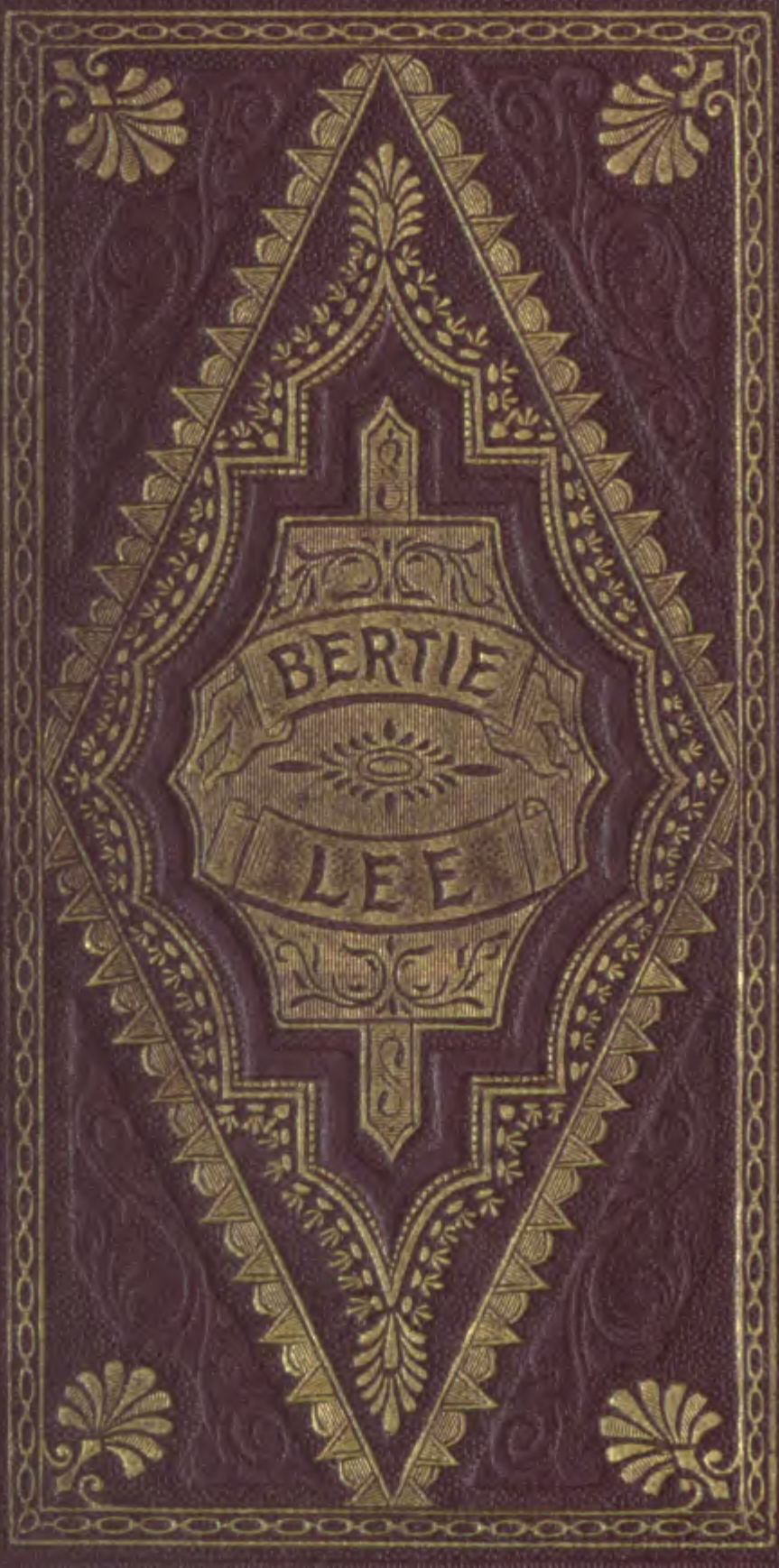
BERTIE
LEE

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Page 17.

BERTIE LEE;

OR,

THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE.

A Boy's Book.

"A wise son maketh a glad father."

EDINBURGH:
ALEXANDER HISLOP & COMPANY.

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NOTE.

THE Author of the following simply-written but powerfully-suggestive Story begs to inform the reader that most of the incidents are true, though they did not all occur in the precise order narrated.

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."—Proverbs i. 8, 9.

"My son, forget not my law; . . . . so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man."—Proverbs iii. 1, 4.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

"WHERE IS NELLIE?"

"WE must get all this grain in to-night," said Mr Lee, as he tossed a large sheaf of wheat to his son Bertie. The latter was standing, fork in hand, ready to receive the bundles and arrange them in courses as his father threw them up. The load was nearly completed, and as it moved from place to place on the open field, it seemed, in its ample proportions, like a small house in motion.

"I think we can manage it," said Bertie, "for the sun is yet an hour high, and there will not be more than three loads after this one. The road to the barn is so level we could take in the last one after dark."

"We must strain every nerve to get this all into the barn to-night, for to-morrow is the Sabbath, and these clouds portend a storm; but doing anything after dark will be extremely difficult, for there will be no moonlight, and these heavy clouds will make the night very gloomy."

The work went on vigorously during this conversation, and the load was now completed. Bertie, sitting on the top, drove it into the barn. Mr Lee now took Bertie's place, and pitched the sheaves to the latter, who stowed them away in the loft above.

This load being disposed of, Bertie hurried down the ladder to the floor, and mounted the waggon. Mr Lee took his seat on a spring-board that belonged to the rigging. Bertie stood up, seized the reins, and, cracking his whip, the horses trotted off at a rapid rate to the wheat-field.

Two more loads were brought in, but as they were returning for the last one, it became quite dark. As they groped from place to place,

picking up the sheaves, the work became both difficult and tedious. At last every sheaf was collected; and in high spirits, though with great care, Bertie drove back to the barn.

Had it been any other evening than Saturday, the load would have been allowed to remain on the waggon till next morning; but as the next day was the Sabbath, the waggon would be needed to convey the family to church,—so the load had to be disposed of. Mr Lee tossed the sheaves up into the loft. Bertie made no attempt at stowing them away in regular courses, as it was too dark for that, but merely kept the opening clear, into which his father threw the sheaves. After the load was all put away, the rigging was lifted from the axle-trees of the waggon, and the usual box put in its place.

As Mr Lee and Bertie were coming up the steps of the balcony, they saw Mrs Lee and John, Bertie's younger brother, coming out of the cellar by the stairs which opened into the balcony at the farther end.

"You're late with the milk to-night, my dear," said Mr Lee.

"Yes, we are. John could not go for the cows as early as usual; and when he got to the field, he found the fence broken down into neighbour Griffin's park, and of course the cows were over there. They had strayed with Griffin's cows to the farthest corner of his pasture; so before John got them back into our field, and the fence put right, it was quite dark. We have just this minute got the milk strained."

"Where's Nellie?" said Mr Lee, as he struck a light.

"Why, to be sure, where is she?" rejoined his wife. "I left her here when I went out to milk, and I have been so hurried since that, really I had forgotten all about her. I daresay she is asleep in some corner. She runs about so much all day, that she is apt to be very sleepy by this time."

"I saw her peeping through the bars of the barn-yard gate while you were milking, just as

father and I were driving off for a load," said Bertie.

A diligent search was now made through the house; every room, pantry, and closet was examined, including the cellar below and the garret above, but all to no purpose, for nothing was to be seen of Nellie.

Nellie was not quite three years old, and being the baby and the only girl of the family, was a great pet with all. Every one looked anxious lest something serious had happened to her. Mr Lee took down the lantern from the peg on which it hung in the lobby, lighted it, and went out, followed by all the rest.

"She could not have got into the cistern," said he, frightened at the sound of his own words. "No, that is impossible, she could not lift the heavy cover; and as to the well, she could not get over the high box that encloses it."

"Perhaps she has strayed into the barn or the empty stable, and fallen asleep in some corner," suggested John. The barn, the stable,

and the waggon-house were, however, now examined with as much care as the house had been, but with just the same result—no trace was found of Nellie.

"Could it be possible that she would follow us to the wheat-field?" suggested Bertie. The suggestion was enough; the whole family set off in that direction, Bertie taking the lead.

A narrow footpath led to the field by a shorter cut than the one over which the hay-waggon went; this Bertie and the others followed, till they came to a little gate, of home construction, on wooden hinges, which admitted them to the field. Bertie with the lantern followed the fence round the field, while the others scattered themselves at irregular spaces over it, all calling, "Nellie!" "Nellie!" "Nellie!" When Bertie had gone a great portion of the way round the field, he came to the large gate, through which he had driven the wheat a little while before. It had been standing open all day, and continued so still. Just as he was passing it, a gleam from the lantern fell on a

little straw flat, which he knew to be Nellie's. He sprang forward, and there, just by the post of the gate, within an inch of where the wheels of the heavily laden waggon had passed, lay his little sister, fast asleep.

"Here she is! Here's Nellie! Hurrah, hurrah!" shouted Bertie, in a voice so loud that the child awoke, while the whole family gathered round her in the highest state of excitement.

"My darling! my own sweet child!" exclaimed Mrs Lee, as she clasped her to her bosom.

"Wha'll am I? Wha'll am I?" said Nellie, rubbing her eyes in astonishment at the novel scene.

She was very much frightened, and could give no intelligent account of herself, or why she had come out there, except that she "wanted to see Beltie and the big laggon."

"Let us bless the Lord for his preservation of our child," said Mr Lee. "Had she been one inch nearer the middle of the gateway, horrible even to think of it, she must have

been crushed beneath the wheels of the loaded waggon."

The glad procession moved on to the house in high spirits, Bertie carrying Nellie on his back.

CHAPTER II.

THE COUNTRY SABBATH.

THE next morning the sun rose clear and bright, while all around was so quiet, delightful, and peculiar to a Sabbath in the country. It seemed as though all nature, animate and inanimate, was rejoicing in God's day of rest. A heavy rain had fallen during the night, but the clouds had now rolled away, and the sun rose in a bright blue sky. For some weeks there had been a great drought. The fervid heat of July had dried up the pasture, and every plant and tree seemed to be perishing for lack of moisture; but now, refreshed by the grateful rain, all looked bright and beautiful. The quiet was

broken only by the hum of insects and the song of birds.

Mr Lee's family rose early every morning, and as early on the Sabbath morning as on any other day of the week. The few necessary duties of the farm were soon performed. John went for the cows, carrying with him his pocket Testament, to read over his Sabbath-school lesson by the way. By the time he had driven them to the milking-yard he had learned twelve verses. Bertie brought the horses from the pasture and fed them with oats, preparatory to harnessing them to take the family to church.

After breakfast, the little household were collected at family worship. Mr Lee read the hymn commencing—

"How sweet is the Sabbath to me,
The day that my Saviour arose."

Mrs Lee, who had a fine musical voice, led the singing, in which all the family joined, down even to little Nellie. Nellie did not know the words, but she had a quick ear for

music, and so she sang the air quite correctly. After singing, they read round the circle alternately, each person two verses, the 22d chapter of First Samuel, about David fleeing to the cave of Adullam. Mr Lee then engaged in prayer, and the exercises of the morning were closed.

After prayers on Sabbath morning, it was customary for the children to ask any questions that they thought proper about the chapter read, or about any portion of Scripture that they had been reading through the week; so the moment the prayer was over John exclaimed—

"Father, in the 3d verse it says that 'David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.'

"Now, in the chapter I read this morning"

—here John turned to the place in his little Bible, Deut. xxiii. 3—"it says, 'An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor, of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.' Now, if these Moabites were the enemies of Israel, how came David to put his father and mother under the care of the king of Moab?"

"A very proper question, my boy," said Mr Lee; "let us look into it. In the 3d chapter of Judges, and 13th verse, it says that Eglon, king of Moab, 'smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees;' and in the 14th verse, 'So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.' All these things seem to prove that Moab was the enemy and op-

pressor of Israel, and yet there is a good reason why David did this. It is one of those curious coincidences which abound in God's Word, and do much to prove that it is his Word. Can any one of you guess what this reason was?"

They all remained silent, so Mr Lee continued: "You know, in the first chapter of Ruth, we read that Naomi and her husband Elimelech 'went to sojourn in the country of Moab' with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The latter married in that land. After this the father and the two sons died. For many years Naomi had sojourned in Moab, and was, no doubt, favourably known to the citizens of that country. When she returned to Bethlehem she was accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, a native of Moab. Ruth, you know, married Boaz. They had a son, whom they named Obed. Obed's son was Jesse, the father of David. So when David left his father under the care of the king of Moab, he left him in the land of his grandmother Ruth, where, no

doubt, many would cherish him for his grandmother's sake."

The boys were greatly interested in this explanation. "There are many such coincidences in the Sacred Scriptures," said Mr Lee; "and while we are on the subject, I will mention another one.

"In the 17th chapter of First Kings we read that Elijah was commissioned to say to King Ahab, that there would not be rain or dew for three years. The narrative then goes on to describe the terrible results of the drought, the drying up of the streams, the withering of the pastures, and a great many other disasters. At the close of the period we are led to infer that water was very difficult to obtain. And yet, when Elijah built the altar to God on Mount Carmel, in the presence of the prophets of Baal, he made a trench about the altar, and he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood, and said, 'Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.' And he

said, 'Do it the second time,' and they did it the second time. And he said, 'Do it the third time,' and they did it the third time. So great was the quantity of water that, we are told, it 'filled the trenches.' Notwithstanding this, 'the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.'

"Now, where was this water procured? It seems impossible that so much water could be found in a time of such general drought. But if you will look at the map in your Bible, you will find that Carmel was close to the Mediterranean Sea, and, doubtless, this was salt water procured from thence. In the 43d verse, Elijah says to his servant, 'Go up now and look toward the sea.' This and the servant's reply—'Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea'—both imply that the mountain was close by the Mediterranean.

"This also, you see, is a beautiful illustration of the consistency of the Bible."

We will not attempt the description of the other exercises of this pleasant Sabbath; the ride to church, three miles distant, in the country waggon; Mr and Mrs Lee occupying the front seat, and the two boys the one behind, while Nellie sat on her little chair in front; the excellent practical sermon of the Rev. Mr White; the Sabbath-school and the prayer-meeting. The Scripture lesson occupied the evening, after which the singing of hymns and family prayer closed the exercises of the day.

CHAPTER III.

MR CAMERON'S STORY.

"BERTIE—John—come boys, it is time to be up," called Mr Lee from the foot of the stairs, next morning, a little after four o'clock. The boys rubbed their eyes, and thought it could hardly be morning yet; but knowing their father's voice was not to be disobeyed, they rose and dressed themselves quickly.

John was a stout boy, and could endure almost any amount of hard labour; but Bertie had grown very tall of late, and had not carried up, as it were, his strength with him. It was evident that he was not fitted for farm work. He had always wished to be a carpenter, but

as yet neither his father nor he saw how this desire was to be gratified.

The wheat crop being all in, they intended to begin this morning with the hay, which was now ready to cut.

The sun was just rising, but already the heat was quite oppressive; so that by midday it was likely to be intense. Still the freshness of the morning air, and the thought of commencing something new, made the boys feel in good spirits. Mr Lee took the lead, cutting a broad swath with his new scythe. The boys cut but narrow strips, and so were able to keep up with him.

At seven o'clock Mrs Lee had the horn blown for breakfast. The sharp work of the morning gave them all a fine appetite. Breakfast was a particularly cheerful meal, and on this morning conversation flowed even more merrily than usual.

