Helen Lester

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1. A Day of Troubles

The summer morning sun shone brightly into the beautiful room where Helen and Louise Lester were bustling about, but, I must say, it didn't find very bright faces. The truth is, for the last hour it had been doing its very best to arouse them from their morning nap; it had played "hide-and-seek" among Louise's golden curls, and shone full in Helen's face, and the little girls had not minded it in the least.

Even the rising bell, which pealed through the hall at seven o'clock, had only served to make Louise turn sleepily on her pillow, and murmur:

"Oh, dear! That abominable bell!"

Helen heard it, and tried to decide how many more minutes and seconds she could sleep, and yet be ready for breakfast at the proper time; but, before she had quite decided, she was again sound asleep, and the next thing that disturbed her was her mother's knock, and question, "Ready for breakfast, girls?"

"Yes, ma'am, in a minute," said Louise, sitting up and rubbing her sleepy eyes. "Nell! Nell, wake up this minute. Mamma is knocking!"

"Let me alone!" said Helen, impatiently, rolling to the farther side of the bed.

"Oh, well, lie there, then, if you want to be late." And Louise bounded up and commenced dressing in the greatest haste.

The second peal of the bell roused Helen thoroughly, and she greeted her sister with a startled, “Oh, my! Louise, why *didn’t* you wake me?”

“Why, didn’t I wake a snapping turtle!” said Louise, laughing; adding, in the same breath: “Oh, dear me! Haven’t I *two* shoes? What has become of the other one? I do wish I could ever find anything! I should think mamma might let Jane help us in the morning. Nell, take your things out of the way, so I can find that shoe.” And Louise tossed dresses, aprons, and stockings about in the greatest confusion.

“Can’t you snarl them a little more?” said Helen. “I’m sure I never saw such a careless girl in my life!”

“Coming, mamma!” answered Louise, to her mother’s second call, as she passed their door on her way to breakfast.

“Hurry, Helen, *hurry!* Tuck your hair in a net and come along. Oh, button this sleeve first, and tie my apron—quick!”

A little more flying around, and the two girls ran down the stairs to the dining-room.

“The Misses Tardy!” said their father, bowing low as they entered.

Louise laughed good-humoredly, and Helen’s face flushed. Helen did not like to be ridiculed. Louise chattered like a magpie, until the arrival of the morning mail compelled her to keep silent while her father read his letters.

“Ah!” said Mr. Lester, as he ran his eye hastily over one of them, “this is news indeed! Cleveland landed yesterday, has been detained by some derangement of the trains, but will be at the station at two o’clock this afternoon.” A general exclamation of delight passed around the table. “I’m glad he has, at last, remembered that he has a home.”

Mrs. Lester wondered whether he would look as he used to, which, considering that he was twenty-one when he left them, and

twenty-eight now, didn't seem very probable. His young-lady sister, Cornelia, thought it would be very pleasant to have a brother to depend upon. His fourteen-year-old brother, Fred, looked as if he thought this tall young man was coming home on purpose to "snub" him. Helen's sober face only grew more sober. Louise clapped her hands in very glee that *something* was going to happen. Louise liked anything new; while fair-faced, blue-eyed Eddie, who was in his sixth year—that is, he was five years and two months old—whose bright eyes had never looked upon his wandering brother, asked, eagerly, "What is he like?"

"What is he like?" Helen could have answered that question very well indeed, though she was but little more than five years old when she saw him last. He was like a tall young man; very handsome, everybody said, with eyes like papa's. He dressed very grandly, and carried a tiny cane, and smoked cigars in the drawing-room, which mamma did not like; and he drank a great deal of wine, until papa told him, more than once, that he was "going too far." He was cross to Cornelia, until she called him a "perfect bear," and said "botheration" whenever she asked him any questions. He was always teasing her, calling her "Little Pug," because she had a small nose; calling her "Topsy," because she had such dark skin. Oh, yes, Helen remembered him perfectly; and not one single good or pleasant thing could she remember of him. She was sure she did not love him a *bit*, and she was perfectly certain he did not love her.

"Nobody does," she said, with a forlorn sigh. "Not anybody in this world." And she kicked her arithmetic, which lay on the floor, out of her way. "Here's mamma, making me comb my own hair, when she knows it will make me late, and I shall get a mark; but nobody cares for *that*. And there is that abominable arithmetic not learned yet, and I'll have to stay and learn it; and as for French, I'll *never* try to learn *that* lesson." And Helen braided her long, black

hair, and fastened her dark-green riding skirt over her pretty muslin dress, as slowly as if her little black pony with white feet, had not been standing before the door a long time, tossing his head and saying, as plainly as a pony can, that he was in a great hurry to take her to school.

"Nell, isn't it *shocking* to have to go to school today, when Cleveland is coming?" said Louise to her, from the next room. "I'm sure I shall study with my books upside down; though, to be sure, that will be almost as well as I ever study. But I don't think I can sit still today. Well," she added laughing, "I never do *that* either; so, I suppose, I may as well go. Are you ready, Helen?" and she came to the door, dressed for school.

"No, I am not; and I *do* wish you wouldn't be always asking me that question."

"Oh, oh! What a cross girl" and she ran down stairs. "Fred," said she to her waiting brother, "don't you dare to speak to Helen. She is as cross as two sticks today."

"Well, Sunbeam," said her father, "where is your sister?"

"She isn't ready, papa," laughed Louise. "She will be down in the course of the day."

"Come here, my dear," said her mother. "Your riding-skirt is all awry, and your curls look as though they had not been combed at all."

"Oh, well, mamma, they'll do. You see, I was in such a hurry, I didn't want to keep papa waiting."

"I wish your sister were as thoughtful," said Mr. Lester, impatiently.

"That's always the way," muttered Helen who had overheard this conversation. "Louise goes down, looking like a scare-crow, and she is Sunbeam, and Pet, and all sorts of pretty names, while I, because I want to dress neatly, must—" And here she paused to brush away two or three angry tears.

Her father grew weary of waiting at last, and went to the city, leaving Fred to take care of his sisters. Twice in one morning had Helen displeased her father.

Helen and Louise Lester attended a private school in the city, which was two miles from their home. Every morning they rode to school on their little ponies, with their father or Fred, and at two o'clock the servant came for them, or, sometimes, their mother in the large carriage. A very beautiful home they had, with splendid carpets covering the floor, and elegant furniture in all the rooms, for their father was a very rich man, and spent a great deal of money in order to have everything beautiful for his wife and children. Then such a pleasant school as they had! There were only twelve scholars—little girls of nearly their own age. And Mrs. Harold, the teacher, was as pleasant as a teacher can be; and though Mr. Abbott, the music master, and Monsieur Rosseau, the French master, were rather stern sometimes, the girls had only to get their lessons well to find them as pleasant as possible.

"You are *almost* late," said Mrs. Harold, as she bade the girls good morning. "I was just about to lock the door."

Mrs. Harold always kept the door fastened while she was opening school. It was a beautiful school-room. The floor was neatly carpeted; paintings and drawings hung around the walls; the shining desks, with arm-chairs before them, were fitted up with every possible convenience. At one end of the room stood a handsome piano, at which Louise presently took her seat, in order to play the opening hymn. Very sweetly it sounded, sung by those clear, young voices:

"Father, hear, to thee we raise
  Grateful songs and hymns of praise;
Let thy blessings on us rest,
  With thy smile may we be blest."

After the hymn was sung, each girl, in turn, repeated a verse from the Bible. They all smiled at Louise's verse: "Let all things be done decently and in order." The merry little girl was hardly ever known to be in order *anywhere* for five minutes; and Mrs. Harold, too, smiled as she said:

"A very good verse, my dear; try to remember it;" and she turned toward Helen.

But Helen started, blushed, stammered, and finally shook her head.

"No verse!" said Mrs. Harold, in grave surprise; and the girls looked curiously at her. To have no verse to recite in the morning was something new and strange in that little circle.

Why did Helen start again when Mrs. Harold's clear voice repeated, slowly, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early, shall find me?" Why did she suddenly bow her head, and keep it bowed some moments after the short, earnest prayer was concluded? What was the matter with Helen this morning? She was not always late; and never before had she missed her verse!

Now, I presume a great many little girls will be astonished when I tell them that Helen had gone to sleep the night before, thinking about what a very good girl she would be all the next day.

"How came she to think of that?"

Why, a great many years ago, before her brother Cleveland left home, Helen had attended an infant Sabbath-school, and among the first Bible verses that she learned was that sweet one, "I love them that love me." Helen remembered it. She tried to love Jesus; she almost thought then that she *did* love Him. She used to talk a great deal about it, until, at last, her father and mother grew frightened at what they called her strange fancies. They thought she must be going to die, because she loved to talk about Jesus and heaven. They did not know what a pleasant thing it is to love the

Savior. So Helen was taken from the Sabbath-school, and told that she mustn't think of those things; she was too little. And very soon she forgot to think about them, and forgot her verses.

But, just the day before all these sad things happened to her, she borrowed a book of one of her schoolmates. It was a Sabbath-school book; all about a little girl who loved Jesus. She used to say that very verse which Mrs. Harold had repeated, and call it hers.

Helen read it, and thought about it a long, long time. It brought back the memory of Sabbath-school days, and she resolved that she would be good again. She did not know just how to commence, but, of course, she must say her prayers, and she mustn't be cross to Louise, and she must get up early, because mamma always wanted them ready for breakfast; and she even decided that she would get up earlier than the bell, and study that dreadful arithmetic—not that she thought it would do her one bit of good, but then, good people always learned their lessons, she supposed. And then she must never keep her father waiting, above all other things. So Helen went to sleep, and dreamed of how very good she was, and how everybody loved her and said she was a sweet little girl. Now, how did it happen that she commenced the next morning by doing the very things that she had particularly resolved not to do?

Oh, it happened as such things often do. First, she did not awake early, and when the bell awakened her, she was provoked that she had not been up an hour, as she meant to be, and she said to herself:

"It's no matter; I may as well sleep a little longer, now that I've slept *so* long. If I am ready for breakfast, that is all mamma wants. I can sleep—let me see—five, no, ten minutes more, and then I can—" and the sentence was finished in dreamland.

Then, oh, how vexed she was when she heard the breakfast bell! She forgot all her good resolutions, and was as cross to

Louise as possible. Then, when she suddenly remembered, she said: “It’s no matter, I *can’t* be good; there’s no use in trying; the more I try, the worse I am. Half these dreadful things would not have happened to me this morning, if I hadn’t wanted to be so dreadful good. I’ll just give up trying, and go on as I always have.”

And then her verse. She knew plenty of verses. She had repeated one, morning after morning, in the school-room, for two years; but she had intended to say the very verse that Mrs. Harold repeated, and yet, after all the things which she meant to do that morning, and had not done, she felt that she could *not* repeat that verse, which, it seemed to her, had been the cause of all her trouble. She tried to think of another verse, but she could think of nothing except a rule in arithmetic and two or three French sentences; so, growing desperate, she shook her head.

There was one other thing that troubled Helen. Those early Sabbath-school days had been connected with her brother Cleveland. He used to tease her; call her “Little Puritan,” “Little Saint,” and a dozen other names, of which she did not know the meaning, but which made other people laugh and her cry. And now this brother, this *terrible* brother, was coming home, just when she wanted to be good. Everything was against Helen—at least so she thought, poor child!

Such a miserable day as it was! Nothing but failure after failure in her lessons; nothing but cross words at recess. Even the poor, unfortunate book, in which she had read the beautiful story, seemed to arouse her anger. “Here, *take* your book,” she said, tossing it fiercely on Laura Selby’s desk. “I never want to see it again.”

Considering all the these things, it is hardly to be wondered at, that, when the hour for the hated arithmetic class was over, Mrs. Harold said:

"This is the third recitation in which you have entirely failed. You may take your seat and prepare your lessons."

Helen threw her book on the floor, and exclaimed, which a passionate burst of tears, "I'll never learn it!"

The school was dismissed, and Helen sat alone with her teacher. Had Mrs. Harold known what a sore little heart was throbbing in the little girl's bosom—known of all the things which had vexed the poor, passionate child—perhaps she might have led her into the right way; but how could she know that such a sullen face covered anything but a sullen heart?

The school-room door suddenly opened, and Louise danced in:

"Oh, Helen! Helen! Papa and mamma are going to the depot in the carriage; and they have come for us; and John has come to take our horses home; and mamma says roll up our riding skirts and put them in the carriage, and *hurry* like everything, because—oh, Mrs. Harold, can't she go?" And Louise paused in dismay as she remembered the troubles of the morning. "Because Cleveland is coming, our own brother Cleveland, and we haven't seen him in ever so many years."

