

THE  
FIRST PATIENT:

A Story,

WRITTEN IN AID OF THE FAIR FOR THE

"CHANNING HOME."

! CATHERINE TILDEN ]

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"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have  
done it unto me."

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BOSTON:  
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CHAPTER I.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

THEY had not spoken for an hour, — Jenny and her mother, — a very uncommon thing for two women. Something evidently had gone wrong, or was about to go wrong, in their domicile. Meanwhile, Jenny's basket of "ironing" has considerably diminished; and so has her mother's barrel of apples, of which she has cut up and strung "any quantity" for their winter's apple-sauce. The kettle alone breaks the silence, as it sings upon the hob; though, it must be confessed, its tone is rather querulous to-night, notwithstanding its occasionally prolonged note in the minor key, as if uttering a wail for the past, or a prophecy for the future. We never could withstand the minor key: it fairly brings the tear into our eye, even when it comes from a kettle. Even the cat seems to be keenly

alive to some coming event: for she has left her comfortable nook in the chimney-corner, and has taken her position upon the high window-seat, where she has sat for the last twenty minutes, her four paws drawn close together; her tail wrapped about them, as if her mind was prepared for whatever might be in store; her ears twitching and veering to every point of the compass; her eyes peering out into the gathering darkness; while her whole attitude and bearing say, as plainly as a cat can say, "If any thing or any body is to be seen coming through those trees, I'll see it, and let you know, Jenny."

Grip, the dog, too, — instead of coming into the house, as he usually does, at this hour, — is sitting upon his hind-legs outside the door; his brown eyes full of earnest inquiry; his nose, *un peu retroussé*, evidently conscious of the unseen influence which is disturbing the family within. It is getting quite into the farther edge of the twilight too; and the lengthening gray autumn evening is stealing into the darkening corners of the room, bringing with it a chill which creeps over heart and limbs. Jenny takes a lamp from the shelf, lights it, and places it near her table; while her mother puts another log upon the fire, and, carrying her apples into the pantry, takes up her basket of parings, and goes out at the back-door to throw them to the pigs,

who — poor things! — have been grunting remonstrances for many a hungry week.

So perfectly absorbed had Jenny been in her own thoughts, that she had not noticed her mother's absence, until, taking a fresh iron from the fire, and holding it to her cheek to ascertain its degree of heat, her eye fell upon the empty chair; and such a sensation of utter loneliness and fear came upon her, that she dropped her flat-iron, threw her apron over her face as if to shut out some dreaded sight, and screamed aloud, —

"Mother! where are you, mother? Come back to me, or I shall die of fright!" and actually sunk down in terror upon the floor.

Hark! a low growl, and then a quick, short bark, from Grip. Look up, Jenny! Don't you know those eyes peering through the window? Grimal-kin does, and testifies her recognition by uncurling her tail, and complacently waving it in time to her low purring. Then, looking round at Jenny, as if to say, "I told you I would let you know," she seems aware that something is amiss; and down she jumps with a bounce, and straightway rubs her velvety sides against the hands that still cling to the sheltering apron; until at length, with a decided "purr-myow!" she insists upon being spoken to. So does the owner of the pair of eyes, who has made good his entrance, in spite of bolts; for, go-

ing round the house, he has found the back-door unlatched: and, pushing rapidly forward, he is at Jenny's side in a moment, and whispers, in hurried tones, —

"Up, up! Jenny dear! Don't start so; don't scream. Quick! before your mother comes back. I just saw her coming round the wall."

"Thank God, it's you, Richard! What is it? Have you found him?" asked she in quick succession, as she sprang upon her feet.

"Yes: quick! Now listen! John is at the end of the lane with the cart; and you must get your mother safe in bed, and then come out to us in the barn, and we will do the best we can. Hush! I hear her now. Confound that dog! he will betray all!"

Such a howl! Poor Grip! Richard noiselessly escapes by one door as Mrs. Jones enters at the other.

"Put up your ironing, dear: you will wear yourself to death. Come, let us have supper: we can save some for father, — if he comes."

Ah! what a sigh was there!

"How pale you look, darling! and how you shake with the cold! Come, and rest here by the fire: I will get the tea."

"Yes, mother: I *am* tired. I will just finish this shirt, though: it will not do to leave it. And

then, after supper, you will go to bed early; won't you, mother? Think how many hours you have sat up lately!" urged Jenny.

"I could not sleep, dear, unless I knew your father was at home. I seem to see and hear him all night when he is away. Besides, it is so dreadfully lonely." And she shuddered as with a sort of fear. Poor mother! poor wife! It is not the first night you have waited and watched till morning-dawn. But three whole nights and days have rolled away on leaden wheels this time; and still the chair is empty, and hearts are full to breaking.

"Surely, Jenny," said she, a moment or two afterwards, putting down the tea-canister, that she might listen the better, — "yes, I do: don't you? Wheels! — hark! They are driving into the barn! He has come at last. Thank God!" And the poor mother sank into her chair, with as blanched a cheek and shivering a frame as Jenny had herself. Alas! ye lonely women, how many of you are there everywhere! City, town, country; cottage, palace, hovel, — all hold their watching women.

The plan had failed. Jenny saw it was useless now to try to keep her mother in ignorance: so she poured out a glass of water, gave her some to drink, took a few swallows herself; then, inwardly calling upon Heaven for aid, she said as quietly as she could, as she threw a shawl across her shoulders, —

"I will just step out and see how things are, mother;" and, before her mother could detain her, she was gone. She knew it was the only chance she should have to aid the brothers in whatever they might require (they were kind neighbors of theirs); and, hastening through the enclosure which separated the house from the barn, she called aloud, —

"Richard! John! where are you? Come quick! I dare not leave mother a moment."

"Stay where you are, Jenny!" said Richard's voice hastily: "I'll come to you."

"Be quick, then; for I dare not wait."

"Hasn't she gone to bed, then?" asked he, as he presently emerged from the barn with a lantern in his hand.

"There has been no time, Richard: besides, she has heard the wagon-wheels, and knows very well that he has come. What is it, Richard? Is he hurt? is he dead?" said she, catching suddenly at his arm, and trying to look up into his face as he stood gazing down upon the ground, at a loss to know what to do or say.

"Not dead, Jenny dear," said he, putting his arm kindly about her, as she stood shivering at his side; "but I fear he has not long to live. He is dreadfully hurt; and we had hoped with your help to have washed and dressed his wounds before your mother should see him. But hush! She is close beside

you! It is all over now; and we must do the best we can."

"Good-evening, Mrs. Jones," said he as quietly as he could. "We have got back, you see."

"Yes, Richard; and you have found him, haven't you? Where is John? You have: I see it. He is hurt? He is in the barn? Let me go, Jenny dear!" and, gently putting them both aside, she took the lantern from Richard's hand, and resolutely pursued her way until she stood beside the mangled body of her husband, lying, as they had placed him, upon some straw in the bottom of his wagon.

Yes, they had found him, after searching all his haunts in the neighboring market-town, — all the taverns by the wayside. No one could tell exactly where he was: but, tracing step by step, at length, as they were passing through a less-frequented road, their ear was caught by the stamping of a horse, as if tied to some tree; and, following the sound, they recognized the well-known wagon, jammed up against a rock by the roadside, and near to it the wounded man. He evidently had been thrown from his seat, dashed his face with violence upon the ground, and had lain there senseless and bleeding until in their search they had discovered him.