Mrs Lee had a brother in the city, named James Mitchell. She had received a letter from him the preceding week, in which he said

a particular friend of his might be expected in a day or two to pay them a visit. Mr Mitchell was a merchant and general dealer, and had been successful in amassing a considerable fortune. His friend, Mr Cameron, was a bookseller, and was also rich. They had long been intimate, and it was at Mr Mitchell's particular request that he paid this visit to Glenville. The family expected his arrival that day, and so the conversation turned principally on him, what he was like, how he would behave himself, and how they would entertain him.

Breakfast over, the mowers returned to their work. About ten o'clock, Mrs Lee brought out lunch in a little basket, with a pitcher of cold water from the well, and the party sat down, beneath the generous shade of a large beech-tree that stood in one corner of the field, to partake of the refreshments. The atmosphere grew hotter and hotter every minute, and before the horn sounded for dinner at twelve o'clock, it became almost insufferable

When they got home they found Mr Cameron

had just arrived. Though he was an entire stranger to them all, yet, as he came introduced by Uncle James, he was a welcome guest. He was a man of about forty years of age, of agreeable manners and excellent conversational powers. He was able to tell them everything about their uncle, and met all their numerous questions with ready answers.

After dinner, Mr Lee, putting on a quizzical expression, announced to the boys that, partly in honour of Mr Cameron's arrival, but chiefly on account of the great heat, they would delay their return to the hay-field till four o'clock. But, in the meantime, that Mr Cameron might not feel too much elated with the compliment, he added that they would go to the back-yard and sharpen their scythes. So out they went; Bertie and John turned the grindstone alternately, while Mr Lee held the scythes on the stone. This done, they adjourned to the door-yard,—so they called the nice, smooth lawn in front of the house,—where a dozen fine beech-trees made a delightful shade. The grass be-

neath was kept closely cropped by some sheep that were allowed at intervals to pasture there. Beneath the shade of the trees they all lay down; the ground being very dry, it was quite safe to do so.

"What do you intend to do with your boys, Mr Lee?" said the guest.

"John is to be a farmer; but Bertie, I fear, has scarcely strength enough for the hard labour involved in a working farmer's life. He sometimes expresses a wish to be a carpenter, but his plans are by no means settled yet."

"You should send him to the town to his uncle, Mr Mitchell, and make a merchant of him," said Mr Cameron.

"Boys are exposed to such temptations in a large city, that I should really dread to have a son of mine go there; and yet God could take care of him there as well as elsewhere," said Mr Lee.

"How would you like to go to the city, Bertie?" said Mr Cameron.

"I think I should like to live with my Uncle

James, sir," replied Bertie, "if it were not for leaving my father and mother here."

"Oh, you would soon get attached to new friends; and while this would not make you forget your old ones, it would cause you to miss them less."

"How long have you been in the town, Mr Cameron?" said Mr Lee.

"Just twenty-one years last month; and now, perhaps, it would interest these boys to hear how I got on there at the beginning."

"Oh, yes," said the boys, both at once, "we would be very glad indeed to hear about it."

"I was born," said Mr Cameron, "in a small house in Ohio. There was not another house within three miles of ours, though it is now a thickly settled country. The farm-work was exceedingly hard, and I was ill suited for it. When I was eighteen years of age, I told my father I would like to go to some large city and learn a business. At first he was greatly opposed to this, but finally gave his consent. I left home with money enough to pay my

travelling expenses, and just *one sovereign* more.

"I economised to the utmost in travelling, hardly allowing myself sufficient food by the way, and so, on my arrival, I found my entire capital to be twenty-eight shillings. I thought New York, as the largest city, would be the best one for me. I was a total stranger. Of all the crowds I met on the streets and other thoroughfares, there was not one face I had ever seen before. I sought a cheap lodging-house, in an obscure street, and the next morning began to look for a situation. I went from shop to shop, and from office to office, but nobody seemed to want a boy, or, if they did, they would not notice a stranger.

"About twelve o'clock I became very hungry, and not wishing to interrupt my pursuits by going back to my lodgings, I bought a small loaf of bread at the baker's shop, from which I made my dinner. The good woman of whom I bought the loaf permitted me to sit in the shop till I had eaten it; and you may be sure I

was glad of the rest it gave me. The woman seemed interested in my appearance, for, when I had eaten the bread, she brought me a glass of water to drink.

"She asked me if I did not come from the country. I told her that I was from the West. She said she had a brother in Illinois, and that she once lived there herself. Thanking her for her kindness, I bade her good-morning, and resumed my search for a situation.

"The afternoon tramp proved no more successful than the morning one. Sometimes I was answered gruffly, as if I had no business to be asking for a place; at other times with a kindly look, as much as to say, 'Poor boy, I wish I had one for you.'

"That night I went to bed weary in body and sad at heart. O how I wished myself at home again! My father had instructed me in religious matters, and had taught me to pray. I earnestly besought God's guidance that night. I feared that I had not done right in leaving home, and that now God was punish-

ing me for doing so. I tried to confide all my troubles to Him, and I felt much relieved when I arose from my knees.

"When I lay down, tired though I was, I found I could not fall asleep. I tossed to and fro, and felt as though a great heat was consuming me. My thirst was unquenchable. Sometimes for a few moments I slept, and then I would awake in great consternation with the night-mare.

"In the morning I felt little refreshed. I attempted to rise, but found myself so giddy that I could not stand. After breakfast, my landlady, finding I did not come down, came up to inquire for me. I told her how ill I was, and she said she would send for the doctor.

"He came about an hour after. The moment he saw me, he said I had the small-pox. I was very much frightened when I heard this, and my landlady turned pale. They conversed together at the farther side of the room for some time, but in so low a tone that I could

not make out what they were saying, though I knew that I was the subject of their consultation.

"Pretty soon the doctor came to my bedside and said, 'As I have told you already, you have the small-pox. Now, this is a most contagious disease, so you cannot remain here. Have you any friends in the city whom you would like to consult with reference to your removal?'

"I told him that I had none; that my friends were seven hundred miles away, and that here I was a total stranger.

"'The best thing you can do, then, is to go to the hospital; in fact, it is the *only* thing you can do.'

"I had always supposed the hospital to be a place to which people were taken just to die; so I had a perfect horror of going there. However, a moment's reflection showed me there was no alternative; without friends, and with a contagious disease, and only a few shillings in the world, there was certainly nothing else for me but this.

"The doctor very kindly interested himself in my removal, and saw me safely carried into the hospital. Here I was placed in a large room, with a number of others who had the same disease. I was agreeably disappointed at the kindness with which I was treated. I had a comfortable bed, clean sheets, a skilful physician, attentive nurses, and all the attention that was possible in an establishment so extensive.

"As I lay night after night on my little cot, O how I longed to see my friends at home! My mother had been long dead; but I had a sister just three years younger than myself, to whom I was warmly attached, and I greatly missed her watchful care. My trouble seemed to draw me nearer to God. I had much time for reflection. My little Bible lay beneath my pillow, and even while the fever seemed burning me up, I could read a verse or two at a time, and by repeating it afterwards, it was soon permanently committed to memory. The Bible was thus my greatest comfort, and I

grew more familiar with its glorious truths every day.

"In about three weeks I began to mend, and, at the close of the fourth, was discharged as cured. The disease was certainly gone, but I was so weak that I could scarcely walk.

CHAPTER IV.

MR CAMERON'S STORY CONTINUED.

"THE question arose, What is to be done? My tedious search for a situation was so unsuccessful that it afforded me little encouragement to try again. In fact, in my weak state, this was impossible. My removal to the hospital, and other necessary expenses, had reduced my little stock of money to less than ten shillings. So something must be done immediately.

"I could think of no expedient except that of selling some of my things. And what could I sell? My wardrobe was scanty, and of the plainest kind, and most of the articles were well worn; they could not be spared; and, if

they could, would bring no money. My father had selected a few books from his small library before I left home, and these volumes were now in my trunk. I disliked to part with them, nor would they bring much, for they had been all well read; but this was my only resort, so I determined to try it.

"Tying these books in my pocket-handkerchief, I set off. I first made my applications at private houses, but at every door I met with a rebuff from the servants, and in no case was permitted to see the master or mistress. Then I determined to call on business men, at their warehouses and offices.

"At the second office I entered I sold one volume. Shortly after, I came to another shop. I saw behind the counter an elderly gentleman of very pleasing countenance, dressed in the garb of a quaker. I begged the priviledge of showing him my books, untying my bundle on the counter before him as I spoke. He looked very hard at me for a moment, and then at my books.

"'Hast thee been sick?' he said.

"'Yes, sir,' I replied; 'I have been very sick. It was only yesterday that I was discharged from the hospital, where I have been four weeks confined with the small-pox.'

"He looked at me with an expression of friendly interest, and then asked me to walk into his private office. Here, at his request, I told him all my story, from the time I left home.

"'Thee never ought to have left home,' he said, after he had heard me out; 'but now that thou art here, thou must get employment.'

"'That is just what I want, sir,' was my reply; 'just what I have been seeking for. I shall soon, Providence permitting, be strong and able for anything; and if I could only get something to do, I should have no fear for the future.'

"He was evidently much interested in my story, and, pausing for a moment, he said,—

"'Thy stock of books is very small; does

thee not think, if thee had money to lay in a more varied and attractive assortment, thee would do better?'

"'I have no doubt I should,' I replied; 'but'—

"'Hast thou no one to lend thee this money?' he continued, filling up my sentence. He looked hard at me, and resumed: 'I think thou art an honest lad. I will lend thee five pounds to begin business with, and shall expect thee to return it as soon as thou art able.'

"I was greatly surprised. Five pounds seemed to me a very great sum, and to be risked, too, by a perfect stranger. Then I doubted whether I should be justified in availing myself of this kindness. Supposing I did not succeed, then I might never be able to repay my generous friend.

"These thoughts passed through my mind with great rapidity. He observed my hesitation. My courage at once returned.

"'Thank you,' I said. 'How can I ever

deserve this kindness, and what security can I give that you will be repaid?'

"'I will take thine honest face as security,' he said, smiling.

"He took out his pocket-book and gave me the money. I poured out my thanks with great earnestness.

"'It is only a loan,' he said; 'so thee may spare thy words.' We conversed together for a few minutes more, and then I took my leave.

"The next question was, How can I invest this money to the best advantage? While considering this question, and before I had gone far, I came upon a book-stand. It was on the corner of the street, and before it stood a very sickly-looking man. Knowing what it was to be sick, I naturally felt an interest in the stranger. I looked over his books; some of them I knew, but most of them I had never seen before. We soon fell into conversation, no customers being just then at hand. He asked me if I had not been sick. I told him

I had, and that I had just come from the hospital;. and finished by asking him if he was not an invalid. He thought he had consumption; that a cough troubled him very much at times; and that he had on one occasion ruptured a blood-vessel. We next talked about books, when I intimated my intention of going into the business.

"'I shall be obliged to retire from it soon on account of ill health,' he said, 'and would be glad of an opportunity of selling out at any time.'

"My total ignorance of the man's character, and the value of his books, made it hard for me to reply to this. I finally asked him at what he valued his stock.

"'I have here a list of the books, made out yesterday, which, at cost prices, amount to thirty pounds. I had an offer of twenty pounds for them, which I only an hour ago refused. I would take twenty-five pounds for them now.'

"I explained to him the narrow limit of my

means; that I could pay down but five pounds if I concluded to make the purchase. He said he would consider this sufficient security, and that he would trust me for the balance till my sales would enable me to pay him. I lost no time in taking the list to my friend, the druggist, and consulting him on the expediency of the purchase. He was slightly acquainted with the man who owned the books, and regarded him as a trustworthy person. In short, he strongly advised my buying his stock. Next morning the bargain was concluded; I paid over the five pounds, and entered on my career as a bookseller.

"Some days I had a good many customers, and on other days very few. Still my sales exceeded my expectations. Often at night, after closing the stand, I took a small parcel of the best books, and carried them among the merchants whose warehouses were open.

"In this way I sometimes sold as many at night as I did in the day. At the end of two months I had paid over to my prede-

cessor all that was due to him (*i.e.*, twenty pounds).

"On a fine morning, a few days after this, I was counting over my money, and found I had just five pounds on hand, so I determined to call that evening on my old friend the druggist and repay his generous loan. As this thought was passing through my mind, I looked up, and whom should I see approaching but the very man who had been the subject of my thoughts! He had refrained from seeking me out, probably from motives of delicacy, till now. I was exceedingly glad to see him, and gave him a very hearty shake of the hand. After some preliminary conversation, I said,—

"'I have now paid all that was due on these books, and was intending to-night to call and pay you the very generous loan you made me; but if you will take the money now it will render this unnecessary.'

"'Never mind that at present,' he said, 'I see thy stock is not very large; use the money for improving it, and if, six months

from this time, thee can afford to repay me, I will receive it.'

"With a pleasant smile, and a kind invitation for me to come and see him, he passed on.

"I attended the auction sales, and bought such books as I thought were bargains. My business through the day improved so rapidly that I gave up the attempt to sell in the evening, and devoted that time to purchasing at auctions.

"At the end of six months I had a very fine stock, and a considerable surplus in cash, out of which I repaid my first and best friend.

"Another six months passed on. The shop on the corner opposite my stand was to let. I inquired the rent, and finding it within my means, at once hired it, and moved all my stock over. A kind Providence has blessed me ever since, and now I have a competency."

Here Mr Cameron paused.

"A very interesting story," said Bertie.

"Capital! capital!" ejaculated John.

"It is so," rejoined Mr Lee; "but come, boys,

we have a long spell of work to get through yet; it is past four o'clock. Hurrah for the hay-field! Mr Cameron, we are very much obliged to you."

As this afternoon the hay had to be spread—a kind of work which is light and easily done—Mr Cameron begged to join them in it, so they all set off together.

Mr Cameron spent a week at Mr Lee's, and enjoyed his visit very much. He took part in all the work that he was capable of doing, and entered with so much spirit into everything that was going on, that Mrs Lee said he "seemed just like one of themselves."

He was very observant, and took much notice of the boys. John, he saw, went to his work with a will, as though he loved it; while Bertie discharged his duties rather from a sense of duty than of pleasure.

Both of them loved Mr Cameron, but Bertie especially clung to him with a strong affection. He never tired of asking him questions, or of listening to his stories about the city and its

wonders — its forests of masts, its splendid steamers, its busy streets, and its elegant buildings.

Mr Cameron had to leave by the coach early on Monday morning. The whole household accompanied him down the lane to the main road, and then, in lively conversation, awaited the arrival of the coach. Pretty soon it was heard in the distance, and not very long afterwards was seen coming over the brow of a neighbouring hill. It was full inside, but Mr Cameron did not regret this, as there was a good seat on the top by the driver. Kissing Nellie, who said, "Dood-by," and "Come back adain!" and shaking hands with the others, he hastily mounted. The stage drove off in handsome style, the driver cracking his whip, while Mr Cameron exclaimed, "Good-bye, Bertie! I shall expect to see you a business-man in town yet!"

CHAPTER V.

LEAVING GLENVILLE.

THE summer and harvest were over in Glenville, and all the precious grain had been garnered into the store-houses. The capacious barn was filled to its utmost capacity. The potatoes had been dug and stowed away in the cellar; and the corn and wheat, all housed in the barn, gleamed through its chinks like fresh-coined gold.

The cattle now rambled the pasture-fields rather for exercise than food, for the early frosts had nipped the blades of grass, and they were turning sere and yellow; but the gigantic pumpkin, and the hay from the shed, made an excellent substitute for their summer fare. The

leaves on the trees had doffed their customary green, and were tinged with those variegated and exquisite dyes that portend their fall.

