

The Family Circle.

WOMAN'S WORK.

Darning little stockings For restless little feet; Washing little faces, To keep them fresh and sweet Hearing Bible-lessons, Teaching catechism, Praying for salvation From heresy and schism, Woman's work!

-N. O. Picayune.

GRACE ROCHE'S LEGACY. CHAPTER VIII. AND LAST.

By the Author of Margaret and her Friends. The following morning, Andrew Roche had a long and earnest conversation with his nephew, Geoffrey felt thoroughly wretched both in body and mind after his dissipation of the previous day; and readily listened to all his uncle said to him. He called himself a fool, thanked his uncle over and over again for his kind advice, and promised to follow it for the future. Andrew would have been better pleased if his nephew had appeared less confident; he knew the danger Geoffrey was in of falling again, from the very fact of his thinking he was quite safe; and determined to watch over him to the best of his power. He invited him to pass a quiet evening at the cottage, and contrived that Milly should be there likewise. It is so natural for us to believe what we hope, and Geoffrey expressed so much sorrow for his foolish conduct, and was so profuse in his promises of amendment, that the old sunny smile once more brightened Milly's face; and the dark shadow was, for the time, forgotten. The next day was Sunday. "Will you call for me to-morrow morning, as you are going to church, Geoffrey?" said Milly, as they were walking home from the miller's cottage on Saturday evening. "Yes, Milly; at least—now I remember, I can't call to-morrow morning, for I am not going to church; but the evening will do as well, won't it?" "Not going to church, Geoffrey?" said Milly, in astonishment. "No; but I'm going somewhere as good. I've promised Mr. Flamank to go with him to his church. You can come with me, Milly, if you like." "Oh no, Geoffrey; I'd never forsake our church; and I do wish you would not go," she added earnestly. "Why, Milly, who talks of forsaking our church, I should like to know? What a silly little thing you are. Surely there is no harm in going to hear what they have to say at other churches. I like to hear both sides."

