future, how some time "she, a willing bride, would be borne away on love's swift wings." Aunt Betsy remarked that "likely as not she would go afoot," but it produced no effect upon Jane, only to awaken pity in her heart for Aunt Betsy's lack of imagination.

The guests had gone to their homes, and the family, with the new addition of Daniel Doolittle, was in the living-room. He looked like a picture of grim fate, as he sat apparently in deep meditation. At last he opened his lips, not, however, in caressing words to his bride, but with this solemn remark:

"I fear I have committed a great error. Mr. Barnes (the minister) must have started from his home about one o'clock. He owns his own horse, and it might as well be doing something as to be in the pasture. He ate a hearty meal and I presume his horse was fed. Now I think it over, I ought not to have given him that dollar; he ought not to have accepted it, for he did nothing for me that I would not willingly have done for him free of charge."

"'Tain't at all likely you will be called upon to do any such job for him," said Aunt Betsy, "for if I remember right, he said he was in his eighty-fifth year, and hasn't got a tooth in his head; just lives with his daughter, and does odd jobs, and a little preachin'. I guess it won't do you any harm to pay him the dollar, nor him to git it."

'Lisbeth looked at her aunt in wonder. What had changed her so? And later on when she went to the

pantry at her aunt's call she was surprised to hear her say, "I declare, 'Lisbeth, I don't know but I have made a mistake. I don't see how any one can be as pizen stingy as that man of yourn is. You've got to keep a tight rein on him or you will lose your soul over again, gittin' used to him and his mother."

Uncle Isaac just dreamed away, wiping now and then a tear from his eyes, and blowing his nose, and saying he didn't see how in the world any one could get such a cold in June.

Old Jerry tried to jump up in 'Lisbeth's lap, but received a blow from Mr. Doolittle, accompanied with the words that he liked to see animals and folks know their places, and that no nasty cat could get on that gown of 'Lisbeth's while he was around, as he was not at all sure that it could be colored.

"Do you expect 'Lisbeth's dress to serve future generations?" said Aunt Betsy, not at all in sympathy with his views.

"Isaac Barton," said Aunt Betsy, after Mr. Doolittle and 'Lisbeth had retired to the spare room, "what do you think has been the matter o' me? The Lord knows I thought I was doin' the best I could, but I find I was mistaken, and if you had had the spunk of a mouse, you, with all your misgivin's, would have gone to work and stopped the hull thing. You see I was makin' a fool of myself, and what did you want two fools in the family for? But I can't help it now. I'll give her the best advice I can, and she'll have to let it go now. I s'pose I ought to be sorry for talkin' so, but it's hard work, when I git waked up, to keep my mouth shut."

"Betsy, you are feelin' now what I have felt all along. But I ain't no fighter, Betsy, and when I did tell you what I thought, you'd make it hot for me with your tongue. It can't be helped now. I don't think that man is honest, or if he is, he's got a soul so small that the Recordin' Angel will never have any good to put down about him. But you, Betsy, have got her into the boat, and I hope now you won't take away her oars and let her drift."

"What do you mean, Isaac Barton?"

"I mean as long as you have held him up as next to the Lord himself, you had better not go to takin' every scrap of confidence she has got in him away. The poor child has married that man as a religious duty and don't care one bit for him. She trembles when he comes near her. And yet, Betsy, you have doomed her to life-long misery."

"Isaac Barton, I have prayed twice a day for months about this affair. I've left my work and gone into the spare room and asked to know what my duty was, and I thought I was showed that 'Lisbeth ought to marry that man."

"You may be all right, Betsy. 'Lisbeth may be happy. If she is, maybe you can get the job of marryin' off the young folks in the neighborhood." And Uncle Isaac went to bed without saying his prayers. Aunt Betsy knew he did, for she watched the curtains before the bed recess to see if they "bulged out, and they didn't."

Meanwhile, in the Green household, Uncle Jim, sitting with the others, the dim light of one candle lighting up his face, was saying: "I believe it's a case of

mesmerism or some such new-fangled name. That girl has married that man when she was asleep and by and by she will wake up to find herself in prison. It's been tried in foreign parts and even in Boston. You can make men and women believe they are kings and queens and go through all sorts of performances. But up there they put their thumbs together and look straight into their eyes. I wonder if he got near enough to 'Lisbeth to do that, George?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," responded George, as he went to the ladder and made his way to the loft.

"The boy feels bad, don't he?" said Uncle Jim. "But it will pass off. Folks don't die of love sickness." Could he have seen or understood the great battle being fought that night—how clenched hands were raised in protest, until, bruised and almost bleeding from contact with the sloping roof, they at last from sheer exhaustion lay quietly over the manly heart that had never pulsated for any other save his lost 'Lisbeth—Uncle Jim would not have thought it a slight attack.

Then he told his brother and his wife more about John Murray and universal salvation; what he had heard about it in the great world; how people were turning from old hard creeds to the thought of universal love.

"Why," said he, "you way back here, you don't know very much about Methodism; but John Wesley, who has brought the new methods into religion, is better than Doolittle and his notions. He allows that you may fall from grace a dozen times and still have a chance of salvation. I don't understand it—it's the same Christ that died. I guess when we come to sum

it up you'll find there has got to be a great deal of behaving yourself done, but if you just trust you'll get along all right and do nothing, the more danger you'll be in. For my part, I want to settle my account every night for the day that is past."

If ever any one did settle his account it was lonely James Green, who, bereft of family and home, a sailor on the high seas, always kept the love of God rather than the fear of Him alive in his heart and shining out of his life.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEAVING THE OLD HOME.

'LISBETH was married. No one in the wide world could have felt more married, if being married meant losing one's identity. Even Uncle Isaac seemed to be thinking of how the load could be made more compact so the things wouldn't get hurt, and Aunt Betsy talked entirely with Daniel concerning eatables she had put up for them to start in with.

"Most of them are in the top drawer of that chest of drawers, and there's enough in a basket for you three to eat. But, Daniel, you look out for that Joe Grimes, the driver; he'll eat everything that's in the wagon if you'll let him. He makes a hog of himself every chance he gits, and when Isaac hires him to do a day's work I put enough on the table and say enough's enough; though Isaac, I do believe, would want me to go and git him another piece of pie. His wife is awful slack and tends more to religion, or thinks she does, than she does to makin' home sweet and clean. That's part of my religion, Daniel, to keep a clean house and have clean vittles, but I know well enough that my besettin' sin is my tongue; it will git me into trouble. I can't stop, as I ought to, and pray when I feel like sayin' a thing that is goin' to hurt, but have to wait till afterwards and then rassle in prayer for a week to git out of it."

"I am so glad to see you so humble, Mrs. Barton, and I have thought since my engagement with your niece, of asking a favor of you, that will be a kind of a discipline to you; and that is in your way of speaking of or addressing me. Had your niece married an ordinary individual whose name was Daniel Doolittle it would be perfectly proper to call him by his first name; but as she has not, but has married one who 'In His Name,' the name of the Most High, has a great mission to perform, one who is a worker in the great moral vineyard, I feel you had better speak of me in a more becoming manner as 'Lisbeth's husband, the minister,' or as '*Mr.* Doolittle.' I have had quite a struggle with my mother about addressing me before folks as 'Daniel' or speaking of me as 'Daniel.' I tell her it is not dignified, and even our relationship does not warrant it. She does better than she did, but she is not yet up to the real mark I have set for her. She could say 'My son' in addressing me and not let my first name become common."

"Well! if that don't beat all," said Aunt Betsy, with a sniff. "I suppose I *hev* been a little too familiar, siderin' our relationship don't amount to much; but when it comes to puttin' a gag on your mother, that's another thing. I guess I shouldn't stand that."

Meanwhile, 'Lisbeth had stolen out to the back door and stood looking at the gray dawn. So intent was she with her own thoughts that she hardly knew when Uncle Isaac came softly to her side and brought to her the first ray of happiness she had had since the ceremony that bound her to Daniel Doolittle.

"'Lisbeth," said he, "here's old Jerry. I'd kind a

like you to bid him good-bye. I've had a hard time to keep him decently fed since that missionary business, but I guess I'll conquer. Now you are married to Daniel Doolittle I can't say anything. I couldn't say much before, but I felt a good deal. 'Lisbeth, do your duty, your whole duty, but if they git too hard on ye, jest count on me to help ye; and 'Lisbeth, if you had stood out a little more your aunt would have given in; for, between you and me, I think she's a little sick of her bargain, but that won't do any good now it's done."

"Uncle Isaac, I couldn't stand out; I have felt since March as though I was tied hand and foot and my heart was dead and I have had to believe in all those horrible things. To doubt is sin, and somehow I have got to live my life. I thank you, Uncle Isaac, but I don't think I shall live long to need any one's help," and a tear rolled silently down her pale cheek.

"Oh, 'Lisbeth, don't cry; I have got a little somethin' that I want to give ye. There's two dollars I want you to take, all your own. I wish it was more."

"But, Uncle Isaac, does Aunt Betsy know about this? If she don't, she'll find it out and make a fuss."

"She can't find it out, and I'll tell ye why — I sold a critter to a drover the other day and when she asked me how much I got I told her *within* two dollars. It wasn't exactly a lie, for I did git all I told her and a leetle more. 'Lisbeth, once when you was a leetle shaver and came way out in the lot with some vinegar and ginger Betsy had fixed up as a drink, I kissed ye, and now, you poor little lamb, I want to kiss ye just once more," and before 'Lisbeth hardly realized the enor-

mity of the transgression, Uncle Isaac had kissed her on the cheek.

She felt very guilty as she went back into the living-room and felt the spot where she had been kissed burning like fire. What if her husband should see it and mistrust something!

"It's time you was gittin' along," said Aunt Betsy, feeling ruffled and terribly rebuked by what the new husband had said to her. "I'll go out to the wagon and help pack ye in."

When there, she shook hands with 'Lisbeth and hoped she would do well; she had her best wishes, and for her part she hoped she would feel that her aunt had done all she could for her eternal salvation. "Mr. Doolittle, you will have to move the box the dinner is in for the driver to set on in the middle of the wagon. You hain't left any room for Mis' Doolittle's feet." Then with another shake of Lisbeth's hand she said, "Good-bye, Mis' Doolittle."

When Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy went back into the lonely house the sun had not yet risen. The dishes were on the table from the early breakfast they had had, and Aunt Betsy went at them with an energy unknown even to her.

"Isaac Barton, if it hadn't been for you I should have had Sarah's child with me this minute, but just because you had some relation down Hartford way, you got me down to that meetin', and that's how it all came about, and we have lost that girl. Why, this mornin' guess what that man said to me 'bout callin' him *Daniel*? No knowin' what he'll want next; maybe want me to git down on my knees and look up to him. I've

held in just as long as I can, and I can't stand it another minute, and you are all to blame for it."

"Well, Betsy, pile it on; when you come to your senses and look God in the face, you will see you're doin' a dumb mean trick, talkin' as you do to me," and Uncle Isaac wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve and started for the barn to tell the hired man to go over to Mr. Green's and work that day, as he was going to change work with him.

It was a lonely old man that sat down on a log in the calf yard that morning. Though the calves approached him playfully, they missed the accustomed caress, and finally left their silent master and went to nipping the tender grass. "Oh, Lord, did I do wrong? Was it the devil instead of you that did start me about goin' down where we first met that man? Oh, Lord, if it's all a mistake and 'Lisbeth's got to be sacrificed, can't ye fix it some way?"

"What am I about?" finally said he in a low tone, "Talkin' in this way to the Lord. Oh, how I wish I was gifted in prayer! how I would pray for that child. Still I think, somehow, if it come to an open tussle between Daniel Doolittle and the Lord, the Lord would beat. I hope so anyway, and if he takes the life out of our poor little lamb, almost, I hope they'll have the tussle."

Although early, there was a visitor to see Aunt Betsy, no other than our friend Jane Macomber. She had felt it her duty to see 'Lisbeth before she went.

"Mis' Doolittle's gone," said Aunt Betsy, dropping a tin cover she had been wiping to the hearth; "been gone an hour. When folks have got near about thirty miles to travel, they've got to start some time."

"I am so sorry," said Jane, bringing from her pocket a piece of paper well written over. "So sorry, for I can't afford postage to send it to them, and I want them to see this poetry before I put it in my book, 'A String of Gems,' that's the name of it, and in a year or two I am going to Hartford to see how much it will cost to have it printed. I should not expect to get over a dozen books at first, and then I should have them printed along just as I could stand it, though I think I know of twenty folks who would buy one."

"I don't set much store on poetry," said Aunt Betsy, wiping her eyes with her apron, declaring she guessed they had got some dirt in them, they run so.

"Ahem!" said Jane, "this is how it begins:

"The sun shone on a maiden fair
Upon a bright June day,
Whose cheeks were red as roses are
When shadows o'er them play."

"It's no such thing; Mis' Doolittle was as white as a ghost and I got the camfire ready if she should faint."

"That's the license in poetry for the sake of the rhythm," said Jane loftily:

"The sun shone on a man of God,
Who slowly bowed his head,
And promised to be true to her,
Till 'Lisbeth was dead."

"*That's* no such thing; that old minister made 'Lisbeth promise like a blue streak about obeyin' and everything, and all *he* promised to do that amounted to much was to *cherish* her, and there's different ways of cherishin'."

"I don't know about it, very well; but, of course,

Mis' Barton, folks can't be just true in poetry; they have to embellish the circumstances."

"Well, I don't want my circumstances embellished; there's enough lyin' in plain talk without stringin' it out in poetry."

"How pert you are this morning, Mis' Barton, and your cheeks are all aglow, giving you the appearance of extreme youthfulness."

"Well, 'tain't because I've got a red sasser," said Aunt Betsy, somewhat mollified by the compliment.

Jane, never heeding the thrust at her, said, "Now, here I have something that relates to you:

"The bounteous table groaned beneath
The feast prepared by Betsy's hands,
As good as any ever spread
In ours, or in distant lands."

"How do you know that, Jane Macomber? I didn't have anything to brag of. How do you know what they have in distant lands?"

"Oh, it's poetic license," returned Jane, "and now I'll skip over twelve verses and come to the last, as I have got to quilt for Mis' Green to-day:

"The bride and groom have gone this day,
To foreign lands to dwell;
The bride will do the dishes up,
And he'll save souls from hell."

"Well, that's pretty strong talk. Is that poetic license, too?" And Jane said it was.

"I'm clean tired out," said Aunt Betsy, when Uncle Isaac at last came to the house. "Can't you take up with a picked-up dinner, bein' the hired man isn't here to-day?"

"I dunno as I want any dinner at all," said Uncle Isaac. "I feel tuckered, too, and as though half the house was gone."

"Don't go to bein' soft, Isaac Barton, but put on this apron and go in the back room and churn for me. Somethin' has got to be done, if half the house is gone."

When the door swung ajar a little later, Isaac was astonished to see his wife picking off the chicken from the bones and feeding old Jerry, who, astonished at the unusual feast, would dodge every time her hand came down near his dish, then draw up and eat it.

"Don't be a fool, cat," he heard her say. "'Lisbeth liked ye and I guess we won't rob ye of your vittles for any missionaries that we know of. Poor old Jerry! I and Isaac will be pretty lonesome and wish our girl back. She might have been saved after all if she had never seen Daniel Doolittle. Isaac Barton, what have you stopped churnin' for? That butter has never come so quick!"

"Well, it's pretty near it; it needs rinsin' down."

While Aunt Betsy's deft fingers were going over the cover and sides of the churn preparatory to rinsing the cream down, Uncle Isaac said, "Betsy, I heard what you said to Jerry in there when you fed him, and, Betsy, I never liked ye so well in my whole life as I do now."

Aunt Betsy, half pleased and half ashamed, said: "It's well that old cat can't talk; he would tell lots of your secrets, Isaac Barton;" and then with a burst of tears she reached out toward him and said, "Isaac Barton, I feel like tearin' law and religion all to flinders and goin' after that girl. I've been a blind old woman,

thinkin' I was doin' God's service when it was the devil all the time puttin' me up to it."

That night Isaac and Betsy Barton on their knees plead for the happiness of poor 'Lisbeth, plead as only those can pray when they see their loved ones slipping out of their lives; and when Betsy at last arose and wiped her eyes, she said she guessed "she felt better, but that it was meaner'n pusley, pushin' any one out into deep waters and then askin' the Lord to keep 'em from drownin'."

CHAPTER IX.

'LISBETH'S NEW HOME.

THE day had been a terrible one to 'Lisbeth. They stopped at noon and ate their dinner under the trees by the roadside, and 'Lisbeth incurred Daniel's displeasure by taking up a piece of bread to eat before he had returned thanks. Joe Grimes's horses must be fed and watered and cared for before they could go farther, so the noon hour was spent by the reverend gentleman in impressing his young wife with his superiority.

"'Lisbeth, I hope you know that you have now become a part of me; that the work of your hands is mine; that whatever you do for souls will be for my glory as well as the glory of God, and that whatever you do that is a reproach will disturb my great work. You have been so silent since you have been a professor that I have hardly known what to make of you, and when you have expressed yourself to me, you have seemed to use my language over again, so I was not sure about your real thoughts; your very soul must be an open page to me; I do not want you to cover up anything from me. If you do it will be disobedience, and have you not promised obedience? I want to keep all these things before you. You are young; there may be temptations to enter into light conversation. My mother will help you; she is a godly woman, but you may rebel

at her wise instructions. That will not do; her counsel will be invaluable.

"I do not think your folks have done anything extra in your setting out. I hoped I would not have anything but the stove to pay for, which I suppose is now set up in our house. The man who put it there was to stay all day and run it for mother. She won't have much to do till we get there with the things, for her bed was set up before I came after you and the few things pretty well put in place."

It was nearly nine o'clock when 'Lisbeth drew up before her new home. The place looked dreary in the moonlight, because of the absence of trees and shrubbery. The house was long and low, with eaves almost down to the two doors which faced the street. Behind it was a low building which served as stable for the cow and horse and shelter for the wagon of the family who had previously occupied it. Daniel had made up his mind to have no animals around him, and had engaged a pint of milk a day of a neighbor, saying that would be sufficient for their use.

There was a kitchen, which served as dining-room also, and two small bedrooms off from it, one to be occupied by the minister and his wife, the other by his mother. Opening out of the kitchen was a spare room with a bedroom off from it. There was a path from each door and two gates.

When 'Lisbeth went into the kitchen, lighted only by a candle which stood on a fall-leaf table, she could hardly see the mother, who approached them in a stately manner, and when introduced to 'Lisbeth said:

"You have done well to marry my son, the minister,

and I have been praying that you will not prove too young to appreciate the great blessing."

'Lisbeth approached the stove, which showed no welcoming light like the fireplace at home, but the singing of the iron tea-kettle assured her of heat and the promise of something warm to drink, for, although June, the evening was chilly.

Joe Grimes had taken his team to the tavern, where he was to stay, and returned with a strong man to help unload the things.

Mrs. Doolittle, senior, showed great interest in the unpacking of the things, especially in the contents of the chest of drawers, which had come safely.

"I had only a little bread and a few potatoes and some tea left in the house. I thought, of course, you would bring with you all that was needed for some time, as it is great folly to prepare for a wedding and then send that which is left all over the neighborhood."

"We have a good supper, I think," said the homesick 'Lisbeth, as she began taking from the drawer bread, cheese, cake, pie, dried beef, ham and chicken, besides other things too numerous to mention.

The elder lady viewed these eatables with evident disfavor; not but that she was glad of them, but they showed extravagance, and while eating the meal with great relish, she would say, "'Lisbeth, did you help make this cake?" When answered in the affirmative, she said, "It will never do for a minister's family; it's too rich."

'Lisbeth retired at once, so tired was she with the long ride. Striving against the homesickness which threatened to overpower her, and with head throbbing

with pain, she lay and listened to the conversation that passed between mother and son :

"My son, I had no idea the girl you was to marry was so young-looking and had such a babyish face. I am afraid she won't do. The elders' wives will get after her and make you trouble. I feel as though you ought to have married some one nearer your own age. I don't want you to blame me for the thought, but I fear they will say you were carnal-minded when she is introduced to the people of your church as your wife. We ought to have begun right at first and had her wash the dishes, and she never said a word about the breakfast. She must not expect me to get it. I will give her my counsel and do all I can to entertain folks who come here, but I shall not feel it my duty to do the work. And, my son, I would advise you to have your wife begin in the morning at family prayers to pray, so she can get broken in to do her duty as leader in female prayer-meetings. Do you know if she is gifted in prayer?"

"No, mother, I never heard her pray."

"Daniel Doolittle, have you, a minister, married a woman that you have never heard pray? I am astonished. It may be the ruin of us, for you know how necessary any such thing is."

Daniel's self-esteem then gained supremacy, and he said in a very dignified manner, "Mother, I have married 'Lisbeth; you have not. I am the minister; you are not; and you will excuse me if I fail to put everything into your hands. There are duties I should be glad to have you perform, but I must have the disciplining and training of my wife. I have held you up to her as a

model of Christian excellence, but we both can remember some things in the past that I do not want repeated, and here they know nothing of your occasional lapses into habits that have been a great trouble to your children in the past. You have, I trust, overcome all obnoxious tastes."

Mrs. Doolittle had a temper and a bad one, and she showed it. Half crying and a great deal angry she retired to her room leaving the dishes unwashed, and moaning and groaning, declared that that foolish little girl had come between her and her boy.

"Mother, I can stand this no longer. I will do what I can to have this home right for you, but if it does not suit you, you can go back to Annie's."

Going to Annie's meant work, and so after awhile she quieted down, resolving in her own mind that she would run things after all.

The next morning pale-faced 'Lisbeth succeeded in getting breakfast on the table, which, after the blessing was asked, was eaten in silence. The minister got his Bible and sat down to read. 'Lisbeth trembled with a terrible fear while the chapter was being read. "'Lisbeth," said Daniel, after the reading, "my mother and I think it is best that you should follow me in prayer this morning, so you will be prepared to take up the cross and lead in the female prayer-meeting."

"Oh, I can't pray out loud, I don't know what to say. I can't pray before you or at the prayer-meeting either. Won't your mother do that? She must be used to it."

"I will lead the first meeting or two, but my son's wife must get the harness on and do her work. I can't do it for her."

They waited some time for 'Lisbeth to pray, but finally arose, giving her reproachful looks, though refraining from chiding her further.

That day was a perplexing one to 'Lisbeth. If she decided on having a piece of furniture in one place, the elder Mrs. Doolittle decided it would be better in another. People were not standing on ceremony, but were already beginning to call, and though 'Lisbeth felt she looked unfit to receive company, she was obliged to go through with an introduction and refuse offers of help from some who would willingly have helped her, and others who would have helped her out of curiosity to see how things were going on there, and what the new minister's folks had to keep house with.

Daniel Doolittle was somewhat disappointed that Uncle Isaac's folks did not do better for 'Lisbeth. He was going to have the spare room for his library and a sort of holy of holies where "In His Name" the swift arrows of thought should be gathered together to pass from his lips on all the Sundays of the year. There had got to be some things bought, a table, shelves for books, chairs where his people could sit when they sought his advice. It was going to cost him several dollars.

"'Lisbeth," said he, "haven't you worked for your uncle's folks ever since you can remember? I've been thinking that maybe you could collect some wages. I know more about gospel than I do about law, but I believe they are in your debt. Some of those things you brought were your mother's, weren't they?"

"Only a few, Daniel, but don't think of trying to collect money of them. They took care of my poor mother through her sickness, and buried her, and they have

cared for me ever since I was born. I know I never helped them enough to pay for what I've had."

"'Lisbeth, I am very sorry to hear you say that. It doesn't promise very well for my future. You are young and strong, and you ought to have made your life count more than that. You'll have to turn over a new leaf, 'Lisbeth, a new leaf, I say."

"Well, I helped what I could, but I liked going to school, so when there was any I went. Aunt Betsy used to think I was handy when she was getting in pieces to weave. I used to hand all the ends for her to pull through the reed — but I couldn't beat it up enough so but that it would look slazy."

"'Lisbeth," said Daniel, "there's a lesson to be woven out of that. Make the web and woof of your life so true that it will not be thin, slazy and unprofitable."

The only room 'Lisbeth had arranged to suit herself was her bedroom, with the high cord bedstead and its white valance around it, the neat patchwork quilt, the little square red stand with one drawer in it, and a white cloth spread, around which was white netting with ball fringe, which made it look neat, a small looking-glass, a tin comb case, a short white curtain at the window, the chest of drawers that she had brought, and one chair. A strip of board had wooden pegs upon which the clothing was hung. Mother Doolittle declared that the chest of drawers ought to be in the living-room, but in this 'Lisbeth was firm.

"Aunt Betsy told me to keep that right in my room, as it has mother's things in it and my own; so I guess I'll do so."

The elder lady noticed a gleam in 'Lisbeth's eye, and

thought it was best not to press the matter further, but muttered something about having it "handy for the whole family."

When evening came several of the villagers called to give them a welcome, bringing gifts of pie, bread and other eatables.

"We hardly thought you could get here before to-night," said one of the elder's wives. "If we had, we should have been here sooner from our part of town."

There was one young woman named Nancy Brown, about the age of 'Lisbeth, who had a good deal of mirth about her for a professor of religion, the good people thought. She beckoned 'Lisbeth out of the door, and as they stood by the window described the different characteristics of the visitors, much to 'Lisbeth's amusement.

"There, the man by the stove is Elder Evans, and that straight woman beside him, with her hair combed straight back under her cap, is his wife. She pesters the life out of him having her 'dying spells.' Your husband will have to go there about four times a year to get her dying message. The Elder says Samantha never has died yet in any of them, but we must treat such spells respectfully, for some time she will go in one. And don't you tell, but I have heard mother say they always come on after she has been mad about something — but she calls them '*dyin*' spells.' After she gets over one she reads her Bible and goes around to the neighbors to tell of her wonderful resurrection, for it is the same as one, she will say. But there's some folks think she's resurrected too often to have it make any lasting impression on the people.

“ That short, fleshy woman with the round face, and white kerchief over her shoulders, and the close cap, that’s Sample Palmer.”

“ Sample? Why, what a name ! ” said ’Lisbeth.

“ Oh, it isn’t her true name, but most everybody calls her that, she is such a hand to get samples. The store-keepers have got so they refuse her sometimes now, for they know she goes into both of the stores the same day for samples of tea and sugar ; but it don’t hurt her ; she’ll send some child in next and tell it not to tell who it’s for, so they think the child’s folks want it. She’ll be over here pretty often at first, and she won’t know you are sick of her till you tell her so. She’s an old maid, and has got enough to live on, but is the worst sponge you ever saw. The other day my mother was all alone, and getting ready to go to see Aunt Sabrina Smith, who has got the seven-year consumption and isn’t converted yet, and she (Sample Palmer, I mean) came in. Mother was rather short with her and said she didn’t hardly know as she could ask her to sit down, as she was in such a hurry to go and see Sabrina, and what do you think she said? ‘ Now, Mis’ Brown, be *ca’m*, be *ca’m*, and sit down and consider what I have to say,’ and then she rolled her eyes up and declared they were not getting at Aunt Sabrina in the right way.

“ ‘ Stay to hum ; I’ll stay with ye — and before dinner we will have a season of prayer for Sabriny, and again after dinner, and it will do her more good than wearin’ out your shoe leather goin’ there. The Lord is abundant in mercy and delivereth from evil when we know his strength.’ My mother was just silly enough to stay, but she told me that when she got down on her knees

she could not help but feel Sample Palmer was praying for her dinner instead of Aunt Sabrina. Mother wanted to do up the dishes right after their dinner, but Sample said, 'Let them go, Mis' Brown, till after we have another season of prayer;' so she prayed again, but mother said if Aunt Sabrina's life had depended upon it she couldn't have opened her lips in prayer. Sample talked a little while longer, and then said she must be about her Master's business — and left.

"Do you believe it, she went right over to Aunt Sabrina's and tried to pray and talk with her, and then there was no getting rid of her until after supper. Once she was going a great deal from house to house when we were having meetings every night, and it was known that, excepting breakfasts and Sundays, she didn't eat a meal at home for three weeks. Every time she went into a house she would say, 'Thanks be to God, there's another soul saved,' for she thought she was carrying on the revival. Our house was the last one she came to before meeting-time, so she stayed there to supper. My brother Henry is as full of fun as he can be — he said to me, 'Nancy, will you get a piece of white paper about a foot square?' I said, 'What do you want of it?' and he answered, 'If you knew you'd tell ahead, so get me the paper.' While we were eating supper I saw he was busy about something with that paper.

"Father harnessed the team to go to meeting, and Henry said he would hang on to the sleigh box. The meeting-house was most full, only some seats way up near the pulpit, and so mother went first, then Sample Palmer, and I came last. Henry wasn't to be seen. I fell a little behind, for I saw something white on Sample

Palmer's cloak, and right there in great, big black letters was printed, 'Thanks be to God, another meal is saved.' It almost broke up that meeting. Folks kept laughing, especially the ungodly ones. I found a seat behind her and when she stood up to sing, I got the paper off, and she didn't know anything about it till some one went and told her. Then she was mad for a spell, but she got over it soon enough, and now she comes oftener than ever, but she doesn't like Henry very well.

"Now, look over by the cupboard at the woman with the brown eyes and hair. She's the Widow Simmons, and she is a saint. She does more good than any one in the whole town — and she don't talk about it either. If you ever want a friend while you are here, that you can trust through thick and thin, go to the Widow Simmons."

"Where can my son's wife be?" said the elder Mrs. Doolittle, coming to the door and peering out into the darkness.

"Here she is," said Nancy cheerfully. "I was just getting acquainted. I think we can be good friends; we are about of an age."

"My son's wife will have to be alike to all," said Mother Doolittle frowning. "*Special* friends among God's children is not becoming in a minister's wife."

"*Oh!*" ejaculated Nancy, with such an emphasis on that word that those in the house looked up at the cheery face of the speaker.

Samantha Evans, when she arose to go, said in a whisper to Mother Doolittle, "Don't let the minister's wife get thick with that girl."

And Sample Palmer, as she went out, raised her hands as in benediction, and said, "I shall come often. You are young in the Lord's vineyard, and will need the help of those rooted and grounded in the faith;" while the Widow Simmons reached out her hand to 'Lisbeth and said, "May God bless you, little sister."

There were tears in 'Lisbeth's eyes when they went away, and she was glad that she had met Nancy Brown and the Widow Simmons.

CHAPTER X.

'LISBETH'S FIRST PUBLIC PRAYER.

THE first few days were full of trial to 'Lisbeth — so many strange eyes watching her when she went on the street, which seemed like a city to her, and being of a sensitive nature she could feel the thoughts of the older members of the church in regard to their minister choosing a wife so young and good-looking. At home she tried to take the position assigned her patiently and bear with the fault-finding of her husband's mother. 'Lisbeth was not accustomed to cooking with the limited amount of milk and butter that she had to use, and complained that her food did not have the same taste that it used to at her uncle's.

"Perhaps my son will have to get a large dairy, so his wife can live on the fat of the land," said his mother scornfully, but 'Lisbeth noticed that no matter where she placed the butter in preparing the table, it would be changed to a place between her husband and his mother, and if she did not like pork fat on her bread they would see her go without and not pass the butter.

"Pork grease is far more nourishing for young folks than butter, especially when they don't have to use their brains much," Mrs. Doolittle would say, and then glance at her son for confirmation.

"Mother is right, 'Lisbeth, and we must economize ;

it's costing more for us three than it ought to. Though we have been here only six weeks we have given away eight meals of victuals and Miss Palmer has had four of them."

A smile at the mention of Miss Palmer broke over 'Lisbeth's face, the first sunny one her husband had seen since he married her.

"What are you laughing at, 'Lisbeth?" said he with interest. At that she burst out with a merry peal of laughter and her mother-in-law said, "Tell us what you are laughing at, or if you have gone crazy."

'Lisbeth then related what Nancy Brown had told her on her first visit, and when it came to the story of the paper on the cloak, with "Thanks be to God, another meal saved," the heretofore decorous man broke out into hearty laughter the like of which 'Lisbeth had never heard before from his lips, and the mother joined in, though with less zest.

"It won't do to tell this to any one else, 'Lisbeth, but we will take it for a warning to look out for that woman. I noticed she was helped to biscuit three times the last time she was here, and then said her appetite wasn't very good, as she had been ailing a little lately. Though I am sorry you listened to such gossip about any of our congregation, I am glad we know it and can give the cold shoulder to her when she comes about meal-time."

'Lisbeth actually sang a little when she was doing up the dishes; her husband had laughed and his mother had joined in.

The following Sunday 'Lisbeth was surprised and alarmed to hear her husband say, when he read the notice for the weekly prayer-meeting:

"Wednesday afternoon the women of the congregation will meet at my house and commence a series of female prayer-meetings to be led by my wife, Mrs. Daniel Doolittle."

As he gave out this notice he glanced at 'Lisbeth's pleading face with a hard look, as much as to say, "You have gone scot free for this length of time and you can be excused no longer;" while his mother nodded her approval. 'Lisbeth looked at the women of the congregation and thought, "I can't open my mouth before them," but a hand reached out and touched hers softly. It was the hand of the Widow Simmons. That touch soothed her although she did not in any way know how she could get through such a terrible trial.

After the afternoon meeting Daniel called 'Lisbeth into the study and said, "'Lisbeth, I don't want you to shirk your duty. I know the congregation does not think you are working enough for a minister's wife. I want you to lead that prayer-meeting; mother doesn't think you can, so I've written out a prayer for you to learn by heart, but don't let her know of it. Read the Sermon on the Mount, then pray this prayer and when you get used to it you can make prayers of your own. Mother's anxious to start in herself, and if she gets a hold she won't let go."

'Lisbeth took the prayer and went to her room. She was lost in wonder. She had heard her husband preach powerful sermons against the Episcopal Church and their reading prayers, and now he wanted her to learn one of his and recite it to the Lord before the people.

She looked at the prayer. It was a good enough

prayer for any woman; she began reading it in an undertone —

“Our Father, we come to thee this afternoon as spared monuments of thy mercy, and we beseech thee to be very near to us. Touch the hearts of thy children within our midst, and if there should be any unsaved in thy holy presence, may they this afternoon be brought from the bonds of iniquity into the true light of the gospel.

“We beseech thee to heal the sick and at the eleventh hour save the dying. Give us unselfish hearts to work in thy cause. Be thou our stronghold, our fortress and our strength. May each of us know our duty and do it. We ask all in thy name, for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

“It’s a good prayer,” said ‘Lisbeth. “And won’t his mother be astonished? I sometimes think he would be different to me if she was away. I’ll study, so I can read the chapter good, and I’ll have them sing, ‘How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord.’”

Wednesday came all too soon, and the room was so crowded they had to have benches out by the door. Mrs. Evans was there, and Widow Simmons, Sample Palmer, Mrs. Brown and Nancy, and numbers of others ‘Lisbeth did not know, or whose names she had forgotten.

She began very bravely reading the “Blessings.” Her voice was sweet and clear, and the Sermon on the Mount never sounded better to the listening Daniel than it did when his young wife read the chapter.

The hymn, “How firm a foundation,” was not sung very well, as Sample Palmer had such a quavering voice,

and Mrs. Evans sang as though she was having a dying spell (as Nancy Brown afterward declared). Then came the awful moment: "Let us unite in prayer," said 'Lisbeth.

"Our Father, we come to thee this afternoon" (the sweet voice faltered). "O Lord! I am so weak and wicked, and thou art so strong; take my life and help me to spend it in thy service. Lord, take away the homesickness from my heart and make me able to do thy work. Lord, help me to love these friends, and them to love me. Thou knowest all, O Lord! Forgive! Forgive! Amen."

If the surprise of those present could have been expressed, there would have been great difference of opinion.

Poor 'Lisbeth's *Amen* ended in a wail, and she was convulsed with sobs. Daniel Doolittle listened and turned at first crimson with wrath, but when the Widow Simmons followed in prayer, prayed for the motherless child, prayed for her safety and her happiness, prayed that she might pluck some of the lilies and roses of life without the thorns and be a help to all, prayed that the homesickness might be changed to rejoicing and the sobs turned to shouts of joy, there was hardly a dry eye in the room.

At the close of the meeting, 'Lisbeth, with her tear-stained face, looked happier than she had before in that new home, and Daniel, calling her in the room, said:

"'Lisbeth, where's that prayer I wrote? Never tell I did it. You have been led to do the best thing, after all."

But Mother Doolittle did not like it, and said so.

That was the place for strong women, not weaklings, and she guessed she had better take things into her own hands.

“Mother, I’ll manage matters for my own wife, and in my own house,” said he very loftily.

CHAPTER XI.

NANCY BROWN GIVES THE MINISTER A PIECE OF HER MIND.

"'LISBETH," said Daniel, the next day after the female prayer-meeting, "I do not want to dictate how you shall pray; I will never try it again; still, be a little careful about letting the neighbors know just the state of your feelings; it gives them too much chance to talk."

"Well," said 'Lisbeth, "I could no more get out another word of the prayer you wrote than I could go to Europe on foot; and it all came over me, the strangeness, the loneliness, how far away I was from the happy girl of one year ago, and I didn't think what I said; that prayer said itself, and I had to cry. Somehow, as soon as Widow Simmons prayed, the stone rolled away, but if Sample Palmer had prayed at once as she did, it would have been dark again. Think of her asking God that 'wisdom might be given them to direct the child-wife of their minister,' and then saying, 'Thou knowest, O Lord, whether he was wise in his choice or not, but Thou canst bring wisdom out of the foolishness of the earth.' If I had not heard that other prayer that was like the 'falling of sweet waters,' I should have been *mad*."

"'Lisbeth, what a gross error you are committing in speech. You mean you would have been displeased, or at the worst, angry."

"Yes, I suppose that is what I mean. Well, I must go to ironing."

"What! your ironing not done yet! Why have you been so negligent?"

"Your mother would not let me iron Tuesday or Wednesday, as I had no particular baking to do, so I only ironed a few of the pieces while I was getting supper. My bread is most ready to go into the oven."

"Daniel, I think I ought to tell you that I haven't ironed a collar for you yet, and you complained about your shirts looking badly when your mother was away a few weeks ago. I tried some collars, and though I wasted lots of starch they would not look nicely. The starch would roll up in little rolls and turn black under the iron, and when I found I had scorched them badly I began to cry, and Nancy Brown came in and said she would take them home and do them up, and so she did, and she has done them ever since."

"'Lisbeth Doolittle, am I sure I hear you correctly? *My wife* can't do up my standing collars and gives them into the hands of some one else to do, and that one not much older than you! What was your aunt doing with you that you know so little about the real work of life? If Nancy Brown is doing up my collars there will not only a bill come in for the work, but your gross deception will come to light. I have worn shining collars, and that girl has chuckled to herself about it and said, 'I'll wait awhile and then I'll tell of it,' and even Sample Palmer — I should have said Miss Palmer — asked me who did up my collars, and I said, 'My wife, of course.' Your deceit has made me tell an unintentional falsehood. One wicked, deceitful thing will bring on

another; you see it, do you not? Did you take my collars and dickey over there this week?"

"Yes," said 'Lisbeth, with the expression of one who had committed a grievous error. "She brings them in the afternoon when you are studying and your mother is taking her nap."

"'Lisbeth, what was your aunt about, not teaching you?"

"Well, Uncle Isaac said he wouldn't wear the stiff things, would rather wear his woolen shirt the year round. Aunt Betsy made him wear a dickey and sometimes a collar Sundays, but they didn't have to be done up often. He hated them so he'd take them off as soon as he got home from meeting."

"That doesn't excuse her from the non-fulfilment of her duty."

"I have been listening to your talk," said the elder Mrs. Doolittle, as she slyly opened the door; "and, Daniel, I have mistrusted something was wrong all along. In the first place, she hasn't cleared her starch right. There must have been chunks of the grated potato in it, a hole in her strainer maybe, and then she hasn't been saving with it either. Oh, I could tell some things, but I won't. I will refrain. My son is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, and the poor foolish thing is his wife — much as I struggled in prayer and tried to have him act wisely; as much as I told him how wise he would be if he could love Maria Wheeler, a girl thirty years old and no foolishness about her, and quite a sum of money of her own and a little house. Maria Wheeler is the girl my son Daniel *did not* marry, 'Lisbeth, do you hear it? But if he had done so there

would be dignity and piety, and saving qualities in household affairs, *real* saving, instead of wastefulness."

"Mother, haven't I told you never to mention that woman's name in my presence? Has it not been a forbidden subject for years? Did she not break up families with her gossiping tongue? and, mother, remember this, did she not try to monopolize me because of my mother's say so? I had hoped you would never refer to that old experience again. I have married a young woman to mold her in godliness, and I shall do it, no matter what comes. 'Lisbeth has done wrong, very wrong; but she is not beyond the pale of forgiveness."

'Lisbeth stood like a convicted culprit before a tribunal of justice, but when the subject of Maria Wheeler was mentioned she showed great interest, and her husband, noticing it, went up to her, and laying his hand on her shoulder, said:

"'Lisbeth, my heart was not at all involved in that transaction. My mother may have thought she was doing best, but it was a great mistake, a *great mistake*."

'Lisbeth went to her little room and threw herself in a chair, laid her head upon the stand and utterly oblivious to anything around her, said, "I wish to God he'd got her; *I wish to God he'd got her*."

The sound reached the living-room where Daniel and his mother were standing, when Daniel went softly, and pulled the door together, saying:

"Mother, you see how penitent 'Lisbeth is; she is having a season of prayer all by herself."

"It won't hurt her," snapped his mother as she went out into the little garden and began working at some weeds that had come up among the cucumber vines.

At last, in looking around, she saw on the edge of the garden a row of something growing. She knew 'Lisbeth had worked there a great deal. She stooped down and looked closely.

"This is nothing to eat," said she, as she ran over in her mind the different vegetables she knew had been put there. "I'll bet it's posies. I'll tell Daniel," and suiting the action to the word, she said, "My son, come here."

"What is it, mother?"

"Come and see what that wife of yours has done, and call her — convict her on the spot."

'Lisbeth was called and the awful truth came out. Nancy Brown had given her some posy seeds and she had sowed them in a row where she thought they would do no harm. As she stood before them she looked pleadingly and said: "Oh, do let them grow; they don't take up much room, and Nancy says they are so pretty when they blossom."

"'Lisbeth, I must give you another lesson, I see," said her husband. "You may pull every one of them up, and when you get your work done, go over and tell Nancy Brown that I say she is to get no more foolish notions into your head."

"She meant nothing wrong; she merely asked me if I liked posies and I told her I did, but didn't think you thought it was right to cultivate them. Then she said, 'Sow the seed along the edge of the garden and surprise him when they get up nicely.' I am sorry I did it, if it's wrong," said the weeping girl as she knelt down and one by one tore up the friends she hoped to have by and by.

"'Lisbeth, it's the carnal mind that wants such things. The adornment of a meek and lowly spirit ought to be all that is necessary for you."

Just then Nancy Brown came into the house, and seeing the back door open, came through into the garden.

"Oh, here's the whole family," said she cheerily. "What are you doing, Mrs. Doolittle, pulling weeds? Mercy on me, no! That's those velvet marigolds that I gave you and you're pulling them all up."

"Miss Brown," said the minister, "it is well you came as you did. I feel it is my duty to have a talk with you; you are having a bad influence over my wife. I know all about the ironing, and now I know you have not only given her the flower seeds but have encouraged her to sow them. As children of God, we must not bow our souls down to vanity."

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," chimed in the elder Mrs. Doolittle.

"'Lisbeth would have had the gay coloring before her, and ere we could realize it, the disposition might come to her to wear gay colors; perhaps you might see a minister's wife with a pink calash on — who knows? I *cannot* and *will not* have such vanity fostered."

"Well! if that don't beat all I ever heard of in my life," said Nancy Brown, her eyes sparkling with anger. "Can't you stop the Lord dressing the birds up in plumage of beauty, and have them all blackbirds? Can't you have apples come at first instead of beautiful blossoms? Can't you have green cucumber blossoms just like the vine, so as not to have a hint of color? Can't you put a stop to nature's beauty anyway, and have it all gray and black? I've wanted to give you a

piece of my mind for quite a while, the way you use that little wife of yours."