They never will know when nor how this terrible thing had happened: but there were people enough to testify that he had drunk freely on the last market-

day; and it is not difficult to conjecture how all the rest had occurred. The women asked no questions, all seemed so very natural, so much as they had expected it would be, some fearful day, — so much as they had almost seen it all those three long days and nights. It seemed a hopeless task to bring back life into that senseless form. The young men had done what they could; but their efforts had thus far been in vain. Oh! it was a fearful sight for wife and child to look upon, — those bruised features, with scarcely a semblance of their human origin. So it was for Grip, who, crouched beside his master, was now looking down into his disfigured face, and now upon the pale ones around it, as if to say, "Can nothing be done?"

"Can't you carry him to the house, boys?" whispered his wife. "Try, Richard dear: don't let him die here!" pleaded she.

"We dare not move him!" they whispered back. "He is all but gone!"

"Let us try, though," said John, kindly comprehending her distress. "His heart beats yet," said he, putting his hand beneath his vest, and stooping down to listen for his breath. "We will not lift him from the cart, Richard, but draw him gently to the house: shall we, Mrs. Jones?" — "Do, do, John!" said she gratefully. "Come, Jenny, we will go and get all ready." They did their best, those two young men;

but it was all in vain. Before they could place him upon his bed, he was beyond all human aid.

And thus ended the faith plighted twenty years ago, — "to love, to honor, and to cherish!" Blessed ignorance of the future! How few would venture upon its untried path, could they see its goal!

Mrs. Jones's story is but the stereotyped one of the land, wherever temptation gains the mastery through the all-conquering glass. Good-fellowship and jolly times for a while; then false friends and failing business, reverses, broken hearts, ruin, death!

## CHAPTER II.

## HOPING AND TRYING.

SIX months have passed since the sad scenes we have just narrated. A great change has come over the little farm, the house, and its inmates. What could two women do to render neglected land productive? Besides, by the terms of Jenny's grandfather's will, her father had only a life-interest in the farm: at his death, it was to go to a younger brother. More than once had he called upon the widow, and manifested his evident desire that she would quit the home of her married life; but, for decency's sake, had several times said, —

"Don't hurry yourself, though, Hannah; but, when you *can* make it convenient, I should like to come back to the old homestead. It seems kind o' nat'ral to get back to the old place again. I don't suppose it makes so much difference to you nor Jenny; you hain't knowed it so long as I have: and, then, Bill neglected it kind of, you know, of late years; and it's a pity to let such land run to waste.

Wal," said he, getting up to go, finding he didn't draw out any plans from the women, as they kept on with their sewing, "you can think it over, sister Hannah; and, next time I come (which will be in about a month or so, I reckon), p'raps you can give some kind o' light as to when my wife can begin to think of moving. She always took a great fancy to the place when Bill was alive. But, then, don't hurry yourself," said he, as he got upon the box of his wagon: "take it easy like. Good-by!" When suddenly a new thought seemed to strike him, as his eye fell upon Jenny's pretty face as she stood at the door. "You are a likely-looking gal, Jenny, and got a good edication: sartin you spent time enough about it up to the 'cademy there. Why don't you make some account on't,—be a school-marm yourself, may be,—and help your mother a bit?"

"We shall doubtless think of something by which to maintain ourselves, uncle," said Jenny, coloring slightly; "and I dare say, by the time you come again, we can give you an answer as to when your wife can move."

Although her uncle did not detect the irony, he could not mistake the heightened color nor the resolute look with which she seemed to bid him and all the world defiance, nor the tone with which she added, "Come in, mother dear; it is too damp for

you. Good-by, uncle!" and she had turned from the door before he had finished gathering up his reins.

"Queer gal!" muttered he, as he felt himself completely baffled. "Don't half like her; proud; comes of all that larning. Ga lang, Jim!" and poor Jim's back had to take the cut his master would more than half have liked to put across Jenny's pretty shoulders.

"Don't fret now, mother darling," said Jenny, as her mother sat looking sadly into the fire before she resumed her knitting. "Let us look at things in the face a little, and see what we can do for an honest home. In the first place, then, here is all this furniture; and this is surely yours."

"Not all of it, Jenny: some of it goes with the house," said her mother, looking round till her eye rested upon her husband's arm-chair. It had been his father's.

"Well, never mind, mother dear," said Jenny, wishing to arrest her train of thought: "we can glean quite enough of what does belong to us; and then, you know, we have clothes enough for one year at least. Besides this, we have the one hundred dollars saved from chickens, eggs, &c.; and, if we only owned this farm, I would not fear, with a lift from Richard and John now and then, but that we could carry it on quite nicely. But it is no use

to talk about *ifs*: so we will go on. Now, as to getting one's bread in this out-of-the-way place, where one milliner, one dress-maker, and one washerwoman, are quite sufficient, it is just impossible for us women. Therefore, mother,—thanks to Uncle Jack's nudging hint,—I shall look over my school-books once more; go up and talk with our good minister, and see what he thinks I can do. You don't think I went away so many winters to that 'cademy,' as Uncle Jack calls it, for nothing, mother?" said Jenny, with a cheery toss of the head. "I always brought you home the prizes, you know."

"The Lord bless you, child!" said the widow, wiping away her tears. "What do you think you could do with all your learning in this 'out-of-the-way place,' as you called it just now? The district school is all they want; and we could never live on that, much less could you get it."

"Well, I don't know, mother, about that, if I should try," said Jenny, laughing; "but I don't intend to try here."

"Where then, Jenny?"

"What should you say to Boston, mother?"

"Boston, child? It would swallow you up! Besides, what could we do without one another? I could not spare you, Jenny dear."

"Spare me? Why, mother, you don't suppose I



could live away from you? No, this is my idea," and she sat down on the low cricket at her mother's feet. "Now, you see if it be not a bright one. I think, that through our minister's influence, and my first-rate certificates, you remember, I can get introductions to the right sort of people in Boston, who could put me in the way to get one of those public primary schools; and then, after I have found out just what to do, I am sure I can find two small rooms somewhere in that big city. We can put into them the furniture we shall keep, making ourselves as comfortable as possible. And then you shall have such nice little dinners for us when I come home from school, you know; and every thing will look so cheery. Oh! won't it be nice, mother? Say, won't it be nice?"

"But how do you know, Jenny dear, that you can get the school?" said her mother, sighing.

"I don't know, mother, yet; but I can try: and, meanwhile, we must live on nothing, and take in sewing. Don't ask me, mother dear, how I shall get the sewing: I shall find it somewhere, I know. But first we must get to Boston; and I must go and ask the way. Now let us have dinner, mother; and then I will put on my bonnet and go to the parsonage, and talk it all over with Dr. Leonard; and I know he will give me good counsel."

She did go to the parsonage, where she met with

the kindest welcome, and obtained the needed counsel and directions; and after having arranged her plans for "breaking up" and beginning anew, and having received an earnest exhortation and a blessing from the good old man who had baptized her, she took her leave, and started for her home. Of course, Richard met her on her way: for he had called at the farm, after work was over; and, finding she was out, had gone up to meet her, on her way back. She was glad enough to see him coming; for the evenings were not long yet: and, besides, she wanted to tell him all her plans. They always had been the best of friends; had grown up together; had been at the same schools and church. There is a great deal of this pleasant intercourse among the boys and girls in our country villages; and, nearly up to this time, neither of them had ever thought of being any more to one another than they always had been. But when, after sitting upon a stone wall for an hour or so, talking it all over, they were on their homeward way again, Richard, for the first time, knew that, without Jenny Jones, their little village would be the dullest place in the world to him. He told her so, after a while: and then she said how much she should miss both him and John; and how much she should depend upon his letters; and, when he came to Boston, how rejoiced she should be to see him. And then Richard

stood stock-still in the road: which, of course, obliged Jenny to stand still too; for she had taken his arm (she was so tired with her walk and long talks); and then he, as if the brightest idea in the world had struck him, said, "Why, Jenny, how stupid we have been! Stay here, and be my wife!" To be sure, the blood did tingle in his ears, and trouble his throat a bit,—so genuine and sudden had been his proposal; but he quietly looked Jenny in the eyes for her answer, just as he would have done to any other question (saving the *pit-a-pat*, I fancy). What did Jenny do? Why, she laughed, of course, and blushed, and said, —

"Nonsense, Dick! We are a couple of children yet: we must do something wiser than that, I guess." And she blushed a shade deeper, and shunned his eyes a little, for the first time in her life.