Mrs. Harold hesitated.

"She has been very disrespectful, besides being indolent; but under the circumstances, if your mother wishes it—" Louise waited to hear no more, but ran to her mother.

"No," said Mr. Lester, with a darkening face, when he heard her report. "No, my dear," to his wife, when she would have interceded, "it will *not* do. Helen *must* be taught that she cannot rule everybody. Make haste, Louise. John, you may wait for Miss Helen." And the carriage rolled away.

And *such* a race as "Miss Helen" led poor John nearly two hours later! Along the smooth, hard road she danced, with the swiftness of the wind. John could hardly keep pace with her; and to his warning that her father did not like to have her ride fast, she

paid not the least attention. Poor Helen! She felt almost wild. Here she was two hours behind time; the stranger brother would, of course, be there; she could almost hear him say, "Hallo, Topsy," for a greeting. If she could only, *only* manage so as not to see him, at least until her tear-stained face was washed and her ruffled hair smoothed.

"He will laugh at me, but I don't care. I won't cry again; I *won't!*" And she flung the bridle from her, and springing from her horse's back, ran swiftly up the walk and darted in at the side door. The dining-room doors were thrown open. The family had just arisen from the dinner-table. Mrs. Lester was helping Louise to fruit, and, waiting for her, the others were sitting or standing around the room, listening eagerly to the newcomer, Cleveland Lester. Helen peeped in at him curiously, almost forgetting her anger at the sight of the strange face, as he stood near the door, talking earnestly.

"He is very handsome, *very*," said Helen to herself, as she looked at the heavily-bearded face. "He doesn't look a bit as I thought he did, either; but I don't like him. Oh, dear, if I can only get to my room without being seen."

And she moved, on tiptoe, across the hall. She had nearly reached the stairs. Why must Louise look up, just at that moment, from her half-eaten orange? But she did, and exclaimed:

"There's Helen!"

Her brother turned suddenly, and, just as she had placed one foot on the stairs, she felt herself folded in his arms. He bent down and pressed on her lips a loving, lingering kiss, as he said, softly,

"My dear little Nellie!"

The sudden surprise, the unexpected greeting, completely overcame Helen, and, springing from him, she flew rather than ran up the stairs—up, up, never stopping until she had reached her

own room and thrown herself on the bed. Then she burst into tears, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

For the rest of that day she had plenty of attention. It took but a few minutes to cry herself into a real nervous headache; and for hours her mother sat by her bedside, bathing her head with ice-water, while her father came every little while to see how she was, and Louise left the piano in quiet, for fear of hurting “Nell’s head.” Oh, yes, plenty of people cared for Helen.

2. Brother Cleveland

Whether it was because Helen went to sleep so very early the night before, or because she still remembered the broken resolutions, or whatever was the reason, she certainly was wide awake the next morning, long before the first bell rang. She lay still a few moments, thinking over that miserable yesterday, until she remembered her brother Cleveland and the one little glimpse she had of him; then she suddenly bounded up. She was very soon dressed, and, gathering her books, she went down to the piazza to study.

"Nobody is up yet, of course," she said to herself. "They will be later than usual this morning, I suppose. Ah! Here's my Bible among my school-books! I'll just learn a verse this very minute, and see if I'll make such a dunce of myself as I did yesterday." And she was busily turning over the leaves, when two hands were laid over her eyes. "Why!" she exclaimed, in wonder and a little vexation. "Fred, is that you? Take your hands away. What in the world are *you* up for?"

But the figure bent over, and again she felt that loving kiss, and her brother Cleveland sat down beside her.

"You are not going to run from me this time, are you, my little Nellie? What *could* have been the matter yesterday? Did I frighten you?"

But Helen's face was covered with blushes; she did not know what to say to this strange man.

"What have you here?" he asked, glancing at her book, seeing he was to receive no answer to his other question.

"It's a Bible," said Helen quickly. "In our school we each say a verse every morning, and I'm looking for one."

"Let me give you one, Nellie." And he repeated, slowly and gravely, 'I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.' Ah! Cornelia!" he added, looking up, as his sister appeared, dressed for riding. "You are ready, I see; so are the horses." And, as he spoke, he took Helen's Bible, and, turning the leaves rapidly, returned it to her, pointing with his finger to the verse he had given her.

Helen sat like one in a dream, looking after her brother and sister as they rode down the avenue. That her brother Cleveland should know any Bible verses; that he should not laugh at her for learning a verse; and above all, that he should happen to give her just that one, seemed very wonderful.

Helen had a happier day than the last one had been. She knew her lessons perfectly—that was some comfort; yet, after all, she came home from school feeling sad, and, if she had spoken just what she thought, you would have heard something like this:

"It is very hard, this trying to be good. Louise, or some of the girls, provoke me every ten minutes, and if I try ever so hard, I can't always get my lessons. And, after all, that verse doesn't say a single word about being good; it just tells about loving Jesus and finding him. I don't know how to love Jesus, nor where to find him, and I've nobody to tell me. I wish I had. If I dared—Oh, if I only *dared*—to ask Cleveland about it; but I don't believe he knows. He never used to go to church. To be sure, he knew that verse, but, I suppose, all men know about the Bible. He is queer, anyway—not a bit as I remember him. I wish I wasn't afraid of him. How funny for him to take Cornelia to ride—he never used to; and how very funny for her to get up early enough to ride with

him! I mean to go downstairs early tomorrow morning; perhaps he will be down. I wonder if he will give me another verse." And so, with her busy little brain full of many thoughts, Helen settled herself to her books and tried to study.

"I wonder," said Cornelia, that evening, "who will get the first ride after Cleveland's new horses?"

"Has he new horses?" asked Helen, eagerly, turning from the window.

"Why, yes," said Louise; "the most *splendid* horses you ever saw, and the darlingest little carriage, just large enough for two. I heard him tell John to bring them to the door at seven o'clock; and, mamma, don't you suppose he is going to ask somebody to ride with him?"

Before Mrs. Lester could reply, the door opened, and Cleveland entered. He had little Eddie by the hand, whose heart he had quite stolen, with the help of some rides on the horse's back and a few good, high swings.

"There, mamma!" said he. "I have brought you your son. He has been honored with the first ride in the new carriage. And now may I have one of your daughters for the second?"

"I presume you can get some company without much trouble," said Mrs. Lester, smiling, and glancing toward Cornelia.

"Then, little Nellie, will you be at the door in three minutes?"

Helen started with surprise and pleasure.

"Mamma, may I?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Certainly, if Cleveland wants you."

She ran eagerly away. To ride was always pleasant, but to ride in the evening—just the time that she was seldom allowed to go—was delightful.

Such a pleasant ride as she had! Cleveland drove fast, and he went directly toward the city; and she liked, above all things, to

see the city by gas-light. Then he talked so pleasantly—asked her about school, and her studies, and the girls, and—

But Helen suddenly stopped talking, and looked wonderingly up at Cleveland. He was certainly reining in his horses before the great stone church where they went on the Sabbath. Seeing her look, he smiled and asked:

"Can't you show me the old church once more? There is prayer-meeting here tonight."

"Oh!" said Helen, catching her breath. "I haven't been in the conference room in a good many years."

"Haven't you? I never was in it; but I think we can find the way." And he lifted her out and stood her on the broad, granite steps.

How strangely Helen felt, following her brother into that room, where she used to go to Sabbath-school! It was queer, she said to herself, that he should take her to a seat just opposite the one in which she used to sit; and there was her very own teacher in the seat!

She was very quiet, and sat with earnest eyes fixed on the minister. One verse which he read from the Bible she caught up and remembered; it was, "And ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life." She knew the verse must mean Jesus. It was one of the verses that she said at school, but she did not understand it. How could *she* go to Jesus? She didn't know where to go.

"I'll listen," she said to herself, "and perhaps Dr. Burton will tell us how."

But no; Dr. Burton was talking to older and wiser heads. He said something about the duty of people accepting of the great atonement, and about Christ being a "propitiation for our sins," but she didn't know in the least what he meant. Suddenly it seemed to her as if for a moment her very heart stopped beating, for there, standing beside her, was Cleveland—her brother, Cleveland! She

peeped up at him; his hands were clasped, and he was—he *certainly* was praying! She listened eagerly; he prayed for her. Yes, he prayed that if there were any little ones looking for Jesus, He would help them to give their hearts to Him; and Helen put both hands to her face to hide the tears.

"That's surely for me," she thought. "I've been looking for Jesus all day, and I can't find him."

Very quietly Helen and her brother went out when that pleasant meeting was ended. He lifted her into the carriage, and, taking his seat beside her, drove rapidly, and without speaking, until they had left the city behind them; then he let the reins fall loosely, and, leaning back in the carriage, said:

"Well, why does not my little sister talk to me?"

"I don't know," said Helen, trying to choke back her tears.

"Little Nellie," said he, drawing her close to his side, and speaking in a very gentle, tender tone, "do you know, I've been thinking about you a great deal for the last three or four years, ever since I learned to love this Jesus, about whom you heard us talk tonight. I have remembered my little sister—how she used to go to Sabbath-school, how she used to love to talk and sing of Jesus; and, I think, the longing to know whether she was loving him, and trying to grow like him, brought me home."

He waited, but Helen did not speak.

"Did you say the verse I gave you this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"And have *you* found Jesus, Nellie?"

"No," said Helen, in a low, trembling voice. "I don't know how."

"It is very simple, little sister. Jesus has promised to show you how, if you will love him."

"But I don't know how to love him."

"Did you ever *tell* him so?"

Helen looked up wonderingly.

"Did you ever kneel down, and say, 'Dear Jesus, I want to love you, but I don't know how; will you teach me?' Did you ever pray such a prayer, Nellie?"

"No," said Helen; "but I've been trying to be good, for two days, and I couldn't. I've never been so bad before."

"I think very likely," her brother answered, quietly; then added, "Nellie, you mustn't try to make yourself good. Nobody but Jesus can do that. If you love him, you will try to be good because it will please him. Oh, Nellie, I want you to be a Christian. I don't want you to grow up without loving this dear Savior who loves you so much. I want you to learn to pray; to learn to ask Jesus every day to take care of you; to help you to love him more than anybody else. You mustn't think it is a hard thing to become a Christian. It is no harder than to love your friends. Let me show you. I have been away from you a long time, and, I presume, you have almost forgotten me; but do you think it will be very hard to learn to love me?"

Helen answered promptly and heartily, "I love you now."

"Well, and loving me, cannot you see that you will like to please me, and will be sorry to do what I do not like?"

"Yes," said Helen, again, very decidedly.

"Do you understand me, then, when I tell you that being a Christian is loving Jesus and trying to do what he wants you to? And oh, little sister, won't you pray to him to give you a heart to love him—this dear Savior, who has done more for you than I could if I were to live a thousand years? He has promised to help you if you ask him."

Cleveland's voice was earnest and loving, and Helen, who had been trying very hard not to cry, could not help it now, and sobbed as if her heart would break. They were just home, too, though they had come so very slowly.

"Would you like to go upstairs instead of to the drawing-room?" her brother asked, as he lifted her from the carriage.

"Oh, yes, if I may."

"Very well, I will excuse you to mamma; and Nellie, if you like, you may go to my room, and I will come to you for a few minutes."

Helen ran up stairs, threw off her things in her own room, then crossed the hall to her brother's. Nobody was there; the only light was that of the beautiful moon, but it made the room very bright and pleasant. Presently she heard the swift, light step of her brother on the stairs. He came over to the sofa, where she sat, and bending down, said, softly:

"Little Nellie, will you kneel down with me, and let me ask Jesus to help you love him?" and, kneeling beside her, he encircled her with his arm.

Helen never forgot that prayer, so gentle, and loving, and plain. It seemed to her, for the first time, that Jesus was really listening; that he knew she wanted to love him, and would teach her how. And her brother asked that she might learn to come to Jesus, just as she would to her father, or mother, or brother, and tell him everything. When they arose, he bent over and kissed her lovingly, then turned, and, without saying a word, left her alone. She heard him go downstairs; and she felt that she was alone with God. She sat very still for a few moments, with a new, strange feeling in her heart; then she slid down and folded her hands.

"Dear Jesus," she said, softly, "I *do* believe I love you. Will you teach me how to love you more?" The first words of real prayer Helen had every prayed in her life.

3. Brother Fred

Fred Lester looked with jealous eyes on his brother Cleveland. To be sure, this brother was very different from what Fred had imagined he would be. He was kind and pleasant, and didn't try to be Fred's master. But Fred had made up his mind not to like his elder brother; so he didn't.