It was evening—and rather a cold evening, too, for it was the first of November. A large lamp stood on a round table in front of the fire, which gave a fair light through the room. Mr Lee was examining the lesson for the following Sabbath at one side of the table, while Mrs Lee was sewing at the other. On a stool near her father's feet sat little Nellie, undressing her doll, preparatory to putting it to bed. Bertie was making a little bedstead, on which the aforesaid doll might lay her wearied limbs.

"Now it is all done, but painting," said Bertie.

"Painting? You have no paint!" said Nellie, with much surprise.

"But I have something here that will do just as well;" and with that he unrolled a piece of paper, and took out some red berries, with which he stained the wood in such a way that it became quite a pretty red.

"Oh, that's splendid!" ejaculated Nellie, when Bertie had done. "I very much 'bliged to you, Bertie, and Dolly is too."

Just at that moment the door opened, and John came in.

"Have you got the paper?" said Mr Lee.

"Yes," John replied, as he hung up his overcoat in an adjoining closet, "and something else."

"What is that?" said Mrs Lee.

"A letter from New York; I think it is from Uncle James."

Mr Lee took the letter; and, after running his eye over it, read it aloud. It ran as follows:—

"NEW YORK, *Oct. 28th*, 18—.

"MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,—I was glad to hear by Mr Cameron that you and your family were well. I was sorry that it was not in my power to pay you a visit during the past summer, as I have a very pleasant recollection of my last visit to Glenville, with Mary and little Georgie.

"But the object of the present letter is to say, that I shall soon need a boy in my warehouse to run errands, deliver parcels, and other simple work. At least, this will be the boy's employment at first; for, as he grows older, I intend that he shall learn to sell goods, and assume the position in the store for which his talents or acquirements may fit him.

"Now, I understand from Mr Cameron that Bertie is not quite adapted to a farming life, nor fond of it. If you would like him to come to town, and if he chooses to do so himself, he can have this situation. The compensation will be trifling at first, but will be increased year by year. Should you desire to avail yourself of this, he had better come down as soon as possible, for the ice will close the river in a few weeks, thus rendering it difficult for him to come till spring. Of course, he will live in my family.

"Kind love to all, in which Mary joins.

"Your affectionate Brother,

"JAMES MITCHELL."

Mrs Lee turned pale with agitation as the letter was read; for the thought of parting with Bertie—her first-born son—a son who had endeared himself in a thousand ways to a mother's heart, was very painful to her.

"Well, Bertie, what do you think of this proposal?" said Mr Lee.

"It has come so unexpectedly that I hardly know what to think, father," said Bertie. "I do not wish to leave home; but if I am to be a carpenter, I should have to go to Albany to learn the trade. If I am obliged to leave home at all, I would rather go to New York, and, of course, I would like to live with my Uncle James better than with a stranger."

"But would you like to be a merchant?" said Mr Lee.

"My preference, ever since I had one, has been for the trade of carpenter, though, since Mr Cameron's visit, my thoughts have often run in the direction of business; but, dear father and mother, I am yet a child; I would rather leave the decision of the whole matter in your

hands. Your wishes, whatever they are, I shall cheerfully follow."

"Oh, you must not go to the town! I love Bertie,—Bertie must stay at home,—you won't go, will you?" exclaimed Nellie, in great excitement, as she hugged him tightly in her little arms.

"Oh, I cannot think of your leaving home yet," said Mrs Lee. "What could you do without your mother in the great city?"

"I am afraid it would be hard work to do without her," said Bertie, the tears starting in his eyes; "but, mother, if it really seems best that I should go, you will not object, I am sure."

"No, my son, I will not," rejoined his mother, "though I do not see very well how we can part."

"We will say no more about it now, but will consider the subject, and pray over it, before we decide," said Mr Lee.

It was now time for prayers. Mr Lee read the 66th Psalm, beginning,—

"All lands to God, in joyful sounds,
Aloft your voices raise;
Sing forth the honour of his name,
And glorious make his praise."

He prayed most earnestly for guidance in this matter, so important to them as a family, and endeavoured to cast their care and anxiety upon God. And as they rose from their knees, every heart felt what a blessed privilege it is to have an all-wise and an all-powerful God to go to in times of perplexity and doubt.

The next day the matter was talked over at great length, and finally it was determined that Bertie should go for the present, and make a trial. If he should have the least preference for returning to Glenville, he was to do so as soon as the river opened in the spring. With the occasional aid of a neighbour, who worked by the day, Mr Lee thought that John and he could manage the farm.

Little could be done for Bertie by way of an outfit, as the circumstances of Mr Lee were very straitened, and it required all the income from

the farm to maintain his home. But as he was to live with his uncle, Bertie's expenses would be lighter than they otherwise would have been. It was a great comfort to his parents that this plan had been proposed. Mr Mitchell was an earnest Christian man, and a very dear brother to Mrs Lee; so they felt that, if Bertie must go from home, they would rather have him in his uncle's family than anywhere else. But it was hard to separate those who had been long bound together by ties so endearing.

The eventful week had passed, and it was now the Sabbath evening. The labours and privileges of the day were over. Mr Lee and Bertie had retired together to a room by themselves, that they might have some private conversation, for Bertie would be off to the city before another Sabbath would arrive.

The exercises of that day had been more impressive than usual. Mr White, their minister, had delivered two discources from

the same text, Agrippa's declaration to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." He had urged upon his hearers, young and old, the necessity of *decision* in the most important of all concerns—the concerns of the soul.

"How many," said he, "especially in Christian families, are almost Christians, and never become anything more."

Mr Lee took advantage of these discourses to impress upon Bertie the importance of deciding for Christ—of giving his heart at once to God. He spoke of the comfort he would derive from the thought of his being a Christian; so that, though exposed to temptation, he might have the Lord for his shield and everlasting defence.

Bertie was touched; he was affected even to tears; but still his own evil heart was saying,—

"Not yet, not yet; there is time enough in the future."

O how earnestly Mr Lee commended him to

their heavenly Father, as they knelt together in that little room, and how the father's heart yearned over his son, as he wrestled with the Lord on his behalf!

Bertie promised to read his Bible, a birth-day gift from his mother, regularly, and to attend faithfully to his morning and evening devotions. As Mr Mitchell was superintendent of the Sabbath-school connected with the church of which he was a member, it was understood that Bertie was to join the school immediately on his going to town.

The next day was spent in leave-taking; for Bertie was to start early on Tuesday morning, in charge of their neighbour, Mr Griffin, who was going to the city on some business pertaining to his farm.

There was no one outside of his own family from whom Bertie felt more pain in parting than Jane Williams, his cousin, as he often called her, though in fact they were not relatives at all. She lived about half-way between Mr Lee's house and the

school which the children of both families attended.

He had been always accustomed to call at Mr Williams' on his way to school, to take Jane with him. They were about the same age, and had been from infancy fast friends.

"Why, Bertie, is it true that you are going to the town to live?" said Jane, as he entered the house that Monday afternoon.

"I'm going to try it for a short time," said Bertie.

"Why, what shall we do without you here? O how much I shall miss you! School will not seem to me like the same place after you go away. Then you will forget your country friends when you make new acquaintances in the city." But seeing him look sad, she resumed in a more earnest tone, "No, Bertie, I don't believe you will. Whatever your city friends may be, you will not forget the friends of your boyhood, and your schoolmates."

"Never," said Bertie, with much emphasis and feeling. "No, Jane; who can ever take your place, my schoolfellow and my true friend? I will write to you often, and expect you to do the same in return." The two friends had a long talk, when Bertie rose to go. Jane held out her hand to him, and said,—

"My dear Bertie, now that we are parting, how earnestly I wish you were a Christian! Will you not give your heart to God? We are parting for a long time, and as life is so uncertain, perhaps it may be for ever in this world. How much it would lighten the pain of separation, if I knew that you had found Christ, and was one of his dear children!"

"I wish I was," said Bertie. "Pray for me, Jane, that I may be kept from temptation, and that I yet may be brought to Him."

"Here is a little book of daily texts," said Jane. "I have another one; and I want you to commit to memory a verse every day, so that each morning we may be learning the same verse of Scripture."

"I will," said Bertie. "Thank you."

"God-bye, Bertie."

"Good-bye, Jane."

And, with tears starting to his eyes, Bertie wended his way homewards, sorrowful and thoughtful.

CHAPTER VI.

THE JOURNEY.

AT an early hour next morning the family were all astir, excepting little Nellie, who was permitted to sleep on. As the stage had stopped for the winter, Mr Griffin's labourer was to drive them in the farm waggon to the station, which was a long way off, nearly twenty miles. John was to accompany them, as neither he nor Bertie had ever been there.

Twenty miles was a long drive without change of horses for a heavy country waggon with a load, so they agreed to start at four o'clock in the morning.

At prayers that morning the burden of Mr Lee's supplications was for his first-born who

was now about to leave them, that he might be kept from temptation, but especially from sin; that the Lord would be his shield and protector in that great and wicked city, so soon to be his home. It was literally with tears that he besought the Lord to bless and protect his boy.

His mother strove to restrain her emotions till Bertie should be away, but, despite all her efforts, the tears would come. All Bertie's things were packed in an old black trunk, once his father's, which displayed a great profusion of brass nails with round heads all over the curved lid, as well as down both ends. Great care had been taken in packing that trunk, for his mother's gentle hands had done it.

The little waggon that was to convey the two boys and the trunk down the lane to meet Mr Griffin's waggon was alrcady at the door, and the old black trunk in its place behind. John and his father were in their seats, and Bertie was giving his mother the last kiss, when the bed-room door was hastily opened, and a little head thrust out. It was Nellie in her night-

gown. In a moment she was in her brother's arms.

"O, Bertie, was you goin' away and no wake me and no kiss me! How can you leave Nellie?"

But the sisterly expostulation was interrupted by Mr Lee's voice calling out—

"Come, Bertie, I hear Mr Griffin's waggon coming over the hill."

"Good-bye, darling little sister; Bertie will come back again before long, I hope. Good-bye, dear mother!"

Bertie was off.

This was his first parting, and it was even more painful than he expected. The tears flowed copiously, but he dried them all up as they came near the gate, lest Mr Griffin should see that he had been weeping.

As that gentleman was at the gate before them, the parting words with his father, who was to leave him there, had to be few. A warm pressure of the hand, as his father whispered to him, "Remember, God sees you," and

"Good-bye," were all that was said, as Mr Griffin drove on, and Mr Lee, turning homeward, slowly wended his way up the lane.

The waggon was nearly full of firkins of butter, and over these were piled a great many bags of oats. Mr Griffin and the driver sat on a bag in the front of the waggon, near the horses, while Bertie and John had a seat of the same sort farther back. There had been a hard frost through the night, and the stars looked cold and distant from a cloudless sky. The boys buttoned up their threadbare overcoats as tightly as possible, and pulled their fur caps down over their ears; but, with all their precautions, they soon became quite cold. And they were very glad when Mr Griffin proposed they should get out and walk up a long and steep hill that was before them. The boys had a great deal to say, and a great many plans to arrange, and thus the time passed rapidly on.

They arrived at the station about ten o'clock, and as the train started in an hour, they had little enough time left to themselves. By the

time Bertie's trunk and the other things were safely placed in the carriage, and they had secured their tickets, the train was ready to start. Of course, the two boys had but a moment for leave-taking.

Just after John stepped back on the platform, the wheels began to revolve, and the train moved off like a thing of life.

Bertie, after the novelty of the railway began to wear off, felt very tired with the long ride he had had in the morning, and he soon fell asleep, and never awoke till the train stopped at the station in New York.

It was just six o'clock, and Bertie for a few moments could not imagine where he was, so strange did everything seem around him. He found Mr Griffin was already busily engaged getting his goods in order, so he got out as fast as possible, and proceeded to look after his own things. Mr Griffin was soon waiting for him. The old black trunk was found and set on the platform. Hardly had they stepped into the road, before they were assailed on all sides by

cabmen urging them to take a carriage. These offers were declined, and a man was employed to take Bertie and his trunk to Mr Mitchell's, No. 468 Greenwich Street. Bertie accordingly parted with Mr Griffin, as the latter had to attend to his own business, and followed the man with his trunk.

How wonderful and how strange everything around appeared to the young country lad! As they passed the market-place, the quantity of vegetables and fruit, to say nothing of meat, poultry, and other things, seemed beyond all computation. He wondered how many hundred gardens and farms were needed to keep up this enormous supply, and where in the world purchasers could be found for such an amazing quantity of material. As the milk-waggons and butchers' and bakers' carts darted hither and thither, Bertie wondered that they did not run against each other. The noise and bustle in that part of the city seemed almost stunning, but it gradually became quieter as they got towards Greenwich Street.

Pretty soon the man stopped before Mr Mitchell's door.

"This is the place," said he; "run up the steps and ring the bell."

Bertie saw a neat, comfortable-looking brick house before him, but saw no appearance of a bell.

"Where is the bell to ring?" said he, in his rustic simplicity. The man laughed heartily and said,—

"Don't you see that little nob by the side of the door? Pull it hard, and then let go."

Bertie sprang up the steps, and the thing was done in an instant. As might be expected, the bell rang furiously. In a minute the servant-girl opened the door, and Bertie inquired if this was Mr Mitchell's house. On being answered in the affirmative, he told the girl who he was, and the man brought in the trunk. The girl showed Bertie into the parlour, and went to apprise Mr Mitchell of his nephew's arrival.

"What a grand place this is!" thought Bertie, as he entered the parlour. The beau-

tiful carpet of almost velvet softness—the large mirror at one end—the piano and other elegant articles of furniture all astonished him. He hesitated a moment before sitting down, for the chairs seemed, in his estimation, altogether too fine to be used as seats. Not that there was any extravagance in the furniture of the house, for it was plain when compared with many others; but to Bertie, who had never before seen a city house, it was magnificence itself.

He had not been long seated when the door was gently pushed ajar, and a little curly head peeped in. Bertie, whose eye happened to turn in that direction at that moment, smiled. The door then opened wider, and the little fellow came in,—cautiously at first; but on Bertie's saying some words of encouragement, he came pleasantly forward, and said in broken sentences,—

"Ain't you my Cousin Bertie?"

"Yes; and what is *your* name, my little cousin?"

"George Cameron Mitchell."

A pause ensued, during which Bertie took the little fellow, who was about three years old, on his knee.

"You are going to live at our house now, are you not?" said Georgie.

"Yes."

"O, I'm glad; it will be so nice to have you here always. Ma says, perhaps I may sleep with you; would you let me sleep in your bed?"

Bertie said "Yes," and then clasped the little fellow in his arms, glad so soon to find a friend in this great city of strangers.

Just then Mr and Mrs Mitchell came in, and both gave Bertie a kind welcome. Mr Mitchell was a generous, off-hand, pleasant man, a great favourite with all who knew him. His wife was a quiet woman, who could only be fully appreciated by a long and an intimate acquaintance: to all such she became more and more valued every year.

Tea was soon ready, and to it Bertie did great justice, for he was very hungry.

CHAPTER VII.

A WELCOME LETTER.

THE return of Mr Griffin the next Saturday brought the following letter to Mr Lee:—

"GREENWICH STREET, *Nov.* 10*th*, 18—.

"DEAR PARENTS,—I had a pleasant journey to the town. Mr Griffin was very kind to me. I found uncle and his family in good health. They have two children—Georgie, about three years old, and the baby, Charlie, one year old. They are very nice children, and quite fond of me already. Georgie sleeps with me. My room is in the attic; and, though it is small it is very comfortable. It has one large win-

dow, a carpet on the floor, a wash-stand, looking-glass, bedstead, and three chairs in it. Georgie goes to bed up there in the dark about seven in the evening, and when I go up he is fast asleep, but in the morning we have good fun, as we both wake up early. I like Aunt Mary very much. She is very good to me, only she don't say much.