"And what may that be, Jenny?" asked Richard.

"Wait a while, Dick?" asked she, looking up once more into his face.

How wonderful they are, these sudden revelations of ourselves! Those two young creatures, who had played and danced and worked, and helped one another, for nearly all the years they had lived on earth (not yet twenty, either of them), without another thought than that they were the best possible friends, part of each other's daily life, — just

as natural and necessary to one another as the sunlight, — now were walking along, hand in hand, with a new world revealing itself to their spiritual senses, while this beautiful earth seemed spanned across by the rainbow of joy and hope. God bless them!

## CHAPTER III.

## WORKING AND PRAYING.

A YEAR has passed away; and there is Jenny, in that tolerably comfortable schoolroom, surrounded by the countless little ones, — kind, loving, patient, faithful. The children love her; the Committee are satisfied; her mother's tender love makes their two rooms as comfortable as she had predicted. What is the matter, then? Weary; oh! how weary! No wonder. To have exchanged the fresh breezes of her native village for the haunted schoolroom is no slight thing. Yes, haunted; for more than just the children come into the "primary" schoolroom. Unhappy home-influences and habits and speech, want and misery and dirt, deception and falsehood, hopeless ignorance and stultified brains, all come in with the children, look out of their eyes, speak with their tones, until the heart aches and the brain grows dry. Don't you believe this? Try it for one year; and, if you do not then admit its truth, it will be because you had not the district that had been appointed to

our Jenny. Whatever might be the cause, Jenny was weary. Her own magnetism was so freely given to her work, that nothing which her mother could do on her return could bring back the elastic step and joyous laugh of former years. "It is nothing, mother dear," she would reply to her fond inquiries. "I am perfectly well; and, oh! how happy! I am only tired." She never let her mother know, that, so sensitive had her brain become to noises, she often lay awake for hours after hearing one of her fearful coughing-spells; for poor Mrs. Jones had caught so severe a cold on the last night of her husband's life, that she had never since been free from a cough, which was fast inducing consumptive tendencies, and often drove sleep from both her daughter's pillow and her own. Still, they both made the best of every pain and ache, and kept up their spirits for each other's sake. Letters from Richard too, and occasionally from the parsonage, were bright spots in their month's toil; and, while Richard was still at home, Jenny's day-dreams were mostly there. But as time rolled on, and another year had passed away, Richard, becoming impatient of his slow progress towards a sufficiency for a home of their own, came down to Boston one fine day, talked it all over with Jenny and her mother; and with their consent and approbation, in view of the prospect which he had before

him, decided to take what little he had saved, and seek his fortune in the West. "Good-by, Jenny!" said he at parting. "Don't work too hard, darling. Trust to me. In another year, with the blessing of God, I will come back for you and your mother."

"Yes, Richard, keep that blessing with you; for you are going into fearful temptations," said Jenny, putting her arms about his neck, and looking deep down into his honest eyes.

"Never fear, Jenny; for you will continue to keep your arms about my neck, and I — will wrestle for the blessing of God."

No need to be ashamed of such tears, Richard; for they will enable you "to see God."

## CHAPTER IV.

### "GOD'S BLESSING."

ALAS for human hopes and plans! Not quite another year found Jenny watching in the darkened chamber of her mother, whose cough had been attended by repeated hemorrhage of the lungs. Her days on earth were fast flitting away. Every day in school, and every night deprived of half its rest, soon told upon Jenny's exhausted energies; but she uttered no complaint, and showed no impatience in her manner, even when it seemed to her that her nerves were made of red-hot wire. She watched on, worked on, hoped on; till one day, when she came home from school, she found a package directed to her, from "out West," in a strange handwriting. The moment that her eye fell upon it, before her trembling fingers had broken open the seal, she felt a shuddering conviction of its contents. Yes, Richard had fallen a prey to a contagious epidemic which had suddenly appeared in the section of the country in which he lived. The fever had seized upon his manly frame as he was performing the last kind offices for a brother-stranger.

"He had had but time," wrote the noble man and woman who fearlessly sought his pillow when no other dared approach,—for there are brothers and sisters of charity outside the pale of Rome, kindred in the Lord with those who bear the blessed name,—“to intrust to her, in his intervals of pain, his last thoughts and wishes for her and for his mother.” ’Twas thus the lady wrote:—

"I do not know you, my young friend; but my heart aches at the tidings I must give you. Perhaps you have not known that a fatal epidemic has been for a few weeks prevailing in our district. I doubt if Richard has been able to write you about it. Poor fellow! called by humanity to the desolate bed of a dying stranger, he has fallen a sacrifice to his generous sympathy. Hearing of the circumstances, my husband and myself, although we were personally unknown to him, hastened to find him out; knowing full well how many are left to die through fear of contagion. We found him suffering as we expected,—alone, almost in despair. We saw at once how it must terminate; and, doing all we could to alleviate and soothe, I asked him if he had any messages for home. Could you have heard him, my poor girl! as he turned his dying eyes upon me and pronounced your name, you would have been sure that he had kept his faith.

" 'Will you write to Jenny Jones, Boston, 16

— Street, and tell her that Richard *has* kept "God's blessing"? She will know. And, after I am gone, open my writing-desk: you will find her letters and my Savings-bank book. Draw the money in my name. You will find an order in her favor, signed by me,—I've kept it so for fear of this,—and ask her to share it with my mother.'

"My husband then knelt down, at his request, and prayed with him. As he closed, Richard uttered a fervent 'Amen! God bless you for all your kindness! God bless them all at home!' and passed away. 'Home' was his last word, Jenny. Surely you will trust, with us, that he has found his home. Could I tell you how many of your strong, brave men who have come out here have wilted away beneath the climate and the temptations to a careless, irreligious life; when father, mother, brother, sister, home, no longer speak to them daily,—you would be comforted to know that your Richard has evidently been kept from all that misleads so many, through his memory of you, and that 'blessing of God' he said you would understand. If you do understand it, Jenny, it will wrap itself about you now, and sustain you in your bitter trial. Trust to it, Jenny: seek it now."

## CHAPTER V.

## SUBMISSION AND COMPLAINT.

It was scarcely six months before Jenny was compelled to send in her resignation. She could no longer do the children justice, nor her mother either. But, before she relinquished this means of support, she went to the cloak-rooms of a large business-house, and secured employment for the autumn, together with engagements to supply several shops with articles of crochet and knit work. She then ventured to lay aside the school. She parted with her children, some of whom cried about her neck as she bade "Good-by!" to one and another. The mother of one of the little ones, who had waited outside the door to speak with her, — a woman who had done their washing for some months past, since her mother's health had failed, — said, as she courtesied her thanks for the last week's payment, —

"I'm thinking, miss, — if it isn't making too bold wid ye, — that it's working too hard ye are intirely,

miss; and that, perhaps, it's meself ye would be plased to let come up and give you a lift once or twice a week in watching your mother. Sure, and isn't it meself who can nurse sick folks? And isn't that an ugly cough ye have yourself, miss, and paler and thinner that ye are growing every day? Ah, indeed! and isn't it these eyes that have seen it? and hasn't Bridget towld me this many a time that it is a tear ye've wiped away behind the lesson-book? Ah, Miss Jones! ye won't refuse me now, will ye?" And the kind creature laid her hand upon her arm, and looked into her face with such a cordial love, that Jenny could not deny her warm heart, although her words had awakened a train of associations that actually seemed to contract her heart with pain.

