

1875

The image shows the front cover of a book bound in red cloth. The cover is framed by a decorative black border consisting of an inner line with a repeating scalloped pattern, followed by a wider band with stylized floral motifs at the corners and midpoints, and an outer line with a repeating scalloped pattern. In the center of the cover is a large, black, stylized monogram, possibly representing the initials 'H.S.' or 'S.H.'. The spine of the book is visible on the left side, showing a decorative pattern and some gold-tooled text, though it is partially obscured and difficult to read.

THE
GOLDEN RINGLET.



Golden Ringlets.

Page 16.

Frontispiece.

THE
GOLDEN RINGLET;

OR,

LIZZIE DIES TO-NIGHT.

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass."—ISA. xl. 7.

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THE GOLDEN RINGLET.

CHAPTER I.

THE VAIN CHILD.

“**W**HAT! looking in the glass again? Why is my silly child so vain?” exclaimed Mrs. Lowden, as she entered the parlor, and found her little Lizzie, a girl about ten years old, perched upon the table before the large looking-glass.

“Isn't my face and shoulders white, and ain't my curls beautiful?” said the proud little creature, as she looked round at her mother, half blushing and half smiling; and she twisted the light silken ringlets carelessly about her fingers.

“I'm afraid you are going to be ruined with pride,” answered the fond mother, as she came up and kissed the fat little cheeks,

which had just been so carefully examined before the large, clear mirror.

"It's no harm to look in the glass, is it?" said the little girl, as she affectionately returned the caresses of her mother.

"It is no harm to look in the glass, when it is necessary; but it is very great harm to be looking in it, just to see how pretty we are."

"Ain't I pretty, mother?"

"Well, dear, perhaps you are; but you must remember that you are just as God made you. He has given color to your cheeks, brightness to your eyes, and beauty to your curls. You should not be proud of it. God did not make us beautiful, in order that we might be vain about it; for he has spoken terrible things in his word against pride of every kind."

"What did God make me pretty for?"

"What do you suppose he made the flowers pretty for, my dear?"

"So that he might make the world beautiful, I suppose; and so that he might show us how nice he can make things."

"Very well, Lizzie, that is a very good answer; and God makes little children pretty just for the same reasons that he does the flowers — that he may show forth in their bright faces and beautiful persons, his infinite wisdom and goodness; and now, is it not very unkind to take the praise and credit of God's glorious work to ourselves, by proud and vain actions, as if some special honor or regard was due to us, because our kind father has chosen to make us lovely?"

"I suppose it is, mother; but it seems to me I *am* pretty."

"Perhaps you are, dear; but you are not nearly so beautiful as the flowers, and they are not proud. And besides all, Lizzie, the flowers fade, and so must you. Your little body will, by and by, pass away. Your cheeks and eyes will fade, and you will be put in the ground, and will turn to dust."

"Oh, mother! I don't like to think of that."

A sad expression came over the little girl's face as she spoke. She didn't like to think of death.

"Ah, my dear child," replied the mother, "the day will come when you will have to think about it. Remember, you are born to die, and keeping these things out of your mind will not keep away death. There is an hour when you must die; and that hour is hastening on, as fast as the wheels of time can move. Oh, think of these things, my child! It is a very bad sign that you do not like to think of them: it looks as if you were afraid of death."

"Mary Fuller is not pretty, is she, mother?" said the little girl, trying to turn off the solemn subject of death.

"Mary Fuller? I don't know that I have ever seen her. Is she the little girl who came home from school with you, yesterday noon?"

"No, mother, that was Cassie Fuller, Mary's sister. She is pretty enough; but Mary is very homely. I think you've never seen her. If you had, you would remember her. She has an awful long nose, and such a big mouth; and she is all scarred from the small-pox."

"Poor thing, she has been unfortunate, as

far as her looks are concerned. Is she a good girl?"

"Why, the teacher likes her very much; she says she's the best girl in school. But some of the girls don't care much for her; and it's just because she's not good-looking."

"How very wicked that is! Mary cannot help her looks: she is just as God made her; and then, if she is a *good* girl, she is beautiful still; she has the highest kind of beauty: a beautiful soul is far more lovely than a mere beautiful body. How mean it is to look only at the outside! What a shame that they cannot appreciate such a good little girl as Mary, just because she has not got a fineiy shaped face!"

"She's real nice when she smiles," added the little girl.

"That is her beautiful soul, that shows itself then. No one ought to slight her because her face is not very pretty. God does not make us all alike; he did not make the flowers all alike, either."

"No; for the big, coarse sun-flower is not near so pretty as the sweet roses."

"And yet, the most lovely flowers often appear the most modest."

"Like the little violet, which peeps up so sweetly, from 'way down on the ground; or the delicate little moss-roses."

"Just so, Lizzie; and now, I hope my little daughter will never be so silly as to be proud of her pretty face. I do not know that it is so very beautiful after all. I suppose there is many a little girl much better-looking than she. We often think ourselves very much prettier than we are."

Lizzie made no reply to this; but in her heart she thought that her mother was quite severe with her; for, after all, she *did* think she was pretty, and as pretty as any little girl in town. Indeed, she was so exceedingly proud, that she felt quite indignant at her dear mother, for intimating that she was proud, or vain in the least; and, consequently, the words of wisdom found no place in her heart. She put them far away from her; and became harder in her sin than ever. In short, she was an exceedingly vain child.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND BABY.

PERHAPS our little readers would like to know more particularly about Lizzie Lowden, and the family to which she belonged. She was the only daughter of Mr. George Lowden, a merchant in the town of Franklin, who had died a few months before the commencement of our story; and had left Mrs. Lowden with the care of Lizzie, and her two brothers.

One of these brothers was older than herself. His name was George;—we see he had his father's name;—and, at the time to which we now refer, he was a noble-looking lad of some fourteen years. He had a strong, healthy constitution, and an active mind; and if he had had proper training in his infancy, and had been kept out of bad com-

pany, he might have been an excellent boy. Indeed, one could scarcely imagine how very useful a person he could have been, had his energies been directed in the right channel; but his father had lived and died a neglecter of the gospel; and his mother did not become a Christian, until after his father's death. By this time, George had imbibed so many bad maxims, habits and principles, and his heart had already become so hardened, that it seemed impossible to bring any Christian influence to bear upon his mind.

Perhaps our young friends may be astonished at this very deplorable condition of George Lowden, at the age of fourteen? but let them remember, that there are many cases in which persons as young as he, have come into this hardened state, by means of evil influences.

And now I hear them saying, "How terrible it was, for Mr. Lowden to live and die without becoming a Christian!" Yes, it was terrible, indeed. And how do they suppose this fearful state of things came to be? By

neglecting his salvation when he was a child; and by letting the cares of this life, and the love of riches occupy his whole soul, when he became a man. The last of these two evils is the result of the first. If we shut Jesus out of our hearts, when we are young, the things of this life will soon engross our whole attention, and thus leave no place for the great realities of eternity.

Lizzie's other brother had been born only a few weeks before her father's death.

There was great joy in the household, when the little infant stranger came. Lizzie, who had been the baby for ten years, began to think that she was too old, and too large to be a baby any longer; and so thought all the rest of the family; thus the desire for a *little* baby, had for some time been very strong.

"Oh, how I do wish we had a sweet little baby like this to pet!" Lizzie would say, when her Aunt Janey brought her playful baby, Jemmy, to Mr. Lowden's. "He's got such fat little cheeks and arms, and such bright eyes! If we had such a baby, I'd play

with him, and nurse him all the time; and I'd love him *so* much."

By and by, they did get a baby—a nice, promising little fellow. The whole family were delighted with it; and Lizzie fairly jumped for joy.

"I must have it in my lap, and hold it myself," she said, to her old grandmamma; and so she would nurse it, and talk to it for hours, when it was too little to notice any thing.

Day after day, she watched over it, with the greatest anxiety; and every now and then asked her grandmamma,

"How long do you think it will be, till it can see me, and laugh, and play?"

"Oh! before long," would be the encouraging reply. "Only wait patiently, and it will soon begin to notice things."

"What will we call the baby, grandmamma? It must have a name, must'n't it?"

"Mamma says you may name it, dear."

"May I? Then I'll call it Willie, after Uncle Willie Knowles. You know he's my best uncle "

So Willie was the name decided on; and Lizzie was quite proud to think that it had been her privilege to select one so nice.

Long, and impatiently did this sister wait for the baby to notice things; but all to no purpose. It had the nice, fat arms, and fat cheeks, which Lizzie loved to kiss; and its eyes looked clear and pretty; but it did not notice any thing. Alas! it was blind; and none of the beautiful objects, or bright, smiling faces around it, could find their way to its dark world. Sister, and grandmamma, and all the rest, cried some very bitter tears about this, when they found it out. Do any of our little readers wonder at them? Oh! it is a sad thing to be blind.

CHAPTER III.

THE GAY YOUNG WOMAN.

WE will commence this chapter, in an advanced period in the history of the Lowden family; when George and Lizzie are grown up, and have passed into the society of young men and women. Our readers will remember that Lizzie was a very vain little girl; and, as her evil propensity was never checked sufficiently in childhood, she grew up to be an exceedingly vain and gay young lady. This is just what we might expect; for bad habits and principles, received into the heart when it is young and tender, take root so deeply that it is with the greatest possible difficulty they can be removed.

Lizzie Lowden had a very sweet voice; and was a lovely singer. She began, when very young, to give great attention to both

vocal and instrumental music; and her parents had given her every opportunity. Indeed, her proficiency in music was very uncommon; and she became noted as a singer, throughout all the country. Her voice had a richness, and sweetness, which made her singing really delightful.

This was a great talent, given to her by God; and she certainly ought to have improved it, in singing sweet songs of praise to his name; but how often it is, that we are so very ungrateful and unreasonable, as to let the very gifts which God's hands bestow estrange our hearts from him. It was so with Lizzie. She soon became proud of her musical talents; and used them only to please and serve herself.

She became very popular among the young and gay; and spent most of her leisure time in vain, and ungodly circles of young people. This was a great grief to her pious mother, and drew many bitter tears from her. Many and earnest were the warnings she gave her wayward daughter; but they seemed to have no deep and lasting effect.

"My dear child," said she, with tears in her eyes, one evening, as Lizzie returned from the theatre, at a very late hour, "what will be the end of this? I fear you are going right down to ruin, as fast as the influence of the evil one can take you."

"Oh! do not talk so, mother," was Lizzie's impatient answer.

"I cannot help it, my child. My heart aches, when I think of it. I have talked, and plead with you, until it seems as if I have said every thing that can be said; and you are just as wrong as ever."

"Oh! mother, you must not want me to be so sober, just now. I'm young, and full of sport. By and by, when I get older, I'll be sober like you."

The last words were spoken rather contemptuously, and went like a dagger through the heart of the loving mother, who watched with such keen anguish, the downward steps of her ungrateful child.

"My daughter, remember the words of the wise man," said Mrs. Lowden: "'Rejoice, O

young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee, in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.' Thus is the matter plainly placed before you. Have your sins, and your wicked pleasures, if you will; but remember, that for every one of them, you will have to render up a strict account, at the bar of God."

"Oh! mother, I cannot give up my pleasures just yet. Why, only think of it, to lay by all my pleasant enjoyments, and bow down my head, and be an old-fashioned Christian!—No, indeed; I will not give up my dancing, and going to parties and theatres, just yet."

"You need not bow down your head, and be sad, in order to be a Christian. A true Christian is the happiest person in the whole world. God only asks us to lay by such pleasures as are really sinful; and it is for our own personal advantage, to lay them by:

they would only ruin us, if we were to continue in them."

"I do not see how I can give up just yet."

"Well, my child, you have just one of two things to do—to leave your sins, and go to heaven; or, have your sins, and go to hell. Now, which will you do?"

"I don't know as I need to settle the question just now."

"Yes; you do need to settle it just now: for now God sets before you life and death; and bids you to choose whom you will serve—him or Satan."

Mrs. Lowden was not always wise in her mode of addressing her daughter, but her motives were good; and Lizzie's conscience often roused against her, as she was thus spurning the most solemn warnings, which came from a yearning heart; but she constantly hardened herself against the truth; and thus succeeded in putting away all her most serious convictions.