"I like working in the warehouse very much. I go there in the morning at seven o'clock, help to take off the shutters, make the fire, and sweep the floors. Through the day I have a great many errands to run, parcels to deliver, etc. This is hard work, for I do not know the names of the streets, nor where to find them; but then I hope to learn all about them soon. I know some of them already.

"Uncle's business is mostly a wholesale one, so we close at six o'clock in the evening, except in very busy times. Mr Cameron seemed glad to see me. His book-shop is kept open till nine o'clock, and he has invited me to

spend my evenings there among his books, whenever I choose; or he offers to lend me any book I may want to borrow, for he says he is sure I will take good care of them. So you see I have quite a number of friends already.

"But, dear parents, I miss you very much, and John and Nellie, too. I suppose one reason why I love little Georgie so much is, because he is just Nellie's age, and reminds me of her. By Mr Griffin I send Nellie a doll, and John a pocket-knife. I hope John will write to me very often; and you, too, my dear parents. At this distance from you, your letters will be a great comfort to me. Give my love to Jane, and with a great deal of love to you all, and a kiss for Nellie,

"I am, your affectionate Son,

"BERTIE LEE."

Nellie's dolls, thus far, had been of home manufacture, and this one, sent by Bertie, was the first bought doll she had ever possessed;

she was, of course, in ecstacies over it, and went from one to another showing it, exclaiming every few minutes, "Oh, isn't it a beauty?"

John's knife was just the thing he had long wanted, but had not been able to buy. It possessed great additional value as coming from the city, and also from being the gift of his dear brother.

Mrs Lee said little, for her heart was full as she read this, the first letter from her dear boy.

"What a blessing, dear wife, it is that our Bertie should have so good a home! I thank the Lord that he has cast his lot with pious people! How many lads go to the city who have no such restraints! I am confident that both Mr and Mrs Mitchell will do everything in their power for his moral and religious training. I trust that, under their culture, the Holy Spirit will cause the good seed sown in his heart to spring up and bring forth fruit unto eternal life."

"O, I pray it may be so," said Mrs Lee; "but how are we to do without him—how can I live away from *my boy?*" A flood of tears gave relief to her pent-up feelings, and then, with Mr Lee, she was able to leave him with his heavenly Father, who alone can keep in perfect safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAKING A BEGINNING.

THE boy's name, whose place Bertie was to take in Mr Mitchell's office, was Sam Miller. Sam was to leave Mr Mitchell's employment when his month was up, about ten days after Bertie's arrival. In the meantime, he was to instruct Bertie in the nature of his new duties. Sam, whose chief recommendation was the excellence of his penmanship, was a careless boy, and this carelessness had caused Mr Mitchell to dismiss him from his service.

The boys were one evening engaged in putting on the shutters. This Bertie found a somewhat difficult operation. The shutters

were large and unwieldy, and, being unaccustomed to work of this kind, he went at it rather awkwardly. Still he knew he would do it well after awhile, for he had a brave spirit. When the shutters were on, and the door locked, the two boys stood for a few minutes talking together.

"Don't you want to go to the music hall with me some night?" said Sam; "I was there last night, and had some splendid fun."

"I have no money to spend on such things," said Bertie; "there is a good many things which I must get, and I have to save all I can till they are bought."

Bertie thought of other uses he had for his money, such as getting things for his mother or little Nellie; but this was too sacred a subject to be spoken of to a stranger.

"But I know the doorkeeper, and by going a little late I can get you in without paying anything," retorted Sam.

"But that would not be honest, would it, to go in without paying?"

"Honest? Certainly, when the doorkeeper knows that we do so."

"Bertie was not sure of this, but did not know very well what to say; and, not wishing to continue the conversation, said hurriedly,—

"Well, I will ask Uncle James if I may go."

"O no! don't do that; its none of his business. He would say no, I am sure he would; for he is so particular about such things. But there is no harm in going; it is simply an amusement. And after your work for the day is done, what is it to him where you go in the evening."

"I cannot go anywhere without his consent. But it is time I was off. Good-night."

Bertie had gone a few paces, leaving Sam a good deal surprised, when the latter called out,—

"Wait a minute. You won't say anything to your uncle about what I said?"

"No," said Bertie, and in another minute was out of sight.

After that, Sam was very cross to Bertie, and would take no pains to show him anything; but, on the contrary, took great delight in seeing him fall into those mistakes which are common to one attempting new duties.

Bertie, however, bore it all patiently, and was careful, whenever an opportunity occurred, to return good for evil. At last Sam's month expired, and he left Mr Mitchell's service without even bidding Bertie good-bye.

Mr Mitchell's business was principally with dealers in the city, and the goods were sent off in parcels tied up in strong paper. Occasionally, however, they received a country order which required a box. On one of these occasions, the goods being laid out and called off, Bertie was engaged in packing them, when Mr Mitchell passed that way.

"Your box is too large," said he; "have you not a smaller one?"

"No, sir."

"What, then, do you intend to do."

"Make it smaller, sir."

When the goods were laid into it, he saw exactly how much too large it was. Now, his love for carpenter's tools became useful to him in a practical way, as all useful information, sooner or later, is sure to be. Mr Mitchell was both surprised and delighted at the neat manner in which the box was cut down, and the dispatch with which the work was executed.

"Will you have these things sent up to my house immediately?" said a gentleman who had been purchasing some things one day. "My wife wants to send them to the country by a gentleman who is going this forenoon."

"Certainly, sir; I shall send them at once."

"Here, Bertie, carry this to Mr Carmichael's, George Street," said Mr Mitchell, as he handed him the parcel.

By this time Bertie had got acquainted with the streets, so he knew where to find the place; and, as he loved the active exercise of walking, he attended to the order with great alacrity.

As he went up the street, crowds of men

and women were passing down to their various avocations in the lower part of the city. Bertie thought to himself, "Amid all this crowd, how strange, there is not one whom I know. How different it would be if I was in Glenville!"

He found the house readily, and, as he was going up the steps, a well-dressed young man, who had come from an opposite direction, went up with him.

"Is this Mr Carmichael's house, sir?" said Bertie, for there was no name on the door.

"Yes, and I am just going in, and will give him your parcel," replied the young man, as he held out his hand for it.

Bertie gave him the parcel, and went off.

The next morning Mr Carmichael called at the store, this time in a state of great excitement, exclaiming:

"I am so disappointed that the parcel I ordered yesterday was not sent home."

"Sent home!" exclaimed Mr Mitchell. "Certainly it was, just immediately after you

left. Here, Bertie, did you not take that parcel to Mr Carmichael's yesterday morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you leave it?" said Mr C.

"At No. 4 George Street, upper side of the street, a brick house with green blinds, and a lamp-post before the door."

"That's the house," rejoined Mr C., as he listened rather impatiently to this minute description of the premises. "Well, come with me, and we will inquire into it."

Bertie put on his cap and went with him.

As they walked along, Bertie told Mr C. that a gentleman, evidently one of his friends, had met him on the steps, said he was going in, and offered to take the parcel and save him the trouble of waiting.

When they reached the house, these circumstances were told to the girl. She said a young man had rung the bell about the time named, and she now recollected that he had a parcel under his arm, but he inquired for Mr Johnston; and when she assured

him that there was no such person there, he went away.

It was now evident that the whole thing was a trick, and that the young man was a thief; but where to find him no one knew. Another parcel with the same contents was sent to Mr Carmichael.

Bertie felt very sorry about the matter. Mr Mitchell enjoined upon him greater carefulness in the future, and the circumstance was never mentioned again.

One rainy morning Bertie was coming down the street, on his return from delivering a parcel up town. When at the corner of Canal Street, a man, a few steps before him, who was in great haste, ran somewhat furiously against a boy coming in the opposite direction with a parcel under his arm. The concussion sent the parcel forward with such violence that had not Bertie, with much agility, caught it, it would have landed in the gutter, which at that place was deep with muddy water.

"Thank you. Oh, I am so glad!" was uttered

in a very grateful voice, and one that Bertie thought he had heard before. On looking up he saw it was Mr Cameron's new boy, on his way to deliver a parcel of books. Bertie had only seen him once before, but he had been so taken with his appearance that he felt very anxious to know him intimately, and this incident opened the way.

That evening Bertie called at Mr Cameron's shop. He found the new boy's name was Frank Bacon, and, like himself, he had recently come from the country. The two boys soon became fast friends.

Frank was a warm-hearted Christian boy, as Bertie soon discovered. Already he had become a teacher in a Mission Sabbath-school, and was labouring to do good as he had opportunity. Bertie believed him to be just the kind of boy that his parents would like to see him associate with, and he was intimate with no one else, for in Frank he found all the society he required outside of his uncle's family. The two friends were seldom apart in their leisure hours, and

their friendship was a source of great pleasure as well as profit to both.

One morning, about six weeks after Bertie entered his uncle's office, a messenger came in from the bank in which Mr Mitchell kept his money deposited, and told him that he had overdrawn his account by nearly a hundred pounds. As Mr Mitchell had been paying some large sums within a few days past, he knew that he had drawn out nearly all that he had previously deposited in the bank, but he did not think that he had drawn any more. He therefore took out the little bank-book in which the deposits are written down, and requested the book-keeper of the bank to balance it. In the meantime, he received a hundred pounds from Mr Cameron, to make his account good.

The next morning the messenger came back with the astounding intelligence that there were a hundred pounds more on the little bank-book than on the ledger of the bank, thus showing false dealing on the part of some one. Upon investigation, it was found that on the

twentieth of November there was entered on the bank ledger a deposit of Mr Mitchell's of twenty-five pounds, while in the little pass-book alluded to, the sum marked was a hundred pounds.

Mr Mitchell carefully examined the business transactions of that day, and found that a gentleman living in the city had paid him a sum of money like that. He recollected, too, that this sum was paid in a cheque, but on what bank he did not remember. He sent, however, to the gentleman's office, and found it was the National Bank. On application at that bank, the cheque was easily found, and the fact was also ascertained that it had been paid at the counter to some person presenting it, and not to the Commercial Bank, in which Mr Mitchell's account was kept. This proved that the cheque must have been abstracted from the book by the bearer, whoever he might be, while on the way to the bank.

Of late, Bertie had been the usual, if not the only messenger sent to the bank; and the

book-keeper, naturally enough, at once suspected him, and said as much to Mr Mitchell. The latter never for a moment doubted his nephew's entire innocence, and became on that very account only the more desirous of detecting the real offender. He accordingly went to the National Bank, and asked to see the cheque. It read as follows:—

1331. *New York, November 19th*, 18—.

NATIONAL BANK.

Pay to *James Mitchell*, or order, *One Hundred Pounds.*

£100.

John Sandford.

On the back of this Mr Mitchell had written his name, so that it might be paid to the Commercial Bank, in which he intended depositing it. As Mr Mitchell's signature was unknown at the National Bank, the thief, before present-

ing it there, had forged the following words below his name :—

"*Correct,*

"JOHN SANDFORD."

Mr Sandford's name was such an accurate imitation of his signature on the other side of the cheque, that it was extremely difficult to detect its spurious character. But the word "correct," not being copied from anything of Mr Sandford's, bore less resemblance to his ordinary writing, and this word seemed to fix the guilt of the transaction on the right person. A comparison of this with the same word found several times in the writing of Sam Miller, showed that it was his work.

There remained not the shadow of a doubt that he had that day been the bearer of the book to the bank, and that on the way thither he had taken out this cheque. As, however, he had gone off to sea, nothing could be done with him.

It was a great comfort, however, to Bertie to be cleared from even the "appearance of evil" in the matter, and a satisfaction to his uncle to be able to fix the deed on the guilty person.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

THE incidents detailed in the last chapter were useful to Bertie. He rapidly gained the confidence and esteem of all with whom he was connected. The principles so carefully instilled into his mind from the earliest period began now to develop themselves. Still, Bertie was not a Christian in every sense of the word. His moral deportment was unexceptionable, and his duties to men faithfully performed. He read his Bible daily, as he had been taught to do, and repeated a form of prayer morning and evening; but the one thing needful was yet wanting. Even his friend Frank was deceived by this fair exterior,

and never for a moment doubted that Bertie was a child of God. As the winter advanced, there was a good deal of religious interest in some of the churches.

One evening, in Mr Cameron's shop, Frank said, "Bertie, I want you to go with me to a prayer-meeting to-morrow morning."

"A prayer-meeting in the morning! I never heard of such a thing! Where is it held?"

"At Mr Ridgefield's church, or rather in the school-room underneath, from six to seven o'clock every morning."

Bertie needed no further persuasion. Partly from the novelty of the thing, and partly because it would give another opportunity of meeting with Frank, he gladly agreed to the proposal. This was not the church at which Bertie attended on the Sabbath, but one of the same denomination in another part of the city.

The next morning he was there promptly at the hour named. About thirty were already present, chiefly young men, although two or

three elderly persons were seated among them. Mr Ridgefield conducted the meeting that morning, though he said in commencing it would scarcely be possible for him, in view of his other duties, to attend regularly. To Bertie there was something very impressive in this little gathering. The early hour, the little room (which was soon well filled), the gaslight, and the earnest faces of the company, many of whom were no older than himself, all served to deepen his interest. Mr Ridgefield went on to say that it was singularly appropriate to give the morning hour to God,—an hour when both mind and body are fresh and vigorous; and then, by a natural transition, he told them that the morning of life was the best period to give ourselves to Him—when the mind is comparatively free from worldly cares. In affectionate words, he urged the youth present, if they had not already devoted themselves to God, to do so without delay. Every word of the good man fell with a new force and power on Bertie's heart.

A hymn was then sung, beginning—

"Come to Calvary's holy mountain,
Sinners ruin'd by the fall;
Here a pure and healing fountain
Flows to you—to us—to all,—
In a full perpetual tide,
Open'd when the Saviour died."

A few verses of Scripture were read, several prayers were offered, and other hymns sung. Frank was among those whom the pastor asked to lead in prayer, and Bertie's whole soul was rivetted, as in his low, clear, musical voice, his friend poured out to God the words of supplication and thanksgiving. The meeting was closed by singing,—

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend."

"How did you like the meeting?" said Frank, as they came out together.

"Very much, indeed—beyond any prayer-meeting I ever attended."

"You will come again, then, I hope."

"Most certainly I will; every morning, if I can."

Here they parted, as their homes lay in opposite directions.

Regularly as the morning came, Bertie was in the little meeting, and every time with an increased interest.

The leader of the meeting, knowing Bertie's intimacy with Frank Bacon, and inferring from his regular attendance at the meetings, that he was a Christian, called upon him one morning to lead in prayer.

Bertie declined. The moment he had done so he felt his cheeks burning with shame. He was pained and embarrassed. No one had ever before declined since the meetings began. But how could he pray? No, he could not. The remainder of the hour of meeting was spent in bitter self-reproaches.

Strange to say, this incident formed the turning-point in Bertie's life. All the way home he kept asking himself the question,

"Why should I not do what others are doing?" He knew it was not so much fear to do a thing which he had not done before, as a consciousness that there was some difference between his position, with reference to God, and that of many others that were there: that they were God's children by a new birth, and he was not. The immediate *cause* of these reflections was soon lost sight of in the question,—

"How shall *I* become a child of God?"

How ardent were his petitions now at the throne of grace! For the first time he discovered what it was to pray in earnest. He took an early opportunity to disclose his state of mind to Frank, who, though a good deal surprised to know that he was not already a Christian, was rejoiced to find him "inquiring the way to Zion, with his face thitherward."