It was a bright Saturday morning—the day which school-boys are always glad to see—but Fred was in trouble. There was to be a grand military parade in the city, and he had counted on being allowed to spend the day there with his father. But business called Mr. Lester in another direction, and he utterly refused to allow his son to go alone. Cleveland came to the library in search of a book, and overheard Fred making a last attempt with his father.

"But, father, couldn't I go with the Fletchers?"

"No, my son; their father is away, and the boys are wilder than you are." Fred bit his lips.

"Well, then, there are the Wilsons; I'm sure I could keep with them."

"No, no, Fred; don't tease me. I'm sorry, but it really isn't a safe place for boys—hardly for men—so we'll talk no more about it."

Cleveland turned toward his father's desk.

"Could we be trusted together, father?" he asked, smiling.

"Why, Cleveland, I thought you were not going."

"I believe I have changed my mind."

"Well, then, if you have a mind to look after Fred, I presume he will be glad."

Fred was only half glad. To go to the city by himself, and to be taken care of, like a baby by his brother, he thought were two different things; but, as he very much wanted to go, he decided to make the best of it. So, in another hour, they were on their way.

Cleveland was very pleasant; more than that, he was merry. He chatted and laughed with Fred, sitting back in the carriage and leaving to him the entire management of the ponies. Arrived at the city, he humored every freak of his younger brother, and, after the parade, took him with him to call on the Colonel of one of the regiments, who was a friend of his. So Fred had the honor of shaking hands with a "real live" Colonel. Then they took dinner at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, after which they went to the museum, and, altogether, the day was so full of pleasure, that Fred quite forgot to smoke a cigar, as he was learning to do, and which he thought did a great deal toward making a man of him—quite forgot it until they were riding home in the early moonlight, and then a feeling of respect for his brother, whom he had not seen smoking since his return, kept his cigar in his pocket. Yes, Cleveland had certainly been very kind, but the greatest kindness was to come. Fred had eagerly promised his father that if he might be allowed to go to the city, his Latin lesson for Monday should be learned after he came home; and judging how little he would feel like study after such a busy day, his brother escaped early from the company in the parlor, and went to Fred's room.

Poor Fred was having a hard time to keep his promise; his eyes would hardly stay open, his head ached, and his thoughts were full of soldiers, and martial music, and wonderful sights.

"Is it hard work?" asked Cleveland, looking over his shoulder.

"Hard work! I guess it is. I don't believe this sentence has got a verb in it at all. It's the stupidest, silliest stuff I ever read, anyhow."

Cleveland sat down beside him, and went patiently over the lesson, giving him only such help as he thought he really needed, but showing him how to help himself.

"He's a good fellow!" exclaimed Fred, half an hour later, as the door closed upon Cleveland, and he flung his books on the table, feeling that his lesson was well prepared. "He's a *splendid* good fellow, anyhow; worth fifty of Tom Fletcher. How he let me manage those ponies! There's nothing mean about him. I've had a jolly time today, thanks to him." And Fred laid his weary head on his pillow, with his heart full of pleasant thoughts toward his brother Cleveland. Fred was won.

4. A Happy Day

Sabbath morning seemed more bright and beautiful to Helen than any day had ever been before. Her heart was very light and happy; she felt full of love. She looked forward to going to church with a new, strange feeling. She was going to hear about the Savior, whom she had so lately learned to love. How strange it seemed that she had never loved him before!

She was dressed for church, and downstairs, before any of the others. Cleveland's carriage stood at the door. Her heart bounded with delight when she saw it. He was going to take her with him. How very glad she was!

But Helen was mistaken. Cleveland came down, in a few moments, ready for church, but he only smiled on her, and said not a word to her about riding. And when his father impatiently inquired for Cornelia, saying that some of them were always late, Cleveland said:

"Don't wait, father; Cornelia is going with me."

Helen's heart swelled, and the tears came to her eyes, as her father lifted her into the family carriage. It was so very hard, she said to herself, that Cleveland should not have taken her with him today. He might have known that she wanted—yes, really needed—him. Why must he have gone in his own carriage at all? There was plenty of room in the large one. Yes, Helen almost had a real fit of sulks over her ill-treatment; but she struggled hard, and, at last, succeeded in wearing a pleasant face; and that same

face was perfectly radiant when, two hours after, Cleveland whispered to her, in the hall:

"Would you like to stay with me to Sabbath-school, little Nellie?"

This, then, was why he had come to church in his own carriage.

Helen had never felt quite so happy as when seated in her old class, beside her old teacher. She heard her brother say that he would bring her every Sabbath while he was at home, if she wished to come.

Oh, it was all so pleasant! To be sure, she did not know the lesson, and she began to see that she knew much less about the Bible than the rest of the class; but she said to herself that she would study very hard.

After the lessons were recited, and the Superintendent had rung his bell to call them to order, Helen, with a glow of delight, saw her brother go forward to speak to the children. Just a few earnest words he said that they could all remember. But one thing set Helen in a tremor. He told them he knew a little girl who hoped she had given her heart to Jesus, and he believed that God would give her something to do in that Sabbath-school; that he would help her to lead some of her young friends to the Savior.

"Can he mean me?" thought Helen. "Can he *possibly* mean me? Oh, I wonder if I can? Oh! I can't do anything for Jesus; I don't know how. And yet, perhaps, I can. He will help me." And Helen's face was lighted up with a new joy.

Altogether, it was the happiest day she had ever spent, and she told her brother so, just as he turned his horses into the long, elm-lined carriage road that led to her father's door. He smiled quietly, said he was glad, then, after a moment's silence, added, thoughtfully:

"Little Nellie, you must not think you are never to have any trouble. You will find some very hard things to do."

Helen wondered what they could be.

"Oh, dear me!" said little Eddie Lester to himself, with a sigh, "I wish Sundays didn't come so often! Papa reads and mamma goes to sleep, and Louise don't play, and everybody is cross!" And poor little Eddie walked back and forth on the long piazza, looking very sad indeed.

Two people heard this little talk that Eddie thought was all to himself. Helen, in her room just above, where she sat in her little rocking-chair, by the window, with her new Sabbath-school book in her hand. It was a long, long time since she had had a Sabbath-school book of her own to read; and this was such a beautiful one, about "Jessie's work." She had read only a little way in it—just far enough to begin to love Jessie very much. But Helen heard Eddie's sad complaint, and looked up from her book.

"Should she go and amuse him; tell him a pretty story?"

"She didn't know any—"

"Yes, she did. The lesson that very morning had been about Joseph. She could tell him that."

"I want to read," said Helen.

"Eddie is such a dear little brother," said Conscience. And the end of it all was that she put away her book, and went downstairs.

Cleveland, in the library, heard the tired little boy talking to himself, and had carefully replaced the handsome book-mark in his Bible, as he arose to go to him; but he sat down again when he heard Helen's gentle question:

"Eddie, do you want sister to tell you a story?"

She told him the story of Joseph, made fresh in her mind by the morning lesson, and told it well. Eddie listened, with his eyes very large and earnest—listened eagerly, without many interruptions, until she came to the part in which Joseph received and was kind to his brothers; then he clapped his hands for joy.

"That's good!" said he. "That's *splendid!* I'm so glad he wasn't ugly to them. I was afraid he would let them starve."

"*I* should have done it, though," said Fred, who had come out on the piazza and heard the last of the story. "I'd never have given them a morsel to eat."

"Oh, Fred! They were his very own brothers!"

"What of it? He was their own brother, too, when they sold him. He ought to have paid them off."

"'Do unto others as you would have them do to you,' Fred."

It was not Helen who said this, nor little Eddie, but their brother Cleveland, who appeared in the door just at that moment, and laid his hand kindly on Fred's shoulder as he spoke.

"That isn't the rule people go by anyhow," said Fred, shortly.

"Not all people," replied his brother. "But it is God's rule." And he sat down beside Helen, and lifted little Eddie to a seat on his knee. The little boy reached after a gilt-edge, which he saw in his brother's pocket.

"Oh! What a little, cunning book! Read me a story out of it, Cleveland."

Cleveland drew out his little pocket Bible.

"It's a Bible, Eddie. Do you want to have a verse out of it for yours?" And, opening it, he started slightly as his eyes rested first on the verse, "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

He read it slowly and earnestly.

"What can it mean, Cleveland?"

"It means," said his brother, gravely, "that God says we must not drink wine—no, not even taste it; and that if we do, it will someday hurt us more than if a serpent should bite us."

"Why, Cleveland, papa, and mamma, and Fred, and all of us drink wine."

"Many persons do not think it wrong, Eddie. They think this verse means that people must not drink too much wine."

"And do you think it means not drink it at all?" asked Helen.

"Certainly I do. It speaks plainly in another verse: 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.'"

"But, Cleveland, what harm can it do to drink just a little?"

"In the first place, my dear Nellie, no one can be sure that he can control himself. Many persons have commenced with 'just a little' who have died drunkards. Besides, if one person can drink it without becoming a drunkard, he ought not to set the example for hundreds who cannot; and a greater reason than either of these is, because God has forbidden it."

"Humph!" said Fred, turning on his heel and walking off, with a very soft whistle.

"Teach it to me," said Eddie. "*Do,* Cleveland, please. I'll have a verse of my own." And by the time he had succeeded in learning it perfectly, the dinner-bell rang.

As they went through the hall, Cleveland said, softly:

"You have made your first sacrifice for Christ, Nellie.

Helen looked up wonderingly.

"How did you know, Cleveland?"

"I saw a very pretty Sabbath-school book walk upstairs," he answered, smiling fondly on her.

Helen's father and mother were like a great many fashionable people who live in the city. They had wine on the table every day at dinner, and all the family drank of it. Cleveland saw, with deep pain, that Fred drank as much, and liked it better, than his father

did; and even little Eddie sipped from his mamma's glass as freely as the rest.

Cleveland had thought and prayed about this a great deal. He believed that the Bible rule was the only true one; and he was full of sorrow on Fred's account, that so young a boy was so surely being led into temptation. He looked up quickly, and met his brother's eye as the wine was passed. Fred colored, but raised his glass to his lips.

"No, mamma, no! I don't want a bit," exclaimed Eddie, as his mamma was helping him to some. "Papa, you mustn't drink that!"

Mr. Lester set down his glass suddenly, and looked at his little boy.

"What is the matter, Eddie? What do you mean?"

"Oh, papa! It says in the Bible it will bite like a serpent. I learned the verse, and it's all about wine."

Mr. Lester looked vexed, and, as he raised his glass again, said:

"Don't make a fanatic of *him*, Cleveland."

Cleveland's voice was very respectful, as he answered, gently, "He is not repeating *my* words, father."

Helen drank no wine that day.

5. An Unhappy Day

"Dear!" said Helen, starting up suddenly from her writing, and nearly upsetting the ink-stand. "What is the use of making such a racket? Fred, *do* stop," she added, opening the door, and calling to her brother. "I shall not be ready one bit the sooner, for all that screaming."

"Well, I guess, Miss Helen, you had better be ready in double-quick time, if you want me to wait for you. I don't believe you're trying to hurry."

"It's not your concern, if I'm not," Helen answered, shortly; and she sat down again to her writing. Ten minutes more, and the chambermaid knocked.

"Miss Helen, your mamma says you're not to keep Master Fred waiting another minute; if you do, he will be late at school."

"Oh, that tiresome boy," said Helen, laying aside her writing, very slowly. "There's plenty of time."

But she knew she must obey her mother; and, in a few minutes, she came downstairs.

"Fred," said she, "if you're in such a flurry, I don't see why you didn't ride on, and leave John to go with me."

"So I should have done, with pleasure, if papa hadn't told me I must wait for you. I don't like such crabbed companions by any means."

Late at school! Helen had not been late since that morning three weeks ago, in which you first became acquainted with her.

But this morning she had to stand in the hall while Mrs. Harold opened school. And Louise's whisper, "That's too bad; I shall have to answer 'tardy' again; so near the close of the term, too," didn't help her to feel better satisfied with herself. What was Helen writing? She couldn't even let it alone during the reading lesson, but scribbled on a bit of paper, until Mrs. Harold saw her, and said, "One thing at a time, Helen."

Only half an hour between reading and arithmetic. Generally this did not trouble Helen, for her arithmetic lesson was prepared at home, in the morning; but today she had not looked at it. She studied very hard; but half an hour was not enough time to spend on five difficult examples, so she failed—for the first time in two weeks.