Day after day, the mother plead with her vain and sinful daughter; and still she con-

tinued in her wicked pleasures, as perseveringly as ever.

"Do not go to-night," said her mother, one evening, when Lizzie was setting in order her gay attire, in preparation for a great ball that night.

No reply was made to this earnest appeal.

"Come, Lizzie, my child, don't go to-night."

"Pray, mother, don't talk so foolish," she replied, as she continued to arrange a beautiful necklace, while standing before the large looking-glass.

"Lizzie, my heart aches, to think of your going," and the tears started from the mother's eyes, as she spoke.

Still the rustling of silks, and the tinkling of jewelry went on; and the girl seemed wholly unconscious of the tender, imploring voice.

"Now, you are not going, Lizzie; surely you are not, when you know it is so much against my wishes."

"Yes, mother, I am going," blustered out

the girl, impatiently, "so it is no use for you to talk."

Oh, how like thunder-bolts these harsh, unkind words fell upon the heart of the anxious mother! and how terribly do similar words often fall from the lips of thoughtless, cruel children, who set at nought the most tender admonitions of parental affection! Do any of our young readers ever wound the hearts of fond parents in this shameful way?

Again and again was the earnest "Don't go, Lizzie!" repeated, and that with tears; but all in vain. The proud-hearted girl continued her gay preparations, without a moment's reluctance, until she stood in full costume, with plumes, and silks, and artificials, all ready for the ball-room.

Once more, the injured mother came forward, with the scalding tears chasing each other down her cheeks, and entreated:

"Do not go to-night, I beg of you, Lizzie. You are breaking my heart, and ruining your soul forever. Will you not stay home for my sake, this once — just this once?"

"No, mother," was the determined reply. "It is of no use for you to spend your breath in talking to me; for I'm determined to go, say what you will."

The last words were spoken very emphatically, as Lizzie turned away from her mother's pale, imploring face, with a proud air, and a scornful look.

"Stop, my child!" said the mother, as she took her daughter by the arm, very urgently. "Stop! I have one thing more to say to you. If you will go, remember, that while you are there, dancing, and serving the evil one, your mother will be on her knees, praying for you."

This brought a cold shudder over Lizzie, for a moment; for even

"Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees."

But then her evil heart spoke again, and she resolved to go on in her sins. Thus she tore her mother's heart; and trampled upon her tears. Oh, cruel act! and all for the enjoy-

ment of a few sinful amusements. Oh, what a price to pay for them! Reader, are you purchasing the trivial vanities of a sinful world, with the awful price of a mother's tears and heart's blood? Or, let me rather put the question in a truer form: Are you purchasing hell-fire with these sacred things? What folly! What madness! Well might the poet say of impenitent sinners:

"In pain they travel all their days,
To reap eternal woe."

Oh! my dear little readers, we would not draw dark, gloomy clouds over young spirits; but we would lift up our voices in solemn warning against those sinful pleasures, which steal away the heart, and stealthily bring the soul into the shades of death.

"Fear ye the festal hour;
Aye, tremble when the cup o'erflows.
Tame down the swelling heart!—the bridal rose,
And the rich myrtle's flower
Have veiled the sword!—Red wines have sparkled fast
From venom'd goblets; and soft breezes pass'd,
With fatal perfume, through the revel's bower.

“ Twine the young, glowing wreath ;
But pour not all your spirit in the song,
Which through the sky's deep azure floats along,
Like summer's quickening breath ;
The ground is hollow in the path of mirth :
Oh ! far too daring seems the joy of earth.
So darkly bound, and girdled in by death ! ”

Like other pious mothers, whose hearts bleed from the wounds made by the hands of long loved and cherished children, she went into her closet, and poured out her troubled soul to God in prayer. While Lizzie was engaged in the giddy dance, her mother was pleading with Jesus for the salvation of her soul.

Long, and earnestly, and with many tears, did that faithful mother pray — aye, she wrestled with God ; for she felt that she could not let him go, until he had assured her heart by his Holy Spirit, that her petition should be granted. She did not plead in vain : that Jesus who is very tender to be touched by the tears, and cries of his people, was moved with compassion ; and gave her the strong conviction in her soul, that he would most

assuredly grant her request in his own good time.

Have our young friends ever experienced the sweet answers to earnest, heart-yearning prayer? Have they learned "in all things" to make known their requests to their Father in heaven by fervent supplications; and thereby to know "the peace of God which passeth all understanding"? It is sweet indeed to have such nearness to God and such confidence in him.



CHAPTER IV.

NO BLIND IN HEAVEN.

IT was a lovely morning in May, and the glorious sun was gilding the green fields and bright flowers of earth, when Lizzie led forth blind little Willie, to breathe the fresh air, and to listen to the sweet music of birds, and running brooks. He was now a very sweet and sensible little boy of some eight summers, whose faculties in general were remarkably bright; but he had never seen any thing of this beautiful world; *his* world was one of entire, and continued night. Ever since his birth, he had been the household pet; and had received the most devoted attention from his kind Christian mother.

No pains had been spared to instruct him in every possible way, and to make him as good and intelligent as a blind person could be.

He was, indeed, an interesting child. He had grown like a tender and delicate plant, watered by his pious mother's prayers and tears; and expanding in the genial and warming rays of heavenly truth. He was so excellent a boy, that every one said he was quite worthy of all the care he had received.

Would our readers like to know how he looked? He was a beautiful little boy, of delicate appearance, and fair complexion; he had flaxen hair, mild blue eyes, and a sweet countenance; and was very gentle in his manners.

As they walked through the fields, Lizzie held him by the hand, and kept him from being tripped up by the long grass. When she saw sweet flowers by the way, she plucked them very carefully, and put them into his hand; and all the time talked very merrily about the birds, the trees, the hills, and the sky; for Lizzie was, in many respects, a kind-hearted girl, and loved her blind brother very tenderly.

"How nice these smell," said Willie, while

he kept smelling at the sweet roses his sister had just placed in his hand. "I wish I could see them."

"Some of them look very white, and pure," said the sister, "and the rest have a beautiful red color."

"I expect they're very nice; but I don't know any thing about colors. How strange it must be to see things!"

"How strange it must be not to see things," no doubt our little readers would reply. Yes, indeed, it must be strange, never to see a tree, or a house, or a man, or to know the slightest thing about colors, or shapes; but in Willie's case, we must reverse the order, and say, "How strange it must be to see all these things."

Lizzie led her brother along, very carefully helping him over the fences, and through the gates, until they had got quite out of the town, and had seated themselves on the grassy banks of a sweet, babbling brook, which kept sweetly singing its way through a low, green vale. All around, in

various directions, were beautiful orchards, and groves of trees, which seemed thronged with all kinds of little songsters. Their notes were very sweet; and chimed in very harmoniously with the music of loving voices, and flowing brooks.

"That water sounds sweetly," said Willie. "Take off my shoes and socks, and bathe my feet in it; will you, Lizzie?"

"Yes, dear; anything to please you, and make you happy," said the sister.

"Please, rub them with your hands, sister; and do n't get my pants wet."

So Lizzie kindly pulled off her brother's shoes and socks; and bathed his snowy feet in the crystal stream, rolling up his pants very carefully, so as not to get them wet.

"Oh, how nice the cool water is!" exclaimed the little fellow, as his kind sister applied the soothing element, in a very pleasant way; talking cheerily all the while.

"How kind God is, to give us such pleasant little brooks, and so many nice things!"

Lizzie made no reply. She saw that it was

very convenient to have "the little brooks, and so many nice things;" but she had never received the light of the Holy Spirit in her heart; and she had never learned to love Jesus; and so she daily enjoyed these blessings, without thinking that they were the gracious gift of a kind father in heaven. She did not see God's love in every thing, like Willie did; for he was a little Christian, and could distinguish God's mercies as being very "tender."

"That bird sings very long," said Willie, after listening for some time with great delight, to a little songster of peculiar sweetness. "Do you see him, Lizzie? and is he as pretty as his song? What sweet sounds he does make!"

"Yes, Willie; I see him in that large apple-tree, just over there."

"I wish that I could see him," the boy said, with a gentle sigh.

"I wish you could," replied his sister.

"The flowers you say are so fair, and bright green leaves are on the trees; and

the birds which sing there are very pretty! How pleasant it must be for one that sees!"

"I'm very sorry you can't see," said the sister, dropping a tear into the sparkling stream, as she contemplated the sad fate of her brother.

"But I mustn't complain," continued the boy; "for God is very kind to me, even if he hasn't given me sight. I can feel the cool shade of the trees and the warm light of the sun; and I can feel the nice water of this little brook, as it runs upon my feet; and I can hear the sweet birds sing; and I can hear you sing, Lizzie. All that is a great blessing. God is very kind to do *that* for me. I do n't deserve *any* blessings, and certainly I shouldn't complain because he do n't give me every thing."

"I think he might have given you eyes that could see," said Lizzie, very impatiently, as she took out her pocket-handkerchief to wipe off Willie's feet.

"Oh, no, sister; don't talk so! that's very wicked. God made us; and he had a right to make us just as he pleased."

May we not learn wisdom from these words of the little blind boy? Have our little readers never had a murmuring heart, when they could not have every thing they wanted, or every thing just as they wanted it? Let them reflect a moment. Do they deserve *any thing*? Certainly if God should deal with us according to our sins, we should be most miserable; but he has not. He has been very merciful, and has given us more blessings than we can number. Every morning, and every evening, his mercies are new unto us. Shall we murmur, then, because we have not every thing we could desire? No; let us rather be thankful.

Willie was blind, and did not know anything about books; and so his mother did not send him to school; but he was not allowed to grow up ignorant by any means. His mother was well educated, and she devoted a great deal of her time to instructing him.

Of course, her method of teaching was altogether confined to oral lessons; but, no

doubt, many of our little readers have learned by experience, that this is a very successful way of enlightening the mind. And it was especially successful in the case of Willie, since his memory was very clear and retentive.

Mrs. Lowden gave her little boy lessons in a great many things — in intellectual arithmetic, in history, in grammar. She also taught him the alphabet which has been invented for the blind — an alphabet of raised letters, which can be learned by the sense of touch.

Perhaps some of our little readers think it was very sad not to be able to go to school; and so it was in some respects, but in many others it was a great advantage. Being constantly at home, under the careful eye, and tender influence of his fond mother, he was saved from a multitude of evils, into which so many of our little friends fall. He did not become rough, and rude by a continual contact with coarse lads; but perserved a mildness and angelic sweetness, such as only a

cruel and good mother can cultivate in a child. He did not become profane and vulgar, nor did he become acquainted with those filthy maxims and practices, and lewd songs, so common, alas, among many children. Living in an atmosphere of the warmest love and the purest truth, he grew daily more and more like the blessed meek and loving Jesus, who should be the pattern of life and character for every little boy and girl.

Willie's mother spent a great deal of time in instructing him in the Bible, she would often spend whole evenings in telling him the interesting stories of that wonderful history, and in explaining the glorious principles given there for our life.

We will now take a peep at them on one very interesting evening which they spent in this way.

There was a cheerful fire in the grate, and a bright lamp on the centre table, which illuminated the cozy little parlor where they were sitting, Mrs. Lowden in her large easy chair, with the large family Bible open on

the stand by her side; and Willie on a stool before her, with his arms in her lap, and his hands in hers.

"Now, ma, go on with one of those pretty Bible stories again," said Willie.

"I scarcely know where to find a new one, my child; I have told you so many, that I have almost exhausted the Book itself."

"Oh! never mind telling me a new one, ma; they are all so beautiful, I don't care how often I hear them. They are always new."

"Perhaps you will say, which one you would like best to hear?"

"I would rather hear that one about Jesus blessing the little children, if you please."

"Very well, you shall have that one. Once when Jesus was teaching the great crowd of people which thronged him from time to time, there were some who brought their little children to him, that he might bless them. They did this, no doubt, because they thought him to be some excellent and good person; and because they had great confidence in the prayers of pious men, and believed that those

blessed by a saint or a prophet would be happy.

"When the disciples saw these people pressing their way up to Christ, through the great crowd, they rebuked them, and told them not to trouble their master with these little things. But just then, Jesus saw them, and Oh! he looked so sweetly and so tenderly upon them, and stretching out his hands, he said: Let the little ones come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven? And then as they brought them near, he took them up in his loving arms, and pressing them upon his fond bosom, he spoke precious words of blessing upon them."