Doubly delightful now was the intercourse of the two boys. Day after day they studied God's Word together, with prayer. At last the light dawned upon Bertie's mind. He saw

the *freeness* and the *fulness* of the Gospel offer. He found no righteousness of his own was wanted—that Christ's righteousness only could avail; he saw that no fitness was needed to come to Jesus,—so he came just as he was, with all his sins, and gave himself to the Lord, saying,—

"Jesus, I come to Thee,
A sinner doomed to die;
My only refuge is thy Cross,
Here at thy feet I lie.

"Thy blood can cleanse my heart,
Thy hand can wipe my tears;
O! send thy blessed Spirit down
To banish all my fears."

He now determined to connect himself with God's people, by making a public profession of his faith in Jesus.

As preparatory to this, he called on the Rev. Dr M'Intyre, whose church he had hitherto attended, and of which his uncle and his friend Frank were both members. The venerable doctor received him with the greatest cordiality.

Bertie, in the conversation that ensued, opened his mind very freely, and spread before him all his difficulties. The good man, rich in spiritual experience and familiar with many similar cases, opened up to him the Scriptures, and endeavoured to let into his soul the blessed light of truth. He left the house, after a long interview, with his mind greatly relieved, and with feelings of veneration and love for Dr M'Intyre which it would be difficult to describe.

But still, as the day approached in which he was to make public profession of Christ, his mind became disturbed and uneasy. He was seized with painful fears, lest he might bring disgrace on the name of Jesus, by walking unworthily of Him. In other words, he was looking too intently at himself, and not sufficiently at Jesus, the *sinner's Righteousness*, as well as his Friend and Helper. In this frame of mind he would awake sometimes at midnight, and spend hours in prayer to God for direction. Sometimes he had almost resolved not to come forward and take his stand among

God's people at this time, but to wait awhile. Then the thought,

> "If you wait till you are better,
> You will never come at all,"

would arise in his mind with alarming power. But at length, after a period of earnest prayer, the peace of God—that peace that passeth all understanding—dawned upon his soul.

The eventful day arrived, and during all its exercises the grace of his Redeemer came to his aid, and at its close his heart was full of joy and peace.

Not that this was the end of Bertie's spiritual doubts and difficulties; for the Christian life is a constant warfare. But though often afterwards in deep water, he never once regretted having named the name of Christ.

CHAPTER X.

GOOD NEWS.

ONE Saturday evening the Rev. Mr White, Mr Lee's pastor at Glenville, was seen driving up the lane in his little sleigh. The minister well knew that he was always a welcome visitor at Mr Lee's house. But he little knew of what welcome intelligence he was then the unconscious bearer. He had been to the Post-office for his own letters and papers, and, finding a letter for Mr Lee, brought it along with him. The winter is a period of comparative leisure with farmers, and so the family were all in the house. John took his horse and sleigh from him, as he drove up to the door, and put the

first in the stable and the latter in the shed. When he returned to the house he found Mr White warming himself by the stove, having laid aside his overcoat and fur cap. The conversation was just beginning to flow freely, when he said:

"O, I had almost forgotten I got a letter for you at the Post-office, as I passed it!" and he drew it from his pocket as he spoke.

Mr Lee saw by the address that it was from Bertie. He instantly opened it, and as he read on, his features evinced a variety of emotions, which he seemed to be trying to suppress, till at length, unable to control them longer, he burst into tears.

"No ill news from Bertie?" said Mrs Lee, eagerly, as she saw him weeping.

"Ill news? No! The most blessed news that ever came to this house. Bertie is a Christian. He has given his heart to God. Our first-born son—our darling boy—is a new creature in Christ Jesus. O, how shall we ever bless the Lord enough for his great goodness in doing this!"

He handed the letter to Mr White, with the request that he would read it aloud. It detailed the circumstances we have already related, only with greater fulness, and in a more artless way.

Before it was finished they were all in tears; but precious tears—tears of joy.

How heartily the excellent pastor entered into their feelings, we need not stop to detail. To both minister and parents the intelligence seemed a rich reward for all their labour, and a full response to all their prayers on Bertie's behalf. They did not fail to thank their heavenly Father for this fresh evidence of his goodness, this new token of his faithfulness and love.

Mr White, in common with many others in the ministry, at times became discouraged at the little apparent fruit of his labours. This case, though he had not been made the direct instrument of Bertie's conversion, encouraged him greatly, for he could not but see that another had reaped where he had sown.

The evening passed delightfully in mingled prayer and praise, and they parted, with silent resolutions to devote themselves more heartily to His service, who had done such great things for one they so dearly loved.

CHAPTER XI.

LABOURS OF LOVE.

THERE is an anecdote told by that celebrated preacher, the Rev. Dr Guthrie, of Edinburgh, about a dismasted merchantman overhauled by a British frigate during a violent gale off the coast of Spain. Every eye and glass are on her. A canvas shelter on deck suggests that there may be life on board. An order instantly sounds to put the ship about, and presently a boat puts off, bearing down on the wreck. Away after that drifting hulk go these gallant men; they reach it, they shout, and now a strange object rolls out of that canvas screen. Hauled into the boat, it proves to be the trunk of a man,

bent head and knees together, so dried and shrivelled as to be hardly felt within the ample clothes, and so light that a boy lifts it on board. It is laid on deck; in horror and pity the crew gather round it; it shows signs of life; they draw nearer; it moves, and then mutters in a deep sepulchral voice, "*There is another man.*" Saved himself, the first use the saved one made of speech was to save another.

So with Bertie. Himself within the fold, he sought eagerly to bring in others. He now began to realise what a blessed privilege it is to work for Jesus. One of the earliest of his new occupations was teaching a class in the mission-school for poor children, where Frank was engaged. In that blessed service he spent many years. Of all his efforts, those in this mission were at once the most profitable and the most delightful. They were as profitable to himself as to those whom he taught. Like Mercy, they were "twice blessed."

He became better acquainted with the Scrip-

tures, and thus his duty and his privileges became both more apparent. The interesting explanations of Scripture by his father, stored in his mind in his earlier years, were now of great service to him in the preparation of the Sabbath lesson. His privileges at Mr Cameron's, too, proved very useful. At least one evening of every week was spent there examining books that served to throw light on the Scripture lesson of the next Sabbath.

He had a class of fine boys of about ten years of age. Bright, intelligent boys some of them were, who could all read, and who soon became very much attached to him, as well as deeply interested in his instructions. Nothing delighted him more than to meet any of them in the street during the week; and the warm shake of the hand, and the polite and cordial "Good morning, sir," evinced the pleasure it gave the boys to be thus publicly recognised. O, how little we know the power of kindness, and realise the transcendent delight of doing good!

One morning, in the latter part of February, there had been a fall of snow to the depth of a few inches, and a cold east wind was driving it furiously through the bleak streets. Bertie was standing near the door, looking out on the whitened street, when a neat though plainly dressed woman entered and asked him if there was a young man named Lee in that establishment. Bertie at once replied, that he was the person. She then proceeded to say that her little boy (and only child), Willie Johnson, was very sick, and that he was anxious to see his Sabbath-school teacher. The woman's face, pale and somewhat pretty, her delicate figure and gentle manners, at once enlisted Bertie's sympathies for her. He inquired what was the matter with Willie.

"I do not know," she said; "but he is in great pain, and has been for some time, so that he gets no rest night or day. The pain seems to be mainly in his right foot and ankle."

"What does the doctor say?"

"I have not had any doctor. If the truth

must be told, my husband has been out of work for two months, and I have just risen from a sick-bed myself. Our money is all spent. We already owe the doctor who attended me a small sum of money, and I do not feel at liberty to call him in again until that is paid. I went yesterday to the Dispensary, and the doctor there promised to come; but he did not do it. I went again this morning, and he talked so roughly to me that I was glad to get away. He spoke to me as if I were a thief." With that she burst into tears.

Bertie went back into the office, and asked his uncle if he could go out for a little while with this poor woman, and Mr Mitchell at once gave his permission. Bertie considered a moment what to do—where was the doctor's fee to come from? His slender income afforded very little for giving away; and yet this case was so pressing, and was so brought home to him, that he could not resist. He had just one sovereign in the world, and with this he intended to buy a pair of trousers for the Sabbath. But

on reflection, he concluded his old ones would do for a while longer; and certainly he did not need them so much as this boy needed a doctor. So he gave the woman twelve shillings, and told her to pay it to the doctor, and call him in to see her boy. On her return, as she would pass the shop, if she would call in for him, he would go with her to see Willie. The poor woman seemed scarcely able to express her gratitude for so unexpected a gift.

After she had gone, Bertie thought: "Suppose the woman should prove an impostor. Perhaps she is not the mother of my scholar at all, but merely some one who knew his teacher's name, and where to find me." Then he dismissed the thought from his mind, as unjust to the good woman. He was sure such grief could not be feigned; still, it must be confessed, he looked for her return with a good deal of interest; and when, after the lapse of an hour, he saw her crossing the street opposite the warehouse, he felt a sense of relief. He immediately put on his hat and coat, and followed her.

As they passed along the street, the keenness of the wind made Bertie button up his coat closely, and he was about to say, "How cold it is!" when the thought of the poor, delicate woman by his side, so thinly clad, and so uncomplaining, prevented him. In about a quarter of an hour they arrived at the place in one of the back streets, where the poor are so closely huddled together.

A wooden building stood in front, by the side of which ran a low narrow alley back to the rear of the lot. They passed into this alley, which brought them to the entrance of a large house, built of brick, and occupied entirely by very poor people. The stairs were narrow, and, of course, without a carpet, but scrupulously clean. Occasionally patches of snow were to be seen that had drifted in at the chinks of the windows that lighted the stairs. Mrs Johnson's room was in the fifth storey, and though she walked with so quick a step while on the street, her strength now began to flag, and before the last stairs were reached, she

was panting for breath, and almost exhausted. The stairs were in the back of the building; while in front of it, on each floor, the space was divided into two equal portions, and occupied by two families, making, in all, ten households in one building. When at the top of the staircase, Mrs Johnson opened the door to the left, and asked Bertie to walk in. She had but two small rooms, one of them about ten feet square, and the other adjoining it of half that size. In the larger room sat Willie in one chair, with his feet resting on another, attended by his grandmother, a bright, healthy-looking, elderly woman. He was very glad to see Bertie, but his pleasure was soon checked by the pain in his foot.

The writhing of his thin, supple, little body, and the contortions of his face, as he rolled up the white of his great big eyes, were really painful to witness. When the acutest agony had abated a little, Bertie endeavoured to comfort him with the hope that his heavenly

Father would soon send relief. He then asked him if he would not like better to lie down in bed. Willie thought he would; so Bertie took him in his arms, as though he had been an infant, and laid him there.

After praying with him, and seeing him as comfortable as the circumstances of his case would permit, Bertie took his leave, promising to call again soon.

Willie had joined the school the next Sabbath after Bertie, so that he had been only a few weeks in attendance there. He, however, was so much interested in it, that he had learned a great deal for so short a time. Every Sabbath he came prepared to say a little hymn (one of those beautiful hymns which Sabbath-school children sing so sweetly), and had already committed to memory many precious passages of Scripture. He had a fine voice for singing, and he loved dearly to exercise it in the Sabbath-school.

For a time Bertie made daily visits to Mr Johnson's humble dwelling, and it was wonder-

ful to see how patiently that dear boy bore his sufferings. During the intervals of pain, he would often break out in one of his favourite hymns, such as,—

"I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand;
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand."

Or the other equally sweet one,—

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he call'd little children as lambs to his fold;
I would like to have been with Him then."

His sickness was very tedious. The case seemed to baffle the physician's skill: though in its development it resembled inflammatory rheumatism, it yet differed from it in some respects. Several times during its course he seemed near his end; but finally, by God's blessing, he was so far recovered as to go out with the aid of a crutch. The first Sabbath after this found him in his old seat in Bertie's

class, and a warm welcome he got both from teacher and scholars.

He was ever after Bertie's most devoted scholar, and proved a great blessing to the other members of his class.

CHAPTER XII.

THE YOUNG STRANGER.

THROUGH Bertie's connection with the Sabbath-school and the church, he was often brought in contact with cases of great religious interest. One of these we quote in his own words, from a letter to the Rev. Mr White of Glenville :—

"It was on a bright spring day, about five years ago, that a large ship, teeming with a living multitude, was seen entering the Bay of New York. The motley throng upon its deck, gathered from all nations, presented a singular spectacle. Some looked pale and sickly, for they had suffered much from improper food, want of air, and improper treatment during the

voyage; but every eye seemed to brighten as the shores of the New World, with their white houses, herds of cattle, and beautiful fields, opened to view.

"On the deck of the huge vessel a young man stood alone, or as nearly so as any one could do so in such a crowd. Though to him the sight of land, and the prospect of a speedy termination of the voyage, were pleasant, yet he could not prevent the tear moistening his eye, as he thought of his dear mother and the brothers and sisters he had left in his native vale. He was truly alone; he had no friends with him, and none before him to bid him welcome. But he was not daunted. He brushed the tear aside, and fixed his thoughts on the future that lay before him in the new continent which he was now approaching. If God would spare his life and bless his exertions, he hoped, at no distant day, to send home for his widowed mother and the other members of the family, to witness his good fortune and share it with him. Filled with the bright

prospect that these generous impulses had called up, his heart grew strong, and few went ashore with more cheerful determination than the young stranger.

"The young man, whose name was John, was just nineteen, and, not having completed his apprenticeship before leaving Scotland, on arriving in America had to labour for some time with little compensation; but he worked faithfully in the hope of better things in the time to come. He was the child of many prayers. He had listened to the able and earnest preaching of many of the Scottish ministry; he was, therefore, well instructed in the things relating to the kingdom; but, alas! he knew not fully—and who does?—the evil of his own heart, nor the powerful temptations to which he would be exposed in a great city. He did not fall into any gross sins; but his heart grew cold toward God, and his attendance at church was not so regular as it had been in the country which he had left.

"Three years of temptation, trial, and sin,

against which his conscience, no doubt, often remonstrated, passed away. Deep darkness was settling round his soul; but God had not wholly given him up to his own devices,—He had mercy yet in store for him. That mercy was manifested in a way he little expected or desired, for it was the mercy that accompanies the chastising rod.

"His employer sent him, one morning, a little way into the country to do some work. The room where it was to be done was warm, and the exercise severe, so that he was thrown into a profuse perspiration. On completing the job, he set out on his return. A cold, damp wind was blowing at the time, and it seemed to pierce him to the heart. He became so completely chilled, that no effort or exercise proved sufficient to restore the animal heat in his frame. On reaching his boarding-house, he went at once to bed, but felt cold all night, despite the extra blankets that were heaped upon him.

"From that period, consumption, with its

slow but certain operation, began its work. He had no judicious friends with whom to advise; and he spent much of—in fact, *all*—his hard earnings upon physicians, but all to no purpose, for he constantly grew worse. At last his poverty drove him to the hospital. There his treatment was so severe, that he felt himself sinking under it; so he resolved to leave it while he had yet strength to do so.

"He returned to his lodging-house in the city, in which he had lived during his years of health; but the landlady, perhaps not wishing to be troubled with a sick man, or fearing he might not be able to pay her, said—in the hope, doubtless, of getting rid of him—that she had no room to give him in the house, except the *cellar*. This statement he had reason to believe was not true; but as he was so ill, he could seek no farther, and so accepted the inhuman offer; and there, in a deep, damp, dark cellar, with a little taper glimmering by his bedside during the day, only rendering the surround-

ing darkness more visible, lay this youth, without a friend, sinking into the consumptive's grave. All was still as death in that horrible bedroom, save when his racking cough disturbed the silence. Ah! could his fond mother and loving sisters have seen him then, how gladly would they have sacrificed their all for his relief! With that independence of spirit which forms so prominent a trait in the characters of intelligent Scotchmen, he had concealed from them, in his letters, both his want of money and the dangerous state he was in; else, how gladly would they, even out of their poverty, have ministered to his necessities!