Then French followed, in a very few minutes. The half-hour which ought to have been given to that had been taken up with arithmetic; so she just read the lesson over and over, despairingly, not trying to learn any of it. Ten minutes more, and they were seated before Monsieur Rosseau, when a knock was heard at the door. Helen looked up eagerly. If somebody would only come and want Mr. Rosseau, and he would excuse the class, then she would not be disgraced, and would have time to look over her history lesson. But no such thing happened.

Instead, who should walk in at the open door but her brother Cleveland. He, of all persons in the world, would hear her failure! What should she do? She fidgeted, and turned red, and made motions to Laura Selby to change seats with her, so that the second rule would not come to her; but Laura only shook her head. So the second rule, the very longest and hardest one in the lesson, came to Helen, and, of course, she could not recite it. 'Twas of no use to cough and stammer; she had to sit down and listen, while Laura Selby rattled off the rule as if it were the easiest thing in the world. Not a single question, in all that lesson, came to Helen that she

could answer. And so, while her brother sat quietly on the stage, and asked questions of the class, and told them stories, his sister was having hard work to keep back the hot, angry tears. Recess came immediately after this class, and Louise ran to her brother, eager to introduce him to her dear friend, Clara Grey. But Helen turned her head the other way, when she passed him, and went into the large school-room.

"I hope you are satisfied, Laura Selby," she exclaimed, as soon as she was quite out of her brother's hearing. "I really hope you enjoyed saying that rule. When I ask a favor of you again, I think you'll know it. I suppose that was the only rule in the lesson that you knew, so you wanted to say it. Some people always learn the hardest, to show how smart they are."

"How silly, Helen," returned Laura, "when you know I always have my lessons; and you know Mr. Rosseau has strictly forbidden us to change our seats."

"You forgot all about that yesterday, when you coaxed Louise to come and sit by you, I suppose!"

"That was because I had forgotten my book, and Mr. Rosseau gave me permission. So, now, can't you think of something else to say about what is none of your business? I've a great mind to tell Mrs. Harold all about it."

"*Do*," said Helen; "I would be a tell-tale. I'll never speak to you again, I know that!" And she turned scornfully away.

Oh, Helen! Helen! Have you forgotten all your good resolutions? Have you forgotten all about Jesus?

Poor girl! Her trials multiplied, and her ill temper increased, so that, by the time school was dismissed, she had offended half the scholars, besides having to report "five," when the roll was called: and that was a very low report indeed. She was not in the least glad to find that it was Cleveland, instead of John, who was waiting to ride home with them. He was talking with Miss Abbot,

the painting teacher, when she came out. He helped her to a seat on her pony's back. Louise was already mounted, and was making her pony go through with several pretty capers for the amusement of the girls. Helen was about to gallop off, as she often did, from John, when her brother said:

"Wait a moment, girls," and continued his conversation with Miss Abbot. Helen frowned, and wheeled her horse, impatiently, away from the girls.

"Why don't you go on, if you're in such a desperate hurry?" asked Clary Grey, laughing.

"Cleveland won't let her," said Louise, innocently. The girls laughed, and Laura Selby said, "It is good she has somebody to manage her."

Helen's eyes flashed. Every word they uttered made her more and more angry. At last Cleveland bade Miss Abbot good afternoon, and mounted his horse, which he had no sooner done, then Helen was off like the wind. Louise and her brother rode fast, too. She could hear them talking and laughing, behind her; but she neither turned her head nor spoke, but kept steadily on her way, and, when she reached home, went directly to her room.

"Oh," said Louise, coming in, a moment after, "I've had such a grand ride! Isn't Cleveland splendid?"

"Humph!" said Helen.

"Mamma," said this same little girl, soon after dinner, "may I be excused from practicing today?"

"Excused two days in succession, daughter? What is that for?"

"I don't want to practice," said Helen, her cheek flushing.

"A very good reason, really. No my dear, I can't excuse you."

Helen went angrily to the music-room. Her sister was at the piano.

"Cornelia," said she, "get up! I want to practice."

"Well," said Cornelia, "could you wait five minutes, or couldn't you?"

"No, I can't. Mamma said I was to practice, and I'm going to."

"Mamma didn't send you here to order your sister round, did she, little Miss Lofty?"

"Cornelia, I'll go right now and tell mamma that you are calling me names. You're just as hateful to me as you can be, and—"

"Nellie!" sounded from the library, in Cleveland's voice.

Helen stopped short in the midst of her angry sentence.

"Now, what will you do?" asked Cornelia. "Cleveland has found that his demure pet is a regular little tiger."

Cleveland spoke again, in a quiet but very firm tone: "Nellie, come here!"

Helen moved slowly toward the library. Her brother lay on the sofa reading. He looked up as she appeared at the door, and motioned the disgraced little girl to a seat on the ottoman beside him. She came very slowly indeed, and sat down. Then he went on with his reading, and said not a word to her.

Cornelia played and he read, and Helen sat with folded hands and thought. A half-hour passed; then Cornelia came to the door.

"There, Cleveland, I've vacated the piano. You can let your torpedo come now, if you wish."

Cleveland said "Thank you," quietly, but not a word did he speak to Helen. How she wished he would say something, no matter what!

Another half-hour passed. What an hour that last one had been to her! It was the first time she had stopped to think during the day, and she had a great many sad things to think of. By and by all the anger died out of her heart, and she began to see how very, very wicked she had been. One by one the tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

Mrs. Lester came to the door soon after.

"Why, Helen! Why are you not practicing?" she asked.

"All my fault, mother. I detained her," answered Cleveland.

"Oh, Cleveland! You will spoil all the children! Well, can she go now?"

"Yes."

And Helen carried her sore little heart to the piano.

Two or three hours later, her practicing all done, she stood by the window in the drawing room, with a very sad face. It was Thursday evening. She remembered it with a start of pain. Before the door stood Cleveland's carriage. He was going to prayer-meeting; but he would not take her. No, indeed! And she put up her hand and hastily wiped away some tears, before Louise should see them. Cleveland opened the door and looked in.

"Well, Nellie, are you ready?" he asked.

Helen turned a burning face toward him.

"I think Helen had better go to meeting tonight, by all means, to get rid of her ill-humor," said Cornelia mischievously.

Helen flashed her eyes that way. She was just going to speak. Then, suddenly, she looked back at Cleveland, and met his grave, steady eye.

"Can you get ready directly?" he asked; and for answer she darted from the room.

"What a temper that child has!" said Cornelia, looking after her. "I wish she would overcome it."

"Can you not help her?" asked her brother, kindly, but very earnestly.

"I?" in great surprise. She was still a moment, then added, "Cleveland, what a queer boy you are! Not a bit as you used to be."

He bent down, and said to her, in a low tone:

"God has helped me to know myself and to struggle against myself." And he went to meet Helen at the door.

He talked to her kindly all the way to the city, but he did not try to force her to talk; she was too much excited yet. He felt very sorry for his little sister. He thought he understood all about her troubles. She had not been prepared with her lesson, and he had chosen an unfortunate day to make a visit that he thought would give her pleasure. She had grown angry with herself, and with everybody after that. He knew how easy it is for people to get into the wrong road, and how hard it is for them to get back again. Now, he knew she was thinking that she could never have been a Christian, or she would not have been so wicked; that Jesus did not love her, and she could not pray to him anymore. He wanted to give her time to think. So it was not until the meeting was over, and she was nestled in his arms, while the horses bore them swiftly toward home, that he said:

"Nellie, why did you look so startled when I came for you to go to meeting tonight?"

"Because," said Helen, speaking in a very low tone, "I thought I had been such a very naughty girl that you would not take me to meeting."

"My dear little sister! Did you think that was a good reason for not going to prayer-meeting? If ever you need to pray, it is when you have been doing wrong, and feel the need of Jesus' forgiveness. Never think, Nellie, that because you have sinned you must not pray. If you do anything that displeases mamma, the very next right thing to do is to ask her to forgive you; and Jesus loves you more, and is more willing to forgive you than mamma could be. But am I not to have a history of this unfortunate day? Let me see! How came you to get into trouble with Cornelia?"

"I was cross before that, and I just kept on. I didn't want to practice, and mamma said I must."

"Why didn't you want to practice?"

"I—I didn't want to see you. I thought you would be in the music-room."

"And you didn't want to see me, because—?"

"I was afraid you would ask me why I didn't have my lesson."

"Well, I'll ask it now. Did I frighten it all away from you, by appearing so suddenly?"

"No," said Helen slowly. "I hadn't time to get it. Because," she added, after a pause, "I studied my arithmetic lesson, when I ought to have been studying French."

"When do you study your arithmetic lesson, generally?"

"In the morning."

"And this morning?"

"I wrote—" Helen's voice was growing lower and lower all the while.

"Wrote what, Nellie!"

"In my composition."

"Your prize composition?"

"Yes, sir."

"The one that Mrs. Harold said you must write, only after all lessons were prepared?"

"Yes, sir." And Helen waited, tremblingly, to see what he could say to her for being so wicked. He said nothing at all for some minutes; then he asked, in a low, grave tone:

"Isn't there something back of all this, Nellie? Did you read in your Bible, and then kneel down and pray, this morning?"

Silence for a few moments; then a low "No, sir," followed by a burst of tears.

"My dear little girl, you have tried all day to take care of yourself. Can you do it?"

Helen's only answer was the fast-falling tears.

"If you cannot," he added, solemnly, "then never try again. Never live another whole day without asking Jesus to help you, to watch over you every moment, to forgive you when you sin. I'm not surprised at the history of this sad day. Poor little sister! How could it have been different, when you forget to pray?"

"Will Jesus ever love me again, Cleveland, when I have displeased him so?"

"Do you think you displeased me today, dear Nellie?"

"I know I did," said Helen, her lip quivering again.

"Do you think I love you now?"

"I—Yes, I'm sure you do."

"And can I love more, or forgive more, than Jesus can?"

Helen made no answer to this; and, after a moment, he asked:

"Do you think God loves you because you are good?"

"Oh, Cleveland! No."

"Why does he, then?"

"For Jesus' sake," she said softly.

"Then, can he not love you, even when you are sinful, if you try to love him, and ask him to forgive you, for Jesus' sake? My little sister must not make this mistake. Do not think you can grow very good in one day, and have nothing left to do. You must learn to pray, every hour in the day, 'Lead me not into temptation.'"

They were at home by this time; and Cleveland, as he left her in the hall, said:

"I will come up in a few minutes, if you want me."

Helen understood him. Very often now-a-days, he knelt beside her, in his own room, and asked God to take care of her.

"Cleveland," said Helen, the next morning, as she stood on the steps, ready for school, "I think I'll give up the prize composition altogether. Wouldn't you?"

"Why? Because it has set you wrong once?"

"Yes," she said soberly.

"I don't think I would. I think I would conquer it, and not let it conquer me."

Helen lingered, and played with his watch-chain. By and by, she said:

"Do you think it would be right to use that which I wrote at a time when I ought not?"

"Do you think it would, Nellie?"

"No, sir."

"Nor do I," he answered, smiling.

"Have you a verse for this morning?" This was asked as he helped her into the saddle.

"Not yet. I'm going to learn one when I get to school."

"Let me give you one, and you can learn it on the way." And he handed her a little card.

Helen's cheeks grew red when she read the words, "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

Two hard things the little girl had to do that day—very hard, indeed, they were—but she knew it was right. So, at recess, she looked all over the yard for Laura Selby, and when she spied her under the great elm-tree in the corner, she walked straight over there, and said:

"Laura, I've come to ask you to forgive me for all the wicked things I said to you yesterday. You were right, and I was wrong."

"Why, Helen!" said Laura. "How very queer of you! I forgive you, of course. I was ugly, too. But, Nell, it isn't like you a bit to say this to me. Just tell me how you came to do it?"

"Because," said Helen softly, "I'm trying to do right, for Jesus' sake."

The first thing she did, after she reached home, was to go in search of Cornelia. She found her in the music-room.

"Cornelia," said she, "I'm very sorry I was so rude to you, yesterday. Will you forgive me?"

Cornelia stopped playing, and turned round on her stool and looked at her sister.

"Will you?" said Helen, tremulously.

"Why, yes, Helen, of course. You needn't have cried about that."

Fred was on the piazza, and stopped his whistling long enough to hear all this.

"My senses!" said he. "What has come over that girl? To think of her asking Cornelia's pardon! Whew!"

6. Fred Discovers that He is a Coward

Fred was sauntering in the garden, whistling. It was Sabbath; but, it seems, he had to whistle; at least, he was never anywhere long without doing so. This time his tune was so very soft, that not even the birds could catch it. He had a fancy that it was not a very respectable way in which to spend the Sabbath. But what was there to do?