"Oh! how sweet!" exclaimed Willie, his countenance lighting up with a radiant smile, and his voice mellowing with pathos. "How I wish I could have been one of them! How I wish his arms had been put around me, and his hands had been placed on my head; and that I could have looked right into his sweet face as he spoke those kind words!"

"Yes, Willie, my dear, that would have been very delightful; but you can still receive his blessing—his greatest, dearest blessing—for he is always near to us, and is stretching out his hands and saying; 'come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And he will gladly receive every little boy and girl who will come to him; he will put his everlasting arms of love around them; and will carry them like little lambs on his bosom.'"

"I want to come to him, ma; how shall I do it?"

"You must believe what the Bible says about him, and trust in him, and expect that he will do for you all that he has promised. That is what is called having faith in him."

"I will try with all my heart to do this, mother; and you will pray God to help me."

"Yes, Willie, I will indeed. Now I will tell you another very interesting story——"

"Tell me the one about the blind man, please."

"There are several stories about blind men

whom Jesus healed, I do not know which one of them you mean, but I will tell you two of them.

“Once when Jesus was traveling from one place to another, and a very great host of people was following him, two blind men happened to be sitting by the way-side. — When they heard the heavy foot-steps of the great multitude, they were puzzled to know what it meant; and as every thing was perfectly dark to them, and they could see nothing, they asked some one standing by, what it was that made such a noise. Those standing near, or perhaps some of those passing by, said that it was Jesus of Nazareth. When they heard this they began to cry out very loudly; ‘Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us.’ When this great multitude, which was passing by, heard them, they rebuked them and told them not to cry out so; but this only made them cry out the louder: ‘Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on us.’ When Jesus heard them he stopped and called them, and said, ‘What do you want me to do

for you?' and they cried out very earnestly; 'Lord, open our eyes.' Then Jesus, who was full of tender compassion, pitied them very much; and coming up to them, he put his fingers on their eyes very kindly, and immediately they received their sight and followed him."

"How I would like to have seen him coming up so kindly and putting his fingers on their eyes, and making them see."

"Yes, it must have been a truly beautiful sight. I will now tell you another story about two blind men."

"Jesus was traveling along the road and these two blind men came following after him, and crying out; 'Son of David, have mercy on us.' And just as Jesus got in the house where he intended to rest a while, the men came up to him and asked him to open their eyes. He then asked them if they believed he was really able to do so great a miracle as to remove blindness. They said they believed he was. Then he put his fingers very kindly on their eyes, and they

began to see right away, and saw every thing as clearly as any body else could."

"How I wish Jesus would open my eyes!" said Willie, very plaintively. "Isn't he just as well able to open my eyes now, as he was to open the eyes of those blind men, then? I wish I could see!"

"Yes, Willie, he is perfectly able to open your eyes, if he chose to do so; but for some very wise and good purpose, he has made you blind; and no doubt he has done it all out of love. He does not 'willingly' afflict us."

While Mrs. Lowden was thus vindicating the righteous government of God, the hot tears began to trickle down Willie's pale cheeks.

"Do n't cry, my darling," said his mother, embracing him very fondly; "it is all for the best. All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

"It's not because I can't see the sky, the trees, and the birds, and the flowers — this is not the reason why I cry. It is because I

cannot see you, ma; I would like so much to see you, and see how you look. I would like to see you smile. I know it must be sweet and lovely — you are so good!”

Words like these swept the most delicate chords of the mother's heart; and she could no longer check the rising tears.

“But you can love me, Willie; and I can love you; and that makes us happy. You do n't feel hard toward your heavenly Father, for making you blind, do you? He has given you a great many blessings — more than you can number.”

“No, ma; I do n't feel hard toward God. I love him very much. He is so kind to me — he has given me almost every thing, when I deserve nothing; surely, I ought not to complain.”

“No, indeed, my dear, you ought not to complain; certainly you ought not. Even your blindness is, no doubt, a great blessing. You know, ‘afflictions are often blessings in disguise.’ Perhaps this was the way in which God, in his kind and wise providence, chose

to make you look to Jesus Christ, and to seek the things that are in heaven; and then, would it not be infinitely better for you to be blind, and follow Christ, and go to heaven, than to be able to see, and become wicked, and go to hell?"

"It is all well, mother. I would not have it any other way."

"Perhaps God has made you blind, in order that other little boys and girls who can see, might appreciate that great blessing, and learn how to be thankful for it. Would you not be glad, if God would thus, through you, teach lessons of gratitude to other little boys, and little girls too?"

"Yes, mother, I am quite willing to be blind and never see any thing in this world, if that will glorify God. I'll soon be in heaven, and there will be no blindness there."

"No, my dear, there will be no blind in heaven; we shall all see there."

Mrs. Lowden and little Willie knelt down together, and returned thanks, and offered prayers to God; and thus sought the grace

of God, to sustain them in all their afflictions; and to enable them to improve them all to his glory; after which, a benediction of good warm kisses concluded the exercises of the evening.

My dear little reader, is it not a great blessing, that God has seen fit, in his kind providence, to give you sight? How pleasant it is to behold this beautiful world, with its blue sky, adorned with those brilliant orbs, and its green earth, so cunningly decked with flowers! Would it not be sad to live all your days in perpetual night? And yet, God might have been perfectly just, and even merciful, in making you so. Dear children, let us learn "in every thing to give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us."

CHAPTER V.

THE BOLD SKEPTIC.

"**D**ON'T believe there is a *single bit* of reality in religion," blustered Miss Lizzie, as she rushed into the parlor, rather unceremoniously, and with a dark cloud of anger on her young face.

"Why?" inquired her mother.

"Good reason, why," continued the excited girl, as she removed her hat and cloak, with a deal of violence.

"Why?"

"If I catch Mary Jones, I'll let her know why!"

"But that is not answering my question."

"Ought Christians to tell lies?"

"No, of course not."

"Well, Mary Jones has been lying about me."

"Perhaps not"

"Yes, she has."

"Be sure that your suspicion is well grounded."

"I'm sure enough about that, I think."

"But what is the trouble?"

"Why, Mary Jones has told Jane Gray the greatest pack of stuff about me, that you ever heard in your life; and not a word of it is true."

"Perhaps she heard it said by those whom she thought to be good authority."

"I don't know about that; and I don't care if she *has* heard some body else say it; she has no business to repeat it. Tale-bearing and circulating slander is no work for a Christian."

"That certainly is very true, Lizzie; but are you sure Mary ever told it second-handed?"

"Certainly I am — this miserable gossip — the idea of a Christian being a gossip!"

The last phrase was uttered with great sarcasm. And one can scarcely blame another, for denouncing such conduct in a professed Christian, as a notoriously wicked thing — a

thing from which a true Christian should shrink. Oh! how careful Christians should be of the *unruly member*—that "*world of iniquity*," which setteth on fire the "courses of water."

"Be sure that you are just in your suspicions," continued Mrs. Lowden; "we never should suspect evil except on the strongest grounds."

"I have the strongest grounds—strong enough to see that there's no truth in religion."

"Even if Mary Jones has dishonored her Christian profession, that does not in reality mar the truth of the religion of Christ. She is to blame and not the gospel. The gospel is none the worse for that. She may never have been a Christian; she did not do this evil *because of her religion*, but *because of her lack of religion*."

"We are apt to identify the thing with the person engaged therein."

"There is a tenlency that way; yet it should not be so. We do not generally

judge so in other things. No one would pretend to say that there is no reality in music, because there have been many miserable musicians; or that philosophy is all nonsense, because there have been many miserable philosophers. Philosophy and music remain the same, whether the professors of these arts are false or true."

To this Lizzie made no reply.

How lamentable it is that so many are made to stumble, by the inconsistency of professed Christians. The day of judgment only can reveal the great hosts who shall have fallen into hell over careless professors of the religion of Christ!

Lizzie Lowden had now become a very bold skeptic, and had but little regard for any kind of a religious theory. From her childhood, she had been very gay and proud; and being a person of beautiful outward appearance, and of extraordinary talents, she soon found her way into a fashionable and fascinating social circle; and became entirely intoxicated with the pleasures and vanities of this life.

She was at this time a very celebrated singer, in one of the operas of a large city near her home; and her musical talents and acquirements were of the highest order.— This position was a great grief to her Christian mother, who shed many a tear daily on account of her wayward daughter. But Lizzie's passion for worldly amusements was so great that she could even trample on a mother's tears, and keep the wounded heart constantly bleeding, if she might but satisfy her craving thirst.

She had been skeptical from a child, and in order to still her occasionally disturbed conscience, she pretended to be even more so than she really was.

"I do n't believe the Bible any how," said she in an advanced period of the conversation just referred to.

"Why?" enquired her anxious mother.

"Because I do n't."

"You should be able to give a good reason for such an important conclusion, as denying the truthfulness of God's word."

"I have good reasons."

"Let us hear some of them, pray."

"I will give you some of my reasons by asking you a few questions. What reason have we to believe that the Bible is true?"

"Why my child, the Bible bears its proofs and seals of truthfulness, on its own pages."

"Let us hear some of them."

"Well, in the first place, the wisdom, depth and sublimity of the truths it advances, are sufficient to show that it came from no source short of an infinite and almighty God — just such a one as it claims for its author. Compare the truths of the Bible with the teachings of the great heathen philosophers.— Why, the Greeks thought they sprung from the soil, and they had a great host of gods, and demi-gods, nearly every one of which had been guilty of some crime; and then look at the Egyptians, they were very learned, and very wise in the things of this world; yet they worshiped bulls, cats, reptiles and many other most abominable things. Now turn to the Bible, and see what a clear beautiful and

perfectly reasonable account it gives of the origin of all things, both in the heavens above and the earth beneath. And how beautifully and grandly it represents the great Jehovah as God over all things, from everlasting to everlasting.

"And then, just think what a wonderful scheme is that of the plan of salvation—wise, beautiful, and sublime, from beginning to end. Never has there been any theory, at any time, that could equal it. The whole life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, with all their relations, objects, and references, are well worthy of an infinite God; and such a theory could not possibly originate in the minds of even the wisest of men."

"That much would seem plausible, certainly," said Lizzie.

"Then see how its prophecies have been and are being fulfilled, without a single failure; and see how all its references to various points in history, and to various places and times, are being proved as perfectly correct.

"Then, there are the stories and poetry it

contains. Why, all good and honest critics allow that their equals have never been produced among men — no, not even among the wisest.

“ We may also refer to its principles, and rules of life and conduct, as being the most excellent ; and if we are honest, we must say, like David, ‘ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ’ — converting it from its wretched and ruined moral state, from which the wisest of the heathen strove so long to rescue it ; but all in vain. ‘ Thy testimonies Lord are sure, making wise the simple : thy statutes Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : thy commandment Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ’ How the Bible has succeeded in raising men from sin and vice, and their consequent misery and woe ; and in restoring it to the divine image ! Nothing else ever could do it.”

“ Well done, mother ; you are certainly quite a logician, and an excellent preacher. I haven’t heard a sermon like that this long time,” said Lizzie, sarcastically.

She was determined not to believe; and so she soon found a way to evade the truth. She was one of those "hearers," whom Jesus represented by the seed which had fallen by the way-side. The way-side was a smooth and hard-beaten path, in which the seed could find no lodgment, and, consequently, it was very readily stolen away by the enemy; and Lizzie's heart was equally ill-prepared to receive the precious words of life; and so Satan soon had the effect of the truth removed, by a little bit of sarcasm.

"Lizzie, my child," continued Mrs. Lowden, "it is but little use for you to kick against the truth. You may shun it in life; but you might as well try to fight against the billows of the ocean, or the rushing winds, as to contend against it, or try to evade it in death and eternity."

"If the Bible is true at all," said Lizzie, "I think it must teach universal salvation. I believe all will get to heaven, if there is such a place."

"Why do you believe that?"

"Because God is a very merciful being too merciful to send a soul to hell forever."

"Yes; but Young very appropriately says,

'A God all mercy, were a God unjust.'

It is not possible for God, according to his own laws and principles of justice, to save a guilty soul that does not believe in Jesus Christ. 'Go preach the gospel to every creature,' saith Jesus; and 'he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;' but 'he that believeth not, shall be damned.' How shall we get over that?"