"Has my wife complained to you?" said Daniel, his eyes shining with anger.

"No, she hasn't, but one with *half an eye can see* just how she suffers and how your treating her so makes Sample Palmer and Mrs. 'Dyin' Evans' and the whole pack of them get after her and try to riddle her to pieces. If you had heard them go on about her to her back at the sewing society the other day, you would have pitied her, and you and that old cat of a mother of yours have set it going, too, the whole thing."

"Nancy Brown, leave these premises instantly, and do not come here again unless I give you permission. I shall come over to see your folks by and by and I know they will be grieved about their daughter's actions. I have long felt you were not fit to partake of the Lord's Supper and now I know it, and shall take immediate steps to have a church trial."

"Go ahead, who cares? I don't want to follow after any leader that will abuse his wife and allow his mother to. I am not very good and don't pretend to be, but I wouldn't use a little friendless kitten as you have used her."

Strange to say, the minister said to 'Lisbeth, "You needn't pull any more of them up till I tell you. Come into the house out of the hot sun," and then, looking into her face, said, "'Lisbeth, have I abused you? I didn't mean to," while the elder Mrs. Doolittle told him he was wound round the fingers of those girls as though he was nothing but yarn.

'Lisbeth went about her work sad and weary, while

her husband going to his room came to the conclusion that after all he had been in the right of it, and yet he never made her pull up the rest of the flowers. Later on they blossomed, and though 'Lisbeth never dared pick any of them, she would go to the garden and admire their velvet leaves and wish she dared put some in an old pitcher in her room, but she did not.

Nancy Brown went home and at dinner-time told the whole story, much to the grief of her mother and father, and the delight of Henry. "Did you give it to him like that? Did you tell him just what you thought of him?" said he, as they sat under the apple-tree after dinner.

"Yes, I did, Henry. I didn't dare tell father and mother all I did say; it was awful, and say, Henry, I called Mr. Doolittle's mother an 'old cat.'"

"Good for you! If I had been there I would have helped!"

"Well, I suppose they will turn me out of the church, and that will make father and mother feel badly, but between you and me, Henry, I don't know any more about that justification and election, and foreordination and predestination than you do. I know the words, but I don't believe in the meaning of those I do understand, and I just as soon they would turn me out as not. Only, I don't want our folks to be sorry," and the tender-hearted girl brushed a tear from her cheek and went into the house and began clearing up the table. Her father and mother were silent. "Oh! dear," said she later on, "if they would only scold me; but they won't. They just look sorry and that is all."

Later in the afternoon Nancy espied Mr. Doolittle

and his mother coming, and said to her mother, "Well, I guess I shall make you lots of trouble, more trouble than I am worth."

"No, you won't, Nancy," said her mother. "You are worth a great deal to me."

Mr. Brown had been on the watch for them and had come in from the field. As he said afterwards, he wasn't going to leave any of his flesh and blood to the mercy of such folks. It was hard for Mr. Doolittle to begin the conversation. He talked about the weather, and about the haying, and on general subjects for awhile, and then began:

"I suppose your daughter told you of our conversation this morning."

"Yes, she did," said Mr. Brown quietly.

"Well, I came over to say that I may have been hasty, just a little hasty, and I *know* your daughter was. I am very sorry I spoke about calling a church meeting. Your family are valued members of our church and —"

"Yes, we pay all we can," said Mr. Brown.

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said the minister. "Your influence is good, and your lives are exemplary, save your daughter's transgression this morning, and if your daughter will only ask my mother's pardon for calling her the name she did, we will let it all pass. Your daughter called my mother 'an old cat,' Mr. Brown."

Nancy then spoke in a quiet voice, "I see I have made a great mistake."

"You're forgiven, you're forgiven," said Mrs. Doolittle, who wanted no break in the church. "Never mention it again."

"But I must," continued Nancy. "When I got home

and looked into old Tabby's kind eyes I thought I had made a mistake in the animal. I might have — ”

“ Oh ! Nancy, Nancy,” whispered her mother, “ don't say any more wicked things.”

Nancy got up and left the room, while the minister tried to excuse it off as the “ fire of youth ” and “ an undisciplined soul.”

“ She will think better of it. We will let it pass.”

Daniel Doolittle was a coward. He could browbeat one he felt he owned as he did his wife, but he could not face the independence of the Browns, especially when he could see that in the future it might detract from the possibility of his pockets being well supplied.

Mother Doolittle did not feel so, and, if possible, after Nancy's last speech she would have carried on the fight.

CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER FROM AUNT BETSY.

SOON after the occurrences just narrated, a great event took place in the Doolittle household. One afternoon a little freckled-faced girl came into the dooryard, walked shyly up to the open door and said, "Mis' Doolittle, there's a letter up to our post-office for you, and ma said you must come after it and pay the money for it."

"Which Mrs. Doolittle is the letter for?" said the elder lady, eagerly.

"I dun'no."

"I'll go after it," said Daniel. "It may be for 'Lisbeth. 'Lisbeth, have you got a shilling?"

"Not in change," replied she.

"'Lisbeth, do you mean to infer that you have any money by you, and I not know it! That would be something I could not tolerate. I asked you for the little change you might have, because I thought it would pay for your letter if you had any, but you may now get whatever money you have."

'Lisbeth went without a word to the chest of drawers, and from behind some of her clothing brought out the two dollars her uncle had given her, then sat down and cried like a baby.

"Daniel, how long are you going to have this thing going on? You married a woman and she proves to be

a baby. I want to tell you, Daniel, I knew of your wife's deceit about that money. I felt it my duty to look over her things that day I was too sick to go to meeting and I found that *money*. I knew it would come out before long, and now it has."

Daniel pocketed the money and started for the post-office. It was not a very long walk and he soon returned.

"The letter is for 'Lisbeth," he said. "I refrained from opening it until I got home, and now if you women folks will sit down, I will read it to you."

'Lisbeth reached out her hand pleadingly: "Oh, let me open it first, Daniel, do!" But he ignored her entreaties.

The wafers were carefully removed from the paper with the point of his knife and the large sheet of paper smoothed out, the date noted, and then in a monotonous tone he began to read:

"MISTRESS LISBETH DOOLITTLE:

"*Respected Niece*, — I now take my pen in hand to write you a few lines; though my pen is poor. Isaac never can make a good pen and I have had to put some vinegar in my ink, because it is so thick. I am middling well, and hope this will find you the same. I will not say but I have been lonesome since you have been gone, but if I really knew the change in your life would redound to your everlasting salvation, I would not mind, but, Lisbeth, I have had sad misgivings, and when I got your last letter — "

"'Lisbeth, have you written a letter I did not know of?" questioned her husband.

"Yes, I did," said she, almost defiantly. "I couldn't help it."

—“I have felt as though, maybe, I urged you a little too much. No, Lisbeth, I am not going to direct your letter to any Nancy Brown; it goes straight to you, and if the whole family have to read it, they will know what I think of that old woman's actions. I'm coming specially to see old Mis' Doolittle, and I guess I can talk better than I can write. Chirk up, Lisbeth! You needn't have the blues so. I want you to do your duty, but I want you to show some of your old grit and be even with that old woman, and your husband, too. Sanctification and such doings don't go together. Your Uncle Isaac and I have been thinking about changing our will, so that Daniel Doolittle or his mother couldn't get a penny of our property, and still have you enjoy it, but the law is so pizen mean, we don't know how to get at it. Maybe he'll see what is best for him, and send that old woman away. I guess you could handle the man, Lisbeth, if you was left to yourself. I have Isaac all along, but I wouldn't have had no show if I had had to tussle with Mother Barton, too; though *she* was considered a nice woman.

“Your Uncle Isaac sends his respects and says that he don't think old Jerry has got over missing you yet; and Lisbeth, it is kinder pitiful how your uncle talks to that cat about you. He'll say, ‘Jerry, how do you suppose she is? Poor Lisbeth!’ And then Jerry will mew; seems like he knew; and all the neighbors miss you. George Green always asks about you, and Jane Macomber has got as much as a peck of poetry to send you when we come. And we are coming, Lisbeth; we shall burst in on you when you don't know it. We shall bring our own vittles, and take care of our

own team, and I guess it won't rob the Doolittle tribe. I'll never get so fast again about a girl that I'll marry her off without knowing something about where I am putting her. I can see my faults, but I try to be a consistent member of the church of God, but I won't bear any nonsense.

"You needn't worry for fear you wrote too much, for you didn't, but I could guess a good deal you did not write. Tell it right out next time, and send it on your own responsibility. Don't get other folks into the idee you are afraid of your husband or his mother either. Fix some of that eyewater we used to make for your eyes. Isaac and me, both of us, think it's because you are crying so much. Your eyes never used to bother you.

"Well, I can't write any more. If this letter makes any fuss, I'll come and settle it.

"Your affectionate aunt,

"BETSY BARTON."

There was a prophetic stillness after the reading of the letter. At last Mother Doolittle burst out with, "Daniel, how long do you expect me to stand this? Look into the face of the woman you have married and then gaze on mine, and see how you choose between us. I'd send her back as you would damaged goods. I'd never stand it—sowing posy seeds, and then getting ironing done, the lazy thing! And then getting other folks to help her about mailing her letter—and *that woman* calling *me* an 'old woman!' I would like to know what you mean by allowing this to go on."

"Mother, will you be quiet? 'Lisbeth has done wrong and I know it, but she is my wife, mother, and I guess we better have 'Lisbeth write to them; it's better

now. 'Lisbeth, here's the two dollars. I wanted to try you a little and see how you would act. I'm sorry you wrote against us, 'Lisbeth, but I guess you don't feel very bad towards me, do you?"

"I could get along with you better if it wasn't for your mother," said she softly, "but I *am* tired of being watched every minute."

"Well! you get away from me sometimes," said the incensed woman. "It seems as though you had time to write letters and deceive in other ways."

"Mother, that's enough," and the old lady went to her room to lay her troubles before God.

Daniel Doolittle was in a quandary. What should he do? His heaviest wrath would have come down on 'Lisbeth if it had not been for that sentence about changing the will. He must change in some way and get his mother away. "'Lisbeth, go and rest a' spell," said he kindly. "You don't look well lately."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE METHODIST PRAYER-MEETING.

AFTER the receipt of Aunt Betsy's letter there was a decided change in the Doolittle home. Daniel was almost kind, and his mother, from the fear of having to go to Annie's, quieted down and was not so harsh in her criticisms of 'Lisbeth as previously. They had heard no more from Aunt Betsy, and Daniel had about made up his mind that it would be a hard trip for the old folks, and maybe they wouldn't come at all. 'Lisbeth had developed wonderfully in the work done in the female prayer-meetings, and people began to speak in a kindly way of the minister's wife. She brought such a sweet peace with everything she said. Mrs. Evans thought she had been instrumental in keeping off her "dyin' spells." And 'Lisbeth had changed; she had less fear of her husband and his mother and more reliance in the love of the Almighty.

Her selections of Scripture for the readings at the meetings were of peace, charity, hope and love; she did not desire to bring about other thoughts. She had become acquainted, so she was not afraid to use her voice in song; the older ones listened and then joined in. Nancy Brown had not been to meeting since her trouble with the Doolittles, but she said she would not be kept away from the minister's wife's prayer-meeting, and

therefore, "to feel right in her soul to come on to the premises," she had said in a blunt way to the old lady Doolittle: "Well, calling names is a bad habit, and I am sorry I called you a name." That served as an apology and made her feel more free to come to the prayer-meetings. She loved 'Lisbeth; there was something in the sweet pale face and blue eyes that made her think of heaven, she said. And so the others began to feel that, after all, the minister had not made a very great mistake.

Sample Palmer had tried them sorely; her mania for "savin' a meal" was so great that she would brave almost anything to do it. When the harvest apples were plenty she went from house to house asking for a few sweet "bakin' apples," then went to the minister's and presented them just before a meal.

"They are dretful wholesome when they're baked," she would say, "and powerful good with bread and milk."

"We don't have only a pint of milk a day," the elder Mrs. Doolittle replied, "so I guess we sha'n't have much of a feast with bread and milk and baked apples."

"'Lisbeth, come here," said Daniel. She went into his room, and he whispered: "Set a plate on the table for her; I am afraid of her tongue."

So Sample Palmer got a meal of the chicken that had been given them and 'Lisbeth had cooked so nicely. She couldn't be satisfied, she must stay and tell stories of the neighborhood; and once that day when she got Mother Doolittle alone, she told her she wanted her to know that she had some of the sympathy of the town; that she was being down-trodden by her daughter-in-

law, and she ought to take things into her hands. "Why!" said she, "the way the minister's wife is goin' on in the prayer-meetin's, folks will begin to think there ain't any hell to keep out of, or devil to frighten — this givin' some of the Word, but not the *hull* Word, and a half-truth is about the same as a half-breed lie."

This pleased Mother Doolittle, but she refrained from mentioning it to her son. She was glad she had some sympathy. With great unction, she said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" Still, she wanted to lay all the blame upon 'Lisbeth.

The next day but one Sample Palmer appeared again with some milk she had begged, so that the minister's family could have bread and milk and baked apples after all. That day they had but a scant supply of fresh meat for dinner, and Daniel did not feel like dividing it, but he had to, and again made up his mind he must work it in some way to stop "that woman's eating there." He was especially displeased when at night they sat down to the meal of baked apples and milk to find the milk not sweet.

"This is never morning's milk," said 'Lisbeth. "She told me to leave it right in the pail and she would come after the pail some time."

"You'll go and carry that pail home this very night, and tell her the milk was sour and that she needn't trouble herself to bring any more, especially as she has got to get it of other folks. Say it strong to her."

'Lisbeth wanted the walk but dreaded the errand. She was, however, delighted to find Miss Palmer absent

and so she left the pail on the door-sill. On her return home she saw the Widow Simmons waiting for her, and was a little surprised at her errand.

"Will you come over here a little while to-morrow afternoon, and under no circumstances let your mother-in-law come? I have company and they are Methodists," she said in a whisper, "and I am going to invite a few here in the village who believe that way and give praise to God above their breath."

'Lisbeth had heard her husband tell about the Methodists and what a terrible set they were, the women talking and screaming right out in the meetings before the men folks, and then having spells that they called the power from God, and she had a great desire to go. When she broached the subject next morning Mother Doolittle, not knowing the nature of the visit, said, "Well, 'Lisbeth, I'll go with you."

"If you please," said 'Lisbeth, "I think I had better go alone; it was a special invitation to me."

Daniel looked up as though to insist upon his mother's accompanying her, and then he bethought himself that the Widow Simmons was behind on her church money and maybe 'Lisbeth could bring it about better than his mother; so said: "Mother, I guess 'Lisbeth can go alone once in a while, and I shall want you here to tend door. I don't want to be disturbed."

When 'Lisbeth reached her destination she found quite a company assembled. The Methodists were a buxom couple who ended almost every sentence with "Bless the Lord!" The Browns and Dying Evans were all of 'Lisbeth's husband's people there, but she knew many others of the village folks.

The meeting began by singing :

“How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see.”

Never had 'Lisbeth heard it sung with such fervor ; she joined in from very joy at being free to do so.

“Let us pray,” said the leader, one who was called an exhorter. “Every onè of us right down before the Lord, and let us shout when the Spirit is upon us : Oh ! let us give thanks unto God.”

The wife of the exhorter responded so much that 'Lisbeth almost thought she was praying too. A few who had gone over to the Methodists from a nearby town were there, and the bedlam that was created made 'Lisbeth wish she was at home.

After the first season of prayer, the exhorter, Mr. Jones, arose and said : “I have come among you to tell you that you who belong to that cold church yonder are all backsliders ; you have the form of godliness but not the spirit. A backslider is the same as a soul unsaved. You need a revival here right among you cold Christians. You have not tapped the fountain of joy. Sing and praise the Lord, said David. Let all the world praise his holy name. Sing unto Zion. Dance before the Lord. David danced before the Lord. What you want is freedom to worship God. You who are hedged about by all kinds of articles of faith, you can't enjoy religion ; if you really love God you are free ; then nothing can disturb you. Why, my wife used to get the best of me once in a while before we were made free by the true liberty of the gospel, and now she don't want to ; do you, Becky ? Stand up here, Becky, and shout for souls : *Glory to God !*”

Becky stood up and began singing a strange, weird song, half song, half chant, keeping perfect time, bending the knees in unison.

"Now! who's coming to Jesus? Lay all your old husks down and get the kernel to-day." 'Lisbeth thought she was disgusted, but while sitting there listening to the medley, a strange drowsiness came over her, and still her head felt light. Another power seemed to sway her, and to the great astonishment of those present she began to sing and shout:

"Glory to God, I'm saved, saved, saved by the blood of the Lamb."

"Why, what's the matter with her? She's our minister's wife and she's been a professor since before she moved here. I don't know about such doin's as that," said Mrs. Evans.

When, after a season of prayer, 'Lisbeth got over her spell, as Mrs. Evans called it, the Widow Simmons spoke to her in a kindly tone: "I am glad if you have enjoyed yourself, but I do hope you haven't done anything that will make you trouble."

"Oh! dear, I hope not," said 'Lisbeth meekly. "I would not like my husband to know. I got to sleep in meeting, but when they were singing that strange hymn I felt so strangely, and then I did not know anything."

The Widow Simmons was more troubled than she could tell. She did not know what to make of 'Lisbeth. Nancy Brown came to her side, and said, "I hope no one will go tattling to your mother-in-law or husband."

'Lisbeth felt hurt. She had seen Dying Evans sleep through half of one of her husband's sermons, and others had got to sleep too, and there wasn't any fuss made

about it ; so she spoke in rather a cool manner to Nancy, and said she didn't know it was any worse to go to sleep than it was to make such a noise as some of them made.

Nancy, thoroughly puzzled, turned away and bade her a cool "good night."

When 'Lisbeth owned up that it was a meeting of the Methodists she had attended, Daniel's face was a study.

"What ! my wife, who has promised faithful observance of my wishes, been to a Methodist meeting and at Widow Simmons's too ? I am astonished. If you were my child instead of my wife I should give you corporal punishment."

"Give it to her, Daniel ; she deserves it more than any child I ever saw."

"Keep still, mother ; this is my own business, but I am put to great straits. Now, 'Lisbeth, are you sorry ? I want to know that." He looked her straight in the eye, until at last she said, "Yes, I think I'm sorry."

The next morning as Daniel was walking towards the store he met Elder Evans. "Good mornin'," said the Elder, "I was comin' to talk with you about your wife. I don't know how you think we are goin' to support a man who has a wife that goes into those howlin' Methodist meetin's, howls with them, claps her hands and wallers around on the floor. Mebbe you think it's all right, but there's some of us that don't, and we can't stand it ; *no, we can't.*"

Daniel Doolittle felt paralyzed. What did it mean ? 'Lisbeth shouting ? Impossible ! He turned round and

said, "I'll go back home; I want to sift this thing to the bottom," and meeting 'Lisbeth leaving the house, he said, "Go back, we want to talk with you."

'Lisbeth looked at her husband's frowning face with fear. What was coming now? What new trouble threatened her?

"The Elder says you were at that meeting yesterday and jumped and shouted, and wallowed on the floor, and acted worse than the Methodists. What have you got to say to that?"

"I have got this to say—it is a lie, and whoever says it is a liar."

"Hold on! hold on!" said the Elder. "I'm a weak man, but I'm not a liar. I can stand bein' called anything else. My wife and Mis' Brown, and Nancy and others have told me you did it, and I believe a multitude of witnesses."

"Why, Daniel, do you think I would do such a thing? No, indeed; but I will own up to one thing. I got to sleep in all that noise and I apologized to Mrs. Simmons about it. Oh! I wouldn't do what you have said I did for all the world; it is cruel to tell such lies."

"It beats all," said the Elder. "I have heard she made you some trouble, but if it's come to this, I don't know how you will get along."

When Elder Evans was gone, Daniel Doolittle, more puzzled than ever in his life before, said: "Do you before God and man deny this accusation?"

"I do," replied 'Lisbeth. "I never did it. My sole offence was in getting to sleep."

Daniel did not know what to make of it. Was there some conspiracy to ruin his wife? And when later he

went on the street the strange glances cast towards him spoke louder than words. "What shall I do, mother?" said he, in his despair.

"Get all of them together who saw her, and brand her, and then if she keeps denying it, shut her up and make her live on bread and water until she owns it up. I knew you'd have trouble, Daniel."

"Shut your mouth, mother," was the rather unclerical response.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STRANGE FORCE.

WHEN Daniel was again alone with 'Lisbeth, he exclaimed :

"I don't know what to make of you. Right in the face of such evidence you positively deny the accusations against you."

"I can't help it, Daniel; they are not true. I felt badly that I got to sleep, but I could do no more than say I was sorry, and unless I talked in my sleep, there is a conspiracy to injure me, and among some I thought my *best* friends, too."

"You do not talk in your sleep, 'Lisbeth, not any to speak of. Christ demands that we forgive seventy and seven times and yet more. I shall try to forgive you, but we cannot, as Christians, pass this over. Those whom you have openly called 'liars' must hear from you a humble confession. There is no other way. As it is, it will about ruin my life and influence, and will block the way against my getting a pastorate anywhere else."

"Well! Daniel, I did not ask you to marry me, and I sometimes feel our union was a great error, but as it is I can't go back to uncle's. Daniel, I have wanted to tell you before, but did not dare, that there is a little child coming to us by and by, and I do not want it to come to our lives with terrible darkness around us."

"'Lisbeth, I have mistrusted this, and it is only another indication of your lack of confidence in me. Oh! I am sorely tried. Had I not set out on the Christian course to work 'In His Name,' I should feel that the billows were going to overwhelm me; but 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,' " said he, assuming an attitude of resignation.

"Oh! my poor, poor son, I can't help but listen when things of such grave importance are going on. You know the Word tells of scourging and punishment to offenders. You know how the ungodly were slain by the will of the Lord. If the Lord can be angry, may not His children, who are so sorely tried, be the same? For my part, I want to open my lips in denunciation of such actions, and were it best, I'd even lay my sanctified hands down in punishment. You are ruined, Daniel, and that girl-woman has ruined you; she has dragged you down into the depths and left you there."

"Mother, that will do. I see you still retain your strong point of listening. Do not say one word to 'Lisbeth while I am gone. 'Lisbeth, get at your work."

Mother Doolittle had a way of talking to herself that was very suggestive when angry, and so she returned to her room, leaving the door ajar, and began talking. 'Lisbeth could not help but hear.

"I think her best way will be to say she was tempted of the devil — to own up she has never been anything, anyway, but a pretender. Her being a professor at all was just to catch Daniel. I hope the child will die; it will be pickled through and through with lies, and be no good to any one. 'Oh, generation of vipers.' I wonder if the Lord Jesus wouldn't put it stronger than

that if He were here now. Oh ! Daniel, my pride, and what I thought would be my eternal blessing, what will you do, what will you do ? ”

’Lisbeth, completely unnerved by the tirade, shut the door with a bang, and went about her work.

Meanwhile, Daniel went on his rounds to collect the witnesses together who belonged to his congregation. No one who was much tinctured with the Methodist idea would be trusted. When he went to the Widow Simmons, he was rather impressed by what she said.

“Don’t be too hard on your wife, though she did shout and sing and pray. When she looked me in the eyes and declared she had not, there was something about her that made me believe she thought so ; and, Mr. Doolittle, there are a great many strange and new things coming before the world nowadays. There’s a power called ‘mesmerism,’ when people seem awake, but are asleep, and say things they know nothing about. There is some mystery, but we will find out your wife is innocent of falsehood after all.”

“You mean to be kind, but you are not right, Mrs. Simmons — you are allowing your kind heart to take precedence of your better judgment. We are told to have charity, but there are cases where charity is sin. Come this evening and reason with her a little, and maybe she will acknowledge the falsehood. If she does not, I do not know what I shall do.”

Mrs. Brown and Nancy were at home, but Mr. Brown was away. Mrs. Brown was reticent, but Nancy was outspoken. “It looks as though she lied like the old Harry, but considering what she has been through, maybe she was crazy for a few minutes.”

This idea gave Daniel some comfort, and he soliloquized: "Well, considering her condition, it might be possible. That Brown girl is a smart girl. You wouldn't catch her falling in with Methodism — no, nor any other religion," said he, with a grim smile. "I've thought of having an interview with her about her soul, but since she gave me such a trimming in my own garden, I feel like letting her alone on such subjects."

Mrs. Evans declared she should not come over there without the Elder, for she began to feel one of her "dyin' spells," but he was no witness.

"I would rather he would be there than not," replied Daniel, "for my wife must apologize to him before the rest of the folks."

When he returned, he had it all arranged for the evening gathering. 'Lisbeth seemed not in the least concerned; she was only pitying people who would tell such falsehoods, and though she prized Nancy's friendship, she said she must learn to do without her.

At the supper table (a "fall-leaf," with one leaf up and the other against the wall), Daniel and 'Lisbeth sat opposite each other, and the old lady at the side. Daniel asked 'Lisbeth if she had been having the headache lately.

"You'd better be wishing her heart would ache," interrupted Mother Doolittle. "Such goings on —"

"'Lisbeth, will you answer?"

"No, I have not had the *headache*, but my head has felt strangely for several weeks," replied 'Lisbeth, almost smiling at the thought of his even asking about her bodily ailments.

“What are you at now, Daniel?” said Mother Doolittle, growing red in the face. “Trying to find excuses for her? If you are, I shall expose the whole thing. Just what a deceitful, good-for-nothing stick you have—” A pause and a *scream*, — the table had risen from the back side and tipped forward; so much that Mother Doolittle’s hot tea was in her lap, and she, screaming and holding her clothing from her, was declaring that ’Lisbeth had done it. Neither Daniel’s nor ’Lisbeth’s tea had been spilled, and Daniel was looking under the table in wonder.

“’Lisbeth, where were your feet? I know you were dipping out some sauce when it happened.”

“Why, right down here! And I did not stir them, either—”

“No, of course you didn’t! You never do any ungodly things.”

“I surely did not,” said ’Lisbeth. “I would not have tried to burn you. It’s a wonder the dishes did not all fall off.”

Mother Doolittle at last took another part of a cup of tea and seated herself sidewise at the table, looking at ’Lisbeth all of the time to see if she was going to try it again, and ’Lisbeth also turned sidewise.

“Mother, you must have leaned upon the table leaf harder than you thought, and tipped it,” said Daniel, resuming his meal. Then, turning to ’Lisbeth, he said in a half dictatorial and half coaxing way, that he had thought her head had not been right for some time, and she had better say to the company that she now remembered doing what she was accused of, but did not realize it at the time, and beg their pardon for

calling them liars. "That's the only way out of it, 'Lisbeth."

Ere Daniel had finished the last word, the table rose from the floor, coming up nearly to his chin, and came down with a thud that made the dishes rattle, but strange to say, nothing was broken.

"Which of you did that?" said Mother Doolittle, retreating to her door and looking into faces as pale as her own. "*Who did that? That's* what I want to *know!*"

"I do not see how any one could have done it," said the minister. "'Lisbeth, are you going to faint away?" said he. "Don't be scared. But still I'm thinking if you didn't know when you shouted and prayed, maybe you don't know when you made a tremendous effort and raised the table up. It may be all of a piece."

"She didn't do it, Daniel," said Mother Doolittle in an awed voice. "I was looking at her that minute. Her feet were near mine and her hands were resting on the table. She didn't do it, and I do not know who did, but it may be some kind of a Methodist trick."

"Well, don't say *one* word about it to the folks when they come this evening! If this should get out, I should be in deeper trouble than ever. O, I am in *sore* straits! I don't know what to do."

"Daniel, I'll give you my opinion, though my opinion don't seem to be worth much to you lately. It's my opinion that the *devil* has got such a strong hold of one member of the family that he's come here to stay. I wouldn't wonder if he stayed so long as you have that one about you. You will probably have a chance to summer him and winter him."

'Lisbeth washed the dishes and smoothed her hair, then took her knitting-work and sat down to await the evening's development. The strange manifestations at the table troubled her more than the accusations that were to be brought against her. Sure of her integrity, and feeling a strong reliance upon something around her that was so near she felt as though she could reach out and touch it, she was little concerned, although she did pity Daniel. "I do not want to bring trouble into any one's life," mused she, "and if I am spoiling his life work, I had better be dead. I *am* dead in spirit even now."

A knock, as though a hammer had struck the window-sill, made her jump from her chair; while Mother Doolittle crossed the room, muttering, "She guessed they were going to tear the door down." No one was there.

"It did not sound on the door to me," said 'Lisbeth. "It was on the window-sill."

"Well, who knocked there?"

"I do not know," replied 'Lisbeth.

"Just as I said," muttered the old lady. "He's come to stay, and that's all there is of it, until my son and myself are free from the one who is beguiling him here."

'Lisbeth paid no attention whatever to her remarks, but took her knitting and began work again. As the shades of the October evening began to fall, one by one the accusing company came in. Elder Evans was to follow his wife after he had done an errand, Mrs. Brown next, and later on, Nancy, who had been to get a letter she had long been looking for. Widow Sim-

mons came, pale and sorrowful. She took 'Lisbeth's hand, and said :

"How are you to-night, my poor child?" and 'Lisbeth responded to the kindly words with a smile pathetic as it was sweet.

"I am very well, thank you."

Another rap at the door — loud and commanding. When Elder Evans opened it, the portly form of Sample Palmer was revealed to the company.

"I come to-night in the name of the Lord," said she. "I've been among the Methodists gathering evidence all day."

"You were not present at the meeting, were you, Miss Palmer? I only intended those to be here who were there."

"No! I was not," snapped Miss Palmer. "I was not one of the favored few considered good enough to go to the Methodist show" — and she glared at Widow Simmons as though she wanted to annihilate her — "but I know what happened. I can bear testimony."

"You may stay if you like, but I can take no evidence that is not direct."

"I think I can give in my evidence as well as Elder Evans," said she, looking across the room.

"My husband is only here to take care of me, if I should have a 'dyin' spell;' he's got camfire and feathers to burn to hold to my nose, but I feel to-night —"

"Let us proceed with the business of the evening. Will you pray, Elder Evans?"

'Lisbeth had called Elder Evans and his wife and all of them liars, and the Elder did not feel much like

praying, but he did. His voice had a hard metallic sound when he informed the Lord of the transgressions of their minister's wife.

Then, one by one, they gave in their evidence, Mrs. Evans saying she had felt she had done wrong in going at all, but maybe it was the Lord's will that she should sin a little to bring out evidence about the minister's wife, as she feared she was still in the bonds of iniquity. Nancy Brown's evidence coincided with the others in point of fact, but she said as little as she could.

Widow Simmons said she did not feel conscience-smitten at all for having the Methodists at her house — they were Christian people and believed in the true love of God that willed not one should suffer, but *all* should come and live — and that she felt it her duty to sever her connection with a church that believed that God, a loving God, had created a large portion of his humanity to go to a hell that he himself had purposely created for their everlasting suffering."

"This is not a meeting to bring out doctrines," said Daniel Doolittle sharply. "What did my wife do?"

"She sang and prayed and shouted —"

"And then told you she only went to sleep. Was not that so, Mrs. Simmons?"

"Yes," replied she, very reluctantly.

"You need say nothing further now," said Mr. Doolittle. "'Lisbeth, what have you got to say? Stand up where the candles will light your face. We want to see you. Will you not own to behaving in an unseemly manner and then telling falsehoods about it, and then capping the climax by calling your friends liars?"

"It was not right to be so hasty to Mr. Evans, I know,

but before God, I declare if I sang and prayed and shouted, I did not know it, and — ”

But a strange change came over her face at that moment. Nancy often declared, “it shone with a white light and her eyes looked like stars.” When the little company looked at her it was as though a new presence was in the room. After two or three deep breaths she began singing in a strangely clear and pathetic voice — and the sweet, though unfamiliar refrain,

“Pleading with thee,
Pleading with thee,
The angels of Heaven are pleading with thee,”

rang out on the autumn stillness until passers-by stopped to listen, and wonder what voice it was that sang thus sweetly. At last she spoke :

“ You see before you the physical form of 'Lisbeth — but as the prophets of old were made to speak by the spirits of those called dead, to-night a spirit is talking to you, and I use the form of my child and her vocal organs to plead for her.

“ This power has always been in the world, but only recently has been acknowledged in this country. I am Sarah Chapin, her mother, and it has been my sacred work to try to guard my orphan child. I know what she has suffered at your hands,” said she pointing to Daniel and his mother, “ and though I do not care to be an avenging spirit, I come to let you know that your persecutions are known in the Heavenly Kingdom.

“ The other day at that religious meeting, she was in a negative condition, so that a departed believer got a strong hold of her. It was not my 'Lisbeth who prayed and shouted. It was the voice of another, and I am

most thankful for that power, for it has enabled me the better to protect my child.

"The strange circumstance at your supper table was only another proof of our presence. We shall, from time to time, bring about such manifestations that we may better continue our work.

"My child is an instrument for communication between two worlds, and, Daniel Doolittle, in your home we desire to begin at once spiritual lessons. As there were appearances in the olden time, so will there be now. In a distant State already has the truth gone forth, and I expect you now to accept of the truth that the dead are with the living and that we shall find means of expressing ourselves.

"I see your hearts are bitter toward my child. Some of you are revolving in your mind ideas about the Salem witchcraft. Others of you think my child is at this moment telling falsehoods. I give you warning that for all you make her suffer, suffering in some way will be yours. But if, on the contrary, you are willing to listen to us, to accept of this new light that will dispel your darkness, if you are willing to have bread instead of a stone, a great joy shall come to your souls and this place become a center where the angels will do a work that will glorify God, and —" but a spasm as though of pain crossed 'Lisbeth's face. She raised her hand to her forehead and would have fallen had not Daniel caught her and placed her in her chair.

"Poor critter! she is as crazy as a loon," said Sample Palmer, edging toward the door.

"I don't know," said Daniel; "that remains to be seen."

They all understood the theory that she was crazy, only the Widow Simmons and Nancy Brown, and they said, "No one who looks as beautiful as that could be crazy." One after another went home without speaking to 'Lisbeth. What had she done now? she thought as the last one disappeared. "Daniel, I told the truth or started to, but did I go to sleep again? I feel so strangely."

"I don't know," said Daniel. "'Lisbeth, look me in the eye and tell me the truth. Don't you know what you have been about?"

"Why! Daniel, I began talking, and then I must have gone to sleep."

"*Well, I never!*" began Mother Doolittle.

"Mother, not a word! 'Lisbeth, go to bed." As 'Lisbeth went to bed she heard his mother ask him if he wasn't afraid to sleep with her. But she did not catch the reply. "Oh! what is it? What is it?" cried 'Lisbeth, as she fell on her knees, but instead of calling upon the Lord, she said, "Oh, Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy, come to me; *come to me!*"

CHAPTER XV.

THE KNOCKINGS.

“WAKE up, Isaac, wake up, I say! Be you deaf and dumb, and haven’t you got no feelin’s?” as she vigorously pinched his arm until he rose up on his elbow, and said: “Betsy, be you crazy? That’s what I want to know.”

“No, I ain’t, but ’Lisbeth has been here. I see her just as plain. Listen to me, Isaac. I was jest gettin’ ready to go to sleep, but I haven’t slept a wink, not a *wink*, when oyer that side of the room it lit up and the wall wasn’t there any more, and I looked into another room smaller than this, with my patch-work quilt on the bed that I gave ’Lisbeth, and our old chest of drawers, and Sarah’s stand and cover; and there right in that room I see ’Lisbeth on her knees in front of a chair with her face as pale as Sarah’s was when she died, and tears rollin’ down her cheeks, and I heard her say — yes, Isaac, I *heard* her say — ‘Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy, come to me; *come to me!*’ and for my part, I am goin’ to the poor child.” And Aunt Betsy began to get out of bed.

“Why, Betsy, you ain’t goin’ to-night be you? Come, get into bed and don’t be foolish. You’ve been dreamin’. You know we was talkin’ about ’Lisbeth, and how bad she would feel when she found out old

Jerry was dead, and you got it into your head about her feelin' bad, so you dreamed it."

"Isaac, if that was a dream, it was a wideawake one. I tell you I saw her and heard her, and know she needs me," and something like a sob sounded through the room.

"Mebbe the poor lamb does want us," said Uncle Isaac. "We'll have to go before long."

"Before *long*! Well, I guess we will. When I have a warnin' like that, I heed it. If I wasn't goin' to have company to-morrow, I'd start then."

It was a long while before Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy could go to sleep. How could she have seen 'Lisbeth so? "If I go there and find her room as I saw it, I shall know the Lord just moved 'Lisbeth near me for awhile, just long enough to tell me she wanted me."

"Well, mebbe he did. It was all a mistake her goin' away," said Uncle Isaac.

"Of course it was, and you're as much to blame as I am, Isaac Barton."

The next morning Aunt Betsy was busy about her company arrangements, and went to work with a will. She began to think maybe it was something like a dream, and still the pathetic face of her sister's child kept coming before her just as she had seen it in her dream.

Jane Macomber came along in the forenoon to see Aunt Betsy, to read a little poetry and tell the news.

"I ain't in no mood to hear poetry readin'," said Aunt Betsy. And then she told of her seeing 'Lisbeth the night before. "Jane, I did see her. I keep thinkin' more and more."

“I do not doubt it one bit. In sleep we go on the wings of love and visit those precious to our heart. Oh, I have soared and soared, and finally let myself right down where my heart was anchored, and oh, such joy even in dreams to look into eyes that answer back to my eyes their love-lit glances.”

“Jane, there was no man foolishness about this. I didn’t soar, nor ’Lisbeth didn’t either. We both was on the floor, and she was prayin’, prayin’ to Isaac and me, and sayin’ she wanted us. She was in a little room that I could pick out of five hundred rooms, and oh, how she looked, — so pale, with tears rollin’ down her cheeks.”

“That is such a sweet description, it would do to put into my book, and I am getting that book pretty well along now, too.”

Just then the company came and Jane took a reluctant leave. The expected company consisted of a man and his wife, distant relatives of Mrs. Barton, who had years before moved to Western New York and lived in a place called Spencerport. They had come to the State of Connecticut to visit their relatives and old acquaintances. Mr. and Mrs. Spicer were both of them large, good-natured people, who had all the sunshine they could get out of life, and felt they earned it by behaving themselves and helping others. It was a revelation to Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy to hear them talking and laughing together in the spare room while she was getting supper.

“Just hear them!” said Aunt Betsy. “When was the time we have had such a laugh, and why shouldn’t we?”

"Well, Betsy, *you* are changed; two year ago you would have thought it was wicked and foolish, and now you talk as though you would like it yourself, laughin' and talkin' to your own husband."

"Isaac Barton, I never spent my breath on any one else's husband, *never*."

"Who said you did, Betsy?"

"Well! nobuddy."

When supper was announced the couple came, laughing at some memory of one of their visits. Uncle Isaac, after shuffling round, looked up to Betsy and catching her nod, turned to Mr. Spicer and asked him to "give thanks."

"Please excuse me. I am just as thankful as though I told of it," and Uncle Isaac, hardly knowing how to understand his guest, asked the usual blessing.

Finally Aunt Betsy, much concerned about a man who did not give thanks, asked him what church he belonged to.

His reply was that he had been all round; liked the Disciple and Methodist churches as well as any till he came to the Universalist, and now he had something that beat the Universalists.

"You don't mean to tell me that you have been among that ungodly crowd of folks?" said Aunt Betsy severely. "I'm astonished at you. Why, I've heard that the Universalists don't believe in hell."

"That's true; they don't, unless they get it as they go along."

"Well, I don't want anything to do with such doctrines," said Aunt Betsy stiffly, as she dipped out the cherry preserves and passed them around.

“What is it that beats the Universalists?” asked Uncle Isaac, anxious to continue the conversation.

“Well, it’s the ‘*Rochester knockings*.’”

“The *what!*” said Aunt Betsy. “Are *any* kind of knockin’s better than the Church? I’d like to see any one that could knock me so that they could knock the Bible out of my head!”

“Oh, you misunderstand me — the Bible tells of all such manifestations. It proves the Bible instead of knocking it out of you.”

“Well, how do you make them?”

“We don’t make them; the spirits of the dead make them, and tell us about their lives in heaven.”

“Mercy on us, man! what spirits do it? I thought they were all asleep until the Resurrection morn.”

“Tell her how it is, John,” said Mrs. Spicer, and Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy forgot to eat, so intent did they become upon the story.

“Well, near Rochester, New York, in a little place called Hydesville, lives a family who have three little girls, and to all appearances they are no different from other girls. They are poor people and have to work for a living. After awhile they began to hear loud raps around their rooms. They would hunt and hunt to find out what made the noise, and they couldn’t find any reason for it.

“The old folks were scared, but the little girls seemed to have lots of fun with the noises and got to asking them to come twice and three times or four times, and they were minded. After awhile they found out they could get messages by repeating the a b c’s, and when they came to a letter they wanted to use, a rap would

come until messages were spelled out, and at last they learned a peddler had been killed there and buried under the house, and they proved it to be true, and now all Rochester and Buffalo and people all round there come to hear the 'Rochester knockings,' and also send for the little girls to come to them."

"You don't say so," said Aunt Betsy. "All the folks?"

"Oh, no, not all, but a great many."

"Well, if that don't beat all. How far is it there? I'd like to hear 'em," said Uncle Isaac, who had not before spoken.

"Oh, a long ways," said Mr. Spicer, "but you needn't go so far; my wife can get them, and if you want her to try, we will this evening."

Aunt Betsy could hardly wait until the chores were out of the way, so anxious was she to see what it all meant. At last they sat down to the table and placed their hands upon it.

"What's that for," said Aunt Betsy, "layin' our hands out so foolish and idle; can't we go on knittin'?"

"No! just keep still," said Mrs. Spicer. "John, have you got the alphabet?"

"Yes," replied he.

All at once a rap came that made the table tremble.

"Who did that?" said Aunt Betsy, turning pale.

"The spirits," said Mrs. Spicer.

"Oh, dear, what noise. Will they do it ag'in?"

Rap — rap — rap! "That means yes."

"Are any of Mrs. Barton's friends here?" asked Mr. Spicer.

"Yes," rapped the spirit.

“Well, I will call the alphabet, and you rap out their names.”

So he named the letters until he came to *S*. A loud rap responded to that letter.

“Now, I will begin over again — *A*.” Another loud rap, and so on until the name, “Sarah Chapin,” was spelled out.

Every vestige of color left Aunt Betsy’s face.

“Get more,” she said in a muffled tone. “If I have got into the devil’s hands I might as well go on.”

“Go to ‘Lisbeth; it is true she needs you very much.”

Aunt Betsy did not faint, but her excitement broke all necessary conditions for further manifestations, and she related to them her dream of the night before.

“That was a vision, Mrs. Barton,” said Mrs. Spicer. “I should go at once, not delay another day. We will help you get off in the morning.”

That night Uncle Isaac dreamed of ‘Lisbeth down by a place that looked like the sea, and that the waters, angry and deep, were rolling nearly to her feet. And Aunt Betsy dreamed of her sister Sarah, who said to her, “I placed her in your care; you promised to protect her; how have you fulfilled your vow?”

CHAPTER XVI.

"THE PRINCE OF EVIL."

'LISBETH had not been long in her room before a sweet peace came over her. "They will come, they will come," said she, and in a mechanical way she undressed and retired.

When later Daniel came into the room, he thought she must be asleep she lay so quietly; but stooping down where he could peer into her face he saw a strangely happy expression there.

"Oh! 'Lisbeth, are you given over to the Prince of Evil?"

"Why no, Daniel, I am feeling happier since I came in here. I know that somehow all will be understood; a presence in the room makes me feel it. I'm sorry I called them liars, for two wrongs never make one right. They wronged me, but I ought not to retaliate."

Still wondering at her manner, Daniel said, "'Lisbeth, do you have any idea what made the table tip so and the knock come on the window-sill?"

"No, I can't imagine; but really, I do not feel afraid about it, do you?"

"Well, I do not feel very comfortable over it, and mother is so scared she trembles when she speaks of it. Were you really asleep when you talked so to-night? Don't you know a word you said?"

"No, I didn't know I talked any after I went to sleep. Do you think I will keep on having those sleepy spells?"