"A fellow can't read forever," said Fred, "and, of course, he can't study. So, what's left to do?"

He sauntered on, until he came to the summer-house. There he found Cleveland, reading; but he closed his book at once when he saw Fred, and came out to him.

"Did you ever see a more beautiful evening?" he asked.

"'Tis splendid, that's a fact," said Fred.

John came out, just then, from the stables, leading Cleveland's ponies, which were harnessed to his light carriage.

"Fred," said Cleveland, suddenly, "suppose you and I go to church?"

"To church! Bless me! I've been once today."

"Well, so have I, and I'm going again. Suppose you keep me company."

Fred thought it all over. "Church is a stupid place; but what the dickens will a fellow do if he stays at home? Pleasant ride, too; and those are dashing ponies."

"Well," he said aloud, "I believe I'll go."

Ten minutes more, and they were riding over the smooth road.

"There's Will Fletcher!" said Fred, as they passed a tall boy. "I wonder where he's going?"

"What sort of a boy is he?"

"Oh, good enough. Don't amount to much. His brother Harris, now, is tiptop."

"Boys are all queer," said Cleveland quietly. "Everybody is, for that matter, but particularly boys. I've been thinking today what strange beings they were."

"Why?" asked Fred, curiously. "What is there so very queer about them?"

"I was thinking, when I spoke, of their idea of courage. You can scarcely listen to a boy's talk for ten minutes without hearing how brave he is—what great things he has done, or is going to do; and yet there is one thing in which nearly all boys are cowards."

"I'd like to know what that is, anyhow," said Fred, much interested.

"It's this matter of religion, of becoming Christians. Many people suppose it is because boys are thoughtless that they treat these things so lightly. I don't think so. I believe they think about religion sometimes—it would be so extremely foolish not to do so. Take yourself, for instance, Fred. You know you're going to die; you know it is quite possible that you may die young. You see and hear constantly of death. You know about heaven; you know it is a place well worth struggling for, and you know how to reach it. Now, wouldn't it be very foolish of me to suppose that you never gave any thought to such matters?"

Fred made no answer, and his brother continued:

"I know you do; I know everybody does. It may be very little thought that they give; but, if at no other time, when they stand at an open grave, and see someone whom they knew, and, perhaps, loved, buried out of sight, then they have to think. Now, the

question is, why are there not more Christians among boys and young men? I know the reason. It is because they are afraid. It's because you are afraid that you are not one today!"

"I!" said Fred, contemptuously. "Who am I afraid of, I'd like to know?"

"Oh, you think if you should read your Bible and pray, the boys would find it out; and you're afraid that Charlie Grey would call you 'Parson,' and Will Fletcher would say you had grown pious, and the boys, generally, would laugh at you. You see, I know all about it, for I remember just how I used to feel. Many a time I thought I should really like to be a Christian, if it were not for the boys; and the older I grew, the more strange and foolish those fears seem to me. I know now that I was a coward, a slave to the boys of my set. I was afraid of their opinions—above all, of their laugh. But it seems I wasn't afraid of the anger of a just and holy God, who, I knew, kept me alive, and who could take my breath away at any moment. If there were anything to gain by such strange conduct, even if there were nothing to lose, it might make a difference. But here is the simple truth, in a few words: You and I know that we have got to die; we know that we are sinners; we know there is a heaven, and one way in which to gain it; and yet, because we shall be laughed at by some boys or men, whom we know we are going to meet before God, we rush ahead, and put God and death out of our thoughts, as much as we can. And we work hard all summer—it may be, for a prize, or something of that sort—and let heaven slip away from us. People are living, everywhere, just as if they did not know that they would certainly lie in their graves. Now, honestly, Fred, don't you think that when a boy acts like that, he acts like a coward and a simpleton?"

But Fred was speechless from utter amazement. He had never heard anybody talk in that way before. He had always supposed people talked about religion in a slow, whining tone, and he had an

idea that they thought everybody desperately wicked, except themselves. Yet, here was one talking about it as he would about any other important subject, and actually calling people who were not Christians cowards and simpletons!

Now, Fred was called a very brave boy. His schoolmates said they believed there was nothing in the world that he was afraid of, and he had rather thought so, too, and gloried in his courage. Boys like to be thought brave; and there is really nothing that they ought to fear, except God's all-seeing eye. But Fred was honest enough to own to himself that every word his brother had said was true, and, for the first time in his life, he began to have a dim notion that, perhaps, after all, he was a great coward.

The text for that evening's sermon was, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" and Cleveland, as they rode home, broke the stillness by repeating the words, in a solemn tone, and added, simply, "I hope you will choose."

Fred, at last, spoke, abruptly: "I'd just like to know what brought you round to this way of thinking. You used to be far enough from it."

"I'll tell you, Fred. You remember young Dennis, who went to Europe with me? Well, perhaps you know that it is quite the fashion for gay young men to disbelieve the Bible. And it is the easiest way of getting along, if a person of any sense at all can succeed in making such a simpleton of himself as to really disbelieve it. A great many pretend to think it is all false; but I believe few persons really do think so. However, Dennis and I made ourselves believe, as well as we could, that there was no such thing as religion. And we lived a very gay life there for a year or more. And then, Fred, I saw him die. Such a death I hope never to see again. It was very dreadful. If I had ever, for a moment, truly believed that there was no God, and no other life to live, I knew then that such a belief was false. During that same week, I

saw two other deaths, so very different. A little child, not yet eight years old, folded her little hands and prayed, and then closed her eyes, as quietly as if she had been going to sleep, and went home to heaven. And only the next day a very old, very learned, good man, who boarded at the same hotel where I was stopping, went to sleep just so quietly, putting his trust in Jesus. And, Fred, I had to think about the matter then; and I saw that the trust which could keep the simple little girl from fear, and let her die with a smile, and which could bring the same look of peace to the face of a gray-haired statesman, was something wonderful, something worth everyone's while to have. So, I went to Jesus and found it. And, my brother, my most earnest prayer is, that you may find it now, without waiting to wander through so many follies, as I did.

7. Upward

Helen was improving. Everybody noticed it. As the weeks and months passed away, she was slowly, but surely, gaining the control of her temper—learning to govern her words and her looks, yes, even her thoughts. Cornelia said, good-naturedly, that she should have to find a new name for her, as she did not remind her of a torpedo as much as she used to. And Louise told her brother, confidentially, that "Nell was getting to be real sweet."

The prize composition, which had caused her a day so full of sorrow, was read, and Helen did not gain the prize—and Laura Selby did. After the exhibition was over, Helen said:

"I'm glad you got it, Laura. I liked your composition very much."

And Laura answered, "I'm sure, I don't think it was a bit better than yours." And she added, to Susy White, as Helen turned away, "Did you ever, in your life, see such a change in anybody as there has been in Helen?"

"She is a Christian," said Suzy, simply. Susy was trying to follow her example.

Cleveland was talking with the teachers and the minister when Helen passed through the large school-room, on her way out; but he caught a glimpse of her, among the girls, and bowed and smiled in such a bright, glad way, that her face flushed with pleasure. She understood him. She knew if he had had a chance, he would have whispered:

"You did not gain a prize, but I know you gained a victory."

Don't think that Helen had grown to be a perfect little girl. She made a great many mistakes, and sometimes failed entirely; but she was trying—trying hard—and she had a friend who could always help her.

On no one did the evident change in Helen make a deeper impression than on Fred. It seemed to astonish him so much that the hot-tempered little girl, who used to fly into a passion a dozen times a day, should really be growing gentle and kind. Fred was ill at ease during these days. Since that Sabbath-evening ride with Cleveland, he had never been able to get over the feeling that he was a coward. He was careful to keep away from his brother, who thought it best to leave him to himself, or, rather, to God. But, oh, how earnestly he prayed! How anxious he felt for Fred!

As for Helen, her heart went out toward her younger sister. Louise was almost always sweet and loving, but so very, very giddy. She could not, or would not, keep still long enough to talk or think about anything for five minutes at a time. Helen could only pray for her. And dear little Eddie! Among all these people, do not forget him. His Sabbath stories had grown to be Helen's afternoon duty. And how dearly he loved them! Eddie was a very precious little brother. Helen had always loved him; but now it seemed to her that she almost worshiped his sweet face.

"Cleveland," said she, one evening, as Eddie, having heard his story and received a shower of kisses, ran away, "I can't help thinking that dear little Eddie is trying to be a Christian. He talks about it a great deal."

"I believe he *is* one," answered Cleveland, looking after the blue-eyed pet with thoughtful eyes. "You know, Nellie, that a very little child can learn to love the Savior; and he really seems to be trying to please Jesus."

8. For Jesus' Sake

"Look out, Louise! There, hang it! You've sent him right straight over my lemon tree!" And Fred bounded across the lawn, where he and Louise had been having a frolic, sending the great Newfoundland dog on endless errands, across the little brook, after sticks and stones. But Louise had thrown her last stone in such a manner that Neptune thought the only possible way to get it was by jumping over a small lemon-tree, which was Fred's special pride and glory. He ran, hastily, to see if the dog had hurt his treasure; but as he did so, Louise gave a shriek, for at that moment the bird-cage, which hung on a low branch of one of the willow-trees, came tumbling to the ground. Helen's bird! She had hung it out there not an hour before, and stood, smiling, to see how pretty it looked, hopping about and singing among the green branches; and now Fred had knocked it to the ground as he ran toward his tree.

"Poor Beauty! He is quite, *quite* dead," said Louise, lifting the cage from the ground. "See, Fred, he must have had his little head between the wires.

"Oh, my!" said Fred. "It's too bad. I'm as sorry as can be; but what in sixty did she want to hang it out there for? She might have known it would get knocked down. Won't there be a time, though, when she finds it out! My! She'll storm like two whirlwinds; it gives me the shivers to think of it."

Just at that moment Helen appeared. She had just come from a ride with Cleveland, and ran around to the lawn to see what they were doing.

"What are you playing?" she asked. "Louise, what's that you're holding in your hand? Why, where's—Oh! Oh! Beauty! My Beauty! Who did it? Who killed him?"

"I did," said Fred, bluntly. "I didn't see him, and I knocked the cage down."

Only for a moment Helen's eyes flashed angrily. She wanted to call him a wicked, careless boy; to say that he did it on purpose, just to be bad; and a great many other things that little girls are apt to say when they are angry; but she had been learning a better way, lately. So she took her poor dead pet in her hand, and smoothed his yellow feathers, as she said to her brother, while her eyes were full of tears:

"Fred, I know you didn't mean to." Then she turned and ran swiftly away, carrying her bird with her. Louise followed, with the cage in her hand, and Fred went upstairs to his own room, closed the door, and began to walk up and down the room.

"It's strange—it's wonderful!" he said, at last. "How different she is! Why, six months ago—bless me! —yes, *three* months ago, she would have acted like a tiger. Now, if religion can make a girl with such a furious temper as she used to have, act as she has today, why, then, I'm thinking, Fred Lester, that you ought to have it. I'm a fool! That's what I am, and have been all my life. Every word Cleveland said to me that Sabbath evening was true, *every word of it*. I know it; I knew it then; and here I've been going on the same old way. Now, what's the use in a fellow being such a dunce? What's right is right, and—" Fred stopped short and listened.

His room was next to Helen's; the windows of both were open. He heard her voice; it was broken by sobs, but the summer wind floated every word distinctly from her window to his.

"Help me to feel gentle and kind, and make my brother a Christian, for Jesus' sake."

A tear rolled slowly down Fred's cheek. She was praying for him—praying that he might become a Christian; and never in his life had he prayed for himself! And then and there Fred resolved that he would begin to pray.

"I say, Helen," began Fred, as he found the little girl in the garden, that evening, covering one of her choice flowers to shield it from the autumn frost, "see here, will you? I want to ask you something."

Helen turned from her flowers, and walked along the path with him.

"I just thought I would like to know, Nell, why you didn't tear round and get in a rage today as you used to, when anything happened?"

"Fred," said Helen gently, "I'm trying not to get in a rage about things anymore."

"I see you are, and I'd give something to know how you manage."

"Oh, I don't manage. I don't do it myself at all. I—I just ask Jesus to help me, and he does."

"But I don't understand all that. How do you know he helps you?"

"Why, Fred, if you had tried, and tried a great many times, not to do a thing, and all the while kept doing it, and somebody should promise to help you if you asked him, and, after that, if you got along a great deal better, wouldn't you know he had kept his promise?"

