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THE INFLUENCE OF A SINGLE LIFE

By J. W. Tinley

Pentecostal Publishing Company
Louisville, Kentucky

Printed Book: Copyright 1902
By J. W. Tinley

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Digital Edition 06/19/2000
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PREFACE

In sending out this little volume to the public, to meet the criticism to which I know It will be subjected, I want to disclaim for it perfection. It is merely the result of a few spare hours from a busy minister's life.

As you will observe, there is no deep plot to be found. This was purposely avoided. I was dealing with a consecrated Christian character, and I intended simply to show how providence could and would lead such a soul, and to show the influence of even one consecrated Christian upon a community.

The story is based upon facts. Belfour is a real place, and remains much as described in the story. Grace is no imaginary being, and old man DeLuph and Uncle Hiram have lived and blessed their community very much as the story relates. The suicide of Mr. Daveny is a real occurrence, as are the other incidents mentioned. And the story is true as detailed. The many conversions recorded are not creatures of fancy, but are real.

The object of this little book is to help young and inexperienced Christians to meet trials with Christian fortitude, and to overcome them; also to help sinners seeking friendship with God to know more of His nature and requirements; and, by a persistent seeking, to find Him precious to their souls. If even one soul should be saved as the result of this little book, I shall feel that all labors expended have been rewarded a thousand fold.

So, adieu, my friends, until we meet with Christ.

J.W.T.
Jesup, Ga.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

This little book by my friend and brother was not written to please critics. It was written for the edification of a large class of young people, who need just such a work. I am confident it will do good and stimulate many a young man and young woman to a broader and deeper consecration of life -- social and all -- to the Master's service. The reasoning of old man Green in defense of wicked social customs is very fallacious, but they are just such as preachers meet every day. If all our young people will read it, and prayerfully follow the example of the heroine, Grace, it will prove very helpful.

C. M. Ledbetter
Blackshear, Ga.
January 11, 1902

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01 -- A DESCRIPTION OF BELFOUR

Belfour was a nice little mill village, situated at the base of a moderately high hill, and nestled among the beautiful trees that lined each side of the streets. These trees were not of natural growth, but were the work of careful planting with the minutest regularity. This had been done several years previous to the beginning of this story. By now they have grown to an immense size, and their out-reaching branches almost solidly arch the streets.

The mill houses, generously furnished by the proprietor, were carefully lined upon either side of the streets, and at a sufficient distance from each other to make them uniformly occupy the squares. The cottages themselves were not of gorgeous build, but modest, comfortable, and neat. And all were built alike, or nearly so, and then were kept well painted and in good repair, as were also the fencings.

To the north of the village stood the large cotton mill, which furnished employment to more than three hundred operatives. The mill had been erected by a bold stream of water. Across this and the adjacent swamp had been thrown a large dam. This threw back an immense pond which furnished ample water power all the year.

The home of the proprietor was situated upon the highest elevation anywhere near the village. Its location was northwest, of the mill and village. The eminence occupied by this home was at a sufficient elevation to give a splendid view of the little village that nestled in the valley below. And the village itself, when viewed from the front verandah of this magnificent home, was most picturesque. No expense or skill had been spared in the preparation of this home to make it ideal. Few, if any, additions could have been made to either its comforts or beauty. From this dwelling to the public road, nearly two hundred yards away, the ground lay in a gentle slope. Around the house, and at a sufficient distance to enclose a neat flower yard, a stone wall had been built, and this was filled in with earth to almost a level. This was distinctly the flower garden. Many were the varieties of small flowers carefully planted in this neatly arranged yard. Walks ran through it in every conceivable direction, until it formed a veritable labyrinth. Next to this yard, and surrounding it on every side, was another stone wall. This was much larger than the other yard, but it, too, had been filled in until the steep had been considerably leveled. This was known as the shrubbery yard. It also had been planted most beautifully, and the shrubbery stood in hedges and lines. Many were the varieties, and of the most choice selections. In springtime, when this and the smaller yard were in the fullness of bloom, it reminded one of the Garden of Eden. Between this last yard and the road below was a shady grove. When the place had first been built, the natural growth of trees had been thinned away, only the most promising being left. Now these trees had grown to immense size, and their broad branches, when in foliage, very nearly shut out the sun. On each of the stone walls was fencing of old iron of the most exquisite design. But thrown around this last grove was a neat plank fence. Standing on either side of the walk-way from the public road to the house was a large, neat, octagon-shaped summer house, made mostly of iron piping. Over this the ivy vines had climbed until they covered it completely. Singly, and in groups, at various places in this grove were rustic seats arranged. Several paces to the north of this walk stood the pavilion. It was here that the proprietor so often entertained his employees with moonlight dances. This pavilion was an open structure, with seats arranged upon three sides where those who were not engaged in dancing could sit and rest.

Robert Green, the proprietor of this excellent property, was a noble, big-hearted character, who seemed to be happier in providing pleasure for others than in seeking comforts for himself. By his unstinted expenditure of energy and money for others, he had won the esteem of all. And not only was he concerned for their social happiness, but as much for their home comforts. Many a poor operative felt the force of his kindness when he was sick and yet drew his stipend as regularly as if he had been steadily at his post of duty. By his wise management and courteous treatment of those in his employ, he had succeeded in collecting a class of men of fine ability. It was due largely to this fact that he had achieved such splendid success in his business. No triflers or indolent characters were given encouragement to remain in the mill or village. But as soon as their true character was established, they were immediately discharged, being left to find shelter in other quarters. By this method the proprietor had succeeded in gathering about him a class of society with whom his own family could associate with pleasure.

Mrs. Green, the wife of the proprietor, was a lady of splendid personal address. She possessed a fine, genuine nature, which caused her to be admired by all who knew her. In her early life she was favored with good advantages, and she had shown the good sense to improve them. This fact perfectly fitted her for the place which she now occupied. She was in perfect sympathy with her husband in all of his plans, and did what she could to perfect her part of them. They had but two children now living, Carl, a bright, manly boy of nineteen, and Pearl, a sweet girl of fifteen. Carl was not so well developed physically as most boys of his age. He had never been strong, and was known as a great "mama's boy."

Carl and Pearl were not like most children reared in luxury, as they had been, who look upon others less fortunate than themselves as beneath them socially. Every tendency of this kind had been carefully watched for by father and mother, and instantly corrected. These false notions are calculated to lead to a haughty spirit, which neither of these sensible parents could tolerate. They had been careful to impress the young minds of their children with the fact that merit is the only true test of character; that money or position could not afford such test, since many who hold position or possess wealth are worthy only of the contempt of right thinking people. (Back of deeds lie motives which give shape and coloring to character. If carefully watched, these deeds sooner or later betray the character that stands behind them. What a man really is in his life and character ought to determine his position in society. How much we wish this kind of teaching were given in every home. But in many instances, even good people have false notions concerning true manhood and womanhood. We need not hope for much improvement as long as false ideas at this point are entertained. When men and women are valued only upon their intrinsic worth, we will see a change. May the day speedily come when men will all meet on one common level, and when pure, unblemished character alone can determine the position that each individual shall occupy. Then purity of character will be at a premium. Then there will be held out to the world inducements calculated to stimulate their highest aspirations. But as long as all come and go in a solid mass, and no appreciation is shown for real worth and genuine merit, we can but expect matters to go on as they are, or worse.)

In this little village it would seem that peace and plenty abounded. All seemed happy and contented, at least it was so from a worldly standpoint, but nothing at all of a religious nature was encouraged in the village.

God can afford to wait long for the development of His plans and purposes. One day with Him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. But with finite man, whose term of life is measured by "three score years and ten," it is not so. Christ's words to Judas are full of meaning to us "What thou doest, do quickly." Into this village a single Christian whose life was fully consecrated to God went, and we shall see the marvelous changes that took place. Her motto as a Christian was: "Lord, Thy will be done."

* * * * *

02 -- THE ARRIVAL

Rob, you have not forgotten that Grace is expected to arrive on the 4 o'clock train?"

"No, Ethel, I have not forgotten it. I will come back in time to go with you to the train. But in the meantime you should put everything in readiness, so that we shall not be detained at the last moment."

This conversation took place on the piazza just after dinner as Mr. Green was leaving the mansion for the mill. His kind wife remained on the piazza watching him until reaching the mill he was lost to sight. She then turned away and began at once to put everything in order. Mrs. Green was a model housekeeper, and under the touch of her deft fingers even the older things about the home put on the appearance of new. As she prosecuted her duties she was thinking of what a fearful draft was made on the man with large business enterprises under his control; of how little satisfaction he was to his own family. Business, like a very exacting boss, demands all of a man's presence, time and thought, if he would make it a success. And he who makes himself a slave to his business finds very little pleasure in anything else. Rob Green appreciated his good, self-sacrificing wife, and was as kind and thoughtful of her as any devoted husband. But the pressure of large business affairs so engrosses the time and thought of men that they, in a measure, forget the little kindnesses due to their families, and which add so largely to the happiness of the home.

Mrs. Green had known very little of her father's family. While quite a young man her father had left home and gone to a distant State to make for himself a fortune. In his business he had been reasonably successful. Both because of the distance and the demands of business, he did not pay frequent visits to the old home. Eventually the warm ties of kinship were partially severed. The rush and push imposed upon him by success had well-nigh effaced those delightful memories and affinities of other days. (And we might say in passing that he who thus loses the love and sympathy of home has lost to his own heart much of that which can soften and sweeten his life. How much does the man of middle life feel like a boy again when, after an absence of a few months, or years, he returns to the old home! The particular interest manifested by the mother in her own individual way, and the kindly tokens of father's continued affections, make one all but wish to be a boy again. And as years pass by, and they advance in age, how much of their former little imperfections they do lose to their children! Nothing is so prominent now as the nobility of their character. And nothing impresses so much as their goodness. Well may we entertain these delightful impressions, for father and mother will soon have acted their part in life's drama, and have passed from this stage of action forever. Then how sad the realization, "I have no mother or father now." The words

of mother, and the oft-spoken maxims of father, will be repeated to posterity as mementos and adages of wisdom. Ah ! then faith spans the chasm of death and joy sings, "We shall meet again.")

It was directly after the decease of her father that Mrs. Green learned of her cousin Grace. She had written the news of her father's death to her uncle, his brother, and Grace, though but a child, replied, with her father, in a letter of condolence. There was but a short correspondence between them, only a few letters being passed, but somehow Grace impressed herself upon the mind of Mrs. Green in a very forcible manner. She felt that here was no ordinary child.

Four years later Mrs. Green was sitting in her room one evening in a meditative mood. Her mind reverted to certain incidents connected with her father's death, and especially to the letters of her uncle and Grace. She knew that by this time Grace must be grown. How much she felt she would like to see the woman who, when but a child, could write such beautiful and thoughtful letters. "Why not invite her to visit us," thought she. "Not one of my father's family has ever done so." And moving her chair to the desk, she at once proceeded to pen her thought. A lengthy letter was soon written, containing the kindest invitation to Grace to make her a visit. By the time that Mr. Green came in, she was pretty well enthused over the subject. She at once began to tell him what she had done, and read to him the letter she had written.

"I am very glad," said Mr. Green, "that you thought of writing Grace. None of your father's folks have ever made us a visit. This makes me more than anxious that Grace should do so. I think that we can make her stay in Belfour pleasant; we will, any way, leave no means untried."

Grace received the letter just a few days after the burial of her mother, she having nursed her through a protracted illness of more than a year. During the last weeks of her mother's illness the strain on her was very heavy. Now, that the reaction had come, she was nearly in a state of nervous collapse. Grave fears were entertained by her father that her strength was not sufficient to rally. He had been seriously meditating what course to pursue for the best to restore her to health again. He had matured no plans when Grace handed him the letter from Cousin Ethel Green, expressing her surprise at its reception.

"What do you think of it?" said her father, as he returned the letter to her.