Lizzie made no reply.

"The word of God, from the beginning to the end, makes the nicest possible discrimination between the righteous and the wicked, pronouncing an eternal blessing upon the former, and an eternal woe upon the latter."

Lizzie was silenced. She could say no more; for her mother's logic was far too sound for her to gainsay.

Perhaps our little readers think she must certainly have been a Christian, after such conversation? But it was not so. This kind of reasoning only appealed to her intellect, and that was not the part which needed to be reached. It was her heart that was wrong.



CHAPTER VI.

THE WONDERFUL CONVERSION.

“**W**HAT a pity it is, that Lizzie Lowden is not a Christian,” said Mr. French to his wife. Mr. French was pastor of the church which Lizzie generally attended.

“Yes; I often think of her, and pray for her,” replied the wife. “She has very fine talents. It is certainly a very great pity that they are not devoted to God, and to his truth.”

“I am afraid she’s a confirmed skeptic.”

“Cannot any thing be done for her?”

“I do not know. There is many a prayer offered up for her: many persons are praying earnestly for that girl; and her mother is crying to God, day and night, on her behalf.”

“Very well; then she will be converted; for God always hears prayer:

'It sha'n't be said that praying breath
Was ever spent in vain.'

God will hear and answer prayer, in his own good time."

"Well, wife, why should 'his own good time' not be *now*?"

"I do not see why it should not. Suppose we commence at once to pray for her conversion?"

"Well said! We will now resolve, by the grace of God, to pray constantly for Lizzie Lowden, until she is converted. True, her heart is very hard; but it is just as easy for God to change her, and give her a new heart, as to change any one else, who might seem to be a very easy case."

"I like that kind of faith in God, very much, and am ready to enter into the matter with my whole soul. But we must not forget to labor, as well as to pray."

"So I think. I have just been wondering if it would not be well to get up a sermon for next Sunday, particularly for her — one on

skepticism, that would meet and fully dissipate all her doubts and objections."

"So do; and mean while, we will pray very earnestly for God to bring her to himself next Sunday, during the services. I believe in selecting particular subjects for special prayer."

The plan was agreed upon; and Mr. French set himself to work, accordingly, to prepare a very excellent discourse on the "Internal Evidences of Scripture."

The discourse was, indeed, an able one; and well adapted to meet an intelligent, clear, critical mind like Lizzie's. But, alas! Mr. French made the same mistake, which Mrs. Lowden had so often made already, when urging her daughter to receive the faith—he constantly appealed to the intellect, whereas it was the heart and the conscience which were wrong. All that was necessary was some simple gospel truth, preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and accompanied with its power.

The next Sunday morning was a lovely

one. The sun was shining brightly; and every thing in nature seemed to stir the soul to high and holy aspirations. On that morning, Mr. and Mrs. French spent several hours in earnest prayer for the conversion of Lizzie Lowden.

Oh, how blessed are the kind prayers of Christian friends, offered up for us when we are unconscious of them! How they strew our path with heaven's richest and most unexpected blessings! When shall we fully realize how much we owe to the secret, agonizing prayers of Christian people?

When Mr. French arrived at the church, he was delighted to find Miss Lizzie there with her mother; for he looked around for her the first thing when he got into the pulpit; and when he saw her, another earnest prayer went up to God, to make use of some of the means of grace on that day, to the salvation of this young woman.

All the exercises were conducted with their ordinary propriety and solemnity. The hymns were read with great elegance;

the organ pealed forth its loud notes; and the sermon was delivered in a very clear and emphatic manner; after which, the minister offered a short and fervent prayer, hoping in his heart, that the longed-for object had been accomplished, and that Lizzie Lowden had truly been converted.

He was just about to give out the closing hymn, when, lo! old Joseph Raino—a very illiterate old colored man, but a very excellent Christian—arose, in one corner of the house, and with his heart overflowing with the love of God, poured forth one of his earnest, but exceedingly broken, exhortations. This was quite an extraordinary thing for Brother Raino; but he “felt peculiarly impressed with the Holy Ghost,” as he said, and he “hoped he might be pardoned, if he had been too forward.” Thus the old man cried, and talked away, for a few minutes, quite eloquently, after his own style, which was very cruel to the “King’s English.”

Mr. French duly appreciated Brother Raino’s earnestness and good motives, but he *did*

feel sorry and mortified, to think he had spoken *that day*; for as he looked around upon the congregation, he saw a smile on the faces of some of the gay young people, and very much feared that so crude and promiscuous an episode, would have a tendency to dissipate the serious feelings produced by the weighty discourse upon the mind of the very refined and critical Lizzie Lowden.

The worship was concluded; and the minister and his wife returned home, praying, meanwhile, that God's Spirit might counteract whatever evil influence good old Brother Raino's very uncalled-for remarks might have produced upon the mind of her for whom they were feeling so anxiously.

During the early part of the week, Mr. French received a note from Miss Lizzie, very earnestly requesting him to visit her, for the purpose of conversing on the subject of religion.

"Bless the Lord!" he exclaimed to his wife, after running over the contents of the note very hastily.

"What is it?" asked his wife, "good news I presume?"

"Indeed it is; God has heard our prayers."

And then, without giving time for further questions, he read as follows:

"DEAR SIR,

I am in great distress about my salvation. Can you not make it convenient to come and see me soon?

Yours Truly,

LIZZIE LOWDEN.

REV. G. F. FRENCH."

Mr. French put on his overcoat and hat in great haste, and started immediately to see the inquirer.

As soon as he met Lizzie, he discerned in her an air of great seriousness, which was by no means common.

"I was most happy, Miss Lowden, to receive such a note, and from such a source. I have been exceedingly anxious about you for some time."

"I believe many have been anxious about

me," replied Lizzie, the tears starting as she spoke. "But hitherto, I have been very little concerned myself."

"I am certainly very thankful that you are *now* being concerned about these things. It is a fearful thing to live neglecting the great salvation."

For a few moments, Lizzie could not speak for weeping — she felt herself to be a great sinner.

"I have been very wicked," said she at length; "how I have wasted my precious time, trampled upon my mother's tears and spurned the Son of God! Oh! it is so terrible, that when Jesus Christ has suffered so much, and come to offer salvation through his blood, I have been slighting him so long."

"It is indeed awful."

"May God have mercy on me! I deserve nothing but to be lost forever!"

"Has it been long since you have had these serious impressions?"

"Only since last Sunday morning. Then I began to see what I had been doing."

"Was there any particular idea in the sermon that arrested your attention?"

"No, sir; it was not your sermon at all that affected me; it was the earnest, broken exhortation, that poor old colored man gave at the close of the meeting. I never shall forget him. His face shone like the face of an angel, and his words went like a dagger to my heart."

"How astonishing!" exclaimed Mr. French. "There certainly was nothing very striking about his remarks."

"To me there was something very wonderful about what he said; the words seemed to come red-hot from his heart, burning their way to mine. I shall never forget them as long as I live."

Oh! how wonderfully does God work! Truly, it is not by might or power of man that souls are saved; but by God's Spirit, and that Spirit works through the earnest and simple-hearted, who like Jesus himself, can *weep* over sinners—"He who goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall

doubtless come again, rejoicing and bringing his sheaves with him;" — they who feel the truth themselves, will make others feel it.

My dear little readers, how earnest we should be in winning souls to Christ. God can accomplish great things through us, with only a few of the most simple words, if they are only sincere and from a broken heart. A word spoken in tears, by a child, may subdue the heart of the strongest infidel. May our young friends not be idle. They can do great things for their Saviour.



CHAPTER VII.

THE LIGHT SHINING.

LIZZIE was soon led to understand clearly the grace that is in Christ Jesus. She was sweetly drawn to put her trust in him whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Won by the love of Christ, she loved and served him with all her heart. She earnestly sought to improve every opportunity of doing good.

Shortly after her conversion, a very remarkable incident took place. One of her associates in a large city opera, called on her for the purpose of getting her to perform at a very splendid and gay public entertainment, which was to take place in a large theatre of an adjoining town. He had heard that she had become a follower of Christ, but supposed that she could be urged to favor

her old friends with her accustomed services nevertheless.

"Will you favor us with your aid?" he enquired, seeing that she hesitated to answer, "your old friends think they *must hear you*, sing once more."

"I thank you for the compliment;" she replied; "but I must have a little time to consider the matter."

She withdrew for a few minutes, and very sincerely laid the matter before God in prayer; and finally concluded to comply with the request on a certain condition.

"I will go, if you will allow me to select my piece;" said she, on meeting her old friend again.

"Oh! certainly, you shall have that privilege," was the reply, without at all suspecting the object of such a request.

Lizzie prayed a great deal, every day, about this matter; she was very anxious that God would so fill her with the Holy Spirit, that she might do a great work for him in the act she was now anticipating. She was

aware that we can serve God in every thing and that there is a possibility of so making use of influence, position and peculiar circumstances, as to turn them all into capital for God's glory.

The appointed evening came; and Lizzie repaired to the opera with an earnest prayer in her heart, that God would make her plan successful, and send down the Holy Spirit with mighty power upon the very large and thoughtless assembly.

The vast concourse of thousands, had crowded into the splendid and brilliantly lighted building; and were very anxiously awaiting the lifting of the curtain.

In due time the screen was raised; and as Lizzie was to open the exercises of the evening with one of her excellent performances, she first made her appearance upon the stage. Every face was upturned with anxious expectation, as she stepped forward, looking almost like an angel. She was dressed in pure white, and her face glowed with a most solemn expression, as she raised her sweet and almost unearthly voice, and sung with great pathos:

"Depth of mercy! — can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Will the Lord his wrath forbear,
And the chief of sinners spare?"

"I have long withstood his grace;
Long provoked him to his face:
Would not hear his gracious calls,
Grieved him by a thousand falls.

"Jesus, answer from above—
Is not all thy nature love?
Wilt thou not the wrong forget?
Lo! I fall before thy feet.

"Now incline me to repent;
Let me now my fall lament;
Deeply my revolt deplore:
Weep, believe, and sin no more."

Every word thrilled the heart of the whole audience; and the people were bathed in tears. Immediately when the hymn was sung, the curtain was dropped, and an awful solemnity filled the place. The congregation was at once broken up, and great and happy results followed the short exercises of the evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROCRASTINATION.

WHAT a blessed thing faith in Christ is. How it divests us of self; and how it arouses into most healthy action, all the good and noble properties of the soul! When Lizzie became a Christian, and tasted of those sweet streams of love and truth which flow from the throne of God, she was exceedingly anxious for others to have the same blessings.

Her brother George, to whom reference was made in the early part of this little book, was now a young man, just in the bloom of life. He had grown up amid the best Christian influences; and had often felt deeply about the great things of eternity. Many times had his heart swelled in his bosom, and tears gathered in his eyes, as he listened to the earnest appeals of the gospel, and the sincere

prayers of God's people. But he had always repressed his feelings; and quieted his conscience, by promising himself to attend to these things at a more convenient season.

Oh, how sad a conclusion! It has rocked many a soul so soundly to sleep, that it has never awoken, until, like the rich man, it opened its eyes in hell. It would be difficult for Satan to tempt men to neglect their salvation forever: they would shudder, and at once recoil from such an idea; but he can very easily get them to put off the matter for a *little while*; and then for a *little while* longer; and thus certainly secure their everlasting woe. Reader, are you yielding to this temptation? are you saying to Jesus, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee?" Beware! God's mercy will not always wait on the wicked, and the rebellious.

Lizzie felt exceedingly anxious about her brother; and often plead with him, to turn at once to Jesus.

"Come, George," said she, one day, "look

to the Saviour now; this is the day of grace; you may neglect it, until it is forever too late."

"I know I ought to be a Christian; and I intend to be, some day."

"When?"

"When I get older."

"How do you know that your life will be spared?"

"Oh! I don't like to be frightened into religion, from a fear of dying."

"Nor does any one want to frighten you, simply on that ground; but is it not a most important consideration? Have you any lease of your life?"

"No."

"Then it is a very false kind of reason, or sense, that would have you to delay having it insured by the grace of God, is it not?"

No reply.