"Here he would soon have been relieved from all earthly suffering,—for no human being could have existed long in such a place,—had not a kind Scotchwoman, who had formerly done his washing, succeeded in finding him. Supposing him to be at the hospital, she had called at his lodgings, to learn something about his health and circumstances.

"Pointing to the cellar, in a very surly tone,

the attendant said, 'He is down there, if you want to see him.' To this the kind-hearted Christian woman made no reply, but proceeded at once to his bedside. On two planks, supported by some boxes, and on which was placed a very dirty bed-tick filled with straw, lay the dying man, with no covering but a tattered quilt, which was quite insufficient to protect him from the cold and damp.

"She was horror-stricken to think that any person laying claim to humanity, not to say a woman, should be so utterly depraved as to put a sick man in such a place. She would have removed him at once to the basement room in which she dwelt, but she was obliged to be away from home all day washing, and could give him no attention, so she thought of another plan for his relief.

"She inquired for his dirty clothes, that she might take them home to wash. In a gentle voice, he replied, 'I think I will not have any more clothes washed, Mrs K.' And when asked the reason, he acknowledged that, as he had no

money to pay for the washing, he did not wish it done.

"'Hout, man,' replied Mrs K., 'I'll wash them till ye'r weel, at ony rate, whether I'm paid or no; so ye need fash nae mair aboot it.'

"In the attic of the house, the cellar of which was occupied by Mrs K., there was a carpenter who had a large family of children. Mrs K. was very fond of these young people, and some of them generally accompanied her when she went out, either on errands of business or mercy. On her next visit to John, one of the little boys went with her to assist in carrying his clean clothes. The little fellow was so affected with the wretched state in which they found him, that upon his return, he went to his father, and told him all the circumstances, adding,—

"'O, father, if you will bring him here, I will gladly give up my bed to him, for I can sleep very well on the floor!'

"His father, a kind-hearted man, was touched by the pathetic story, and the earnestness of

the young advocate, and proceeded immediately to ascertain the state of the case. He was as much affected by the sight as his little boy had been, and proposed at once to remove him to his own house. The invitation was so warmly given, and John's spirit so subdued, that though he had long shrunk from being dependent, he at once accepted the generous offer. That night, and the few remaining days and nights of his short career, were spent in the house of that good Samaritan.

"The day after his removal was the Sabbath. As I was going from the Sabbath-school to church, a worthy member of our church called me aside to say, that she knew a young Scotchman in destitute circumstances, lying ill, and she wished that I would call and see him. That afternoon I did so; and there, in that little attic room, in that poor man's house, I found him,—not surrounded, it is true, with the luxuries of life, but with kind friends, and everything which his generous host could procure for his benefit.

"That afternoon I learned some of the particulars already narrated of John's history.

"The following day I had the pleasure of carrying to him a sufficient sum to relieve his pressing necessities, being the contributions of a few Scottish friends, when I had a further opportunity of conversing with him. He was so feeble that he could say but little, and his feebleness was much increased by a racking cough that continually annoyed him.

"A Scottish clergyman, who abounds in every good work and labour of love, visited him several times, and did much to cheer his dying hours. The time of trial and seclusion in that gloomy cellar was, I trust, blessed to his soul. He had time for serious reflection, and God's Spirit seems to have visited him in his distress. A gradual growth in grace was very perceptible. I found it a great privilege to be near his bedside, and visited him often.

"The last interview we had was one not soon to be forgotten. As I rose to take my leave, he said, amid great difficulty of breathing,—

'How long do you think I shall last?' I was startled, for it seemed a portentous question, coming as it did from one just on the confines of eternity. I told him it was difficult, in his weak state, to form any opinion; that he would probably go off suddenly at last; but whether it would be to-day, or to-morrow, or some days hence, it was impossible to predict.

"'How does your mind feel in view of the great change that awaits you?' I inquired. 'I want to go home,' was his immediate and cheerful reply. His desire was soon granted, for it was not long after that he went home.

"Then came the funeral. Assembled in that little room was the excellent clergyman who had endeavoured so earnestly to direct the young stranger to Christ while he lived, and who now came to say a few words of warning to the living over his cold remains—the family in whose bosom he had found so good a home, and three other persons from the neighbourhood, one of whom was the worthy Scotchwoman, Mrs K.

"His body was wasted almost to a skeleton; his arm, as he was laid in that plain coffin, seemed small as that of a child. The solemn occasion was faithfully improved. The gentleman who had so kindly sheltered the dying youth was not a pious man, though possessed of a warm heart. He was most earnestly and affectionately urged by the messenger of Christ to flee to Jesus, as the true source of comfort in life, the only hope in death, and amid the solemn realities of the judgment-day. A kind and appropriate word was said to each. Some of these exhortations, I trust, the Spirit carried home to the souls of those present. In his prayer, the man of God pleaded very earnestly for a blessing on that absent mother, that she might be comforted and consoled, and that all his friends and relatives might be enabled to lay the dispensation to heart.

"His remains were taken to the city cemetery, where, on a gentle declivity, overlooking that noble inlet of the sea, amid the blaze of a summer's sunset, we laid him in the stranger's grave."

CHAPTER XIII.

HOMEWARD.

THE winter and spring rapidly sped away with Bertie, amid useful employments and the delightful companionship of his dear friend Frank.

One warm morning in the latter part of June, as Mr Mitchell sat down at his desk, he called Bertie to him, saying, in a pleasant tone,—

"I suppose you expect to pay your father and mother a visit this summer, Bertie?"

"I would like to do so, sir."

"Very well; I think you can go to-night. I would have told you before, but I was not certain till now that you could be spared; and

as the time is so short, and as you will have some preparations to make, you may set about them as soon as you please."

Bertie's eyes fairly glistened with delight, as he thanked his uncle and hurried off.

He had been very economical, and was now the possessor of nearly ten pounds of his own wages. Three of this he determined to appropriate for travelling expenses; two to gifts to his friends at home, and the remainder he would give to his father, as his first earnings.

He bought, with much care, a neat dress as a present to his mother; a Noah's ark and a picture-book for Nellie; a nice little writing-desk, all furnished, for his brother John. He had still half-a-crown left, and with this he bought a book for Jane Williams.

It took no little time to make all these purchases; for when one has but a small sum to use, it has to be managed skilfully. Then he must have a long interview with Frank Bacon, for he would not see him again for two whole weeks. O how he wished he could take him

with him. Mr Lee had invited Frank to pay them a visit, but Mr Cameron could not spare him at this time.

Finally, all the arrangements were made, the little portmanteau carefully packed, farewells said to all, and Georgie kissed half-a-dozen times. The train did not start till five, but Bertie was so afraid of being left that he was at the station by four o'clock.

At last the train began to move, slowly at first, but soon with greater rapidity, and they shot out of the town at fine speed. It was a bright afternoon, though very warm, and it seemed so delightful to get away from the great, overheated, busy city.

"I wonder if any one in the train is as happy as I am," thought Bertie, as he sat in the carriage, gazing at the glorious scene. He concluded that it was scarcely possible any one could be.

When the train reached Albany, Bertie was one of the first to step on the platform, portmanteau in hand. He went directly to the

office of the Glenville stage. He found it would not start for an hour yet, but he bought his ticket and took his seat, feeling as though, by consummating these two acts, he was so much nearer home.

CHAPTER XIV.

A HAPPY MEETING.

"HOW is the dinner coming on?" said Mr Lee, as he glanced into the kitchen where his busy wife was tripping about with unusual alacrity.

"It will be all ready as soon as Bertie arrives," was the rejoinder. "Poor boy, he used to love chicken-pie. I wonder if his mother's pies to-day will please him as well as they used to do before he lived among the grand folks." As she said this, she drew from the oven a chicken-pie, the beautiful brown exterior of which was very provocative of appetite.

"I hope he is not much changed," said

John, who was helping Nellie to put on her Sunday shoes. "I don't believe he is, unless it is for the better, and that could scarcely be," he continued.

"I wonder if he knows that Brindle has a calf, and that old Tray is dead," observed Nellie.

"I think I hear the stage coming over Griffin's hill," Mr Lee exclaimed.

John sprang to his feet, and was in a moment on the top of the waggon, where he could see for a long distance.

"It is not the stage," said he; "but only Squire Jones' men, with the big waggon and the hay-rigging; but the coach must be along very soon, and I shall stay here till it comes in sight."

"I mean to give Bertie my little kitten," said Nellie. "I am sure he will like it, for it is a little darling." As this was the only living thing belonging to Nellie, the gift required quite a sacrifice.

"And I will give him all the crystals I have collected on the hill," said John.

"And I will give him a pin-cushion; see what a curious one it is," said Jane Williams, who had softly come round the back way, to avoid being noticed, and now stood among them.

"O, Jane, I'm glad to see you; so you have come to welcome Bertie, too; this will be an unexpected pleasure to him," said John, from the top of the waggon.

"There she comes! there she comes! and at the top of her speed. Who will be at the gate first?" shouted John, as he sprang from his elevated position into the midst of the waiting friends below. A general rush, helter-skelter, down the lane ensued. Of course, John was a long way in advance of the others. He did not stop at the gate as the others did, but ran on down the road, and, when the stage came up, mounted on the top along with Bertie.

The first eye that Bertie caught was that of his mother; and as he leaped from the stage, he sprang into her arms. O what a warm embrace was that! There is a chord of attach-

ment between a good mother and an affectionate son, that has nothing to equal it in this world.

"Mother!" "Bertie!" was all that either said, but,—

"Eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again,"

while tears gave vent to joy too intense for words. Mr Lee also clasped his son to his bosom, as he exclaimed, "My dear boy, how glad we all are to see you again!" and he added, in a whisper, "How this pleasure is heightened by the thought that you are now a child of God!"

Nellie hugged her brother almost to suffocation, and seemed never satisfied with kissing him. Jane, who had been standing a little aside, to give the others a chance, now came in for her share.

Altogether, it was the happiest meeting that had ever taken place on that quiet roadside. Meanwhile, John had got Bertie's portmanteau from the top of the stage, and the driver and his remaining load were nearly out of sight,

the horses galloping at full speed, as they were a little behind time.

How pleasant and familiar everything seemed to Bertie in that bright June morning, as they went up the lane.

They were soon seated at the dinner-table, doing full justice to the excellent cooking of Mrs Lee. Bertie declared he had never before tasted such chicken-pie—the long ride having, no doubt, sharpened his appetite. It was a very merry dinner party, at which every one enjoyed himself in his own way.

Mrs Lee ate scarcely anything, and said very little, and yet she was as happy as any one in the little group. The joy at meeting her long-absent son again seemed to fill her soul. Perhaps there was even a little excusable pride in that fond mother's glance, for Bertie had grown very much, and was otherwise greatly improved by his absence from home. There seemed a manliness now in that frank, open countenance, not apparent before.

When dinner was over and the table cleared

off, Mr Lee, whose heart seemed filled with gratitude to the Giver of all good, proposed they should have prayers. The books were got in a minute by Nellie, and they sang a few verses of the Psalm,—

> "O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord;
> And all that in me is
> Be stirred up his holy name
> To magnify and bless."

After which they read the 135th Psalm. As Mr Lee poured out his thanks to the Lord for permitting this pleasant meeting, it seemed as though he scarcely knew when to stop.

They rose from their knees subdued, but filled with a pious joy that worldlings know nothing of. Religion, beside the joys which it alone can give, sweetens every innocent earthly pleasure. Verily, godliness is "profitable for this life" as well as for "that which is to come."

The afternoon was holiday to all, and was spent mainly under the locust-trees before the

house, where Bertie recounted, with that minuteness of detail so interesting to dear friends, all that had befallen him in the great city, as well as some of the wonders of that wonderful place.

The time of Bertie's visit sped rapidly away. He found one of his coarse straw hats, and some of his old clothes, in the attic, in which he arrayed himself, and aided his father and brother in hoeing corn, and the other work of the farm at that season.

He also repaired and put in order a great many things about the house for his mother. In fact, all over the premises he left traces of his careful and skilful hand. Several afternoons were given up for holidays, one of which they spent at Mr Williams'. Jane, of course, was very glad to see him, and, in return, spent an afternoon at Mr Lee's. Another afternoon was spent with their dear old pastor, Mr White, who was delighted with Bertie, and took occasion to learn, from one of his own boys, the latest accounts and the fullest descriptions of

the benevolent and religious enterprises in operation in the great city.

Finally, the last morning arrived, and Bertie set off, carrying with him to the city the prayers of the whole household as a blessing and shield.

CHAPTER XV.

LITTLE GEORGIE.

A STRONG affection had grown up between Bertie and his little cousin Georgie. The latter was scarcely five years old, and yet they were a great deal of company for each other. Georgie was beginning to read a little, and, of course, Bertie was very glad to aid him in learning. He also told him stories from the Bible, and read to him his favourite passages from that wonderful book. The little fellow loved to hear about Joseph, and Samuel, and David; Hezekiah, and Daniel, and Paul; but the part that delighted him most was the last two chapters of St John's Revelation, in

which heaven is so vividly and beautifully described.

Mr Cameron sent him a nice copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress," with many large plates. These pictures interested him very much, and as Bertie read and explained the immortal allegory, the little fellow soon had a very correct idea of it.

One of his uncles had given him a little tin sword at the last holiday season; but from what he had heard of soldiers and battles, he knew that swords were used for killing people; so this toy was not a favourite, and had been seldom used. But as Georgie heard the second part of the "Pilgrim's Progress," about Christiana and her children, he took to his sword, and, marching about the room with it brandished in his hand, he declared he was Great-Heart, and that he would defend them all from the giants and other enemies who stood in the way to the Celestial City. The whole story had a reality and a power to him rarely exceeded in the minds of more mature readers.

He was very fond, too, of the little hymns that Bertie taught him, such as—

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour."

Or,—

"The rosy light of the morning bright,
Awakes me up from sleep."

And the twenty-third Psalm, in the Scottish version, beginning with,—

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: He leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

He did not repeat his prayers like a mere task, as too many children do, but offered them with an earnestness and a reverence that showed that he really wanted God to give him the things he asked for. He had great faith that God would hear and answer prayer. One night, a servant who was left alone with him in the house, was quite terrified at the shak-

ing of the windows by the wind. Seeing the cause of her agitation, he said, "Why, Susan, that's only the wind. If you would pray to God to take care of you, you would not be so frightened."

When Bertie went home to dinner, little Georgie would often come back with him to the store to spend the afternoon. He was a quiet, thoughtful little boy, and never gave any trouble to those he was with. He had also a great faculty of amusing himself, and did not require, like some children, to be constantly looked after.

One night Bertie woke up about twelve o'clock, and found his little cousin very restless—tossing the clothes off, and apparently unable to sleep. "What is the matter, Georgie?" said he.

"O, cousin Bertie, I feel so hot that I can't sleep!"

Bertie felt his hands; they were very hot. He feared that Georgie had a fever, but he did not like to alarm Mr and Mrs Mitchell

by calling them at that hour. So he got up and gave Georgie a drink, and tried to soothe him to sleep. But the little fellow continued tossing about in the bed, and at last exclaimed,—

"O, I wish it was morning! Don't you think, Cousin Bertie, if I was to pray to God He could bring the morning? I'm sure I should feel better then."