"I have not seriously considered it, father," replied Grace, "as I think it impossible for me to go."

Her father had done a lot of thinking while he was reading. This, to him, was the opportunity to do something for her health. He could see wisdom in the proposition, and felt that it was essential that she accept it. So, after hesitating for a few moments, he said "I do not see why it should be impossible for you to go. I am quite sure that you need the rest, and this will be such a delightful visit for you."

"But, father, could you think me so unkind as to leave you at this time?"

"But, daughter," replied the father in his own affectionate style, "nothing would delight me more than that you go. I assure you that I shall get on well, and the visit will be so beneficial to

you. Now, do not refuse to accept on my account, but go, by all means. It will be worth more to you than physic, and I think your constant care of your mother for so long a time, with such beautiful devotion would merit just such a visit as I believe this would be for you. So, for my sake, I shall ask you to go."

"But, father, you will wait until morning for a more definite reply from me, will you not?"

"O yes; longer than that, if you wish. But I would like that you make the date as early as you well can."

The hour for Grace to retire having come, she bade her father an affectionate good night, and went directly to her room. The letter was a surprise to her, but the promptness of her father in urging her to accept was a greater one. She did not understand his motives, and hence the mystery.

After closing the door to her room she still continued to study the matter. She did not object to going, but regretted to leave her father at that time. "But," thought she, "I shall do in this as in all other matters: I will ask God to direct me that I may do what is best for myself and most for His glory. If I go, I must be sure that it is God's will. I want to do nothing else." It was God's will, and He so impressed her that night. The next morning she was able to say to her father that she thought it right to comply with his wishes. The time had been set, and the evening referred to in the conversation on the piazza was the time for her arrival.

Mr. Green had gone home on good time, and had everything in readiness by the hour for the arrival of the train. When the train stopped at the depot he was ready to meet and assist her. Just at that moment a young lady, rather slender in build, with dark hair and dark eyes, came down the steps. Mr. Green, looking into her face, thought he could see a slight resemblance to his wife. As she stepped from the train he met her, bowed politely, and said, "Grace, I suppose."

She politely bowed and replied, "Yes; and this is Cousin Bob?"

"Yes," said Mr. Green, in his usual good natured way, "this is your Cousin Bob, and a cousin that you have not seen before. Come right on to the carriage, and I will then see about your baggage. Ethel and the children will take charge of you." As he approached the carriage he said, "Grace, this is Cousin Ethel, this is Cousin Pearl, and this is Cousin Carl. They will take care of you now. You will be doing right well if they do not talk you about to death. Take charge of the carriage, Carl; I will come up presently, after I shall have gotten the baggage."

At this the horses pranced away toward beautiful elevation, a little more than a half mile in the distance, where stood one of the most beautiful residences Grace had ever seen. She immediately recognized it as the Green mansion, and a mansion it was. It was so called by the entire village.

Mrs. Green and the children began at once to express their pleasure at having her make them a visit. And the children were trying to explain everything with which they met.

When the carriage stopped at the door of the mansion, all were helped out, while the coachman took charge of the carriage. The four went into the parlor, where they waited for the arrival of the baggage. Grace saw that the comforts and luxuries of this home far surpassed her expectation. She was then shown to her room. Mrs. Green and Pearl lingered at the door, talking. "I was so sorry, Grace, to hear of your mother's death," said Mrs. Green. "And she suffered so much, I would think. I know you are quite broken down from your constant watching at her bedside. I do hope that your visit with us may be a rest for you. I know you must need it so much." "Yes, Cousin Ethel, I could not have borne up under it but for the help of our Father in heaven. I asked Him for strength equal to the privilege of caring for mother in the kindest possible way, so that I could make her last hours on earth as comfortable as her suffering would admit; and He gave me this strength. It was this help from him that sustained me through it all."

"Your mother," said Mrs. Green, "was a great sufferer in her last hours, was she not?"

"Yes," replied Grace, "but her suffering was softened very much by her strong faith in God. Indeed, the end was a triumph with her -- I might say a fitting close to the pure, sweet life she had lived for so many years. I shall not forget it to my latest day. She called us all around her bedside, gave to each her parting message, bade us good-bye, and then said, 'Now, Lord, let thy handmaiden, weary of life and suffering, depart in peace.' And O, Cousin Ethel, such satisfaction and such holy triumph as were hers! And with a face aglow as if all but transfigured, she lifted her hands up, as if to meet some one, exclaiming, 'Jesus, Jesus,' and passed peacefully away. O, Cousin Ethel, I didn't feel that mother had died. She had gone home. To her, death was a mere transition."

By this time the conversation had grown too serious for Mrs. Green. She informally left the room, requesting that Grace rest while she looked after the home duties that then demanded her presence.

"There is something about that dear girl that I do not understand," thought Mrs. Green, as she went to give directions to the servants. "She is happily serious. I did not expect to find her so pleasant this soon after the death of her mother. She doesn't seem to regard her as dead, but rather translated. I am delighted to know that she isn't nursing her trouble. She does need rest and recreation so much. But such inquisitive eyes as she has! Every time she looks straight at me there seems to be something in her eye that says, 'I wonder if you are a Christian?' Somehow those looks troubled me, and I don't know why. She has said nothing directly to me on the subject of religion."

Grace, left alone, had time to reflect on her trip, and then to spend her accustomed hour in prayer. This sudden change seemed to have brought her into a new world. The conditions are so different from those of her own home. "It does not seem that Cousin Ethel is very religious," thought Grace. "She did not enter readily into the conversation with me, but seemed a little nervous."

By this time the hour had arrived for her evening prayer. She knelt by the bedside where possibly no one ever knelt before, and thanked God for the blessings of the day; for bringing her safely to her destination; for the rich provisions made for her comfort; for His presence all the day.

Then a prayer that her visit might be made a blessing to some one; then closed by saying, "And, Lord, thy will be done by me, with me, and through me as thy handmaiden."

These are truly precious moments to the Christian, when he may shut the world out and God in. The vexations of the day are forgotten as God appears in the richness and sweetness of His splendor to His creatures. These are holy moments.

After the season of prayer, Grace went down stairs and out on the verandah to see the little village. She was met at the doorway by Pearl, who threw her arms affectionately around her, and took great pleasure in answering every question, and explaining every sight that she thought interesting to Grace. And as Grace looked down into her large blue eyes, she thought, "I wonder if you have any knowledge of Christ and His love"? There was something in the frank expression of the girl that won her heart.

After tea they were entertained in the parlor by Pearl's music. Presently Pearl said to Grace, "Do you perform"?

"I can," replied Grace, "but I had rather not this evening, dear."

The hours were pleasantly spent until the clock struck nine, when Grace was again conducted to her room; and with an affectionate "Good night" she was left alone.

After the children had retired, Mrs. Green said, "Rob, what do you think of Grace"?

"I am delighted, even above my expectations," said he. "At first I must confess that I felt a bit disappointed, as she did not measure up to my preconceived notions of her, but she does improve so much on acquaintance -- so modest and sensible. She will make such a nice companion for Pearl."

"And, Rob, she is so religious. I asked her about the death of her mother, and I wish you could have heard her talk. The truth is, I had to get away as soon as I well could."

"Well, said Mr. Green, "You know that her mother has just died, and she naturally feels sad and delights to talk on religious subjects. But she won't be in Belfour long before she will forget all that, and be as gay as any one."

"But, Rob, I doubt it. She somehow impresses me as being a girl of too much decision of character to change her mind so suddenly as that."

"Yes," replied Mr. Green, "the Guff girls were very religious, too, when they first came here. They could talk of nothing else. But you don't hear anything more of them now, and they are among the leaders in our society."

* * * * *

"Well, Ethel, I have announced an entertainment to take place to-morrow evening for Grace's special pleasure. I think that she has recovered sufficiently now to enjoy an evening of pleasure."

Mr. Green was just leaving the mansion for the mill when he made this announcement to his wife.

"Why, Rob, you don't tell me so! I am astonished at you. Why didn't you speak to me before you did this? I do not think that Grace will take any part in it, and you can see how unpleasantly it will situate her. Had you mentioned the matter to me, I might have suggested something, that we could have done to make the evening pleasant for her."

Why do you think that she will have nothing to do with it, Ethel?"

"From her frequent conversations with me," replied Mrs. Green. "I have heard her express herself freely about dancing, and I know that she isn't willing to take part in that kind of amusement."

"On what grounds does she place her objections?" inquired Mr. Green, gravely.

"Well, Rob, as I have told you before, Grace is a Christian, and she doesn't think it either becoming or right for a Christian to dance."

"Oh, pshaw ! that's all stuff ! This is only one of her fanatical notions. She will soon see better. Grace is young and bright, with plenty of life, and she will chime in at the proper time when the right influences are brought to bear on her. I know that she is a bit sad now, on account of her recent bereavement, but time is a great healer of troubles, you know. Before many weeks she will be as happy and gay as any girl in Belfour. Now, you see if what I tell you isn't true."

"Well, she may, Rob; but I shall believe it when I see it. I look upon Grace as a girl of decisive character, and once she has formed an opinion, she isn't easily moved from it. Grace is one of the purest Christians I ever knew. She is most devoutly consecrated to what she thinks is right. I am satisfied that it will take a long time to change her present way of thinking."

"You are? Well, just let me handle the matter for a while and I will show you. I know just how to manage her. If you don't believe it, you just watch for a while. Before she realizes what I am doing, she will be brought fully into all our amusements. But don't give my plans away, or you will spoil everything."

"I shall not interfere with any of your plans, Rob, but I am confident that you will fail. You simply do not know Grace as I do."

"If the reasons assigned are all, I have no fears. She just hasn't seen the amusements of Belfour. When she does, I am confident that she will not find so many objections."

"But, Rob, suppose she does have nothing to do with it, think what a peculiar position she will occupy. The evening could be rendered exceedingly unpleasant to her. Grace is my guest, and I would feel bad about it if it were to turn out that way. I repeat, that I do not think this the wisest thing to do so soon as this."

"But, Ethel, she places herself voluntarily in the dilemma. She ought to have left her religious notions at home. We are not responsible for them. I am providing the highest, best class of amusement that I know of for her. If she has such strict opinions about certain matters, she should have left them at home. You know that Belfour is no place for such sanctimonious thinking as that about which you speak. And this is one of the reasons why I do not invite preachers here. They would be everlastingly down on every nice thing that you might start. They are an intolerant class who pose as dictators in all matters. Somehow I can't endure them, and I try to let them know it. One preacher in our little village, so happy now, could spread confusion by his opposition to our way of thinking and doing that it would take years to get over."

"But, Rob," replied his wife, rather seriously, "the preacher might be right. It doesn't seem to me that the present way of doing is altogether the best. We have had dark hours of trouble, when I felt very keenly the need of some good man of God to offer me comfort from the Bible. And we may talk as we please now, but there may be darker days awaiting us than any through which we have yet come."

"Well, I must go to the mill. Ethel, see that everything is properly arranged for tomorrow evening. If you speak with Grace, impress upon her mind forcibly that she must take some part in it. Don't humor her present notions in any way. I know of no better time to make the experiment in her case than at that time."

Mr. Green left immediately for the mill, while Mrs. Green remained pensively on the piazza. She was troubled at the present situation. Mrs. Green had learned to love Grace dearly in the short time she had been in the home, and she feared that something might be done to hurt her feelings. "It will never do for Grace to go there, feeling as she does," thought Mrs. Green. "I can't change Rob. My only hope now is to change Grace's mind. I had better do this than that any unpleasantness should arise." And Mrs. Green walked back to Grace's room, where she found her writing.

"Pardon me," said Mrs. Green; "I did not know that you were busy."

"Never mind that," replied Grace; "I am through now. I have just written to my father."