"If you will observe the houses, as you pass along through this town, you will find that nearly every one is insured; but the burning of a house is far from being as com-

mon as a death among the people; and yet, no one would think it sensible to find fault with a man for wanting his house insured, immediately after it was built; and sometimes even before it is completed? Very few ships venture out upon the sea without being insured; and yet, the loss of a ship is a rare thing, compared with the death of a person. Would any man think it unreasonable, if you were to urge him, very earnestly, to have a valuable ship, loaded with a precious cargo, insured, before it went out upon the perilous waters?"

"No; certainly not."

"And if you found him reluctant to secure his property, would it not be very reasonable and proper, for you to point out, very seriously, to him, the very great and dangerous risk that he would be incurring, by neglecting so important a matter?"

"No; of course not."

"Then what would you think of that man, if when you come to him in this reasonable way, shall turn to you and say, 'Oh! I don't

believe in being frightened into any such measures, in this way."

"I should say he was very foolish and ridiculous; and not even worthy of counsel."

"Well, George, 'thou art the man.'"

"There, Lizzie, you have me, I must acknowledge; you are quite a preacher," exclaimed the brother, trying to put away his serious convictions.

Oh, how many there are, who thus allow Satan to steal the precious seeds of truth out of their hearts!

"How important it is, George," continued his sister, "that you attend to your soul while you are young. Now is the time, when your character will be formed for ever, either for good or evil—for heaven or hell. How necessary to have the heart, and life guarded against all iniquity! An error made in early life, may have very serious consequences, be that error ever so small to our thinking. If we make even a very small mistake, in the first part of a long mathematical problem, the

ultimate error is fearfully great, and so it is with errors made in youth—they have a most appalling result, when carried out through a long life.”

George looked very serious, but made no reply.

“I feel distressed for you, my brother,” continued Lizzie; “I do wish you would listen to the gracious words of Jesus and trust to him, now.”

The large tears coursed their way down over the young man's cheeks; but he said nothing. The view he then had of himself almost constrained him to promise his sister that he would no longer delay; but in a moment, the gay world with all its fascinating charms came up before him, and he quickly brushed away his tears, and left the room, as if to say, “No, no, I cannot give the world up yet. I must continue a little longer in my sins.” And this was apparently the awful crisis of his life. His tender feelings were suppressed, and then returned no more. He

often heard the truth afterwards, but his heart had been turned into a rock, and he cared for none of these things.

Oh! my dear little readers, be careful; if you should continue to harden your heart, there may be the same sad state awaiting you.



CHAPTER IX.

WILLIE'S DEATH.

IT was a lovely morning in spring. The joyous brooks had laid by their icy fetters, and were sweetly singing their way down the sides of hills and mountains, and through the quiet valleys. The sun was bright and clear, and the soft winds breathed gently upon the tender grass and spring flowers, while happy birds were singing in almost every tree.

Little blind Willie, was lying very quietly upon a bed of sickness, and dear friends were watching every day for the happy spirit to take its flight. For many weeks, he had been gradually wasting away, by the slow progress of consumption; but it was delightful to see how patiently the little Christian could bear his pain, and how he grew more and more heavenly, as he neared the spirit land.

On this beautiful morning to which we refer, Lizzie was sitting by the window and near the bed where her sick brother lay.— She had watched with him all night, and was glad when the day came. With what interest she watched the gray dawn, when the myriads of birds awoke, and poured forth their sweet and lively song of morning devotion; and the stars one after another modestly withdrew their feeble light, from before the rising sun, which by and by, poured forth its flood of glory upon the whole face of nature.

Little Willie was awake too, and quietly revolved a great many interesting things in his mind; but he saw nothing of nature's light. Day after day came and went, but revealed nothing to his sightless eyes; night and day were the same to him.

In a pitcher which stood on the stand near the bedside, was a bouquet of withered flowers; and Lizzie was learning lessons of mortality from these emblems of human frailty. She looked at Willie and then at the flowers, and thought of that instructive scripture:

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it, surely the people is grass." What a striking resemblance she saw between her dying brother and the fading bouquet. They had both been very beautiful, but how soon they wasted away.

"Sister," said Willie with a low faint voice, "the Lord is going to take me home to-day."

"How do you know, dear?"

"The angels told me so in my dream last night."

"Did you have a pleasant dream?"

"Oh, yes?"

"Can't you tell it to me?"

"No! it was so glorious, I cannot tell it as it was."

"Tell me as well as you can, Willie."

"I thought the angels came down from heaven, right down here to my bed; and whispered such sweet words—oh, so sweet!

sweeter even than mother can speak. And they were so loving; and I thought I could see them with their beautiful white garments, sweet faces, kind eyes, and bright wings."

"What did you think they said?"

"They told me not to be afraid to die, but to trust in the Lord Jesus, and he would send them to bear me home. And then I asked them, how long it would be before I could go with them to that happy place; and they said, I should go to-day."

"What became of this angel band?"

"They went back to heaven, singing, oh! so sweetly, and then I awoke."

"Would you like to die, Willie?"

"Oh, yes; I long to be with Jesus, and with the angels."

"Will you not be afraid to go through the dark valley?"

"No. The angels will go with me."

"Are you willing to leave me, and ma, who love you so much?"

"Yes, sister; I love you more than I can say, but I love Jesus most of all, and he calls me. I must go."

"Will you love us still, do you think when you are in heaven?"

"I will always love you, dear sister, and mother too. Mother says, the angels are sometimes ministering spirits; perhaps I may come to comfort you when you are sad and lonely."

"Dear, sweet Willie," said Lizzie, as she kissed his pale lips and emaciated hand, "I love you so much! How can I part with you!" and the tears rushed thick and fast, as she thought of the sad separation, so soon to take place.

"Don't cry, sister; I'm going to heaven. Oh! I'm so happy! The only thing that makes me feel sad, is to think how you and mother will weep for me when I am gone. If you only would n't mourn for me."

"We will try to be reconciled, dear brother."

"Bury me beside my father, Lizzie; I want to lie close to him. But then it won't make any difference; for my spirit will be happy, if my body is dead. How strange to think

that this body — these hands, and arms, and feet — will lie in the ground, and turn to dust!"

The little boy paused for a moment, and looked as if he was studying deeply over this wonderful change, through which he was so soon to pass.

Lizzie repeated those beautiful words of Scripture, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"Call ma, tell her I'm dying," whispered Willie, as his breath grew shorter, and death seemed to seize his vitals.

In a few moments, his mother was at his bedside.

"What do you want, my dear child?" she inquired, bending over the dying boy, to catch his last whisper.

"I am going, mother, to that blessed land, where sorrow never comes; where God shall wipe away all my tears; and where I shall sing his praise forever."

The last words were uttered very feebly; and Mrs. Lowden saw very plainly, that her child would say but very little more.

"Are you happy, dear?" she whispered.

"Yes — yes — so very — happy — the angels are coming — to meet me."

A few more breaths, and the little spirit took its flight to the happy world above, to be forever with the Lord.

Oh, what a happy moment must this have been for Willie! His eyes were opened when he got to that blessed world of light; and he saw God, and the angels, and heaven, in all their real glory; and all the hosts of heaven rejoiced over the joyful spirit released from its dark prison of clay.

The dear little form was neatly arrayed in a pure, white shroud; and many, indeed, were the fond kisses impressed upon that pale, sweet face.

"How lovely! how angelic he looks!" exclaimed Mrs. Ross, as she gazed upon the lifeless form.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Pain; "he is almost

too lovely to be buried out of sight, in the cold earth."

In a short time, Willie was in the old grave-yard, beneath a large weeping willow, and close to the mouldering remains of his father. He had joined the silent multitude, to rest sweetly, till the great trump shall sound.

"Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep."

One beautiful evening in Spring, when the sun was setting, and nature was sinking to rest, Lizzie stole away to the grave-yard, and planted a lovely rose-bush at the head of the newly-made mound. It was a season of sweet meditations; and when she returned home, she wrote in her diary, "I have just planted a rose on the grave of my dear brother Willie. I thought it the fittest monument for one like him.

"We rear no marble o'er thy tomb,
No sculptured image there shall mourn:
Ah! fitter, far, the vernal bloom,
Such dwelling to adorn.
Fragrance, and flowers, and dews shall be
The only emblem meet for thee

“Thy grave shall be a blessed shrine,
Adorn'd with nature's brightest wreath;
Each glowing season shall combine,
Its incense there to breathe.
And oft upon the midnight air,
Shall viewless harps be murmuring there!

“And oh! sometimes in visions blest,
Sweet spirit! visit our repose;
And bear from thine own world of rest,
Some balm for human woes!
What form more lovely could be given,
Than thine, to messengers of heaven!”

My dear little readers, like Willie, you may die in childhood. Are you ready now, to go?



CHAPTER X.

THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

HIZZIE Lowden was truly an earnest Christian. Her greatest talent being her extraordinary ability as a singer; she employed it to the glory of God, in every possible way. She united herself with a few Christian friends, and traveled from place to place, holding concerts of sacred music.

The people were charmed with her sweet voice; but the living and hearty expression she was accustomed to give to the beautiful sentiments contained in the pieces sung, from time to time, made a far deeper impression upon their minds. The way in which she entered, with her whole soul, into the glorious spirit of sacred song, led many a one to think of heaven, and long to be there.

In this pleasant employment, she was constantly in contact with the good, the respectable, and the educated. Perhaps many a professed Christian, if placed in the same circumstances, would have entirely forgotten the lower, and more needy classes. They would have thought it the duty of the minister, the Sunday School teacher and the missionary, to attend to the spiritual wants of these; and as to their temporal wants, they would have looked to the various charitable societies to supply these. But Lizzie was not such a one: When she lay down at night upon her soft pillow and easy couch, she thought of her Saviour when he was on earth, not "having where to lay his head;" and then she would think of the great host of poor, who at that moment were suffering for the bare necessities of life; and then the tear of sympathy would steal down her cheek, and she would ask herself the question—"Is there no way, in which I may find out some of these, and administer the balm of consolation to their broken spirits?" She always made

it a practice to spend all her spare time, in every town where she might happen to be, in hunting up the poor and the distressed, and attending to their spiritual and temporal wants, as far as it was within her power. Many a sad heart did she make glad, many a smile did she bring to the despairing countenance by raising from off their backs the heavy burdens of woe; and many a sweet song did she sing by the bedside, and in the lonely hovel of the disconsolate. Was not hers the Christian religion? The heart of Jesus ever yearned over the poor; *he* came to seek out and to save the lost. Oh! how many there are, who dare to call themselves Christians, when they have really nothing of that tender benevolence, which characterized the Son of God! Yet the Bible says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

It was in the town of Winston, one beautiful morning of summer, when the sun was just throwing his first rays over the waking world, that Lizzie arose according to her usual custom, to see if she could not discover

some lowly sufferer who might need her charity.

She passed up one street and down another, and in front of many a stately mansion and gorgeous edifice, until at length she found her way into a lonely and poverty-stricken lane. She passed by a few of the miserable houses, until she thought she had discovered the most wretched of them all. It was indeed a dreary looking habitation. The low walls slanted in various directions; the shattered roof was dangerously *sagged*; the window sashes were well nigh filled up with rags; and the door with its large wooden latch, looked scarcely strong enough to warrant handling.

Lifting a hearty, but silent prayer to God, to bless her attempt to relieve the sufferers she might discover within; she ventured to knock for admittance. The door opened; and a wretched scene presented itself. A poor and careworn woman, with pale cheeks, and sunken eye, clothed in thin and tattered garments, met her at the door. The room

was a dilapidated apartment; its walls and ceiling adorned with torn paper and broken plastering; and its furniture was of the most meagre character.

In one corner, on a miserable bedstead, with still more miserable bedding, lay the man of the house. His emaciated face, and distressed eyes, appearing still more dismal from his long, dark and neglected beard, told plainly, that some slow and weary disease was preying upon him, and that he was not long for this world.

"Good morning," said Lizzie cheerfully, and with a bright smile on her face.

"Walk in," said the poor woman faintly.

Lizzie stepped in very gently, and took a seat on one of the old chairs which adorned the humble dwelling.

"Is that your husband?" she asked the woman, pointing to the bed in the corner.

"Yes; he's been sick now a great many months; and I suppose, he'll never be well again."