"Why, yes," said Fred, "I suppose so. Is that the way you've done?"

"Yes, it is. I can't tell you how many hundred resolutions I've made and broken; and I do now, sometimes. But, then, I go right to Jesus, and tell him all about it, and he helps me to begin again."

"Well," said Fred, this time speaking very slowly and decidedly, "I should think if there was any help to be had, I needed it about as bad as anyone; and, you see, I'm going to begin, too. I'm going to try to be a Christian, and, Nell, I want you to help me."

"Oh, Fred, dear Fred, I'm so very glad. I have wanted it so much."

"But, then, you see," continued Fred, kicking a stone out of his way—kicking it as if he did not know exactly how to say what he wanted to, and only did that to give himself time, "I don't know exactly where to begin, nor how. It's different with girls, somehow. But, then, we boys are so full of fun, and, it seems to me, we are forever doing something wrong. It seems as if a feller couldn't live a day without having to cut up some prank, or else get laughed at. I suppose I oughtn't to mind being laughed at; but, then, I do, and that's the long and short of it. Cleveland told me one night, right out, straight and plain, that I was a coward. He was the first person who ever told me so; but it's as true as can be."

"Oh, Fred, you must tell Cleveland. There is no one who can help you as well as he can."

Helen felt an arm around her, then, and her brother's voice asked, gently:

"Has my little Nellie forgotten the friend who 'sticketh closer than a brother'? By the way, Fred," he added, "I heard part of your last remark as I was passing up the walk, and I thought I would come and explain what I said to you one evening. Don't suppose I called you, or anyone, a coward for not liking to be laughed at.

Nobody likes that, that I know of. The idea is this: Suppose such a thing were possible, our house burns down tonight. You are in your room, you are lost—not because you could not escape, if you would; but because you would not, for fear the boys would laugh at you, and say you were afraid of fire. What would you think of yourself, under such circumstances?"

"I should say I'd get out of the window pretty quick, if all the boys in creation were to laugh at me."

"Then take my meaning. Isn't it cowardly to mind a laugh, when the road we want to take is not only the most sensible, but the only safe one to take?"

"But then," said Fred, meditatively, going back to the fancy of the burning house, "boys wouldn't laugh at a fellow for getting out of a fire."

"No; and that shows their folly more plainly than anything else. A boy would be thought insane who would laugh at another for trying to save his life, or to save himself from being hurt in any way; but, because one wants to save his soul, wants to act like a creature who is to live forever, somewhere, and can be happy or wretched, just as he pleases, then some are ready to laugh. Is such folly as this worth minding, Fred?

"No," said Fred, decidedly; "no, it isn't."

And just then Helen ran away, and left her brothers together in the star-light.

9. Captain Fred

Fred had fairly started, now, on the right road. He had learned to pray; and a boy who every day asks God to help him cannot go very far wrong. But he found it hard work. He had been a leader among the boys for so long that they looked to him to start "fresh fun," as they called their wild frolics. Long before, they had named him Captain, and a merry one he had made them. He wondered when they would discover the new road he had taken. He wished a great many times that they all knew it; but for a week or two nothing happened that called for him to take a stand on the other side.

"It's got to come," he said to himself one cold morning, as he laid his books on his desk and joined a crowd of boys around the stove in the recitation-room. They had been shouting to him to hurry ever since he first appeared at the door, some ten minutes before. "It's got to come, and I may as well have it now as any time. There's mischief ahead, I see; so, Fred Lester, show yourself a man—anyhow a boy who is not ashamed of his new principles."

"Come, Captain," said Harry Fletcher; "how dreadfully slow you are this cold morning. Do you know your Latin? Because it's a pity if you do, for we're excused this morning." This speech was greeted with shouts of laughter. "That is," continued Harry, "we're going to be. But, listen to our plan. Will just stepped into our store as we passed, and helped himself to a pound or so of their best pepper. You know it's pretty cold, and we wanted to heat the room

up well for the old gentleman. Will says he got the pepper, and you may have the honor of scattering it; you do it so well, you know. So, now, go ahead; spread it on good and thick; the stove is red-hot, and then, says I, the way we'll read Virgil this morning will be slower than usual. Of course, when the old feller comes, none of us will have the least kind of a notion who did it. Do you take, Captain?"

"No, I don't," said Fred, promptly.

"What!" exclaimed Will. "You won't do it?"

"Not a bit."

"Oh, ho!" the Captain's turned coward," said another. "He's afraid he'll get found out." A great deal of laughing and shouting followed. Two or three repeated the word coward loud enough for Fred to hear, and a bright spot was growing on his cheek. Suddenly he sprang upon the stage.

"Look here, boys, I want to make a speech."

"A speech!" cried one.

"Good!" yelled another; and all crowded around to listen.

"Go it, Captain," said Harry Fletcher.

"Now, boys, you know I've always been with you in all sorts of frolic, right or wrong."

"That's a fact," said Ned Grey.

"Bah!" said Will Fletcher.

"Attention!" screamed Harry. "Listen to the speaker."

"Well," continued Fred, "I've had something that I wanted to tell you for more than a week. I'm glad I've got a chance to say it today. It's just this. I've turned right square round, and now I'm going to travel this road, if I can." And Fred turned himself round, and took two or three steps toward the right. "I've enlisted, boys. I've got a new Captain, and a great one, and I'm going to try to serve him well."

"Parson Lester," said one of the boys, with a low bow.

"How dreadfully sudden he has got good!" said Will Fletcher, in his most sneering tone. "How did it happen, Parson? Come, tell us."

Fred turned toward him. "Will, if by getting good you mean that I've resolved to be a Christian, and to serve Christ all the rest of my life, with his help, that's just what I mean to do; and I don't think I'm ashamed of it, either."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Harry Fletcher. "I say Fred Lester's not a coward, anyhow."

"Three cheers for Captain Lester!" said one of the older boys, coming in at that moment, and supposing that Fred had been making one of his comical speeches. They were given, by most of the boys, with great glee. In the midst of the uproar their Professor entered—the bell rang, and the boys all moved toward the chapel.

The pepper lay safely stowed away in Will Fletcher's overcoat pocket that morning, and most of the boys respected their young captain. Nevertheless, it was hard. There were hundreds of petty tricks played on him that tempted him to lose his temper and show his strength. He came home from school, one afternoon, with a very tired and a very gloomy look.

"Well," said Cleveland, who was passing through the hall, and met him, with a smile, "how does it go?"

"It's pretty hard work, Cleveland, and that's the whole of it. I feel half discouraged. When a boy makes you mad, it's a good deal easier to pitch him over the fence than to think of a 'soft answer' to give him."

"Of course it is; it's a good deal easier to do wrong than right, always. But, Fred, how can you get discouraged? You remember, 'To him that overcometh'—"

"I know," said Fred, looking back, and returning his brother's smile, as he passed up the stairs.

"Do you really think that a man can't be a Christian if he drinks liquor of any sort, Cleveland?" asked Fred that afternoon, just before dinner.

"Not that, quite; because a man may be a Christian and yet commit sin. But if you mean, do I think it is wrong for a Christian man to drink liquor because he likes it—yes, I do."

"Well, hang it! What *can* a fellow do?"

"Fred, are these expressions, which you so often use, really necessary?"

Fred sighed, and then laughed. "Is that wrong, too?" he asked. And both went to the dining-room, in answer to the bell.

Fred generally did a thing promptly, when he had made up his mind. "None for me, Tom," he said to the waiter, who was passing the wine. His father glanced up.

"Another convert?" he asked, with a slight curl of his lip. "I presume we shall have all my family signing the temperance pledge, soon."

"Oh, papa! Would you, too?" asked little Eddie, eagerly, who had heard from Cleveland all about temperance pledges, and whose interest in the temperance cause was really wonderful.

"Not at present, my boy. I don't feel in any special danger."

"Oh, papa! I think you might do it for me. And then, you know, about the serpent."

"Hush, Eddie!" said his father, sternly. "Little boys should not talk so much."

One thing concerning Fred troubled his brother—those cigars! He felt as though he could not have his young brother grow up a slave to a cigar. He thought about it a great deal. What could he say to convince Fred that smoking was, at least, an evil? How he

had learned to smoke at such an early age, all boys who have grown up near large cities, and been allowed to do very nearly as they please, will readily understand.

It was more than a week after the wine had been given up that Cleveland, sitting in the library just at twilight, saw his brother on the piazza, cigar in hand. He started up, and appeared in the door just as Fred was about to strike a match. He shook his head with a quiet smile.

"Don't do it, Fred. Give that up."

"Well, hang it!"

"Oh, Fred!"

"The dickens! No; not that, either. I mean, what's going to become of a fellow, if he can't smoke?"

"Is that all there is left to do?" asked Cleveland , still smiling. But receiving no answer, and seeing that his brother looked just a little vexed he added, seriously, "Fred, if I can give you two good reasons why smoking is, to say the least, no wise, will you give it up?"

"Fudge! Yes, I will." Fred's tones were rather crusty.

"You remember the deep pits we saw the other day, when we were out riding? Did you observe the narrow boards which were laid across them, to measure their width?"

"Of course," said Fred, sullenly.

"Did you ever try to walk across one of them?"

"What a question! Of course I didn't."

"Why not?"

"Humph! I ain't such a simpleton. I'd have been more likely to find myself at the bottom than anywhere else. I'd like to know what you're driving at?"

"But you might have crossed in safety."

"And then, again, I might not. And what in sixty would I want to go across for, anyhow? I wouldn't have gained anything."

"That's just the way I argue about smoking. I tell you, Fred, there are hundreds and hundreds of young men, who have commenced with smoking, and have tumbled into the pit of drunkenness before they were half way across. It's a dangerous road. It is well known that the indulgement of the one appetite creates a taste for the other. Besides, suppose you do happen to cross the pit in safety, what have you gained?"

"I'm not afraid of being a drunkard," said Fred, in a very contemptuous tone.

"No one ever was, Fred. If people only were afraid, we should have no drunkards. But, do you think that we, who pray every day, 'Lead us not into temptation,' have a right to say any such thing?"

To this he received no answer, only Fred said, presently, in a quiet tone, "That's only one reason, anyhow."

"You want another? Well, did you ever jump across that stream at the foot of the lawn?"

"Lots of times."

"It's a very easy matter for you; but what if sickly little Freddy Farnham should attempt it?"

"He'd pitch in, likely."

"I presume he would. And there are plenty of Freddy Farnhams in the world; plenty of boys to whom cigars light the way to the bar-room. Now, one question more. Suppose you were walking on the bank of the stream, with Freddy Farnham beside you, and you thought quite likely that, if you showed your skill in jumping it, he would try it, too, and would, most likely, get drowned, would you do it?"

"No," was Fred's prompt answer, though in a tone that plainly said he knew that he was talking right against his side of the argument.

Not another word said Cleveland. He leaned against one of the pillars with folded arms, and watched his brother's face.

Fred still held the cigar in his hand. He eyed it closely for a moment; then he put that and both hands into his pockets, and whistled Yankee-Doodle, quite softly. Then he broke off sweet-brier leaves from the bush, and strewed them over the piazza. Presently he, too, folded his arms, and remained still. Slowly his face settled into a fixed resolve. Out came the cigar again, and three others with it, and, leaning over the railing, he took a steady aim; they plashed in the water, only a few feet from him, and the merry little brook carried them away.

What a sudden glow of pleasure lighted up Cleveland's face!

"Bravely done, my brother," he said, earnestly, as his hand rested for a moment on Fred's shoulder; then, turning, he lifted little Eddie, who had come to say "Goodnight," and carried him to the other end of the piazza, to see the evening star.

"Do they have stars in heaven?" asked the little boy.

"They say the angels wear starry crowns, you know."

"Well, Cleveland, do you think he'll give me one?"

"I hope so, Eddie."

10. Helen and Louise

Louise had the toothache. She had moaned and sighed with it all the afternoon, and was as nearly in ill-humor as Louise was ever known to be. Besides having to endure the pain, she was greatly disappointed. It seemed hard that she must have the toothache on that particular day, when Cleveland had promised to take Helen and her to a splendid concert that very evening. Cornelia had gone with one of her city friends; Mr. and Mrs. Lester were going out to spend the evening, and Fred was to be of Cleveland's party; so Louise was to be left alone with one of the servants, and at this she complained bitterly.

Helen, coming down stairs, dressed for her ride, overheard this conversation between Louise and her mother:

"I think it is very bad, mamma, that I must be left with Jane all this long, dreadful evening."

"Why, my dear, Jane will do everything for you; and you surely are not going to be selfish, and want one of us to stay with you, when you are not sick!"