And with this assurance Mrs. Green went in and putting her arms affectionately around her shoulders, said: "Grace, Rob is making big preparations for us to have a gay old time tomorrow evening. He has engaged the village band, will have all sorts of refreshments, and really everything to make the evening pleasant. Now, dear, I have heard you express yourself quite freely about such matters, but you must lay aside these notions and help us to make the evening a pleasant one. Now, don't say that you won't. I will give you plenty of time to carefully consider the matter. You are in Rome now, and you must 'do as Rome does.' And it's all given for your special benefit."

"I am very sorry, Cousin Ethel, that Cousin Rob has taken such pains to make the evening so pleasant, and that I can't participate in it. You know that nothing would delight me more than to join in with you and the young people of the village and show my appreciation of this kindness shown me, but unless I should see good reason to change my mind, I could not conscientiously do so. I ceased to dance when I became a Christian, and I can truthfully say that I have not had a desire to enter into such amusement since. I have no patience with a Christian who is so pressed for pleasure that he must seek it from the world. David, in the eighty-fourth Psalm, says: 'I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' I know that many so-called Christians feel that when they are in Rome they must follow its fashions and ways, but I do not so see it. I am as much duty-bound to be true to God and to maintain a Christian character here as at home. It is as near to the heart of God from one point in this world as another. And I believe that every wrong deed of His children wounds His great loving heart. Then how could I do this, after He has done so much for me? It is His approbation that delights the soul; His approval furnishes the most complete satisfaction."

"I have all faith in your piety, Grace, but you can hardly imagine how anxious I am that you should enjoy the evening with us. I feel that it will, in a measure, be incomplete without you. And I do not see how you should do so great a wrong by taking part with us. This, it seems to me, would be a very small offense against God, or your conscience."

"But, Cousin Ethel, there is where all injury to the Christian experience and character begins. One does not go into wrong at a leap. The insidious influences of sin lead by small degrees; but once you have yielded, you are weakened for the next attack. The only safe way for the Christian is to do God's will at any cost. No one can be intensely spiritual without being very guarded against every wrong. We cannot serve God and mammon. We must either give up the world, or the love of God and the hope of heaven."

"But, Grace, you are young now, and at that age where the world offers most to you. It seems hard that you should forfeit every pleasure it offers and become so old. The young people of Belfour have a great deal of amusement, and I don't think that you will find a nicer class anywhere. Come, now, my girl, don't be over-pious I will take you under my wing and protect you from harm."

"I would most gladly do anything to please you, Cousin Ethel, if it did not involve my conscience to do so. But should I go beyond my convictions of right, I could not have any respect for myself."

"I shall leave you, dear, to think the matter over carefully, and dream about it, and hope you shall see good reasons for changing your mind."

Mrs. Green would not have been so persistent had it not been for the disposition of Mr. Green. She felt sure that he would try every possible way to induce Grace to dance, and, should he fail, would feel hurt. She knew further that he would use more strenuous measures than common, because Grace claimed to be a Christian -- that nothing would please him more than to persuade her to abandon her convictions. And if he should fail, she knew not just how he would take it.

After Mrs. Green left the room, Grace had time to think the matter over carefully. She at once saw her dilemma, and knew not what to do. She was enjoying the hospitality of this home, and they had been extravagant in their efforts to make her visit pleasant. If she refused to take part in the approaching event, she might incur their displeasure for life. They did not view these matters as she did, and it seemed now that nothing short of her actual participation would please them. It was a fearful pressure brought to bear on her young life. Many a Christian older than she would have yielded. But Grace was made up of martyr principles, and she was immovably fixed in her convictions. It takes just this to be a Christian at all times. That Christian will never amount to much who lets the world dictate his pleasures, or frighten or coax him into its ways. The only remedy in sight was to pray. Many of the Christian's hardest battles are fought upon the knees, and the victories accomplished in this way are permanent. So Grace fell down by her bedside and prayed most earnestly for the leadings of the Holy Spirit in this matter. She was very importunate in her prayer, and ceased not until she had the assurance that God would direct all things for the best and to His glory.

At tea Mr. and Mrs. Green were unusually pleasant. Not one word was said in any way relative to the approaching dance. After tea an hour or more was spent pleasantly in the parlor. Just as Grace was leaving the parlor for her room, Mr. Green said, "Grace, you have improved so much since you came to see us, I think now that you are getting strong enough to enjoy a little more violent exercise than what you are accustomed to, and we shall have a big gay time to-morrow evening for your special pleasure. I hope you will have on your best looks and enjoy it hugely. You will then meet all our young folks, and they will try to make the evening pleasant for you."

"Thank you, Cousin Rob. It has been several years since I have danced, and I guess by this time I am pretty well out of practice. It would hardly be fitting for me to begin again on so conspicuous an occasion."

And with these words she disappeared in the direction of her room. After again committing herself to God, together with the approaching trial, to which she felt sure she would be exposed, she fell asleep.

As they sat by the fireside, Mr. Green said to his wife: "Ethel, have you mentioned the dance to Grace?"

"I have," was her prompt reply.

"How did she receive it?" asked Mr. Green.

"Just as I told you she would," replied his wife. "She will not take any part in it, I assure you."

"Well, you see what she said when she left the room. I thought that was receiving the matter very kindly."

"Rob, Grace is too polite and ladylike not to be courteous, but I insist that you do not know that girl. She is too thoroughly devoted to her convictions of right to yield to anything else. And I

must ask that you do not press her too hard. If she thinks it wrong, let her have the benefit of her convictions. Do not so press the matter as to make her feel uncomfortable."

"I say that she will yield at the proper time. If you don't believe it, just wait and see," said Mr. Green.

Grace had prayed most fervently that the Spirit might impress her with her duty at this time -- that He might make her pathway plain. With this prayer on her lips she fell asleep. At that moment it seemed that God began the impression. In her dream she fancied herself standing upon a high elevation, where the larger part of the world could be seen. Beneath her lay the world, which seemed moving in busy haste. The creatures of earth were eager in their pursuit of such things as the world offered. Out in mid-air poised an angel with crown in his hand. Its brightness threw a halo of glory around the angel that excelled the brightness of the sun. This crown was held out at full arm's length to the world, while the angel said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt have a crown of life." A part of the world was busy seeking money. Another part was seeking pleasure. Neither of these two classes ever knew that the angel was there, or had spoken. They were blinded by the "god of this world." Another class would seek the world and its pleasures with one hand, and with the other reach out for the crown. But they all failed. Still another class (how few their number) kept their eye at all times on the crown. They were so intent on winning it that they never for a moment lost sight of it. They were ever faithful to God.

Grace awoke in a transport of joy. The dream was so vivid. Her duty was now plain. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." She thanked God again and again for such a vision as had been given her illustrative of that Scripture. It was far in the night when she again slept.

The next day was a busy one at the mansion. Carl was out on time gathering flowers in the village. Mrs. Green and Pearl were making selections from the yards around the mansion. Over the doors to the summer houses were beautiful flower arches. A large one spanned the entrance to the pavilion, covered with cedars and interwoven with flowers. This looked like one solid roll of flowers. Swinging down in front and at the center of this entrance, and just before the arch, was the name "Grace," made of flowers. As Grace saw it all, she could but think how such a place must be devoid of grace. But "what a rebuke this is to Christians who pretend to decorate their churches on Easter day," thought Grace. "Here taste and order are displayed. There, few flowers, poorly arranged, is usually the case. Oh, that the people of God loved their own as the world loves its own, how different things would be."

Now the immense crowd is fast gathering, and the band is in its place and has played one piece. All seem to be as happy as larks. Now the first set is on the floor and in full swing. Pearl came up to where Grace was sitting, and said: "I know you will not object, Cousin Grace, if I remain with you," and placed one arm around her shoulders.

"My dear," said Grace, "I thought you would have been off with the other young folks."

"I prefer to stay with you, I believe," said Pearl.

By this time the music stopped, and the crowd began to make their way to the summer houses which had been converted into refreshment stands. Grace watched carefully the jolly crowd as young men and maidens drank freely of beer and champagne, very few calling for lemonade.

Just then Mr. Green approached Grace with a tiny glass of champagne, and said: "Grace, here is a sample of Belfour's best champagne. Drink it, it will revive you."

"Please excuse me, Cousin Rob; I could not touch it under any circumstances."

"But just this glass for my sake," replied Mr. Green. "It won't hurt you."

"Not I, Cousin Rob. Not for any consideration. With due thanks to you for your trouble, but I must be excused."

Mr. Green laughed heartily and said: "Why, this is but a common occurrence with us."

Grace did not reply, but thought many things might be common occurrences and still be wrong.

"Come here, Mr. DeLuph," called Mr. Green to a young man standing not far away. "Grace, this is my friend, Mr. DeLuph. I wanted you to meet him, and hope that you will find him as entertaining as I have."

By this time the music had started again, and couples were going merrily to the pavilion. "Will you dance this set with me?" asked Mr. DeLuph of Grace.

"You will please excuse me, Mr. DeLuph, as I do not dance."

Mr. Green came up just then and said, "What's the trouble, Mr. DeLuph? You seem a bit embarrassed; this is unusual for you."

"Oh, nothing, sir, only Miss Grace has just refused to be my partner in this set, and I must forego that anticipated pleasure."

"Grace will not refuse you, I am quite sure, Mr. DeLuph, because this is her entertainment," said Mr. Green in a joking way. "Go along, Grace, and perform your part."

"I must be excused, Cousin Rob. I do not dance, as I have already said. If I can add to the enjoyment of this evening without doing violence to my conscience, I will most gladly do so, but to go farther than this, I cannot."

"But you ought to have left your conscience at home," said Mr. Green.

"I think fully enough of this crowd has already done that to excuse me," replied Grace.

"Miss Pearl, may I have the pleasure of dancing this set with you?" asked Mr. DeLuph.

"I shall take it as a kindness, Mr. DeLuph, if you will excuse me. Cousin Grace doesn't dance, and I feel inclined to remain with her just now. I am afraid that she will feel lonely."

"But you must go, Pearl," said Mr. Green impatiently.

"If you demand it, father, I will go, but I much prefer not to do so this evening." "I demand it; go on."

Pearl and Mr. DeLuph left at once for the pavilion, and Mr. Green returned to the refreshment stand. It was but a few minutes before Pearl came back, and laughingly said, "Cousin Grace, I switched him off. I held back until the set was made up, and then we decided not to go in. Don't you notice father. He is a little ruffled now because he could not induce you to dance, but he will get all right in a few minutes."

But Grace did feel it most keenly. She saw that it had all been a plot between Mr. DeLuph and Mr. Green that everything should go off as it did. And she did not appreciate the situation at all. But she consoled herself, knowing that she had asked direction of God as to what to do. Had it not been for that fact she would have left on the morning train.

Grace then, with Pearl, took charge of the children, and it was not long before the entire company of children had gathered around them. She introduced little games that made them laugh, and the children enjoyed them hugely. And it was not long before Mrs. Green remarked, "I believe that Grace and Pearl have the largest and happiest crowd. See how many grown folks have joined them."

Just then a young lady came hurriedly by Grace with a small glass of champagne in her hand. She went directly to where a group of young folks were talking, and handed it to a tall, handsome young man. He trembled from head to foot, and at first declined. "You will certainly drink it for my sake, Mr. Daveny," said the young lady. The young man, with trembling hand, took the glass, when his hands shook so that he could scarcely drink it. When he had done so, he stepped back, bowed politely and said, "Excuse me, please."

"Daveny's off for another drunk," said Pearl. "That young man is a reformed drunkard, and he will never stop now until he nearly kills himself."

"What a pity," remarked Grace. "That man may become her husband some day."

"In less than an hour after the glass of champagne had been given the young man a sharp pistol shot was heard between the pavilion and the mill.

"What in the world can that mean?" said Pearl. "Father doesn't allow anything like that on these grounds."

"I don't know," replied Grace, rather seriously. "I fear some one is hurt."

By this time the men were going in the direction of the disturbance, and some excitement was manifested.