"What is your disease, sir?" asked Lizzie, moving her chair to his bedside.

"Consumption," was the reply.

"Then, you never expect to get well, do you?"

"No; I can't live much longer."

"Are you in want of any thing, to make you comfortable?"

"My wife and children sometimes have little or nothing to eat for days. I haven't been able to earn any thing for a great while; the children are all small; and it takes all my wife's time to take care of the family, and wait upon me."

Lizzie opened her purse, and gave very liberally for the supply of their temporal wants, before she said any thing to the man about his spiritual state; for she had but little hope of reaching the heart, when the outward wants were carelessly neglected; and then she would have had but little heart to pray to God for these needy people, if she had not been ready to relieve their temporal wants, which were so strongly pressing upon them.

"Are you prepared to die?" she then

asked, turning kindly toward the sick man.

"Ah, no! I am a lost man—lost—lost forever."

"Then you are just the one Jesus Christ came to save; for he himself says, that he 'came to seek, and to save that which was lost.'"

"My sins have been too great to be pardoned."

"Don't say so, sir; for the Bible shows, that Jesus died to save the chief of sinners. None are too sinful, if they will only receive him. His grace is infinite; and he can save unto the uttermost."

A sudden light gleamed on the despairing features, as these last words were spoken; and Lizzie saw plainly, that she had presented a new idea to the desponding soul.

"Are you not willing to receive, and trust Jesus, on the glorious terms of the gospel?"

"Yes; but I never saw it in this light before."

Lizzie drew from her pocket her own

familiar little Bible, and selected some precious portions, which she read to this poor family; and then, having had all the little children called up, she addressed each of them separately; and kneeling down among them, offered an earnest prayer to God, for their salvation.

She left the town that day, and did not return, until about six months afterward.

This poor man lived only a few weeks after the visit to which we have just referred; but owing to the sweet words which Lizzie spoke about Jesus and his salvation, he had cast himself upon his tender mercies, and become happy in the blessed hope of eternal life. His triumphant death was the means of bringing his wife to receive the same consolations; and she then trained up her little ones in the fear of the Lord.

What a blessing was that one visit to this poor, desolate family! It relieved their pressing bodily wants; and brought them all to Jesus. Who can calculate the influence of a few earnest efforts, put forth in the name

of Jesus? May we never withhold our hearts or hands from this precious work of bringing the joys of salvation to the miserable and the lost; for truly, "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

During the following winter, Lizzie was in this same town again. It was a cold and stormy day: the wind was howling boisterously; and the snow was flying thick and fast, when she resolved to go and see how the poor family was provided for, during such severe weather.

As she opened the door, her heart was moved with the sight. The mother was absent, and the poor little children were in a most wretched condition. The fire was low; the snow was blowing through the shattered windows and walls; and the little ones were bare-footed, and dressed with thin and tattered garments. They were all kneeling together, around the miserable fire; and the oldest boy, a lad of some six years, was praying very earnestly to God. First, he repeated the Lord's prayer; and then he added a very

earnest petition of his own. As soon as he arose from his knees, Lizzie went up to him, and taking him by the hand, said:

"Why did you say that prayer, my son?"

"Since my father died," replied the boy, "my mother has to go out and work all day to get something to eat; and this morning, when she went away, she cried because she had no bread to give us. She said we should now have to starve; for father was dead, and she did not see how she could get enough to keep us alive."

"How long is it since your father died?" interrupted Lizzie.

"He died last Summer," said the little fellow, and then went on to finish his story. "So I told mother not to cry, for I could get some bread; and *that's* what made me pray. 'Our Father,' ma'am, the prayer begins; and as our father is dead, I thought He would be a father to us. And then the prayer asks for bread each day; and that's just what we need."

Lizzie started right off, without losing a

moment, and purchased a large quantity of bread and meat, and various other things which she, in her benevolence, craved for them; and hastened back to the dismal hovel.

"I thought God heard me," said the little lad, with a grateful smile, as she poured forth her presents.

"God always hears prayer," she answered.

"That's what father said when he died."

"Did your father die happy?"

"Yes, ma'am, he did. Oh! he said such sweet words!"

The poor hungry, and cold children ate their food with a great relish, for they were nearly famished, not having eaten any thing since the day before; and they did not remember to have ever eaten any thing so good in all their lives; for it had been many months, since they had been glad to get bread and water, without thinking of meat, or any of the very nice things of this life.

Lizzie also ordered some coal, and had a good warm fire made, before she left the

wretched place; and had the great pleasure of seeing the family really comfortable. Oh, how it delighted her heart, to catch their grateful smiles, as they expressed a thousand thanks in every action, though they were too ignorant—poor things—to say a single word, in return for the great favor!

Lizzie told them many precious things about Jesus and heaven; and knelt down and prayed with them before she left, commending them to that God who has promised to be a "father of the fatherless," and a "judge of the widows."

How very little many of our young readers know about want or suffering. They live in good houses, have nice beds to sleep in, plenty of wholesome food to eat, and kind parents to love and instruct them. Do they thank their heavenly Father for this, from day to day; or do they live on, thoughtless and careless, as if God had nothing to do with these things? Let them think for a moment of the many poor little children, who are

having just such trials as those which we have described; who live in old, loathsome and dilapidated hovels, sleep on miserable little ragged couches, and find it a wondrously strange thing to be free from hunger or cold.



CHAPTER XI.

THE LITTLE CHRISTIAN GENIUS.

IN a very plain, little, old house, in the town of Grafton, there lived a poor widow, with her only little boy. "Little Pierre" was the name by which he was commonly known, in the small circle of his acquaintance. He was a very nice little fellow, with clear blue eyes, and bright yellow curls; and though his mother was not able to give him rich clothes, she always kept him very neat.

This widow was a pale, thin and delicate woman; and though she often had days and weeks of illness, she still managed to do enough sewing to support herself and her little son. She was a good Christian mother, and trained Pierre up in the fear of the Lord; and he was led to put his trust in the Saviour, when very young.

Little Pierre was a genius — a very fervent lover of music; so he often cheered his mother's lonely and toilsome hours by singing the sweet little songs which he, with his uncommon readiness to acquire, had learned from some of his young associates. He also composed the air and words of a very sweet little song, which his mother entitled "The Orphan's Lament," because it so beautifully expressed the sad feelings of a poor little fatherless boy, who often knew what it was to suffer hunger and want.

Pierre was very fond of his little song; and kept it in the upper drawer of the old bureau, from which he often took it, to sing it over, and to ponder upon its familiar sentiments.

One dreary day in Autumn, he sat by his mother's bed-side, humming his own little tune. His mother had been ill for many days; and had not been able to provide for the wants of her little family as usual. There was no bread in the closet; and for the whole day little Pierre had not tasted food. Yet he sat, humming to keep up his spirits; still, at

times, he thought of his loneliness and hunger, and he could scarcely keep the tears from his eyes; for he knew that nothing would be so grateful to his poor invalid mother, as a good sweet orange; and yet he had not a penny in the world.

The tears would roll down his cheeks; and his voice would falter at the sad, sad thoughts; yet he did not dare to let his mother see them. Hastily rising, he hurried to the window, and there watched a man putting up a great bill, with yellow letters, announcing that Miss Lowden, the great singer, would sing that night at the "Temple."

"Oh, if I could only go!" he thought to himself; and then pausing a moment, he clapped his hands. His eyes lighted with unwonted fire; and running to the little stand, he smoothed down his yellow curls. Then, taking from the bureau the old stained paper which contained his little song, he gave one eager glance at his mother, who was sleeping, and ran speedily from the house.

"Who did you say is waiting for me?" said

Lizzie, to her servant. "I am already worn out with company."

"It is only a very pretty little boy, with yellow curls, who says if he 'can only see you, he is sure you won't be sorry; and he will not keep you a moment.' "

"Oh! well, let him come," said the beautiful singer, with a smile; "I can never refuse children."

Little Pierre came in: his hat under his arm, and in his hand a little roll of paper. With a manliness unusual to a child, he walked straight to Lizzie, and bowing, said:

"I came to see you, because my mother is very sick, and we are too poor to buy food and medicine. I thought that perhaps if you would only sing my little song, at one of your grand concerts, may-be some publisher would buy it, for a small sum; and then I could get food and medicine for my mother."

Lizzie rose from her seat, and taking the little roll from his hand, lightly hummed the air.

"Did you compose it?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"You — a child?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And the words, too?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Wonderful little genius! Would you like to come to my concert?"

"Oh, yes!" and the boy's eyes grew liquid with happiness. "But I could n't leave my mother."

"I will send some one to take care of your mother, for the evening. And here is some money for you to go and buy food and medicine. Here is also one of my tickets. Come to-night. That will admit you to a seat near me, my good little fellow. Your mother has a treasure in you."

Almost beside himself with joy, Pierre bought some nice oranges, and many a little luxury besides, and carried them home to his sick mother.

"See here, ma, what I've got!" he exclaimed, as he came in, in almost breathless haste, with his arms loaded with parcels.

"Where did you get those, my child?" said his astonished mother.

He then told her of his good fortune, and that not without tears, as he handed out one little delicacy after another, which his own wisdom had prompted him to select.

The tears of gratitude rolled down the mother's pale face, as she kissed her good little son, and said —

"We must not forget to thank God for these things, my dear. He gave them to you."

In the evening, our little friend went to the grand concert. Never before had he been in such a splendid place. The music clashing and rolling, the myriad lights, the flashing of diamonds, and rustling of silks, bewildered his eyes and brain.

At last, Lizzie came; and the child sat, with his glance riveted upon her beautiful face. Could he believe that the grand lady, whom every body seemed to worship, would really sing his little song? Breathless, he waited; the band — the whole band — struck

up a little plaintive melody; he knew it, and clapped his hands for joy; and oh, how she sang it! It was so simple, so mournful, so soul-subduing. Many a bright eye dimmed with tears; and nought could be heard, but the touching words of that little song — oh, so touching!

Little Pierre walked home, as if moving on the air. What cared he for money now? One of the sweetest singers in America had sung his little song; and thousands had wept at his grief.

The next day, he was frightened with a visit from Miss Lizzie. She laid her hand upon his yellow head, and turning to the sick woman, said,

"Your little boy, madam, has brought a great relief. I was offered, this morning, by one of the best publishers in the country, a very large sum for this little song; and after he has realized a certain amount for the sale, little Pierre, here, is to share the profits. Madam, thank God, that your son has a gift from heaven."

The noble-hearted singer and the poor woman wept together; and little Pierre, who was always mindful of him who watches over the tried and tempted, knelt down by his mother's bed-side, and uttered a simple prayer, asking God's blessing on the kind lady who had deigned to notice him in his affliction.

The memory of that little prayer made even Lizzie more tender-hearted; and she spent even more time than before in going about doing good.

How blessed it is, that there are some who, even in the highest stations of life, take pleasure in imitating the example of him who came to bind up the broken-hearted.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HARDENED HEART.

OUR readers will remember George Lowden. We will now show what became of him. In early life, he, at times, had very serious impressions; but, like many other young persons, he trifled with his convictions, and resolved to put off the important subject to a more convenient season, thus lulling his awakened conscience into a sounder and still more dangerous sleep than ever. He became entirely absorbed in the business and pleasures of this life, and never again felt those deep and tender impressions which he had formerly experienced.

We now find him, at the age of thirty years, on a sick bed. He was seized, very suddenly, with an inflammatory disease; and in a few days was numbered with the dead.

During his short illness, Lizzie sat by his

bed-side almost constantly. One day, as he lay in a sort of stupor, almost unconscious of every thing around him, she asked—

“George, do you think you will ever get well?”

“No, my sister,” he replied, sadly; “I shall never get well. I shall live but a few days.”

“Are you prepared to die?”

“Ah! no—no! I am not prepared to die,” were the words which fell in mournful cadence from the lips of the sufferer.

“Don’t the thoughts of dying, and the necessity of a preparation through the blood of Christ, occupy your whole mind? Your condition is a very sad one—going into the presence of God, and not prepared!”

“I suppose it is sad enough; but I do not want to think about it. My sickness and pain are so great, that I *cannot* bear to think about any thing else.”

“Ah! my dear brother, you find that a bed of sickness and pain is a poor place for preparing to meet God.”

"Yes, indeed, it is."