"Oh, I hope not," said her husband, fervently. "And, 'Lisbeth, when they are coming on do you feel ugly and cross?"

"No, I just feel happy and float away."

"Well, 'Lisbeth, I have made up my mind that it is your peculiar condition that has twisted your head a little, without making you *really* crazy, and we must lay it to that. I guess Nancy Brown will, and maybe the Evanses; but mother and Sample Palmer and a few others will have to keep to their own idea of your being crazy, or possessed of the devil."

"Oh, how dreadful! and I have never meant to do anything so very bad."

'Lisbeth did not go to sleep, but lay there with her eyes staring wide open, until her brain throbbed so that lights flashed before her eyes, and in the morning, when she tried to crawl over Daniel to get up and build a fire to get the breakfast, she fell back fainting. Her husband, frightened as much as he allowed himself to be, called his mother to bring some water, which she did, turning the whole bowlful over 'Lisbeth's white face.

"I guess that will fetch her to," said she. "Folks of her kind don't die very easy. They're kept alive by their master the devil until he gets a place hot enough for them."

"Mother, what are you saying? I can't bear that, even from you," said Daniel, as he rubbed 'Lisbeth's hands and wiped the water from her face. "We needn't be heathens, if we do find an erring one, and try to

crush her out. 'Lisbeth is sick, and under the circumstances, I think it's a good thing. It will give people the impression that she was not right in her head that day at the widow's, and last night, too."

"But, Daniel, there's the doctor's bill, if you have one; and do you want your poor mother worked to death for your sick wife?"

"Well, mother, you were a great deal different when you knew Annie was near, so I could send you to her; but since they broke up and went West, I see that you begin to act the same as ever."

"Daniel! I have done my duty every moment of the time. I have maintained the dignity of the home and told 'Lisbeth how to act, though she hasn't done it. I *know* I have acted righteously, and —" a rap, so loud that the bedroom door fairly trembled, was heard.

'Lisbeth, aroused from her half-fainting condition, said, "Oh! what is it?" Mother Doolittle started for her room in a hurry, and Daniel, with a strange fear upon his face, looked at the place where the rap had been and then at 'Lisbeth.

"'Lisbeth, before God and man, do you know what this means?"

"No, I do not, Daniel. I can't understand, but I am not afraid."

Daniel built the fire for his mother and she went fearfully around getting the breakfast. It was a simple meal — salt pork fried and potatoes hashed up in the grease, while from a rye and indian loaf she cut two slices of bread.

"Where are the eggs Mrs. Winslow brought over for our use?" said Daniel. "I feel as though I could

eat an egg with my breakfast, and maybe 'Lisbeth could."

"No, I don't want anything," said 'Lisbeth, faintly, "and I didn't know Mrs. Winslow had brought any eggs."

"Well," said Daniel, "if there's wastefulness in this house I am going to know it." He went to the cellar, but no eggs were to be found.

"Come this way," said his mother; then leaning toward him, she whispered, "I presume 'Lisbeth has made way with them in some of her crazy spells."

A rap sounded on the table that rattled the dishes and made Mother Doolittle and her son jump to another part of the room.

"*What does it mean?*" 'Lisbeth, I say, *do you know?* If you have got some trickery about you that's doing it, I'll see that you are thoroughly punished for it."

"It's a wicked thing to get in league with the devil," said the old lady. "Ah, Daniel, let us be careful we are not drawn in ourselves, by giving in to her and pitying her."

After awhile they mustered up courage and ate their breakfast in silence. When they had finished, Daniel said: "Lisbeth, slip on your gown, and sit up while we have prayers." But when she raised her head, she was so sick that he did not urge her further.

Pat! pat! pat! came the sound of footsteps; then a rap; and when the door was opened, Sample Palmer stood there, with her most religious look upon her face. She wore it in different degrees to suit the occasion.

"Good mornin'," said she, to Daniel, softly. "How

is she this mornin'? Hev you prayed the devil out of her? I went home last night, and late as it was, read how 'seven devils' were cast out of that woman in the olden times. I did think, last night, she was crazy; but this mornin', I've made up my mind that she is possessed of the devil. Sit still, Mis' Doolittle! Don't stir! Let me help myself! I've been prayin' so much, through the night, that I feel 'weak as a cat,' and I'll help myself to a bite;" and suiting the action to the word, she turned out her tea.

Daniel, not forgetting his disappointment about the eggs, said that they had intended to have eggs for breakfast, but could not find them, though they were brought only a day or two before.

"Don't your hens lay?" asked Sample Palmer.

"We do not keep hens," replied Mr. Doolittle. "It's too much trouble, and costs a great deal."

"Why, that beats all! I thought you kept hens. Only a day or two ago, I was up to the other part of the town, to Spencer's store, and I met you goin' out of there, Mis' Doolittle, and old Mr. Spencer said to me, 'The minister's mother is a pretty spruce old woman, to walk way over here to sell a dozen eggs, when there's a store so near her house.'

"'Yes,' said I, thinkin' it strange. And then he laughed, and said she liked his kind of snuff best, he guessed, for she wanted it for the eggs; and that, awhile ago, she brought a pair of socks she had knit for the minister, that was too small, and took part of the pay in snuff, and the rest in money. Mr. Spencer is real talkative," continued Miss Palmer, "and ain't afraid to tell about his business."

“My mother does not take snuff, and has not, since she felt it was a wicked expense, and a sin against God.”

Mother Doolittle, very red in the face, said nothing, but glared at Sample Palmer as though she wanted to turn her out of the house.

Sample Palmer had not forgotten the slights she had received at Mother Doolittle's hands; how she might have saved herself many more meals at the minister's house if it had not been for his mother.

Mr. Doolittle went into 'Lisbeth's room, drew the white curtain, put a piece of dark cloth up to the window; and said, “Don't try to get up until I get back.”

Then, in the bright October morning, he went out to see the committee who had met at his house the night before, and in a manner totally unlike himself in its servility, begged them, under the circumstances, to do nothing more about 'Lisbeth; he was afraid her head was affected, but after a few months he felt she would be herself again; and the Evanses, Browns and Widow Simmons gladly consented.

Nancy declared after he was gone, if 'Lisbeth was crazy, Daniel Doolittle and his mother had made her so.

When he got home, he went to his mother, and said, “So I have found out what becomes of eggs, and my socks and other things. You are taking snuff again, and no doubt burning up the snuff rags, instead of washing them. And you have laid all that was missing to 'Lisbeth. I guess if the devil has got hold of her, he has of you; so there's a pair of you.”

Mother Doolittle, compassed about by the evidence

she knew he had, began to make vain excuses, and laid it to 'Lisbeth, who annoyed her and broke her clear down with worry, so she had to resort to the old habit ; but Daniel had no pity for her.

"Well, let this be the last of it. One habit leads to another, and you know the past, mother. It's as mean to deceive and then lay it to others as it is to take the snuff."

Strange stories were being repeated in the village. Books about the Salem witchcraft were hunted up, and the similarity, or supposed similarity, noted. The minister was a martyr now ; a few weeks ago he was looked upon as stern and stingy.

"But what if any of us had a real witch to deal with?" said Mrs. Evans, with great earnestness. "What would we do?"

Others pitied the child-wife, whom they believed to have been driven insane by the cruelty of her husband and his mother. Never had his church been so full as in these days since trouble was known to exist. It had been known since Nancy's adventure at the minister's house that something was wrong, and people of that time did not like to remain long in doubt.

Daniel Doolittle could hardly analyze his own feelings toward the subject of all the trouble. Sometimes, when he thought of their unborn child — *his* child — he manifested a new interest in 'Lisbeth that made him almost kind. He hoped 'Lisbeth wasn't going to have a long fit of sickness, he said to his mother, upon his return from a call a day or two after she had been obliged to keep her bed, "It costs so much."

And the mother, fearful the subject of the eggs

would be brought up, said, "Don't worry, Daniel! She will be all right in a day or two."

"Has she eaten anything yet, to-day?" asked Daniel.

"No, I haven't been near her."

"Well, it's time you did," said he, with a look in his eyes that meant mischief. "It don't look like a Christian act for one woman to let another, on a sick bed, go without food until nearly two o'clock in the afternoon."

The loaf of wheat bread was taken from an old table cloth and a slice cut off and toasted. "Put lots of butter on it, mother, and make it soft so she can eat it, and give her a good cup of tea."

'Lisbeth heard it from her room. How nice it sounded to have some one speak kindly of her. She lay quietly until Daniel himself came and helped her up in bed that she might eat.

Then 'Lisbeth went to sleep, the first natural sleep she had had in many hours. Neighbors came and went. Widow Simmons brought a dish of plum preserves, and Nancy Brown a piece of chicken breast and some broth; but 'Lisbeth slept on. When she awakened about nine o'clock in the evening, she said:

"Daniel, I'm going to see Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy. I saw them coming. They will be here tomorrow."

"That's nonsense," said Daniel. "They won't come this time of year. Why, it would take them two days each way. You've been dreaming, 'Lisbeth."

"Well, if it was a dream it seemed just like the truth," and she turned her face toward the wall and tried to go to sleep again.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ANSWERED PRAYER.

“WILL we ever get there, Isaac? I declare, if I had known it was such a ja’nt I don’t know as I should have undertook it.”

“Yes, you would, when Sarah told you to come.”

“Isaac, we’ve got to be a little slow about what we think Sarah said; for mebbe we are deceived. You know it says that in the last days there will be goin’s on that will deceive the very elect. If we get there and find ’Lisbeth well, and that she didn’t kneel and pray for us to come, I shall think the whole caboodle of things we’ve heard were lies of the devil’s own makin’, and you’ll be to blame for bringin’ me here.”

“Mebbe you don’t think our friends the Spicers are honest,” said he. “I wouldn’t be so dumb changeable, Betsy. The Lord will have to take you to heaven in some of your good spells, or else the other feller will think you are goin’ to take a trip his way.”

“Why, Isaac Barton, ain’t you ashamed of yourself, and you a good church member, and you knowin’ what a misery I had in my back before we started from home. I wouldn’t have thought you would have talked that way.”

“Well, never mind, Betsy, we are both tired, and we will be there right off now. But if we find there’s

nothin' true about what we've heard, we will just keep our mouths shut, won't we?"

"Yes, we will; that is, I will, but I have some doubts about you, Isaac."

As they entered the little hamlet, the house of the minister was pointed out to them, and many a peep from behind curtains testified to the curiosity of the village people to know who had come to the minister's. They got out of the wagon, Aunt Betsy declaring "the day's ride had been worse than the day before, and that she was as lame as she could be," and looked around. The doors were closed. The yard was perfectly barren of anything, save long dead grass and some shorter grass which still retained its verdure.

"I guess they're all dead," said Aunt Betsy, "instid of sick," as she went to the living-room door.

Her knock was answered by Mother Doolittle, who opened the door a little way, and when asked if Minister Doolittle lived there, said "Yes," but did not invite her in.

"What do you want?" said Mother Doolittle, still holding the door. "My son the minister doesn't see any strangers or any of his congregation when he is studying his sermon, for he wants the house very still."

"I can't help what Daniel Doolittle wants. Isaac and me have come thirty miles to see our niece 'Lisbeth, and we are goin' to see her, too."

"Aunt Betsy, Aunt Betsy," came a voice from the bedroom.

"'Lisbeth is sick," said Mother Doolittle.

"Oh, I am so glad of it." And Aunt Betsy turned round and spoke to Uncle Isaac, "'Lisbeth is sick."

"Do I understand you to say that you are glad my wife is sick?" said Daniel Doolittle, slowly advancing into the room. "That seems to me most peculiar, very strange indeed."

"I know it seems strange," said Aunt Betsy. "But I can't explain now. Let me go to Sarah's child." And in a moment Aunt Betsy had 'Lisbeth in her arms showing in a few moments more real affection for the child left in her charge than she had shown in all the weary years 'Lisbeth was beneath her roof.

"Come, Mrs. Barton, and take off your shawl and bonnet. Mother will help you while I go and see about the horse."

"So you're old Mis' Doolittle?" said Aunt Betsy, eyeing the woman before her. "I've had a great many strange idees about you."

"So also have I, about you," replied Mrs. Doolittle. "From what I have heard my son the minister say, also from the actions of your niece, I have had good reason to think about the whole family."

"Well, the size of the family couldn't have kept you very busy," said Aunt Betsy, straightening herself up and looking around. "Yes, it's the very bedroom, and the very place," said she to herself. "And 'Lisbeth is sick and does need me."

Aunt Betsy went back softly into the bedroom, and said, "'Lisbeth, the other night I looked right into this bedroom when I was thirty miles away, and I saw you kneelin' right by that very chair, and prayin' to your Uncle Isaac and me to come to you. You looked whiter'n you do now, and was cryin.' Wasn't that so, 'Lisbeth?"

"Oh ! Aunt Betsy, it was so, but how did you know it? How could you see me?"

"I don't know, but I did ; and then, 'Lisbeth, lots of things have happened, but I can't tell you now. You look so pimpin' I'd hardly know you. Are they good to you?"

'Lisbeth answered slowly, "Some of the time."

Meanwhile, Uncle Isaac had brought package after package from the long wagon box and placed them near the door, and then had gone with Daniel to put the horse up. "If there's anything eatable among your things, Mrs. Barton, I guess I had better sort them out and put them where the dogs can't get them. They come along here sometimes."

"Well, I guess, Mis' Doolittle, I'll bring 'em in and put 'em where I can get 'em," said Aunt Betsy, as she picked up a cheese box she had packed with eatables, and placed it on the table, saying as she did so: "'Lisbeth, what shall I do with these vittles?"

"If there aren't too many you can put them in the lower part of the red cupboard, Aunt," said 'Lisbeth, showing more energy than she had that day.

After Aunt Betsy had opened the cupboard she peered into it, and said, "Well, there's nothin' to hinder puttin' a cart-load of vittles here ; there's nothin' in it."

"My son's wife has been sick for some days now," said Mother Doolittle, "and so, as I am only here as a guide and counsellor, there is not much on hand. But we have got some bread in the crock in the cellar-way."

"Oh !" said Aunt Betsy sniffing. "Well, I guess I have brought enough to last a spell."

When Uncle Isaac and Daniel returned, the fire was kindled in the stove, though Aunt Betsy declared it was the unhandiest thing she ever saw and made a place lonesome as the grave, and Mrs. Doolittle, throwing a tablecloth over a chair for Aunt Betsy's use, said she wanted to go and have a season of prayer.

"Does she have such seasons often?" said Aunt Betsy to 'Lisbeth.

"Yes," replied 'Lisbeth, "when there's anything to do."

The excitement had given 'Lisbeth an appearance of strength and color to which she had long been a stranger, and she insisted upon sitting up to the table during the meal.

Daniel Doolittle thoroughly enjoyed the meal and so did his mother, and Aunt Betsy watched with astonishment to see how hungry 'Lisbeth acted.

"Don't eat so much butter," said Mother Doolittle commandingly. "'Lisbeth, it won't do; you are determined to get sick on our hands, I see, and have a long pull at it."

"Let her eat, mother," said Daniel, "she has no fever, and it won't hurt her."

"I shall have to tell you about 'Lisbeth by and by," said he gravely, "but I want her to eat all she wants."

"How good you be," said Aunt Betsy. "Want her to eat! Why shouldn't she eat all of the time? We fetched every 'smidgen' of these vittles here, tea and all."

"You do not understand me," said Daniel. "I would like her again to partake of the true food of the soul. She has fasted many days, I fear."

'Lisbeth looked at him in wonder. "And," continued Daniel, "in order to be strong spiritually, she must be strong physically."

"Yes, strong in all ways," said Mother Doolittle as she arose from the table declaring she had relished her "bite" better than anything in a long time.

'Lisbeth seemed tired, and soon had to go back to bed. Aunt Betsy followed her into the bedroom, where 'Lisbeth, with her head close to Aunt Betsy's, told her of her unhappiness.

"Oh, you poor child, you poor child! What does it mean, your talkin' in your sleep so? I don't know but it's a judgment on Isaac and me lettin' you leave us. Yes, 'Lisbeth, I freely own it was pushin' you out." Three raps came softly on the headboard.

"'Lisbeth, what's that?" said she, starting up.

"I don't know, Aunt Betsy; but they come to me often. Sometimes they are loud and act cross-like, then again they are low like these. I'm not afraid of them any more."

"'Lisbeth, to-morrow I'll tell you somethin' if you're better."

Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy slept in the bedroom off from Daniel's study, and when they were safely in bed, she said:

"Isaac, 'Lisbeth did pray for us to come that very night, and there's somethin' else you would never think of; she don't know what it is nor any of them — but '*Lisbeth has got the Rochester knockin's.*'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A REMARKABLE BREAKFAST.

AUNT BETSY was astir early in the morning. She did not go through to the living-room, but once in a while would go and listen at the door, then return and sit down softly with apparent fear of making a noise.

"What in the world be you about, Betsy? 'Tain't daylight yet, and you've been back and forth, back and forth, for an hour."

"Keep still," whispered Aunt Betsy. "I ain't heard a sound yet, and I am bound to stay in here and make old Mis' Doolittle git the breakfast. I'm watchin' to see if she tries to git 'Lisbeth up; but then they're snorin' yit."

Aunt Betsy almost fell asleep in her chair waiting for some noise from the other room. Then there was a shuffling sound and she heard Daniel go to his mother's door, and say: "Mother, you will have to get up and get the breakfast. 'Lisbeth isn't well enough, and she has got to be a little careful for awhile."

"Daniel," she heard the mother respond, "how long are you going to abide such laziness? Your wife will make a great helpmeet, laying abed day and night. Oh! is this the prosperity I thought my son was to bring about for himself and his old, worn out mother?"

"Mother, don't talk about your being worn out, for

it isn't true. No woman could have had an easier time than you have had since you came to live with me; you have really had nothing to do."

"I have tried to hold your hands up in good works, my son; I have tried to keep the people respecting your wife; I have had frequent seasons of prayer for the spread of the gospel; I have in fact done all I could to make your life count; and now you talk to me about having had an easy time. Why can't Mrs. Barton get the breakfast? She's used to it."

"I shall not call Mrs. Barton. Have you no other views of hospitality than that? After riding all these miles you would expect her to do your work, would you?"

"It is not my work; it belongs to your wife." But at the same time she began to get out of bed.

Daniel could have built the fire, but he did not like to build fires. He could have done many other things that would have hurried up the breakfast; but instead he went back to his room and lay down on the bed again!

Meanwhile Mother Doolittle, with her gray hair hanging down her back, had kindled the fire and was putting on her petticoat and short-gown when Aunt Betsy, looking as bright as though she had not taken an unaccustomed journey, came out into the room knitting-work in hand.

"Good mornin', Mis' Doolittle; I guess I'll go in and see 'Lisbeth."

"You can't," said Mother Doolittle getting together her gray locks and trying to push them back under her cap. "Daniel is there."

"Well, then, I guess I will settle down and knit a few rounds till breakfast is ready."

"I don't know when it will be ready," said Mother Doolittle with a sigh. "I've had a misery in my back all night, and I don't know how I am going to get around."

"Well, I'll tell you there's nothing like being brisk. The harder it aches the faster you'd better go; you'll soon have it out that way. I've told Isaac many a time if I had not had so much gumption I should have been ailin' all of the time, and he said: 'Yes, Betsy, gumption and exercise have done it,' and I believe him."

Mother Doolittle had filled the tea-kettle and had just begun to open the cupboard door when Aunt Betsy said in a very emphatic way:

"Mis' Doolittle, you ain't washed yourself yit."

"Well," said Mother Doolittle, "I never wash my face much. I just rub it off every morning with the top of my stocking, and it keeps the skin soft and smooth; but I always intend to wash my hands as often as once a day anyway;" and she plunged her hands in some water that was standing in the little wash kettle on an upright block of wood.

"You must have to wash your stockin's often, Mis' Doolittle, makin' them serve for your feet and face both."

"I wash them often enough," said the old lady in an irritated way.

Aunt Betsy said afterwards she thought breakfast would never be ready, but she was bound not to help one iota if it never was; only she did hate to see the

victuals she had brought there handled around in the way that old Mrs. Doolittle handled them.

“Why, she took a good, baked chicken that was all stuffed and pulled it to pieces and licked the stuffin’ off her hands when she did it; but I just kept still. I’d said she should git the breakfast, and she did.”

Aunt Betsy did not enjoy her breakfast; she had always been used to good cream for her tea, and when she saw Mrs. Doolittle skimming the cream off from the pint of milk and putting it in a teacup she did not know what to do at first, but finally made up her mind she’d outwit her; so she reached right over and set the cup at ’Lisbeth’s plate saying :

“I’m glad you thought to take the cream off for ’Lisbeth; it’s so nourishin’; I declare I don’t know what I should do to live on a pint of milk a day.”

Daniel and ’Lisbeth just then came in from their room. Aunt Betsy hastened to get some warm water for ’Lisbeth, and when Daniel and Uncle Isaac had been through the same process they sat down to breakfast. As soon as thanks were offered Aunt Betsy said :

“Mis’ Doolittle, you must fill up that cup of ’Lisbeth’s with tea and not weaken it any. Here, ’Lisbeth, take it; your mother-in-law has skimmed all the cream off into your cup.”

’Lisbeth looked up with a puzzled air, but did not say “Thank you,” as she saw the clouds had settled darkly over Mother Doolittle’s face.

Daniel Doolittle liked a good meal when other folks provided it. Notwithstanding the mutilated condition of the baked chicken he ate very heartily. Even Mother Doolittle forgot to dread the dishes and grew

good-natured enough to inquire about the souls that had been saved through Daniel's work when he was at M —.

"Oh, let me see; I guess there didn't any of them really prove their callin' and election sure. Some have gone over to the Methodists and some to the Universalists, and some of 'em ain't believin' in anything — slipped out of the church in three months. I don't think there was one on a solid foundation."

"Well," said Daniel, "I did my best to get them to flee from the wrath to come, and felt encouraged with my work."

"Yes, there was great promise; but takin' it all in all, this year ain't seemed a good year for the real Orthodox Church; there's so many new things comin' up and newspapers are gettin' so thick that tell about new religions and wonderful doin's that folks get their minds off from old paths."

"Yes, that is so," sighed Daniel. "The harvest of the Lord's vineyard has seemed to be small; I've noticed it myself, and as for papers, Mrs. Barton, the newspapers nowadays are not fit for women folks with weak heads to read. I've hid our Hartford paper lately, so mother and 'Lisbeth wouldn't get hold of it."

"Why have you hid it?" said 'Lisbeth. "What is there in it that I shouldn't read?"

"Accounts of what I call witchcraft, that's going on way off in New York State," replied her husband.

Just then the table, with both leaves up and filled with food and dishes, rose nearly a foot from the floor and came down on the elder Mrs. Doolittle's foot.

Every one jumped up and started away from the

table ; but 'Lisbeth whispered to Aunt Betsy, "It's done that before."

Daniel stood up white as a ghost and said, "'Lisbeth, again I ask you, did you in any way aid that table to rise up and come down on mother's foot ?"

"Why, no, Daniel ; what makes you feel I did ?"

Aunt Betsy looked from one to the other in utter astonishment. What could it mean ? Mother Doolittle limped off to her bedroom, asking Daniel to get her the camphor for her foot.

Uncle Isaac got a little piece of kindling wood and while whittling it said to himself, yet out loud, "It's dumb strange anyway."

"I've got something to tell you all," said Aunt Betsy, as soon as she had finished the dishes. "I am goin' to tell my story first, and then I want you to tell me what has happened at this end of the road, for I don't feel comfortable about it."

Daniel and his mother, who had come back from the bedroom, listened attentively to the recital as she told of her vision of 'Lisbeth, of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Spicer, and of the message from 'Lisbeth's mother ; and then of her husband's and her dreams the following night ; then of their getting to 'Lisbeth's home only to hear the Rochester knockings again.

"Now," said she, "I want to know what you have found out here."

Daniel, in a hard voice, told of 'Lisbeth's going to the Methodist meeting ; of her strange actions there, also of her declaring that it was not her lips that spoke, but that the voice of another spoke through them ; of her subsequent actions when they came for the purpose

of her asking pardon of those whom she had accused of falsehood. All this was recounted.

"And I was not to blame, Aunt Betsy," interrupted 'Lisbeth. "I did not know I said one word. I know nothing only that I went to sleep, and they think I made it up and that I make the knocks myself. I am so tired of being accused and so homesick I wish I could die."

"'Lisbeth," said Daniel, "never let me or any one else hear such words from your mouth again. Do you know what it is to go into the presence of the living God?"

"No, I guess she don't," snapped Aunt Betsy. "No wonder the poor child thinks God's dead instead of livin',—such things heaped upon her shoulders when she ain't to blame no more than she is for the wind that blows. I guess she ain't as 'fraid of a livin' *God* as she is of some livin' *folks*."

'Lisbeth was crying hard by this time. Could it be Aunt Betsy who was standing up for her, the Aunt Betsy that married her off to the minister? Could it be scolding Aunt Betsy, bearding the lion in his den for her sake?

Uncle Isaac came up to her and said: "There, don't cry, poor lamb, poor lamb. You may go home with us and forget all your troubles."

"Mr. Barton, will you please remember that you are speaking of my wife, one over whom I have positive control, one whose destiny is in my hands; will you please remember that?"

"We ain't likely to forgit she's changed hands," said Aunt Betsy.

"Daniel, how long are you going to stand such talk as this? You are opening your doors to the serpents that will sting you."

"Snakes are a subject you ought to know about, Mis' Doolittle. I 'spose you made a study of their habits till you've become one of the snake family."

"Mrs. Barton, I cannot allow you under my roof to say such stinging things to my mother."

"Well, Daniel Doolittle, I don't know whether your snakes' stinging's any worse than her snakes, but I have got just one thing to ask of you, and that is that you will shut and lock the doors, and we will all sit down to the table and get a message through the Rochester knockin's that will set us right. Then you can see what you've done, blamin' 'Lisbeth as you have."

Half in fear, half in curiosity, Daniel Doolittle acceded to Aunt Betsy's request, and Mrs. Doolittle, who had been in and out of the bedroom as often as was necessary to avoid work, drew her chair near the stove and watched proceedings.

"Let's have the table away from the wall and both leaves h'isted," said Aunt Betsy, as she suited the action to the word and drew the table out.

"There's five of us," she said. "Mis' Doolittle, you may set by me."

"I'll not sit down by that table till I know what it means," declared Mrs. Doolittle.

"Well, stay where you be, then," was the response.

The four were at last seated, Daniel and 'Lisbeth facing each other, and Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy opposite each other at the centre of the table.

"Daniel, you will have to get an alphabet and a

piece of paper. You've got an old spellin' book, ain't you?"

"Yes; or slate and pencil will do as well as paper."

"Now lay your hands flat on the table."

Before five minutes had elapsed a shower of tiny raps were heard.

"Oh dear," said Mother Doolittle, "it's the devil again."

So intent were they on the noises that no one heeded her remark.

"Are some of our friends here?" said Aunt Betsy, putting herself in master of ceremonies.

Rap, rap, rap, sounded loudly on the table.

"Is it for Daniel?" *One rap*. "That means *no* and three raps, *yes*," said Aunt Betsy. "For old Mis' Doolittle?" *No*; a loud rap. "For Isaac?" *No*. "For 'Lisbeth?" *Yes, yes*, was rapped out, and a shower of little raps followed.

"Isaac, you point out the letters and tell us what letters they rap at." And slowly the tiny raps gave the message.

"I am the spirit who controlled my child in this house the other evening. I spake through her lips and told the truth.

"There's a great truth to come to the world, and you, Daniel Doolittle, who have in your keeping this dear child of earth who will be a means of communication between two worlds, may be a blessing or a curse. If you listen to the voice of reason and God's love, you will put out the bitterness of hell; but if you do not, you may make your own life a barren waste and wreck the life of my precious daughter.

"Sister Betsy, I beg of you and Isaac to help my poor 'Lisbeth. Under the right conditions, her life would be a light in the world. If we are hindered and thwarted in any way, it will be a light extinguished for that life only to shine with a greater brilliancy here in the other world you sometimes think about.

"I ask you, Daniel Doolittle, as you prize your future happiness, not to deny my 'Lisbeth the privilege of going to her old home to stay until after the birth of her child, when she will, we hope, be in a condition of body and mind to be used by unseen ones to give out the higher inspiration of the spheres. The way is opened between the two worlds, and we want the passage kept clear for the best results that can be given.

"Mrs. Doolittle, I do not come with any thought of unkindness, but I am watching you in your actions towards my child, and you will suffer for everything you do that in any way disturbs and lessens her chances of life.

"God bless you all, dear friends, and those who do not yet understand the truth. SARAH CHAPIN."

Daniel Doolittle had taken the slate and carefully written the letters as Isaac named them, and as they slowly grew into words the perspiration came out upon his forehead, and he grew white with fear and wonder. When at last it was finished and both sides of his slate were filled, both voice and hand trembled as he read the message from 'Lisbeth's mother.

"I do not know what to make of this," he said. "I surely do not; I must have time to think."

"Daniel Doolittle, I've got just one word to account for it. It's just as I expected; it's devil, *pure devil!*"

"Mother, do be still; I want to think," said the thoroughly puzzled man; and then with the thought of giving in in any way to their ideas, his self-esteem arose, and he said:

"Do not one of you speak a word to me upon this subject until to-morrow at ten o'clock. By that time I shall have decided what it is or who is to blame or to be credited with its production, and what attitude you may expect me to assume concerning it; but not one word before then, *not one word*," said he, bringing his hand down upon the table with great force.

An answering knock, as loud as his own, made him retreat from the table, then go bravely back, put down the leaves and place the table against the wall. He then went into his study, and a little later was heard going out of the house.

"I bet he's gone to git the views of the neighbors on the subject," whispered Aunt Betsy to 'Lisbeth, as she helped her back upon the bed.

"Oh, Aunt, if I can go back with you, I sha'n't care what any of them think."

"You want to know you're right, don't you, 'Lisbeth? Don't get reckless, we can't afford that."

All day long 'Lisbeth planned what she would take with her, and she told the story of the two dollars and the letter from Aunt Betsy.

"Well, 'Lisbeth," said Aunt Betsy, "I didn't understand that man as well as Isaac or you'd never married him. The first words he said to me about him was, 'I don't really like the cut of his jib,' and that's a great deal for your Uncle Isaac to say."

CHAPTER XIX.

SENTENCE IS PRONOUNCED.

“WHAT are you so uneasy about, Isaac, and if you had anything to say why didn’t you say it in there, instid of makin’ me come here?”

“Well,” said Uncle Isaac, “I wanted to make a request of you, and that is, don’t stir up the old woman so. I hate to have you do anything that will make her any uglier, for mebbe ’twill hender ’Lisbeth’s goin’ with us, and I want her to go. Don’t you, Betsy?”

“Well, I guess I do; she’s my relation a little more than she is yours. But, Isaac, I hate like pizen to be a hypocrite. I *can’t bear* that woman, and how that poor girl lives here I don’t know. It’s enough to make the ‘Rochester knockin’s’ come just on her account, to make me wake up to what I have done. But I’ll try and not have a real scrimmage with old Mis’ Doolittle if I can help it.”

So Aunt Betsy went back into the living-room, where ’Lisbeth and Mrs. Doolittle were sitting.

“It’s nearly night and Daniel hasn’t come. My poor son, how my heart bleeds for him!”

“How many things we say that haven’t any sense to them, don’t we, Mis’ Doolittle? Now there’s what you just said about your heart bleedin’. I heard a doctor say once that the heart was a pump that was pumpin’

the blood through all the time ; so you see if your heart didn't bleed you might die, Mis' Doolittle. It can't bleed for your Daniel more than it bleeds for me."

"Well, it's a figure of speech that my poor husband used to use. He said his poor heart bled for sinners ; but, poor man, he died with liver complaint."

Aunt Betsy tried her best not to rile up old Mrs. Doolittle, but every once in awhile she would be provoked to do so by some utterances which she would bring out about 'Lisbeth.

That evening was a gloomy one, as Daniel said but little, and soon after supper went to his study. After awhile he did a very unusual thing—he called his mother in.

"Have you called me to get my advice about 'Lisbeth?" said Mother Doolittle, with a half smile.

"No, I have not. I have called you to hear all I can that has been said ;" and Mother Doolittle, with what she had heard and what she imagined, told a long story, which Daniel said confirmed him in his course. His face was hard and bitter, as he followed his mother out of his room.

Mrs. Doolittle's foot was swollen, and Aunt Betsy, thinking she ought to make amends for what the "knockings" had done, had asked 'Lisbeth if she had any wormwood in the house, had steeped some in vinegar, and was all ready to bind up the foot.

"I guess I'll get the mop-pail and let your foot soak a little while ; mebbe that will help take out the swellin' ;" and then as she looked down at the other foot : "I'll haul off the other stockin' and put that in. It will do it good."

"Yes," said Daniel, looking down. "Mother, you had better do so, it will equalize the circulation."

"I wasn't thinkin' of that," said Aunt Betsy in a low voice. She told Isaac, after they went into their room, that "just the sound of that man's voice had given her a chill."

"He don't mean to let 'Lisbeth go, Isaac, I know he don't, and how can we leave her here with him and that old she-bear?"

"Now, Betsy, I wouldn't talk like that. Mebbe it will be all right. Let's kneel down right here by the bed and pray the Lord to let us have our child back."

Aunt Betsy herself, with tears running down her face, asked that the child they had banished might go home with them: "I know I am not worthy of it, Lord. I know mebbe I didn't have any children of my own because you knew I didn't know enough to bring 'em up; but, O Lord! we want 'Lisbeth now in her hour of trouble; we want her, Lord. Help Sarah to help her, for we must shield our girl."

Uncle Isaac prayed too; but he went further than Aunt Betsy. He said, "But if, O Lord! somebody is goin' to be made better sometime if our prayer is refused, make us willin' to wait."

They had decided if 'Lisbeth went home with them, they would start the next day, and divide the journey into three days. And Betsy declared she didn't care if it cost them "every cent they had, if she could only get 'Lisbeth home again."

Neither of them slept much that night, and although they talked very little they knew there was a burden upon them hard to bear.

"If they don't let her go I shall almost be sorry I washed and did up that old woman's foot. When I see how dirty it was, I thought it would be lonesome to be clean and the other one dirty as rot, so I offered to wash 'em both."

"Try to sleep," said Uncle Isaac, not heeding her remarks.

The morning dawned cold and gray. Aunt Betsy did not wait for any one to get up, but had the fire kindled and the breakfast on cooking before the others awoke. 'Lisbeth, with but little hope in her heart, got up and went around quietly helping her aunt, but neither spoke of the hope that was uppermost in their hearts.

Uncle Isaac came in from feeding his horse, for he had brought his own grain, and they sat down to breakfast.

It was a dismal meal. When family prayers were offered by Daniel there was no soul in the petition. He reminded the Lord that in "all things he intended to do right," and seemed establishing a mutual confidence between the two: that is, he would trust the Lord if the Lord would trust him. Ten o'clock came around too soon, for each one felt doomed to disappointment.

"You will all come into my study," said the minister. "I have my Bible handy there, and some things I wish to tell you will be more emphasized by the surroundings." When each had taken a seat Daniel cleared his throat and began:

"Yesterday I spent in two ways; one in looking up the laws of the State to see just what power a husband possesses over a wife, and I found it was *absolute*. I have a right to demand absolute obedience and to chas-

tise, if I do not use a stick larger than my thumb," and Daniel held up his thumb for their inspection. "Of course if I could not support my wife it would be different, but that has nothing to do with the question. I have sometimes felt by Mrs. Barton's talk that she would take 'Lisbeth away bodily, so I have looked that up and my decision is that she *cannot go*."

'Lisbeth's face grew a little paler, and a struggling sigh told of the inward conflict; that was all.

"I also studied what was going on in the world by very fortunately meeting at Elder Evans's one of the professors from a theological school at Hartford, a relative of Mrs. Evans, and learning from him the terrible things which are occurring in the western part of the State of New York.

"The 'Rochester knockings' are sending souls on the downward road worse than abolitionism, and are of the devil."

"I *said* so, I said so," wailed Mother Doolittle, wringing her hands and rocking backward and forward in her chair. "I knew it all the time."

"I consulted the professor as to my duty, for in the present situation I have to ask advice, and he said the only thing that would bring a victory was firmness, isolating the subject of the devil's choosing. He also said that the spirit of evil never stayed unless there was sympathy with him, that he stayed by those who beckoned; and, therefore, though my wife might not make the noises that came, might not give utterance to the words, she was in her soul inviting the evil one or he would not keep so near her. We then looked over the same revelation of wickedness in 'Lisbeth that they had

in the Salem witchcraft times, and we have found plenty of Scripture to show that the curse of God is upon her.

“‘Suffer no one with a familiar spirit to live,’ it says in the Book — ”

“Well!” broke in Aunt Betsy, “’Lisbeth’s mother ought to be ‘familiar’ with her if any one.”

“I asked for silence; I have something which I think will meet your case when you tell about dreaming and visions.

“‘Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of a prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul; and the prophet and the dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken to draw you away from the Lord your God.’ We went over the Word, and we have made up our minds it is best to ask your relations, ’Lisbeth, to depart, and leave you under the influence of my mother and myself, to see if we cannot cast out the devils, so that when my child is born it will not be a curse to the world.”

Then addressing Mr. and Mrs. Barton he said, “I have a hard but Christian duty to perform. When you return to your home, you leave ’Lisbeth as entirely to me and out of your lives as though she had never been under your roof. I shall pray that the evil one will desert you, as much time as I have to spare from my other duties. You may think of ’Lisbeth as having perfect retirement. Her exercise will consist of doing the work of the household while able and walking twice a day with me back and forth from the gateway six times. That will give her the air. No neighbors will be seen

by her, as she must keep in her room and the living-room. The most of my congregation now understand that she is insane, and are requested not to intrude upon us. Quite an unexpected sum of money was placed in my hand as a present because of the sympathy people have with the insane and demoralized condition of my wife, so I think in a money way I shall not suffer for it. The outsiders do not, as a rule, know of the 'knockings,' and can but feel that 'Lisbeth's actions at the Methodist meeting and at the house were caused by insanity. I will say this to comfort you, Mrs. Barton, 'Lisbeth shall have all she wants to eat, and I shall not chastise her only to reprimand her with my tongue; but after a change comes I shall even feel that I am justified in so doing, to turn her from welcoming the devil as an angel of light. I shall not allow tears to be shed by her when you go. I wish to prevent everything that indicates weakness and beckons a stronger power of evil to come.

"Let us kneel in prayer."

"I won't," said Aunt Betsy. "I'll never kneel in the presence of such a reptile as *you* be. I believe you've lied. I believe we can take 'Lisbeth home without the minions of the law bein' after us, I do. Why don't you speak up, Isaac? You haven't the spunk of a mouse; you ain't got no fight in you. No, Mr. Doolittle, if you want to pray, *pray away*. I shan't, nor I shan't hear you!"

"Oh, Betsy! don't talk," said Uncle Isaac, going up to her pleadingly. "You'll make it harder for 'Lisbeth after we've gone."

"I didn't think of that," said Aunt Betsy. "No, I

didn't. It would be just like that old reptile to hurt her for what I have done."

"Mrs. Barton, I would rather you would hasten your departure than to further disturb my household. Remember I want no communication between you and my wife."

"Oh dear," said Aunt Betsy, "I've got to ask one thing of that man. I've got to do it, and how I hate to!"

She came back from her bedroom and found Daniel alone. She went up to him and getting before him, where she could look him in the eye, said, "Daniel Doolittle, if 'Lisbeth dies, may I have her to bury by her mother, my dead sister? I want to know this before I leave her."

Daniel hesitated for a little while, then said, "If you will sign a paper to bear all the expenses — the shroud, coffin, and taking her there — I think I will promise you that you may have the body if she dies."

"Well, write it out and I will sign it," said Betsy, "and Isaac shall sign it too."

The paper was signed, Uncle Isaac declaring it seemed like a death warrant.

"Have an early dinner, 'Lisbeth," said Daniel. "Your folks want to get an early start." And then turning to them, blandly said, "You won't get half-way to-day, will you?"

"I don't know and I don't care," responded Aunt Betsy.

'Lisbeth was getting some potatoes to boil, and Aunt Betsy offered to pare them.

"We don't waste our potatoes paring them; we haven't got any animals to feed," said Mother Doolit-

tle. So 'Lisbeth washed them clean and put them into the kettle.

They were not left together one minute ; either Daniel or Mother Doolittle was with them.

After 'Lisbeth had set the table, she said she guessed she would make her bed, and as quickly as she could, scrawled on a small piece of paper : " You can find out about me by writing to Nancy Brown." This she dropped slyly into Aunt Betsy's hand, and went on about her work.

'Lisbeth did not make near the fuss about her disappointment that Aunt Betsy did. A strange peace stole over her, and when she bade them good-bye, it was without a tear. But what should she do, she thought, if those noises came ? How terrible that would be ! Then going into her room, she took up her Bible, and opened to the verse :

" And lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world."

" If He can be near me, my mother can ; and I know it will be all right. I am not going to worry. If Daniel should strike me, as I feel sometimes, I do not believe it would affect me. If my baby lives, I want it to be a comfort, so I must take care of myself." And her husband and his mother marvelled at her wonderful serenity ; the old lady not without bitter disappointment, for she enjoyed seeing 'Lisbeth dejected.

A fence was built across the middle of the yard, and the gate fastened. All visitors must go into the other side of the house, and 'Lisbeth could take her walk in the closed yard.

One day, after a slight snowstorm, she was walking

back and forth with her husband, and Nancy Brown came along before Daniel noticed her approach. 'Lisbeth, seeing her friend, looked so pleadingly, that Nancy said, "How do you do, Mrs. Doolittle? I hope you are better." But, with a wave of his hand, Daniel enjoined silence from 'Lisbeth, and said, "Physically she is getting better;" then pointed significantly to his head. Nancy passed slowly along, but the thought troubled her, and she went to talk it over with Mrs. Simmons.

"I don't believe the minister's wife is any more crazy than you or I. I saw her this morning, and though she looked pale and sad, her eyes have no look of insanity in them. I believe he is keeping her shut up for some purpose that has nothing to do with real insanity."

"Well," said the widow, "I have been reading and hearing about what the spirits are doing in York State and in some parts of Connecticut, and I believe more and more it was her dead mother that made her talk so when we went over there, an accusing crowd to crush her. I am so ashamed that I went and testified to what I knew. I thought then it was right, but now I know I should have been much happier if I had helped, instead of hindering her. Mr. Doolittle is getting a good deal of sympathy, and I hear that some have offered to raise money to put his wife in an insane asylum, if he will put her there."

"H'm! I guess the poor girl would be better off there, or almost anywhere, than she is now."

Sample Palmer almost outwitted Mother Doolittle one day. Watching her chance, when she had gone into a neighbor's and left the door unlocked, she had

slipped into the study and through into the living-room, and was going to 'Lisbeth's room, when she found herself followed by the minister, who said :

"Miss Palmer, I made a public request in our meeting that none of my parishioners should go beyond my study door this way. I thought that request would be granted."

"Oh, I know how you feel, Mr. Doolittle ! But I felt it my duty to come to-day, and I wanted to see your wife, so I could contradict some strange stories that are goin' round among the Methodists. They say you abuse her when she is crazy, and don't give her enough to eat, and —"

"I do not want to hear any more, Miss Palmer, but I do want you to go out of my house ; my word is law."

"Mebbe it won't always be," said Sample Palmer, as she started on to see Mrs. Evans, who had been having one of her 'dyin' spells.' "And if I can do anything to get you out of this place, you go !"

CHAPTER XX.

APRIL'S GIFT TO 'LISBETH.

THE weary months crept on. October's crimson and golden tipped leaves had turned to the russet brown of November, and November's cruel winds had swept the last vestige of them from the trees. Light snow came and went, but when the world was in December's clasp, Nature shrouded the dead forms of Spring, Summer and Autumn in her winding-sheet of snow. The new year dawned, the blue sky bent as in pity over the cold earth ; the wind, sighing through groves of pine, spruce and hemlock, gave out mournful sounds.