Mr. Green came by just then, passing toward the pavilion. He called to DeLuph to know the cause of the disturbance. Mr. DeLuph had been among the first to go immediately to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

"Daveny has killed himself," replied Mr. DeLuph.

"Yes" said Grace, "and that young lady who induced him to take the champagne is a murderess. I would suffer my hand to paralyze before I would do a thing so wicked. She is at fault, and should be made to feel the force of the awfulness of her crime."

Mr. Green was not far off and heard all Grace had said.

This sad incident broke up the dance given for Grace's special benefit. And the men went to the place where Daveny had murdered himself, that they might assist in taking the dead body to a house.

Grace, all the while, had kept at peace with God. And when she retired that night it was with a conscience void of offense toward God and man. And withal her religious experience was brighter, if possible, than if she had not been subjected to the severe trials of the day. After Christ's temptations angels came to minister to Him, and they come to God's children when they stand true to Him under the severe trials of life.

"I am with thee alway," is Christ's promise to His struggling children. And peace is the result of victory. Grace retired that night with a holy calm resting upon her spirit.

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04 -- AFTER THE BALL

It was at breakfast the next morning that Grace and Mr. Green met. They passed the usual greeting, and Mr. Green tried to be jovial, but despite his efforts, Grace could see that he did not feel as kindly toward her as he had before the ball.

But she maintained the same sweet temper, and conversed as easily as before. The transactions of yesterday were buried with her, and she had the approval of God upon the course she had pursued.

Presently Mr. Green said: "I fear you did not enjoy last evening's event so much, Grace. I did not know of your strong distaste for such gatherings until it was too late to call it in, or I might have changed the program a bit."

"I was very sorry, Cousin Rob, I assure you, that you should have gone to so much pain and expense, as you did, to make the occasion so pleasant, and then the nature of the amusements was such that I could not, with my convictions, enter into them."

"You could have entered into them, I think, if you had left your convictions at home." replied Mr. Green.

"But I never do that. I do nothing without first asking Supreme guidance in it" said Grace.

"Bosh! All this talk about asking guidance," said Mr. Green. "Do you suppose that your God impressed you that it was your duty to come out here and treat us all as you did last night? I think religion ought to be flexible enough to accommodate itself to circumstances."

"I grant you," said Grace, "that what many profess as religion will bear such accommodation, but I neither profess nor want that kind. A true Christian has no love for such things. The book that I follow says, 'If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' And since the day of my conversion I have had no desire for such things. I have something that is far better."

"You have your ideas, Grace, of what you think it takes to constitute a Christian, and so have I. And I have as much right to my convictions as you have to yours. You believe that one must forfeit every enjoyment of the world and go mourning all his days in order to be a Christian. I believe it is the duty of man to make life happy here with everything that God has placed in the world. My religion, you see, is an assimilation of what God has arranged for His creatures' happiness here. Yours is separation from all these, and a life to self, with some imaginary deity by your side. A religion of your kind would be tiresome to me.

By this time Mr. Green felt that he had the reins pretty well in hand, and that he had scored a good point. He was very anxious to gain the advantage for many reasons. He knew that his wife and Pearl were already devoted to Grace. That they might at any time fall in line with her ideas of religion, and if he could produce the strongest argument, he thought this would prevent their doing so. He did not realize that one of the strongest arguments in favor of a religion is the characters of those who profess it. Comparatively few men read the Bible; nearly all men read character.

After carefully thinking for a moment, Grace said: "I think you would make a good theologian if you only knew the Scriptures, but it is quite evident you do not. You speak of your ideas and mine as if we would be judged by these. You and I haven't any right to an idea until we investigate God's word carefully and prayerfully to ascertain whether or not such an idea is in keeping with His word. If it is, then we are safe in forming ideas; if not, we are not. Now, you have given me your ideas, as you say: I want to ask if you sought them out of God's word after careful and prayerful study. If so, you have a right to speak as you do; if you have not, I say, reverently, you had better mind what you are doing."

Grace's reply was rather unexpected, and was a surprise to Mr. Green. He saw that the entire family was very much interested in the conversation, and that they recognized Grace as his superior in the discussion. This was more than he could well endure. His opinions had been taken

in the village without even questioning the justice or truth of them. And now that he should be beaten in his own scheme was more than he could well endure. So, pushing back his plate, and rubbing his hands nervously together, he said: "Whether I got my ideas after praying and mourning or not, they are mine. I have a right to them, and I shall not change them very soon."

"Hush, Rob," said his wife; "remember that you opened the discussion."

"Oh! Ethel, you are so ready to jump at conclusions. Grace knows that I meant no disrespect for her. I was just speaking in one of my emphatic ways."

But Grace did feel it most keenly, though she did not make any reply, as she thought it best not to do so.

"But, Grace, I would like to ask what you saw wrong in what was done last night? I want to know your objections in short; then maybe I shall know better next time how to regulate matters to suit your taste."

Grace knew that there were reasons deeper than those expressed, and she felt keenly the delicate position she occupied.

"I might say, Cousin Rob, that my objections to the ball last evening would hold good with all balls. I do not think a Christian has a right to seek pleasure from such a source. God is the fountain of all joy. To have Him in our hearts is to have the thing and the source with us always. You must remember the tragedy most vividly, I should think. Had it not been for wine and champagne, I hardly think that it would have happened. And this feature is not peculiar to the ball of last evening. I have never attended one where it was not carried on, either publicly or privately.

"A set of married folks were the leaders, as they are in nearly every one that I have attended. Then it's death to the spiritual life. I have never known a dancer to die happy. The case that led to my conversion I mention just here. She was in many respects a noble girl, kind-hearted and a true friend. We had just engaged in a three days' dance, when on the last night my friend went home with a severe pain in her side. We watched by her bedside for more than a week. And while in those stupors peculiar to pneumonia, she would say, 'Just this one more set, then I am done.' And lying on her bed, almost in the very jaws of death she would go through all the motions of which she was capable. And when aroused she would plead most earnestly with those around her not to dance. Said she, 'It is my worst sin, and it has ruined me; I am lost.' It happened to be my time to sit up with her when the final change came.

"Oh! the look she gave me when she said, 'Grace, promise me you will never dance again.' I did so. Then, with the most terrific expression I ever beheld on a face, she reached up to me and said, 'They have come for me. The devils are here. I feel their fires.' With these words on her lips she died. Oh! you can never tell how much the remembrance of this scene disturbs me yet. I do so much, regret to think of my friend as lost. And O, if I had only been a Christian I might have led her into the light of the Gospel, and how different her future would have been."

By this time Rob had gotten up and was standing by his chair, watching the influence of the incident as related by Grace on the members of his family. He saw that Grace was very much under the influence of her own story, for her eyes sparkled with tears. Carl and Pearl listened most intently, and Mr. Green saw that the incident had made a strong impression on their minds. He was truly offended, and left immediately for the mill. His wife followed him to the steps, while Grace and Pearl went back to the parlor.

"Ethel," said Mr. Green, "I am tired of this business, and I can't stand much more of it. Grace is carrying her fanaticism too far -- entirely too far."

"But, Rob, you should not feel provoked at Grace, for you brought on the discussion. Grace is reserved with her opinions. She doesn't speak until she has a good reason."

"Reserved! what, Grace reserved? Do you think that incident at the table this morning reserved? I really think it the most out-of-place thing I ever heard," said Mr. Green.

"But, Rob," said his wife, looking him directly in the face, "you asked Grace to give you her individual reason why she objected to the dance. She simply related the incident to show what forces were brought to bear on her to cause her to stop dancing. I fail to see where she has done any wrong."

"Well, I see," said Mr. Green, "and I tell you now that it must stop. I have got about as much of this kind of business as I want. The first thing you know she will be telling us how we ought to raise our children, and then you will hear from me."

"There is no danger, Rob, if you will just let her alone," said Mrs. Green. "She does not in any way meddle in affairs that do not concern her."

"Oh, Ethel, you talk so silly! Surely you did not hear her this morning, did you? I noticed that every one of you had your eyes and ears stretched as if you were afraid you would not catch it all. And yet such a piece of nonsense as it was -- -I never heard the like before."

"That may be true," replied Mrs. Green, "but you might have been better off if you had. I don't think that a little religion would hurt us any way. I know, for my part, it would not injure me."

"Yes, replied Rob, "there is where all this business will finally end. We will have a house full of penitents going around mourning as if all their friends were dead. I tell you plainly, Ethel, I won't stand any such, I will not. I mean it.

"But, Rob," said Mrs. Green, "don't be too hasty."

"Hasty! what," said Rob, "don't I see to what all this leads? And, Ethel, she is sure to be down on me about the bar. Don't you know she will? Then I shall tell her that its my business, and I am capable yet for a while of looking after it, and need none of her advice."

"Yes," said Mrs. Green, "she will certainly tell you what she thinks of it if you ask her. But I don't think that she will unless you do. And I insist that you started the conversation, and I don't see that you have any just grounds to feel hurt."

"No, I don't suppose that you do," said Rob; "you have been taking lessons yourself, I am quite sure, from the way you talk. And the children! Well, did you see Pearl last night? She stayed with Grace all the while, and danced but one set, and that after I had demanded it of her. And Carl never showed up on the pavilion at all. Don't you think that I notice such things."

"Well, what if they did not dance," said Mrs. Green, good-naturedly. "I don't see that they ought to dance unless they want to. But, Rob, I want to talk more about the bar. You claim that it doesn't pay much. I am satisfied that it does a lot of mischief, and we are able to live without it. Why can't you go out of business? That affair last night shocked me most awfully. I have hardly felt like myself since. It might not have happened if we had not carried intoxicants out there. That was a fine young man when not under the influence of drink. And somehow I feel that we are partly to blame for the crime."

"Yes," said Rob, "I knew that when Grace said what she did down there, you would take it all to heart."

"But, Rob," replied his wife, a little more serious than before. I have been convinced for some time that the bar was a bad business, and it's creating a lot of confusion. Only a few weeks ago, you know, that poor unfortunate man deliberately took his life, and I am reliably informed that it was due to the statement of his account sent him, and the demand you made that if he did not settle you would foreclose your mortgage on his home at once. This drove this poor man to suicide. I never felt so much for any one as for that poor widow and six children when the coffin was opened at the grave the last time. Did you hear those poor little half-clad children scream and say, 'Bring back my papa, bring back my papa!' And, Rob, it was our bar that did it."

By this time Rob had somewhat struck his equilibrium again. The positive, common-sense way his wife was talking had brought him down to plain facts.

"That was bad," said Mr. Green, "but you do not mention the charity of our town in giving to her so many things. We gave the children a pair of shoes each, and sent a barrel of flour and lots of other things to the widow. We keep liquors to sell to those who want them, and will have them; but we do not persuade them to buy."

"That is true, Rob, but it's in your power to put it out of Belfour. If you would work half as hard to get rid of it as you did to retain it, there would be no trouble in getting it out, and I could not but think also, how your vote represented dependent, helpless ones in your own family. The children and I cannot vote; you represent us. But you certainly did not represent me at that time. I could not help myself. That poor man who killed himself, of whom I spoke but a few moments ago, who drank up everything he had, represented eight by his vote, and I know his wife begged him to vote the dry ticket. Rob, this means something. We ought to think about these things. There are many helpless women and children represented in this business. It looks to me like the extreme of cruelty to bind the hands of women and children who have to suffer the consequences of this

business, and then force this traffic on them any way. I do not approve of it. I feel that every cent made that way is blood money. Besides all else we have a boy."

At this juncture Mrs. Green looked off and hesitated a moment as if in deep study.

"How would I feel to know that my only boy was a drunkard?"

Here the conversation grew quite serious. Rob Green had but two living children, and he idolized them.

"But, Ethel," said Rob, "I don't think we need fear for Carl. I have tried to raise him up to know the bad influence of spirituous liquors. I have kept it where he could get it when he wished, and I think this the proper way to prevent boys from becoming drunkards."