"But you must look to the Lord Jesus Christ, my dear brother. He is able to save even you. The precious blood he shed cleanseth from all sin. Look to him. Trust in him."

"My dear sister, I cannot. Why do you trouble me with this? There is no hope for me. The heavens seem like brass over my head. The strongest cry cannot pierce through them."

"Oh! do not say so."

"I may as well tell the truth, terrible as it may be. I am like the man whom Bunyan saw in the iron cage, who seemed so very sad, with his eyes looking down to the ground, his hands folded together, and sighing as if his heart would break. Oh, I do not wonder he sighed!"

"Oh! George, do not say so. There is still mercy for you? You may yet look to Jesus."

"No, no, never! mercy is clean gone forever. I am shut up as in an iron cage, and I cannot get out. Oh! now I cannot!"

"My dear brother, you are making a very fearful mistake. The precious blood of Christ takes away all sin; that blood avails for all who will come and trust in it. These things are faithful and true. And you must believe the word of God. Oh, how full of mercy he is!"

"I know it, but:

'Mercy knows her appointed bound,
And yields to justice then.'

"It is of no use to pray for me; I have crucified the Son of God afresh; I have opened all his wounds; I have counted his blood an unholy thing. Oh, I have trampled upon the precious blood of the Son of God; I have done despite to the Spirit of grace; I have shut myself out from all the promises, and there remains therefore for me, no more mercy, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. Oh! what a bargain I have made; I have sold heaven, and eternal glory, for a few sinful pleasures and lusts. I have bought hell, and what a price I have

given for an everlasting dwelling among devils, and the spirits of the lost! I have given my soul, to buy all this! Oh, eternity! eternity! how can I endure to think of it.— Must I be lost! lost! lost, forever! O God! O God! oh! Eternity!"

While he was still speaking in this excited, fearful manner; Lizzie lifted up her beautiful voice, and sung very slowly, and solemnly:

"Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay,
Though I have done thee such despite;
Cast not a sinner quite away,
Nor take thine everlasting flight.

"Yet, oh! the chief of sinners spare,
In honor of my great High Priest;
Nor in thy righteous anger swear,
I shall not see thy people's rest."

"It is not the Holy Spirit that is striving with me. It is not the Holy Spirit. It is not the tender melting influence, which I felt in other days. It is a hardened feeling of bitter remorse. It is not a desire to be with God, and to love and serve him; or a desire

to renounce my sins; but a desire to get out of the way of the Almighty, if it were possible. I do not feel any repentance; but only a burning feeling of selfish remorse."

"Sha'n't I pray for you?" inquired the sister, with the tears gushing down her cheeks.

"Oh, no — no — no! do not pray; I have committed the sin, for which you should not pray. To pray for me now would only sink me deeper into everlasting woe."

To these terrible words Lizzie could make no answer. She had set before him the precious truths of the Gospel. But he believed them not. She knew that in Jesus Christ there is salvation for whosoever will come. But he would not come. Her heart was filled with sorrow, and she remained silent.

Presently George shook his head, and repeated with a slow, and solemn voice:

"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."

Ah, how true! My dear little readers, you may act the fool all your life; you may trifle with God's grace, while you are living upon

his mercies; but there is an hour coming when you will be wiser. When the solemn hour of death draws nigh, you will see the folly of your course, and it may be that then you will still refuse to look to Jesus, even as this poor sinner did.

"I did not think that I should die so soon," moaned the young man, as he lay with his eyes closed; and apparently musing deeply upon his sad condition.

"Ah! yes," thought his weeping sister, "how common it is, for all men to think all men mortal but themselves."

My dear little friends, how is it with you? You are continually expecting others to die, and never think it strange to hear the death-knell, or to gaze upon the pale face of the dead, or to stand beside the gaping tomb; yet you are not expecting to die yourselves. Why is this? Go into the grave-yards, where the silent multitudes are sleeping; will you not there find many a little grave, even much shorter than yourselves? Commit this little verse to memory.

“Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set, — but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!”

During the remainder of George Lowden's sickness, he lay in a deep stupor, from which it seemed impossible to rouse him. Sometimes he groaned forth bitter lamentations, about his lost state, and then he would utter the hardest, and most blasphemous language against the Most High.

When his last night on earth had come, and all felt fully conscious that he could live but a few minutes longer, his friends resolved to wake him, if possible, out of his dull and stupid condition, and place clearly before him, the great, and terrible change so near at hand.

The physician, who had been sitting at his bed-side for several hours, made every effort to bring him to his senses.

“My dear young man,” said he, as George opened his eyes, and stared wildly at him;

"you are almost gone. A few moments more are all that remain to you."

"Oh, must I die! must I die!" he cried out, with all his strength.

"Yes, George, you must die. You must die in a very short time."

"I cannot die!" he exclaimed; "I will not die!"

Alas, his reluctant cries were all in vain! His breath grew short, his eyes dim, his limbs cold, and his tongue stiff.

"Down I'm rolling, down I'm rolling. Oh! I cannot escape!" were his last, and awful words; and he was gone to that land of lone, deep despair, where light never comes.

George Lowden's was indeed a solemn funeral. The sermon was preached from those solemn words — "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." And many wept, while listening to the fearful truths contained in that familiar text. Ah! sinner, how will you escape? how can you escape?

“Though your hearts be made of steel,
And your foreheads lined with brass;
God at length will make you feel;
He will not let you pass.”

The weeping mother and sister, sorrowed without hope. And, oh! how sadly did the sound strike their hearts, when the cold clods fell upon the lid of the coffin; and “dust to dust,” was pronounced over him, to whom even the grave could give no rest.

Here was the end of that proud ambition, which once burned in the bosom of this ungodly youth. Truly

“Earth’s highest station ends, in ‘here he lies;’
And, ‘dust to dust,’ concludes her noblest song.”

When will the youth be wise; and “seek first the kingdom of heaven?” If they will but do so, all other things shall be added unto them.

One day, shortly after the funeral of her brother, as Lizzie sat in the parlor with her mother, reading a religious paper, the hot tears came gushing down her cheeks, as she

dropped the periodical, covered her face, and exclaimed —

“Oh, how true! how true!”

“What is it, my child?” inquired the mother.

“Oh! I have just been reading some verses, which so clearly set forth my poor brother’s case.”

“Read them.”

Lizzie read:

“Oh! some other time; but not now — not now!”

And he dashed off the tears from his sorrowful brow;

“I am young — I am strong — and my hopes, they are high—

There is plenty of time to repent, ere I die!

“Oh, not yet, not yet! — I have much to plan,

And religion is not for so active a man;

I will think, and reflect, and return, by and by,—

There is plenty of time to repent, ere I die!”

“Alas! there was time; but ’twas all in vain:

For Repentance had left, and she came not again;

As in glad days of youth, so in days of old age—

Other thoughts, fears, and hopes, his wrapt spirit engage.

“His heart is cold, and his dreams are of earth;
There is plenty without, but within there is dearth;
There was time, dear indeed: but alas! it was vain—
For Repentance had left, and she came not again!”

How many there are, who are pursuing the dangerous course expressed in these solemn words! Reader, be careful how you deal with those tender feelings produced by a conviction of sin. Oh! wipe not off hastily those hot tears which flow down your sorrowful cheeks, when the heart is stirred with awful thoughts. The day may come, when you would give worlds, if at your command, for a single hour of life; when your heart will be turned into impenetrable rock; and your tears, should they flow, will be only those of bitter remorse.

CHAPTER XIII.

VISIT ACROSS THE OCEAN.

LIZZIE was a person of exceedingly fine temperament and feelings; and all her trials and afflictions had a great effect upon her. When little Willie died, she pined away to almost a skeleton; not because she felt any disposition to murmur against God, for this would have been very wicked, but because her nature was so tender, and strongly affectionate, that to separate her from those she loved, was almost like taking away her life—to have the tender ties of nature snapped asunder, was more than her fond heart could bear.

Very soon after George's death, her health began to decline. Her pale cheek, sunken eye, and languid countenance, plainly told that grief was preying upon her vitals; and

that it was necessary to take immediate measures to restore her.

It was soon decided upon, to send her away to England, to visit some of her mother's relatives and friends. It was hoped that a voyage across the sea, and a change of persons and things, would tend to arouse her drooping spirits, and bring back her wonted health.

In a very short time, Lizzie had embarked on a beautiful steamer, and was out on the ocean, sailing for England.

Many a happy and deeply interesting hour did she pass, gazing at the vast expanse of waters, upon which the ship was tossed, from day to day, as it kept gradually nearing its place of destination. How it stirred her soul to see the great billows, crested with foam, lifting themselves like huge mountains, toward heaven, and then sinking down like the lowest valley; and how sublime were the deep notes of music which ever accompanied this gigantic action!

How much the moving of that great sea,

by the hand of Almighty God, reminded her of his providences in the great sea of life! She saw other ships on the ocean, from day to day; and observed that the same great and swelling surges oftentimes lifted one on high, while at the same time it brought the other exceedingly low; and that the grand movement went on, alternately exalting the low, and bringing down the high, each having its elevations and depressions.

To her, the ocean was always sublime, whether in the morning, when its crested waves were gilded by the rising sun; or at mid-day, when it was wrapt in the full glory of light; or at evening, when the last beam of day gleamed upon its billows; or when the heavy black clouds rolled down upon its heaving bosom. But it was most sublime, when the soft, gentle rays of the moon smiled upon its fierce countenance, and kissed its angry face, throwing a sweet silvery light over all its dark features. This reminded her of that sweet Christian charity, which can gaze fondly upon the most angry and destruc-

tive fellow-being; and of that hope, which beams through the darkest clouds, and throws a cheering light over life's stormiest sea.

But Lizzie did not spend all her time in amusing and interesting simply herself; for she was one worthy of the name of "Christian"—one "who went about doing good." Wherever she went, or in whatever circumstances she was placed, she always asked herself—"Is there not within my reach, some sad heart that I may comfort? Is there no sad soul, to which I may carry a little of the precious light of God's truth?"

This was her inquiry, as soon as she came on board the steamer, and could command a few moments of her time.

As we may imagine, she very soon found abundant opportunity to put her kindly feelings into action. She met in the saloon, a lad who had become a miserable cripple. His back was very crooked; and his legs were drawn up, so as to be altogether useless; and he was obliged to move about entirely by means of his hands. He looked very forlorn;

and Lizzie felt anxious to know the cause of his misfortune, and to ascertain his object in so long a voyage.

"You are greatly afflicted," she said.

"Yes," he replied; "it is with great difficulty that I can move about at all."

"May I inquire the cause of your lameness?"

"Certainly, ma'am. Five years ago, when I was but ten years old, I became a wayward and disobedient boy; and on receiving a slight affront, as I then thought, I ran away, and left my widowed mother; and I am an only child, too. I got on board a ship, and became a sailor, and came over to America, leaving my mother alone, in the city of London. About two years ago I fell from the mast of the ship, and was very badly hurt. This injury was followed by a very severe cold, which brought on rheumatism; and so I am a cripple for life."

The large tears gathered in the lad's eyes, as he told this short portion of his melancholy history; and Lizzie was deeply moved, too;

for she had a very sympathizing heart, and always had a tear for others' woe.

"Don't you suppose your mother felt sad when you left her in that way?" she asked.

"Ah, yes! for she was a good mother, and always loved me very tenderly. I know she has shed many, many a bitter tear over her wayward son."

"Have you never written to her, since you left?"

"I wrote shortly after I got hurt; but I never got an answer. I suppose she must be dead, or moved to some other place."

"Ah! my dear boy, you should not have disobeyed and grieved your dear mother; that was very cruel. God's chastisements have followed you; for he has said that he will visit their sins on those who disobey or dishonor their parents. I never knew a child to prosper who broke a parent's heart. 'Honor thy father and mother' is one of the ten commandments."

"Misery has followed me in my wickedness; and I never expect to be happy again."

The lad covered his face, as he spoke, and the large crystal tears trickled through his fingers. Lizzie's heart was moved for him; and she thought that now was a good time to introduce the precious balm into the wounded heart.

"Are you a Christian?" she inquired.

"No; I am not. My mother tried to teach me the right way; but I have despised her instruction, and have been very wicked, all my life. Oh, I have certainly been very wicked!"