"Bridget mustn't tell tales out of school," said Jenny, smiling through the tears that sprang to her eyes. "Thank you kindly for your offer, Mrs. Brian. I dare say, I shall do nicely, now that I shall not have to talk so much; but I shall be thankful to have you come sometimes, and help me a bit. Indeed, you may come to-morrow if you will, and help me to put my rooms in nice order: will you?"

"Will I? — won't I, honey? And hark ye, Miss Jones!" said she, coming nearer to her that she might whisper: "let me do any thing I plase for

love; won't you now, miss? For that's pay enough in this cowl'd world."

Heaven bless their warm Irish hearts! There are many such among us.

A month or two more found Jenny the busiest among the busy in the cloak-room of Good's establishment. At first, the change of occupation seemed beneficial; but constant knitting at odd hours, with considerable domestic occupation to keep all tidy, and to meet the weekly bills, — to say nothing of the demand upon her vital energies occasioned by the increasing illness of her mother, — at length began to prey upon her spirits, and sap her strength, to that degree, that more than once of late, when she had at length been able to lay her weary head upon her pillow, she had been tempted to pray that she might lie down and die beside her mother. And then that home-sickness of the heart for Richard, — Richard, of whom she never spoke to any one. Do you not suppose, do you not *know*, that, despite the strength and comfort which almost always came when she sought that "blessing of God," still the sunshine of this life had ceased to illuminate her daily paths, to give hope and joy to her heart, or elasticity to her step? Ah, yes! human love and companionship are foretastes of another world, — types of something the soul craves, and shall have hereafter. Yet look up, Jenny! Do

you not already discern, twining itself about the two-ply'd cord which hitherto has bound you to your earthly life, that third bright strand, so strong in its resistless beauty that it already lifts you to your feet? Trust to it, dear sister! it is the Father's love which draws you home.

At length the long, cold winter reached its height; and Jenny's invention was put to the severest test to find ways and means to keep from her mother the knowledge that she could earn barely enough to find them in fuel, food, and rent, not to mention the medicines and the doctor's bill. No one knew how poor they were; unless, indeed, it might be the faithful Irish heart of Maggie Brian. They had not made many acquaintances since they came from the country; and, since Richard's death, had lived mostly by themselves. The painful memories of the widow's heart, the manner in which their home had passed from their hands, and the entire silence of its present owners, had not encouraged them to keep up much correspondence with their native village. An honest pride of bearing their own burthen too, of concealing from the knowledge of any one there how the once well-to-do farmer's family had become reduced, kept Jenny from mentioning, even to her friends at the parsonage, how poorly things were going with them. Besides, she always had been able to earn enough for her mother and herself; and she



trusted, through God's help, that she always should. Then there was Richard's mother, who in her letters, after the death of her son, spoke as though she had lost her first-born through his love for Jenny; and even John had been gone away these three years, she wrote, because "he could not sleep o' nights, nor work o' days, for thinking of her," — as it came out, after Richard and she had gone away, for all he had never said a word to either of them about it. "And so," the letter went on to say (poor hungry mother's heart!), "you see, Jenny, neither you nor your'n hain't been of much good to me nor mine; for your father helped to lead away my husband, and the boys have both left me for love of you. The money, too, that Richard sent you, — I wonder if he thought I could always work as I have done. I should have thought he might have remembered his poor old mother a little more, who has loved him ever since he was born, instead of thinking so much of a young gal who always carried her head too high for these parts. Well, I suppose it ain't no use writing any more about it: least said, soonest mended. I'm sure I don't wish ye no kind o' harm, nuther; leastwise to your marm, poor body: I'm sure she has seen trouble enough in her life. So good-by! I don't see no use in keeping up this writing o' letters, that hain't got nothing in them: besides, it's dredful tire-some going over to the post-office, since the rheu-

matiz sot in. And, now the boys are gone, I can't git no one to do a chore for me, nohow; and as for the old man, he don't stir for nothing, unless 'tis to go over to the tavern, where he never used to go till he know'd your father. It hurts my eyes, too, to write: they ain't been good for nothing since Richard went out West, and John went to Californy. I cried 'em enermost out; and I hain't been able to see good since. So no more from Richard's mother."

What did Jenny do with Richard's legacy? It was only seventy-five dollars. We'll see.



## CHAPTER VI.

## BEREAVEMENT AND LONELINESS.

WE must not linger over the many anxious weeks which Jenny passed at her mother's bedside, sometimes knitting by the shaded lamp, sometimes ruining her eyes over pretty fancy-work which she had undertaken, that she might keep all square with the world; till at length, fearing she should be ill herself, she was forced to accept of Maggie Brian's offer, at least for one or two nights in the week. —Mrs. Jones longed and almost prayed to be released, were it only for her child's sake; but the consumption which had laid her low was of that lingering kind which demands to the very dregs all that the human frame can give.

"Don't, mother darling!" sobbed Jenny one night, when her mother had been grieving that she had become a burthen, rather than a help, to her, — "don't talk so to me! Whom shall I have on earth to love me, and to tell me so, when you are gone? Were it not that you are suffering, I fear I could not be resigned to God's will."

"I am willing to suffer, then, my child. Trust Him, Jenny, though he slay you."

"I will, mother; I will. Let us seek his blessing together." And the poor girl knelt down beside her mother's bed, and prayed till peace came again upon their hearts.

For the first time, Jenny began now to seriously tremble for the future. As yet, no week had passed without prompt payment of all her bills; but now she had drawn every dollar from the Savings-bank, with the exception of two precious deposits, — one reserved for her mother's burial; the other, Richard's legacy. Well, she would work the more. She could not yet ask for charity; nor would she seek a lower rent. Her mother's days should end there in their honest home; and, if Mrs. Brian would let Bridget come and sit with her mother while she was out or working, she thought she should be able to accomplish twice as much, and keep all comfortable to the last.

"Sure, and wouldn't it be an honor to the child, miss?" And so it was settled. Every day, for one fortnight more, Bridget Brian came up between schools, and after, to sit with and wait upon Jenny's mother.

One evening about dusk, as Jenny came in with hands full of little comforts for her mother, and a budget of work for the next week's needs, she found

Bridget mounted upon a cricket at the bedside, her little face blanched with fear, as she kept wiping away, as best she could, the life-stream which was flowing from her mother's mouth. The poor sufferer had brought on another hemorrhage during one of her coughing-spells; and all she could do now was, to look with a mother's eyes upon her darling as she took Bridget's place, lay her dying hand upon her head as she bent over her in filial love, commend her in her inmost soul to the Father who would never leave her, and await the final call. Once only did she speak again: it was when, in an interval of comparative ease, as Jenny was making all comfortable about her again, she drew her down, kissed her gently, and just whispered, —

"You said it would be a home for me when we came here, dear; and so it has been. God bless you, darling! It won't be long before you will come too, Jenny."

"Oh! thank God!" cried Jenny, nestling her wan face close upon her mother's pillow.

"His will be done, darling. Don't sob so, Jenny. You'll break my heart."

"I won't, mother dear. There, rest now," said Jenny soothingly, as she wiped away her tears; "God will watch us both." And she laid her head down again close to her mother's cheek, until the "one was taken, and the other left."