Mrs. Green replied in a rather sad tone, "That hasn't been my idea of the best way, and I fear you will find it so after it is too late."

"Ah, Ethel, you are always borrowing trouble. I have no fears for Carl," said Mr. Green, in a rather impatient tone.

"Nor did I, not until last night. But I do now. And if you had seen what I witnessed, I think you would change your mind."

"You don't mean to say, Ethel," said Mr. Green sternly, "that Carl was drinking."

"Yes, I do," replied his wife, "and he was drunk -- big drunk, at that. I left the grounds and came home to put him in bed."

"Well, I'll see about this matter, I will. You watch if I do not put an end to it."

As Mr. Green spoke his wife saw that he was out of humor.

"Now, Rob," said she, "mind what you do, or you may say something that you will have reason to regret."

"I say, Ethel, I'll look after this matter, that's enough."

So, Mr. Green left immediately for the mill, and Mrs. Green stood on the verandah thinking how much it changed the case when he found that it was his own boy who was drinking.

* * * * *

05 -- AN INCIDENT

After the conversation on the verandah, Mrs. Green went directly into the parlor where Grace and Pearl were entertaining themselves on the grand piano.

"You children are amusing yourselves, I suppose?" said Mrs. Green, as she seated herself in one of the large easy chairs.

"Yes," replied Grace, "I prefer an hour or so early in the morning in which to practice and keep up my music."

"What is the name of the piece you were playing and singing just now?" asked Mrs. Green.

"My Mother's Bible," replied Grace.

"I do think it is so pretty," said Mrs. Green. The music is good, but the words attracted my attention most."

"Yes," replied Grace, "and those words have a much broader meaning when one has been blessed with a mother like mine. In such case the words are intensely real. The Bible was her hand-book in life. She read it most of all books, and knew more of it. And at last pillowing her head upon it she fell asleep in Jesus."

"I have not told you before," said Mrs. Green, in rather a subdued tone, "but my mother was a most devout Christian. Her pure life, her strong faith, and her unshaken trust in God ought to have been a benediction to me, but I have seen and heard so little of a religious character since I have been in Belfour that I have drifted away from my earlier impressions. Rob has always been so averse to everything of a religious nature, and has so studiously avoided such things that I have scarcely had the heart to mention them in his presence. But I cannot think we are doing just right."

This was the first hopeful sign discovered by Grace since her visit to the home. "Maybe," thought Grace, "they are not so hard as I supposed."

Grace had now been in the home nearly three weeks, and up to the evening of the ball everything had been made exceedingly pleasant for her. Since that time matters had not gone so smoothly. But she consoled herself with the thought that she had asked God's direction in all she had done, and that she had His approval. The strongest forces had been brought to bear to try her fidelity to God; but she looked upon these as tests of character, and one would never know their strength of resistance were it not for the trials which come upon them. Trials really develop character.

"Pearl, do you know anything of Carl?" asked Mrs. Green.

"I do not, mama," replied the daughter. "He left immediately after breakfast, starting for the mill, I suppose."

Mrs. Green said, "But Pearl, isn't the mill shut down?"

"I believe it is, mama," the daughter replied.

"Let's see if it is," said Mrs. Green, at the same time rising from her chair. Pearl and Grace followed immediately.

"Yes," said Mrs. Green, "its shut down; something must be wrong. Do you notice how swiftly the men move from place to place?"

"Some of the machinery is out of repair, I guess," suggested Grace.

"Hardly think so," replied Mrs. Green in a thoughtful mood.

"Oh! mama," said Pearl, "somebody is hurt, don't you see those four men with some one on a stretcher? Oh! who can it be?"

"I don't know, Pearl; be quiet and let's see if we can find out." Mrs. Green spoke gravely. "Mama, do you notice how nervously father moves about? He seems to be all confusion."

Then in a nervous manner she said, "O, mama, can it be Carl?"

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Green, with a deep sigh that spoke louder than words. "I am now satisfied that it is he. O, my Lord, can it be Carl? Just look how Rob bends over the prostrate form."

At once four strong men picked up the stretcher and started for the Green mansion. There could be no more doubt now as to who it was. Mr. Green came close to the stretcher, leaning upon the arm of a strong man.

By this time Mrs. Green and Pearl were in the greatest agony of mind. Their screams and groans were most heart-rending.

Grace had remained silent until now. She had forgotten everything else in her intense desire to see and know who was hurt. But now she was satisfied beyond a doubt that it was Carl. O," thought she, "let me try now and help Cousin Ethel and Pearl." And in her affectionate way she placed one arm around each of their shoulders and said softly, "Cousin Ethel, trust in God, and save your strength. You don't know what the demands will be upon you. They will certainly be heavy if he is badly hurt."

"O, Grace, you do not know. You can not know," sobbed Mrs. Green. "This is almost more than I can bear."

"I know that, Cousin Ethel," replied Grace, "but God knows, and He has the power to help you. O, do, Cousin Ethel, leave as much of it as your frail nature will allow to Him. He is our burden-bearer."

By this time they had reached the yard enclosing the house, with the boy. Mrs. Green and Pearl ran out with hands upraised and in screams.

"Stop, Ethel, both you and Pearl. He may not be dead," said Mr. Green, "and you might excite him. Let him be taken into the room as quickly as possible."

By this time the men had let down the stretcher, while Mrs. Green on one side and Pearl on the other were kneeling over the prostrate form in deepest agonies.

Mr. Green placed his hand gently on his wife's shoulder, saying, "Dear, let us take Carl in the house now where the doctor can do something for him."

Mrs. Green arose reluctantly, and supported herself on Mr. Green's shoulder. Grace put her arms around Pearl's waist and assisted her to her feet and into the house.

Grace said, "I am so sorry, Cousin Rob, so sorry. But since it has happened, I am so glad I am here to do whatever I can for him."

"Thank you, Grace," said Mr. Green. "This is a severe ordeal. It's worse than you can imagine."

The men lifted Carl from the stretcher to the bed and the doctor examined him at once.

"He isn't dead yet," said the doctor in a rather excited manner. "His pulse is good. I hope we shall be able to restore him to consciousness in a little while."

"Do your best, doctor," said Mr. Green. "Spare no means to save my boy. The cost is nothing, nothing. O, do try to save my boy."

With this the strong man broke down, and a profusion of tears gushed from his eyes. It was the first time since the accident he had been able to weep.

The doctor said gently, "Mr. Green, I will have to ask you and Mrs. Green, also Miss Pearl, to leave the room, and let Miss Grace, Mr. DeLuph and myself have charge of Carl; your presence confuses us so we cannot do our best. Just let us have the room, please, and we will do all that lies in our power to restore him."

"How can I leave my poor, darling boy?" said Mrs. Green in another paroxysm of grief.

"It's essential, Mrs. Green," said the doctor. "The life of your boy may depend upon it. I will notify you in a moment of any change."

The three arose slowly and reluctantly left the room for the parlor. They were seated on the sofa, and Pearl and Mrs. Green leaned their heads affectionately on the shoulder of Mr. Green.

It was now eleven o'clock. The home was almost as quiet as death. Grace could be seen at intervals bringing hot water, but her step was so light that she could scarcely be heard. An hour has passed.

"What can you report now?" asked Mr. Green in the most earnest tone.

"No change yet," replied the doctor.

The suffering father closed the door softly and resumed his former seat. The only audible sounds from the room were deep sighs, and occasionally a fresh burst of tears and weeping.

No one knew just how the accident happened but in some way Carl had lost his balance, and having fallen across one of the great driving belts was thrown with fearful force against the great pulleys; his clothes being caught, he was carried over with terrific speed and thrown with crushing force upon the floor. It was just then he was seen, and the mill was stopped instantly. At first he was thought to be dead. The doctor was summoned immediately, and Mr. Green notified. Then it was discovered that he was not dead.

Two hours more have passed and no change yet. The doctor and his two helpers have been faithfully working for three hours. Carl was still breathing, but unconscious.

O, how slowly these hours dragged by! The three figures in the parlor were sitting like statues, scarcely a word passing between them. What fearful suspense! Every minute they were expecting tidings of evil. Minutes now seemed as long as hours the previous evening.

"I can't stand this suspense," said Mr. Green, "I just can't stand it, Ethel."

"Let's walk the verandah for rest," said Mrs. Green. "Anything is preferable to waiting in such suspense."

The three walked with locked arms for a time. Then Mr. Green said, "Ethel, it is no use trying longer. If they have not restored consciousness, they had as well stop. I cannot bear to be kept from my Carl in this way. It's now five o'clock. They have had six hours; this ought to be enough."

"No, Rob," said his wife, "don't be impatient; he is in good hands. Grace is an experienced nurse, and the doctor is doing all he can."

"Well," replied Mr. Green, "I cannot longer stand this." Going at once to the room, he opened the door softly and said, doctor, if there is no change yet you had as well stop and let my poor boy be quiet. I can't stand for him to be longer tortured in this way."

"Please, Mr. Green, leave us alone for a while yet. As long as there's life there's hope. Kindly leave the room and Carl to our care for a little while longer."

Mr. Green reluctantly closed the door and went back upon the verandah.

What a change trouble can make in a home. This beautiful mansion, which only yesterday was the scene of mirth and pleasure, is today converted into a house of mourning. And the proud, stately manner of its occupants is reduced to the humility of beggars. David once said, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." And many others have in every phase of trouble and affliction seen that a heavenly Father's hand was guiding.

The clock has just now struck six and still no tidings come from those within. Patience is gone, hope is writhing in agonies in the hearts of the three. But just now the door opens. Every eye is centered upon it. Grace appears. She staggers forward and says softly, "Carl is conscious, thank God."

In an instant Mrs. Green and Pearl threw their arms around Grace's neck and wept freely for joy, while Mr. Green was rubbing his hands in a most nervous manner and saying, "I am so glad, I am so glad."

"Come in," said Grace, "and see him now, but do try to suppress your tears until you leave the room."

The four moved softly into the room. When they looked again into Carl's eyes they all wept for joy, and kissed him.

Mrs. Green said between her sobs, "My darling Carl, I thought you would never know mama again."

"This will do now," said the doctor kindly. "Let us take charge of him a while longer."

Pearl and Mrs. Green remained bending over Carl, looking into his eyes. Though bruised and disfigured as he was, they thought him never so handsome and sweet.

"You will go now, please," said the doctor. "Delays are dangerous."

Grace walked out on the verandah with them and said, "About five minutes ago Carl opened his eyes. Then in a minute or so said, 'Water, please.' Oh, Cousin Ethel, no wonder I was overcome with joy when I came out. I had labored and prayed for consciousness so long." "It's a miracle, I feel."

As Grace returned to the room she repeated half aloud:

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

* * * * *

06 -- CARL'S DREAM

Two days have passed since the accident at the mill. Carl has retained consciousness, but with this exception there are no visible signs of improvement. He talks but little. Does not complain much. He bears up under his extreme suffering with the greatest fortitude. He is apparently satisfied if Grace is by his bedside. Day and night she has watched and nursed him with the devotion of a mother or sister. And under the intense excitement, and nerved up by the strongest desire for his recovery, she has forgotten herself. She has taken but little rest, as Carl would only consent for her to be absent from the room for short periods at a time. While Grace is at her post as nurse she is devoutly praying. This accident to her is a puzzle, but her faith is strong in the wisdom of the God who guides and controls the affairs of this world. And she is constantly praying that God may use this sad affair to His glory. Grace meditates much while left alone. It may be, thinks she, that this will prove the most direct way to the hearts of this rich, worldly family. All things work together for good to those who love God; but this family does not love God. Then she consoled herself by thinking that it may prove the plan by which God will answer the prayers of Cousin Ethel's mother, who has gone to heaven. She says that her mother was a devout Christian.