"I didn't think you'd ever be turning preacher, Milly," said Geoffrey; and there was a little vexation in his tone; "but I've promised to go this once, and I don't mean to break my word." Milly turned away, and next day was not only at church but at the Sunday-school. There, with her class gathered about her, she found a place where she forgot her troubles in trying to do good to the young souls she loved. Andrew Roche's fears concerning his nephew proved only too well founded. In less than a month from the day when Grace was taken ill, her unfortunate heir had become a constant visitor at the Half-Moon, where he now generally spent the whole of his evenings. Andrew had spoken to him in vain; for Geoffrey found it convenient to take offence at what he termed his uncle's "interference," and thus a coolness grew up between them. Geoffrey's foolish mother did much towards increasing this ill-feeling, by suggesting to her weak-minded son that it was jealousy and spite on the part of his uncle, because he had been left out of Grace's will. Geoffrey knew better; but it suited him just now to pretend to believe it. The old shop was no longer considered good enough for his improved prospects; and Geoffrey commenced re-building on an extravagant scale. He had become very intimate with the Flamanks, whose only daughter he now generally accompanied to church at least once on Sundays. Mr. Flamank thought it would be a good thing to secure Geoffrey and his expected fortune for his daughter, and left no means unemployed for that end. "Old Grace Roche couldn't possibly last much longer," said Mr. Flamank to his wife; "and then—" But Grace Roche did last, strange to say, and seemed in better health than she had been for years. Meanwhile Geoffrey's business fell off day by day; and no wonder, for he was scarcely ever in his shop, and no one could depend upon his punctuality in executing any order; so that they went elsewhere. The fine new house and shop were finished, and heavy bills coming in and no money to pay them. Geoffrey had already borrowed a considerable sum of his uncle; and all poor Milly's little savings into the bargain. He must try his uncle once more, and amidst the heavy rain of an autumn evening, he bent his steps towards the miller's cottage, and found him in conversation with the clergyman. He had become a comparative stranger there, but was always welcomed kindly. There was now a greater contrast than ever between the appearance of the two cousins, for Geoffrey's naturally grave face had become worn and haggard. "I'm almost ruined, uncle," he exclaimed. "Will you lend me two hundred dollars? I'll promise you to turn over a new leaf from this very hour if you will." But Andrew was firm in his refusal to advance anything. "I have already done an injustice to my own children, Geoffrey, in the money I have given you, and which I shall never see again; and I can do no more. There is but one course open to you. Give up all you have to your creditors; and I will undertake to furnish you with funds to emigrate to a distant land, where your knowledge of your business will always enable you to earn your living, and where you will be removed from the temptation you have not been able to withstand." Geoffrey would not listen to his uncle's proposal, and begged and entreated for the loan he required. But in vain! and in a violent passion, breathing hard and unjust words towards his kind relative, Geoffrey Roche left his uncle's house, vowing never to cross the threshold again. It is a fearful thing to part in anger and hatred; for in this world of change and uncertainty, no one can reckon upon having a future opportunity of expressing regret, or asking forgiveness. Geoffrey Roche never reached his home; and his dead body was found next day in the mill-pond. It was in time of heavy rains and the "waters were out," that is, were much swollen and increased by the rain. There was a short way across the meadow from the miller's cottage to the village, and many supposed that Geoffrey had missed his way in the dark—mistaken by the flooded state of the country—and had fallen into the pond. Others took a darker view of the matter, and said that the wretched young man, a prey to remorse and despair had added sin to sin by willfully causing his own death. In compassion to the feelings of his surviving relatives, the coroner gave the case the benefit of the doubt, and verdict was returned of accidental "death." And the good old pastor preached a funeral sermon, which was remembered in Woodthorpe long after the lips that spoke it were silent in the grave. The heavy autumnal rains had given place to a winter of more than ordinary severity. The streams were all bound up, and the cold was intense. Mrs. Burton, at the farm, had been sitting up watching by the bedside of a sick child, and on going to the window to look out on the clear frosty night, she saw with alarm a thick cloud of smoke rising in the direction of Grace Roche's cottage. She aroused her husband and some of the men, and Mr. Burton was on the spot in a few minutes after his wife had given the alarm. There was no chance whatever of saving the cottage, for it was old and thatched, and there was no water to be had from the frozen pond; but he shuddered at the thought of the wretched old woman being burned to death. He was a powerful man, and a brave one too; and, although when he reached the cottage the flames were already beginning to burst forth, he drove in the door with one blow from his strong arm, and, at the risk of his life made his way through the burning cottage, caught up the already insensible form of Grace Roche, and carried her in safety into the farm.

They laid her on a bed; gave her some wine; and in a few moments she came to herself. No sooner did she do so, than, with a piercing shriek, she exclaimed, "The thatch! the thatch!" By this time the cottage had become a heap of ruins. But Mrs. Burton tried to quiet the old woman by telling her the men were doing all they could, but that her life had been spared, and she ought to feel grateful that it was, for she had been in great peril. "What's my life without it?" shrieked Grace. "Without what?" asked Mrs. Burton, thinking that the fright had upset the old woman's senses. "The money, the notes, all! all! in the thatch," screamed the miserable woman, going off into a violent fit of hysterics. It was quite true. Her ill-gotten wealth had been converted into bank notes and hidden in the thatch of the old cottage, and had perished in the fire, and Grace Roche was a penniless beggar! There was not much sympathy felt for her in Woodthorpe. "She must go to the workhouse, and serve her right too." But Andrew Roche did not say so. Early in the morning he was at the farm in his comfortable chaise-cart, with an offer from himself and wife to give Grace a room in their cottage, and a seat by their fireside. "Let bygones be bygones, Grace," said Andrew, kindly, "and you may be happier with us in your old age, than you were in your lonely cottage." The old woman was moved at last: this real kindness melted her hard stony heart. "I have not deserved this of you, Andrew," she said in a broken voice, "you once told me I might live to want the kindly feelings I then despised. I do want them, for I am very wretched, but I don't deserve them; and from you least of all." "Don't talk of deserts, Grace; few of us deserve much, I reckon, if it came to that. But come home with me, and Bessie will do all she can to make you comfortable." Grace Roche did not live very long to enjoy the home now provided for her by her brother's kindness, but she lived long enough to think very differently of what she had done, and to encourage the clergyman to hope that she had had grace given to her to repent of the sins of her past life; and to trust in her Saviour's blood. And when she died, her last breath called down blessings on her brother and his family, who had so nobly returned good for evil. The miller and his family prospered; and Andrew and his wife had the happiness of seeing all their children comfortably settled in life. And Maggie did have to turn out of the mill, for Frank brought home his wife, who was no other than Milly Northway herself. "Those Roches at the mill seem to get on finely in the world," said Jem Price to the old "oracle" in the farm-house kitchen. "Get on! To be sure they do," was the reply; "and for a good reason too; they put their trust in God—try to do their duty—work hard and industriously to get their own living, and not one of them has ever troubled himself about Grace Roche's legacy."