"Yes, dear cousin," said Bertie; "God *could* bring the morning at once in answer to your prayer; but then, don't you see, how many children who are not sick it would awaken and disturb, and how many people it would frighten to have the day begin in the middle of the night. Now, you would not want all this harm done merely for your benefit, would you?"

"O no! I would not."

He was apparently falling into a doze, as he continued, in a whisper,—

"There shall be no night there."

"Where?" said Bertie, much surprised at his little cousin's words.

"In the holy city that it tells about in the end of the Bible. You know it says that they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light."

"What made you think of that now?" said Bertie, not a little astonished at the readiness with which he quoted the exact words of Scripture, though he knew that these had always been his favourite passages.

"Because I think Jesus will take me there when I die. O! what a pretty place it must be, on the banks of that river, clear as crystal, and in that city of pure gold!"

"Yes, it will be a pretty place; a glorious, happy, and holy place," said Bertie, musingly.

"And I shall see Jesus, who loves little children, and who blesses them. He will be always there, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. Won't that be delightful? And you will come, Cousin Bertie, and mother, and

father, and Uncle Cameron. And my little baby-brother is there now. I hope he will come with Jesus to meet me at the gate."

The dear little fellow talked on in this strain awhile, but his words grew more and more indistinct, and at length he fell into a disturbed slumber. When Bertie was sure his cousin was asleep, he rose gently, dressed himself, and, hurrying down stairs, told his uncle and aunt. They were much alarmed, and at once despatched Bertie for the doctor, who lived near by.

On his arrival, the doctor pronounced it scarlet fever, but of a light character, which, he trusted, would soon yield to gentle remedies and good nursing. Georgie was very patient, and took his medicines with readiness. Mr and Mrs Mitchell, and Bertie, watched him in turn, one of them being always with him night and day.

At first he seemed to be doing well, and no apprehensions were felt for the result. But on the afternoon of the fifth day, when the fever

ordinarily subsides, he began to grow worse. The doctor was hurriedly sent for, and his anxious face showed that he was surprised at the change that had taken place.

It was soon evident that life was ebbing away; that that dear little boy was just on the borders of eternity. He had never seemed so dear to them as then. With what intense and loving interest did those fond parents watch by the bedside of their dying son! What would they not then have been willing to do or give, to have him with them a little longer! How anxiously every breath was watched, and every want anticipated!

It was midnight. The household was collected in the room, and all eyes were turned on the bed where the little sufferer lay. He had been for some hours unconscious, but suddenly he roused up and asked for a drink. A glass of ice-water was applied to his lips, and he drank freely. He seemed revived, and looked round with signs of recognition to the friends at his bedside. At

last his eye rested on his mother, and he whispered,—

"Mother, I am not Great-Heart now, but I am Christian, and I am passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But I am not afraid, for Jesus is going with me."

Turning to his father, he said, "Father, I will welcome you and mother at the gate when you come.

"And Bertie, too," he said, as he glanced at his cousin. "I shall soon see the wall of jasper, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. I shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for Jesus, who is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, shall feed me. O, will not that be blessed! Come, Lord Jesus, and take your little boy home." He closed his eyes, and in another instant Jesus had welcomed him to the Holy City.

For some minutes they all stood transfixed. Bertie's uppermost thought was,—

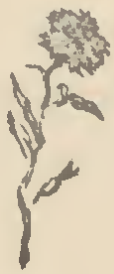
"If this be called dying,
'Tis pleasant to die."

All thought of his loss was swallowed up in the glory of his departure.

For a moment nature and grace struggled in the stricken father's heart, but faith prevailed; and, raising his eyes to heaven, he said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

They buried him beside his little baby-brother, in Greenwood Cemetery; and on the stone at the head of his grave were simply the words,—

"OUR GEORGIE."



CHAPTER XVI.

TROUBLE AT GLENVILLE.

YEARS rolled round; other children were born to Mr Mitchell, but little Georgie was never forgotten. His playthings were carefully stored away in a drawer, sacred to his memory. His image was so faithfully imprinted on his parents' hearts that it could never be obliterated.

A few more grey hairs were to be seen on Mr Lee's head, and a few more wrinkles were traced on his wife's forehead. John had grown to be a young man, and Nellie was going to school.

Glenville was unchanged. Mr White's labours were still continued there, and had been signally

blessed. The beech-trees threw out their shade in summer over all who sought their shelter, and everything about the farm looked very much as it did when we began our narrative.

But it was winter now, and a snow-storm, which had been threatening for several days, was coming on in earnest. Mr Lee had been out on horseback, and being at the village, he had called at the Post-office and got a letter. This he held in his hand as he entered the kitchen door.

"A letter from Bertie?" said his wife.

"No, my dear; this letter is not so welcome as that."

"No bad news from him, is there?" she continued, her face changing from the flush caused by the work in which she had been engaged, to a deadly pallor as she spoke.

"No, dear wife; it does not relate to Bertie at all. But compose yourself, and you shall hear it."

Mr Lee hastily laid aside his overcoat and hat, and they sat down together by the fire to read the letter.

It was from a gentleman who had for several years held a mortgage on Mr Lee's farm. This mortgage, originally two hundred pounds, had been reduced year by year, mainly by the aid of Bertie, till now it was just the half. Though the interest had been always promptly made up, yet the owner was anxious to have the mortgage entirely paid off. He now threatened that, if this were not done before the first of the next month (and it was already the fifteenth of January), the mortgage would be foreclosed, and the farm sold by auction to meet it. So large a sum could not be got among their neighbours, for most of them were, like himself, in debt. To apply to his brother-in-law, Mr Mitchell, would have been the natural course in such an emergency; but they had been the recipients of so many favours from him, that they could not bring their minds to apply to him again. Then he had been very kind to Bertie, and an application of this nature might possibly injure or peril the prospects of their dear son.

There the two sat, in great perplexity, as that winter twilight drew on. The dreary weather without toned but too well with the anxiety within. No feasible plan of relief presented itself. Their fears were deepening into despair.

For some time they sat in silence. At last Mrs Lee said,—

"What *shall* we do?"

"We can only go to Him who has said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer you.' He only can be our helper now. Let us, my dear wife, commit our case to God."

They knelt together on the kitchen floor, and asked the Lord to show them what to do. They acknowledged that He had encompassed them with his favour as with a shield; they thanked Him for his rich and abundant mercies to them and to their little household, and besought Him for aid and direction in this time of perplexity.

They rose from their knees, comforted and

refreshed by communion with God. But there was the debt.

The next morning Mr Lee determined to write to the holder of the mortgage, and beg a little more time to make up the sum needed. He also wrote to Bertie, stating the whole case, and inquiring whether he thought anything could be done by him to aid them.

But after the letters were written, it was found that the roads were so blocked up with snow that they could not be got to the Post-office that morning.

The next day the farmers turned out with their horses and sleighs, and united together, Mr Lee with them, in endeavouring to make the highways passable, or, as they termed it, "break the roads." First the young lads forced their way through the deep, loose snow on horseback. Of this band of rustic cavalry John Lee was one of the foremost. It was exciting and pleasant work for young people. The sun was out in all his splendour now, and the whole earth was one glitter of dazzling

snow. Even the fences were covered, so that the whole country presented one unbroken surface of the purest white. Following the party on horseback came the older men in carts, one after another, in long procession. Occasionally they would come to places so deep that the horses could not get through them; then all set to work with shovels to dig out a passage. Altogether, it was a lively scene.

The winter day had worn on. The sun had just gone down amid gorgeous clouds, but still lighted up the heavens and the earth with a blaze of glory. The distant sleigh-bells, and the merry shouts of the boys coming from school, were the only sounds that broke the stillness. John was out feeding the cattle, Nellie up-stairs studying her lesssons for school, and Mr and Mrs Lee in the kitchen. The good housewife was preparing the evening meal, while her husband sat gazing abstractedly into the fire. A glance at their faces told that they had been talking over the mortgage. After a long pause, Mrs Lee, resting her elbow

on the mantelpiece, and looking at the same place in the fire that so attracted her husband's attention, said,—

"Well, we have tried to trust the Lord in this, as in all our other anxieties, and I am sure He will find some way of deliverance."

"O, yes!" said her husband; "if we had only *faith* to trust more fully in God's promises, we should have much less perplexity in the journey of life. The Lord may see it to be necessary that we should suffer; for, perhaps, we have settled down too well satisfied with the present world, and the comforts and enjoyments which He in his goodness has given us here. This calamity, if it comes, may be to remind us that this is not our home; that here we are but pilgrims and strangers; that we must look for a better inheritance, even that heavenly one which God has prepared for all that love Him—an inheritance which He, I am well assured, has in store for us. But, perhaps, this is just our time of trial, and deliverance may be near at hand.

"I have heard my mother tell of a time of great suffering in Scotland in her early married life, which, from the high price of provisions, was commonly called 'the dear year.' My father was a man in narrow circumstances, and on one occasion they were in great straits. The man he had worked for failed, and not a penny was to be got. Another man who owed him a considerable amount was unable to pay just at that time. They were out of money, and, what was worse, they were out of bread and provisions of every kind. My father, a tender-hearted man, could not bear to hear the hungry children crying for food, so he went out to try and walk off his own hunger, as well as once more to commit his case to Him who feedeth the ravens.

"My mother said to my eldest brother, 'Take that bag to Mr Anderson's (the gentleman who owed them some money), and tell him we have nothing to eat; perhaps, though he has no money to spare, he may give you some barley-meal.'

"My brother went off, and you may imagine how my mother watched for his return. He came back sooner than she expected—so soon, in fact, that she was afraid, as she heard his step approaching the door of the cottage, that he must have returned empty-handed. But no—the door opened, and he entered with the bag of meal on his back.

"The gridiron was soon smoking with cakes, and my mother was just taking off a gridiron-full when my father returned. His first thought was, that the Lord had sent them relief by a direct interposition of his hand, as He did to Elijah; but when he learned the circumstances of the case, he considered it not less the Lord's doings, because accomplished through human agency. You may guess what a blessing they asked on their supper that night!

"It may be so with us.

"They were never in such straitened circumstances again. The trial of their faith had answered the end for which it was sent."

"Come, let us change the subject," said Mrs Lee, in a voice intended to be cheerful. "Did you know that this is Bertie's birthday?"

"So it is," said her husband; "in the anxieties of the day I had entirely forgotten it; and an important day it is, for he is now twenty-one years of age."

"Yes; and yet it seems scarcely possible that he can be so old. It seems but yesterday since he lay an infant in my arms, our first-born; and now to think he is a man! It does seem strange, indeed."

Just then John came in, his boots covered with snow. He had finished his evening work, and, brushing off the snow, he sat down by his father to wait for supper.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNEXPECTED GUESTS.

THE kettle was boiling, the sausages were fried, and the first gridiron-full of nice, crisp cakes were sending up a fragrant incense from the table. So Nellie was called, and in a few moments they were all seated at supper. Just after the blessing was asked, Nellie started up, exclaiming, "I hear the sound of wheels, mother." This could only mean visitors, for the house was too far from the main road for them to hear those passing at that distance. Before they had time to look out, the door opened, and a tall young man, well wrapped up in a travelling-rug, entered.

"Why, Bertie, can it be you?" exclaimed

Mrs Lee, who, with a mother's keen eye, detected her son through all his attempts at concealment.

Nellie sprang into his arms; John attempted to relieve him of his shawl; Mr Lee was so astonished that he hardly knew what he was doing; and, as might be expected, all spoke at once.

"Stop a minute," said Bertie, succeeding finally in getting his voice above the others. "I have some one with me, whom I must no longer leave out in the cold."

In a moment he brought in Frank Bacon, and introduced him to the family. None of them had seen Frank before, but they had heard so much about him through Bertie, that they received him as an old friend, and felt as though they had known him for years.

The supper-table was now enlarged by the addition of two more plates and the other requisites, and the delighted company were soon seated around it. The long ride in the cold

had given the two travellers an excellent appetite, and the cakes were pronounced the best they had ever tasted.

In their delight at seeing Bertie and his friend, none of the family had thought to ask the reason of this unexpected visit.

But when the first excitement had a little subsided, Mr Lee said,—

"How did you think of coming to see us at this inclement season, Bertie? and how did you get your friend to risk himself in our rigorous climate in mid-winter?"

"It was Uncle James' plan," said Bertie. "He ascertained that this was my birthday, so he asked me the day before yesterday if I would not like to surprise you with a visit. He knew I was not afraid of the cold. Of course, I was delighted, and still more to learn that he had already spoken to Mr Cameron, and arranged to have Frank to come with me."

About nine o'clock they had prayers, after which Frank retired to his room—the *best* room, it was called—the one kept for visitors. John

and Nellie retired at the same time, but Bertie and his father and mother sat still round the stove. After a little general conversation, Mr Lee said,—

"Bertie, I do not want to throw a damper on your visit, just at its commencement, by telling you of our troubles, but it is absolutely necessary that you should know of them."

Bertie looked frightened, and eagerly asked, "What troubles, my dear father?"

Mr Lee then detailed the facts about the mortgage, with which the reader is already familiar, and closed by saying, "These embarrassing circumstances have given us many sleepless hours; and we have sought, by earnest prayer, to commit the whole case to our heavenly Father, who alone can deliver us."

"And your prayers are answered," said Bertie, "as the prayer of faith always is."

With that he drew out a bag from his pocket, and, loosening the string, emptied its contents on the table. It was just the sum they needed, —one hundred pounds, all in gold sovereigns,

most of which, fresh from the mint, fairly glistened in the lamp-light.

The father and mother looked at each other for a moment in amazement. They could scarcely credit the evidence of their senses. At length a painful shadow seemed to creep over the father's face, and he exclaimed,—

"My dear boy, where—how did you get so much money?"

"You could not have got your father's letter yesterday?" said his mother.

"No," said Bertie; "I will explain. When Uncle James said I might come and see you the day I came of age, he added some complimentary remarks about my having been faithful in his service, etc., and then gave me, for a birthday present, and as an acknowledgment of his appreciation of my services, a cheque for *eighty pounds*. I knew that the debt on the farm was about a *hundred* pounds, and as I had saved twenty pounds from my last year's salary, I determined to appropriate the whole to paying off the debt. Thus, in the

only way in my power, I would acknowledge my obligations to you, my dear parents, for the faithful training that I have received, which, under God's blessing, has resulted in my receiving this sum from Uncle James; and here it is, all carefully counted, though little did I think when I left town that it was so much needed. It is an answer to your prayers."

"It is, indeed," said his father. "O, what a relief it is, and how wonderfully sent! But, Bertie, we cannot consent to take your hard earnings, except as a loan."

"Yes, dear father; you must consent to take it as a free gift; and you cannot have half the pleasure in receiving that I have in being able to give it. I shall never miss the money. I am young and strong, and have the promise of a large salary for the coming year, from which I can save more than half."

"My dear, dear son," said Mrs Lee, clasping him to her bosom and kissing him, "you have been our comfort and consolation. God has made you a blessing indeed."

"And to his name be all the glory," said Mr Lee. "Let us thank Him now for this temporal mercy, as well as for the greater blessing of eternal life."

Fervent were their thanksgivings, as the father and mother knelt down with their son before Him who has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." And then, with happy hearts, they retired to rest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRANK BACON'S PLAN.