February brought some signs of promise ; then locked up the streams again in chains of ice, and said the time had not yet come for hope. When March was blustering out her story of what had been done and what she could do, and how she could, if she would, cling to winter, or burst all prison bars and let April kiss the mountain and the stream with a promise of better days, there came to the lonely heart of 'Lisbeth a great hope, but it whispered through pain. All her days had been alike ; her home, her work, her short walk in the yard until the snow got so deep that Daniel would not shovel it even for her, and then, under strict guard, he allowed her to walk back and forth in the path used by the minister and his family. In only two instances had she

spoken to any one but Daniel and his mother. Then it was purely accidental. One day, when Mother Doolittle was having her season of prayer and loud snores resounded from her bedroom, and Daniel had been called to see Mrs. Evans in one of her "dyin' spells,"—the Elder assuring him as he came to the door in great haste that he guessed this would "finish up Samanthy,"—'Lisbeth stood by her bedroom window and saw Nancy Brown walking slowly past, trying to attract her attention. When sure that 'Lisbeth saw her and that she was not watched by others, she dropped a little roll of brown paper over the fence and hastened on.

At first Daniel had securely fastened the door every time he went out, but 'Lisbeth had shown no disposition to go only into the yard and back again to the house, seeming rather to shun people than to desire to see them, so her husband had somewhat relaxed his vigilance.

'Lisbeth listened — snore, snore, snore, from the bedroom ; and putting a shawl around her, walked toward the street and back again a few times picking up little sticks and throwing them out of the path. At last, in stooping, she grasped the roll that Nancy had left, and went slowly into the house, but her heart was beating so hard that it seemed as though it would burst its bonds. She hastened into the bedroom and with trembling fingers opened the package. The first paper after the wrapping was a letter from Nancy.

"MY DEAR MRS. DOOLITTLE :

"I may be doing very wrong to do as your Aunt Betsy wants me to, but I am going to try it if I die for it ;

and, oh ! I hope it won't make you trouble. I want to tell you that I am sorry I ever seemed to appear against you. I have had my punishment, for a cousin of mine, who is a 'medium,' as they call it, has been to visit us, and she has convinced me of the truth that your mother could have spoken through your lips, and that the strange knockings can tell the truth.

"The people are turning around and blaming Mr. Doolittle instead of you, and many of them say there ought to be an investigation ; but of course the most of his congregation stick to him, though mother and I have both left, and demanded that they take our names off the books, because we do not believe the doctrine. Father sticks to it yet, but don't seem to blame us much for what we have done, and Henry is delighted to have some of the family get 'free from chains,' as he calls it. I shall write your aunt that I saw you at the window, and that you smiled and waved your hand at me, and that will do her some good ; for in her letter to me she says, 'Lisbeth was all right in her head when I was there, but being shut up like a convict may make her tearing insane. Try to get your eyes on her, and I will believe what you say.' Remember, I am your true friend,

NANCY BROWN."

Aunt Betsy's letter ran in this wise :

"MY DEAR LISBETH :

"I feel as mean as the old Harry trying to get this roundabout way to you. I never did do anything underhanded, but I think I shall have to hear about you or die. Isaac says that I have not been natural since I was at your house, and I haven't *felt* natural. I can't

get the knockings at all, Isaac nor me, and all the comfort I can get at all is what your mother tells me in dreams, yet that husband of yours almost thinks I ought to be killed for seeing visions and dreaming dreams. I think he will have to wait awhile before he gets his claws on me, but I guess he would like to do the job. Lisbeth, the other night your mother said as plain as a b c : — I will let you know about Lisbeth when her time of trial comes, and so I am waiting and waiting for the message from her.

“Your Uncle Isaac isn't like himself either; he don't seem to have any ambition. I got a little yellow kitten and brought him — though I hated to like pizen — and put it into his lap. He did act pleased, and said — It will be another Jerry, won't it, Betsy? and then he looked up with that twinkle in his eye that he has when he is going to say something that will cut me up, and said, — Betsy, hadn't we better strangle the kitten and send the food she might want in her lifetime to the missionaries? I'd have been mad once to have had that thrown in my face, but I wasn't then. Isaac is so broken down that it seemed good that he would say anything that made him feel a bit happy. Lisbeth, sha'n't I never have you any more? Lisbeth, do you think it wicked to direct the Lord a little what to do? Well, I don't, and the other night when we was having our family prayers, I prayed first, and I asked the Lord if it could redound to His glory that He take Daniel Doolittle and his mother before He took you, and give you a little peace of your life, to please do so. You see I didn't know but what the Lord could make better angels than He had folks of them. I didn't know how

Isaac would like it, but do you believe me, when he prayed, he said, — Oh, Lord, answer Betsy's prayer if consistent with Thy will, and try to make it consistent. You've got lots of friends here, Lisbeth. I guess Isaac and me have dropped some few words that makes folks think you are not very happy, so most every one that speaks of you says Lisbeth so soft-like, it makes me feel like crying.

"We are getting old, Lisbeth, and are going down to the grave alone; but it's good enough for us. We pushed our staff and our supporter from us, and now stranger hands shall close our eyes; for all our kin, only shiftless John Barton, your Uncle Isaac's cousin, are either dead or far away.

"I can't write any more, Lisbeth, and I don't know as you can read this if you get it, because my eyes are running so they blur my glasses all up. I shall hear about you if not from you, Lisbeth, and when the little baby comes, if you can, will you just smooth its little head and tell it I wish it wasn't half of it Daniel Doo-little's, but tell it we will do well by the Chapin side. I'd just as soon that critter would get her hands on this letter as not if it wouldn't make you trouble, so maybe you had better burn it up, for that old woman will be into everything as soon as you are not able to help yourself. Well, good-by,

"AUNT BETSY BARTON."

When 'Lisbeth read the above letter, she felt as though she had been transported to her home again, and happy tears rolled down her cheeks.

"How good Nancy is," she said musingly, "to

brave so much for me. But, oh, I cannot burn the letters! What shall I do with them?" Her eye fell on a medium sized pincushion upon her stand that she had made only a few days before. To think was to act with her. She ripped one side and turned out the lining, then rolling the letters up snugly, she wrote on a piece of paper the words :

"I could not burn these letters; they are all the comfort I had for weary months. If any one ever finds them when I am dead, and Aunt Betsy is alive, send the letters to her and she will know I love her and forgive her; that my mother comes and gives me messages by tiny raps on a footstool I hold in my lap, and she has told me I have got a work to do, but a short one, and then I will come to her, and that I am glad to go. Life is a great deal more terrible than death, and I am not afraid; but I am trying to live patiently while I do live. Remember me as your loving 'LISBETH."

A noise in the living-room showed that Mother Doolittle was awake, so 'Lisbeth threw the cushion and the letters into the chest of drawers and went into the room where the old lady was trying to put some of her snuff cloths into the stove.

"How you scart me, 'Lisbeth! You always come so sly somehow that I never know when to look for you."

"I hope I didn't disturb you," said 'Lisbeth, as she went round to the side of the stove to put in some wood.

"Let that alone!" shouted Mother Doolittle. "What's the use of your burning so much wood?"

But 'Lisbeth persisted, and said, "You need not be afraid of me. I shall not tell Daniel that you are

taking the snuff, though how he can help knowing it I can't tell. I smell it every time you come near me."

"Do you?" said the frightened woman. "Now what I need is a vanilla bean to put into it, and then I know it would not smell so much like snuff. But, 'Lisbeth, whether it is because you are so extravagant that he is poor all of the time, or whether he don't get any money anyway, I know that, though I have saved and struggled to educate him, there are whole months at a time I am without a cent. I should never have sold the eggs if it hadn't been for that, 'Lisbeth. And now one of my shoes is so full of holes that it makes me take cold every time I step foot on the ground. He don't pay any attention to it, and says we have all got to economize, there's sickness coming on and help has got to be hired. 'Lisbeth, I think he thought I was going to be able to do it all; but I just told him I couldn't and I shouldn't, so he has hired the Widow Simmons."

"Oh! has he?" said 'Lisbeth, a feeling nearer akin to joy lighting up her face than had rested there for many a week.

Some writer has said, "The beautiful souls of the world have an art of saintly alchemy by which bitterness is converted into kindness; the gall of human experience into gentleness; ingratitude into benefits; insults into pardon;" and 'Lisbeth had such a nature.

That night when she and her husband were seated by the table, he studying his Bible, to save fire and candles in the study, she finishing up a tiny garment that she had fashioned herself, she spoke to her husband, "Daniel, I have a request to make of you."

"What is it, 'Lisbeth?"

"Your mother is taking cold every day because her shoes are so thin. She does need another pair."

Daniel stared at 'Lisbeth in utter astonishment. Here was his wife, who had never received a dozen kind words from his mother, forgetting her own needs; for the two dollars Uncle Isaac had given her served for the infant's wardrobe.

"She shall have the shoes, 'Lisbeth," said he; and then placing his large hand upon her head, said, "Oh! 'Lisbeth, I wish you wasn't doomed. You have got some good in you. Do the knockings come any more? Maybe you have overcome the devil."

"I won't deceive you, Daniel. They do come to me sometimes, very softly; but they have been a great comfort to me since I have been shut up here."

"I wish they wouldn't come. What I am doing is for your good, 'Lisbeth; it's because I am ever willing to lay whatever I love best on the altar and see it sacrificed, rather than to in any way encourage the work of Satan."

"Some time you will know me as I am," said 'Lisbeth. "Some time I shall come to you in another way than now, and you will understand me then."

"I do not know what you mean, 'Lisbeth. I did not know you were going away."

'Lisbeth dreamed happy dreams that night, and in the morning found time to finish sewing up the cushion. Much to Mother Doolittle's surprise, Daniel brought in some shoes for her to try on that morning.

"My wife told me you mentioned needing some, and I thought I would not neglect it any longer."

That afternoon and the night following were long to

be remembered at the Doolittle home, for 'Lisbeth went down almost to the "valley of the shadow of death," and then, when the attending physician thought the last breath had fled, as though a baptism of strength had come from heaven, she rallied and found the kindly face of Widow Simmons tear-stained, while Mother Doolittle was looking at her with a scared, white face, and saying, "Is she dead, doctor; is she dead?"

"No," said the doctor; "see, she is looking at you."

"Oh! I am so glad, for what I would do with that baby I don't know. I'm too old to fuss with young ones."

"Always thinking of yourself, mother; go out of the room."

Later, when they brought to 'Lisbeth her little boy and let him lie close to her side, she felt as though a new light had come to her. She must live for baby's sake.

Daniel beckoned the doctor into his study, and said, "Will she get better, doctor? I never knew a being could suffer so and live."

"If she is well cared for she will live," said the old doctor, "though she has been pretty near the jumping-off place."

"I am astonished to hear you speak in such a way of death, doctor. I have known you were not a Christian, but I did not know you doubted immortality."

"I do as expressed and taught by the Church. I had rather be annihilated and have the whole world annihilated than to have for one instant the thought that any one was going to be in a lake of fire and brimstone eternally; there's no sense in it."

Dr. Parsons had the name of being an infidel, but a very efficient physician, and was much sought after in all critical cases.

"Well, doctor, I want to ask you a word about my wife and the safety of my child. I told you something of her mental condition when I engaged you to attend her, and I want to ask you if you think her insanity would be conveyed to the child should she nurse it?"

"Why, your wife is no more crazy than you are," ejaculated the doctor; "there's not the least symptom of it about her."

"Well then, here is a far more serious question — if she is not insane, she is a witch, and could witchcraft in any form be transmitted through the milk of the mother to the child?"

"Witchcraft be d — d!" said the doctor. "I never heard such nonsense in the world. That little snowdrop in there a witch! And what's a witch, anyway — who knows anything about a witch?"

"I have here the record," said Daniel, holding up the Bible.

"Your record be d — d," said the doctor as he started for the door; "if I stay any longer I shall swear like a trooper, but I never heard such nonsense in my life from any one that ought to have sense."

The doctor gave very explicit orders as to the care of 'Lisbeth, but declared outside that the Widow Simmons was the only one he could trust, for the old woman was a fool and the parson a fanatic.

Mother Doolittle had great curiosity about the baby. Would it look like Daniel? "Anyway," said she to Widow Simmons, "we will at once consecrate it to the

Lord. Of course it will be hard work to save its soul with such a mother, but I shall advise Daniel to keep the child away from her just as much as he can, as soon as it is old enough. There's never any of the Doolittles, or the folks on my side of the house, gone down to perdition that I know of, excepting one, and I am a little uncertain about him."

"Do you not think, Mrs. Doolittle, it's best to help every one we can and live a good life instead of feeling that one who is taken from us by death is destined for eternal punishment? As I grow older, I rebel against such a thought."

"That's because you are carnal-minded. You ought to learn that there's just as much glory due to the Lord for preparing a hell as for preparing a heaven. If there wasn't only one place we should all be mixed up together there, but His allowing the wheat and the tares to grow together until the harvest shows that He means separation."

Widow Simmons sighed and a tear trickled down her cheeks. Somewhere in the wide world she had a wayward brother, if he wasn't dead, and she did hope that some way poor Joe would have a chance for a place in Heaven. But if it was so that death settled it, her hope for him was very small, for the last she had heard of him he was bad still.

A faint voice from the bedroom summoned her. Two large blue eyes looked up into hers and the pale lips said, "Stoop down, I want to whisper." So the widow bent her head till it nearly touched the white face, and listened. "It isn't so; there's a chance for every one. My mother has been to me many times and told me so,

and my mother knows because she is dead. I'll tell you more sometime, but I am tired now."

"Rest, poor child, rest," said the widow, "you in your weakness have comforted me. Would to God I could be strength to you."

Daniel stole softly in and gazed upon mother and child. "It's like a picture," he said, "a beautiful picture;" but then muttering to himself about deceiving the elect, he went out as softly as he came in.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "MILK SWEETENER."

THE power of motherhood, who can estimate it? How it softens and tones down all the cruel mysteries of life, and makes of darkest clouds azure draperies to shield the treasure, God given, from the wearying glare of mid-day.

'Lisbeth lay motionless and white as the pillow the wan face pressed; but the speaking eyes were looking lovingly at the little bundle of humanity so near her.

"You have a nice baby there, Mrs. Doolittle," said the gruff old doctor, "and you must make up your mind to do all you can to get strong so you can care for it. You don't want the little chap left buffeting around without any mother, do you? So you just take this," and he placed a spoonful of medicine to her lips.

"You don't think I will die, do you, doctor? I cannot understand this terrible weakness."

"Not a bit of it if you mind me." And the doctor ordered a strong egg-nogg, but "a little at a time."

The bottle of liquor was the first that had ever been in the minister's house; not that he was very particular about temperance, but it was a useless expense.

Mother Doolittle took the bottle up, smelled of it and placed it back, and asked 'Lisbeth if she was used to taking liquor.

"No," replied 'Lisbeth, "I never took any only when I had the measles."

"You'd better be careful of the stuff," said Mother Doolittle to the Widow Simmons. "Don't let it get tipped over."

Daniel came into the room and, knowing how tired Mrs. Simmons was, said kindly, "You go and lie down in mother's room until midnight, and she can sit with 'Lisbeth. If anything is needed you can be called. I am very tired myself and must rest."

Much to the wonder of all, the old lady readily acquiesced, and soon there was quiet over the house. 'Lisbeth lay in a half drowse, with one hand touching the little one, seeming asleep yet awake to everything that was going on. Mother Doolittle bent down and looked at her and then, seeming satisfied, took the liquor bottle from the stand and went stealthily into the living-room.

'Lisbeth wondered why she should be so sly if she only wanted to taste the liquor. "Surely I should not care," thought she.

Promptly at twelve o'clock, Mother Doolittle called Mrs. Simmons. Just before time for Daniel to be stirring, a nightcapped head appeared at the bedroom door of Mother Doolittle's room, and an uncertain voice said, "I've got a misery in my back, had it all night. Tell Daniel not to 'sturb me when he gets up; I want to sleep half a day."

Mrs. Simmons did the errand, but thought the minister did not take it very graciously.

"I'll get the breakfast and do the work if you will sit by your wife a little while," said the widow.

Daniel assented, and finding his wife awake, said, " 'Lisbeth, through the mercy of God you are spared, and I hope my child will be the means of making you perfectly sane and able to bring him up in the fear of the Lord."

"He's our boy, Daniel, and I want him brought up to *love* God."

Daniel's long arms reached to the far side of the bed and took up the little bundle. With clumsy fingers he began untying the string of the little cap that fitted snugly to the head, and pushing it back, looked at the soft golden hair that clustered even then in rings on the tiny head.

"He will look like you physically, and I shall not mind it if only in a mental way he is like me. 'Lisbeth, I have something to ask of you. You know that anger or excitement is communicated to a child through its mother's milk, sometimes with direful results. I have been afraid that that which I deem witchcraft will also be communicated, so I have made up my mind to have you commit to memory some selections of Scripture and a few verses of Watts's hymns, and keep your mind entirely on them when you are nursing him, instead of the lullaby hymns common among mothers. It's the milk the boy needs, not your mentality. I have prayed over this and had advice too. At first I thought it was best for you to have some form of prayer to go through with, but knowing your abhorrence of set prayers, I will try to arrange something else."

Sick as 'Lisbeth was, she looked into Daniel's face and laughed. "Why, how can I be saying verses of the Bible or anything else only that which comes from

just loving my boy when I am attending to his wants?" And as though her very weakness had made her bold, she reached out her hand and said, "All the world couldn't drive the truth from me that my mother comes to me, and oh! it is all the light I have had in these weary months you have kept me prisoner."

"Do you mean to tell me —" Daniel began angrily, but he was interrupted by a smothered sound of distress from his mother's room.

"She must be sick," said Widow Simmons, as they both went in.

Mother Doolittle was lying with her head over the front side of the bed, her body crosswise of it in a violent vomiting attack, and a smell of liquor pervaded the room.

"What does this mean, mother?" said Daniel, showing but little sympathy by the tone of his voice.

"Tired out."

"Mother, where did you get the liquor? I thought you hadn't tasted any for years."

"Hain't had none."

"Mother," Daniel's voice was hard now, "tell me the truth."

"I jus' tasted 'Lisbeth's; tha's all."

Daniel left her, and went for the bottle. "How much of it is gone, Mrs. Simmons?"

"Why," said the widow, "I could not tell that a spoonful had been taken out."

"I tol' you I jus' tasted of it;" but Daniel was not so easily satisfied. Taking the liquor, for which he had a dislike, he tasted it; it was very weak but the color was good. He shook it and there came sailing up

from the bottom, where it had been lodged, a tea leaf. That told the story.

"Mother," said Daniel, "you turned out half of that liquor and put in cold tea to fill it up."

"How'd you know that, Daniel? Did 'Lisbeth see through boards?"

After the old lady had been made more comfortable, Daniel said to Widow Simmons, "I trust you will say nothing about this affair. Mother has two weaknesses, one is for snuff and another for liquor. I shall see that this does not occur again. She is a good exemplary woman, all but these spells, which, by our being very careful, cannot occur often. But I regret it, as I feel it makes her stumble in the Christian race. If I had the least doubt about her ultimate salvation, I should feel very bad indeed, but mother has been a professor since she was eleven years old."

"Tha's so," came in a thick voice from the bedroom; "there's no doubt o' my calling an' 'lection."

"Keep still, mother," with great emphasis.

There was one thing about Mother Doolittle — she could not be humiliated; her large self-esteem made her worst faults appear as nothing when compared with the sins of others.

When the baby was nine days old, Mother Doolittle insisted on 'Lisbeth beginning to move. "When Daniel was a baby I was up and around before two weeks."

"What if you were?" said the wrathful old doctor, turning and facing her. "You were probably as tough as a knot and you could stand it, and," continued he, eyeing her, "I guess you are a little tough yet. This

woman here is sensitive and delicate, and I'm going to be minded about her; keep her still, I tell you."

"But," said Daniel, "I have been thinking that you have been here really more than you need to, and that it will amount to a great deal when you come to sum it up. When I married I made up my mind I would set an example to my people about the needless employing of physicians and heavy doctor's bills paid at the expense of the church."

"Heavy doctor's bills be d — d; church be d — d! I'll get that little woman on her feet unless you want her to die, and then the expense might be more."

The doctor discovered on his first visit after Mother Doolittle's experiment with the liquor what had become of it. Wishing to test its strength, he had taken up the bottle and tasted it, then went to the window and threw it out. "I'll go to Hartford for every drop of liquor I give my patients if I've got to get it diluted like that," and to prevent this injustice Widow Simmons told him partly what had occurred.

"Oh, yes, that's all right," said he; "it's gone down one of the saints; that sanctifies it. I'll bring you some that you must put under lock and key," and he did.

"'Lisbeth is too weak to work, mother, and if she takes care of the baby, it's all you can expect. You'll have to do the work for awhile, for I can't keep help any longer," said Daniel a week later.

So Mother Doolittle could not help herself, but got the scanty meals and did the work in a way that made 'Lisbeth long to get around.

Daniel had been true to his word; numerous passages

of Scripture and some verses from hymns were written in a bold hand on paper and pasted on the walls. The following are samples of the comforts she got: "But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he feareth not God." "Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

"They are all so gloomy and threatening, Daniel. Why can't you give me something comforting, like 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'?"

"'Lisbeth, there's no rest for familiar spirits, and I do not want to give them any encouragement at all. This is done to protect my child."

"Just as they used horseshoes at Salem?" asked 'Lisbeth.

"Well, yes, on the same plan," said Daniel; "only I want them crushed out by the power of the Almighty, and so I give you passages of Scripture that deal with sin. I do not want comfort, it's a bodyguard round my son, 'Lisbeth."

Dr. Parsons ran in one day to see how the youngster was getting along, and putting on his glasses peered at the writing on the wall.

"Why, what is this for?" said he, wonderingly. And 'Lisbeth told about her husband's idea of safety.

"'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' That's a milk sweetener, is it?" And he chucked the baby under the chin and giving 'Lisbeth an assuring smile, went over to the store to tell another story about the fool parson.

'Lisbeth heard voices in her husband's room one day, and soon after was astonished to see the portly proportions of Sample Palmer coming into the room.

The minister, not wishing to lose one of his flock, had half apologized for his treatment of her, and she had triumphantly declared she should make another trial at getting where 'Lisbeth was, as Mrs. Simmons and Dr. Parsons both said she wasn't crazy one bit.

"You've got a great responsibility, Mis' Doolittle, now that little child is entrusted to your care, and I hope you will walk in the fear of the Lord."

"I don't know much about the fear of the Lord. I love Him for baby's sake, because He gave him to me alive."

"It seems to be my lot to warn people of carnal-mindedness. I have witnessed sad sights in my life and heard strange sounds. I'm goin' to tell you about one, Mis' Brown's sister. Sabriny is dead and buried. I was there when she was dyin', and I was astonished. I stepped up to her and said, 'Don't you want Mr. Doolittle to come and pray for you?' and she looked me right in the eye when she was dyin' too, and said, 'No, I don't. I don't want any Orthodox prayer to shut my glory out.' And then she kep' smilin' and would say, 'Here's Brother George, here's father, here's mother,' and then just smiled so the smile stayed, and died. *Laughed* when she was dyin', just think of it! And they had a Universalist minister from New Haven to preach at her funeral. He never said one word about her not bein' a professor, but said her life and good deeds told a great deal better than anything else. And

she, when she is raised up at the last day, will take the left hand road into outer darkness, where there shall be 'weepin' and wailin' and gnashin' of teeth.' "

Sample Palmer was an enthusiast on hell. She gloried in giving word pictures of it as a child glories in sweetmeats. She felt that she must see the state of 'Lisbeth's mind, but she found no trace of fear.

"I've heard a great many stories about you folks here, and I have made up my mind to find out if they are true, so I can correct any falsehood that may be goin' about."

"Well," said 'Lisbeth, quietly, "you had better ask Mr. Doolittle."

Thwarted at this, Sample turned her attention to Mother Doolittle, who was preparing dinner. "You look about used up, Mis' Doolittle; let me help you a little." And suiting the action to the word, she drew out the table and began setting it, putting on a plate for herself, much to Daniel's disgust, who said to his mother:

"Are you sick, that you can't do your own work?"

"No, I guess she ain't sick, Mr. Doolittle," said Sample; "only a little tuckered. Don't worry about her. I'll help her till it's all on the table." Then, said she, "Mis' Doolittle, I'll turn out the pork fat and put butter in to make the gravy of; it will taste better and be better for Mis' Doolittle; more nourishin', you know."

After dinner Sample did not remain to help wash the dishes, and 'Lisbeth, seeing the scowling looks of Mother Doolittle, laid baby down and washed them herself.

Nancy Brown was also admitted, and admired the

baby to her heart's content, but between spells took pains to tell 'Lisbeth that she had written Aunt Betsy all about the baby, and also what a triumphant death her Aunt Sabrina died.

'Lisbeth's "knockings" continued, but were now only tiny raps in answer to her questions. No loud ones had come to disturb the household for some time, and Daniel began to think he had conquered the devil.

As the months went on and baby grew into their hearts, it looked as though he might be a connecting link between their lives. When a year old the little fellow began to walk, and Daniel said it was time he was made to mind.

"What makes Danny act so strangely, 'Lisbeth?" said her husband to her one day (for no name but Daniel would do for his offspring). "See him up in that corner. He acts just as though he was trying to talk with some one, and now see him reach his arms up, and act as though he wanted to be taken. Here, baby, come to father," said Daniel. The child did not look at him, but with a seraphic look upon his face reached farther up, until he came near falling.

The frightened father caught him and taking him to the door said, "'Lisbeth, how strange his eyes look; I should think you would be frightened about him." But 'Lisbeth was not.

On the little stool in her bedroom, her mother had rapped out these words: "Danny sees us, and if he lives will be a great help to the world, as he has inherited your tendencies of mediumship." 'Lisbeth was more alarmed than pleased about this, but she had often seen the child in such an ecstatic state that she feared

to disturb him lest the cord that held spirit and body should be severed and her boy go to the other life. She had tried to keep the knowledge from her husband, fearing she knew not what, for surely he would not be cruel with his child.

“'Lisbeth, have you cast a spell over Danny?” said her husband later in the day.

“No, Daniel, I would not know how to do it.”

“The devil might help you,” said he, bitterly; “he helps his own.”

CHAPTER XXII.

“VENGEANCE IS MINE ; I WILL REPAY.”

“THE devil helps his own ;” the words kept repeating themselves over and over in her brain. In the long weary months that had passed, the whole thought of Daniel, in connection with what he termed witchcraft, had been directed in a series of petty persecutions upon 'Lisbeth. Would her child now be made to suffer also ?

“I have neglected my child,” said he, “and left him too much under baleful influences. I must have him more to myself,” so he would shut himself up in his study with the little fellow, and 'Lisbeth would hear the pitiful wailings of “mam, mam,” until it seemed she would go crazy, and the minister himself declared he could never get his sermon done. He finally conceived the idea of having his mother always with 'Lisbeth when she was caring for her child. It was a terrible task for the old lady, and 'Lisbeth used to pity her as she would sit winking and blinking to see if there were any unusual demonstrations on her part.

One day when she was giving him his bath, she caught up one of his rosy restless feet and kissed it right in the hollow. The sensation was such that the little child laughed merrily, and would again place it to her lips for kisses while lying on her lap. That was

enough for Mother Doolittle. Later in the day she rapped at Daniel's door and was admitted.

"Daniel, I think I know how she does it; I saw her go through a heathen operation this morning. You know people kiss the Pope's toe; well, 'Lisbeth actually kisses that child in the hollow of his foot; I saw her do it, and I thought he was going right into one of them spells again."

"I will speak to her about it; you could take your oath you saw her do it? You know I want no discrepancies if I ever have to make out a case against her. The people here are turning against me and for her to such a large degree that I should be pretty well discouraged were it not for the pretty sum of money Uncle Charles left me."

"Left *us*, Daniel, you and me, and I have not had the handling of one cent, nor have I had a single new article of clothing from it! You have shut your hand over it, and your hand is large, Daniel. Even 'Lisbeth needs some things for herself and Danny, and you have given them nothing."

"Mother, are you more capable than I to manage affairs? I do not want to be unkind, but you would revel in snuff and rum if you had the handling of it, and the Rev. Daniel Doolittle would have a family to be proud of—his mother a drunkard, his wife a witch and his only child bewitched. Such notoriety as that would be rather too much for me. I've got enough of trouble, mother; go out."

"My son, they say the worm will turn sometimes, and I am going to say this thing if I die for it, that for a man who started out to work 'In His Name,' all for

God's glory, you are making a failure, for you don't give us enough to eat. I can scrimp as well as any one, but it hurts to see a mere child scrimped, and when little Danny cried, 'More, more, more,' when the bit of milk you allowed him was gone, and he could not eat the bread alone, I felt sorry for 'Lisbeth, with all her faults, when I saw the tears roll down her cheeks."

"She could have fed him something else."

"There was nothing else he would eat, and not much that we could, either. I'll go out now."

Daniel thought seriously of what his mother had told him. He had for a long time been following up Sample Palmer's system of getting meals out, and seldom failed of getting one good meal a day. Was he starving his child? He went into the living-room, and said :

"'Lisbeth, you may get three pints of milk a day, and let the child have all he wants, and tell me, if things are really necessary and you need them, what you want."

"We want more fresh meat, Daniel. You know salt pork is not healthful. Though Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy used a great deal of it, yet they had veal and chicken and fresh beef to make soups of, and then one could have a variety, besides all kinds of vegetables."

"Well, we could have vegetables enough if you and mother would work in the garden and raise them. It would be good exercise for you women folks."

"Your mother is too old and too lame, Daniel, and I have the work to do and Danny to care for."

"'Lisbeth, I want to forbid you going through any of the heathen rites of kissing that child in the bottom of

his feet. The child is not like other children; he is saying things beyond his years, and I cannot break him of the habit. A child of two and a half years should not have such a will of his own. You know he insists he is playing with a little girl whom he calls Luty, and divides everything he has at times with an unseen child. You encourage him in it, and I know it, every time you get him alone. When I brought him back from Elder Evans's the other day you noticed he had been crying and acted sick. I had to punish him severely there. Mrs. Evans suggested shutting him up in a dark room, and we could hear him telling 'Luty' all about it. What does it mean?"

"Luty tum to play wit' Danny," said the little fellow with shining face, running up to his mother. "Her's in de torner," and then darted back. "Luty brin' udder dran'ma. Luty dood, pappy whip Danny, Luty tiss Danny."

"Stop that," said his father; "stop that talk I say; there's no one there, Danny, only just yourself. Danny tells stories."

"Pappy tell 'tories, Luty dere."

Just then Nancy Brown came in to have a chat with 'Lisbeth, and Daniel went back into his study. For a wonder Mrs. Doolittle remained in her room, probably because her season of prayer had turned into a nap.

"Nancy," whispered 'Lisbeth, "I am afraid my husband will be the death of my little Danny. The child sees spirits, I know he does, and talks to them, and his father says he will whip it out of him. What shall I do? Will I ever see Aunt Betsy again?"

"I have a letter from her which I wish you could

read, and she says, ‘I must have our girl back before we die. Her Uncle Isaac is very feeble.’”

Just then Daniel reappeared and said, “Well, Miss Nancy, are you about ready to come back to the fold again? Have you found anything satisfying to your soul outside?”

“Yes, Mr. Doolittle, I have. I have found that God is Love; I have found that when we die we do not sleep until a great Resurrection day, for I know friends have come back and told us they were living in a beautiful country where there is no pain; I have found out there is no hell, only the sting of conscience that comes from wrong-doing; I have found that little children do not suffer for the sins of the parents; I have found that we all have guardian angels who would lead us aright if we would listen to them; I have found that life after death is made beautiful by a beautiful life here.

“There was a medium, who gets the raps, at Widow Simmons’s last night and we got several messages. A message came to you, Mr. Doolittle, from your wife’s mother, and it was, near as I can remember, like this: Tell Daniel Doolittle to beware how he treats that child. The angels have placed their hands in benediction on his little head, and we want him to fulfil his mission; and she said to ‘Lisbeth —”

“Not another word, not another word; such damnable *heresy* shall not be uttered under my roof.”

“Just as you like,” said Nancy coolly.

“I am astonished that Widow Simmons has gone so far in evil ways, but when she let the Methodists into her home, it was the devil’s wedge that will always keep the door open for all false doctrines.”

"Well, I must go," said Nancy; "good evening."

After the evening meal 'Lisbeth went into her room for a few moments, took the stool in her lap and this message came: "I wish you would run away to-night with baby. Oh! that I could get you home with Betsy." 'Lisbeth was called at that moment and could get no more; but she was troubled. Why should she run away with baby? What did it mean? Did she remember right? for she had a system of pointing to the letters and not writing down the words, as she was always in haste.

That night she dreamed her mother said to her, "Even from the land that knows not pain, I dread the valley you must pass through."

In the morning Daniel seemed more cheerful than he had in some time, even tried to perpetrate a joke. It was too clumsy an affair to put on record, but 'Lisbeth laughed, and Danny, seeing mammy laughing, screamed with delight. There was to be a meeting of the trustees of the church that day and Daniel left early in the afternoon to attend it. He found that his word was not law, that some of the people were getting tired of him, that they complained of his manner of living, also that such a scandal as that of the "Rochester Knockings" should attach itself to the minister's family. Mrs. Evans had told Sample Palmer about Danny and his seeing a "ghost child;" the Methodists and the Universalists had learned of it; "and I don't know how many others, and I shall have to seek a new place or quit the ministry. Now, 'Lisbeth, what are you going to do about it?"

"Daniel, what can I do about it? The Bible teaches

us that there are spiritual gifts, and our boy is one of the gifted ones; don't you know it says 'discerners of spirits'?"

"It means nothing for to-day; it was written for that particular time, and for that particular church. I do not want you to think for a moment that there is any warrant in the Bible for such things; it is all of the devil."

A loud rap right on the partition before him made a picture (the only one in the house) of a lone woman by a lone gravestone, with a great weeping willow over her, fall to the floor, and break into a thousand pieces.

"Daniel, is the devil at it again?" said Mother Doolittle, peering out of her bedroom.

"The devil's at it, mother," said he, as he went back to his room. That night he said to the little one, "Come here, Danny; pappy is going to teach you some more to your prayer."

The little fellow knelt down and prayed:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take;
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

"Now say, 'Dear Lord, please keep the devil away from mammy and Danny.'"

"Danny tan't say dat."

"Danny must, before he gets up. Now say it."

He would repeat it until he got to the word *devil*, and then he would say, "Danny tan't, Danny tan't."

"Danny must," said the father, sternly. "If you do not, I shall whip you."

"No! No!" cried 'Lisbeth, coming forward as though to take him in her arms.

"Say it right off; say it, I tell you."

The frightened child began to cry, and the father, dragging him into his lap, let blow after blow fall on the tender flesh. Even Mother Doolittle interfered:

"He's holding his breath; oh! raise him up," cried the wife, frantic with fear.

Daniel raised him up and turned him over. What a sight presented itself! Instead of the fair face of their child, was one distorted and purple, with eyes rolled back in the head. "Take him! Do something for him," cried the now frightened father.

"Get warm water to put his feet in," said 'Lisbeth to Mother Doolittle.

"Let me rub him," said Daniel.

If a look could have killed, Daniel Doolittle would have dropped dead.

"Don't dare to touch him! Never lay your finger on him again," said she. "Do you hear? Get Dr. Parsons."

In a few moments the doctor was there. Tenderly taking the little one in his arms, he carried him to the bed, and undressing the little body, saw the great red marks caused by the heavy blows.

"Oh, I see now!" he said with scathing sarcasm. "There has been some *ministerial* work done here; something to be proud of."

Daniel turned and went into his study. The doctor worked on; at last the rigid form relaxed and the eyes slowly opened:

"Danny doin' play wit' Luty. Naughty pappy! Naughty pappy!"

All that night 'Lisbeth and the doctor worked over the child. In some way, Widow Simmons and Nancy Brown had heard of the trouble, and both were busy making draughts for the little feet and poultices for the rigid spine. Once in a while the old doctor would express a word of hope; then he would say, "It's no use." Just as the morning sun was first touching the eastern horizon, and a faint ray fell across the bed, little Danny opened his eyes and said, "Pappy! Mammy! Danny's doin'. Luty here; udder dran'ma here; dood dran'ma." The words were lost in the sounds of loud sobbing, for Mother Doolittle was weeping as none had ever seen her weep before. The little child had crept into her heart, and found a place that even her own had never found; but 'Lisbeth stood there tearless, watching the last faint struggle that marked the passage of baby going from her arms to "Luty's and udder dran'ma's."

Daniel stood like a man of marble until the doctor spoke to him and said:

"Well, the little life is finished! Did your anger pay?"

He had heard the pitiful story during the night.

"May God forgive me! It did not pay," said Daniel. "It did not pay."

'Lisbeth insisted upon caring for the little form herself. She looked at the dark bruises, then turned and pointed to the text still on the wall: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." She lifted the little feet, and kissed the hollows that were like marble; all the rosy hue was gone. She even thought of the friends who had helped her through the night, and wanted to get them something to eat. She looked

pitiingly toward Mother Doolittle, who had not ceased her weeping, and asked her to take a cup of tea. So strangely calm was she that some marvelled at it and said, "After all, she did not love her child as much as we thought."

The funeral passed off as other funerals of the times did, with only this change: the officiating clergyman considered it was a wise Providence that took the child away from its surroundings, commended the mourning father to the consolations of their beloved religion, and the mourning mother to repentance and the mercy of God.

'Lisbeth heard the clods of earth falling on Danny's coffin, and while others shuddered, she was motionless.

Upon their return home, she went to her husband and said, "You will sleep in the spare room; I want the room where Danny died." He could not dispute her right, and there was a gleam in her eye that he dared not meet.

When morning came, a bright September morning, and Daniel at a rather late hour went into the living-room, he found no fire in the stove, and no signs of any one having risen. Cautiously he opened the door of the bedroom, opened it as though he were treading on holy ground. The bed was as it had been the night before. 'Lisbeth was gone!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GUIDING LIGHTS.

AND what of 'Lisbeth? When she returned to her room she had no purpose only to be rid of the hateful presence of Daniel Doolittle and his mother. To be alone with Danny and mother seemed to her rest and peace. She could see them flitting around her, and leaning forward she said, "Oh! speak to me, speak to me. I cannot count the raps, cannot keep track of anything. I am so tired, so tired."

Then was the stricken one given a stronger power of discernment, a sensation of touch, of soft hands smoothing the weary brow. A little hand nestled in hers and directions were given her by the subtle law of spirit as plainly as are the directions from mortal to mortal in the earth world.

"Get together a few of your clothes, wear your heaviest shoes, and pass out quietly. We will lead you to Aunt Betsy. Do not be afraid, child; you have done more than your duty and the remainder of your short life must be spent in a noble service." Without a sound she gathered together in a small bundle what she was directed to, and with no emotion, until she came to the dress which Danny wore when he was struck the cruel blows. This she hugged to her heart, kissing it over and over.

"My baby! oh, my baby!" cried she. "This little slip seems a part of your happiness and your suffering;" and, opening her own gown, far too large for her shrunken form, she folded it around her and again hooked up her dress.

"Which way shall I go?" she said. "I have forgotten the way."

"We will lead you," came in quiet tones to her listening ears. "Watch the light by night and our shadowy forms by day."

When she reached the living-room, the heavy snores from Mother Doolittle's room assured her all was well in that direction; but could she have looked further into Daniel Doolittle's room, she would have found one keenly alive to the unpleasant thoughts that were his companions. After all, they were thoughts of his future and the attitude of his congregation, rather than of remorse for what he had done. He reasoned that the child would have died anyway in some of those queer spells, and that the blows had nothing to do with his dying. "But what if I should be brought up at a minister's meeting and my rights as a minister taken from me; what then?"

This was the burden of Daniel Doolittle's thoughts, as 'Lisbeth, the betrayed wife, the broken-hearted mother, crossed his threshold for the last time.

"Oh, yes, there's the light, thank God. Yes, mother; yes, Danny, I will come. Don't move too fast, for I am tired." But after awhile her step was lighter and she was enabled to make more rapid progress. She had no plans; the dulled condition of her brain admitted of neither planning nor reasoning. "I am going to Aunt

Betsy;" that's all she thought, and when it seemed the light was really going wrong she would murmur, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

When the Wise Men of the East knelt upon the sands of the desert in thankfulness to the Star in the sky that should lead them to the Christ-child, they had no more of trust than had 'Lisbeth when she followed the light *mother* had promised. On, on she went, until she could see in the east the light that foretold the dawning of a new day. At last, to her surprise, the light shone over the door of a low log building. The latch-string was out. She unhesitatingly pulled it, and in the darkness ran upon the seats of a country school-house. "Rest now," said a soothing voice, and without thought of fear she wrapped her shawl around her, and, laying her head upon her bundle, slept the sleep of real exhaustion.

She did not fear the scampering rats that were holding high carnival there, nor the dismal sighing of the wind through the pine trees. All of fear and dread were in her past, all of suffering too, she thought, and the future had just one thought — "I am going to Aunt Betsy." She was wakened later by the songs of birds and the lowing of some cattle not far away. She felt stiff and thirsty and wished she had some water to drink.

"I must go soon; yes, now I can go," said she joyfully, as her clairvoyant vision beheld two shadowy forms, a woman and a child, just before her. She was not led by the road this time, but to a spring of water, clear as crystal, a little way down a ravine, and as she reached it she heard a sweet voice say:

"There, Benny, wait for mammy. Benny will get in the spring and mammy will cry," — and a gleeful child of nearly three years of age came round the corner of a great rock laughing joyfully, while the short, stout, red-cheeked mother, almost breathless from the unusual exertion, with pail and gourd in hand, followed him. Both stopped on seeing 'Lisbeth, and the child hid his face in his mother's skirts, while 'Lisbeth said :

"Is the boy yours? Has his father ever killed him and has he come back to you?"

The woman drew back in astonishment and fear, and would have fled had not 'Lisbeth, seeing the fear she had caused, asked for the gourd that she might drink some water. The kind-hearted woman reached it out in silence, and then said as she saw how eagerly 'Lisbeth drank the water, "Have you had any breakfast? You seem famished."

"No, I have not thought of that."

"Well, poor child, come up to the house with me and rest on the bed until I get it ready. You are tired, I know. May I ask where you have started for?" and with an expression as though any one must know, she said, "To Aunt Betsy's."

The woman asked no more questions, but looked back, as she saw 'Lisbeth did not follow her, to renew her invitation; and 'Lisbeth cried, her face lighting up, "Yes, yes, I will go. I see them now by you."

The young woman looked all around, and seeing no one, went up the hill toward the log house; the door was open and a bright fire was burning on the hearth. In a moment the iron tea kettle was filled with water, and swung over the fire, while kindly Mrs. Briggs got

the little wash kettle, and putting some water in it, said to 'Lisbeth, "Let me wash your face and hands, and then you lie down for awhile, for you look so tired."

Smilingly 'Lisbeth obeyed, and the short sleep upon that soft bed brought her to a consciousness of what she wanted to do. "I must not tell them about mother and Danny going before me," said she. "I will say as little as I can."

Her sweet and serious demeanor as the good man of the house asked a blessing quite won his wife, and she was no longer afraid of the travel-stained wanderer. At the table 'Lisbeth spoke of the place she wished to reach, and acted so sane that Mr. Briggs told her he intended to go in that direction that very day, and she was welcome to the ride.

"How far is it from here?" asked 'Lisbeth, and could hardly believe that she had already traveled ten miles of the distance.

"I can take you at least seven miles on your journey," said the kind-hearted man, and 'Lisbeth thanked him and begged his wife if any one sought her, not to tell that she had been there.

"I am doing no wrong," said she, with quivering lips. "My baby boy was killed, and I shall never be happy again until I see Aunt Betsy, and then I'm willing to die."

"You must tell me how your boy was killed," said the woman, hugging her own bright boy to her heart, and 'Lisbeth hastily related the story, but made no reference to the manifestations which had occurred, fearing she might frighten her good friends.

A lunch of bread and butter and meat was put up for 'Lisbeth and the husband, and the last 'Lisbeth saw of the mother and boy was the little child held high above the mother's head.

"She is so good," said 'Lisbeth, "and you are good to help me."