On the third day, all was over. Every thing had been done decently and in order. The clergyman, at whose church Jenny had worshipped when she could leave home, came at her request. She asked Mrs. Brian and Bridget and the landlady to be present during the service, took her Irish friends in the carriage with her to her mother's grave, — which she had purchased in the strangers' lot at Forest Hills, — stood by it until the sods hid her from her view, drove back to her solitary home, went quietly up stairs, took off her things, bade Maggie and Bridget "Good-night!" sat down in her mother's arm-chair, and cried as though her heart would break.

Alone! — all alone in the world! — that was her thought, her feeling, in spite of the whispering in her heart, which said, "Not alone; for the Father is with thee." At length the human sobs were hushed, and she could pray: but, as she arose from her knees, the chill of the deserted room came over her; and, do what she would, she experienced that creeping sensation of fear, that species of supernatural dread, which makes one long for a human hand and voice. But she was all alone now, and must depend upon herself. She resolutely shook off the emotion which was mastering her, put all things in order about her room, undressed herself, and lay down upon the little couch she had occupied

during her mother's illness. "I will not fear," she said, "but trust in God." Yet the morning dawned before she slept; not because she was afraid, — for those feelings had passed away, — but because her heart and brain were crowded with the past, the present, and the future. At length, a gentle peace settled on her spirit, and she slept in the light of trust. "God's blessing" had come upon her.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WORKING FOR GOD.

IN the course of another week, Jenny had made up her mind as to what she should do; had arranged all her little affairs; had seen her landlady; and after finding that she must either retain both rooms or give them up, as one could not be let without the other, had sought another lodging; found one in the third story of a house in an out-of-the-way street, the rent of which she thought she could meet; and as soon as possible, with Mrs. Brian's and Bridget's aid, got every thing nicely arranged in her new home, and gradually settled down to her solitary life, — solitary, save when she could in any way help some more suffering brother or sister of humanity. She continued to obtain sufficient knitting and sewing for the demands of the summer months; but when the winter came again, do what she could, her failing health would not allow her to accomplish enough to meet her expenses, without an anxiety and hurry which preyed upon her spirits.

At length, she was obliged to remove to a still more humble shelter; and, when she looked around the sloping attic-chamber she had chosen, she could not help feeling glad that no one at home (as she still called her native village) would ever be likely to see her there, wearing out her lonely days, with scarcely fuel enough to keep her warm.

"Shall I go out to service?" thought she, one night, as she sat by the smouldering embers, emitting hardly sufficient warmth to dry the wet and chilled feet she was holding before them. "At least, I should then be sheltered, warmed, and fed. Could I do it? Ought I to offer my services to do housework, when I am scarcely able to keep my own room in order? What could I do with children? I could not lift one from the ground, if it should fall: besides, I have no longer voice enough to tell them stories nor sing them lullabies. Cook? Impossible: I could lift neither pot nor kettle. Wash and iron? I have not strength enough to wring my own clothes. No: plainly I have no right to induce any lady to take a poor, feeble invalid into her family. Suppose, too, I should, by chance, get into one of those families where so little is really comprehended of the poor workers in the kitchen, and where the poor workers themselves might be utterly distasteful to me. No: thank God, I am of necessity spared this trial. I will persevere a while

longer; and, if the worst comes to the worst, perhaps I will write to Dr. Leonard."

On this same evening, Union Hall was brilliantly lighted for one of those evening parties which call together so many bright faces and joyous dancers; and, for an hour or so, none had been so merry as that young girl, who, for the last hour, has been gazing down from the balcony upon the spectacle below. Suddenly the tears spring into her eyes; and memory and imagination are both busy with scenes long passed away, but which, this night, seemed to be enacted again before her mental vision. The merry dancers flit away; and, in their stead, she sees a lowly pallet, upon which lies a dying girl, to whose last wants, she with her little sisters, under her mother's direction, are ministering, — a poor suffering fellow-creature, with whom they had shared their scanty means. One and another loved and lost, upon whose last pillow she had watched and waited, passed in review before her.

"Ah! those were better days," whispered conscience. "Have you forgotten how you used to soothe their throbbing temples, and sing them to sleep when every other opiate failed? Have you forgotten your mother's prayers for their parting souls? Have you determined to be a mere butter-

fly, to waste your precious soul in folly, — ay, worse, — perhaps in sin? Do you mean to do nothing for God?” — an expression her mother had used whenever the children murmured at the sacrifices she taught them to make for the sake of the poor girl they had sheltered under their roof, — even to the lying on straw-beds in the attic, that she might have their softer one. “Nothing for God? Yes, I will: I will turn away from this wasted life; I will do penance for my sin; I will do whatever my hands may find to ‘do for God’!” Just then, they came to seek her to go home. “Yes, willingly! I never want to come here again!”

“Oh! don’t ye believe it, darlint: it’s yourself that’ll be after coming the very next time. Don’t I know ye?” looking into her face, and laughing. “Go long wid ye, for the fool that ye are!”

Ah! Norah Doyle, you and she met many more times on this earth; but it was not at a merry-making like this.

That night, that young girl knelt down, and prayed that God would forgive her folly, her sin, her wasted life, — wasted as to all that was real and true, and worth living for; wasted as to the good she might do to others or herself; wasted as to her mother’s teaching and example; wasted as to the law and spirit of Christ. She then solemnly resolved, within herself and before God, that she would

henceforth and for ever forsake the life she had been leading, and would go forth to find God’s work; and she did find it.

It had rained all day, and was raining still. Jenny stood close up to her narrow window, that she might catch the last rays of light to finish her work. For the past month, since we last saw her, she had only just been able to keep starvation from her door. Twice during that time, she had sat down to write to Dr. Leonard. Once she had looked at the bank-book in her desk: it contained Richard’s legacy. Should she touch it? No: her own name was signed for its transference at her death. “I will, I will write to Dr. Leonard to-morrow,” said she to herself, as she put in the last stitch. “I must carry home this work now, before the shops are shut; then I will get what little I need for the next week, pay my rent, and to-morrow I will write to the parsonage.”

She was coming back from her errands, — it was already quite dark, — when, just as she was passing a street-lamp, a tall, well-formed man, who was coming round the corner she was passing, accidentally brushed against her, and threw her umbrella from her hand.

“I beg your pardon, miss, a thousand times,” said he, as he picked it up, and handed it to her again.

Their eyes met for a moment: she thanked him, and they went their way.

But that voice haunted her long after she had laid aside her dripping cloak, and thoroughly soaked stockings and shoes. She had stopped on her way up stairs to her room to pay her landlady, who remembered afterwards how pale she looked, and how her fingers trembled as she counted out the rent; but, as she only saw her once a week, she thought no more of it till the next pay-day, when it was not Jenny who tapped at her door.

Meanwhile, the poor girl sat down before the few embers, pressed her cold hands to her aching head, while the voice that had spoken to her in the street opened again whole volumes of the past, carrying her back to the evening-walk from the parsonage, when Richard and she had first agreed to "wait" for one another. Strange it should have sounded so like Richard's! At length, shivering and chilled to the heart, she undressed herself, and crept into her bed; and, after tossing about in restless pain and fever till nearly dawn, she fell into a deep sleep, from which she was awakened by Bridget Brian, who, having tapped once or twice at her door without an answer, had ventured to lift the latch, and enter.

"What? What? What is it?" said Jenny, starting from her uneasy sleep, and catching at the child's

dress. "O Biddy! is it you? I thought I heard my mother calling to me: I must have been dreaming!" And the poor girl fell back exhausted upon her pillow; but, suddenly starting up again, she exclaimed, as she strove to rise from her bed, "Why, Biddy, it must be very late: I ought to have been dressed long ago!"