EVERYTHING was delightful to Bertie and his friend Frank about this winter visit. It was many years since either of them had been in the country at the cold season, and their old recollections of the clear, white snow, so different from the brown, dirty snow and mud in the city, and of delightful winter visits, were all revived. Jane Williams was often with them in their walks, and several visits were made to her house. She had grown up into a fine-looking young woman; she was also a warm-hearted Christian, who sought to do good as she had opportunity; and opportunities are never lacking to

those who really desire to engage in Christ's service. Frank entered into her schemes of usefulness very heartily, and, being a little older, and having had a great deal of experience, was able to give her many useful hints in carrying out her plans. He went with her through her tract district, and had a kind Christian word for all; for he who loves the Master best, will love most what He loved, the souls of men. In a little village near by was a cotton-mill, that furnished employment for a number of men, women, and children. From the latter Jane had collected a little Sabbath-school, which met in her mother's parlour every Sabbath afternoon. There was no church nearer than Mr White's, about two miles distant, and, as the children had no means of conveyance, but few of them ever entered the house of God. But Jane visited them frequently, especially those that were sick, and so won upon their affections, by interesting herself in their affairs, that they were willing their children should go to her

for instruction. She had a fine voice, and enlivened the exercises of the school by singing beautiful little hymns that were familiar to her, and which, in the absence of books, she taught them to sing from memory. Sometimes, too, through the week, she would invite them to her house, and there entertain them with some instructive story. It was a pleasant sight to see this little group.

Frank had heard about the school from Bertie, and had provided himself with a supply of little books and children's tracts, which he distributed among the scholars, and, at Jane's request, made a short address, which interested them very much. Bertie was, of course, always with his friend in these Christian efforts; but Frank, being a little older, and more experienced in the Christian life, generally took the lead.

The weather was clear, but very cold. At times the thermometer went below zero. The snow creaked beneath their feet, from the intensity of the frost; but the large stoves,

filled with dry maple and beech, banished all cold from the houses, while the over-coats, shawls, and wrappers, proved effectual barriers to the cold, when they were out of doors.

One day Bertie and Frank were out walking alone. They were returning from a visit at Mr White's. They had walked some distance in silence—an unusual thing with them, for they always had plenty to say; but on this occasion they were busy with their own thoughts. At last Frank broke the silence.

"Bertie, I have something to tell you, which, I think, will surprise you a little; something which, just for the present, I would rather have nothing said about to others."

Bertie looked up with an expression of wonder and inquiry, when Frank continued,—

"From the time when I was fifteen years old, I have *desired, with my whole heart,* to study for the ministry. When I first professed the name and service of the Lord Jesus, this desire was paramount, but many obstacles stood in

my way. One of them was feeble health, for I was a delicate child, and my parents judged that active employment would be better for me than study. Shortly after I went to the city, and entered the employment of Mr Cameron, I thought of it again. In fact, I have been holding the subject constantly in view, and for some years have been studying Latin and Greek, as well as attending to other studies, preparatory to entering college. Through Mr Cameron's liberality, I have now saved a sum nearly sufficient to carry me through my course; and my own exertions, during the period of study, can easily supply the rest. If I live, I expect to enter college next September."

Bertie was surprised; for although he had always thought his friend well fitted for the arduous and responsible duties of an ambassador of Christ to dying men, yet he had no thought that Frank had any intention of becoming one. He said, heartily,—

"I am very glad; very glad indeed!" and,

after a moment's consideration, added, "What does Mr Cameron think of it?"

"At first he seemed a little doubtful, and I thought he was about to oppose it. He said he was attached to me, had hoped to have me with him as long as he lived, and to give me a share in the business after a year or two. He inquired how long I had thought of it; what preparations I had made for it, and many other questions. After hearing all about it, he expressed himself satisfied, and generously offered to provide all the means to carry me through my studies."

"That was very kind of him."

"I assured him that I did not need any assistance at present, but that, if near the end of my course I should require aid, I would gladly avail myself of his very liberal offer."

They continued talking over the matter till they arrived at Mr Lee's door.

At last the period of their visit came to an end. They remained just a week, during which time the mortgage was paid off. They

had enjoyed every hour of the visit, and were the better for it in health besides. But, finally, the last day came, as it always does come to all earthly enjoyments, and they took their departure.

They were cheered, however, by the thought of a coming summer visit, not far distant. All the crevices in their travelling-bags were filled with fruit, preserves, gingercakes, and other good things peculiar to the country.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TWO PREACHERS.

SIX years and a half have rolled round since the close of our last chapter. It is a bright Sabbath morning in August, and Glenville seems more than usually astir. All the church-goers are on the way to the house of God, and many others who seldom crossed its threshold are now moving in the same direction. In fact, some are on the way thither, who were never known before to enter the sanctuary. Although the way is long, and the morning rather hot, yet they move on as though they had an interest in the place they are going to. The reason is, that Frank Bacon, now a minister, is to preach for Mr White.

Most of his six summer vacations have been spent here. There is scarcely a cottage or a house in the vicinity, however humble, but has had him for a visitor; and to those where sickness and death have come, a well-known and beloved one. This is his first sermon after being ordained to preach. Our friend Bertie is with him.

The church is filled to its utmost capacity. There is scarcely standing-room in any part of the house.

After the preliminary services, the young preacher announces his text: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

We can give but a few words of the discourse.

"How strange that, for a lost, ruined world —a world that *hated* God—the Prince of Life should leave the bosom of his Father, and expire by an ignominious death on the bitter cross! Love unutterable, unspeakable! The

love of God the Father, and of God the Son. The reflection of the sceptic of a bygone age, may have been, at times, the musing of better minds: 'It is far too great—it is far too good to be true—Infinite Goodness compassionating infinite weakness.' Think of the love of Jesus, *now!* The burning coals in the censer of old were but a feeble type of the burning ardour of affection still manifested by the Great High Priest, within the veil, in behalf of his own people. There He bears the name of each indelibly engraved on his breastplate. 'Loving them at the beginning, He will love them even unto the end.' 'As the Father has loved *me, so* have I loved *you,*' are his own precious words."

Profound stillness pervaded the assembly as he dwelt upon the love of God, as displayed in the death of Christ, and in salvation through grace. His voice was clear, and his enunciation very distinct. All acknowledged that the youthful preacher had done well, and many gathered round him as he descended from the

pulpit to thank him for his sermon. Not the least cordial of these friends was the venerable Mr White, now upwards of seventy years of age. He laid his trembling hand upon Frank's head, and, in the midst of the people, implored the blessing of our heavenly Father to accompany all his labours in the work of the ministry. It was a pleasant sight to see those two servants of Christ, the one just girding on his armour, and the other only waiting for his Master's summons to lay it down.

The short intermission of half an hour was spent in pleasant Christian intercourse; the conversation being directed to that infinite love of which they had just heard.

Mr White preached in the afternoon from the words, "I am crucified with Christ." He was an able and an earnest preacher at all times, but on this occasion he seemed gifted with double power. All hung on his words as he pictured the true Christian bearing the cross. The appearance of the man, too, so full of years; his white hair and peaceful counte-

nance, all betokening the end of his labours, was truly impressive. But this discourse proved that his eye was not dim, nor his natural powers abated.

We can give but his closing words: "I died in his death, I rise in his resurrection; I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me. Not I, a poor, wretched rebel, whose foundation is in the dust, who dwells in a cottage of clay. It is I, the disciple of Christ, the member of Christ's body, who looks forward to the glorious inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away. When this vile body shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, when I shall have done with sin, with sorrow, with everything that can interrupt my communion with Christ, and when, beyond the utmost bounds of everlasting hills, I shall lay my crown at his feet,—there, with the saints and angels, I shall join in the Song of Moses and the Lamb! O ye pure and glorified spirits, when shall I be with you, where Jesus is?"

"O when shall the period appear,
When I shall unite in your song?
I'm weary of lingering here,
For I to your Saviour belong!
I'm fetter'd and chain'd up in clay,
I struggle and pant to be free;
I long to be soaring away,
My God and my Saviour to see!

"I want to put on my attire,
Wash'd white in the blood of the Lamb;
I want to be one of your choir,
And tune my sweet harp to his name.
I want—O I want to be there,
Where sorrow and sin bid adieu;
Your joy and your friendship to share,
To wonder and worship with you!"

After service, Mr White went home with Mr Lee. The family with whom he lived being absent for a few days, Mrs Lee thought he would be lonely, and prevailed on him to go with them. He was very quiet as he rode along; the excitement occasioned by preaching had given place to depression.

After dinner was over, they went out on the

balcony to enjoy the cool evening breeze, so refreshing after the heat of the day.

Bertie had brought with him, from the city, a volume of sermons by a distinguished divine, and proposed to read one of them aloud. The offer was gladly accepted. Bertie had but just begun, when all were startled by seeing Mr White fall from his chair in a fainting fit. Restoratives were applied, but for some time without effect. After a while, however, he opened his eyes feebly, and, looking languidly around, closed them again. For a few moments he seemed to sleep; then awaking, he said, in a changed voice,—

"I am going home; the wife of my youth and my children are all there. I shall soon see them; but, better still, I shall see the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. It has long been my wish—though the wish has never been uttered—that the Lord would take me to himself on the Sabbath-day, and now He is going to do it. Blessed be his name for ever and ever! I feel little pain; but I know this

clay tabernacle is about to be taken down—soon I shall be free." He again closed his eyes and seemed to sleep.

In about ten minutes he opened them for the last time on earth. He said a few words to each member of the family; then, turning to the sun, just setting in the west, he said, as though addressing it,—

"You I shall see no more on earth, but I shall see a more glorious sun—the Sun of Righteousness. Yes, I shall see *his* face, and shall behold his glory. I hear his voice—let me go!" There was no struggle nor groan; but drawing one long breath, his spirit winged its way to the heavenly hills.

CHAPTER XX.

CHANGES IN GLENVILLE.

IT is again winter in Glenville. The snow covers the ground to the depth of several inches. There is a great stir in the good old farm-house of the Williams'. For some days all had been unusually busy. First, there was a seamstress at work in the little sitting-room, and Jane and her mother sewed with her. The nearest town had been previously visited to procure material. After this came the house-cleaning, and everything was overhauled from garret to cellar. Then followed a great period of baking and cooking. It was incredible the number of substantial loaves that were turned out of the little brick

oven in the kitchen. Mince-pies of the old-fashioned, genuine kind might have been counted by the dozen, and time would fail us to tell of the cake that followed, from the plain pound-cake, Bertie's favourite, through all the different grades, up to the large cake frosted with sugar, which was to grace the centre of the table. In all these operations they were assisted by Mrs Lee. The large cake was entirely the work of her hands, and was made at her house.

But the evening at last arrived for which all these preparations were made. All through the latter part of the afternoon, the merry rattle of the wheels announced the arrival of visitors; and before seven o'clock a goodly company had gathered. The richest landed proprietor in the town was there, and so were several representatives from among the workpeople of the cotton-mill. No such company, in point of numbers, had ever assembled in that comfortable mansion before. But everything was managed so nicely, and arranged so well, that there seemed still room for more.

The minister has arrived—the pastor of a neighbouring congregation. Footsteps are heard on the stairs, and dresses rustle in the hall. The suppressed voices of the guests are hushed, and every eye is turned towards the door. It opens, and Bertie Lee enters, with Jane Williams leaning upon his arm. The Rev. Frank Bacon, now pastor of the Glenville church, follows, with a friend of Jane's leaning upon his: they are to be groomsman and bridesmaid. A prayer for God's blessing; a few words of counsel; the solemn words that are to unite two fond hearts for a life-time are said; another prayer offered, and the ceremony is over.

In a few minutes supper was announced, but no table was large enough to hold half the guests, so they sat down in companies, beginning, of course, with the eldest.

Little Nellie, now nearly fifteen, was particularly active, and seemed always just where she was wanted. John Lee, too, made himself useful in all directions. Mr Bacon, of course,

had a kind of oversight of all the rest. Mrs Lee, arrayed in a beautiful new dress, of plain, black silk—one of Bertie's gifts—watched her son with all a mother's fondness, as with a gentle grace she moved from place to place, to see that all was going on right.

The simple and innocent amusements of the evening followed the supper. A merrier or a happier company had rarely been seen.

At an early hour the festivites ended, and the party broke up.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

"THERE they come," said our friend Jane Williams, now Mrs Bertie Lee, as she glanced out of the basement window of a neat cottage in a quiet street in the city. "They are very welcome. Mary Ann," addressing the girl in the kitchen, "please have breakfast at once; I am sure they will be hungry enough."

Mary Ann, as willing a creature as ever lived, and devoted to her mistress, poked the fire in the range till it fairly glowed, and gave another stir to the batter that only waited its time to become a pancake.

While this was going on below, Jane hurried

to the front door to admit the visitors so anxiously looked for. They were no other than Mr and Mrs Lee from Glenville, on their first visit to the great city. Bertie, apprised of their coming, had been down at the station to meet them on the arrival of the train.

They were in plain country style, but Jane was too full of joy to care for dress, for no more welcome visitors had ever entered that door.

The honoured guests had hardly laid off their wrappings before a drayman arrived, with quite a load of good things from the country. There was a tub of butter for winter use, "yellow as gold, and sweet as a nut," Bertie said. It was the "last made," and had been put up by loving hands for a dear son and daughter. Then there was another keg of butter from Mr Williams, enough to last all winter, made in the country fashion. John had sent a bag of nuts to sister Jane, and Nellie a bag of chestnuts to brother Bertie.

But we have not space to name all the things that kind and thoughtful friends had sent.

The party were soon seated at the breakfast table, doing ample justice to Mrs Jane's and Mary Ann's culinary skill.

"Did you know that your young minister, my dear friend Bacon, is going to be married?" said Bertie.

"Is it possible?" said Mr Lee. "No, I had not heard it. But how does it happen that you know Glenville news before those who have just come from there?"

"Oh, that is a very common occurrence, sir. The city is the place to learn the news. I had a letter from him yesterday, communicating the fact."

"But who is the favoured one?" broke in Mrs Lee, with the curiosity attributed to her sex.

"A young lady of his native town, whom he has known from his boyhood; an excellent girl, who, besides being a first-rate wife, will prove a true help-meet in his ministerial work. At

least, that is his opinion, and he is generally right."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr Lee. "He deserves a good wife. His labours have proved as profitable and as acceptable as those of his predecessor. I can pay him no higher compliment than to compare him to the sainted Mr White, whom he certainly resembles as much as a young man can resemble an old one. Already his preaching has been richly blessed to God's people and to the conversion of sinners. His efforts at the mill have been crowned with great success. The little Sabbath-school, Jane, that you commenced, is now large and flourishing. A nucleus for a church has already been gathered round it, to which it will soon be necessary to call a pastor."

"He has been a dear friend to me," rejoined Bertie. "Our heavenly Father made him the instrument of my conversion."

Mr Lee reverently continued: "Our God is truly a covenant-keeping God. He is the hearer and the answerer of prayer. How won-

derfully He answered our petitions for you, my dear son! When, with fear and trembling, we committed you to Him, as you left us for the city, we little thought that our petitions were to be so soon and so graciously answered."

"But Bertie has another piece of news for you, father," said Jane, with an arch smile.

"I hope it is as pleasant as the last piece," said Mr Lee, turning to his son. "What is it?"

"My uncle James has taken me into partnership with him, giving me a handsome share in the business. The firm now reads—'James Mitchell & Co.' When I look back upon the time I left Glenville to push my way in the town, I cannot but feel grateful to God for his kindness in preserving me from the dangers and temptations which beset this place; while to my uncle I owe a debt which I can never repay. But, father and mother, the first great cause of my success in life and in business is to be found in those great and good principles which you instilled into my mind in early youth."

"Well," said Mrs Lee, looking fondly at her son, "we can never thank our heavenly Father enough for his goodness to you and to us. When we consider all the way that the Lord has led you, we may well say, with the sweet singer of Israel, 'I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread.'"

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