"But, mamma, I *am* sick; my tooth aches dreadfully, and I don't feel good a bit; and I did want to go so badly." And Louise began to cry.

"Oh, Louise, I wonder if mamma will have to stay at home and disappoint papa, just for a selfish little girl, who has the toothache, when she has a good, kind nurse to take care of her, too?"

Helen's face had been growing very thoughtful during this talk. Could she? Should she? Ought she? She asked those questions rapidly, and tried to answer them. Cleveland was standing in the drawing-room door, waiting for her. She turned toward him suddenly. He was watching her with a queer look on his face. She smiled to know how well he could read her thoughts, and how poorly she could read his, for his face did not help her a bit. However, she had decided. She untied her hat, and drew off her gloves; then she glanced back at the face which she was always watching, nowadays. This time he smiled and bowed, and Helen was into her mother's room.

"Mamma, I'll stay with Louise."

"You, daughter? Why, I thought you were going with Cleveland."

"So I was, mamma; but if Louise would like me to stay—"

Louise looked up eagerly. "Oh, Nell, I don't want to be selfish, but if you only would stay with me!"

"I will," said Helen, sitting resolutely down, not daring to trust herself to go to the window nor listen to the jingle of Cleveland's sleigh bells.

"It was very selfish and bad of me to keep you," said Louise, sobbing; "and I know mamma thinks so, and Cleveland, and all of them; but I could not stay with that Jane."

"No, Louise, I like to stay with you, if you want me."

"Do you think the concert will be very splendid? Oh, dear! I wonder if Cleveland will ever ask us again? Did Fred go? How queer Fred is getting to be! What is the matter with him, do you suppose? Oh, my! You can't think how my tooth jumps! Don't you think he's different somehow?"

"Yes, I think he is. He is trying to be different, Louise."

Louise drew a little sigh. "Everybody is getting good but me, Nell. There will be nobody to love me, by and by."

"Oh, Louise! How foolish! You are a great deal better than I am."

"No, I'm not. I couldn't have stayed at home tonight for you. I should have been sorry for you, and all that, and I should have cried, very likely, because you couldn't go; but as for giving up that concert, just because you took a notion to have me stay with you, I tell you I couldn't have done it. No, indeed; and, Nell, I think you are growing dreadful good; truly, I do. You're ever so much nicer than you used to be. You wouldn't have stayed at home with me once; now, would you?"

"No," said Helen, slowly, "I don't believe I would. But it's not because I'm good; it's because I—Louise, I want to please Jesus."

"Well, that's being good, I'm sure. I think it's nice to be so; but, oh, dear! It must be such dreadful hard work, always to be thinking about one thing, always to be remembering that you ought to do what you don't want to. I never could do it; never in the world. Say, Helen, don't you think my cheek is swelling more? You don't know what a funny little puff it seems; just like a sweet apple. No, I don't suppose it would make any difference whether the apple were sweet or sour, only the 'pound-sweetings,' you know, made me think of it. Just hand me that bottle, will you? If anybody knows what such a little girl as I am doing with the toothache, I wish they'd tell me."

Helen went for the bottle, with a little sigh. Louise did mix things up so—swollen cheeks, and sweet apples, and being good, all in a breath.

"Louise," said she, trying to come back to the subject, after the swollen cheek had been bathed, "do you ever pray to God to help you?"

"No. Oh, yes, I do; I say 'Our Father,' sometimes. Yes, I say it quite often."

"But do you think of what you're saying, and try to mean it?"

"Well, no; not much. It is such very hard work. You see, there are so many things to think of. I say a few words, and then I go straight to wondering whether Clara Grey and I had better have blue bonnets with white plumes. We want to dress alike, you know. I think blue and white is lovely, but Clara likes pink best, and I don't know how it will end; and so, you see, there's that, and the lessons, and riding, and all sorts of things to think about, and I just get all in a whirl and let it go."

"Louise, if you should die now, tonight, do you suppose you would go to heaven?"

Louise sighed, and tossed her curls around on her rumpled pillow. "I'm sure, I don't know. Please don't talk to me about dying, Nell; it makes me feel so awful gloomy. It isn't likely I'll die yet. I'm only a little girl; and people don't die with the toothache, you know. Do they ever, do you suppose? How mine does ache. Isn't it almost time for mamma to come home? Do, Helen, play and sing, 'Two Merry Hearts,' or something lively for me; I feel so gloomy."

Helen gave up in despair. She gave Cleveland an account of the evening's conversation the next day, and finished with a sad, "It don't do any good to talk to Louise; she is so giddy, she won't even listen."

And the only answer he made was, "I'll give you a verse for school, this morning, Nellie: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask of God in my name, believing, ye shall receive.'"

11. Captain Fred Gains a Victory

The long winter came and went away again almost before the busy little girls knew it. Mr. Lester and his family removed to their town house. The all-important question of blue bonnets and white feathers, or pink bonnets and black feathers, had been decided in favor of the blue and white, and Louise and her friend Clara nodded their plumes back and forth to each other, as they met in Broadway or the park. Another prize for composition had been offered in the school, and Helen won it. And now the beautiful spring days began to come again, and, very early in the season, the family came back to "Locust Shade," every one of them glad to get away from the city.

Helen was going on steadily and quietly, having her little troubles, but carrying them all to Jesus. You would not have known her for the same little girl; at least her schoolmates said they should not. Cornelia said she never knew anyone to improve so fast, and her mamma told her that she was growing to be a great comfort. Even papa noticed that, some way, Helen's face was brighter and happier-looking now than it used to be—less often in a frown. He often called her Sunbeam, nowadays.

As for Fred, you have seen that whatever he did was done promptly. He had taken a bold stand among the boys at school. They found him as full of fun and frolic as ever, only the frolic must be of the right kind, and at the right rime, if they wanted him to join them. So, Fred was Captain still, and, with most of the

boys, a great favorite. He and Will Fletcher had never been very good friends. They were rivals in their studies; both smart boys, both eager to lead their classes, and a good deal of envy had sprung up between them.

The class to which Fred belonged had all been hard at work one afternoon, in a difficult lesson in Virgil. Nobody could read it, so as to make sense. Fred carried his book home, and worked faithfully all the evening. He could not get it out. Twice he started, determined to go to Cleveland for help, and both times came back, newly resolved to work it out alone. Once, during the evening, Cleveland opened his door and glanced in.

"Hard at work?" he asked.

Fred nodded, without raising his eyes from his book.

"Do you need any assistance?"

"Y-e-s," (very slowly.) "No!" (in a bold tone.) Then he laughed. "Thank you all the same, Cleveland."

"I understand," said his brother; "you will conquer it."

And he did. It was late when he closed his book; but when he did so, a carefully written translation of the troublesome lesson lay between the leaves. He showed it to Cleveland the next morning. His brother read and returned it.

"Good, Fred. There are one or two rough passages; but I will not point them out to you, lest some of the boys should think you had help."

Sure enough, when the Professor commended his reading of the difficult passage, Will Fletcher said, sneeringly, "Some boys have learned brothers, and some don't."

The teacher turned to Fred. "Did you have help, Lester?"

"No, sir; I showed the translation to my brother, this morning, and he said there were rough places in it; but he would not tell me what they were, for fear somebody would be mean enough to think he helped me."

At recess, he stood near enough to Will Fletcher to hear him say, “The Parson wants us to swallow the story he told in Virgil, this morning; but I’ll be hanged if I am not too old to do it.”

Fred’s eyes flashed, and he looked very fierce for a moment; then he bit his lip, and turned on his heel and walked away.

During the afternoon recess of that same day, the algebra class gathered around their teacher’s desk.

“No,” said he, smiling, in answer to their eager questions, “no, I’ll not help any of you, until you come to the class; if any of you are successful before that time, you’re at liberty to help your neighbors if you wish.”

A second time that day Fred was successful. Only fifteen minutes before the bell for recitation, he laid down his pencil and gazed with satisfaction on a long row of figures. The work was right. Now came his trial.

The very next desk at his right was Will Fletcher’s; and Will was bending with knit brows, over his slate, looking every moment more and more perplexed. For a moment he hesitated. He had worked the problem for himself, why not let Will do the same? Then, if he couldn’t get it, he would be where he had been wanting to be for the last six weeks—at the head of his class. Then he smiled. It was queer; but just then he thought of the story of Joseph, told by Helen on that Sabbath afternoon, so long ago—of his comments of the words that his brother repeated, “Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you.”

He leaned forward and touched Will’s arm, slipped a paper on his desk, and, pointing to the several parts of the work with his pencil, went through a dumb show of conversation, which boys understand so well, and finally pointed to the answer. Will stared at it with a bewildered face; then nodded and smiled, dashed off a string of figures on his slate, and the work was done; and, at that moment, the class-bell rang. When their teacher inquired whether

any of them had succeeded, only two of the class arose—Will at the head, and Fred beside him.

"Did you work the problem without assistance?" he asked Will.

"No, sir; Lester game me some ideas in the puzzling part."

"Well, Lester, who gave you some ideas?"

Fred laughed. "I think I blundered into it, sir. I was working away at it, and suddenly it came around all right, and I understood it."

Fred had started for his father's office, that evening, when he was overtaken by Will Fletcher.

"Well, Parson," said Will, "you did me a good turn today, and I'm sure I'm obliged to you."

Will still continued to call him Parson. Fred's cheek used to flush and his eyes flash whenever he heard the word; but as Will seemed very friendly sometimes, he concluded, after a while, that the name didn't hurt him, after all.

"You're quite welcome to all the help I gave you," he said, in answer to Will.

"I didn't do a very handsome thing by you, this morning, I must say. Why didn't you flare up and pitch into me?"

"One reason was because I thought it wasn't worthwhile. I knew you didn't believe a word of what you said yourself. You knew I wouldn't tell a lie for all the lessons in creation. But that wasn't the great reason. Fighting a thing through is not the rule I go by, nowadays, you know."

"Well, hang me, Parson, if I don't think your rule is a pretty good one, after all. Sometimes I've half a mind to try it myself."

"You'll never regret it, if you do, never!" said Fred, halting at the corner, where he was to turn. "And, Will—" He hesitated, and when he spoke again, his voice was lower and a little husky. "It's

what I pray for, every day, Will." And he turned and went swiftly down the street.

12. Eddie's Good-Night

It was a bright, beautiful May day. The sun was shining, and the birds were singing. The lawn at Mr. Lester's had never looked more beautiful, nor the little brook rippled more merrily. But the lawn was deserted. Old Neptune walked sadly round and round, and wondered why nobody came to play with him. What was the matter? Where were Fred, and Helen, and Louise, and little Eddie? Fred, from his window, saw the old dog, Eddie's playfellow, and dashed away the tears, as, hearing a step in the hall, he went hastily out and inquired:

"How is he now?"

Eddie was very, very sick. He lay on his little bed, tossing restlessly from side to side, while the fever burned in his cheeks, and gave a wild brightness to his blue eyes. They were a sad, tearful family now at the Lester's. Mrs. Lester never left her darling's side, and the other members of the household wandered restlessly from room to room, unable to do anything, or think of anything, except that the pet of the family was burning with fever. But, toward the sunset of this May day, Eddie's little restless form was still; the red had faded from his cheek, and his eyes were closed.

"How quietly he is sleeping!" whispered Louise. "Oh, I'm sure he is better."

The family were all gathered in Eddie's room. Dr. Holmes was there, and anxious eyes were trying in vain to read his face, as he held the little white hand in his. Presently he said, simply:

"Give him his medicine every hour, as usual; I will be in again, this evening."

Mr. Lester and Cleveland followed him out.

"Well, Doctor," said the anxious father, nervously.

Dr. Holmes's face was very grave. "Mr. Lester, I have done all that man can do for your little one."

"You—you don't think—" and Mr. Lester stopped abruptly.

"Is there any hope, Doctor?" asked Cleveland.

Slowly, with those earnest eyes watching him, the Doctor shook his head. "He is sinking rapidly; I am afraid he will not rally again."

Mr. Lester's face settled into a rigid self-control, and he spoke in a low, hard voice:

"Tell your mother, Cleveland; I cannot."

Cleveland went back to the sick-room. They were all waiting for him.

"Dear, mother," he said, bending over her, and speaking very gently, "can you not trust your darling to the Savior?"

"Don't Cleveland, don't! I can't bear it. He is not going to die; he is better. Don't you think he is?"

But Eddie's blue eyes unclosed, and he spoke, feebly:

"Mamma."

"My darling! My precious baby! You will not leave mamma, will you?"