THE UNEXPECTED SON.

One summer afternoon Mr. Malcom Anderson arrived with his family at his native town. Putting up at the little inn, he proceeded to dress himself in a suit of sailor-clothes, and then walked out alone. By a path he well knew, and then through a shady lane, dear to his young, hazle-nutting days, all strangely unchanged, he approached his mother's cottage. He stopped for a few moments on the lawn outside, to curb down the heart that was bounding to meet that mother, and to clear his eyes of a sudden mist of happy tears. Through the open window he caught a glimpse of her, sitting alone at her spinning-wheel, as in the old time. But alas, how changed! Bowed was the dear form once so erect, and silvered the locks once so brown, and dimmed the eyes once so full of tender brightness, like dew-stained violets. But the voice, with which she was crooning softly to herself, was still sweet, and there was on her cheek the same lovely peach-bloom of twenty years ago. At length he knocked, and the dear, remembered voice called to him in the simple, old-fashioned way—"Come in!" (Come in.) The widow rose at sight of a stranger, and courteously offered him a chair. Thanking her in an assumed voice, somewhat gruff, he sank down, as though wearied, saying that he was a way-farer, strange to the country, and asking the way to the next town. The twilight favored him in his little ruse; he saw that she did not recognize him, even as one she had ever seen. But after giving him the information he desired, she asked him if he was a Scotchman by birth. "Yes, madam," he replied; "but I have been away in foreign parts many years. I doubt if my own mother would know me now, though she was very fond of me before I went to sea." "Ah, mon! it's little ye kin about mither, gin ye think sae. I can tell ye there is na mortal memory like theirs," the widow somewhat warmly replied; then added—"And where hae ye been for sae long a time, that ye hae lost a' the Scotch fra your speech?" "In India—in Calcutta madam." "Ah, then, it's likely ye ken something o' my son, Mr. Malcom Anderson." "Anderson?" repeated the visitor, as though striving to remember. "There be many of that name in Calcutta; but is your son a rich merchant, and a man about my age and size, with something such a figure head?" "My son is a rich merchant," replied the widow, proudly, "but he is younger than you by mony a long year, and begging your pardon, sir, far bonnier. He is tall and straight, w' hands and feet like a lassie; he had brown, curling hair, sae thick and