"Do n't you want to be a Christian?"

"Oh! I am too wicked to become a Christian. Indeed I am."

"Do n't talk so; no one has too many sins for Jesus Christ to pardon, if he will only come to him."

"But I am such a great sinner."

"Then you are just the one Jesus came to save; for he came to save sinners. Certainly you need some comfort, do n't you?"

"Oh, yes I do; for I am very sad, and

lonely; and no body cares for me. I haven't got any friends."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Lizzie; "Jesus loves you; and wants to be your friend. He died for you. Will you not receive him?"

She expostulated very earnestly with the poor, sad-hearted boy; and at length, succeeded in leading him to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

He was then a happy soul; and could cast all his cares and sorrows on his dear Saviour, knowing that he cared for him. She gave him a Bible, and, during the passage, gave him much very precious instruction from it.

Thus she was the means of bringing the sweet balm of salvation, to a sad and wounded heart, turning drops of bitter grief to rivers of delight; and also learned a very profitable lesson herself. How thankful she felt that she was not a cripple like that poor boy. What would he not give, or what would he not be willing to do and suffer, if he could but have the use of his limbs restored. But

she had always had the use of hers, and never knew what it was to want in this respect; and yet she had never heartily thanked God for this special blessing.

One evening, as she walked slowly through the cabin, the brilliant light of its large lamps discovered to her in one of the beds, a beautiful little boy of some six years; whose sparkling black eyes, flaxen curls, and sweet little face, were like a lovely picture, on the smooth snow-white covering. Lizzie had an excellent heart, and was very fond of children. So in an instant she was seated by his side.

"Are you sleepy, dear?" she asked.

"No; but I think I'll be sleepy soon."

"Did your mother put you to bed?"

"No; aunty did."

"Is not your mother traveling with you?"

"I've got no mother; my mother is dead; and my father too."

The little fellow's countenance grew sad, as he spoke; and Lizzie's tender heart responded with deep sympathy, to the sad, young spirit,

which so readily portrayed its grief, on the pale face, and dark eye.

"Have they been dead long?" she inquired.

"No; my father died last winter, and my mother last spring. They're buried along side of each other; and have got white grave-stones at their heads. I often have seen the place where they lie."

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No. I had one little sister; and she's dead too."

"Do you live with your aunty?"

"I live with my grandma; and aunty takes care of me."

"Do you ever pray to Jesus?"

"Yes; my mother taught me to do that; and since she's dead, my grandma and aunty teach me such things."

"I hope you will always trust in Jesus, and try to please him in every thing. He loves you so much, and takes care of you wherever you go. He loves you and all little children."

"Does he love bad ones?"

"Yes; he loves them; but he is not pleased with them, he is so sorry when little children are bad. He wants them all to be good and happy."

"Oh, who is that that crawls about so funny? can't he stand up and walk like the rest?"

"No, dear; he has been badly hurt; and is a cripple. Don't you pity him?"

"Yes, I do. How did he get hurt?"

"He fell down from the mast of a ship."

"Did he fall in the water?"

"No; he fell on the ship's deck; and was almost killed; then he took cold afterwards, and got all crooked and lame. Are you not glad that you are not lame, like him?"

"Yes."

"Do you know who made your whole little body, so well and sound?"

"The Lord. But I didn't fall and hurt me."

"But who kept you from falling? You might have fallen, and hurt yourself, a great

many times, might you not, if God had not taken care of you all the time?"

"I might so!" said the little fellow, looking quite surprised, as if an entirely new thought had seized his attention. "I s'pose I might fall out of this bed, and break my arm, or my leg, if God did n't watch me?"

"Yes, dear; a great many evil things would happen to us every day, if our kind Father in heaven did n't take care of us every hour. We are surrounded with a great many dangers, which we cannot see, and could not avoid, if God did not protect us."

"Ain't he a good Father?"

"Yes, my child; and we ought to love him, and praise him with all our heart."

Thus the sweet and profitable conversation went on for some time between the two new friends, until, by and by, Lizzie began to be anxious to see a friend, who was very sea-sick.

"I must go, now; kiss me 'good-night,'" said she.

"Good-night," answered the little fellow,

giving her a hearty kiss, as she bent down to him.

"Go to sleep now; and have sweet dreams," said she, tucking the quilts neatly around him.

"I love you!" responded the sincere and artless little creature. "I wish you 'd talk to me often."

Thus Lizzie soon found her way into the tender little heart; for she had a key that would unlock almost all hearts, and let her into their most sacred places. Did I say it would unlock almost all hearts? Aye, it would open quite all hearts—even the hearts of enemies; and if there was a bit of love there, she was sure to find it. Now, my dear little readers, what do you suppose that key was? I know you would love to have one like it. Well, you may as well as not; and I will tell you just exactly what kind of a thing it was: It was a heart full of true, pure, and benevolent love—one that makes us love our neighbors as ourselves; that makes us so that we can truly "rejoice with

those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep," feeling others' pains and sorrows, as if they were our own.

When Lizzie had once found her way into the heart, she knew how to possess it. She was always careful to sow there the precious seed of truth and righteousness; then watering it with tears and prayers, that it might bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

We shall not have time to enter into detail with reference to her pleasant visit among her mother's friends and relations in England. It must suffice to make but a few remarks about the whole six months of her exceedingly profitable stay.

She was very joyfully received; and so exceedingly amiable and pious was her conduct, that she very soon won the hearts of all, and had a powerful influence over the whole sphere of her acquaintance. She was a person of strong feelings and fine talents; and, consequently, was naturally calculated to have a very great influence, either for good or for evil. She was deeply conscious of

this; and it was her daily and most earnest prayer to God, that he would fill her with the Holy Spirit, and help her to do all that she was in any way capable of doing, to his glory.

Her health soon entirely returned. Her cheek glowed with life, and her eye was full of light, as in former days, when she took leave of her many warm friends, to come back to her mother.

Many and earnest were the requests for her visit to be prolonged; and, as far as she was concerned, it would have been very pleasant for her to have yielded to these solicitations; but her afflicted mother was at home, without any of her own family to comfort her, and she could not think of staying away from her any longer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHIPWRECK.

IT was a lovely morning in spring, and the sun was throwing a flood of glory over the clear and cloudless sky, when Lizzie and a company of her friends stood on one of the large wharves of Liverpool, awaiting the departure of the steamship Hungarian, for America. There was a merry bustle all around, as the busy crowds moved to and fro; laughing, talking and shaking hands; but dark clouds hung heavily upon some faces, as the sad words of parting were anticipated — parting that might be long and painful; that might be for years; that might be forever. No wonder if the eye grows dim, and the brow cloudy, at thoughts like these.

By-and-by the bell of the large ship rung,

and summoned the passengers on board. In a few minutes the farewells were spoken, the people were on board, and the steamer began to move slowly out of the dock.

For many days the sky was clear, and the water smooth; so that those on board the steamer began to indulge strong hopes of soon meeting their friends in America. But, alas! who can tell what a day may bring forth. They arose one morning to behold a sun-rise as beautiful as man ever beheld; but before night, the thick black clouds had covered the whole heavens; and a raging storm was lashing the sea into a most terrible fury.

Night came on. But, oh! what a night! Earth and heaven were wrapt in thickest darkness; and the rain poured down in torrents; the vivid lightnings flashed; and the roaring thunders pealed mightily over the heads of the frightened mariners. Thus hour after hour of that dismal night passed on; and the groaning ship was driven by a violent tempest. No one slept, while many were

lamenting, and crying for mercy; and every one expected to go down in a few hours. Those of the company who were not prepared to meet their judge, were filled with horror and consternation; but the Christians were calm, and collected. Lizzie, especially, was very composed, she knew that she was resting on the "Rock of ages;" and that *it* never would move, be the storm ever so great. She could look up, amid all the misery that surrounded her, and say, "The Lord reigneth, therefore will I rejoice."

About day-break, the ship was driven upon a rock, a short distance from the coast of North America, and so badly injured, that there was no more hope of escape.

It would be impossible to describe the scene of consternation that followed. Weeping mothers clasped in their arms their frightened children, and screaming children clung to their mothers; while many were crying aloud for mercy.

The Captain, who was an earnest Christian, was so composed, amid all the dreadful scene,



Golden Kinglets.

that he sat down quietly, and wrote out an account of the dreadful catastrophe, which was afterwards found, carefully concealed in the wreck.

Lizzie, during the after-part of that dreadful day, and just before the ship sunk, took a card from her wallet, and wrote upon it, with her pencil, "Lizzie dies to-night, mother;" then, cutting off one of her golden ringlets, she put both it and the card carefully in the wallet, and placed them in a part of the wreck, where they were subsequently found.

Just before night, the storm cleared away; and those on the main land, seeing the ship upon the rock, and the masts thronged with those anxious to escape death, started to bring them relief; but before they could reach them, the shattered vessel fell in pieces, and all on board were lost.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONCLUSION.

FOR many days, there was the greatest possible excitement, in discovering the remains of the lost ship. Among the first articles that were found, were the Captain's account of the storm and Lizzie's wallet, containing the card and the golden ringlet. These were immediately sent to her mother.

As soon as Mrs. Lowden received the melancholy farewell tokens from her daughter, and the sad letter which accompanied them, she made arrangements for Lizzie's body to be brought home for burial.

When she was identified among the dead, her remains were carefully placed in a tight coffin, taken home, and buried by the side of her father and brothers.

Lizzie's young friends put a tomb-stone at the head of her grave, containing the following inscription :

In Memory of
LIZZIE.

Low on sweet nature's breast,
Let thy meek heart find rest,
Deep, deep, and still !

Soon after her daughter's death, Mrs. Lowden received, from a friend, some very touching verses, which were afterward put to music, and became a very popular song, entitled :

LIZZIE DIES TO-NIGHT.

'T was hard our parting, mother dear,
It gave you untold pain ;
But hope was strong within our hearts,
That we should meet again.
There's health upon my cheek once more,
And in my eye new light ;
'T will all be quenched 'neath ocean's foam,
For Lizzie dies to-night.
Lizzie dies to-night, mother,
Lizzie dies to-night.

I've been so happy, mother dear,
While brightest summer smiled:
The friends who loved me far away,
Have guarded well your child.
They've brought me almost back again,
To you and home's delight;
But I shall never see you more,
For Lizzie dies to-night.

Lizzie dies to-night, mother,
Lizzie dies to-night.

I'm thinking, mother, of the time
When little Willie died—
We laid him down, with bursting hearts,
My father's grave beside.
'T was there you thought, my tender form
Would vanish from the light;
But, ah, my grave is 'neath the wave,
For Lizzie dies to-night.

Lizzie dies to-night, mother,
Lizzie dies to-night.

I know you're thinking, mother dear,
Of all these dangers past;
But you can never know, how hard
Death came to me at last.

I'm almost in your arms once more;
God make your burden light!
I never more shall cheer your heart;
For Lizzie dies to-night.

Lizzie dies to-night, mother,
Lizzie dies to-night.

Lizzie Lowden's sudden death had a great effect upon the young people of her acquaintance. Many a youthful face grew sad, and many a bright eye dim, on hearing the melancholy story of her early and sudden death.

Will not our young readers take warning, from this sad lesson of early mortality? Oh, lay not plans for many years of pleasure; for what is life? It is but a vapor, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away.

Oh, do not delay! The pleasures of sin harden the heart, and make men insensible to the great truths of the glorious gospel. Oh, beware of sin! first it deceives, and then it hardens.

But what was the effect of this great affliction upon Mrs. Lowden? She had had a great deal of trouble; she had lost all the rest of her family before; how would she bear this last and terrible stroke, which took away the dearest one of all? She bore it like a Christian—kissing the rod, and loving the hand that held it. "Thy will be done," had always been a part of her prayer to God; and now, when he did his will, she was not going to murmur. She felt the loss of her dear ones, and wept over the graves of the departed; but she wept not the bitter tears of a rebellious heart—she wept such tears as "Jesus wept," at the grave of Lazarus—tears of sympathy, faith and hope.

"Thrice happy they, who can repose,
In calm and holy trust,
On him who wept for others' woes,
Who raised the sleeping dust:
Who in a glorious robe of white,
Arrays the blood-bought soul,
And bids it rest in realms of light,
While endless ages roll."