"Stop, Miss Jenny dear, do!" said the child. "School don't keep to-day; and mother said I might come, and see if I could do any thing for you. Now, just you lie still, miss, and let me make your fire and get your breakfast; and, when it is all nice and warm, you shall get up." And the child laid her back with her tiny hands; and, covering the clothes smoothly over her, she laughed and nodded, and then busied herself about till she had made all tidy, minding what Jenny said to her, "Not to make much fire; for she was burning up with heat." It was true; but Jenny remembered just how many sticks she had left, and that they must last this week at least.

When the child had arranged all to her satisfaction, had made the kettle boil, had "drawn the tea," set out the one cup and saucer on the clean white cloth, and toasted the bread (for she had looked in vain for butter, milk, or sugar; Jenny having long since crossed these off from her list of "must haves"), she went to the bedside to report progress; when, to

her dismay, she found her friend shivering and shaking beneath the clothes, her teeth chattering beyond her power to keep them still, while she vainly tried to ask with her eyes and hands for what she could not articulate.

At length Biddy comprehended that a cup of hot tea was wanted; and she flew to bring it to her. She put it on a little stand near by, while she helped Jenny to sit up, propped her with the pillows, threw a shawl over her shoulders, and then did her best to steady the cup while Jenny tried to swallow the tea.

"Thank you, Biddy," she said, as its genial warmth began to make itself felt. "I will lie a little longer, if you don't mind staying a while. I believe I have taken cold," said she, sinking down beneath the clothes again.

"I should love to stay, dearly," said Biddy. "I came on purpose, miss; and mother said I might, if you would let me. See here," said she, pointing to her little luncheon-basket: "you remember this, don't you, Miss Jenny? Mother made me bring my dinner with me; for she said she knew you would have enough to do to cook for yourself, miss."

Poor Jenny hid her head beneath the bed-clothes. She could not have given the child a dinner. Towards night, Bridget's mother came to take her home.

"What! gone to bed so early, miss? Well, that's

wise. I hope Biddy hasn't been a trouble to ye?"

"She has been a great comfort, Mrs. Brian: indeed, I don't know what I could have done without her," said Jenny, shivering, as she had been doing at intervals all day.

"And is it ill ye are, Miss Jenny?" said the kind creature, her more experienced eye detecting the hectic spot upon the pale cheek. Then placing her hand upon her forehead, and feeling of her hands and feet, she whispered to Bridget to go for the doctor.

"No! don't call a doctor, please," said Jenny earnestly. "I shall be better to-morrow. I have taken a severe cold, I believe. I was out in the rain last night, and came home dripping wet."

"In the rain was it, miss? Well, it is plain that it is ill enough that ye are now, anyhow. Biddy, run home; climb up to the upper shelf in the closet, and bring back that paper of herbs ye'll find there. Go, quick wid ye! By your lave, miss," said she, taking off her bonnet and cloak as she spoke, "it is meself that's going to make you comfortable before I go. I want you to have a beautiful sweat like, miss; and so you won't mind my putting your feet into warm water, and giving you a hot drink, and tucking you all up warm, will you, miss?"

"Thank you kindly, Maggie," said Jenny: "I shall be very grateful to you."

"And then to-morrow, miss, if you don't come out o' this, you'll let me send for the doctor, won't you, darlint?" coaxed Maggie.

"Oh! I shall be better" (the frightful vision of an unpaid bill presenting itself before her eyes). "I know you will do me good: it is only a cold. You must promise me, Maggie, not to send for a doctor without my leave."

"Sure, and it's not for me to be taking so great a liberty, miss. It's my best I'll do to cure ye; but the Lord, blessed be his holy name!" — and she bowed her head and crossed herself, — "only knows whether I shall be able to bring ye through."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SEEKING AND FINDING.

IF the tones of the stranger had awakened memories in Jenny's heart, no less had the casual glance of her eyes, as they thanked him for his civility, followed him to his pillow. He could not divest himself of their influence, do what he might. All the next day, and ever after until he met them again, did they urge him to search till he found them. Meanwhile, his affairs called him from the city; and it was not until some days later that he was able to come back to Boston. There, let him do what he would, those eyes followed him up and down the streets, on board his ship, into the newsroom, the Sailors' Home, everywhere. Perhaps it was because they were so like those he once had known, and was now seeking for in vain, that they haunted so ceaselessly his waking and his sleeping dreams. Be that as it may, we must leave him to his search, while we follow the steps of that young woman who had taken the solemn vow to "do something for



God" and for her own soul. Faithfully has she kept her promise thus far, doing whatever her hands and heart found for her to do; and it was much. Oh! how much there is, when one really wishes to find! Have you ever tried it, ye who fritter away your days and nights in listless idleness; or who sigh away your time and powers, complaining that life is a wearisome journey, — a failure, a burthen, a curse? Brothers and sisters all! listen, as she did, to the voices ever speaking within you; watch for the visions ready to form themselves upon the mirror of your spirit, if you will only keep its surface pure enough; listen to the cry of the soul which God gave into your care, beseeching you to do something for its development and perfection. Then, with God's blessing on your purpose, you will emancipate yourselves from the weary serfdom to which you are bound. What, now, let me ask *you*, sweet young girl, — what, now, are your pursuits? Do you do any thing for others, for yourself, for God, in the busy round of eager pleasure that requires all your physical strength for its fatigues and disappointments? Watch your own mind through one week of its daily, nightly rounds, and see if it has accomplished any thing worthy of an immortal being, a child of God, a steward of his treasures. And *you*, with your strong frame and noble capacities, — what use are you making of those powers

which God has intrusted to your care? Is your strength spent on his work? Or are you sapping its very foundations in a dissipation of heart and mind, of soul and body, which is gradually transforming you below the beasts that perish? Oh! wake up, sons and daughters of God, heirs of another life! Burst asunder the fetters of custom, of fashion, of sin, that bind you, and make yourselves free with the freedom which Christ has offered you, — free to look up into heaven, and feel that it may be yours; free to look upon the earth, and gratefully make it yield the treasures which the Father has placed within its bosom for his creatures; free to seek for the sinful and the suffering wherever they be, — in the palace or the hovel, — to take them by the hand, to lift them up, to put your sustaining arms about them, as, praised be to God! so many of his children have done and are doing throughout this broad land, — throughout the world. Then, too, will ye understand, as she has done, while you emerge into the heaven-born light of love, that all are God's children, be their earthly lineage or outward worship what it may. Then will ye understand, as she has done, that the Father who called his children into life, and loved them with a love that far transcends the mother's for her child, will render unto all that even-handed justice and compassion of which we have but

reached the faint semblance in this our world as yet. Then will the command, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you," teach you to respect your brother, as she has done, although he may not bow his head at the same altar with yourselves; and to see that the field for God's work will be broad enough for all to labor in, side by side, until an impartial Judge shall declare who have been "good and faithful servants."

Daily did the young girl, who has called forth these thoughts, kneel within her closet, or before the shrine she had been taught to feel was holy, — that *was* holy to her, for it led her thoughts to God; faithfully confessing her sinful thoughtlessness, and consecrating herself to higher aims, till at length (we must here anticipate her subsequent career) she has been able to go from attic to cellar, wherever she has heard that there was suffering or want. Her weekly earnings by her profession have often been more than two-thirds expended upon the needy; and richly has the promise been fulfilled to her, of "Give, and it shall be given unto you again, pressed down, running over." She has given of her own substance, and her hands have been strengthened from the abundance of the workers in a different sphere; she has given of her love and patience, and many a weary head and heart have blessed her with their latest breath. She has left

them unmolested in their faith, and she has made her own to be respected. God bless that young Christian! What though we look from different casements here to catch our glimpse of heaven: the Father's house will open wide its doors to welcome all the children who have sought his face on earth. Let her not think that we would take from her one quiet "closet joy" she may possess, and offer human praise. No: we rejoice for her that she has found out her duty, and is striving humbly to perform it in the sight of God alone. Rather would we whisper in her ear, "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." She will have need of all her prayers to guard her against that human approbation which sometimes muffles the "still small voice" of the Spirit. We could not help this interruption to our narrative; the words would be spoken: but, now that we have borne our testimony and whispered our warning, we will look upon her earlier work, and see how it came to her to do.