"I'd be worse than a brute if I didn't help you along," said the sturdy farmer, and he tried to get 'Lisbeth's mind off her trouble by giving a history of his "little feller," beginning at a very early period of his existence.

After three hours' ride 'Lisbeth suddenly rose up in the wagon, and said: "Oh! I see them going that way; I must get out now."

"See who?" said the puzzled man. She did not explain, but said she knew "it was the place where she must get out."

"Well!" said the man, slowly, "I believe you are right after all. I should have carried you two miles further, to the other forks of the road."

"I know this is right," said 'Lisbeth, thanking him and bidding him good-by.

"A bit wrong somewhere, poor critter," soliloquized the man as he drove on, and watched the little form of 'Lisbeth on the other road; "and if there's been murder, the murder of a little boy, too, that man ought to hang, and I could help hang him, too, I believe. I hope she'll find her friends."

'Lisbeth's joy at seeing the shadowy forms of her dear ones, and her rest, made her feet move quickly; and as she looked from side to side of the road at Nature's great display of September tints, she for a moment for-

got her great grief in her thankfulness for that which was left to her of life.

"If I didn't know Danny wanted me so, I should like to go on living."

When night fell she saw the light again, and followed it until directed to take another rest. She looked into a house she was about to pass, and through the uncurtained window saw a man reading from the Bible, then all kneeling in prayer.

"Surely they will not turn me away," said she, "when I am so tired and hungry, too," and she gave a timid rap at the door. It was opened by a sunny-faced girl, who started back when she saw before her the white face and eyes bright with fever.

"Will you let me stay here all night?" said 'Lisbeth in trembling tones. "I am walking a great distance, and oh! I am so tired," and the tears came into her eyes.

"Yes, yes," said both the father and mother in the same breath; "come in."

'Lisbeth had begun to feel her great weariness, and before she could reach a chair, she fell fainting on the floor. The mother called loudly for help from the girls, and the poor worn form of 'Lisbeth was taken from the floor and placed tenderly upon the bed in a recess in the room.

"Get her clothes off," said the father, from the next room, "and get her something hot to drink," when at last it was announced that 'Lisbeth had opened her eyes. She submitted patiently to being undressed, but when good Mrs. Kellogg came to the child's dress wrapped round the poor body of 'Lisbeth, she said:

"Sakes alive, what's this?" The weary 'Lisbeth let them take all else away, and was dressed in a clean night robe of one of the girls, but she shut her hand tightly over the little dress, saying, "Danny's dress, Danny's dress. Oh! mother, I want Aunt Betsy."

"Poor child, poor child," said Mrs. Kellogg, as she looked at the pale face and then at the worn-out shoes, and she dressed with tenderness the blistered feet that had taken such a toilsome journey. "Who can she be? She makes me think of some one I have known some time." 'Lisbeth had fallen into a stupor that rendered her perfectly unconscious of all that was passing in the room unless some attempt was made to take from her Danny's dress.

At last Mrs. Kellogg and John, her only boy, came up to the bed and looked upon the still form.

"It seems as though I know that face, but where have I seen it?" said the son. "I'll tell you; that's Isaac Barton's niece. I know it; the one who married the minister and went away."

At the sound of the name of Isaac Barton, 'Lisbeth looked up and smiled, then whispered, "How much farther is it to walk?"

"Not a step farther," said the man, going near the bed. "They shall come to you."

"Oh, will you get them? Please do, right off."

"They shall be here to-morrow," said he as he wiped a tear from his cheek when he saw the look of supreme thankfulness which shone in 'Lisbeth's face.

"Take the light away so I can see if my lights are here," said 'Lisbeth in one of her times of consciousness.

They took the candles from the room for a few moments and when they returned 'Lisbeth said, "Thank you. They are here; I have my lights."

The terrible excitement of the last few days began to make sad havoc with poor 'Lisbeth. Her fever was rapidly rising, and her terrible cries of, "Don't, Daniel; don't strike Danny any more," were heard by a belated passer-by, who drew rein at the door and demanded to know the "meaning of the screams."

They told him as quietly as they could of their strange visitor and their belief that she was a niece of people who lived some miles distant.

"Send for them at once," said the stranger. "They may be able to soothe her so the fever will abate. If something is not done she will live but a few hours."

"Are you a doctor?" asked Mrs. Kellogg. "If you are, do something for her. Our doctor is sick, and it's miles to go before we could get any one else."

"I am not a physician according to your definition of the term," replied the young man; "but I have a gift of healing with my hands that has enabled me to relieve human suffering."

His horse was taken to the stable, and the young man approached the bedside of the fever-stricken 'Lisbeth.

She was talking in snatches of Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy, laughed aloud about old Jerry, the cat, and then in quite a loud voice sang:

"Nellie Bly shuts her eye
When she goes to sleep;
But when the day begins to dawn,
Her eyes begin to peep."

This was followed by a loud laugh and the words, "Uncle Isaac, is she at it again?"

Then she was leaving home, stealing away in the night, trying to be so still. Then, as she heard some little noise, she would declare it was the "earth on Danny's coffin."

The stranger after some time succeeded in getting hold of her hands, talking in the meanwhile in a monotonous tone, to which she listened as though she were dreaming of olden days. At last the tense form relaxed, the lids closed over the burning eyes, and George Green, for it was he, said,

"Thank God! thank God! even though it be rest only for a little time. Can it be that this is the way I see my friend of other days? My poor, poor 'Lisbeth!"

He had spent most of the time since 'Lisbeth's marriage traveling with his Uncle James, and at his death had become possessed of a comfortable income, which had enabled him to study to his heart's content, not only mesmerism but whatever of the occult had presented itself to the public. Many experiments had shown him his power as a mesmerist, and when he found 'Lisbeth he said in his mind, "Poor child! she was mesmerized into bondage. Angels grant we can get her out of it."

Already had John Kellogg started for the home of Isaac Barton, a little over ten miles away. George told the Kelloggs of his former acquaintance with the patient and took his place by her bedside, determined to help her if he had the power to do it. While he kept his lonely vigil he thought of other days when

this poor stricken woman was the life of the school and the neighborhood. He closed his lips tightly to keep back the bitter words which came to his mind, and then and there he decided to stand by the sorely stricken friend of the past.

CHAPTER XXIV.

REACTION OF PUBLIC OPINION.

DANIEL DOOLITTLE was in a dilemma. 'Lisbeth was gone. He did not care for her loss — her white face would be a constant reproach — yet he must make a stir about it, or there would be no end of stories. But his mother looked at it from another point of view. Who was to do the work? She declared she couldn't and would *not*. Daniel Doolittle had no idea of any one in his household saying they "would not," and he sternly bade her to get the breakfast. Did she expect him to hire a girl, with all the expenses of the funeral on his hands, and the prospect that he might be considered unworthy of his charge? Breakfast was not over when a gentle rap at the door signalized the appearance of Nancy Brown.

"How is your wife this morning?" said she, after bidding them both good morning.

"She is not here," said Mr. Doolittle, coloring. "Her bed was not slept in; she has disappeared."

"Disappeared! And you sit here quietly eating your breakfast! Why, man! your wife is crazed with grief, and may lie this moment in the bottom of the river."

"The sin of it will be upon her own head if she is," he replied. "She is rebellious; she cannot submit to

the chastening hand of God, and if she has hastened her entrance to perdition, I am not to blame for it."

"How dare you say such things when the whole town is up in arms about your cruelty to your child? The chastening hand of God, indeed! Say, rather, the cruel hand of a heartless father, for your hand is as red with the blood of your child as though you had pierced the frail body with a dagger, instead of bruising the tender flesh of your baby boy."

Daniel Doolittle winced; he had not expected anything like this, and believed his Christian character would keep him above such unchristian suspicion. "Had he not a right to chastise his own child?" he argued with his conscience.

"Well, what are you going to do about your wife? Every stream and body of water for miles around ought to be dragged, unless we get some tidings of her."

"Well, if it is thought best, perhaps we had better investigate the matter, though, for my part, I feel she has made her own bed and must lie in it."

"Who's to bear all the expense of this search?" whined Mother Doolittle. "Money don't grow on bushes 'round here."

"I think you are the stingiest and most heartless woman I ever saw!" declared Nancy, "and I wonder the Lord lets either of you live. I warn you of one thing,—if you don't make some effort to hunt up 'Lisbeth, it will be thought that a man who is not above pounding a baby will not be any too good to put his wife out of the way."

"What shall we do, mother?" said Daniel, as

Nancy went out of the door, and slammed it hard in her anger.

"Oh, I wonder if you think my opinion is worth anything? Well, if I was in your place, I would see Deacon Evans and some of your congregation, and see how they feel. Likely as not Dr. Parsons has been making trouble all around for you."

"Well, maybe that will be the best way," said Daniel, very humbly for him.

Dr. Parsons had been talking with a vengeance. A rank infidel, but a very good-hearted man, he was not slow to denounce a system of belief that would let any of its exponents indulge in such temper as would sacrifice the life of an innocent child; and like other extremists, he called the whole church "a hard-hearted, murderous crew, who would rather think of infants in perdition than to believe any one was good that did not believe in their infernal doctrine."

Sample Palmer got up late, and started out before breakfast. She saved three meals that day, and groaned and prayed, and talked about "the condemnation of the wicked" in one breath, and her opinion of their minister in another; for she had become disenchanted with Daniel Doolittle. She had taken a great many meals there, too, in the last year, but she groaned as she told what a scrimping cook young Mrs. Doolittle was, and said that, as far as the old lady was concerned, no one would get any meals at all, if they had to wait for her to get them.

Sample Palmer watched her chance that day, notwithstanding all of the excitement, to get a sample of tea from a new clerk who had come to one of the

stores, while the owner of the store had gone to dinner.

Daniel called on Deacon Evans, who had already been told of his wife's disappearance, and a few of the members got together to consult about "What we had best do in regard to hunting her up;" also in regard to Mr. Doolittle's standing in the Church. While they deplored the bewitched condition of the minister's wife, they could not help but feel that she had not been treated rightly, and thought that the minister's temper was the cause of the death of his child. They thought Dr. Parsons a very wicked man, but they believed in his word.

While they were wondering what they had better do, Nancy Brown, with the aid of her brother, had dozens of men at work in a systematic search, so that when Daniel's congregation did get started, they were only following on the lead of more efficient and earnest searchers.

Some thought 'Lisbeth had committed suicide, and others, in low voices, talked of the awful strain upon her for some time past, and were afraid she was lost in the woods, and would suffer from hunger or die from the sickness caused by her terrible grief. But no unkind words were spoken of her, so gentle and kind had she been with all of them; while her husband had proven so hard and unrelenting, seeming to think more of what he could get out of the people in material ways than he did of feeding souls, that public sentiment was against him. He could do no more for that place, and his church had thought for months that they must seek a new pastor. Yet by his strange power,

when in their presence, he held them and made them feel they had been wronging him. But the spell was now broken ; his frequent assertions that he was doing all "In His Name" would never make any impression upon them again. If he treated a beautiful woman cruelly in the name of God, or killed a little child in his anger in the name of Christ, it was only blasphemy to them now. Nancy Brown rather pitied him as she saw him go past to his lonely home, his head bent forward, his long arms dangling at his side, and a look of deep dejection on his face.

Maybe, after all, he cared for 'Lisbeth ; maybe he loved the little child, and she had accused him falsely of heartlessness. But could she have looked still deeper she would have found that Daniel Doolittle was busy with his own troubles ; he had had to plead with his people after they had told him they did not want him any longer, to promise him they would not enter complaint against him at the ministers' gathering that would soon take place in Hartford, and had received a partial promise that if his wife could be found safe and had not been driven out by abuse from her home, they would overlook the rest.

The pendulum of public opinion swung too far the other way, and most unkind tales were told of the cruelty of the minister and his mother toward the unfortunate wife and child. Night came, and the searchers returned home weary and disappointed, without any news.

Meanwhile, Mother Doolittle had been investigating 'Lisbeth's wardrobe, and concluded that some of it was gone. She was just going to investigate the chest of drawers when a loud rap made her run to Daniel's room

with a face so white that he looked at her in astonishment.

"What is the matter, mother?" said he.

"Oh! Daniel, 'Lisbeth's gone, but she's left the devil here. He knocked at me when I was going to open the chest of drawers to see how many things she had taken with her."

"Mind your business, then," said the dutiful son. "I've got troubles enough without hearing about your knocking devils."

"I'll go to your sister's, Daniel, I will, if you talk that way."

"That's what I intend you shall do. I sha'n't have a roof to cover my head long, and you had better pack up things as quickly as you can," and then, wiping a tear from his face, Daniel Doolittle told his mother of his dismissal from the church.

It was a haunted house that night: no little feet to patter around, no childish voice, no soft lullaby from the sweet lips of a loving mother; but the silence, broken only by the loud ticking of the clock, seemed full of voices to Daniel Doolittle and his mother. About nine o'clock a neighbor called and told them of their fruitless search.

"As ye sow, even so shall ye reap." There was a harvest of pain and darkness for Daniel Doolittle and his mother to reap, for nature in its physical or moral sense is a strict accountant and foots up every column with the greatest accuracy.

CHAPTER XXV.

“GOOD GOD, I THANK THEE.”

“ISAAC, Isaac, don’t you hear the knockin’ at the door? Something is the matter with some one, and we are wanted.”

Uncle Isaac, grown older than when we last wrote of him, yet always on the alert if there was a thought of helpfulness, partially dressed himself, and in a loud voice, said: “There, there, don’t break down the door with your dumb rappin’; we ain’t deaf if we be old.”

When at last the door was opened, and he saw by the dim light young Kellogg standing there, he said: “Why, who is it? I thought some of the neighbors was sick and had come for Betsy.”

“Well, some one is sick and I’ve come for you both. Your niece, ’Lisbeth, is at our house, very, very sick, and is calling for you.”

“Sick at your house! Who be you and where is your house, I should like to know?” said Uncle Isaac in astonishment.

The young man then explained about poor ’Lisbeth’s journey on foot, her great sorrow; and was going to finish the recital by telling about the baby boy, when Aunt Betsy screamed from the bedroom, “Isaac Barton, have you lost all the sense you ever had? I can’t hear plain what the man says, and I can’t come out till I am

dressed. What is it 'bout 'Lisbeth? I heard her name spoken."

"Betsy, I don't want to be hard on you, but it's all your fault. 'Lisbeth's run away from that orthodox lightnin' rod that you married her to, and she's dyin' over to Kellogg's and we have got to go to her."

With her nightcap still on, its full white ruffle standing out in bold contrast to the parchment-like face of Aunt Betsy, she appeared at the door and held out her trembling hands beseechingly. "Don't, Isaac, don't; I can't stand it. I thought I was doin' for the best; I thought I was savin' 'Lisbeth's soul from hell; you know I did."

"Well, you wasn't, Betsy. You put her soul and body into hell; but we must not waste time. We must get a bite to eat and feed the young man and his horse, then start for Kellogg's. It will take a good while to get there; it's nine or ten miles."

The men went to the stables, and in the dim light of the early morning Aunt Betsy tried her best to get breakfast, but her mind was not on it; she would stop in her work, and say: "Oh! Sarah, sister Sarah, can't I speak so you can hear? Have I murdered your child? If she dies will it be laid at my door? What shall I do, what shall I do?"

It was terrible to see the hitherto self-assertive woman struggling with her conscience, and then her mind went back to messages she had received from her sister Sarah, how she had told her that she did not blame her, and a peace came to her soul that helped her to perform her unexpected early morning work in a most methodical fashion.

"I can stand it," said she, "if Isaac don't twit me about it. Anyway, there's lots of worse things than dyin', as I believe now, and I should think 'Lisbeth would rather die and done with it than have to live with Daniel and old Mother Doolittle. If I had had to live with that old woman there would have been a funeral, and I don't know whether 'twould have been hers or mine."

While they were eating their breakfast young Kellogg told of 'Lisbeth's ravings about her baby that was killed, and how she pleaded that some one, unknown to him, would not strike again, and how she clung to the child's dress, kissing it and crying over it.

"I begin to see what it may mean," said Aunt Betsy, tears trickling down her wrinkled cheeks. "My niece has not been allowed to write me, but one of her neighbors, Nancy Brown, has told me in her letters about the little boy seein' visions and how mad it made his father. Oh! if he has killed that child with his cruelty and 'Lisbeth dies too, poor, broken-hearted mother, I'll make the world too hot for him to live," and Aunt Betsy brought her hand down on the table with an emphasis that made the dishes rattle.

There was a sly twinkle in Uncle Isaac's eye, notwithstanding his grief, as he said:

"I guess we hadn't better go into the business of manufacturin' hell, if that old woman and Daniel did."

The hired man and his wife, who lived in a house near by, had by that time come for their day's work, he on the farm and the woman because it was one of the two days of the week when she helped Mrs. Barton. The three started a little after seven o'clock, and young

Kellogg rode his horse by the side of the wagon occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Barton. He told them of 'Lisbeth's sending the light out of the room to see if *her* light was there, and said: "I guess she was crazy when she first came."

"I know what she meant by that," said Uncle Isaac.

"So do I," said Aunt Betsy, but neither of them thought to explain.

"Oh! how slow the horse goes," complained Aunt Betsy. "I guess we won't get there in time to see her."

"Well, the poor old critter is goin' on twenty-six, Betsy; you didn't expect he'd trot, did you?"

"Is he as old as that?" replied his wife. "How old everything and everybody is gettin'. Just look at the leaves; they're gettin' ready to fall."

"Yes," said Uncle Isaac, "but they're prettier'n they've ever been before. If we could fall off from the stem o' life like that, prettier at the last than at the first, wouldn't it be nice?"

"Well, mebbe our souls look that way to the angels who can see them," she replied, reverently.

"When we get to the top of the hill, we can see the house," said the young man as though waking from a reverie.

And it was so; just a little farther and the farmhouse of the Kelloggs was in sight. It presented a strange appearance, with a small frame building added to the old log house. In the yard, walking back and forward with quick, nervous tread, was George Green.

"Sakes alive!" said Aunt Betsy. "How in the world did you git here? Have you been after 'Lisbeth and

got her to run away with you, *have* you?" said Aunt Betsy, suspiciously. "If you have, I'd rather she'd die than to have that disgrace to think about."

"Shut up," said Uncle Isaac. "You don' know as much as you did a year ago."

Aunt Betsy was about to answer back when George Green explained the cause of his being there, and how the magnetic power he possessed had been the means of giving 'Lisbeth a little rest.

"Don't go near her now; don't let her hear your voice. Wait until her pulse beats are such that I dare awaken her."

Silently the old couple followed Mrs. Kellogg into the living-room of the house, and waited without uttering a word, only a whispered response when asked if they were hungry. The two old people looked like a picture as they sat in pathetic silence waiting to have one look at the happy child of other days. Aunt Betsy's lips moved often as though in prayer, and then her hands would be clenched as though closing around the throat of some enemy.

"I have awakened her," said George Green, "but she does not know me yet; she won't know you. Can you bear to see her much changed?"

"I can bear *anything*," said Aunt Betsy, "if I can only see her;" but the tear-stained cheeks belied the words, and when she gazed upon the shadow of the once beautiful girl her sobs sounded through the house.

"There, there! hear them, Daniel; I don't like to sing those awful things; don't ask me to. I don't believe God can be so cruel, and they are all getting scared. Don't try to scare them into heaven; you can't do that,

Daniel. Oh, well! I'll sing it, but I hate to, oh! so bad.” And her clear voice rang out on the still air the following old hymn :

“My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
 Damnation and the dead ;
 What horrors seize the guilty soul
 Upon the dying bed,
 When endless crowds of sinners lie,
 And darkness marks their chains,
 Tortured with keen despair they cry,
 Yet wait for fiercer pains.”

“Don't you believe it, don't believe it,” she said, in a loud whisper; “it isn't so. My mother came back from the dead and told me better. I have to sing those awful things to please Daniel. Don't you tell him I said so; no, don't.” Then again, “Mammy's Danny, there, come close to me. Pappy will say you are dead, but you're mammy's boy; put your arm right through the little sleeve—mammy won't jerk it as grandma does. I'll go out now in the shadows, George, the cool, green shadows, and we'll talk, talk about Aunt Betsy and Uncle Isaac. You said they would come.”

“We're here,” screamed Aunt Betsy. “Look this way; here we are. Oh! 'Lisbeth, know us just for once, won't you? Poor lamb, poor lamb!” Something in the agonized voice reached the dazed brain of the poor woman, and with a quick gasp, she said: “Have you come? Oh, good God, I thank Thee,” and then the fever hue left the cheek as colorless as marble, and an unconsciousness that presented the appearance of death placed its seal over the perfect features.

“Is it the last?” said Uncle Isaac, pressing forward—a rap so loud that it wakened strange echoes in the si-

lence, answered, *No!* The frightened Kelloggs started in search of the cause, while George Green, the faithful friend, and Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy construed it, as it proved to be, a promise that for a little while at least the spirit of 'Lisbeth should inhabit the frail body.

"We will wait and watch," said Aunt Betsy earnestly, and as the breath came at more regular intervals, and the fever flush was all gone, they in that sick-room sent out such earnest petitions for help as angels only can understand and the long tenderness of years originate.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NANCY "STEALS" THE PINCUSHION.

FOR three days the search for 'Lisbeth went on. Daniel Doolittle was taken seriously ill in the midst of his packing, and again public opinion veered around. Sample Palmer was the true indicator of the pulse of the people, and her portly dimensions were often seen at the house of the minister. "No knowin' what the poor man's been through with his crazy witch of a wife and old Mis' Doolittle, who's about as bad. And then their layin' the child's death to him, as that old infidel of a Dr. Parsons has; then when he's in the worst of his troubles to have his congregation and the deacons of his church use him as they have. If our minister dies it will be laid at the door of his church."

Sample Palmer groaned after this declaration, and concluded it was her duty to stay at the house and answer questions when folks came there. Plenty of food was sent in, so there was no cooking to do. Mother Doolittle glared at her and gave out hints that "there was such a thing as being too much at home in neighbors' houses." Sample Palmer didn't care for that; she had a duty, and she was going to do it. Mrs. Evans concluded the minister had been treated badly. What in the world should she do when she had one of her "dyin' spells," if she didn't have any of the consolations of

religion? "I feel as if I was goin' to have one soon; do go and see what you can do for the minister."

Daniel found it more comfortable being sick and waited upon than he did well and blamed, and the numbers of people who found their way to his room were treated with ravings which were more the result of intense excitement and natural craftiness than of fever.

"I started on my happy, useful career 'In His Name,' nothing for self, all God's, — His will first, mine last. My people have seen me in deep waters, but have sent out no plank to save me, and now, robbed of my wife by cruel fate, and of my child by the will of God, I lie stranded and alone," and his long arms were thrown wildly about, while ejaculations of self-pity were uttered.

Sample Palmer, in her corner, whispered to one of the neighbors, "If that wife o' his is only dead, and his mother goes away, mebbe if he lives he'll amount to somethin' yet; but it's my duty to watch that he don't get notions after young girls. If he is free, after a suitable time, he should marry some one of a suitable age. I think it's better for a minister to marry a woman older than he is — let me see; there isn't as much difference in his age and my age as there was between his and 'Lisbeth's. Poor critter! I feel that she's dead. I dreamed a queer dream the other night, and I believe it meant somethin'."

Henry Brown went into the Doolittle house with the rest of the searchers after 'Lisbeth, but found a new anxiety there in the serious illness of the minister. On his way home he met Dr. Parsons and told him of the minister's ravings.

"I'm glad of it," said the old doctor. "It's good

enough for him, but he won't die. There's no such good news. He'll just carry this on until he gets his followers back, and then pose as a martyr. I've got the most uncomfortable desire to horsewhip that man that ever came to a mortal. That baby's bruised body and that little mother's saint-like face come right before me in the night. I am beginning to believe in a one-sided after-existence."

"Why one-sided?" said Henry.

"Well, I believe good people will go into an unconscious rest, but that an everlasting hell, worse than was ever preached, is made for such reprobates as that hypocritical, baby-killing, wife-crazing creature, 'In His Name' *Doolittle*."

"Go home with me a little while, doctor; I hate to face mother and Nancy with no news."

"Believe I will," said the doctor. "I'm lonesome myself."

They found Nancy laughing and crying at the same time, and holding with a tight clasp a letter which she would let no one else touch.

"I can't do anything with her," said Mrs. Brown. "She got the letter a half hour ago, and has acted this way ever since."

The doctor went to a bench where the water stood, took a teacup full of it, and walking straight up to Nancy, dashed it in her face.

"I'll give her something else to think of," said he; "just as they do balky horses;" while Nancy, wild with anger, stamped her foot and shook her fist at him.

"You are usually a girl of good sense," said the doctor, "but you have got the hysterics and that's all there

is of it. Sit down and behave yourself, and let us hear about the news you have in the letter!"

Nancy, at mention of the letter, began to show symptoms of another paroxysm, but the doctor shook his fist in her face and started toward the water-pail. This move brought her to her senses, and turning so white they feared she would faint away, she handed the letter to Henry to read. Henry looked at the signature, saw that it was from Betsy Barton, and then thought he could see the meaning of Nancy's strange emotion.

The letter was from Aunt Betsy, describing in detail, as far as she knew, all that had happened to 'Lisbeth, the kindness of the Kelloggs and George Green, who was helping to cure 'Lisbeth.

"I have found out now just how that critter worked it on us. He mesmerized Lisbeth and me completely—me first, Lisbeth afterwards; but he couldn't get much of a hold on Isaac. Oh! how I abused that man because he wouldn't say right out that he wanted Lisbeth to marry the minister. George Green's Uncle Jim knew about it in the time of it, but they all said it wouldn't do any good to talk to me or Lisbeth, because we were under the spell. He mesmerized all the folks he converted here and there isn't one of them that has stuck to the religion they got through him—only Barney Battles, and he died before he had time to backslide.

"If half the things Lisbeth says when her fever is high are true, I'd like to make it hot for the whole Doolittle tribe. She keeps a child's dress right in her hands; if you take it out when she is asleep, she wakes right up and goes to raving about it. She keeps talking

about a letter she put in a pincushion and don't want it to stay there ; and, Nancy, though I don't believe in stealing myself, as her heir (I guess I am if she dies), I want you to get that cushion some way. I must have it. I don't think there will be more than one in her room. They don't seem to have an over-abundance of anything, so I guess they won't be very flush with pincushions.

"The Rochester Knockings have come here three or four times, and they say Lisbeth will get better because she has work to do. Poor child! she don't look as though she would ever lift her finger again to do anything ; but I must get her home. I want her, if she has got to die, to die on the bed her mother died on. I want to feel that I have waked up from a sleep to do my duty by my sister's child.

"Isaac hain't of no account whatever taking care of her ; George and I have the most of it to do, for Mrs. Kellogg is busy getting something to eat for us and the men that's digging the potatoes and cutting the corn.

"I'm going to ask a great favor of you, and that is, that you will come to us in our trouble and go to Lisbeth's home with her, whether she's living or dead. I want you. Isaac tells me to tell you he will pay you well if you will ; but for my part I don't feel like making too many promises. You'd think Isaac was a millionaire. When Lisbeth looks a little better, he turns round and promises to pay everybody more than they think of asking. Lisbeth talks to her mother and Danny and then turns her head to hear them answer. She looks just like an angel when she does that, and then we all cry. I wish she'd be ugly, but she isn't a bit yet ; when I act as

good as Lisbeth does it will be because I'm struck with death. Does Daniel Doolittle flourish like a green bay tree? Does he want to pack all the boxes that go to the missionaries, so he and old Mother Doolittle can steal all they want to? Do they call my sister's child a witch and a deserter? Are they doing much with their hard-shell religion nowadays? I've wondered if they have folded their hands and kept still about our poor lamb escaping. If I can hinder it, Daniel Doolittle shall never set eyes on Lisbeth again; but Isaac says the law will not uphold us in keeping her from him. Isaac is an old fool though. If the law is that way, we will have it fixed. I'm worrying some about things at home. Our hired man's wife ain't any too neat, and they eat as though they never had been filled up when they get a chance, so I presume all the preserves will be gone and half the hens killed. But I don't care if I only get Lisbeth home.

"Oh, I will tell you another thing. Every night Lisbeth wants the light took out of the room so she can see her light. Well, the other night after I took out the candle, I came back into the room just as still as I could. I heard little rappings all around the room and then I saw come down from the wall a large round light and a small light, and they came so near her face I could see it plain, and she said, 'Oh, Aunt Betsy, you there? I know it. Danny's face is in his light. Can't you see it? Can't you, auntie?' I didn't see it, and I felt a little like I had been stealing, but I saw the lights plain and no one can beat me out of that. Now get the cushion if you can and come here to Lisbeth; she needs you and I do too.

"Give my respects to your folks and to the Widow Simmons, but don't trouble about the others; I ain't got any respect for them. If 'In His Name' Doolittle should happen to enquire whether he finished the job with Lisbeth as he did with her baby boy, tell him that she is alive and won't hurt him, and that I am alive and I *will* hurt him and old Mother Doolittle if I can; that is, I'll make them feel a little of the trouble they made my dead sister's child feel. I don't suppose that is right, but it is mighty human, and I am not above a little feeling of revenge. I wish I was, but I can't make myself over, not at least while I am as riled as I am now. Your affectionate friend,

"BETSY BARTON."

As Henry finished reading the letter, Dr. Parsons laughed so that Nancy threatened to throw water in *his* face. The others, their hearts filled with thankfulness because 'Lisbeth still lived, began to plan about the journey that Nancy must take.

"I'll go with you," said Henry, "if father can spare me."

"Of course we can spare you," said both father and mother.

"How shall I get that cushion?" said Nancy. "If I ask for it, old Mrs. Doolittle will think there is something wrong and insist on keeping it."

"*Steal* it," said Dr. Parsons, "make a bold, daylight theft. Go in to see the parson, and sweep some for the old woman, and get away with the cushion. You women can make poultices, but you can't plan great robberies."

Dr. Parsons was happy; day and night he had seen the white face of 'Lisbeth staring out from some tangle of vines and leaves, and the wasted form too weak to rise, for he could not get it out of his mind but that she had wandered away in the woods and was lost.

"I wish Nancy *had* thrown the water in my face. I'm such an old fool," said he, "but somehow that weak little woman had more power over me than any one I ever knew. I wonder what it is about the 'Rochester Knockings' anyway."

After a very early breakfast, Nancy started for the Doolittles'.

"I feel like a thief and a hypocrite," said she.

When she arrived at the house, though it was early in the morning, her rap was answered by Sample Palmer, who explained that she happened to think a basket of stuff had come in the night before, just as she left, and she was afraid Mrs. Doolittle would not think to take care of it; but it seemed she had thought, and Sample Palmer did not know where the things were.

"You goin' to stay a little while, Nancy?" said she. "If you be, I wish you'd make me a cup o' tea. Old Mis' Doolittle's restin' or havin' a *season o' prayer*, and I thought I'd stay till she was up around."

"I don't want to go around the house getting things to eat unless I am told to do so by the family," said Nancy, remembering the hard things she had said under that roof.

A feeble voice from the minister's room called her name. Daniel Doolittle could not afford to lose one inch of his vantage ground, and he recognized in straightforward Nancy a most formidable opponent.

"Will you come here, Miss Brown?"

Nancy went slowly toward the room, wondering what she should say.

"You are kind to come and see me in my great trouble and weakness," said he, reaching out his hand to her. "And may I ask that you will find something for me to eat? I feel very faint this morning, and our Sister Palmer hasn't the faculty of getting around that you have."

Sample Palmer had followed Nancy in, and at once said: "I could get your breakfast for you, but I don't keep my hand in, in the way of cookin' much. My time's mostly spent in givin' religious consolation, comfortin' the sorrowin', you know —"

"Yes, yes, I know how very efficient you are as a visitor to warn people of the wrath to come. You sit down with me while Nancy — Miss Brown, I should say — prepares some food."

Nancy was in a hurry to get to 'Lisbeth, but she saw her way clear to get the cushion by being in the living-room alone. She looked around in dismay. Mother Doolittle had had such continual seasons of prayer that she had neglected the dishes from day to day, and the table was piled full of tins and dishes, in some of which draughts had been made for Daniel's feet, and others containing remnants of food which had been provided by the neighbors.

"The cushion first," said Nancy to herself, as she saw the coast was clear, and cautiously opening the door to 'Lisbeth's room, she at once saw the object of her search. It was larger than she thought; where should she hide it? Finally, lifting her gown, she pinned it firmly to

her skirt. It bumped against her when she tried to walk and was terribly in the way, but she went bravely on, washing the dishes as soon as she could get the water hot, for they were all dirty. Then came a hunt for food; the cupboard was empty, the shelves in the little closet the same. She went down cellar — nothing there. Finally she went to Mr. Doolittle and asked what she should do. "I don't find anything in the house."

"I couldn't either," said Sample Palmer.

"Waken mother, and ask her," said the minister. "I know a large basket full of food came in last night from the neighbors."

"The basket is there, empty," said Nancy. She went to Mother Doolittle's door; the nightcapped head rose slowly from the pillow, and seeing Nancy, she called out ungraciously, "What do you want?"

"Your son sent me in here to ask where you had put the victuals. He's hungry, and there's not a scrap to be found for any one to eat."

A little snuff box and sundry rags were quickly put under the pillow as the old woman got out of bed.

"Well," said she, in a loud whisper, "we've boarded Sample Palmer ever since Daniel's been sick, and last night when Mrs. Evans sent the victuals, I was determined she shouldn't have the handling of them," and going to a corner she pulled out a brass kettle used for boiling clothes, and after throwing off from it sundry articles of her own wearing apparel, she removed a soiled table-cloth, and revealed bread, butter, eggs, a basin of stewed chicken, together with doughnuts, pies, and a dish of preserves.

Nancy thought how impossible it would be for her to

eat one mouthful after it had been in that stuffy room all night, but made up her mind it would be good enough for the kind of *cats* there, and hastily prepared the minister's meal.

"Have you got a sup of tea left?" said Sample Palmer, as Nancy took in the minister's breakfast. "Stand back, Nancy, and let me look at your gown. Something bunches right out."

"I guess it's where my skirt is pinned up," said Nancy, coloring. "I'll take care of it; the tea is out on the stove."

Sample Palmer had seen the good meal brought in for the minister and walked with alacrity to the kitchen, but Mother Doolittle had been too quick for her; the tea was gone and nothing to eat in sight.

"It does beat all where Nancy has put things," said she as she stood gazing around. "'Lisbeth's door is open, mebbe they're in there." She slowly opened it wider, stepped in and was about to make investigations, when a loud rap caused her to make a quicker movement than she had made for a long while.

"What shall I do? The Rochester Knockin's are after me," said she, as she went into the room where Daniel Doolittle was eating his breakfast with a hearty relish.

"When did you hear them?" said Daniel. "I hoped we would never hear them any more."

"Well, I just went into 'Lisbeth's room to close the door, and only stepped in when something rapped right in front of me."

"People do not go in that room, and I do not see how the door came to be open."

Nancy felt the blood rushing to her face, but neither of them paid any attention to her.

"Yes, as I said before," continued Daniel, "my wife must be either dead or crazy, or she may have wilfully deserted me. Only the good Lord knows how I feel when I think of it, but the consolation of home seems to have been forbidden me. The satisfaction of having a Christian woman at the head of my household is also denied me. If my poor erring wife is dead, I look upon her future without hope; she will reap the reward of her heresy; if she is living and crazy, she will be found and put into some asylum; if she has deserted me and gone to her relations, those I once considered such godly people, but who have proved to be given over to Satan, I shall free myself from her. No, I do not now think I would listen to her pleading to come back to me."

Sample Palmer groaned out the words, "God forbid!" and Nancy, too full for utterance, bade them good morning and hastened home.

"I did mean to tell him that 'Lisbeth was living, but I couldn't," said she. "He is so resigned to the worst that it would be wrong to disturb him. And he never mentioned that blessed baby."

"Did you get the cushion?" said her mother.

"Yes; here it is," replied Nancy, who had taken it from her skirt and put it under her light shawl when she started for home. "I wonder if it's worth making a hypocrite of myself for."

It was ten o'clock before she was ready to start, and the long ride was made less dreary by her spirited remarks concerning Daniel Doolittle.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SWEET COMMUNION.

MEANWHILE, at the humble home of the Kelloggs strange things were taking place. As 'Lisbeth began to show symptoms of recovery, George Green and Uncle Isaac went on home to prepare the way for her removal, and as 'Lisbeth more fully realized her position she wanted daily to hear something definite concerning her baby.

"Aunt Betsy, bring that little stool here and put it on the bed, so I can have mother tell me about Danny."

It was a strange sight: The spiritual face of 'Lisbeth lighted up with hope, and the gaunt form of Aunt Betsy pointing patiently to the letters of the alphabet, hoping in that way to get more correct messages. "I want it so 'Lisbeth's mind won't run it," she said, and so she would hold the alphabet and paper out of her sight, that she might not know what letters were indicated by the knockings. Mrs. Kellogg would come to the bedside when this kind of communication was going on, showing a deep though perhaps not an approving interest. Aunt Betsy had not been able to draw her out as to her thoughts about the knockings; but when a message came thanking her again for her kindness to 'Lisbeth, she broke down completely, and said she must do her duty.

“I have kept still about these goings on in my house because I pitied that poor sick child, but I have made up my mind it is my duty to speak. I think you’re both deluded ; you’re being led, if by any spirit, by an evil spirit that claims to be your mother. If your mother was a good Christian woman she wouldn’t want to be knocking on stools and tables ; she wouldn’t want your little boy to be bound down here to earth, but would want him up in glory. She wouldn’t encourage you to give up religion ; she would ask you to get more. I have been thankful every day that I could do anything for you ; I have prayed I might be more like Christ and judge not. Whatever I have done, whatever has come to you of help, is done in the name of the Blessed Master. I was thinking only a little while ago, not over three weeks, how good God had been to me, and how little I had ever done for Him, and I prayed that some work might be put into my hands, and He sent me ’Lisbeth. Poor bruised child, how I love you ! I made up my mind I would do my whole duty ; but there was something else I needed, something to try my faith, and all these strange things have come into the house that you call the spirits of the dead. I have no doubt they are those wicked, restless spirits who want to make trouble yet. Misery always loves company, so when they find they have a power to reach out to those not fully grounded in the faith, they pull down and down. That poor child has suffered so she don’t know what she is about, but if she would trust her baby with Christ it would be better. And you, Mrs. Barton ; you are a good woman, but you are getting on sinking sand. Just think of years of faithful service in your church, and

then at just a little beckoning of the Evil One you give that all up and bow down to this wicked folly. I do not want to hurt your feelings, but I tell you there's something wrong somewhere. The messages I have heard are all good, but doesn't the Bible tell about evil appearing as an angel of light? This is the trial of my faith; I am glad it has come, glad I have triumphed so I can tell you the real truth. I did not want to, for I like you both, but I am frightened for your future."

Aunt Betsy's face was a study, and 'Lisbeth grew so white that Mrs. Kellogg ran for water, declaring that she seemed doomed to make folks feel badly.

"I love you, oh, so much!" said 'Lisbeth when a little revived. "But this is true, Mrs. Kellogg. Don't you begin thinking I am possessed of the devil, or I shall die," and with a wail of woe, the poor weak child hid her face on the pillow, and Mrs. Kellogg went about her work.

For once in her life Aunt Betsy was silent, but not convinced by any means. Her anxiety for 'Lisbeth made her careful, but she smoothed her head and said, "'Lisbeth, folks can't all think alike, there isn't any use thinkin' they can, and Mis' Kellogg has been so good to us that, if we talk at all, we must talk gentle like. I've heard of folks who was color blind, can't tell only one or two colors, and all other colors look like them. So it is with religion, some can't see only one way somehow, can't broaden out, can't feel as though other folks could be right when they don't believe as they do. I shall have a little kind talk with Mis' Kellogg, but I wouldn't hurt her feelin's for a farm. If she would put her religion right into words

it would be about the same as ours, and she would find that Christ taught it as well as the spirits. 'Lisbeth, we hain't gone back on any real religion. We've only learned more of the love of God, and more about the Man who used to like to call Himself our 'elder brother.'"

'Lisbeth went out to dinner with Aunt Betsy, and Mrs. Kellogg met her with a kiss, saying, "I love you so, I had to tell you the truth."

Aunt Betsy could not quite keep to her former thought of silence, but said rather hastily, "Mis' Kellogg, I hope you don't think I'm tellin' my sister's child a pack o' lies."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Barton, or at least I know neither of you intend to tell falsehoods."

She then changed the subject, referring with a happy smile to the beautiful trees full of their autumn glory, and said, "I used to have a chance to see beautiful pictures, and when I came west, into the woods, our folks thought I had laid down life and everything beautiful, but I have my pictures all painted for me, and the Great Artist does it; and, oh, how beautifully it is done!"

There was a happy smile on 'Lisbeth's face at the thought of going home, and, strange to say, for days she had not remembered Daniel Doolittle any more than as though he had never come into her life. Aunt Betsy was troubled about it. What if he should take it into his head to come after her? What should she do? And she thought, "I ought to hear from Nancy by this time, or she ought to come. Anyway, *some*thin' different ought to come to pass."

And there did. Just as the evening shades began to lower, there were voices at the gate, and Nancy Brown and her Brother Henry arrived. They had driven very fast, for they were not accustomed to the road and did not want to get caught in the dark.

Nancy waited for no introductions, but took 'Lisbeth in her arms and held her close, while tears rolled down her cheeks. "Poor little girl, oh! thank God, you are alive."

Betsy had never seen Nancy Brown, but she put her arms around her and kissed her, a thing almost unheard of for Aunt Betsy to do. She always asserted she was "not one of the kissin' kind," and 'Lisbeth in the past had no reason to doubt her assertion.

Mrs. Kellogg received the strangers kindly and prepared them a supper. But when they went back to 'Lisbeth's room, a strange change had taken place. Her face was transfigured, and again the mother dominated the child; again were words of thankfulness uttered to the tried and true friends. Taking Mrs. Kellogg's hand, the sweet voice said:

"To you I owe great thanks, which I want to utter by word of mouth. You have saved the life of my child, and although your mother is here, standing so closely to you that you could touch her by reaching out your hand; and though your brother William is here, he who died in a far away island of the sea, but whose whereabouts have not been known to the family for years; though your baby girl, Mary, who stayed with you just six weeks of her little life, is here, grown into a fair maiden of sixteen, though numbers of others who have loved you are here, yet I see, dear friend, that

your soul is steeled against any thought of giving them welcome. I do not blame you; I only pity you. You are laying that which comes of God's precious love to the wiles of evil spirits; but I bless you for your kindness, and when you come over here I will reach my arms out in welcome to you, and then you will know it is the truth.

"Take 'Lisbeth home, Betsy; she has some work to do yet; but the body is frail, the soul lives more in the life than on earth. Her Danny, our little treasure, keeps calling his mammy, and his baby fingers are stronger than all earthly considerations. Her constitution has been broken down by the pressure upon the brain, and by unkindness heaped upon her."

"Oh, I know it, I know it," interrupted Aunt Betsy, "and I've done it myself, just by bein' so obstinate. I never will take the job ag'in of savin' souls that way, and killin' bodies."

"Don't feel badly, sister, I have learned much upon this side of life. I have learned that martyrs are as necessary as conquerors; that all the conditions of life are necessary to make up the great whole; that there will never be growth without agitation and seeming destruction. Roots natural to the soil must be destroyed, crushed, ground to pieces, and be subject to that law of nature, decay, before there can arise from the soil that which wise hands have planted. So every exponent of a new thought must pass through the crucible, and, if in the refining process the physical structure gives place to the spiritual, it is a change rather to be thankful about than to mourn over."

To Nancy Brown comforting words were spoken, and

the advice repeated, that they get 'Lisbeth home as soon as possible — "We want her there." Then the voice ceased, and 'Lisbeth lay back wearily upon her pillow.

After she was comfortably fixed for the night, Aunt Betsy, Mrs. Kellogg and Nancy had a talk around the kitchen fireplace. The rest of the family had retired for the night, but Mrs. Kellogg was eager for a talk.