In the adjoining room Mr. and Mrs. Green are talking. Since the accident Mr. Green has apparently lost interest in everything but Carl. He attends to no business; will not even give orders. He walks the yard or verandah with hands clinched behind his back, with measured step, eyes looking toward the ground. He has slept but little, day or night. He cannot be consoled, and will listen to no words of sympathy. This morning he and his affectionate wife are sitting in their room. He has been in a deep, thoughtful mood for some time. Then to her astonishment he asks, "Ethel, where is the justice of God?,"

"I don't understand you, Rob," said his wife in complete astonishment.

"I mean just what I say. Where is the justice of God in sending this calamity upon our boy? I suppose you and Grace would say that God is in everything. If so, why should He send this suffering, and maybe death, upon our only and innocent boy? And this is the God Grace claims to be so kind and affectionate to His dependent creatures. I am a father and I have too much love and concern for my children to deal with them so cruelly as this. I press my question, Where is the justice of God?"

"I cannot give you a satisfactory reason, Rob, because of late years my mind has been on other things; but I venture that Grace can make it all plain and satisfactory to you. But Rob," continued his wife, "let me ask you to be a little more reverent in the way you propound this question; we are in enough trouble now. We ought to seek the friendship of God, and not try to wound His feelings further."

"I do not see how life could be any more unbearable than what it is," replied Mr. Green sternly, and arising from his chair he went directly to where Grace sat by Carl's bedside, ready to respond to any call in a moment. As Mr. Green saw his mangled boy, and Grace, his preferred nurse, he felt the uprising of some little jealousy. That his boy should prefer any one before his father to watch over and care for him at a time when such service would be a delight, was a little trying, to say the least. As he stopped in the door with a low brow, with head bowed and shoulders

stooped, Grace felt the deepest sympathy for him. He is carrying his own grief, instead of giving it to God. O, what a heavy heart and sad experience must be his! How much better he would feel, and how much lighter his poor heart would be, were he to leave these troubles with Him who said, "Cast thy burdens on the Lord and He will sustain thee."

As Mr. Green scanned the room carefully, he finally let his eyes fall on Grace, and then said, "Grace, where is the justice of your God?"

"I do not understand you, Cousin Rob. What can you mean?"

"That's what I mean," said he, pointing his finger at Carl as he lay like one dead upon the bed. "Why should God have sent this on that poor, innocent boy? You have been representing your God as the very embodiment of love and sympathy. You say He controls all things. If so, how do you reconcile this accident with such a character as you claim for Him? He seems to me rather to be a monster, ruling with despotic sway, having no concern for His dependent creatures."

"Oh! please do not, Cousin Rob; do not talk so irreverently as that, seeing you are so dependent upon Him. Even your every breath comes from Him. Not an enjoyment of your life but He permits you to have it. He has been thus kind to you for these many years, and now that trouble has come, you forget all the things of the past, and charge Him with purposely and wantonly disturbing your happiness. Cousin Rob, did you not place every piece of machinery in your mill? Would this machinery treat you kinder than it did Carl if you were, from any cause, to fall into it? I am quite sure that God suffers many things to happen for the correction and consequent profit of His creatures. But we can cause many things to happen of ourselves. God has endowed man with reason, and by this he may know where dangers are. He has planted within man the spirit of fear in order that he may preserve his own life from danger. But if men persist in running all kinds of risks, and now and then are injured, they cannot charge their injuries to God. It was a matter of carelessness or misguided judgment. I am satisfied that out of the incidents of life God does bring much good to His creatures. Many times He can impress lessons at these periods that He cannot by ordinary methods. But for the accident to which you refer, I consider that you are rather responsible than God. But out of this very calamity He will bring good if we will but submit to His leadings. We are so prone to look at all our matters from the human side. When our desires and affections take such strong hold upon us, it is hard to be quite still that we may see what God will do for us, and to say, through all, 'Thy will be done.' One of your mistakes, I am quite sure, is thinking death to be the worst of all calamities. I do not see it. There are many things that can and do happen to the human family worse than death. And I have always been impressed that Hezekiah made a mistake when he wept and prayed for longer life. How much better it would have been had his sun set without a cloud to mar its glory. And if we leave this case, which has plunged us into such grief, in the hands of our wise, good Leader who 'careth for us,' all will end well. I do not see, Cousin Rob, how you can regret this accident much more than I. But I am willing to do all that my strength will admit, and then leave the results to God. I am satisfied that all will come around right. But do, Cousin Rob, be careful how you talk. While God is love, He is also infinitely just, and you are too prone to mistakes to question either His goodness or wisdom in anything."

All the while Mr. Green was standing in the door, leaning against one of the facings. A part of the time while Grace was talking he seemed well-nigh unconscious of anything; then he would

look her straight in the face. Grace could not decide whether or not he was taking seriously what she said. But this was a matter of small moment to her. She was saying what she believed to be the truth, and was hopeful that through some part of it God would send conviction to his heart.

Mr. Green was a very stubborn man. He had his own convictions of everything about which he cared to speak or think, and was not easily moved. His previous convictions had been shaken, though he was too stubborn to acknowledge it. And in his question to Grace he was really seeking light, while nevertheless, trying to disguise this fact by the blunt way in which he introduced the subject.

"Well," said Mr. Green, after meditating a few moments, "it seems plain to you, but it's all Greek to me. It does seem hard that my Carl, my only boy, should be taken so unexpectedly from me. It's more than I can bear."

"But," replied Grace, in her own sympathetic way, "Cousin Rob, think how good our heavenly Father has been in permitting him to stay with us this long since his misfortune. The little service I have been able to render has been a very great pleasure to me. Most gladly would I stay for months by his bedside if God will but permit him to remain with us. And if he does stay, the great Father in heaven must decree it. If not, he will leave us."

At this moment both were moved to tears, and Grace could scarcely conclude for her sobs. She continued, saying, "Let us leave it to Him who knows best what ought to be done."

Just at this moment Carl aroused from the apparent stupor. Grace, leaning over him, asked if anything could be done for him. He opened his eyes wide, looked up at Grace, and said, "O, Cousin Grace, I have been to heaven; I have been to heaven."

Carl spoke much stronger than he had since being hurt. Mrs. Green heard him from the adjoining room and rushed in to see the last. She was confident that it had now come.

Carl continued: "O, Cousin Grace, I might have been dreaming, but I can't think so. It was so real. I must have seen it all."

"Don't talk so, Carl; you are too weak. Just wait a little until you can gain a little more strength."

"O, Cousin Grace, I must tell it! I dreamed that I was on a long journey to a far distant country. I had traveled until I had just about given out. Just then I came to a narrow river. It was so dark and cold looking. I saw two angels standing on the opposite side, and they said to me, 'Fear not; when once thou goest down into the river we will help thee.' O, I waited and waited, Cousin Grace, because the banks were so steep, and the waters so dark. Then they said again, 'Fear not; we will help thee.' I looked back beyond them and there was heaven; and this was the country to which I was going. It was so beautiful, and the angels seemed so happy that I could but venture in. And once having stepped into the river, I immediately sank beneath its waves. When I came up again the two angels had hold of my arms and said, 'Fear not now. This river is death, and thou art safely over it.' Oh, how happy I was! I looked back across to time, and felt how glad I was that all

pains and sufferings were gone. You can never know how happy I was. We were just going up to the city of God when you called me back. O, if I could have remained in that happy place! Cousin Grace, what do you think? Heaven looks just like it had snow all over it."

By this time all were weeping or rejoicing in the room.

Carl again spoke, saying: "Cousin Grace, you say that you are a Christian. Do you think I would be saved if I should die as I am? I may have been dreaming, but I can't think so. I was praying when I went to sleep."

Grace suppressed her emotions, and said in her usual way, "I fear you might not be saved, Carl. I would not take the risk, any way, since God has let you come back. He may have showed you all this in order to lead you to repentance."

"Cousin Grace, just tell me what I must do to be saved. I am willing to do anything God may require of me."

"That which He would have you do, Carl, is to repent of your sins and believe His word. And what He would have you accept as a gift from Him is forgiveness of your sins, and salvation. God stands ready to give you these when you repent and ask Him for them in true faith."

"I have been trying to pray," said Carl; "but kneel down here by my bed, won't you, Cousin Grace, and ask God to forgive my sins and save me."

At this moment Mrs. Green, who was convulsed with weeping, kneeled on the other side of the bed, and said: "Pray for me, Grace, for I, also, must become a Christian."

At this juncture Mr. Green left the room in haste. He could stand no more of this without yielding, and his stubborn nature said, "I will not." But he could not leave behind him the influences of those scenes.

Grace was not accustomed to praying aloud, but the peculiar circumstances surrounding her at this moment gave her inspiration. She prayed most fervently for the two, and just as she was saying, "Now, Lord, do reveal Thyself to these, Thy creatures seeking Thee through faith and repentance," Carl said, "Oh! I have it, I have it. I know I am His now. Oh, this blessed experience!"

This was too much for his mother. She arose and softly laid her arms about the boy's neck, and wept aloud.

"Dear mama," said Carl, "just ask Jesus to come into your heart, as I did, and He will do so, and will save you."

Mrs. Green said aloud, "Oh, Savior, come into my poor sinful heart and make me a Christian. The next moment there was joy of all joys to her. "Oh," said she, "I would not give the happiness I now experience for all I have ever gotten from the world. That God should save me,

even me, is a thought which fills me with gratitude to Him that no tongue can express. Grace, let us sing, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'" And the three did truly sing it that evening. Many have tried to sing it aright; many more have sung it merely to be heard; but this little group sang those soul-stirring words from the heart. They really and truly sang it.

"Poor papa and Pearl," said Carl, "how much I do wish they could enter into this blessed experience with us. I would not regret my hurt if they could only be induced to seek and find Christ as precious to them as He is to me."

"We will talk to our heavenly Father about them," said Grace. "Now you must rest a while for my sake. Do not talk to any one until you shall have rested."

As Mrs. Green went to arrange the evening meal the sun was just setting behind the western hills, and throwing a richer radiance over the heavens than was ever painted by artist. As she looked upon that scene of beauty, she said, half aloud, "May the sun of my spiritual life go down as gloriously as the sun sets this evening."

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07 -- MR. DELUPH'S VISIT

It has been one week now since Carl's misfortune, and yet no visible sign of improvement. When those meeting with the doctor would ask of Carl's condition, he would simply say, "We must wait for further developments."

While other visitors were coming and going, one, a little more distinguished in some respects than others, came. This was old man DeLuph. In many respects Mr. DeLuph was a noble man, and he held the unbounded esteem of all those who knew him; but in his earlier days he had fallen in with the "free thinkers," and he had not since then given any attention to religious subjects. He was a man of good advantages, with a vigorous intellect, and had read widely on the subject of skepticism.

Mr. Green met him and conducted him into the room where Carl was. And as he leaned over the bed he said in a low voice, "Carl, Mr. DeLuph is here to see you." At this Mr. Green left the room, as he could hardly suppress his tears when he saw his once beautiful and light-spirited boy so emaciated from his injuries as that he scarcely resembled his former self. "I am so glad to see you," said Carl, in his low, musical tone of voice "This is your first visit, is it not?"

"Yes," replied Mr. DeLuph, "since the morning of your accident I helped to bring you home then, but I don't suppose that you remember it."

"I remember," replied Carl, "that you were here when I regained consciousness. But I was so weak then that all that passed seems much like a dream."

"And, Miss Grace," said Mr. DeLuph, turning half around as he spoke and nearly facing the young girl as he seated himself, "I would suppose you to be pretty well fatigued by now."

"Not so much as one might suppose," replied Grace. Strength is promised, you know, equal to our needs."

"Yes," said Mr. DeLuph, "I suppose that one does not feel so much the fatigue when impelled by the strongest solicitude. This I know has the tendency to destroy in a great measure one's feelings and concern for self."

"One does not feel so much fatigued, anyway, when our Father in heaven furnishes strength," said Grace.