It was at the close of another fortnight, — during which she had suffered so acutely from the severe cold which she had taken, that she had scarcely been able to sit up an hour in the day, — that the last drop seemed to be poured into Jenny's brimming cup. Every moment of the first week, when it was possible, had been given to the work she had brought home with her on that rainy night. For

the first time, at the close of that week, she had been obliged to send for her landlady, as she was too ill to go to her, and beg her to excuse her inability to pay the weekly stipend; trusting that, on the following Monday, she could make it good. The landlady opened her eyes a little wider than usual, not having had the least idea of her lodger's circumstances; and then, in a very different tone from the one she usually adopted, she said, —

“Oh! very well; I think I can wait till then: but I suppose there will be no doubt about it then, Miss Jones? You know, I have to pay my own rent; and I am therefore obliged to look out pretty sharp. You won't take no offence, I hope; but next Monday will be the latest I could wait. I wouldn't say it now, Miss Jones; but, if my pay is to depend upon your being well, I don't see much prospect of the rent: in fact,” said she, as she held on to the handle of the door she had opened, “I may as well tell you now, — that it need not be any disappointment to you then, — that I should like to have you consider this as a week's notice, in case you shouldn't have the money. I must see to my own rent, you know.” And she closed the door after her with a nervous bang, that went through poor Jenny's head, as her words had done through her heart. What did she do? She cried till her heart was like to break; and then she tried to pray,

and then to write to Dr. Leonard the dreaded confession of her poverty; to speak of Richard's legacy, and why she did not use it. But the thoughts she tried to write would not form themselves into words; her trembling hands refused to trace the letters; and, to prevent herself from screaming aloud in her nervous excitement, she closed her desk, mechanically locked it, and put the key into her pocket, and sat down once more to try to compose her thoughts. But it was all in vain. She pushed back her chair with the energy of fear, and began to pace the room from side to side till her brain seemed like a ball of fire.

“Oh! what shall I do? where shall I go? God be merciful to me!” And the poor girl threw herself across her bed in an agony of despair, which, by the time that Mrs. Brian came in to see her the next morning, had worked such a fearful change in her wan face, that you would have said she had lived a life in that one short night.

“What! dressed already, Miss Jenny!” said the cheery voice. But it needed but a moment to change it to its gentlest key, as Jenny raised her heavy eyes to her face with scarcely a sign of recognition.

“Why, how is this, my darlint? Not been in bed at all? Ah! Miss Jenny dear, do let me go for the doctor. Indade and indade it's very bad that ye

are. Ye look, for all the world, like as your poor mother did the night she died. Let me go for the doctor, honey?"

The word recalled Jenny's flittering senses. "No, no!" gasped she. "Give me a drink of water, Maggie. Lift me up a little. I fell asleep; and, when I woke, I could not move." Poor thing! She had swooned in the night, and thought she had slept.

"There, there; thank you kindly; I shall be better soon. God will bless you for your goodness to a motherless girl, Maggie." And poor Jenny leaned her head upon the kind creature, and wept.

"Don't cry, honey! Sure, and isn't it meself who should be kind to Biddy's tacher? There now," said she, "let me make your fire and get your tay." And she was turning away to do both, when Jenny detained her with one hand, while she covered her eyes with the other, and sobbed, —

"Maggie, I have no wood, I have no tea, and — and I have no money to buy them with."

"Don't, dont, don't, Miss Jenny dear! It's my heart that will break with your sobbing. Sure, and there's tay enough in this big house, and wood too. I'll go and ask the landlady." And she was suiting the action to the word, when Jenny once more held her back, and said decidedly, —

"No! not for the world! I cannot pay her rent,

I could not ask her for food." A sudden thought shot into Jenny's mind as she spoke. Her eye fell upon a ring, that was of some value, on her finger. It was the gift of an old school-mate in happier days. She drew it off slowly, and reluctantly handed it to Maggie; and asked her, in broken tones, —

"Could not you do something with this, Maggie? Is there no pawnbroker, until I can redeem it?"

"Indade, and it's my best I'll do intirely, Miss Jenny," said she, putting it on her smallest finger; her kind heart boiling over with sorrow and sympathy for her young friend. "It's meself ye may trust; and sorrow a bit, if I don't bring ye back something nice. Lie still till I come to ye; and never you fear!"

Jenny tried to smile; she tried to think: but the same whirling of the brain came over her again; and she closed her eyes, and tried only to keep still. Mrs. Brian departed on the instant, without again looking at her charge; did her best to make a good bargain; and was back again in an hour, accompanied by Bridget, carrying a basket of wood between them, and another filled with small packages. The good creature had coaxed a neighbor, a little better off than herself, to take the ring in pledge for what she could spare; had added a stick or two from her own pile, beside what tea and sugar she could glean; and

hurried back, arriving just in time to bring Jenny out of another swoon into which she had fallen. Had Mrs. Brian understood more of disease, she would have known that Jenny was sinking in a rapid decline: her strength was gone, and alternate fever and exhaustion were fast releasing her from earth.

She revived again for a time under her kind friend's nursing. But day after day found her no better. Her senses wandered in delirious fancies; her ears ached with the din of weakness; her soul seemed to leave her body, and wander up into untold heights or sink to some fathomless depths; then again it would poise itself, and count the days until the dreaded Monday. It came at last: she knew it well; and, all day long, she seemed to see inscribed on walls and ceiling, on every bit of furniture within the room, the fearful warning of the week before. But she had now become so feeble, she could not connect her thoughts for many successive moments; and she was lying in this half-delirious state, when a low tap at the door sent every drop of blood to her heart; and, had her life depended upon it, she could not have uttered the needed words. But there was no second tap: the door was gently opened; and instead of the coarse, bold tones of the landlady, a sweet and gentle voice said, as it seemed to her to approach her bed, —

“May I come in? You do not know me; but you

soon will. I want to comfort you. I heard that you were ill, and all alone; and I want to nurse you; may I?”

Jenny heard as in a dream. She looked up into the loving eyes that were gazing into hers; lifted up her feeble arms, and clasped them about her neck; and, sweetly smiling, murmured, —

“Have you come back at last, mother?”

“God has sent me to you, sister,” said the loving voice. “I’ve come to nurse you; may I?”

But Jenny knew no more that night: she was in a land of dreams. Her troubles all had passed away. She was walking again with Richard; she was chatting with her mother, cheering her fainting heart, or ministering to her wants. Now she was nutting with her old school-mates, and now she was the merriest at the village dance. In that one night, her gentle nurse had gathered nearly all the history of the past, even to the cherished legacy, and the reasons why she had not used it. She saw that this was Jenny’s secret; and faithfully did her involuntary confidante preserve the knowledge she had gained. Oh! how lovingly and patiently did that young girl do this “work for God”! Day after day, and week after week, did she minister to her wants from her own earnings. No danger now that the rent would not be paid, no fear of unpaid doctor’s bills, no fear of any thing, while those two loving beings, Maggie

and her friend, watched in turn at Jenny's bedside. Indeed, it was through Bridget Brian that this sister of charity had found her way to Jenny. She had accidentally overheard Bridget telling a little school-mate, who had been with her at Jenny's school, as she and they were waiting to be served at a grocer's shop, how very ill their teacher was, and that she verily believed Miss Jones was as poor as they were. Upon inquiring who was ill, her ear being open now to catch any message to her heart, she learned enough to induce her to go to Bridget's mother, from whom she ascertained the particulars of Jenny's forlorn situation.