"I have had a narrow escape," said she. "Why, when she in there" (nodding towards 'Lisbeth's room) told me about mother and my baby, and the absent brother, whom we know nothing about, it seemed as though I had a great truth, and I really felt as though I had heard from them ; but when I came out by myself and took my Bible, I turned right to the passage : 'What is that to thee ? follow thou me.' And though it may all be true about William, and though the power that moved the lips of that child may know about my mother and little Mary, I do not believe they've seen her. I think they are saved and in glory. I don't know about poor William, but oh, my friends, I believe this is of the devil."

Aunt Betsy didn't like it ; how could any one doubt after such testimony ? So she said, "Mis' Kellogg, you're as good as gold, but there's somethin' wrong with your head. You'd never do to act as judge, for you wouldn't mind anything about a cloud of witnesses ; what you'd thought beforehand would have to go. How you can put that poor child hand in glove with the devil is more'n I can see." And Aunt Betsy, usually so strong and persistent, burst out crying.

"Don't feel so, Mrs. Barton ; it's just as I feel, and I can't help it."

"But," said Nancy, speaking for the first time, "you have a kind, good nature. It is the same kind of a spirit that makes you feel you are right and we are wrong as has caused so many cruel things to happen in the world. Servetus was burned at the stake, with long hours of cruel agony, because he believed in one Infinite God, instead of three Gods. They kindled a fire with green wood, that was slow at first, to see if they could not make him take it back."

"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Three in One," softly repeated Mrs. Kellogg. "If I begin by letting go one iota of my faith, I shall be in danger of letting it all slip out of my hands; and, if you please, I had rather not argue about it any longer. I am firmly grounded in the faith. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, I hope for salvation, and if by His spirit He aids me, I shall try to prove faithful." And she proved true to her convictions, for no one could get her to talk about her experience with spirit manifestations while 'Lisbeth was there.

"I cared for a poor, sick, troubled woman, that was all," and it was with much difficulty Uncle Isaac could persuade them to take even a moderate compensation for board.

"It was the Lord who sent her here, to show me I could do good and not let go of my faith, and I feel very thankful that it is so; but I must not think of anything I have done in a money light."

When they all left the next day, Henry for his home, Aunt Betsy, 'Lisbeth and Nancy going toward the old home with Uncle Isaac and George Green, who had started in the night, that they might get there soon after daylight and let the horses rest before they started

back — the last words they heard Mrs. Kellogg say were, "God grant I may meet you in heaven." And the dear soul went out into the great beyond ere many months, so earnest in her religion, so faithful to every condition of her home and religious life, that no one doubted it was a most triumphant death.

In dying, she saw faces, and pointed to them after the stiffened lips could hardly utter words. But the loving tenderness of her life shone out years after, and those who knew her as maiden, wife and mother can never fail to thrill at thought of her. The magnetic harmonies of a life true to its own convictions, studying life from its highest standpoint, cannot fail to be felt by the sensitive. One who accepts of the highest principles of life, accepts of the highest principles of Christ, to which is added the wisdom of the centuries.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE OLD HOME ONCE MORE.

AUNT BETSY had a gift of taking life hard. She had kept her natural propensities subdued during the excitement of her visit to 'Lisbeth at the Kelloggs and during the ride home, which was accomplished under great difficulties, Aunt Betsy declaring, "it was next to takin' a dyin' person out for a ride," trying to get 'Lisbeth home; but when safely there, with 'Lisbeth in the spare room and in the care of Nancy, the vials of Aunt Betsy's wrath were let loose, and in no choice words she declared that the hired man and wife had done nothing but eat, and lug in dirt; that the wife was shiftless, and had only one smart streak about her — she knew the best preserves and had eaten them up, while a jar of blackberry jam, that was a little burned, she had probably "only stuck her fingers in and tasted of." She declared that the house was "that *pizen* nasty" that yellow Jerry (number two) had got his fur so stuck up he would never be clean again; that she was glad they did use up the cream or waste it, for the little butter they had made was not fit for soap grease.

Poor Uncle Isaac sat and listened in silence, till she turned to him and said, "What do you mean by not sayin' a word? Can't you see all this dirt and trouble?"

"Yes, I see it all, Betsy ; but I have been so thankful since we got that poor lamb into this house that I haven't even thought of complainin'. It seems like we ought to have a thanksgivin' meetin', and reach right out to Sarah and all of our folks for directions. Do you know, Betsy, it seems as though sometimes we don't realize we have an audience when we get to turnin' things up so."

"Isaac Barton, I can take a hint without a kick, and I know just as well as I want to that you are scoldin' me, though you've got so soft over 'Lisbeth's sickness that your scold isn't any worse than a flea bite. All I've got to say, if Sarah is round here, she, bein' a woman, knows what I've got to go through, and if she don't like my complainin' she will have to get out of hearin'; she used to do that when she was a girl. I don't suppose the angels devote *all* their time to us mortals. Catch me goin' to heaven, and instid of tryin' to learn anything, just settin' round to hear 'bout housekeepin'. You always went to extremes, and now you think we've got a houseful of *spirits*, I must go round, sayin' 'Excuse me, please.' There ain't no sense in it. Sarah's got 'Lisbeth here all right, and now probably she's at the heavenly singin' school learnin' some new tunes."

"I wouldn't wonder if she was," said Uncle Isaac. "If I remember right, she had to give up her earthly singin' schools and spellin' schools and everything else as soon as you begun to rule the house, and as for me goin' to extremes, Betsy, be honest, won't you? I was never an extreme man on hell, and you and 'In His Name' Doolittle used to take so much comfort thinkin' and talkin' it over."

"There, Isaac Barton, you stop; if I've been an old fool I can't help it now, but don't you bring that man's name in; I can't stand it yet. I expect we'll have a tussle with him, but I want to forgit him a little once in a while. I've had trouble, Isaac, as well as you, and I don't want to be bothered."

"Well, I won't bother you, Betsy; I'm sorry I said anything, but when I think of how dumb mean things have gone, I want to blame somebody. I'll go to the barn and git acquainted with the critters ag'in. I guess they need me."

After Uncle Isaac went out, Aunt Betsy laid her broom against a chair and stole quietly into the spare room.

Nancy had caused the bed to be moved into the large room, as the bedroom was so small, and Aunt Betsy had given up the idea of having the carpet taken up, as Nancy said it would be better for 'Lisbeth than the bare floor. Aunt Betsy consented to sacrifice her carpet to many feet by concluding that it would last out *her* time, and if 'Lisbeth was going to die she didn't know as she cared to have it last "for strangers to put down in the kitchen, like as not." For news was current in the neighborhood that a family had moved in from Boston who had carpets on every floor in the house and two widths in the kitchen. Aunt Betsy said that was all she wanted to know about them, "for they would have to season all their vittles with dust."

'Lisbeth lay upon the bed in a sweet, restful sleep. A little color tinged the pale cheeks. The golden hair curled at will around the white forehead. The lips trembled as though being used in her dream, and all

around her was that sense of quiet and peace that whispers of conflicts won. Aunt Betsy's troubled face softened; the hard expression made by her late grievances vanished, and she looked at Nancy, sitting so quietly by the bedside, with such mute thankfulness that, old and harsh and worn with life's struggles as we have pictured her, Nancy could see in her almost the face of an angel. A tear fell on the bright patchwork quilt, and with this silent benediction, Aunt Betsy stole softly back to her work. No more scolding, no more noise, for a time at least, but with clasped hands she leaned forward, and said: "Oh, Lord, if you've saved 'Lisbeth's life long enough to get her home, I thank you, and, Sarah, if you've helped, I will bless you always."

George Green had given the neighbors to understand that 'Lisbeth was too sick and weak to see people, and that her friends had better wait until she was stronger, but irrepressible Jane Macomber wouldn't hear to it.

"I have shared the joys of the Barton homestead; I shall also share their griefs," said she. So with work pocket on her arm, well filled with poetry, she came around to the woodshed door, and surprised Aunt Betsy soon after dinner.

"Don't say a word, Mis' Barton; I know my duty. I will let the poetry go for awhile, and manifest my willingness to help you in a practical way. I will not even ask to see 'Lisbeth yet, but I will wash up your dishes."

"Is Jane goin' to die," Aunt Betsy wondered, "to think of helpin' about work instead of readin' her poetry?" and rather hesitatingly she accepted the kind offer. Jane moved softly about. Her cheeks were not quite as red as formerly; she had used different substi-

tutes to lengthen out the paint upon the saucer, and the result was little spots on each cheek almost the color of leather.

It was a great cross to Jane, who would pinch the cheeks to give them a glow, but she dared not use the real paint more than once a week. Aunt Betsy watched the change with complacency, but owned she would like to know the different things that had been used, as all together they would make good stuff for tanning leather.

After the dishes were washed, and the room set to rights, Jane asked so meekly if she could have a "view of 'Lisbeth," that Aunt Betsy had not the heart to deny her, and when 'Lisbeth, now awake and refreshed by some of Aunt Betsy's best chicken broth, reached out her hand, Nancy was surprised at the attitude Jane assumed, as in a loud whisper she said: "I will not now, my dearest one, cheer you with the poetry that has been born from my soul to fit your particular case, but it will go into my book as it is. I may give to you and your good friend here some snatches of it that will be like gleams of light upon a barren field."

"Don't read a single snatch now," interrupted Aunt Betsy, "'Lisbeth's too weak."

"Yes, that's what I thought," said Jane, rolling up her eyes.

"Near to the portals of the tomb
Our 'Lisbeth's feet have trod —"

"Stop that," cried Aunt Betsy, "and come out into the other room." Jane very reluctantly followed her, while 'Lisbeth, in low tones, made Nancy acquainted with some of the life experiences of Jane Macomber.

"Won't she feel badly at the way your Aunt Betsy has treated her?" asked Nancy.

"Oh, no; Jane cannot bear any malice towards any one. If she had not had her life filled up with her ideas of poetry, she would have died long ago. You cannot offend her, and she is, I presume, just as strong in the faith that some gallant knight is coming after her as she was forty years ago. Her hope is her salvation."

"Hope is a wonderful gift," said Nancy.

"Yes, it is a great gift, but my hope now is not in this world; it is that I shall be spared to comfort Aunt Betsy and Uncle Isaac just a little while, and then move on. My baby needs me; even in heaven I believe my mother heart would teach me how to guide his little feet better than one of whose life he is not a part."

"My dear friend, do you ever think that you may have a work to do here? It seems as though the whole world needed to be redeemed from superstition, and you, who have the gift to help, feel like moving on."

"Angels forgive me if I am selfish," said 'Lisbeth, as tears rolled down her cheeks. "I am tired of the shadow; I want the substance, the real life."

"There, rest now; I do not want to say anything to disturb you, but I do love and feel sorry for your uncle and aunt. If you could stay with them while they live, it would be acting the mission of an angel on earth."

"I will try," said 'Lisbeth, "but, oh! it is so hard and so slow trying to get along."

Meanwhile, Aunt Betsy, somewhat softened toward Jane, told her some of the experiences through which 'Lisbeth had passed.

"Oh! what an inspiration I had when I was here helping 'Lisbeth quilt. She laid bare her young heart to me, owned she feared she was not doing right by marrying him. Then and there, maybe you remember it, Mrs. Barton, I offered to take him off her hands. I felt that even in his dark eyes there might have been a love light for me, but she refused from a blind sense of duty. Ah, if he had married me, he would never have laid a murderous hand upon *my* offspring."

"I don't think he would have had the chance," said Aunt Betsy, dryly.

Uncle Isaac and George Green came in, and Aunt Betsy, without asking George to sit down, beckoned him to go into the bedroom.

"George," said she in a whisper, "you've got to be mighty careful about 'Lisbeth."

"Why, is she worse?" said George, in an alarmed tone of voice.

"No; that ain't what I mean, but when you magnetize her, or treat her, or whatever you call it, what do you suppose folks will think? They won't understand your pawin' round, and I guess you hadn't better say anything about it. I'm afraid it will cause talk, your comin' here anyway, but I can't help it. If you can mesmerize 'Lisbeth and help her, you're goin' to do it."

"Not *mesmerize*, Mrs. Barton; she has had enough of that; but magnetize; give some of my life principle to her. I understand the conditions perfectly, and will not see 'Lisbeth alone, not once. Some of you shall be present at every treatment. I do not know as I can cure her, but I can help her surely."

He then went to 'Lisbeth's room, pleased that she had

stood the fatiguing ride as well as she had, and from his very life gave to her those wonderful currents of strength that seemed to emanate from him. As careful as they were, the door swung open just a little, and Jane, left alone for an instant, looked in.

“Oh! what a wondrous revelation. True love cannot be killed; he clasps her hands, he looks into her eyes.”

By the time Aunt Betsy came back, Jane was in another part of the room farthest from the door.

“Mrs. Barton, may I use your ink here on the clock shelf? I have my quill pen in my work pocket.”

Aunt Betsy looked at the door ajar, and then at Jane. “He is as careless as a boy,” she thought, “goin’ in and leavin’ that door open, even a little, but I guess Jane is safe,” and she closed it securely.

Meanwhile Jane, impressed by the scene she had just witnessed, and anxious lest the fire of her genius should be expressed ere it die out, wrote :

“The year that passed was long to George,
His idol he had lost,
But prayed that ‘Lisbeth might come to him,
No matter what the cost.

“So though Daniel was a man of God,
And tried to do his part,
He could not bring one gleam of love
Into poor ‘Lisbeth’s heart.

“She’s been brought back to Barton’s home,
Where even now she lies;
With hands clasped tight in George’s hands,
She gazes in his eyes.”

“What be you writin’?” said Aunt Betsy to Jane.
“Seems to me you must have been taken with a poem pretty suddin.”

Jane, glad that once in her life Aunt Betsy had asked her about her writing, said: "Listen while I read thee my latest inspiration."

When she had finished, Aunt Betsy said, in no very quiet tones, "Jane Macomber, you've been peekin' into that room."

"Yes, Mrs. Barton, the fates are always kind to born poets. What should that door do but swing open just a little bit as I passed. I glanced in, and saw such a tender scene — he and she clasping hands and looking into each other's eyes; it was a scene for an artist."

Aunt Betsy said she felt as though Jane Macomber thought she was lying every word she said in explanation, though she had Jane's promise that she wouldn't tell the neighbors, but should "hug the sweet delusion still."

"Hug all you want to, but don't you go to talkin' 'bout George Green and our 'Lisbeth, or we'll put the law on you."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A FATAL "DYIN' SPELL."

BEFORE Henry Brown had returned from taking Nancy to the Kelloggs, Dr. Parsons had reported enough concerning Aunt Betsy's letter to Nancy, so that the news reached Daniel Doolittle. The discussions that took place, and the assertions of those with vivid imaginations, made the wildest kind of rumors prevail. If 'Lisbeth died, could they take the minister up and put him in prison, or what would take place?

Daniel was urged by his mother to do something; arrest the Bartons, or 'Lisbeth, or some one, and see what could be done. "What I shall do the first thing, mother, is to get you off to Annie's. I do not know what is going to become of me, and I want you where you will be safe."

"Why, Daniel! Why can't I stay with you? You have got money left that was your Uncle Charles's, and intended for me too. We can keep house until you go to some new place to preach. You could make me comfortable without my being sent way off west to Annie's. How do we know but she has got the Rochester Knockings, too, by this time!"

"It doesn't matter," replied Daniel. "I have got to stem the tide of persecution alone." So Mother Doolittle complainingly made ready for her journey.

Sample Palmer was now a daily visitor. She was better than a newspaper to tell what was going on, Mother Doolittle declared, and so divided with her grudgingly the tea and the food that was sent in by the neighbors.

"I don't know what Daniel will say, but Henry Brown brought a letter here a little while ago, telling us to let Henry move 'Lisbeth's chest of drawers and clothes over to his house, till they could come after them."

"Is that so? What did your son say?"

"He hasn't seen the letter yet. He went over to Elder Evans's; his wife is in a 'dyin' spell,' and though I told him he was not able to go a step, he said he must, for he didn't want to let go of any friend he had managed to keep."

"Mis' Doolittle, I don't want you to say one word about it, but I've heard that them spells o' hern come from just *mad* fits; are a sort of hysterics, and that they hain't a bit dangerous."

"I asked my son once if that wasn't the case, and he said he thought it might be a correct rumor, but that his duty called him there just the same."

"Will he ever live with his wife again, if she gets well?" asked Sample Palmer.

"Oh, I hope not! I think that any one living with that bewitched creature is in daily danger of having a curse fall upon him, but since he has heard where she is, he really talks of demanding his rights, though what he can do with her is more than I can tell, unless it is to teach her and them a lesson, that they can't have things their way all of the time."

"Well, he married against the will of God. There are women now nearer his own age who would lift him right up in the ministry, and help him to do a glorious work, if *she* was out of the way. Do you think she will get well?"

"I don't know," said Mother Doolittle. "But as sinful as she is, I could not help but pity her when they put little Danny in the ground, and I pitied myself, too. I loved that little child."

"Do you think your son really killed that baby? You know they are saying ugly things about it."

"I think my son was a gracious instrument in the hands of God for a punishment to 'Lisbeth. He could not help acting the part planned for him, and" —

Just then Daniel Doolittle appeared in the doorway. So quietly had he opened the door that neither of the women had heard him, and the sense of fresh air and light coming in caused them to look up.

"Why, Daniel! How you scared me," said his mother.

"I have been standing by the door for a few moments, and have heard some of your conversation, but at this time I will not comment upon it. Mrs. Evans is dead; died in the triumphs of faith and her friends, who have been pleased to call her spells only the result of mad fits, have learned a lesson that will show them the Lord has a way of leading His saints almost down to the valley and shadow of death, and then allowing them to come back and warn sinners. For years Elder Evans's wife has been thus led. Yet, as I came past the store, that singular man, Dr. Parsons, said, 'So Mrs. Evans made up her mind to die in one

of her dyin' spells?' That man can do more with his infidelity to tear down the bulwarks of the Almighty than a half-dozen righteous ones can build up."

Sample Palmer was quiet for once.

Mrs. Evans was dead, and there was the Elder; poor, lonely man.

"My duty leads me hence," said she in a dramatic way, "to comfort the broken heart of my brother, poor Elder Evans."

Daniel did not try to hinder her going. His mind was intent upon other things.

"Here's a letter Henry Brown brought for you," said Mother Doolittle.

"I suppose you have read it, mother?"

"Of course I have, and what do you mean to do about it?"

"Well," said Daniel. "I shall do as they request."

"Daniel Doolittle, are you crazy? By law, 'Lisbeth don't own a rag, and the chest of drawers will sell for something."

"There are women folks who can reason, but you can't. Here I am, stranded. I can't stay here, and as soon as I sell the things, and get you off to Annie's, I shall go out to see 'Lisbeth. I may stay there some time. It's the best thing I can do. It will save paying board, and in a measure stop the talk."

"So you, with all your piety, are going to put yourself in league with the devil again?"

"I know what I am about, mother. I have found company for you to go out west with, and I shall stay here for awhile and see what can be done; but sometimes it seems as though all hope was at an end, and I

must give up as far as my ministerial work is concerned. Mother, I don't know as you will understand me, but I am once in awhile haunted by the fact that the dead are now in a conscious existence near us. I have been startled two or three times by seeing the pale, pleading face of little Danny, and there was no smile on it; it was such a reproachful face."

"Daniel, it is time that I should be strength for you; you had better take a fetty pill and go to bed, or else own up the dominion of Satan over you. I feel as though my last earthly stronghold was being taken from me. I must go and have a season of prayer," and this time it *was* a season of prayer, for Mother Doo-little prayed so loud that her words were quite plain to Daniel.

"Oh, Lord of Israel, bring my son, Thy servant, out of the wilderness he has become entangled in. Part the waves of the great sea, and let Thy servant, with his powerful intellect and wondrous power for the dispensation of the pure gospel, pass through. Lord, Thou hast need of his work. Thou knowest he is saved, but do not let him give up the struggle. Bury his enemies beneath the waters of Thy wrath, and make this experience prove to be a firmer rock upon which he can stand; and may the Evil One take all that which has so disturbed the tranquillity of Thy servant back to the bottomless pit where it belongs. Amen."

Daniel liked praise, whether it was in a prayer or any other form, but did not quite understand his mother's meaning, and stepping to the bedroom door, he said:

"Mother, I thank you for interceding for your unhappy son, but I am glad that prayer was not made in

public. They would surely have said that you were praying for 'Lisbeth to go to the bottomless pit."

"Daniel, I did not pray for her to go there, though I haven't the least doubt but she will. I meant that the Rochester Knockings and all this talking, as though you have seen dead folks, should go there ; for they would almost deceive the very elect." Just then, from 'Lisbeth's room, came a series of loud knocks.

"Oh ! Daniel, let's hurry out of this house, or maybe if you get 'Lisbeth's things away they will leave." Accordingly, the next day, Henry Brown moved 'Lisbeth's few belongings to his father's house, much to the relief of Daniel and his mother.

The church was filled to overflowing when the funeral services of Elder Evans's wife took place. The change that comes to all is a wonder worker, for it makes people for once remember all the good traits of the one over whom has come the seal of silence. Not even in softest whisper were *mad fits* and *dyin' spells* spoken of. Sample Palmer was there, looking in such a heart-broken way at Elder Evans that Dr. Parsons said he knew the Elder's fate for the future would be large doses of Sample Palmer. Widow Simmons was there, helpful, thoughtful and kind, remembering, as no one else could, the most remote relatives of the deceased, and instructing the person in charge to give them a seat among the mourners. Daniel Doolittle and the Rev. Mr. Barnes were both present.

The choir sang "Sister, thou wast mild and lovely," and "Jesus can make a dying bed as soft as downy pillows are ;" and Daniel, the forsaken, Daniel the abused, as Sample Palmer termed him, after prayer by Rev. Mr.

Barnes, preached a sermon that thrilled them through and through. He drew a vivid contrast between the silent sleeper and some of the audience before him. "She was saved; her last work was one of mercy" (it was making doughnuts for the Doolittles); "her thought through all her suffering was for the salvation of humanity. It would be well to follow in her every footstep. At the Resurrection morn she will come forth from the place where they will bury her, her heart full of joy. Yet, methinks," said Daniel, "in all her joy she will look over the brink of hell at you and you, and you, who are pleading for one drop of water to cool your parched tongues, in pity, and wish she could succor you; but the gulf that cannot be crossed will be between you, and after awhile she, with the rest of the saints, will learn that it is justice that has separated you, and will go on her way rejoicing. Hear, ye who have been traitors to your Church and to your God, these words: eternal life or eternal punishment, which will you have?"

Elder Evans said in a very meek way that the funeral services took on the form of a revival service, that it couldn't hurt Samantha, but Daniel Doolittle had had his say.

The Doolittle house was soon vacated, Daniel taking his leave at the same time that his mother did, leaving his friends, even, in the dark as to his intentions. And the strangest rumors were soon circulated about the empty house. Groans were heard, strange lights were seen, and some went so far as to say they had seen Baby Danny lifted up to the window struggling as though he wanted to get away from something. The owner would

scarcely go over it even by daylight, but gave his permission for a number of men to go together and board the windows up so the lights the devil lit could not be seen from the outside.

"It's given over to evil," said a strange-looking young man, who had not long lived in the village, "and we'd best let the devil have it." He was the first one to suggest boarding up the windows. Henry Brown helped to do it, but he kept his eyes open all the time. After months had passed, he found the young man who had said it was given over to the devil had spoken the truth, for the lights, groans and other strange noises had been brought about by him, and people's imaginations had served to do the rest. A gang of robbers who had been terrorizing the country was captured there, and it had proved a good hiding-place for their spoils. So the haunted house had only been haunted by human wickedness, and not by the devil and his angels, as had been said.

Sample Palmer was in her glory. There was spiritual work for her to do. Elder Evans was cast down and needed her advice. A sister-in-law who "was as deaf as an adder," Sample said, "was fit only to do the manual labor, but Elder Evans wanted some one to stay his spirit." Not a day passed that she did not go to see if he was comfortable, and succeeded in making him most uncomfortable by it. At last he said to her, "I am most thankful for your kindly services, but ain't you a little afraid folks will talk about your comin' here so much? I have thought a great deal about it on your account, Miss Palmer."

"I know my duty, Elder Evans; don't worry about

me. I live in an atmosphere above it," and rolling her eyes toward heaven, she murmured, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"Well, Miss Palmer, I think it would be a little better for me if you didn't come so much, and my sister-in-law is gettin' a little out about it; says she can't keep eggs enough to pay for the tea, and Samanthy always did that. I don't want to accuse you of doin' wrong, but haven't you been so much one of the family that you have helped yourself to butter and eggs?"

"Elder Evans, in that my conscience is clear. The laborer is worthy of his hire. I have been spendin' my valuable time here, and your wife used to say, 'I always have to do the thinkin' for the Elder,' so I knew you didn't think to tell me to help myself, and I did as I felt you would want me to if you thought, and have occasionally counted up the hours spent here, the advice given, and its value, and have taken very limited payment for the same."

"Oh, well, if that is all, we won't mind about what has gone; but Mary Jane says she won't stay if you keep comin', and I have got to have some one to work for me."

"It is ever thus!" said Sample, as she shook the dust from her feet (as she afterward declared) of a place that she truly felt the Lord had willed to be her future home.

The Elder never married again. He felt that it was wrong for him to put any one in Samantha's place. Samantha had suffered so and was such a shining light that he declared, if, when he got to heaven, by any chance he should know his own, he should be ashamed

to look Samantha in the face, and say, "I've brought along another woman that I will introduce to you as my wife. Samanthy always was particular about that and could never abide havin' more than one husband or one wife, and though I told her we didn't promise to cleave unto them only until death parted us, she would look solemn, and say *no* good could come of mixin' up with too many folks."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SPIRIT TRIUMPHS.

UNDER the magnetic treatment of George Green, the loving care of Nancy Brown, the strong tonic of Aunt Betsy's terse sayings and Uncle Isaac's loving tenderness, 'Lisbeth was slowly regaining her strength. One morning she had a reminder of her past, when Nancy gave her the cushion she had secured with such difficulty, and as 'Lisbeth, with trembling fingers, took out the stitches she had put in so fearfully, it brought back to her a cruel chapter of her existence. She looked at her own miserable scrawl (as she called it), and with hot tears falling, said:

"Oh! how little we can know of the future, even with the strange power that comes to us; and I believe it is well, for had I at that time known what was coming to me, how I would go down into the shadows of the valley, and then come back again to life with my little sunbeam close to my heart; if I had known how every thought would be centered in him, and then at last how his little life would be crushed out; I believe, Nancy, I should have opened a vein and let my life blood flow out."

"And proved yourself a weak and cowardly, instead of a strong, true woman," said Nancy. "It is much better as it is for us all."

“If you had known it was goin’ to happen, it wouldn’t have happened,” was Aunt Betsy’s contradictory speech. “Do you suppose if I was told some one was goin’ to knock Isaac down and kill him some night when he went to open the door, I’d let him go to that door? No; folks could bang all night, but he shouldn’t stir an inch to be killed. If you had known all about what Daniel was goin’ to do, and I had known, we would have had you away from there if I had had to go to jail for it. But when Sarah did try to tell you, a little while before it happened, you didn’t know what it meant. I guess it’s just as well we don’t know too much ahead, and that’s what I’m afraid of in this spirit business. I expect folks will want to know everything about their lives, who they’re goin’ to marry, and how to get rid of ’em when they are married, instid of just havin’ it count in the soul. Sometimes I don’t think I’m a whit better’n I was before I knew about it; I’ve got the same pizen disposition, and I think I know it all. Once in a while I have a streak that I try to be a good deal better. I used to behave because I was afraid and followed in the footsteps of a cruel God. Now sometimes I think I behave, and am better, because I’m ashamed to be watched by them that’s got unharnessed from the body and live where they don’t ache. But I’m the same Betsy Barton yet. I guess what’s in you will come out. Once, when I was on the Doolittle warpath and had got the war paint all on to make ’Lisbeth marry him to be saved, I’d been awful aggravatin’ to Isaac, and he said to me:

“‘Betsy, you’re awful tryin’, but you *think* you’re good.’

“And he took up old Jerry (I always knew he was in a state of rebellion then) and said :

“‘Do you know what I think you would do if Christ should come right into the house in the body?’

“‘What would I do?’ I said, kind of low, so I wouldn’t show my temper.

“‘Well, you would give him a seat in the spare room, and stay there awhile and tell him what the professors did that was wrong, and then come out in the back room and jaw me because I got some grease on the floor stealin’ my own meat to feed old Jerry.’

“That upset me, and I cried, and he was sorry; but I thought of it a good deal. I’m *happier* now, but I guess I ain’t anythin’ to brag of in *goodness*.”

“Oh, Aunt Betsy, you are a hundred times better, and so am I. I couldn’t get near enough to you to love you. You almost thought it was wicked to love, and I have cried myself to sleep many a time because I was so lonely. I heard one of the girls at school once tell how her mother kissed her the last thing at night, and I have watched the stars from my window many a time and tried to see mother’s face there, and wondered if she would kiss me good-night if she were here.”

“I never did set much store by kisses,” said Aunt Betsy, “but there’s worse things in the world.”

The dinner that day was a happy meal, for ’Lisbeth sat with the family for the first time. Uncle Isaac’s face fairly beamed. But just as dinner was over five loud raps sounded upon the table. They heard the sounds with pleasure.

“That’s the call for the alphabet,” said ’Lisbeth. “Will you get it, Nancy?”

The old spelling-book was brought to the table, and slowly but surely the following sentence was rapped out, "Daniel is on his way; be strong."

'Lisbeth turned pale, Aunt Betsy red, and Uncle Isaac looked fearful, while Nancy said in a calm tone, "It has got to be settled some time, and the sooner the better for your comfort."

"Is he comin' here?" Aunt Betsy spoke loud to the raps always, and Uncle Isaac often declared she acted as though she thought the angels were deaf.

"Yes, to-night," came the answer.

"Well, he'll go away ag'in," said Aunt Betsy. "I won't have him in the house."

"Be careful," rapped the spirit.

"You may tell me to be careful as much as you please. If Daniel Doolittle comes here he'll get a piece o' my mind, but I suppose I shall have to stand his comin' and fix up 'Lisbeth's room upstairs for him."

'Lisbeth had gone back to her room, thrown herself upon her bed, and with her whole soul was praying for wisdom. "What shall I do, what shall I do?" said she. "I want to do right."

"I do not feel that he will do you any harm, or try to get you away," said Nancy. "He'll have plenty of trouble if he does."

Not one doubt of the truth of the message seemed to come to them. The Knockings had said it, and that was sufficient.

"Why, I know he will come just as surely as I know I live," said Nancy, "and I want every one of us to be ready for him."

"I'd like to know, for one, how to act," said Uncle Isaac. "I don't want to make it worse for 'Lisbeth."

About five o'clock two men were seen riding up to the door; one, Mr. Barnes, who had married Daniel and 'Lisbeth, the other, Daniel Doolittle.

"Fetch 'em in the side door," said Aunt Betsy, when Uncle Isaac went out to meet them. "I don't want him to see 'Lisbeth till I see which way the land lays. He may behave himself and be sorry, but I don't believe he will."

When they came into the room they found Aunt Betsy all alone. She greeted Mr. Barnes kindly, but when Daniel held out his hand to her, she said,

"I can't touch your hand yet; set down."

"Mrs. Barton, I have come to see about my wife, 'Lisbeth, who, I hear, has been under your roof for some time."

"Whose roof should she be under, if not under ours? She'd have been outdoors without a shingle over her for all of *your* tendin' to her."

"I have been very sick, Mrs. Barton. All the past circumstances have combined to make me feel very ill."

"I should wonder if you *wa'n't* sick, Daniel Doolittle. You would be fit for State's prison if you could look back on these few years and not be sick. Folks hain't supposed to feel comfortable that pound little children into fits and illtreat their wives."

"Mrs. Barton, I have come to tell you that I am not a perfect man."

"Tell me some news," interrupted Aunt Betsy.

"And I see my mistakes," continued Daniel. "But I have been sorely perplexed; the strange hallucinations of my wife, combined with the powers of evil over her, the affliction being also upon our child, and the contradictory rumors circulated among my people, almost unsettled my brain, and I may have been harsh, but not willingly unkind. I tried to do my duty, but I felt the walls of Zion falling at my feet. Thus, I may have been led into errors through righteous wrath that I would not in calmer mind have committed."

"Oh! Daniel Doolittle, I can't stand it to hear you talk so high and mighty. Ain't it enough to come here and mesmerize me and 'Lisbeth, and get me to push her right into your arms, then take her home to a mother that, just like you, let her go through trouble and care, and when you were mad kill your little child, or be the means of its dyin', and then never think of the poor, half-crazed mother, and she crawls out from under cover o' your roof; then never hunt for her, and let her wander off till strangers take her in; and now when we've got her home you come here and talk about her *hallucinations* and your little boy you killed? Yet, Daniel Doolittle, there's one thing I want to ask your forgiveness for."

Daniel leaned forward expectantly, and said, "What is it you wish to be forgiven for, Mrs. Barton? It is our duty to forgive."

"I want you to forgive me for ever *thinkin'* you was a good man."

"Madam, I cannot stand this, even in your house," said the minister.

"What's up?" said Uncle Isaac, just then coming in

from the barn. No one explained to him, and the silence that followed was broken by the voice of Daniel :

"Mrs. Barton, I would like to see Mrs. Doolittle, my wife."

"'Lisbeth's here," said Uncle Isaac, his lips quivering, "or what there is left of her, and I don't s'pose I have a right to keep you from seein' her. I don't like to ask any favor of you, Mr. Doolittle, but there's one thing I must ask, and that is, don't scare her and make her sick, or worse than she is now. We've trembled for her, Mr. Doolittle, and even now it looks doubtful for her some days, just as though the little feller was callin' her so loud she would go to him."

"Well, I must see her; I will go to her room."

"No, you won't," declared Aunt Betsy; "set down, she'll come out here."

Nancy, with trembling fingers, had prepared 'Lisbeth for the ordeal. A white shawl was thrown over her shoulders, not whiter than her face. The hair, which had been cut off during her illness, was one mass of golden rings on her head, and the blue eyes had the look of one haunted by cruel fate. Leaning on Nancy's arm she came into the room and was helped to the rocking-chair. The strength of the morning was gone.

When Daniel approached, he took a hand that was too weak to offer resistance. He bowed to Nancy, and said: "You have been very kind to my wife, which in a great measure atones for the thoughtlessness of the past. 'Lisbeth, are you ready to go with me?"

"Where?" asked 'Lisbeth.

This was a poser to Daniel. He didn't know where himself, for at present he was homeless.

"I have not fully planned my future course of action, and therefore cannot tell you where, but surely it is right I should have the society of my wife, especially after our mutual bereavement."

"Your mutual what!" exclaimed Aunt Betsy. "If you mean by bereavement feelin' bad about Danny, why, I can't see how it applies to *you*. You must have felt a *little* bad. I suppose any one does that has been doin' murder, but —"

"Sister Barton," said the old minister, Mr. Barnes, "you are making a very grave accusation against our brother here. Do you think he meant to kill his child?"

"Well," said Aunt Betsy, "*mebbe* he didn't; but it had the same effect as though he did mean to do it, and 'Lisbeth has been almost killed too, poor child. It's as near murder as I'd want to git."

Daniel looked at his wife, so like a shadow of her former self, and something like a gleam of pity and remorse came to his face. A feeling of guilt that he could not understand oppressed him, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, he said: "Oh, friends, I have regretted my blows. I loved the little child, but I so feared the powers of evil were surrounding him that I was nearly frantic, and almost unconsciously my hands came down upon the tender little body. God knows it was anger and fear for the child's soul that guided it, not the thought of the awful thing that did occur."

Upon 'Lisbeth's face came the peculiar light that was always to be seen when the strange influence took possession of her. Daniel gazed with apparent dread, while the old minister watched the change with a

wonder that was made apparent by his bending forward and placing one hand on Daniel's knee.

"Daniel Doolittle," said 'Lisbeth, or the power that moved her lips, "even upon this side of life, where we see more clearly than you, we make mistakes, and while I do not in any way wish to absolve you from the regret that will follow wrong-doing, yet, I will say, we do not believe you had any thought of injuring the child. Your anger dominated you, and your iron will would not bend to reason. When you touched the trembling form of your little child, the same iron will and intense cruelty of your nature were apparent, and when you found out the result you were too proud to own your great mistake, except at first. It has been the means of changing your life course, the result of which will be its own punishment in the world in which you live; but we are teaching your little child that, covered up as the best part of your nature is, every pure instinct, every gracious thought, every desire for reconciliation with those whose feelings you have outraged, will be taken note of, and we who are reaching for the good instead of the evil will help you to a better manhood if we can.

"We come to you as angels of light, and you call us devils. We come to emphasize the mission of the Man of Nazareth, and you have received us as usurpers, and influences that lead downward. The child that I loved and left cannot go with you to any home that you can make her; neither can you come to this home to break up the harmony that we wish around this instrument of the angels the little time that she is spared in the earth world. It will not be long before she will

come to her loving mother and her much loved child, but she will not leave the physical until she has accomplished more for humanity. We wish you no harm, Daniel Doolittle, but your dominion over this child has passed away. You may see her again ere the spirit comes to us, or you may not; we cannot see; but her life must be in a wider sphere of action than the bondage in which you would hold her. Not in anger, but in sorrow, have I said this.

"And," continued the voice of the spirit, "Isaac and Betsy, we leave this trust in your hands; as you feel you failed in the old times, make reparation for it by paving the way for her to do the little work that she can do. No greater benediction could come to the last days of your well-spent lives than to open the doors of heaven to the world. Your days will not at longest be very many; help us to do what we desire, and your coming over here will be to you all that you ever dreamed heaven could be.

"Go you, Daniel Doolittle, into a new soul life; your barren creed can never more be to you a blessing. Learn wisdom; do not try to limit the Eternal, do not make Him in the image of your frail humanity. Seek the mother who bore you; put some thought of gratefulness into your actions for what she has sacrificed for you. Had your life grasped the real possibilities of living, she would have gone side by side, hand in hand with you, but you remembered not mother's love nor your mother's sacrifices, and so you forced a resurrection of her most unworthy self, and my child was cast in its shadow."

Turning to Nancy, she said: "I would be pleased

that you, friend of my child, courageous friend indeed, should be near her as much as possible during the short time that the physical will be spared as our instrument. Blessings will come to you in so doing. I would have you recreant in no home duty, but I would have you learn the true way. I want the powers within you developed for the best; we do not wish this development to be without labor and thought, but the vital exercise of every faculty. That which is too easy to attain does not strengthen the moral character. I must now bid you adieu, for I fear I have used too much of the strength gained by the serenity of home life."

When 'Lisbeth returned to consciousness Daniel Doolittle was standing near her, and in a tone of voice from which all the sternness had departed, he said, "'Lisbeth, I'm sent away; they say you can never belong to me again. I do not understand this idea of your being some one else, and talking much better than I used to, but it's taken all the desire away from me to demand obedience. 'Lisbeth, your mother (if it is she) knows I didn't mean to kill Danny. Good-by —" for Nancy was already helping 'Lisbeth to her room.

Aunt Betsy was in a quandary. She had vowed all kinds of vengeance upon Daniel Doolittle, and now she was thinking what she should get him to eat. As Mr. Barnes and Daniel arose to go, she said :

"You'd better stay till after supper, we will have it early to-night," and both gentlemen seemed willing to do so.

Aunt Betsy soliloquized as she went into the back room: "Well, here I am at it ag'in, hatin' folks and cookin' for 'em. I wish I could be decent."

Uncle Isaac took but little part in the conversation, and neither Mr. Barnes nor Daniel talked about that which was in their hearts. Jerry No. 2, looking much like his predecessor, ensconced himself on Uncle Isaac's lap.

"That cat seems to hold his age remarkably," said Daniel, amiably, desiring to interest Uncle Isaac in something.

"Oh, this ain't the cat that tried to make mince-meat out o' you when you was prayin' that night. That cat died a natural death, and was never robbed of one meal for the sake o' the missionaries. Betsy hunted the town over to find another one just like him, and she found one, too, didn't she, Jerry?"

Jerry stretched and looked wise, while Daniel remarked that "Mrs. Barton had changed greatly since those days."

"I hope so," replied Uncle Isaac. "I can stay in the house now and visit with her, without her makin' herself a picture book describin' hell."

"Why, Brother Barton," interrupted Mr. Barnes, "don't you believe in a hell? Some would say you could have no sense of justice if you did not."

"Yes, I believe in a hell that folks make themselves; the Lord don't make it, there ain't no devil to make it, but folks do make themselves unhappy, and that is hell, and I'm tryin' when I see any one pilin' up considerable of it, to git 'em to slow up."

"Supper's ready," announced Aunt Betsy, and almost before they were seated, she said, "Mr. Barnes, will you ask a blessin'?"

She declared if Daniel Doolittle had in any way

opened his lips in prayer she guessed she should have turned him out of doors, especially after his self-esteem had asserted itself, and in order to bolster himself up, he had said: "Mr. and Mrs. Barton, I suppose you know I could collect very heavy damages of you for harboring my wife and alienating her affections from me."

"Go about it, then," said Uncle Isaac. "I'd bring in a bill, too, that wouldn't be a light one."

"Daniel Doolittle, don't you be talkin' about bills. It won't do. I git riled too easy for that, and Isaac isn't *putty* any more," said Aunt Betsy.

"Oh, friends, you quite mistake me. I only said I *could* do so; I did not say I intended to. I must 'In His Name' banish my own selfishness."

Aunt Betsy rose from her chair, and with a face white from excitement, said in a repressed tone:

"Daniel Doolittle, never, as long as you and I live, have that 'In His Name' over before me. I used to bow to you because you said it. I insulted my own husband, I sent my sister's child out into your and your mother's clutches. I made my life a misery and God a demon. I placed you so high up in the heavens that you could have picked out stars and dropped 'em down, and then I had to cry over my child, her whole life spoiled, and you kept sayin' like a parrot, 'In His Name.' I found it was *in Daniel Doolittle's name*, not in the name of the Man that loved little children and would not even let bad women be abused. You had better be goin' pretty soon. I don't abound in grace, and I shall keep bilin' over as sure as the world."

The two clergymen departed as the dusk deepened, the one old in good works, one who had lived Christ the best he knew how ; the other, one who by his selfishness banished the good, while he had wrapped himself around with the odor of sanctity. Yet they were of one Church.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TWO REVERENDS DISCUSS HELL.

WHEN Daniel Doolittle and the Rev. Mr. Barnes rode away from the Barton homestead, they experienced strangely conflicting emotions. Daniel was a man who made few close friends, and had but very few confidants. He used often to declare that one who was a teacher and a preacher ought to have reached that condition where oneness with God would render human advice of no avail. He would much rather be an adviser than one advised, and only in the trying moments caused by his experiences during the years of his married life had he honored any one enough to admit that advice to *him* was necessary. But at this time he was anxious to at least learn the opinion of his friend, and said:

“How easy it is for the strongest to waver and lose their hold of the truth. When confronted as I was to-day by the strange attack of my — of Mrs. Doolittle, for a moment I actually felt as though a spirit possessed her, claimed her whole individuality and dominated her will. I mean by this the spirit that it purported to be, but my better judgment, when severed from contact with those conditions, rebels, and plainly tells me it is either clever acting or the devil himself, linked to other powers of darkness.”

"Who made the devil?" asked the older man.

"What do you mean, Brother Barnes? Have we not the record?"

"Yes, but I am older than I used to be. I am through with the ministry, and I begin to think over the fence a little. That explanation of hell given by Brother Barton to-day some way seemed more in keeping with divine justice than any conception I have ever had, especially when taken in a literal sense. As sometimes taught, it has really been repugnant to me, and for years I never preached a sermon on retributive justice. Maybe I did wrong, but I believed not at the time, and kept silent."

"Well, what do you think about 'Lisbeth seeming to be her mother, and laying down the law to me? It looked reasonable in a sense while I was there, but *now* my reason spurns it. If it is a spirit at all, it is a spirit of darkness."