glossy! and cheeks like the rose, and a brow like the snow, and the blue een, wi' a glint in them, like the light of the evening star. Na, na, ye are no like my Malcom, though ye are a guid enough body, I dinna doubt, and a decent woman's son." Here the masquerading merchant considerably taken down, made a movement as though to leave; but the hospitable dame stayed him, saying, "Gin ye hae travelled a' the way fra India, ye maun be tired and hungry. Bide a bit, and eat and drink wi' us. Margery! come down, and let us set on the supper!" The two women soon provided quite a tempting repast, and they all three sat down to it, Mrs. Anderson reverently asking a blessing. But the merchant could not eat. He was only hungry for his mother's kisses—only thirsty for her joyful recognition; yet he could not bring himself to say to her—"I am your son." He asked himself, half grieved, half amused—"Where are the unerring natural instincts I have read about in poetry and novels?" His hostess, seeing he did not eat, kindly asked if he could suggest anything he would be likely to relish. "I thank you, madam," he answered; "it does seem to me that I should like some oatmeal porridge, such as my mother used to make, if so be you have any." "Porridge?" repeated the widow. "Ah, ye mean parritch. Yes, we hae a little left frae our dinner. Gie it to him, Margery. But, mon, it is cauld." "Never mind; I know I shall like it," he rejoined taking the bowl and beginning to stir the porridge with the spoon. As he did so, Mrs. Anderson gave a slight start and bent eagerly toward him. Then she sank back in her chair with a sigh, saying, in answer to his questioning look—"Ye minded me o' my Malcom, then—just in that way he used to stir his parritch, gieing it a whirl and a flirt. Ah! gin' ye were my Malcom, my poor laddie!" "Weel, then, gin I were your Malcom," said the merchant, speaking for the first time in the Scottish dialect and in his own voice; "or gin your braw young Malcom were as brown and bald, and gray, and bent, and old as I am, could you welcome him to your arms, and love him as in the dear auld lang syne? Could you, mither?" All through this touching little speech the widow's eyes had been glistening, and her breath came fast; but at the word "mither," she sprang up with a glad cry, and tottering to her son, fell almost fainting on his breast. He kissed her again and again; kissed her brow, and her lips, and her hands, while the big tears slid down his bronzed cheeks; while she clung about his neck and called him by all the dear, old, pet names, and tried to see in him all the dear, old, young looks. By-and-by they came back. The form in her embrace grew comelier; love and joy gave to it a second youth, stately and gracious; the first she then and there buried deep in her heart; a sweet, beautiful, peculiar memory. It was a moment of solemn renunciation, in which she gave up the fond maternal illusion she had cherished so long. Then looking up steadily into the face of the middle-aged man who had taken its place, she asked, "Where hae ye left the wife and bairns?" "At the inn, mother. Have you room for us all at the cottage?" "Indeed I have—two good spare-rooms, wi' large closets, weel stocked wi' linen I hae been spinning or weaving a' these lang years for ye bath, and the weans." "Well, mother dear, now you must rest," rejoined the merchant, tenderly. "Na, na, I dinna care to rest till ye lay me down to tak' my lang rest. There'll be time enough between that day and the resurrection to fauld my hands in idleness. Now 'twould be unco irksome. But go, my son, and bring me the wife; I hope I shall like her; and the bairns, I hope they will like me." I have only to say that both the good woman's hopes were realized. A very happy family knelt down in prayer that night, and many nights after, in the widow's cottage, whose climbing roses and woodbines were but outward signs and types of the sweetness and blessedness of the love and peace within.—Little Pilgrim.

GERMAN FAMILY LIFE.

Rev. Dr. Stevens contributes to The Methodist the following interesting article on life in Germany: A good German home is the best in the world. I say this peremptorily. German mothers are thoroughly maternal and extremely affectionate; German fathers are generally forbearing and moderate, and singularly inclined to "domestication." German children generally grow up, as by instinct, with an admirable mixture of filial reverence and affection. The Germans love large families; the more children, the better, according to their philosophy of life; and they generally have abundance of them. They despise the French and American misanthropy in this respect, and justly point to it as a proof of demoralization, unknown in their own better land. In their home-life they seem continually but unconsciously to be contriving agreeable surprises for each other, and this good feeling overflows the boundaries of home, and reaches all the intimacies of their lives—their kindred, their neighbors, their pastors, and their school-masters. No people make more pleasure out of fete-days, birth-days, wedding anniversaries, etc. None know better how to make "presents" or to invent souvenirs. For a German not to know the birth-days and wedding anniversaries of all his intimate friends, and not to commemorate them by some token of affection, however slight (for the value is nothing compared to the sentiment), is a barbarism, a sacrilege. In large families, these commemorations, reaching from the grandparent to the yearling baby, and extending

out to all dear friends, keep up, of course, an almost continuous exercise of kindly attentions and forethought; and the Germans have quite universally a peculiar tact of closing these beautiful little things with dramatic surprise, so as to render the "manner" infinitely more precious than the "matter." The lowliest village school-master's birthday is known to all his rustic flock, and his cottage on that day is a shrine of pilgrimage to all the little feet of the hamlet; flowers, books, cheeses, loaves of bread, embroidered slippers, chickens, geese, even young pigs, are showered upon him. He is decked with bouquets, and his humble home garlanded within and without; he is addressed in original doggerel, and serenaded with music and dancing. And thus, also, fares the village pastor; and all these things are done so heartily, so joyously, as to be evidently spontaneous, never ceremonious, as much a joy to the donors as to the recipients. Add to these domestic occasions the public festive days of the Church and the State, and you can imagine that German life is holy days enough. Christmas, and similar days, are occasions of incredible festivities throughout Germany. Santa Claus has no better dominion.