"I am a 'free thinker,' Miss Grace, and you can readily see that we do not see alike on the matter of religion. I have thoroughly considered the subject, and weighed the evidences on both sides, and from these have drawn my conclusions."

"I fear, sir," replied Grace, "that you have directed your investigation along lines that suited your convenience most. And if you try by the power of your own mind to answer all questions as to the existence of a God, you will most certainly fail. The finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, and for this reason alone all mental reasons assigned must be imperfect. His Book says, 'Canst thou, by searching, find out God?' And in His own word the Infinite One nowhere offers an argument in favor of the existence of a God. It is a matter of revelation, and the Bible allows no room for a doubt in the matter. But there is a way by which we can know the certainty of His existence. That way is to follow His commands. Until we have done this we have not gone to the utmost extent to know the truth as to the existence and character of a God. His demand is that we seek Him with the whole heart. Then He assures us that we shall find Him. God responds to the inquiries of our hearts much more readily than to the questionings of our minds. It is the heart that He bids us to give Him, not the mind. And He assures us that the 'pure in heart shall see' Him. God reveals Himself to the inner consciousness of man when He seeks to know Him in pardon and deliverance from sin. I would like to ask if you have sought to know God by heart contact; that is, as a personal Savior?"

"Indeed, I have not," said Mr. DeLuph, "and I see no reason why I should. I observe all the rules of morality, and in many instances more closely than numbers with whom I meet, who call themselves Christians. I most heartily endorse the code of morals as given us through your Bible, and believe that all men ought to obey them. But when you claim a great imaginary being, living out somewhere in the immensity of space, who claims the worship of earth's creatures, I must part company with you. This is a being that I confess I do not understand, and so must wait, as you say, for further revelations of Himself."

"But I insist," said Grace, "that God nowhere promises to reveal Himself to any one just to satisfy his curiosity. It is our need that brings Him nigh. He manifests Himself to the seeker, rather than to the mental inquirer. God works through the heart to the brain. Let Him in all His sweet influences into your heart, and immediately 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' God's word gives us few definitions of who He is. An many of these we are incompetent, to understand. His word says, God is a spirit. We cannot properly understand this statement, though it be a truth. We cannot conceive God connected with body. We do not know spirit severed from

body. It is a law of psychology that we cannot picture anything in our minds entirely unlike what we have seen. We have never seen a spirit separate from a body; hence our incapacity to understand God by this definition, if we may call it a definition.

"But there is another expression in the Bible which may help us much in knowing who God is. St. John, who leaned upon the breast of Christ and caught closer glimpses of His real nature than any of the other disciples, says, 'God is love.' This definition, it seems to me, might be understood of all. Not that He possesses love, but that He is love. And he who lives in love, lives in God, and God in him; for 'God is love.' Thus, though the wisest sage cannot define love, all may know what it is. The little two-year-old babe throws its arms around the neck of father or mother and says, 'I do love you.' The father and mother cannot define love, but that little child understands it. The wise and the ignorant meet here on a common level. Both may know God, but neither can define Him. And in this way, Mr. DeLuph, you can know God. If you will but cast away the barriers which hinder His admission to your heart and let Him in, you will know more of God in one minute than a world of careful research could reveal."

"You reason well, Miss Grace, said Mr. DeLuph, "but I am not just prepared to take your physic. Seeing is knowing with me. Why did not God reveal Himself personally? Why must we seek Him through love or spirit? It does seem that a God of such wisdom and power as you claim could have revealed Himself in a more satisfactory way to poor doubting minds than He has."

"Answers to your questions," said Grace, "may not be easily given; but God is God just the same as if they were. He gives us rules by which we may know Him, and if we ever know Him we must comply with His demands. The psalmist says, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork!' But this knowledge comes after you have known Him in your heart. Only the pure in heart can see God. Then you can see Him in the heavens, and all the earth is vocal with His praise. The babbling brook has a tongue of its own, and the light around you is but the almightiness of God arching the skies. But you can get these conceptions of Deity only as you come in contact with Him."

"All this is quite plain to you," said Mr. DeLuph, "but you must remember that it is not so to me. I am satisfied that you have devoted considerable study to the subject from the freedom and familiarity with which you discuss it."

"But, Mr. DeLuph, it can be as familiar to you as to me. It is not all a matter of study. God reveals many things to anxious seekers. But you will pardon me if I ask, Are you a skeptic through preference, or is it a matter of honest doubt?"

"I assure you, Miss Grace," said Mr. DeLuph, "that it is honest doubt with me. When quite a young man I fell into my present way of thinking, and have had no reason, as I supposed, to change my mind. But if the proper influences were brought to bear to convince me of the fallacy of my present opinions, I would most certainly abandon them. If I am mistaken, I realize that my mistake is a most serious one. If my present ideas are wrong, they may be discovered at a time when they have gone too far to admit of repair. But I have not discussed the subject so freely with any one before, as most of the so-called Christians with whom I have met seem shy, and do not

care to talk. But I would like to ask you why, if they all believe with you, they do not talk as you do?"

"I cannot answer," said Grace, "for any one but myself. But since the day that God so wonderfully and powerfully saved me, I have not ceased to tell it. And such a love possesses me that I cannot be content when I meet with folks to let them pass by without speaking a word for my Master. I know what they lose by not knowing Him. I know what they gain when they find Him as a precious Savior."

"Mr. DeLuph," said Carl, "it isn't near so hard to understand, when once you start. You know I believed before I was hurt as you do. I had listened closely to what you had said. And if I had died then I should have been lost. But Cousin Grace told me how to repent and believe God; I did it, and am now a Christian and not afraid to die. It is so plain to me now. I wish I could tell you all of it, but I cannot."

By this time Carl had become animated and was likely to talk too much for his weak condition. Grace arose and going to the bed said, "Carl, please be careful lest you talk too much. If you do, you may suffer much for it."

"But, Cousin Grace," said Carl, "I feel that I am strong enough to tell Mr. DeLuph about my dream and conversion. I do not feel fatigued, and I promise you to stop as soon as I have told that."

"I had been praying, Mr. DeLuph," said Carl, "when having fallen asleep I dreamed of going to heaven. I did not want to come back, but Cousin Grace called me, and I awoke. She said I must have dreamed it, but it doesn't seem like a dream to me. I asked Cousin Grace to tell me how to repent and believe God. She did so. I did as she told me. I told Jesus how sorry I was that I had ever done wrong. I believed Him to forgive me and trusted Him fully, for I could trust no one else then, and O, how happy I was! I did realize that Jesus loved me, and I feel now that He does. I would not exchange this joy in my soul for all the pleasures of this world. And, Mr. DeLuph, you, too, may have this blessing; Cousin Grace can tell you how."

"Please do not talk more now, Carl," said Grace. "If this does not hurt you, you can talk more presently."

Mr. DeLuph had been intently watching the boy from his first expression. He had said nothing all the while Carl was talking. But it was evident to Grace that he was much interested in Carl's story.

"I am glad," said Mr. DeLuph, "that you find so much consolation, Carl, in your religion. I know it must be a source of great comfort to you at this trying time. But I am what Miss Grace would call a hardened sinner, being deeply set in my ways; and it is not nearly so easy for me to surrender my opinions as it was for you."

"But," said Grace, "if you ever become a Christian, you must surrender the opinions you hold now. You say that you are ready to know the truth. If so, cast away your former notions and start anew to seek the truth."

"But these are my convictions, and I am hardly responsible for them. You see I have my ideas of matters, and it is not so easy to thrust them aside all at once."

Mr. DeLuph spoke in a thoughtful mood, as if he were measuring his words.

"But God will not judge you by your notions," said Grace. "He will judge you by His word. No one has a right to any notion or any idea that is not correct. I might have a notion that a horse was a cow, but would my opinion make it such? We are responsible for the correctness of our opinions when we have the power to know the truth. God gives us His word, which tells us all we can know of Him, and His will toward us. If we fail through carelessness to ponder His truths, and so do not know His will, the failure is ours, and we ought to be dealt with as if we did know them."

"Christ says, 'I am the way the truth and the life,'" said Carl. "If we but let Jesus into our hearts we have the truth there, the way there and the life there. We get it all when we let Him come in and take possession of US."

"That is true," said Grace, "and He ever stands ready to enter the hearts of such as seek Him, but He will not enter until He is invited. He is the true and only way, the unchanging truth, the everlasting life. Let Him into your heart, and you have all !"

By this time the hour had come when Mr. DeLuph must go. Arising, he said: "Carl, I am glad to see you so cheerful. You do not seem to mind your misfortune much. But how could you complain with so noble and efficient a nurse as Miss Grace? I consider her perfectly competent to fill her place here, and you must, my boy, be obedient to her every command. And, Miss Grace, at a convenient time I would like to again discuss a part of our evening's conversation."

"Most gladly will I discuss it with you, Mr. DeLuph," said Grace.

Mr. DeLuph left the room promising Carl that he would see him again soon.

"Cousin Grace, God can save Mr. DeLuph, can't He? He can save anybody who seeks Him. Let us pray especially that he may be saved."

"Yes, Carl," said Grace, "God can save him, if he will only let Him. And I will gladly join you in prayer for him."

As Mr. DeLuph left the Green mansion his every thought troubled him. "I have not believed in religion, but how can I doubt what I saw?" thought he. When he had arrived at the store he found quite a number of the young men of the town congregated there. "Boys," said Mr. DeLuph, "if you visit Carl you had better prepare to talk on the subject of religion, for he and Miss Grace will be in for holding an old-fashioned class-meeting with you."

"Say, Mr. DeLuph, did they draw you into the discussion? and how did you come out?" said one of the young men in a jocular way.

"Come out?" said Mr. DeLuph; "I came out the best I could. That young lady knows as much theology as an old flint and steel theologian. But, boys, hear me! She is right. I would advise you all to listen to what she has to say."

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08 -- PEARL AT PRAYER

While Mr. DeLuph was in the room with Carl and Grace, Pearl thought it the best time to slip away unnoticed and spend a short season in prayer. Since the conversion of her mother and Carl, Pearl had been much concerned on the subject of religion. Her nature was the reverse of Carl's in some respects. Carl spoke frankly of his convictions, and sought help from those whom he supposed competent to furnish it. Pearl was timid, and did not express her spiritual troubles to any one, but wrestled over them with God alone. She had listened attentively to all the conversations between Carl and Grace in her presence, but as far as she was able to do so had hid her impressions from them. Many times Carl had said, "I do so much wish that Pearl could be converted, but she does not show so much concern for her spiritual welfare as I had hoped to see." But at that very hour an earnest prayer was perhaps going up from her heart for light and help. Or, she may have been crying out, "O, that I knew where I might find Him!" We cannot always judge others from outward appearances on this subject. Many a curious question that confuses you to know just what the person is seeking comes from a burdened heart seeking relief. Of all people, Christians ought to be the wisest. "As wise as serpents," to select an opportunity for doing good; and as "harmless as doves" in the discharge of Christian duty. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," is St. Paul's injunction to Timothy. And it is a timely one to all sincere Christians. The magnitude of the work is so great, the issues that depend upon fidelity so immense, that no Christian can afford to be otherwise than keenly alive to every interest of God's cause and kingdom. And the magnitude of the Christian's work is only heightened if we but consider that God has no eyes in this world with which to see the needs and distresses of humanity but our eyes; no ears with which to hear the cries of the needy but our ears; no hands or feet with which to go and distribute blessings but ours; no tongue with which to tell of His undying love for a lost and ruined people but our tongues. If every Christian stood ready and obedient to our Savior's commands, how much of the sin and sorrow of this earth which now exist would be eliminated speedily. The devil has few subjects in his satanic service but who respond to his demands willingly, while our Father in heaven must hold out every inducement and promise a crown of life to persuade a small percent of His host to consecrate themselves fully to Him, and wait with willingness for any service of His.