Cleveland stepped lightly to the door, and beckoned his father forward. And the sweet, childish voice continued:

"Mamma, I've had such a beautiful dream. I thought there were angels all around me, and I heard music, and I saw Jesus. I wanted to go with him, only I wanted you, and papa, and all to

come, too. It was beautiful, up there; I wanted to tell you about it; and—oh! Where's Cleveland?" And as his eyes fell on his brother, he said, eagerly: "He did, he did have a crown for me!" Then his eyes closed, wearily; but he opened them again, with a sweet smile, to say, "Good-night, mamma; I'm so tired; I'll tell you the rest in the morning."

How very still the room grew! Mrs. Lester bowed her head over the golden one on the pillow, and fairly held her breath to catch the sound of his faint breathings. A mist seemed to swim before Helen's eyes; she felt faint and dizzy. She looked around for Cleveland; he was supporting Cornelia with his arm. Dr. Holmes came in, softly; no one heeded him. Suddenly Cleveland's slow, firm tones broke the stillness:

"Jesus said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And, almost at the same moment, Dr. Holmes added: "He is gone!"

Poor Helen! She felt as if the world had all turned black. What should she do? What would become of her? She thought her poor little heart was breaking. Cleveland had carried his mother, white and lifeless, to her room. Cornelia, too, had fainted, and now he was bending over her. Louise was in the nursery, sobbing and locked the door. And there, on his little bed, lay the still, marble form of her idol. How Helen lived through the rest of that day, she never knew. She couldn't cry—the tears refused to come; she couldn't think, and her head throbbed almost to bursting.

It was late in the evening when Cleveland answered a low knock at his mother's door.

"If you would come, sir, and speak to Miss Helen," said poor Jane, in a troubled tone. "She is in such a way. She hasn't eat a mouthful of anything, and she won't speak to anybody, nor listen to what any of us say. She just sits out there, on the piazza, in all

the damp, like a stone, and we're just afraid that she'll catch her death."

Cleveland went swiftly out to her, and, bending down, drew her close in his arms.

"My dear, little Nellie, cannot you, either, trust him to Jesus?"

"Oh, Cleveland!" And Helen laid her head on his shoulder, and sobbed aloud.

He let the tears come for a few minutes; then talked low and earnestly to her. His father opened the door, and called him.

"Now, Nellie," said he, rising, "won't you be brave and strong for papa's and mamma's sake, and for Jesus' sake?"

"I'll try," said Helen, wiping away the tears.

"Jane," said Cleveland, "will you get Nellie a cup of tea and something to eat? And then she will go to bed." And, giving her a very tender loving kiss, he went back to his mother.

He couldn't have given Helen a harder task that night than to eat her supper. It seemed to her that every mouthful would choke her. But she ate it.

13. Eddie's Serpent

Nearly a week had passed. Little Eddie's golden curls had been brushed back from his white forehead. They had put pure, white flowers all around him. They had kissed the cold lips for the last time, and left him in his little coffin-bed, among the flowers and the birds, in beautiful Greenwood.

The family at Mr. Lester's were all gathered at the dinner-table; the first time they had met there together since Eddie's chair was vacant. It was a sad hour. Each one tried to talk of something else besides the subject which filled their hearts. But there were so many things which reminded them of it. The wide space between mamma and Cornelia, which had been his seat; the vacant corner, where his chair used to stand—oh! everything, everywhere, looked vacant and desolate! Then there was nothing to say. No one wanted to speak of the beautiful day; for it was just such a day as this when they laid him in his little grave. The air was sweet with the breath of flowers that were blooming right under the window; but he used to call that rose-bush his, and the very sight of it brought the tears to his mother's eyes. Even old Neptune, pacing by the window, in a slow, lonely way, reminded them of the sweet, ringing voice that used to exclaim, at sight of him, "There's my dear old dog!" That sweet, childish voice! How mother, and father, and all of them missed it and longed for it! Oh, it was hard, hard work!

Even Fred, when he commenced saying, “Father, will tomorrow be—” choked, and could not finish his sentence; for tomorrow would have been Eddie’s birthday—he would have been six years old. So long and eagerly had he been looking forward to that day! He was to have spent it in the city, with some little friends. Ah, he was spending it with the angels, in the “Golden City!”

Tom came in presently, and began to pour the wine. Mr. Lester watched him nervously for a moment; then his eyes sought his wife’s, inquiringly. She seemed to understand his thoughts, for she shook her head, as she tried to stop the fast-falling tears.

“Tom,” said Mr. Lester, “you may take away the wine; and you need not serve it with the dessert after this. So much, at least, we can do for our first-born; can we not, Helena?” he added, when the wondering waiter had carried away the wine-glasses. But the poor mother’s heart felt crushed, and she answered only with her tears.

“Dear, Eddie!” said Cleveland, softly, to Helen, as they left the table. “His serpent is banished.”

14. Another Happy Day

Fred and Helen had been on the lawn for the last hour, talking earnestly; finally Helen went for Cleveland, and the conversation continued.

"Well," said Cleveland, rising at last, "I'll see father; but you had better talk with him yourself, afterward."

Mr. and Mrs. Lester were sitting together in the library. Both were reading, but neither seemed very much interested. They felt lonely and sad. They missed the dear voice which had been hushed in death, and they had no loving Savior to go to for comfort. They glanced up as Cleveland entered.

"May I interrupt you and mother, for a few minutes?" he asked. "I have just been talking with Fred and Helen; they are very anxious to unite with the Church, next Sabbath. Are you willing?"

Mr. Lester looked steadily and gravely into his son's face. "So, our children are all going to leave us!" he said, at last.

"No, sir; I hope not," replied Cleveland, in a low, moved tone. "I trust we shall follow the little one home. It was his last wish, you know, sir, to have 'father and mother, and all.'"

Mr. Lester remained silent for a long time. At last he asked:

"Do you think they are fit to join the Church, my son?"

Cleveland smiled slightly. "I think, father, that they love the Savior, and look to him for help. You know that is all the fitness he requires."

His father arose, and walked slowly back and forth through the room before he spoke again.

"I don't know much about these matters, Cleveland; not as much as I should. But Fred and Helen are certainly changed, very much changed, for the better. If religion has done this, I am glad they are interested in it. No, I have no objections to their joining the Church. I am sure, Helena, you have none, if it is going to help them any. As surely as there is a heaven, our boy is there today, and I want them all to meet him there. Tell them so, my son."

"Mother," said Cleveland, gently, bending and speaking low, "will you not remember Eddie's last want?" Then he went back to the brother and sister on the lawn.

It was Sunday, and Helen stood in the great church, before the altar—not alone; she had brought with her a friend, Laura Selby. Fred, too, was there; and by his side, with an earnest look on his boyish face, Will Fletcher listened, while the solemn words were being spoken:

"Helen, I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

Four young hearts given to Jesus! Four young lives proving the Savior's promise, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." Oh, little girls and boys, he has made the same promise to you all! Can you afford to live without him? Can you bear to die as young, perhaps, as Eddie did, and have no crown waiting in heaven for you?

"Fred," said Will Fletcher, as they stood in the hall together, after church, "do you remember how I used to call you 'Parson?'"

"Yes," said Fred, quietly.

"Well, do you know, I believe you ought to be one?"

His friend made no reply, and, after a moment, Will spoke again, in a low, earnest voice:

"Fred, if God wants us, let us be brother ministers."

"Yes," said Fred, in a firm tone. And he clasped Will's hand in his own.

They did not know that Cleveland overheard them, until, an hour after, as they were passing out from Sabbath-school, he gave a hand to each, as he said:

"God bless my two young brothers in their resolve, and give them much work to do for him."

In the evening the family were gathered in the parlor—all but Cleveland and Louise. They were sitting in Cleveland's favorite seat, on that western piazza. Helen did not sit there much, nowadays; it was where she used to tell her Sabbath stories.

"But, Cleveland," said Louise, in answer to some question of her brother, "I do truly want to love Jesus. I think it would be very nice and pleasant to feel that he loved me, and was taking care of me, and would take me to heaven when I had to die; but, you see, I don't know how to do it. It seems so queer, somehow, to love somebody that is so very far away—that I've never seen. I really don't think I could ever do it."

"Do you love me, Louise?"

"Why, Cleveland, what a very funny question! You know I love you, with all my heart."

"But I'm going to cross the ocean, next month; I shall be very, very far away from you. Will you love me then?"

"Oh, Cleveland! Are you going back to Europe? Oh, my! Does Helen know? What shall we do without you?"

"Will you answer my question?" he said, smiling.

"What? Will I love you when you get to Europe? Why, it's such a very naughty question, it don't deserve an answer. You know I'll love you just as hard as I can, wherever you are."

"But how can you love anyone who is so far away?"

"Ah, but, Cleveland, I have seen you. You have been here a long time, and you've been just as good—so good that I couldn't help loving you."

"Sit down here, little sister, and I'll tell you a story. Away off, in India, there's a little girl whom I have never seen, but about whom I know a great deal. You know God has given me a great deal of money, so I use some of it to help the missionaries there. And I wrote to one of them, and asked him to adopt a little girl, and call her Annie, and teach her to read and write and teach her all about Jesus; and I have sent her books and clothing."

"How old is she, Cleveland?"

"Nearly twelve, now; and she has learned to read and write, and I—"

"Cleveland, please tell me what kind of things you sent her. Dresses like mine, and bonnets, and all those things?"

"You interrupt my story too often, Louise. Yes, I sent her everything that I thought would be nice and proper for her to have. Well, this little girl writes to me; I must show you some of her letters, such loving ones as she writes! She says, next to the Savior, she loves me better than any person in the world. She likes to read my letters better than the books I send her.

"Do you write to her?"

"Yes."

"How funny! Couldn't I write to her, sometimes? Oh, Cleveland, won't you just tell me whether she has blue eyes and curly hair, like mine, or black eyes and brown hair, like Helen's?"

"I really do not know." And Cleveland smiled, in spite of himself. "But I wanted to ask you if you didn't think she was a very queer little girl to love me?"

"Why, Cleveland, what do you mean? Why, I should think she would almost worship you."

"But she has never seen me."

"Oh, well, you have written to her, and been so good, and done everything for her."

"My dear Louise, what has Jesus done for you?"

Louise sat very still. She just began to understand his story. At last, she said, softly:

"I know why you have told me about it. Dear Cleveland, I will try to love Jesus."

"Cleveland!" called Mr. Lester, from the parlor. And the brother and sister went in.

Mr. Lester was walking slowly back and forth. He always did that when he was thinking deeply.

"My son," said he, turning toward Cleveland, "some of our family have commenced a new life, lately—one of them has gone to commence it in heaven. I've been thinking that it would be for us all to start, at least, toward the same road. Will you read a chapter in the Bible, and pray for us?"

"Most gladly, father." And Cleveland drew his little pocket Bible, with a heart overflowing with joy.

15. A Whole Year

"Just exactly a year today since Cleveland came home," said Helen, walking round and round on the grassy lawn, talking to herself. "Just to think! A whole year! How well I remember that day! What a day it was, and how I dreaded to meet Cleveland, and how sure I felt that I should dislike him; and what a brother he has been to me! How many things have happened in a year—wonderful things! We have prayers, morning and evening; and Cornelia reads in her Bible, and she talks with Cleveland alone, too; I'm sure she does. And Louise is trying to be a Christian, and Fred and I are members of the Church. Fred and I! How very strange! And someday, I suppose, he will be a minister; and so will Will Fletcher. What a dreadful boy Will Fletcher used to be! And how very, very different they both are now! And dear, precious little Eddie is an angel in heaven, and wears a beautiful, bright crown."

A step Helen knew and loved sounded behind her, and her brother clasped his arm around her, as he asked if she were having a discussion all by herself.

"Oh, Cleveland," said she, "do you know it is a year today, since you came home?"

"I do, and remember it distinctly—how, among other things, my little Nellie ran away from me, and I saw her no more until the next day. Do you remember all about it?"

"Yes, indeed. I've been thinking of everything that has come since then."

"And what is the sum of all your thoughts?"

"I feel very glad," said Helen, softly.

"For what, little one?"

"For you, and—and everything."

He sat down on one of the low seats, and drew her to him. "I, too, little sister, am very glad for everything, even that our precious darling has gone from us. We are very lonely without him; but I cannot help thinking that he is leading papa and mamma home to heaven; that every one of us will meet there by and by." After a moment, he added, with a quiet smile: "I'll give you a verse for tomorrow; you know, I gave you one a year ago;" and, holding her close in his arms, he repeated, slowly:

"I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old."

The End