THE BEGINNING OF METHODISM.

From the "Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II."

But it is curious enough to find that the first step towards making those companions, to whose society Wesley had thus been directed, was taken by his younger brother Charles, then an undergraduate at Christ Church, who had himself been awakened into deep religious earnestness, and had obeyed the promptings of his warmer social nature by drawing together a few fellow-students in the same circumstances as himself. These young men moved by the first thrill of that tide of feeling which was soon to sweep all over England, had the courage to separate themselves from the mass of young bucks and bloods, the roystering "men" of their day, and to form themselves into an almost monastic brotherhood to the amazement of the University. Times have changed wonderfully since then: we are not unaccustomed now to the severe youthful virtue of the tender Ritualist, or to that curious pagan pietism which distinguishes the sect of young philosophers; but even at the present time such a brotherhood could scarcely originate without some ridicule from the surrounding crowd. It was the object of ceaseless darts of wit and a storm of merrymaking in that irreligious age. "They were called in derision the Sacramentarians, Bible-bigots, Bible-moths, the Holy or the Godly Club." One of their critics, less virulent than the rest, applied to them an old name fallen into disuse, which, indeed, is far from describing the character of the unregulated enthusiasm and emotional excess which was then and after attributed to the young Pietists. This name was that of Methodists—a title lightly given, with little perception of the importance it was to assume. To take it according to its etymology, it might as well have been applied to the followers of Benedict or Francis as to those of John Wesley; and, in fact, this movement, of which no one fore-aw the importance, was at its beginning much more like the foundation of a monastic order than anything else. Had Wesley (we repeat) been a Roman Catholic, from his hermitage he would have come forth like Benedict to the formation of a great community. His country, his race, and birth, were, however, too many for him. There are few notable lives in which one can trace so clearly the modifying influence of circumstances. A body more opposed to Rome could scarcely be than the religious society which acknowledges Wesley as its founder, and yet no society could be more evidently established on the very principles of Rome. When the young Reformer [John] returned to Oxford to his university duties in 1728, he was received at once as the spiritual director of the little brotherhood, an office hitherto unknown among Protestants. Under his guidance the brethren fasted and prayed and devoted themselves to alms and charity; they regularly visited the prisoners and the sick; communicated once a week; and fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, the stationary days of the ancient Church which were thus set apart because on these days our Saviour had been betrayed and crucified. They also drew up a scheme of self-examination, to assist themselves by means of prayer and meditation, in attaining simplicity and the love of God. Their principle was to "live by rule, and to pick up the very fragments of time that not a moment might be lost." The Scheme of Self-examination, which unfortunately we have not room to quote, was divided into two tables like the Decalogue itself—a searching self-inquisition into every passing thought and movement of both mind and body. Its rules are most identical with those of the mystic codes of monastic piety, as indeed they are with the expression of all intense religious feeling, when driven, if we may say so, to a desperate stand against the world. It is impossible to doubt that the mind must be injured, and its grace and spontaneity destroyed, by such perpetual and minute self-inspection; but it must always be remembered that such rules must originate in times of desperation, when the standard which has to be set up before the enemy must be painted in the boldest colors, and when human nature cannot refuse itself a certain exaggeration. Moderation and good sense are well in their way, and so is the natural involuntary grace of those sweet souls who sometimes seem from their cradles to share the tenderness and indulgence as well as the purity of their Divine Master. But such are not the fiery captains, the forlorn hope, of Christianity; and at this moment John Wesley's little band of young, extravagant, ascetic knights-errant was England's forlorn hope.—Blackwood for Oct.