"Do you ever wonder when you think of it, why a good and wise God will give so much greater latitude to evil spirits than to good ones? Why should He let them seek to destroy, and bring trouble to struggling mortals, and keep His wise, loving spirits shut up in a far-away heaven? From what I have read in the Word, and in the papers; from what I have heard of the Rochester Knockings, and from what *I* know of the same kind of knockings, occurring right in a minister's family of our own persuasion in this very State, I am inclined to think that there is more in this great realm of existence than we have ever thought of; that the man who lives twenty years longer will come in closer relationship with those who have been called dead. If the

spirit of man endures forever and a natural law will allow *some* of them to come back, why cannot *all* come? I was much moved by the beautiful change in your wife. I have known the girl since her birth. I knew her mother before her, and a brighter girl never lived. She was crushed out of life by her troubles. She idolized her husband, and when she lost him, her health failed, and she came to Mrs. Barton's, and there was nothing but trouble. Mrs. Barton was determined she should experience the hope that she was saved, and should feel that she was a sinner, almost beyond pardon. She told her her sorrow for sin ought to be just as great as though she was a murderer. But she couldn't see that at all.

“‘Why should I feel that way when it isn't true? I am not such an awful sinner,’ she would say; and I guess my voice was husky with tears a great many times when I tried to pray with her. I hoped she would talk to me to-day, if it were she, but maybe she's forgotten. Can a spirit forget?”

“I hope so,” said Daniel, gravely. “If there's anything in this individual consciousness except for the glory of God, I hope my boy can forget. Poor little Danny,” and again the tears came to his eyes.

For the second time that day Mr. Barnes pitied Daniel Doolittle, the great exponent of a relentless creed.

“Different types of humanity take religion differently, as the different birds sing different songs, some in one key and some in another, but I suppose they all work into the divine harmony by and by; and I don't know as it would be complete if one sound was lacking.

Brother Doolittle, since I have begun to reason, I find that I can reason from natural laws. I find a great Bible in the world of nature, and it goes on and on. I pray for dreams, kneel by my bedside and invite my company. I have only one child living now and I live with her; but my dream company is large, with all my father's family coming once in a while. My own come often — first my wife, who did not go to bed to die, she was always so busy.

“She had stood by two of the children (George and Sarah, who died with inflammation of the lungs) until the last. We watched together many a night, and when morning came I would follow her directions to try to rest; but she, poor soul, when she waked up my oldest boy, John (who was afterwards lost at sea), to sit by them, would go straight to getting the breakfast, and so she had no rest; or if she did, I did not know it.

“Soon after all this trouble came my youngest child, with whom I now live. She had but little help even at that time. A young, inefficient girl did some work, but my poor wife would sit up and watch to see what she was doing, so fearful was she that my wants would not be attended to. When the baby was almost four months old, my wife sat down to get her to sleep. The door to my little study was open, and I heard her singing about the ‘gentle Shepherd’ in such a weak tone, and then the sound died away. The next I heard was the child as it rolled upon the floor. With a sharp word already on my lips, as reproof for such carelessness, I picked up the screaming child, and turned to the form in the rocking chair. She must have stopped breathing about the time she sang ‘gentle Shepherd,’ for there was a

smile upon her face. I called loudly to John. I thought she had fainted, but she hadn't. She had been so hurried and worried that she had taken no time to go to bed and be sick, and die like other people.

"My sister brought up the little one with my help. Her life was filled with advice, and yet she had no woman's love. That's one reason why I pitied your wife in her girlhood so much; and," continued the old man, "if my wife did not try to make me feel all right about it when I have my dream company, I should be a very unhappy man now. But I'm only waiting, with a greater trust than youth ever gave me, for my book of earth life to close, that I may begin upon the new volume. Oh, Mr. Doolittle, you are younger than I am; you will again preach to the world. Won't you put into your sermons more about the tenderness and care we ought to show the mothers of our children?"

If Daniel Doolittle mistrusted a weakness in any one, or by any chance it was confessed to him, he could not help administering reproof. Aunt Betsy, in one of her moments of bitterness toward him, said the Doolittles had made a great mistake in not getting Daniel in somewhere, when he was young, as hangman; that he would consider it his duty to be very firm, and see that the man was well hung. So when the poor old man by his side had ceased speaking, Daniel reproofed him for what he termed morbid sensitiveness, and said that always recognizing weakness was encouraging it, and that in all probability it was some organic disease of the heart that his wife died from, instead of overwork.

"For my part," continued Daniel, "I think some notions concerning women being tenderly cared for because

they are mothers are hurtful. They are taught to expect a great deal more than they have to pass through, and their imagination makes up the difference between what they do suffer and what they expect to suffer, and it weakens in proportion. If they knew less and expected less, they wouldn't think about the suffering; animals do not, or if they do, make no sign."

"Animals are taken care of, and don't have to work away all their strength, but women do."

"I do not like to discuss the subject. The whole trend of thought nowadays seems to tend toward making men the monsters and women the victims. The apostolic declaration that wives should submit to and be obedient to their husbands is getting to be a thing of the past."

"Well, let it pass. May I ask you what your plans are?"

"I have decided to let 'Lisbeth stay at her uncle's until she is better. She would only be a bill of expense upon my hands as she is now, and I shall go out and spend the remainder of the winter and spring with my sister, who is in Genesee County, New York. I don't know how I shall find things there. Mother does not like it very well, but perhaps I shall be able to settle down there and do some work should there be any vacancy. I expect there are all kinds of churches there, or beliefs, and that comparatively few have clung to the old Gospel."

"You have been exonerated from all blame, have you, as regards the home trouble and the death of your child?"

"Oh, yes; Elder Evans and a few true souls have

made it all right, and I have most excellent credentials to take with me if I wish to use them."

"Well, I wish you well," said his companion. "But I believe through the grace of God you will see things very differently soon."

The following morning Daniel Doolittle, with the kind of thanks that seemed to hint at his entertainers being debtors to him for his company, started on his journey, which was then a wearisome one, to Western New York. Daniel mused, "Fate seems to have thrown me where I must fight the powers of darkness and maybe it is the Lord's will that I should be near the fountain head of this terrible heresy. Sometimes I think I am losing hold of myself. I am astonished to see myself swayed by others. I became as weak as a child when with 'Lisbeth, and I am afraid looked through her eyes, and then when Mr. Barnes talked as he did, it was only by the greatest effort of will that I could resist settling down to his level. I wish I hadn't even seemed to weaken about Danny. I am a puzzle to myself, but I have read that great minds are often thus afflicted."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MOTHER DOOLITTLE'S FEAR OF DEATH.

FOR some time after Mother Doolittle arrived at her daughter's she gave vent to a continual round of complaints. Going by stage and canal had been slow work. The passengers who rode with her did not appreciate the dignity of her character, and one driver actually said to her, "You'll have to move along, old woman." Though she talked of "my son, the Rev. Daniel Doolittle," and tried to impress people with her importance, it had no effect. She was no more than any other traveler, and after passing through what seemed like great wildernesses, and over mountains, she at last landed, homesick and tired, at Annie's door.

"I shall do the best I can by mother," Annie had said to her husband, "though I think I'm not wicked in saying I dread to have her come. I wonder if what we heard the other night is true?"

She soon knew, for her mother began a steady stream of talk. The first thing she wished to impress upon them was that she could not work, that it had not been expected of her at Daniel's, and that she couldn't begin again when she was so old.

"Well," said Annie, "there's a great deal to do, and only one of the children old enough to help me. I'll do my best by you, mother, and I hope you will be

satisfied. Of course, I feel differently than I should if I did not know that it was not your choice to stay with me. People here in this little place, at least in the village, are very kind to us, and we have made many friends. I hope it will be as pleasant for you as for us. I didn't like it at first at all, but it is better now."

When the son-in-law came home to supper, he greeted her with a kindly shake of the hand, and when they were seated at the supper table, he asked no blessing, although Mother Doolittle bowed her head expectantly.

"What was all the trouble with Daniel and his wife, and the child, and everything?" asked he, in a cheery voice.

Mother Doolittle looked from one to the other, her daughter, her son-in-law, and then at the children,—four healthy, bright-eyed children,—with a face as solemn and dreadful as though she was going to tell of the most awful calamity.

"It's *witchcraft*. It's the Rochester Knockings. It's letting the devil into the family, and allowing him to try to overcome all the good that my son, your brother, the Rev. Daniel Doolittle, could have done. At times I trembled for him; it seemed as though he was going over to the dominion of Satan; but when the child died, and that wicked witch of a woman deserted him, then he began to see the enormity of his sin, and seek again for the paths of righteousness."

"What was the matter with the child?" asked Annie, in a suppressed tone.

News then did not travel as it does nowadays, and the Rev. Mr. Doolittle had expressly forbidden his mother

to say one word upon the circumstances preceding the child's death.

"The little fellow had convulsions," said Mother Doo-little, keeping her eyes upon her plate.

"What caused the convulsions?" Annie was determined to make her mother tell.

"Well, undue excitement, and — and tendencies that he inherited from his mother."

"Tell the truth, mother. Say that your son and my brother let his heavy hand fall with such crushing force upon the tender flesh of his only child that it died from the effects. Oh, mother! it is terrible, but do not try to cover it up, for I knew it."

"Why, daughter, how did you know? Who has written you? Who has told you of it?"

"My sister Catherine, mother."

"Your sister Catherine! Annie, what do you mean? She has been dead for years."

"No, not dead, mother; not dead, but living, and the much despised Rochester Knockings, through the little Fox girls, slowly rapped out to us the message that Daniel's child died by the hand of its father."

"The Rochester Knockings here? Annie, are you, too, in the toils? Have I left my Connecticut home, only to be met in my own daughter's house with tales like this? Daniel punished Danny because he would not say his prayers right, and he, being frightened and angry, went into convulsions and died. But, oh, Annie! the horror of it, of your having these knockings here. Do they listen, these devils, and pound the walls, and frighten every one?"

"No, mother, the manifestations have not come to

our house at all, but we have been very fortunate in seeing the girls through whom they first came, and now there are four within two miles of us who either get the knockings, or else go into trances and the spirits talk through them."

"Oh, Annie, Annie! what has your poor old mother done to be thus haunted by these devils? All my pride and my ambition concerning Daniel is laid low. If he gets another charge the shadow will hang over him; and now I come here to find my only daughter and her family deluded by Satan."

Her agony was pitiful to behold, and even Annie, who had in her youth felt so little of the loving tenderness that should come from mother love, could not refrain from trying to comfort her.

"Mother, you shall not be disturbed at all; we will not talk upon the subject. I will ask those who visit us to refrain from all allusions to it, though you must not stand in the way of our attending the weekly circles."

"Weekly what?" screamed the irate old lady.

Annie then explained how a few of the neighbors had banded together to see what they could learn about the other life, and about the friends who had passed over, and also to see if any among them had the power to be channels of communication between the two worlds. Horror was depicted upon the mother's face.

"And this is my daughter, brought up in a godly home, given over to the powers of darkness. I am draining the cup of bitterness to the dregs." She arose, and reeling as though with drunkenness, sought her room.

Pity is akin to love, and Annie came nearer loving her mother in that brief space of time than she had in all her life. Her childhood gave her only bitter memories of the supremacy of Daniel over everything else. Her education had been meagre; his had been as good as the times permitted. Daniel had been the pride of the house; she had been the drudge. But, after all, this was her mother.

"What shall we do?" asked Annie of her husband. "I don't like to grieve my mother."

"If you wish to be again tyrannized over, follow her advice now; if not, act according to the dictates of your own conscience, and learn all you can that means emancipation from a theology that has not the least resemblance to true religion."

The time passed slowly to Mother Doolittle. There was no place where she could attend her kind of church, and so she preferred to stay at home; but she made the place so dreary that had it not been for the chance they occasionally had of visiting congenial friends the gloominess would have been unbearable. Whenever the children tried to stay in the house, the fault-finding of the old lady, or her long sermons upon what they were coming to, made them miserable, and Annie did not wonder much at a conversation she overheard between her two boys when she was busy a few moments in the woodshed. They were talking about a very long, steep hill, down which they had been forbidden to slide, on account of the danger of breaking their necks.

"Charlie, if some day Grandma Doolittle should come out here and take your sled, and say she was going

way up there on the very top of the hill and slide down, and you knew she'd get her neck broke, what would you do?"

"I guess I would let her take my sled. Do you s'pose it would break my sled, too?"

"I don't know," began Johnnie, but they were interrupted by their mother with well-timed remarks as to their wickedness in even thinking of such a horrible fate for grandma.

One day, while the winter was still at its height, Annie heard a knock at the door, and upon opening it found herself face to face with her brother. Though she tried to be glad to see him, a deathly faintness almost overpowered her, and without a word of welcome she almost fell into a chair.

"What is the matter?" asked the reverend gentleman in a cold, hard voice, with as little emotion in it as though seeing his sister was an every-day occurrence.

"Oh, Daniel, it was so sudden. I did not expect to see you."

"Of course you did not, but such demonstrations are a symptom of weakness, which I deplore and which your bringing up would give no warrant for." He passed on to the fire, asking as he did so, "Where's mother?"

"Mother isn't very well, Daniel, nor very happy here, although I have done my best; your coming will do her good."

The sound of a strange voice in the living-room aroused the old lady from a dream of Daniel; and after she had assured herself that some one was there who talked like Daniel, she did not tie up her shoes,

nor smooth her hair, but, with more energy than she had shown since she had been there, threw herself in her son's arms.

"Oh! Daniel, my son, my son! You have come at last."

Daniel steadied her with his hands, holding her from him, and saying,

"Don't be foolish, mother; it is not like one of your dignity to act so childish."

"Daniel, I have lost all my dignity. Don't you see how old and trembling I am. I am not myself, Daniel. I feel as though I was going to die."

"Sit down, mother," said the son. "Annie, comb your mother's hair. I am sorry to see her look so slovenly."

"I would comb her hair every day if she would let me, but she has not been happy, Daniel; she has just longed and longed for you."

"That, of course, is a very reasonable thing for her to do; she feels her weakness and she needs some one with strength of character to assist her. You were never a strong woman."

"Daniel Doolittle, I would like to welcome you as a brother ought to be welcomed, but this is my house, *our* house, I should say, my husband's and my own, and our house is our kingdom. Please, while you stay here, conduct yourself accordingly."

"Don't quarrel, children," said Mother Doolittle, in a trembling voice. "I can't stand it. I would like to be happy just once before I die."

Annie tried to banish the terrible gloom in her home by interesting herself in Daniel's journey and studiously

avoided every subject that would call up any of the past bitter experience, but while she busied herself in getting the potatoes ready, so that the children who were all at school could have a good warm supper of "meat victuals" as it was called, Mother Doolittle whispered to Daniel, "Is 'Lisbeth alive yet?"

"She was a few weeks ago. I went to see her."

"Oh, Daniel! how did you dare to do it? Wasn't you afraid of the curse following you? and oh, Daniel! it hasn't followed you nor me; it has got here ahead of us both. The Rochester Knockings are right in the neighborhood, and they all believe in them here."

"Impossible," said the now startled Daniel, "but still I might have expected it, for there are legions of devils."

"You can't talk to them, Daniel. Annie and her husband, too, are as independent as they can be, and won't listen to a word against it in this house."

Daniel showed something akin to pity when he looked at his mother closely, and said, "Mother, are you sick?"

"Daniel, I don't ache anywhere, but I am scared. I am afraid I shall be sick. I am afraid I shall have to die. Sometimes I feel like holding my breath just as long as I can, for I used to hear that people were fore-ordained to breathe just so many breaths, and it seemed as though I was breathing so fast, so many times a day, and I am getting older every day. I count the days and say, 'one day less to live,' and when a week has gone, 'one week less to live.'"

"Mother, you are a Christian woman, and such thoughts are foolish. In the natural course of events

you cannot have much longer to live. I had supposed you felt your calling and election sure, although I know in some ways you have been delinquent to duty, and more than once broken over the strict rules you should have lived by."

"Daniel, don't; you hurt me. I have spent my life trying to build you up."

"Yes, you have been a good mother to me in the main."

Such a transformation as came over the face of his mother would have touched any one, however callous.

"Listen, Annie! Daniel says I have been a good mother. Say it once again, won't you?" and Daniel repeated it.

Mother Doolittle went to her room again, and Daniel confronted Annie as though he were an accusing spirit.

"Annie, do you know our mother is going to die?"

"I have feared it, Daniel, although she did not lose her appetite, or seem so weak, until a few days ago. We have tried to have her see a doctor, but she has refused."

"I think she will have one now," said Daniel, and his face softened, for memory was busy with him.

Whether it was the excitement of seeing her son, or whether it was some lurking disease they had not known of, that caused the change, they did not know, but the next morning she was unable to rise from her bed. The best physician within reach was called in. He said it was a general breaking down, medicine might stimulate and prolong life, but she would never be around any more.

"What was that he said to you, Daniel?" asked Mrs.

Doolittle, after the doctor had gone. "Didn't he say I couldn't live? Tell me, won't you?"

"No, not just that, mother, but something like it; that you would never get around any more."

"It's no wonder that I am dying like a dog; I've had nothing to strengthen me; give me something quick," and she sank back upon the pillows in a spasm of terror. Daniel hurriedly placed the cordial to her lips, and she swallowed it so quickly that it almost choked her.

"Thank God, I feel better," said she, a few moments after. "Don't leave me, stand by and give it to me if I feel again as though I was sinking way down through the bed and floor."

"Are you afraid of the pain of death, or of what follows in the after life?"

"I am afraid of both, Daniel. I can't see any light; it's all dark."

For days the poor old soul fought even the thought of death. She would spring up from a sleep caused by an opiate, with horror depicted upon her face. "Oh, Daniel, I saw myself in the ground, way down deep, and there wasn't any way for my soul to get out of the grave."

"Let me pray again for you, mother. Oh, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace."

"Stop, stop," screamed his mother. "Why, you are praying for me to die. Oh! they all want to get rid of me."

"Mother, you must be calm; you have nothing to fear. Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are. You know that, don't you, mother?"

Search for Him. I do not think I should feel as you do ; you are saved."

"Tell me about Jesus, Daniel." So he tried with choking voice to give words of comfort, but the words he had repeated so many times to others did not seem to apply to his mother, and the woman felt they had no meaning for her.

"He healed the sick ; He cast out devils ; why don't He make the way light for me ?" cried she, piteously.

Annie stole up to the bed after a time, and said : "Mother, let me take your hand. The way seems strange to you, but it will be bright. Father and Catherine, and all you love, will come and take you with them when the time comes, and you won't be lonely. Poor mother, try to trust."

"Daniel, come here. Annie says your father and Catherine will come for me. Daniel, can they ? How can they come ? They must be far away."

Something of faith in their presence came to Daniel as he stood by his mother's dying bed.

"I will pray they may come, if it will comfort you."

She did not interrupt him in that prayer, but fell into a sweet sleep.

The next morning there was on the face of Mother Doolittle a changed look, and she whispered, "Daniel, I'm not afraid any more."

"The Lord be praised," replied he fervently, for he was quite worn out with this terrible experience.

"I've seen your father and Catherine, and they told me not to fear."

"You have been dreaming, mother ;" but she shook her head, and a smile flitted over her face.

The dying eyes seemed full of a strange inquiry. The hands were raised, and the purple fingers noted.

"That means going with your father, Daniel," she whispered, and then a reaching out of both hands to unseen ones, the whisper, "Tell 'Lisbeth to forgive," and Mother Doolittle had crossed the threshold—a woman ripe in years, but with a dwarfed soul, had learned a new lesson in living.

"Thank heaven," said Annie, kneeling reverently by the still form.

"Amen," said Daniel Doolittle.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“'LISBETH'S DAY.”

MONTHS had passed away, and the March days were giving gentle reminders of spring. At the Barton home the winter had been one of beautiful revelation, and people for miles around had learned such lessons of 'Lisbeth as the wisest professors of well-known schools had failed to teach.

Nancy had stayed a few weeks, but as 'Lisbeth was gaining, in a measure, some appearance of health and strength, she deemed it best to return to her home—much to the discomfiture of George Green, who, in his frequent visits, had learned not only that Nancy was a willing student of progressive thought, but that she might be an ideal woman in a home, and their hearts had told to each other the sweet story of hope, though the lips had as yet remained mute.

'Lisbeth, the dream of his early youth, the martyred friend, the instrument of those unseen powers that dominated her life, and were permeating public thought with such sweet and holy views of the here and the hereafter, he held in thought, almost he feared, as some devotee bows at the shrine of his chosen saint.

The influence sent out from that remote farmhouse had been marvelous. 'Lisbeth had been attacked in the pulpit and by the press. Scathing criticisms had fairly

blistered the sheets of the weekly papers, until Aunt Betsy declared they should not come into the house ; but 'Lisbeth smilingly said, “They can't touch me, Aunt Betsy, and they won't you if you live in my world. I want to know all that is published ; nothing can hurt me.”

“Well, 'Lisbeth, I ain't good enough to live in your world, and I never shall be. I'd like to shake the hull caboodle of liars till their teeth chatter.”

Through the directions of 'Lisbeth's guides, one evening in the week (Thursday) was given to the people, and every bit of available space in the lower floor of the house was filled with eager listeners.

They called it “'Lisbeth's Day.” Uncle Isaac would build the fires, and bring in the new seats he had made, spreading over them blankets to make them more comfortable, and the smile on his face was pleasant to see.

“What makes you look so happy, Uncle Isaac ?” asked 'Lisbeth.

“Oh !” said he, “I'm thinkin' of old times, and jest comparin' 'em with the new. If this new light hadn't done anythin' in the world only to change your Aunt Betsy, it's worked a miracle. Jest imagine her fillin' up her house with seats, and havin' folks trampin' the mud or snow over her floors once or twice a week !

“No ; she would have said they better go to the school-house or the meetin' house to save souls. But now I don't hear her say a word ag'in it, and she don't jaw me when I try to help her, though the other day she did say that she couldn't git the mud up so but the dust would fly every time she swept, but she wasn't goin' to make a fuss about it ; she'd make friends even with the

dust, as she was goin' to dust herself, and hoped there'd be enough that was good about her old body to send up a flower or two to bless some one's life for a little while.

"I'm pretty mean myself, for I said to her, 'Betsy, if you're goin' to live in a flower or anything o' that kind, and somebody picks you and presses you between the leaves of some book, and the book gits burned up mebbe, how be you goin' to git yourself together at the Resurrection?' I expected she'd fly at me as she used to, but she spoke in a kind of a whisper :

"'Isaac, ain't you glad we've got rid o' that thought? I've laid awake nights thinkin' of that time of the Resurrection of the body, when the folks that we liked and the folks we didn't like would all get up out of the same graveyard, and how the bodies at the bottom o' the ocean, that the fish had eaten all they could of, and the Indians that's been buried settin' down hundreds of years mebbe, and the folks that was burned at the stake all of these years, would all go travelin' round with their old bones, and be in heaven some of 'em, and some of 'em burnin' and burnin'—it's been dretful to me. But now, when I know that it's a spiritual world, and that right here handy is the spiritual body, and I won't care for this old body no more'n I do for the finger nails I've cut off and burned up, I feel comfortable like, and it's all come through 'Lisbeth.'

"I see she was goin' to take on about gettin' you to marry Daniel, so I said, quick like, 'I see Jane Macomber this mornin' when I went by and she says she wants to read a poem next 'Lisbeth's Day.' That made her fire up lively, and she said, 'She won't read no

poem here 'Lisbeth's Day; it would be just like havin' little fire crackers to try to call folk's attention away from a cannon. No, sir, if Jane Macomber comes here she will keep her mouth shet.' ”

“ Dear Aunt Betsy, how good she is, and how good you two have been to me.”

“ Don't say anything, 'Lisbeth. I can't stand it.”

“ 'Lisbeth's Day ” had become a day looked forward to from week to week as a day of great revelations. Even some of the strictest orthodox people, who had never allowed themselves to become entangled in the wilderness of sin, gladly entertained some of their friends who lived at a distance, that they might hear about everything that occurred. Jane Macomber was as good as a newspaper to spread abroad the news ; how 'Lisbeth looked like an angel ; how she always stayed in the spare bedroom until all the folks were there, and seated just as still as they could be, and even then they would say “ Hush ! ” when they heard her open the door ; how she would take a chair at the end of the table, and just pass her hands lightly over her forehead and eyes, and then the light would come into her face, and she would rise up and sing words that had never been printed in books, and the tunes would be like the warble of a bird, and then sometimes like the moaning of the sea before a storm ; and then such a prayer, that just made the low room seem full of sunshine, though nothing but tallow candles were there. And the sermon !

Jane's descriptive powers gave out there. But on this particular night Jane had made up her mind she should be heard ; that the power of the spirit was upon

her. She had felt the chills down her back all day and it was proof to her that she was going to be inspired just like 'Lisbeth. She had been quiet when Aunt Betsy had told her "they didn't want any poemin' there that night," and decided that she should write a poem for her book upon "The soul that never sings."

The evening exercises were very beautiful. People listened hungrily to the philosophy of life, and if now and then some friend of olden days signified his or her presence, it was looked upon with thankfulness, but not with the desire to dethrone everything else. Freed from the nightmare of the vengeance of a cruel and unjust God, they were glad to lift their hearts on such occasions, to receive the revelations that severed slowly but surely every chain of the past.

There were those who had begun to experience unmistakable manifestations and had established home circles for development; but the quiet of "'Lisbeth's Day" was not interrupted by experiments of unseen forces, proving the two worlds recognized the necessity of these lessons, that, appealing to reason, lifted the veil from before those with darkened lives, and, as the flowers lift their sweet faces for the refreshing dews, so these souls were lifted up into a glory their lips could but poorly express.

Aunt Betsy kept her eyes upon Jane Macomber. She felt uneasy, as all through the beautiful discourse of 'Lisbeth she was acting so strangely. As soon as 'Lisbeth ceased, and before she could be led to her room, where the influence was thrown off, in order that she might return and greet the friends, Jane was on her feet. Rolling her eyes and throwing her arms round

wildly, she declared that she was the spirit of a sage of unrecorded ages ; that she had lived when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy —

Aunt Betsy made her way through the crowd, took hold of Jane's arm, and said, “Jane Macomber, set down and shet up. I knew you was pretty old, but I didn't know you belonged to unrecorded ages, whatever that is.”

Jane shuddered, made passes over her head, and said, in an apparently surprised tone, “What is it? I feel so strangely.”

“Oh, you do, do you? Well, you acted like a fool, anyway. Don't disturb any more meetin's on 'Lisbeth's Day.”

The following Saturday a letter was received that cast a gloom over the peace and quiet of the home. Jane Macomber had been there that day to talk over her wonderful experience, and, ever ready to bring forth some romantic thought, she had said :

“'Lisbeth, if I was in your place, I would not let Daniel Doolittle stand any more in the way of my soul's happiness. I would get a divorce from him. If you want me to, I will study up the law so that you can be free as a bird of the air, to let your bruised heart rest on the manly breast of George Green. I can see how you have both pined and pined, and felt that the dawn would never come. I have in my work bag here a poem on that very subject which I will read to you, and I am going to put it into my book.”

“No, you won't read no such poem here, and you needn't talk any o' that kind o' stuff to 'Lisbeth. I don't believe in no such nonsense. *Lean on the manly*

breast of George Green! It's *my* opinion she would have to push some one else out o' the way if she did. Besides, can you tell me what the use would be for 'Lisbeth to have two live husbands travelin' about the country?"

"Oh! dear Mrs. Barton, you are so unsophisticated that you do not know such ties as 'Lisbeth's are frequently severed."

"You needn't call me big names, Jane Macomber. I've got my opinion of this business of gettin' rid o' *one* husband so as to get another one. If folks can't live peaceable together let 'em keep apart. But don't you try to set 'Lisbeth up to any huntin' for congenial souls. That won't do in this house."

Just then Uncle Isaac came in with a letter in his hand, which he handed to 'Lisbeth, and sat down, bowing his head upon his trembling hands, as in prayer.

"Take it into the other room and read it," said Aunt Betsy to 'Lisbeth.

"How cruel you are, Mrs. Barton, to send her away. I so love to watch the expression of one's face when reading a letter."

Aunt Betsy did not reply, and Jane, feeling that nothing was to be gained by staying, went home.

'Lisbeth came slowly into the room, and said, "It's from Daniel."

"Read it," said Aunt Betsy, trying not to get excited. 'Lisbeth read:

"MRS. DANIEL DOOLITTLE:

"*Dear Madam,*—I take my pen in hand to write you that which I dare to hope you may have enough of

the semblance of yourself about you to be interested in. As you will see, I am at Annie’s. I have succeeded in getting a charge here, though with great difficulty. The power of evil is here. I am in the hot-bed of the Rochester Knockings, and am determined to crush out Satan, not in my own name, but ‘In His Name.’

“I shall come after you in June, and we will proceed at once to our home. I now command you, as one with authority, to be ready to leave behind you every particle of the delusion under which you have suffered. Blot out the memory even of it. You must come with me as clean as an unwritten page, upon which I shall trace the law, the truth and the life. My mother’s last days (for she is dead) were embittered by this terrible belief that has found its way into Annie’s household. She felt that life held nothing for her. She died in the triumphs of faith, and even had grace when she was dying to speak of you.

“There must be no ifs or ands about the future. You belong to me; that is as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Tell your uncle and aunt I have gotten over my weakness, and I shall not for an instant give ear to any pleadings. I hope you are recruited enough so you can do your own work. We can afford no help.

“Yours truly,

“DANIEL DOOLITTLE,

“Your Husband.”

’Lisbeth looked at her uncle and aunt with a smile on her face, and said, “Don’t worry; he can never have dominion over me again.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NANCY'S BETROTHAL.

THE weeks spent by Nancy at the Barton's were a revelation to her. The actual fact of spirit communion was indelibly impressed upon her. She had seen 'Lisbeth arise in the morning showing a weakness and languor that seemed to point with surety to an early passing out, change from a person of weakness to one of power; from the gentle, heart-broken mother, yearning for her boy, to the intellectual giant, who spoke of death as only growth, and strove to impress those present with the vast avenues of wisdom open to any receptive mind. When those were present who had passed under the rod of earthly afflictions, her face would become transfigured with a beauty unseen by them before, and with a strength not her own she would point out the way, the light and the life.

So frequent were the demands upon her that "'Lisbeth's Day" became an established thing. The little tavern in the village had a revenue never known before in that section to any landlord. People from Hartford, and all the surrounding towns, as well as from far away Boston, came and remained for days to study the woman and the power that dominated her. The ignorant and the creed-bound could only solve it in Daniel Doolittle's way — the works of the devil and witchcraft,

and many of these inquisitive intruders were shown the door, with the vigorous language of Aunt Betsy ringing in their ears.

'Lisbeth would say, "I am so sorry I am the cause of making you so much trouble;" and Aunt Betsy would answer, "'Lisbeth Chapin" (she never liked to call her Doolittle), "shet up, you ain't no trouble; but Isaac and me don't want folks comin' here imposin' on you, askin' if your head feels flighty, and tryin' to feel of your pulse, and liftin' up your eyelids when the power is on you. No, sir! there ain't no little upstart of a doctor goin' to tell *us* he wants to see you in the — what is it, Nancy, that man called it?"

"Cataleptic state," responded Nancy.

"*Catapictic* state," proceeded Aunt Betsy, wrathfully. "They can't fumble over *you*."

"No, they can't," said Uncle Isaac, "they don't know as much as the dumb critters." So the offending ones would be sent away and new people would come, intent upon investigations.

Through the whole experience 'Lisbeth manifested a patience that was wonderful to behold, and sometimes Aunt Betsy would say to Nancy, "There! hear her laugh; our 'Lisbeth's got back."

Into Nancy's life had come the revelation of an unspoken love, and she would whisper it low to herself, "I wonder if he loves me." Then knowing the past dream of 'Lisbeth's love for him, she would try to cast it aside, as though it did not belong to her.

"I don't know what we'll do when you're gone," said Aunt Betsy on the evening before Nancy's departure. "I want to pay you, and pay you well, for what

you have done for us, but I feel as though it would be hard sleddin' without you."

"Whatever you do, don't talk of pay, Mrs. Barton. Did you ever know the teachers in a good school to offer to pay their pupils in money for coming to school? I've been a student in one of the greatest schools any one could attend, with wise spirits from the other side of life as part of the faculty, and with disciplined spirits in the body as the remainder. I have become cognizant of transformation in human thought that has changed you, my friends, from what you say you were — always thinking of the power of God to smite — to the surety of a principle of love that is divine. Mrs. Barton, you and your husband have been great teachers to me, and though I deplore the sorrow that has brought me here, I feel thankful for all I have received while here."

Uncle Isaac reached down and took up yellow Jerry No. 2, and while he was stroking him gently, said, "Betsy, ain't it in the Bible that the weak and foolish things of life shall confound the wise? If so, mebbe we be teachers. Let's set up a school."

"It *is* set up," said Aunt Betsy, shortly.

"You will come to see us in June, remember, the first of June, will you not?" said 'Lisbeth, as she bade her friend good-by.

George Green was present and both eyes and lips said, "Do come in June."

The eyes were dim with tears that watched Nancy, as she disappeared with her brother Henry around the bend in the road.

Some lives seem fitted to twine themselves around other lives. The subdued, soul-educated Nancy had

still some of the fire that showed itself in the home of Daniel Doolittle when she called Mother Doolittle "an old cat," but over that spirit had come the softening influence of the beautiful soul of 'Lisbeth, and her own soul had echoed the harmony.

Nancy's return to her father's house was heralded by Sample Palmer, who, with groans and tears, was asking all the neighbors to have seasons of prayer; that now the Doolittles were out of the way, it might be the Lord's will to take Nancy from under the dominion of Satan. But in her first visit to Nancy she forgot her anxiety, in her desire to hear about 'Lisbeth.

"How is that poor, miserable, bewitched critter, Nancy?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked Nancy.

"Why, the unworthy wife of Daniel Doolittle."

Nancy had to choke down her temper to reply that she thought 'Lisbeth was some better physically, and a shining light mentally.

"How does she shine?" asked Sample.

"With a crown of love so grand that she can pay kindness for unkindness, love for hate."

A look of disgust passed over the face of Sample Palmer, and with a sneer that could be felt, she said, "How does she and the *rubbin'* doctor, George Green, git along?"

Nancy was not an angel yet, and if a flash of the eye could kill, Sample Palmer would have fallen to the floor.

"George Green, the magnetic doctor, and 'Lisbeth have had no trouble, I think."

"Well! such goin's on as I have heerd of there is

enough to make the hull world disgusted, and it would if they could only hear about it. It's enough to be a witch without draggin' down decent people. Poor Mr. Doolittle! he will never ag'in be a light in the world because of what his wife has done."

"Do you think it would be quite fair for Mr. Doolittle to suffer for what his wife has done?" Nancy looked wonderingly at her brother Henry, but he continued, unheeding, "Now supposing, Miss Palmer, you had near relatives in this place, do you think they ought to suffer for your getting your name into everybody's mouth, trying to court Elder Evans in his own house, so soon after his wife had died, and persisting in it until he himself had to tell you to stay away, and bring you to account for produce you had taken away from the house? I should be very sorry, if you had any friends, for them to suffer for what you had done."

Sample Palmer's face was a study; wrath, shame and a desire for revenge vied with each other for supremacy, and with a haste hardly in keeping with her corpulent body, she drew her shawl around her and left the house, closing the door with a bang.

"Oh, Henry, how could you?" said his mother, reproachfully.

"I could just as well as not, and I did," said Henry. "I knew she would make Nancy's life miserable, and now we have her back we want her happy."

Widow Simmons came in after a few days, glad to see Nancy, and inquired about 'Lisbeth, with so kindly a light in her eyes, that Nancy broke down and cried.

"They all call 'Lisbeth better, but I know she is not going to live long. I feel it and I believe she does."

Then Widow Simmons, when she was alone, with Nancy, told her, with blushing face, that she was soon to be married.

"You remember the Mrs. Rogers I nursed out Hartford way, who died with consumption? Well, her husband wants me to be his wife, and I am going to be."

"What is his religious belief?" asked Nancy.

"He is a Universalist, but says he is willing to learn any new truth. And, oh, Nancy! it seems as though it is too good to be true, that I can have a good husband and a good home, and have the hard work done for me. I feel I don't deserve it."

"There! Stop that!" said Nancy. "We all know you do, so just be happy." And a few weeks from that time, Widow Simmons had bidden good-by to the scenes of her troubles, and gone into a home of comparative luxury.

Sample Palmer spread such wild rumors around the neighborhood about Nancy that when she went to the little church presided over by an elderly clergyman, she attracted so much attention that she said she hardly felt like going out anywhere.

Elder Evans, true to his faith, passed into the eternal world soon after her return, and when, after Nancy had been home a few weeks, she began to study her father and mother, it was with a feeling of fear. Were they, too, drifting out of life? But it was only the gradual ripening process, and her absence had simply made it more apparent to her.

When Nancy parted with George, whatever understanding there may have been between them was un-

spoken, but they knew that soul could speak to soul with tenderest meaning, and that spoken promises would make no stronger the love which demanded love, or claimed it as a right. Nancy was, therefore, not at all surprised when she received a letter which expressed his loving faith in her.

"Nancy, you know that you belong to me, and I to you; that life would be dreary without the prospect of your sweet companionship. What day will you name as the gladdest of all glad days, when you and I will be forever united? Is there need for us to long delay the happiness which is rightfully ours?"

He wrote of his plans for the future and consulted her wishes in regard to a home. "My first duty will, of course, be to my parents; but they are both looking forward to the new life, and my sister, now grown up, will stay by them while they remain with us. She was, as you know, the child almost of their old age, and they live in her. Still, nothing shall sever me from doing my duty to them, nor do I think you would desire it, more than I desire to break the ties of your home life."

"I feel strangely about 'Lisbeth," continued the letter. "She seems dreaming half of the time. She says she sees Danny and her mother so much that she is almost taken away from herself. It is hard to witness the anxiety of Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy as they watch her. Uncle Isaac will look at her as she sits with radiant face, bent forward, and eyes wearing the expression of one who is looking into another world (as she is), and he will lay his hand upon her shoulder, and say, 'Lisbeth! 'Lisbeth! Do come back!' With a little start she will say, 'Oh! I am sorry I keep leaving you.'

My thought is, it will not be long before she will be with her child."

Nancy read the letter over twice; then went to her people and read it aloud to them. No fault was found.

"I think he is worthy of you," said Henry. "But, oh, Nancy! It will be lonely without you."

"It's the best thing that could come to us," said the mother, "to see our children happily settled before we die. I can only say, God make you happy, child."

A youthful voice was heard at the door as the twilight deepened.

"Mis' Brown, will you come over to Sample Palmer? She's got a fit or something, and my ma wants you right away."

The family all started, and found kind neighbors trying to call life back to the unfortunate woman, who had passed out in a fit of apoplexy. Henry, who only a few weeks before had indulged in scathing words to the lonely old woman, said, as he helped carry her to her bed, "I wish I hadn't said what I did to her; I would like dead folks to feel kindly to me."

They found a strange medley in that house, — samples of almost everything; tea enough to last a long time, had she continued to board around as usual. They found money as well — change done up in little cloths, and buried in tea-cups of rice, or bowls of salt. She had made no provision as to the disposal of her property, and the number of people who claimed to be blood relations was something to be remembered. The contest about the little property had to be settled by lawyers, who helped themselves so liberally in fees that there was not much left to divide.

The funeral sermon was remembered for years as one untrue to the woman's life, and the fulsome flattery showered over the lifeless body served to leave a feeling of disgust in the memory even of those who claimed to be her best friends. There is something about this guest who enters every home that serves to cast over the lives of even the most unfortunate a veil of charity that not only helps the living, but gives to the freed spirit a desire to study the conditions which will help in the new activities of the higher life.

So of Sample Palmer's past there were no reproachful thoughts, and though no stone marks her resting place, a rose bush gives to the sometime visitor of its beauty and fragrance, and that rosebush was planted by the hand of Nancy Brown.

CHAPTER XXXV.

GROWING OLD.

SPRING in all its beauty was sending out to the world its glad message of resurrection and life. At the Barton home indications of the usual spring house-cleaning were visible, and Aunt Betsy, with the help of the hired man's wife, and often the hired man himself, to say nothing of Uncle Isaac's attempt at whitewashing, was asserting her old-time authority and making it a little uncomfortable for all concerned. 'Lisbeth had tried in vain to do something to help along.

"Aunt Betsy," said she, "I can just as well wash the dishes as not, and get the meals, too," but she was refused, Aunt Betsy declaring that there were enough folks to do the work who were "just human and that was all," without one who was half the time lent to angels of light. No; 'Lisbeth could read or write or sew a little, but if she *was* strong enough to do it, and Aunt Betsy knew she was *not*, she shouldn't work.

So 'Lisbeth's life was that of a high priestess to the people, and the sick, the weary and the wicked laid their burdens at her feet. Should a trial come to any one for miles around, were there troubles to be settled between neighbors, or were there disastrous losses, the first question asked was, "Have you been to see 'Lisbeth?"

In some instances the people responded to the question with words more emphatic than complimentary, and declared they had had enough of trouble without going to a witch to be helped into more, while others told of the sweet peace and loving kindness that had come to their lives by learning of the comforting religion that not only helped through dark places in life but gave added assurances about the other world. The direct testimony of the present, with witnesses to prove it, was more to them than faith without the true witness of the spirit could ever have been.

After 'Lisbeth's room had been thoroughly cleaned, and she was told by Aunt Betsy to keep out of the "muss," she could but wonder as she sewed and listened, how she had ever lived in that world of work. She looked at her frail white hands, and holding them up to the light of the April sun, said: "Could such transparencies ever have accomplished anything?" Then came the thought, "Yes, if Danny had stayed with me, I would have made them, with God's help, stronger than iron. Oh! my precious boy." Then would come the happy vision of mother and Danny, and the half-sigh, "I am content to wait."

She smiled and remarked to Uncle Isaac one day during the cleaning that it seemed like old times when Aunt Betsy, almost trembling with rage, said, "Isaac Barton, what be you about? Whitewashin' the cellin' or the floor?" and Uncle Isaac responded meekly, "Betsy, by the looks, I guess it's the floor."

"Well, then, git right down. I don't want any more to clean up; you always was so careless. I'll do it myself."

“Very well, Betsy; I guess you’d better. Sometimes my arm trembles and I grow dizzy lookin’ up.”

Aunt Betsy wound a white cloth around her head like a turban and went to work. “I’d like to know if he went straight any of the time, and where he left off; I guess it’s here, but it’s awful crooked like.” Dipping deeper than she meant to into the whitewash, her first act was to deposit a large blotch of it upon her nose, and as it ran into her mouth there was a choking sound that caused Uncle Isaac to softly remark that he “had ’bout as soon hev it on the floor as in his mouth.”

“Go to the barn, Isaac Barton, and tend to the critters. I can’t do anything with you watchin’ round and laughin’ inside.”

Uncle Isaac, glad to be freed from the “dumb bother,” started for the barn, while Aunt Betsy again made the attempt, but a few strokes of the brush showed her that there had come to muscle and sinew a change, that the orders of the brain were not being faithfully carried out; in fact, that that which a few years before had been her delight must be done by other and younger hands. So the hired man’s wife was called in and the work put into her hands, with the words:

“I’ve concluded I hain’t goin’ to hev hired help round and do all the hard jobs myself; I’ve been doin’ that altogether too long.”

But she watched for Uncle Isaac to come in from the barn, met him at the woodshed door, and said, “Isaac, I was mean to talk to you as I did about the whitewashin’. I can’t whitewash the ceilin’ either; it came mostly into my face or onto the floor, and oh! Isaac, it’s because we’ve grown so old. I don’t like to grow old.

It makes me tremble to think what it means, and our home here is so pleasant."

"Betsy, put on your bunnet and come out here. There! look here at these pineys, see this pretty green sprout, look at them all around. I'll dig up this root. See how old and brown the hide looks, but it's burst and gittin' ready to blossom. I don't s'pose it hurts any gittin' ready, and it must be glad, if it knows anything, to be a great white piney. When we tremble and fool round whitewashin', and can't git things right down here in the dirt of the world, it's 'cause there's somethin' inside of our souls that's jest claimin' its right to blossom somewhere. So don't let's mind, Betsy, how or when it comes, this sproutin' time to our souls, if only we're spared to see 'Lisbeth through."