Suspecting that it was the dreaded pay-day which most harassed the sick girl's mind (for Maggie said "she kept moaning about it in her sleep"), her determination was taken. As soon as her work was over, she hastened to the street, found the house, saw the landlady, told her she had called to pay Miss Jones's rent; and then, counting out enough more for a week's pay in advance (very much to the surprise as well as satisfaction of that lady), she ascended the stairs to Jenny's room, as though she were perfectly accustomed to the way; and there, as we have seen, commenced her mission of love. Often, during these days and nights, Jenny's wandering senses gathered themselves again; and then her nurse would put her arms about her neck,

and lay her head upon her bosom, and tell her how she loved her for letting her take care of her. "And now, Jenny darling," she said to her one day, when she had been brighter and more collected than usual, "is there no friend whom you would like to see? No Dr. Leonard, of whom you have spoken in your dreams? Your minister, dear, — wouldn't you like to have him come and lay his hands upon your head, and pray with you again, as you have told me, in your sleep, he used to do? You have not long to tarry, dear: shall I write to him to come?"

"Oh, do!" sobbed Jenny. "Tell him to come: I shall not be a burthen to him now. Yes, do!"

"Jenny dear, do you think you have treated him quite fairly, not to have sought him long ago? Surely he would have procured you aid, and have saved you much of the terrible suffering you have endured. Think, dear, have you no pride in your heart that has been a stumbling-block to your feet? Would you not have helped him, if he had been in want?"

"Oh! how willingly!" sighed Jenny.

"And then, darling," whispered she, "have you no one whom you would forgive before you leave this world? — no one at the old farm, where your mother lived so many years? He is your father's brother: can't you forgive him, Jenny?"

"I do, I do, as I hope to be forgiven!"

"And now, one other, Jenny dear, is there not,— Richard's poor lonely mother?"

"Ah! sister" (she knew her by no other name), "you will break my heart!" again sobbed Jenny. "I do forgive them all!"

"Then won't you send her Richard's legacy now, darling, while you can send it with your love?"

"Do as you will," faltered Jenny, seeing now the mistakes she had made,— "do as you will, sister. I have been proud, foolish, and unforgiving. I see it all now. Write to Dr. Leonard. Send Richard's legacy, and tell them how sorry I am I did not send it sooner. But then, sister dear," and the hot tears fell upon her nurse's neck, "it was all that was left to me of Richard!"

"Would Richard have wished you to use it for his mother's punishment, Jenny?"

"No, no! I see it all now. Write to them all: write at once."

They came without delay,— Dr. Leonard, with his tender upbraidings and his paternal blessing; Richard's mother, with her late repentance and her broken heart, bringing with her messages from the farm, with many a comfort for Jenny's remaining days; and last, not least, came one who had sought her sorrowing for many a day, and who now found her but to lose. Poor John! could you but have recognized on that rainy night the blooming play-

mate whom you and Richard had loved so truly in years gone by, perhaps you might have saved her all this woe. Be that as it may, God will bless those manly tears, as, kneeling by her bedside, after they all had gone, save the sister who had summoned them by her touching letters, he poured out for the first and last time the love he had cherished in his heart. He told her how it had gone with him round the world; how the memory of all those good and happy hours, when Richard was alive, and they had worked and played, and sung together at their Sunday school, had kept him from despair; and how he had come home to share his honest earnings with his mother, and with Richard and his wife, when he was greeted with the tidings of his death, but could get no knowledge of her mother or herself.

"O Jenny, sister! you can never know the love I have borne you, nor how I have gone up and down this thronging city to find you out; for sure I was you were in sorrow somewhere, now that Richard was gone."

"Hush! brother John!" whispered Jenny, gently laying her hand upon his head as it was bent beside her. "Hush! don't you see him there beside you, blessing you with his love? Lift me up, brother John, that I may see him better!" Her senses had flitted again; the day's excitement had

been too much for her; and after a while, as she rested against his arm, she smiled, and softly whispered, —

“Shan’t we wait a while, Richard? we are only children now.” And then presently, “Cheer up, mother: we can try at least.” John’s broad chest heaved beneath its light burthen, as he strove to repress his grief; but Jenny smiled and murmured as in a dream, “That’s kind, Richard: rock me to sleep; there, rock me to sleep! Sing to me, mother!” And she closed her eyes, and lay like a tired child, as a sweet low lullaby rose from her nurse’s chair, and filled the room with its melody. Just then, Dr. Leonard softly entered: and Jenny seemed to recognize him; for she held out her hand to him, and whispered, “You will give me letters, won’t you? Tell them I can teach. Good by! I’ll write to you.” No one spoke a word. She murmured on, still resting in John’s supporting arms; till suddenly she said, “Yes, we have kept ‘God’s blessing,’ Richard. It will not leave us now; will it, Dr. Leonard?”

“Never, dear child, neither in this world nor in the next. Let us seek it now.” And, kneeling beside her bed, he offered a prayer for the departing spirit, which filled all their hearts with peace. At its close, Jenny partly raised herself, and, looking round as though she missed some one, called gently, “Maggie! Biddy!”

“They are gone home, dear,” said her nurse. “Shall I kiss them good-by for you?”

“Yes; and they need not come to-morrow. Richard will do all now; won’t you, Dick?” said she, as she looked up into John’s face, and smiled. Then, nestling back again to his support, she murmured presently, as if in sleep, “I’m tired, mother; only tired: I shall be well to-morrow.” You might have heard a feather fall in the hush of those last moments. Suddenly she started forward, looked eagerly for some one she could not see, and called aloud, “Sister, come; I’m weary!” She came and knelt beside her bed, took the feeble hand now groping to find her own, and whispered, “Sleep, then, darling! Shall I sing to you again?”

“Yes, God bless you, sister! Kiss me before I sleep!” And, bending forward to meet the dear caress, she fell upon her neck, and — journeyed on!

God does bless thee, sister; and he will: for from the death-bed of this, thy “first patient,” didst thou go forth to found a “Home” where the heavy-laden may lay their burthens down, and the weary fall asleep!



## N O T E.

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THE "Channing Home" was established two years ago, by Miss Harriet Ryan, through the assistance which she derived from friends whom she had drawn into sympathy with her benevolent purpose. Four years earlier, she had visited a stranger under circumstances similar to those described in this story, of whose previous life nothing is known to the writer; that visit, and the scene in Union Hall, being the only parts of the story which have a foundation in fact. During these four years, Miss Ryan devoted all the time at her command to visiting the sick, whom she sought in their destitution and friendlessness. As her interest in this service increased, she devised the plan of a hospital for needy and suffering women, — especially those who were sinking under the terrible scourge of consumption. The building formerly occupied by the Federal-street Society as a vestry, but for some time disused, was taken by her, and, as soon as the nature of her work was recognized, was placed at her disposal, free of charge for rent. From this place she has been obliged to remove, in consequence of the sale of the property. In the course of the two years, she has sheltered beneath her roof fifty-seven patients, seventeen of whom have died. The house to which she has gone, in South Street, will allow her to receive but fifteen patients, — as large a number as can enjoy a proper share of her personal attention. Gratuitous medical aid has been given, of which Miss Ryan speaks in terms of the warmest gratitude. Whatever funds may be collected for the support of the "Home" will be placed in the hands of two gentlemen, who have consented to act as Trustees.