"I don't s'pose we can regulate that either, Isaac; though I do think we shall see Sarah's child through. But it's strange, and I can't make it all out. I can't see for the life of me how so ugly a woman as old Mis' Doolittle can die in the triumphs of faith, while lots of folks that have been real decent keep drawin' back their feet when they come near touchin' the waters that they say we must all step into."

"Betsy, last 'Lisbeth's Day don't you remember that was explained? There ain't any water at all, it's all a figger of speech, and dyin's only livin'; and as for old Mis' Doolittle, sometimes I think if Daniel did write it, we don't just know what he's talkin' about. He wouldn't have a Doolittle die any other way."

"Well, it's strange that when 'Lisbeth knows he's comin' after her in June she don't worry about it. All I've ever heard her say was, 'He can have no more

dominion over me.' And I've thought mebbe, oh, Isaac !
I've *thought* — ”

“ So hev I, Betsy, that mebbe the angels would take her away instid of Daniel Doolittle.”

“ I must go into the house,” said Aunt Betsy. “ It ain't right standin' round here talkin' to you instid of watchin' hired help.”

“ I like to hev you talk to me this kind o' way, Betsy ; and, somehow, I trust our hired help more'n I used to.”

A week after the above conversation, when the house was a model of neatness, Uncle Isaac said to his wife, “ Betsy, we begin 'Lisbeth's Day ag'in in May. The roads are gittin' real dry. George Green has been tellin' me what we'd better do to accommodate the crowd — have the meetin's in the orchard. He says lots of the neighbors will give lumber and help make the seats, and we can make a sort of preachin' stand for 'Lisbeth and two or three others to set or stand in, and have it covered with green boughs every Sunday.”

“ Isaac Barton, do you mean to tell me that you are goin' to have the meetin's *Sunday* ? ”

“ Yes, Betsy, if 'Lisbeth's helpers think it best. George Green says they are havin' these kind o' meetin's everywhere Sundays, and that it's pure religion that's bein' taught ; and that when folks do come, they will hev to own up that that's what they want, instid of makin' some other excuse and then attendin' 'Lisbeth's Day.”

Therefore it became an established fact that there should be services on Sunday in the Barton orchard when it was pleasant, and in the house when it rained.

It was 'Lisbeth's idea to be dressed in white and wear a little bunch of flowers as her only ornament — always forget-me-nots when they could be secured ; if not, some other flower of soft shade and sweet perfume.

The services seldom varied, unless, as sometimes occurred, some guest was present who would take part in the exercises. George Green was always master of ceremonies, and often made remarks upon the gifts of the spirit, and practised his gift of healing in ways that were considered miraculous. Those who were opposed were terribly opposed, and would circulate the most revolting scandal, which, when it reached the ears of 'Lisbeth, would be passed off with a troubled look and the words, "Oh, I'm sorry ; I thought she was my friend," or, "I expected better things of him ; he is a professed Christian."

"'Lisbeth Chapin," said Aunt Betsy one day, after hearing such a remark, "I guess we all know by this time that profession ain't always possession, but if folks have got religion it will work out, you can't shet it up and keep it. When they talk that way about you, 'tain't no Christ talkin' through them ; it's jest their own wicked selves ; and since I've come to know 'In His Name' Doolittle, and see how he's carried sail — "

"Oh, don't, Aunt Betsy ! He's Danny's father."

"Well, I don't want to hurt your feelin's, but the side of your Danny that will make him grow more like the highest angels won't be the Doolittle side."

When 'Lisbeth knew that George Green was to marry her dearly beloved friend Nancy, she asked eagerly that they should be married soon. "I want to see you happy together before I pass away."

"What makes you talk so, 'Lisbeth?" responded George. "You are much better than ever we thought to see you, and I believe you will live to do a great deal of good; you could not be spared."

'Lisbeth's countenance changed, and she seemed looking beyond the depths of human mysteries into the Beyond, viewing with the eyes of the mystic things which her friend could not see, listening with her soul to sounds that could not reach his deaf ears.

At last she spoke. "I can tell you, friend of the happiest years of my life in a worldly sense, what I know is coming to me. I do not dare tell uncle and aunt about it, yet it comes to me constantly, this surety of release; this looking beyond the veil to my new home. I do not know the time, but I sing it over in my soul, their promise that it will not be long, and I believe it will be weeks and not months when I shall go. I know that he who is the father of my child will never again compel me to be the mistress of his house. Another messenger will come for me whose hand I shall take. I cannot tell the day nor the hour, but were it not for my dear friends I would be glad if it were to-morrow. I have done what I could, and these friends, unseen by you who compass me about, tell me of a higher, more beautiful work when freed from the mortal. Therefore, George, write Nancy to come, and so will I. I want her near me, I need her loving tenderness; and don't tell Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy. I do not want to grieve them."

"Lisbeth, dear child, I think your unseen friends are mistaken. You are weak, it is true, and cannot bear much, but don't get it into your head it's your duty to

die, for there is much in human belief. If you think death to your body all the time, it will be death; think life awhile longer. You cannot be spared. Who could take your place? You have been used by our friends to voice truths to those who have needed something to break the bondage of the past, but your work is only just begun. Oh, 'Lisbeth, try to live." And, strong man though he was, there was a sound of suppressed sobbing.

George Green did not in the least care for 'Lisbeth in the old sense. The sunny, mischievous girl had died to him long ago. It was the genius which shone through the instrument, the good the world needed, that could not, he almost felt, be completed without this woman, who was chosen to lead out of the wilderness of doubt. This thought made him an earnest suppliant for her physical life to be continued.

"You are quite mistaken, George. These months that seem like long, long years since Danny went to mother have to me, while learning my new lessons, and being the message bearer to others, been months of preparation. I fairly count the days sometimes. I watch my strength waning, and say, the clock will stop some time soon, for the heart beats so feebly, and I want that last day to be more bright than any day of my life has been. My joy will be intensified, glorified; do not let it be dimmed by the sight of tears. Oh! George, help them, these friends of mine, to be brave.

"There are others coming to fill my place. The spirit of truth has touched many souls. Some one has sent me a paper from Boston, and in it messages from the dead have been printed. That paper says there are

those possessed of marvelous gifts being heard of all over the country, but that like other newly developed ideas, there is much to regret; that the true phenomena are being so cleverly imitated that constant care is needed to distinguish between the true and the false; that audible voices of those called dead speak in the darkness, and that music is played by spirit hands.

“Oh! the world is so wide, George, and there is so much to learn, and all these people upon whom the gifts of the spirit have fallen have to suffer, some in mild ways, and others in ways marked by struggle and persecution. I do not want to stay very much longer, still I am willing to leave out all there is of self, give the last remnant of my strength, and then, for a strength that never fails, and a work that in the vast cycles of eternity will be more and more a joy to me. Oh, this eternal growth, how it fills me with the thought of God’s great completeness.”

’Lisbeth, completely exhausted, leaned back in her chair and looked like one dying. George took the cold, pulseless hands and again warmed them into life, but as he went to his home he mused, “It isn’t the province of angels to live here all of the time; it isn’t their native element. ’Lisbeth will leave us,” and he wrote his thoughts to Nancy.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS."

THE meetings out-of-doors made it possible for hundreds to attend upon 'Lisbeth's Day. The orthodox city of Hartford was frequently well represented. Some of the best teachers of the day, and even noted divines, came out into the wilderness to see a reed shaken by the wind, and found falling from the lips of this frail girl-woman such words of wisdom, such knowledge of both sacred and profane history, such power of language and purity of thought, as made the most pronounced critics say, "Whence comes this woman's peculiar power?"

The morning service would often be the heart to heart talk that brought peace to weary souls ; such sermons as opened the doors to the City Celestial, and made her hearers feel that they almost caught a glimpse of the legions of angels who could come at call.

In the afternoon all would be changed. The tender face would assume the appearance of strength, until in its very rigidity there would come over it the look of bitterness and denunciation so unlike the instrument used that the very transfiguration must have convinced the thoughtful, if no word had been spoken, of another individuality dominating her brain. Frequently there came one who was acquainted with Greek literature, who

knew its poets and philosophers, its history and mythology, who could quote from Homer, Pindar and Euripides, who had studied the religious systems of the past.

He would arraign the Christianity of the day with words so withering in their import that they sounded, even to 'Lisbeth's best friends, almost like blasphemy. With the human Jesus he had no quarrel, but with the claim that He was the Lord of lords, and King of kings, he had no patience.

"Should not a God prove Himself a God? How can the finite kill the Infinite? Would any cross be strong enough to compel a God to suffer upon it?"

This influence always disturbed 'Lisbeth. "Oh, how I wish my lips never had to utter such words. My soul is not in harmony with them." But every lecture of the kind would bring its quota of people, who would wait to catechize her. What had she studied? Was she familiar with the authors she had quoted? What books did she read? Would she be kind enough to show them her library?

Aunt Betsy, in her vigorous way, would say, "Come along, I'll show you her books, or *our* books; she hasn't any;" and they would find the Bible, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a *History of the Colonies*, the *War of the Revolution* and the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

"Do you mean to tell me, madam, that these books are all she has made a study of?"

"Yes, I do; unless Mr. Doolittle, her husband, had some that she studied. I guess he didn't though. She wouldn't have no time there anyway, if she had wanted to study, and I guess a minister of the Gospel, if he

didn't amount to much, wouldn't have any such stuff as she has been made to say this afternoon."

"Then you don't like it," said one of the visitors.

"No, I don't, nor she don't neither, but you see there's all kinds of folks been dyin' for thousands o' years, and it would be queer if some hard cases didn't get back."

"If that is so, madam, you are allowing a most dangerous doctrine to be propagated. If the evil ones can come and display such a spirit of destruction to everything held dear in the past, there ought to be a stop put to it."

"You are a minister and think you know. I ain't goin' to say though that there wasn't any truth in what was said. It appears in old times, folks laid a good deal more to Jesus than He wanted 'em to. The human kept gittin' ahead of Him, and though He was wonderful, He lived the plainest sort of a life."

"'I and my Father are one.' What do you do with that, madam?"

"Why, I believe it, of course; so does 'Lisbeth, so does Isaac, that the very best of us just belongs to God and God belongs to us."

"I have heard, Madam Barton, that you were once a good Christian woman, and abounded in grace, and —"

"Well, I wasn't one bit Christ-like. I thought I was, but it was only when I could have my way that any one could get along with me. Isaac Barton suffered more when I abounded in grace than he ever has since. I learned that to abound in grace was to bear things and do as I would be done by. I've never thought half so much about Christ as I have since I

knew what He said was true, that He came to make folks better. He didn't go preachin' about them two folks in the garden that affected a whole world full of folks, 'cordin' to the old idee, but He told 'em right out plain to behave themselves. When He got riled He called them a generation of vipers. I don't think He did near as much good as He did when He was tender-hearted and cried about Jerusalem. If you want to talk about that Man of Sorrows, I could talk all day, but I can't abide that kind of talk that makes God worse than any unfortunate human person. Won't you come in and have a bite to eat?"

The reverend gentleman thought he would; not that he was hungry, but he wanted to study, if possible, more into the life of the frail little woman who had electrified her audience that day, from such different standpoints. In that he was disappointed, for 'Lisbeth had at once gone to her room, and with the kindly help of friends, had changed her garments, and was lying upon her bed panting from very weakness.

"One more day's work done; one day nearer my beloved ones."

"Did you speak, 'Lisbeth?" said Mrs. Green, who was with her.

"Not to you, dear," was the reply, "and you may go now. Let down the curtains and I will try to rest."

Meanwhile, Jane Macomber had espied the reverend gentleman sitting in the yard, and approached him. The brown spots on her cheeks newly painted, her scant locks curled at each side of her face, and her immense leg-o'-mutton sleeves, newly stiffened, were in strange contrast to her very small body.

"Pardon my intrusion, my dear sir ; my name is Macomber, Miss Jane Macomber, and I have been studying with great interest the marvelous expression of your face, as you sat lost in wonder and adoration at the words that fell from the lips of our sainted 'Lisbeth. I thought I could read in the depths of your clear blue eyes the desire to inscribe upon the tablets of your memory every word that fell with such gentle grace, and, later on, such wonderful words of denunciation of old theology."

"Madam, I am a minister of the Gospel. Old theology is good enough for me, but I will own that I have been very much puzzled that this unlearned woman should have such a power of expression, and I am somewhat disappointed that I cannot have an opportunity of conversing with her."

"It was that disappointment which drew me to your side, and I have come with healing in my wings."

The gentleman looked at her marvelous sleeves and smiled, but Jane, all unconscious of the smiling sarcasm, continued, "The spirit has also fallen upon me, and although I have not yet the power of 'Lisbeth I shall soon be upon the platform, and will now, if you desire it, give way to those divine influences that are ever by my side."

Suiting the action to the word, she arose and was going through the preparatory struggle of spirit, as she called it, to give forth words of courage to the hungry-hearted divine, when Aunt Betsy stepped out into the yard and giving her a violent shake, said, "Jane Macomber, we don't want any such doin's. Come in and help me set the table."

"Oh! ah! where am I? Yes, I see; memory again asserts itself. May I ask if during my momentary unconsciousness, before I was rudely awakened by the superior force of muscle, if there were any words dropped that were like apples of gold in pictures of silver?"

"Well, no; I didn't hear any."

"Never mind, my dear sir, I will invite you to my humble home, and there you can drink rich draughts from the fountain of wisdom, and though I feel shy about speaking of it, I have had an impression that in a business way (if in no other way) our lives may be linked together. I have a most valuable book of poems that as yet the world knows nothing about. I would like to make you a sharer in the proceeds that will come from their publication. I will also ask you to write me an introduction. Ah, you see," she continued, playfully, "I know in whom my heart trusteth."

"Come, Jane." It was Aunt Betsy's call in her most impatient tones, and Jane obeyed.

George Green had been an amused listener to the conversation narrated above, and remarked to the clergyman that he hoped he would not judge all the company by the unfortunate woman who had just addressed him. He then outlined her history, spoke of her loneliness, and that her belief that she was a great poetess had helped her bear privation and struggle. George Green could not be unjust to any one; if there was one ray of light to shine he always found it.

"No," said the minister, smiling; "I could not do that, for I found, in the crudest expression I have heard, a depth of meaning that is a sermon in itself. Mrs. Barton is a very intelligent woman, is she not?"

"Yes," replied George, "she is intelligent, but uneducated and unconventional; yet, if her real impulses for good could be brought before the world in a more efficient manner, she would be a teacher to the untaught as she is to-day a helper of the helpless."

"She has taught me a lesson to-day of great value," but he did not say what it was.

After deep thought he again addressed George with the question,

"Do you believe in suicide?"

"Most certainly not?"

"Do you believe in slow murder?"

"Why should you ask me such a question? Of course I do not."

"Well, it is being reported that you understand mesmerism, and that it is your power over this young woman that renders it possible for her to speak as she has spoken to-day. It was to prove these reports true, or learn of their fallacy, that I came here to-day. If you hold this wonderful power, and she is willing to be subject to it, it is suicide of the most pronounced type on her part; and, if she is not willing and you are casting over her this influence, I should have to use that other and more obnoxious word concerning you."

"Believe me," said the surprised young man, "that this is a great mistake. I know little about mesmerism, but am convinced of its claims. I possess animal magnetism to some considerable extent, and have been enabled to help her physically, but I have no power to touch that brain, as it is being constantly touched by these unseen forces, to give out such words of life as are being given."

"What do you mean by unseen forces?"

"The spirits of the so-called dead."

"How do they do it?"

"The same law of inspiration which obtained in the past is working to-day with renewed power. You, as a minister of the Gospel, have no right to deny it, and cling to your Bible. If, for an instant, you allow the claims of Mesmer to be true, you are admitting the fact of the power of mind over mind. If the embodied can so control, think of the power of the disembodied, freed from the trammels of the flesh, to find our sensitives in life, and give their thoughts, some wise and helpful, others cruel and selfish, according to the plane they were on intellectually when they passed out of the physical."

"Well, I am interested in that woman. If it is the spirits of the dead, have they any right to kill her?"

"No, they have not; neither are they doing it. Could you have seen her right from the hands of one of your kind, one who had taken the same vows you have, but did not have enough of the Christ love about him to even keep his heavy hand from showering blows upon their helpless child, that resulted in convulsions which caused death; if you could have seen that young mother sent back from death's door by the angels, to fulfil what they said would be a short mission ere she joined her child; if you could know the wonderful, and to some, supernatural power, that sways that brain and body whenever under this control, and know how, even now, she seems drifting into the other life only to catch from them strength to give out new lessons, you would bid all your cynical, unbelieving thoughts depart,

and you yourself would become a student of this science of the soul."

"I am not as ignorant as you may think. I have read some of the writings of that strange seer, A. J. Davis, and must own I am interested; but reading is one thing and seeing and hearing another. If the living can be the interpreters of the dead, there must come soon a new era in all religious thought, a great awakening. Do not the spirits tell you so?"

"Yes, they speak of an awakening, but are not as sanguine as I am of results to the masses. There are those teaching to-day who have been martyrs to the religious intolerance of the past, and they tell us that the light will dawn upon the people slowly but surely; for they say even heredity must be changed by the proper education of generations to come, that sometimes these religious tendencies that only deal with the doctrinal points, all letter and no spirit, are as much inherited as the color of the eyes.

"Yes, we have had wonderful privileges, but still fully realize that through the present instrument they are short lived. We are told not only by her who feels her nearness to the other life, but by the guides, that she can work more effectively upon that side than here, and that the time of her dissolution is near."

"Well, it is all very strange; no wonder it has been said of these revelations that those who come to scoff remain to pray. I shall pray to be led rightly, for there are so many witnesses whose testimony cannot be disputed that I cannot feel it all a myth, or the works of the Evil One."

After he had been refreshed with a good cup of tea

and a bountiful repast, he started off toward the Corners alone, as he came, and not one had really been any the wiser about him, save George Green, who kept his impressions to himself.

The week following the meeting of the last Sunday in May was one of unusual depression, physically, to 'Lisbeth, and the mental was, in a way, swayed by the weak condition of the body. For three days she sat up very little, but when Thursday morning brought Nancy, the joy of seeing her was so great that for a time she seemed to revive, and talked much like her old self. But on Saturday a great unrest came over her. She would wander out into the orchard, then rest, then follow Uncle Isaac to the garden, looking at him so wistfully that he would say :

"What is it, poor lamb? Are you afraid that man will make you go with him? Tell me all about it; won't you?"

And she would reply, "No, Uncle Isaac, I am not afraid of any one, only I want you to see me all you can."

"Bless your heart, I want to see you always," and a tear would trickle down his wrinkled cheek.

On Saturday evening, just as it was growing dusk, she went up to Aunt Betsy, and throwing her arms around her, caressed her as she would a grieved child; but no tears dimmed her eyes. To Nancy only she told the secret.

"Nancy, I'm going soon to mother and Danny. They have told me so, and I am so sorry for Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy. The rest of you can get along, but they will be so lonely. Oh, so lonely!"

Nancy tried to have her take some medicine or to be treated, but she said, "I don't want to stay ; the time is nearly up."

Nancy told George of her fears, and George tried to dissuade 'Lisbeth from appearing before the large audience that he knew she would have to face that day ; but she said, "I shall work to the last ; do not try to dissuade me."

Never before in all the history of 'Lisbeth's work had there been such a manifestation of the spirit as upon the first Sunday in June. There was nothing to mar the harmony, although many new faces were present. It was long remembered that this day, of all the days of 'Lisbeth's work, was the sweetest. And there was discovered a sound in her voice that seemed like an anthem of triumph when she sang.

The subject of the morning was, "I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you." And most beautifully did she portray the loving tenderness of the Nazarene, who, even with all the darkness, pain and conflict known to Him, thought of those who would mourn His loss. She declared that that which was possible for Him to do was possible for all loving hearts, for was He not our elder brother ?

"If," said she, "the time comes soon when the instrument through whom these words are spoken should leave you, or, at least, you no longer hear her voice or see her form, her love for you will bring her back to you. She will keep in touch with your troubled or peaceful lives, and you shall not be comfortless, for she will co-operate with other friends to lift the veil and give you a clearer sight."

The subject of the afternoon was "Rest," and the discourse, like that of the morning, was marked by an absence of anything dogmatic or unfriendly to any class. It seemed as though it was a foretaste of the future, enlarging the thoughts and sympathies of humanity, replacing the old-time narrowness with an appreciation of the fact that life, rather than belief, reveals the stature and development of the soul. Rest, she said, was not idleness, but harmonious action. She appealed to their higher natures to live the best that was in them, and to know the best.

At the close of the service, for the first time since her public work began, she lingered and took the hands of the friends in hers, her lips moving as though she had good news to tell, but was kept from telling it.

All remembered her as they saw her last that day, for even when the house was reached she turned, framed in the rose-embowered door, and raising her handkerchief in her hand waved again a sweet good-by.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE STRANGER.

NANCY stayed with 'Lisbeth as much as she could, the never to be forgotten days of that week; yet even with her friend beside her, she was dreamy and strange.

Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy said they felt like going on tip-toes around the house, for there seemed a mystery all about them. Neighbors, uneasy in spite of themselves at the turn the last meeting had taken, came and went, and conversed in low tones about the incidents of the previous Sunday.

Aunt Betsy was even patient with Jane Macomber, who came with a poem to read about "'Lisbeth with a halo around her head," and said, "Jane, sometimes I've treated you real mean. I see it now, and I'm sorry."

"Oh! Mrs. Barton, most delightful of friends, I will come over to-morrow and read you a number of my poems that you have never heard," but Aunt Betsy told her "not to overdo the poem business, and she would try to get along with her."

They all watched the happy-hearted George and Nancy, when he came evening after evening, to tell over and over again the old, old story, as old as God Himself, the story of love; and the murmur of their voices made Uncle Isaac dream of days long gone when he was whispering in willing ears the same story.

On Wednesday evening, 'Lisbeth bade her friends good-night before the candles were lighted, and went to her room. Nancy, who had occupied 'Lisbeth's old room upstairs during her present visit, followed softly to see if all was well, but, instead of quietly sleeping, 'Lisbeth was kneeling by the bedside, the rays of the full moon shining upon her face.

"Oh, 'Lisbeth, why are you not in bed? You will surely catch cold with that window open, and the cold air coming in upon you."

'Lisbeth did not move, and upon closer investigation Nancy found her cold and rigid as though dead.

Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy responded to the call for help, and 'Lisbeth was laid in her bed. Soon the near neighbors were around, trying to bring life back to the still form.

Their efforts were rewarded, for 'Lisbeth looked wonderingly at them, and said in a disappointed tone, "Oh, I am here yet, and I just gave my hands to mother to help me across to Danny. I thought the time had come."

A physician was summoned, but he shook his head. "It is only a question of time; there is nothing to build upon physically, and the spiritual needs no remedy. My services are not required."

'Lisbeth talked little, but watched for three days that which was invisible to other eyes. When they asked if she were in pain, she said, "Ought I to suffer pain before I can be released? If so, I will welcome pain. I'm just held here by a little thread."

When Sunday morning came, there seemed a restlessness about her not noticed before. "What is it, 'Lis-

beth?" asked Aunt Betsy, as she bowed her old head to hear the whisper.

"I want you to send for Mr. Barnes, and I want to see George and Nancy married before I go, right here to-day."

Aunt Betsy could refuse nothing that 'Lisbeth asked, and made her wish known.

At first Nancy said, "Oh! how can we be married, right in the shadow of death?"

"Death is not a shadow, but a cloud of glory. Do, oh! do as I ask."

So in the early morning the old man was summoned to the Barton homestead, and tremblingly performed the service, remembering another service held in that room, when the eyes of this now dying woman had looked at him with far more of a questioning as to the meaning of the ceremony than to-day, when the film of death was gathering over them, and her fingers that were fast growing purple reached out to other hands unseen by those who watched.

"Listen now, George, Nancy, promise me this—you will pledge to stay here as long as uncle and aunt need you, won't you?"

"Oh, if they only will," said Aunt Betsy, sobbing.

"Yes, we will promise."

"Raise me up; let me look out;" and when they lifted her, the dying eyes noted that which no one else had. "See," she said, "he is coming; it is well."

Yes, Daniel Doolittle was coming. For miles he had walked with the laudable desire to save money. He would need to have a conveyance when he took 'Lisbeth with him, so he would save all he could. He met

and passed people without a word. He was determined to get there early enough to break up the Sunday gathering as far as 'Lisbeth was concerned, and speak to them himself. He would show them their error, and he would crush out the error in 'Lisbeth, if it cost a life to do it. He had weakened when he had seen her before; he would not now.

George Green went out to meet him, with the kindly purpose of preparing him for the scene within, but was not given the opportunity.

"Are you here all of the time?" asked Daniel, unmindful of his greeting. "I think I have come in the right time to save what remnant of reputation my wife may have left by taking her away."

"Come this way, sir," said George, "There's a stranger with your wife who never visited her before."

"I presume so, but I shall claim my right as a husband to put all strangers out. I shall be firm in my determination this time. And, remember, I do not want to be introduced to any strangers."

"Your introduction will come later."

Daniel followed George into the room, saw the weeping friends, saw 'Lisbeth reach out her cold hand toward him. Oh, the horror of it! 'Lisbeth was dying! What could he say?

"'Lisbeth, my poor wife, are you at peace with God?"

The lips moved. "Yes, and with the whole world."

Aunt Betsy could not restrain herself. "Daniel Doolittle," said she, "you might as well ask a snowflake if it is white. Are *you* at peace with the children of men?"

"I am blinded ; I shall fall !" said Daniel, reaching out until the kindly hand of Mr. Barnes was felt. "Give me a seat."

A chair was placed for him, and Nancy brought water and sprinkled his face.

"It was a sudden faintness," said he, apologetically. "I have walked a long distance."

'Lisbeth must have sensed the gathering of the people outside the house, although no loud word had been spoken.

"Tell them to sing the song mother taught them when she came one day," and when told, they began in low, tremulous tones to sing,

"It's only a step from the darkness
Into the glory of morn."

They had hardly completed the first verse when 'Lisbeth said, "Hush, the other music ; don't you hear it?" and then, "Poor, poor Daniel, I will try to help you there. They are coming. Aunt Betsy, mother's arms are around you. Oh ! precious Danny ; yes, mammy will come. See his hands, Daniel ; see ! see ! he touches your hand."

Daniel recoiled as though he had been struck a blow ; he thought he felt the little clinging fingers.

"Death isn't pain, no, *no*, NO ! Give my love to everybody."

The sweet smile stayed upon the fast stiffening features. The Stranger had been kind and left no mark in taking possession.

"A wedding and a death," the neighbors said. "Strange that should have been her wish."

Uncle Isaac took Aunt Betsy's hand and led her out into the garden.

"We've faced our trouble, Betsy," he said. "How do you feel now?"

Her face was tearless, and she answered, "I am so glad it was Sarah and Danny who took her instid o' Daniel Doolittle. We will be brave, Isaac. 'Lisbeth will keep the gate wide open."

Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy left all preparations for the funeral in the hands of George and Nancy. George, who had for days expected 'Lisbeth's transition, had been correspondng with a worker whose name in those days was a household word, and on Wednesday the coffined form of 'Lisbeth was carried by loving friends and placed in the speaker's stand that had been made for her. Although almost unheard of in those days, not one of the friends wore black. The platform was a bower of beauty; ferns, roses and wild wood flowers hid 'Lisbeth's narrow resting place. Her sweet face, crowned with its golden coronet of hair, rested on a pillow of violets and roses, and her wasted form, covered with ferns and water-lilies, wore no suggestion of death.

Daniel looked in wonder upon the preparations, but could say nothing, as he had intimated to George Green that, under the circumstances, he did not think it was his duty to help bear the expense. And George had responded, "We are all glad you do not feel to; *we* loved her, and it is a pleasure to us to do all that can be done."

The funeral was an event that will live in the history of that place. Aged women tell the story to their

grandchildren as they pass there, the story of 'Lisbeth, and the first funeral held out-of-doors in the sunshine, the body resting on a bed of flowers.

Daniel Doolittle felt as badly as it was possible for him to feel. He must have loved 'Lisbeth, he thought, or he would not have had those peculiar sensations. George Green's reference to the "stranger" and his reply troubled him. He wished he had waited until he had seen how things were before he had asserted his authority. Then those little clinging fingers. Did he feel them when his dying wife called out about Danny? And 'Lisbeth had spoken kindly to him, too. Well, she who had been kind in life could not be otherwise in death.

Mr. and Mrs. Barton were kind to him. How could they be? he wondered. He knew in the depths of his soul he did not deserve it.

Nancy pitied him, after all her hard feelings toward him; she pitied his doubting, uncertain mind, and when she asked him if he would like a lock of 'Lisbeth's hair, she almost liked him, because he let the yellow curl twine round his finger and smoothed it, and a real tear dropped upon it. When he went away out of their lives, no unkind word was uttered. The ministry of sorrow is alike everywhere; it softens the hardest hearts and wipes out many of the memories of human wrongs.

In a few days Nancy had a letter from her brother Henry, who highly commended her action in marrying George by 'Lisbeth's bedside.

"Dear 'Lisbeth; she will break the silence and come to us all. How time and places are changing," he wrote. "So few here now who know 'Lisbeth, only as

they have heard about her. So many new people have moved on the farms, and our friends keep going to the city. It seems a little lonely, but I shall soon bring one of the smartest girls you ever saw to be a daughter to mother."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

REMORSE.

"DANIEL DOOLITTLE, where are you? I want you to go to the barn and help mow away the hay. You think I married you for an ornament, don't you? One would suppose you did by the way you get out of every bit of work you can. A pretty minister of the Gospel you are! I've heard that everybody pitied you in Genesee County that knew you, because you had married me, and said that I wouldn't make a good clergyman's wife. I didn't have a chance to try my hand at it and rent my farm. They had to give you walking papers before we had been married two months.

"Oh! You are corresponding about a charge, are you? Well, it will be nothing but a waste of postage. You can't get far enough from those old Connecticut stories to hold any kind of a charge, and your own sister is against you; I wish I had known that before I married you."

"I wish you had," said Daniel, as he disappeared out of the back door; going with reluctant steps to the barn, to help the hired man unload the hay.

'Lisbeth had been gone two years, and upon leaving Connecticut, he had come to take charge of a country church not far from Rochester, N. Y. He had determined to annihilate the Rochester Knockings, and make

converts to his belief ; but he found it was not so easy to do that. The sermon that he prepared as a masterpiece for the extermination of this peculiar belief offended his parishioners. Though they were not believers in the modern phenomena, they did not like to have their friends who *were* interested called such names as he applied to all who had bowed their heads to this device of Satan.

He had parted in anger from his sister Annie, declaring that her delusion had brought death to their old mother, and that she was a disgrace to the family ; that he never wanted to see her again ; and she, in something of the same spirit, had responded by saying, unless there was some change in him, it would "be perfectly agreeable" to her.

So, more alone than he had ever been before, he, to save money, lived in one room, and cooked the little food he did not get on his visiting trips (which were numerous).

He tried to study and write powerful sermons, but Daniel Doolittle was haunted. Whenever he became most urgent in his search for words of denunciation, he would see pass before his mental vision, 'Lisbeth, not in sorrow, but glorified, and always leading their boy, who would turn and look as they passed and wave his little hand. "Oh, I am dreaming again," he would say, as he wiped the perspiration from his face, and strove to go on with his subject. But his manuscript would lie untouched for hours, and he would pace the floor and say, "I cannot live alone."

A widow, by the name of Phelps, resided some five miles away. When she heard the minister was single,

she concluded she would join the church. Her husband had been dead for several years, and her ambition was to marry again, and occupy some place where she could be a leader. Tired of overseeing her large farm, she thought if she could marry a minister she might get even with some who had refused to be her friends, because of her past unsavory reputation.

So she made up her mind to marry Daniel Doolittle. Everybody knew that what she made up her mind to do she *would* do, whether it was to sell a cow for double its value or marry a man; therefore, in the course of events, it came to pass that Daniel visited her. He was very much pleased with the place and the widow, more particularly when he found that there were no near relations who would keep their eyes upon the property.

He knew his time was short as pastor of the church that he served. He felt it in the manner he was treated when, Sample-Palmer-like, he went out to meals. But if he could establish himself in such a home as the Widow Phelps's, he would gradually give up the ministry and take charge of the finances. Perhaps it would be best to rent the place, and take their ease. When visiting her he was altogether a different man than the one who bore down upon poor 'Lisbeth and carried her away. He could not scare Widow Phelps with any idea of hell, and he did not try it; but in an awkward way began to compliment her upon her looks for a woman of her age, and upon her wonderful executive ability.

"I have heard that you, a lone woman, have made your farm pay you better than any man for miles

around." And she, flattered at the thought, would say, she thought she had done pretty well to lay up what she had, and to know enough to keep it.

Daniel hardly liked the positive assertion about "knowing enough to keep it;" but concluded that after marriage she would see her wifely duty.

Strange as it may seem, only a very few knew of the quiet wedding that took place at Widow Phelps's farmhouse, and it was a proud day of her life when she walked into the little church as Daniel Doolittle's wife. In a very grave way Daniel introduced her to the friends in the vestibule, but Widow Phelps as a regenerated woman who had joined their church and would be able to help them financially, and Widow Phelps as their minister's wife, were two very different individuals.

She lost no opportunity even that first Sunday of telling them what she intended to do, and she knew Mr. Doolittle would be willing. She did not think it their duty to be sending off clothing to the heathen, or to the missionaries for the heathen; they'd always got along well enough without help as to clothing, and lived as they were brought up to live. She didn't see why, if they got religion, they would have to dress just as the missionaries did. It was just hiring them to get religion. They had much better fix up their meeting-house, and tend to the folks that they knew were needy.

"You see," said Daniel, "my wife, Mrs. Doolittle, hardly coincides with our former methods, and perhaps there are changes that can be made in some ways."

"I think there ought to be one change anyway," said

one of the deacons' wives, who declared she knew the Widow Phelps, root and branch. She did not say what the change was then, but later, when Daniel and his wife were out of sight, she said :

"If I've got to toe the mark and have things go as Sal Foster says, I'll leave the church. Before she married Phelps everybody knew just what she was and what kind of a family she sprung from. Her father had been in jail for stealin', and Sal, when she was young, used to hide the things that had been stolen, and then when the rest of them died or skipped the country, Sal in some way caught Sam Phelps, and led him a dog's life from first to last ; never gave him any peace until she got all of the property out of his hands into her own name, and has never so much as bought a gravestone for him."

The deacon finally told his wife to come along home and not tell all she knew, and she went, talking as long as she could make them hear her, about "Sal Foster."

"I wish you wouldn't do that way," said her husband, "You'll get up an awful muss."

"Why, John, she even whispered to me that she would take it off my hands making the Communion bread, for she thought the last time it was a little sour. I've made the bread for ten years, and no one ever knew of my making sour bread."

"You didn't know any one ever knew it, Mary, but I knew it, and so did the pigs, that time it was so awful sour, and you hid it under a barrel in the barn, and fed it to 'em a little at a time, just as they could stand it. I watched you, and laughed over that more than I ever laughed over anything in my life."

"I should think you would be ashamed snoopin' round and tendin' to things that's none o' your business."

But the deacon laughed and walked on ahead, while the wife deplored the reign of "Sal Foster."

Within a month after his marriage Daniel Doolittle was informed that they would like him to hand in his resignation, and in two months he was only a retired minister, with but little hope of being anything else. In fact, if he could have manipulated home affairs as he desired, he would not have cared to preach again.

When it first dawned upon Mrs. Doolittle that, instead of being a minister's wife established in the village as a leader in society, she was still on her farm, "with a man on her hands, and the prospect of slaving her life away for him," her wrath knew no bounds, and she set to work to make his life miserable.

"How much money have you got laid up?" asked she one day, after an unusually bitter word battle.

"I shall not tell you," replied Daniel, and he did not tell, though she begged and threatened, day after day.

At last they compromised. He was to pay her a dollar a week and help about the chores, and the chores consisted of all kinds of work.

"Here, Daniel, take hold of this blanket and help me wring it," she demanded one day when the spring washing of bedding was being done. Daniel took hold of it very awkwardly, and when she gave one of her vigorous pulls, let go of his end entirely, throwing the suds up into their faces, and wetting her clothing through.

"You old rascal," spluttered she, as, trying to get the soap out of her eyes, she went close to him, "I'll teach you." But there was one thing Daniel Doolittle

abounded in, and that was legs, and he made such good use of them that he got out of her reach, and sat watching from afar, until her anger should cool. And it was with feelings very much like a child who has been playing truant, and hears of something occurring at home that will take the attention of the family off from it, that he saw a wagon load of company drive up to the house, and heard his wife calling, "Daniel, Daniel, come here and take care of these horses."

A man who has it in his nature to browbeat and abuse a woman is always a most abject coward when either woman or man gets the upper hands of him.

One day his wife was silent. It was a new experience for her, and Daniel wondered what it meant. At last she looked him square in the face, and said :

"Daniel Doolittle, did you ever murder any body?"

"What do you mean?" faltered he. "Do you not know better than to ask me such a question?"

"Well, I must say you talk very strange in your sleep for an innocent man, calling out, 'Take him away! take him away! Don't let his fingers touch mine. Oh! 'Lisbeth, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.' Now, Daniel Doolittle, what does it mean?"

Had there been any pity in her heart she would have pitied the white faced man, who staggered back to a chair, and with a trembling voice said, "Do I talk like that?" Then, as though it was a relief to free his mind to some one, he told his wife the true story of 'Lisbeth and little Danny.

"Then, it wasn't out and out murder, Daniel? I've been thinking of having you taken care of, but I guess you won't be dangerous."

“No, I won’t be dangerous ; only let me have a little peace.” And so it came to pass that the few hundred dollars that Daniel Doolittle had saved and inherited changed hands, and whether from pity, or because she was tired trying to get him to work, she let him roam around the place, furnishing him with the most inexpensive clothing and looking almost with a shudder at the black piercing eyes, as in her soul she wondered how long he was going to live.

Thus we bid him good-by, as he sits under the waving branches of a maple tree, with eyes looking into space, and lips moving nervously.

How many Daniel Doolittles of the world have perjured their soul life when they took upon themselves the mantle of the Man of Nazareth for selfish aims, and have let cruelty and unkindness be the fruits thereof, only the revelations of another life will reveal.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“JEST WAITIN’.”

MEANWHILE, at the Barton homestead there were peace and plenty. Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy had given up all care, and placed everything in the capable hands of George and Nancy. George was much away from home, and since 'Lisbeth's transition there had been added to his magnetic powers the gift of clairvoyance, with which power he healed the sick, and kept Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy informed of what 'Lisbeth was doing, telling the story of her happiness over and over again. It was their great consolation.

There was at that time a loyalty to Truth which made people willing to sacrifice more according to their means than at the present time, and so there stands in the village to this day a modest church, whose very foundations were laid with the thoughts born of the teachings given on “'Lisbeth's Day,” so many years ago.

Not so many speakers grace its platform now, but many of the old workers are still missionaries from the higher spheres, striving for the betterment of humanity.

It is evening in 'Lisbeth's old home, and a fire is upon the hearth. Uncle Isaac and Aunt Betsy love to see the fire, even though it is June. A little 'Lisbeth is standing by Aunt Betsy's side, with long white night gown on, saying, “dran'ma, take baby.”

"Let me lift her up," says Uncle Isaac, "your arms are so weak," and as he takes her up he puts his face close to the golden head, just as he used to that other golden head so long ago. Aunt Betsy's withered arms hold the little one closely, lest she may fall, and tears drop upon the upturned face.

"It yains, it yains," cries baby, and Nancy takes her gently away, for she knows it is a baptism of tears in memory of that other baby who did not get the kisses and caresses its young life needed, but who was brought up in such a soulless way that the angels had to take her for a pupil in order to supply the great need of a young heart.

Little 'Lisbeth is in bed. A near neighbor has come in to talk to George about his father's estate, for most of our old friends have been called home. The lamp, in lieu of the candle of old, is lighted, and the conversation takes another turn.

"I have never seen anything that convinced me the soul lived after death," said the neighbor. "I have no faith in it, and it is impossible to get knowledge."

"No, it ain't," said Aunt Betsy. "If you seek, you will find. We found it was true; didn't we, Isaac?"

"To be sure we did," responded Uncle Isaac. "And we all here think it's people's duty to look up something about their future home."

"Well, if I'm going somewhere I shall go and I can't help it, and that will be all there is of it; you nor I couldn't change it."

"Betsy, I guess I will tell him the story I read the other day about the king's fool. Wouldn't you?"

"Yes, Isaac."

"Well, it 'pears there was a king that didn't want to find out how wise any one was, but just how big a fool they could be, and he offered a prize to the one that could make the biggest fool of hisself, and the prize was a great gold-headed cane. Mebbe you've read it," said Uncle Isaac.

"No, I haven't. Go on."

"Well, when he giv it to the one that had acted the fool best, he said, 'Keep this cane until you see a man that's a bigger fool than you be.'

"A good while after, the king was taken sick. The doctors couldn't cure him nor do him any good. He sent for the man who had the cane, and told him he was going to die; he could get no help. And the one who was called the king's fool asked him where he was goin' to.

"'Why, I don't know,' said the king.

"'What, you goin' to take a journey, and don't know where you're goin'! Hain't you got ready at all? Hain't got packed up with any kind of goods?'

"'No,' said the king.

"'Well,' said the other, 'when you giv me this cane, you told me to keep it till I found another man that was a bigger fool than I, and I shall have to give it back to you. I always know at what town my stage is goin' to stop and what the climate is.' "

The man laughed heartily at Uncle Isaac's story, but went away determined to know all he could of the last journey he should take.

George told of his success, and of the new acquaintances he had made during his few days' journey, and then of what he had heard of Daniel Doolittle.

"They say that it is pitiful to watch him go around with his head bowed down, not seeming to see what is before him; or sitting with his eyes apparently fixed upon something the others do not see."

There was something like a smothered sob, and Aunt Betsy asked, "Do they say that woman is kind to him?"

"Well, not exactly kind, but that he really does not seem to sense whether people are kind or not."

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap," said Nancy, and Uncle Isaac added, "Amen."

Aunt Betsy said, "Why, Isaac, you and I wasn't so awful kind, don't you remember?"

But Uncle Isaac replied, "Speak for yourself, Betsy." Then, as though ashamed of the remark, reached over and smoothed her gray hair, saying irrelevantly, "It don't stay under your cap very good, does it, Betsy?"

The next day, the anniversary of the June day when 'Lisbeth's body was laid under the sod, toward nightfall we find the old couple resting on a bench made by 'Lisbeth's grave for their accommodation. As the slanting rays of the setting sun touch the slab of marble, Aunt Betsy takes her handkerchief and carefully wipes the dust from the one word engraved thereon, the name "'Lisbeth," and says :

"Isaac, I guess, after all, we will be laid side by side. We won't let 'Lisbeth come between us. I did feel as though you wanted to be beside her, and so did I, but it won't make no difference. They'll keep our graves green, but that grave over there (poor Jane Macomber's) won't have any one to think of it or of her, more than she did when she was alive. She was so lonely,

and I kept forgettin' it. But we've taken lots o' comfort since 'Lisbeth learned us the way."

Uncle Isaac bowed his head in response. "Betsy, we wasn't married only until 'Death us did part.' Do you feel willin' to promise for the new life?"

"We couldn't be separated, Isaac. Folks can't be if they get to lovin' best when there's pain and trouble and sickness."

"Betsy, let's kneel down here by 'Lisbeth's grave and pray."

So the two old forms, with bowed heads touched by the last rays of the setting sun, knelt, while Uncle Isaac prayed:

"Oh, Lord, when you send 'Lisbeth for one of us, won't you let her show us both over? We want to come together, Lord, and we're waitin', jest waitin'."

"Amen," said Aunt Betsy.

"The dew is fallin' and we must go." And so they climbed into the low wagon and rode slowly homeward.

"I'm glad we've been over once more," said Aunt Betsy. "Mebbe it's the last."

And in a few days the neighbors marvelled that Mr. and Mrs. Barton had passed away within three hours of each other.

On the marble slab under their names are inscribed these words: "Death did not divide them."