Pearl had gone up stairs to her room, but had not, as she thought, tightly closed the door. It swung ajar just enough to allow Pearl to be seen as she kneeled by the bedside. Mrs. Green had suspected for what purpose Pearl had gone to her room, and she stood tyler for a time to prevent intruders. Mr. Green had just gone to one side of the entry to close the door that opened out on the upper verandah. Mrs. Green, seeing the door ajar, her womanly instincts impelled her to peep within. What was the sight which met her gaze? It was Pearl at prayer. As quick as thought her emotions were stirred almost beyond control, and in her heart she said, "Thank God!" At this moment Mr. Green, who was wandering aimlessly by, discovered her tears.

"What can be the matter with you, Ethel?" said he in a tone of surprise. Mrs. Green was too overcome by her emotions to reply, but simply pointed through the door at Pearl. Mr. Green looked, then almost staggered with surprise. He turned away suddenly, as if to leave, then, stopping short, turned round and said: "Ethel, I am tired of this. No matter where I go in the house I meet someone in tears, or find them on their knees. I thought once that ours was a happy home, but it's as dismal as a graveyard now. I told you of all this when I heard Grace talk a little. Now, if I go into the room where Carl is, he can talk of nothing but dreams and going to heaven. It is fanaticism, and I am tired of the whole thing. And Grace is responsible for it all. She never tires of talking about what she calls 'religion.'"

"But, Rob," said his wife in a low tone as she walked up near to where he stood, "I do not mention religious subjects to you unless you first speak of them."

"Ethel," replied Mr. Green, "that may be true, but there is something about every one of you that talks when you say nothing. I see it in Grace's face, in Carl's face, and now it is in your's. Your very looks torture me, for they seem to say, 'See how happy I am, and how miserable you are.' I almost wish I were dead anyway. Yes, if I had only died before my boy. But Grace is the 'meddlesome Mattie' in this business."

"Be careful, Rob," said Mrs. Green. "All this could have happened if Grace had not been here. And I certainly do not know who among us could have done for Carl what she has. Somehow I feel impressed that it is due to her prayers more than to anything else that Carl has been spared to us this long. But, Rob, when you tire of Grace here, she will go; I'll see to that."

"No, not for the world in that way," replied Mr. Green. "Ethel, you always take everything to heart. I want Grace to stay and do all she can for my poor boy. If prayer is the only means by which to save him, I want her to pray mightily. But I am so worried and distracted that I am not myself. You know that."

At this moment the two turned and walked slowly down the stairs together. At the foot of the stairs Mr. Green turned to the front verandah. Mrs. Green stopped and leaned upon the stair railing as in deep meditation. The scene up stairs came most vividly to her mind.

All this time Pearl was wrestling and struggling in prayer. Her anxiety became so great that she felt she could not cease her efforts until relief came. It is astonishing to see how God, in many instances, impresses young hearts. Their struggles through conviction and repentance equal, if they do not surpass, many older persons. This may seem a little peculiar if we do not properly consider it. The old stand upon the borders going out from life. Their forces have already been expended. The young stand upon the threshold of life with its vast possibilities lying out before them. Nothing strengthens the determination of a Christian more than a clear conception of the awfulness of sin, and God's hatred of it. And the deeper and more thorough the work of conviction and repentance the brighter will be the change in conversion, and the more consecrated will be the Christian life which will follow. And it is to be feared that the reason why we have so many deaf and dumb Christians in the Church today is because they have not gone deep enough in their repentance and in their seeking after God to see the awfulness of sin. One could not realize the denseness of the

dark night were it not for the brightness of the day. The higher and greater your conception of the holiness of God, the darker and more terrible will be your knowledge of sin.

Mrs. Green had not left the stairway. She was waiting, hoping and praying that this struggle might be the final one when Pearl would press through grace divine into the kingdom of God.

Pearl's door swings back until it strikes the wall. Mrs. Green looks up just as Pearl appears at the top of the staircase with a light step, a sparkling eye and a face suffused with tears. They were not tears of repentance this time, but were rather tears of joy streaming from the young Christian's eyes. Almost as light as a spirit she came down the stairs, threw her arms about her mother's neck and sobbed aloud. Mrs. Green said, "Thank God!" and kissed her again and again.

"Mother," said Pearl, "I am so happy! Oh! this is heaven, isn't it?" and burst into tears of rejoicing again.

Mrs. Green said: "Your father is on the verandah."

At this suggestion Pearl was gone, and around her father's neck she threw her arms and wept aloud. Between her sobs she said: "O, papa, I am so happy, I am so happy. And, dear papa, if you could only experience what I do this moment! And you can, if you will. O, it's heaven in the heart. It's glory a thousand times over."

Mr. Green made no reply to all that Pearl had said, He tried hard to suppress his tears, but the appeals of his sweet, pure child, with face as bright as though it had been lit up from another world, were too strong for even his stubborn nature. He held her tightly clasped in his arms while tears rained down into her bright, happy face.

Mrs. Green went rejoicing into Carl's room to break the news to him and Grace.

"Pearl is converted," said she, in as quiet a manner as she well could. "She's on the verandah with her father just now. She will come in presently."

It was not so much a surprise to Carl and Grace, because they had heard her sobs at the stairs when she first met her mother.

Not many minutes elapsed before Pearl came with a swift step into the room where Carl was, and throwing up her hands as she saw her brother, said: "O, Carl, I can talk with you now; I, too, am saved !" She leaned over Carl and said; "I know now what you meant the day of your conversion when you said so many strange things. They are all plain now."

Grace arose at first when Pearl came in, but she had now resumed her seat, and was rejoicing in her very soul over the sights before her.

Pearl presently turned to Grace and said, as she kissed her: "Cousin Grace, this is one star in your crown. Had it not been for you I would not have known and experienced what I do."

The little group talked of their experiences and blessings until it was quite apparent that Carl must desist. He had already shown signs of weariness.

Then Pearl and Mrs. Green left the room, while Grace persuaded Carl to take a little rest.

As Grace sat watching by Carl's side, the events of the day naturally came up for review. It was all a pleasant mystery to her. "I cannot account for the wonderful change in this home, but I know that it is God's workings. I had no idea that I, with all my weakness and timidity, would have been thrown in a place where I should have been surrounded with so many responsibilities. I shudder when I think how much even yet may depend upon my fidelity to God. My prayer has been, 'Lord, thy will, not mine, be done.' And He has led me here. And this moment I feel that I am willing to live or die for Him. O, how sweet life is when we can say, 'Thy will be done.' We do not fear what the next shall be, for if it is God's will, it is best."

"In Thy hands, dear Savior,
I'm peacefully at rest,
Waiting Thy sovereign will,
Assured it's for the best."

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09 -- A GLORIOUS SURPRISE

It has been three days since Mr. DeLuph's visit to Carl. He has thought much of the conversation had that evening, and wished many times to know the real truth, and there never was a really anxious inquirer after the truth, but by some means or in some way God has met this earnest questionings. When Paul cried out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" God impressed Ananias with just the right thing for him to know and do, and sent him with the much needed information. Cornelius was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, but his knowledge of righteousness was necessarily limited; so God impressed the Apostle Peter with the proper thing for Cornelius to know, and sent him to carry the information. The apostle in his dream heard the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us," and he was speedily on the march to carry glad tidings of peace to that people. It is God's response to the earnest call of His creatures. When any soul becomes exceedingly anxious to know the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, it will be forthcoming from a divinely-directed source

Mr. DeLuph's mind had been very unsettled for the past three days. He was now in a proper state of mind to receive the truth, no matter from what source it might come. He had set aside this morning as the time to go out to his farm, three miles from the village.

There was an old man living on the plantation adjoining his, who had from childhood been a most devout Christian. Because of his unsullied character and strict conformity to right, the boys and girls in the village had named him "Old Saint." Those who had more respect for the old man's purity and age always called him "Uncle Hiram." His devotion to God as a Christian could not be questioned. In his young days he had been licensed as a preacher of the gospel. Since that time he had held monthly services in the various parts of the community. He was faithful and true, a devout

servant of God; yet he had seen but little fruit from his labors. Still his faith had not faltered, nor had his courage lessened, and his good works ceased not. He endured as "seeing Him who is invisible," knowing that the path of duty is the path of safety. Through all these years the old man had been "going forth with weeping, bearing precious seeds." And now, in the wisdom of God, it was time for him to "return with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

It is not always easy to wait God's own time for the development of His purposes. We grow so restless to see fruits. But there is a planting time; then time is necessary to bring forth the harvest. We often try to bring the planting and harvest too close together. In this matter we can but do our best work and wait God's own good time to give the increase. It often requires more grace to submissively wait God's will than it does to face His enemies and fight His battles.

This day Mr. DeLuph thought he would ride by where the "old man" was at work and have a little talk with him. As he approached one of the small enclosures connected with Uncle Hiram's home, he saw the old man pulling the fodder from his corn. As it would be but a few minutes when he would reach the end of the row, Mr. DeLuph thought he would quietly wait. The old gentleman was busily at work, and apparently talking to himself.

"What a scene of poverty!" thought Mr. DeLuph, as he surveyed the house and surroundings. "His condition almost beggars description. I do not see how the old man maintains himself and family on a farm so poor. This crop is hardly worth the harvesting. He hauls wood nearly half of his time to the village, then farms, or pretends to farm, the rest of the time, and to all appearances has plenty. I do not understand it."

Uncle Hiram had not seen Mr. DeLuph, as he had been so busily engaged with his work. But in an instant Uncle Hiram threw down his fodder and began to clap his hands and say, "Glory, glory, glory!"

The old man's hat fell off in the meantime, and his face was lifted heavenward. He rejoiced again and again, and continued to say, "Glory, glory, glory!" This state of ecstasy lasted for fifteen minutes or more, when the old gentleman took a soiled handkerchief from his pocket, wiped the perspiration from his face, picked up his scattered fodder and began his work again, singing, "On yonder everlasting shore, by and-by, -by and by."

Mr. DeLuph turned his horse away and started for his farm. He could not intrude upon such a scene as that.

He went directly to his fields, but was hardly conscious of what he saw. No matter where he looked, he could see nothing but Uncle Hiram rejoicing. His song rang continually in his ears. Somehow he felt that the old saint really saw and felt what he was singing about.

As the evening came on his thoughts lingered more and more around the scenes connected with Uncle Hiram. Under the hallowed influence his heart melted and tears would at times roll down his cheeks. How strange it was to him that he could not control his feelings. "I cannot account for this strange sensation," thought he. "I do wish I had not seen that old man. It has thrown

me all out of fix somehow with myself. I'll not try any longer to attend to business, but will go home and try to get composed again."

With this he started away toward the village. As he rode along the scene in the field became, if possible, more vivid. Then the tender words of Grace and Carl, only three days before, came up with new power. I do not know what it means, but I am somehow in a terrible condition," thought he. Just then he remembered distinctly a quotation from God's word which Grace had used in her conversation with him but three evenings before. It was this: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." "Can this be the Savior knocking at the door of my heart?" thought he. "Can He be seeking admission there, when I have so unkindly shut Him out? Is this the Savior, the Christ of whom I have been hearing so much of late? And does He, out of the great kindness of His heart, manifest so much concern for me? And does He who reigns on high condescend to ask me to give Him a place in my poor, hardened heart? I have appreciated earthly friendships, and the little tokens of kindness offered, but here is a Friend above every friend, and only to think of my unkindness to Him!"

By this time Mr. DeLuph was weeping freely. "I cannot stand this," thought he. "My burden is more than I can bear." "Cast thy burden on the Lord," was immediately impressed upon his mind. Lifting his eyes and heart heavenward, he uttered his first prayer. It had but few words in it, but they were the outbreathings of a burdened, troubled heart. And God does not so much listen to the words of a prayer as He looks beneath the words to the motive which prompts them.

He said, "Lord Jesus, if Thou standest at the door of my poor sinful heart, seeking to enter, I do now remove every barrier and bid Thee come in and take control of me; let me from this moment ever live a Christian to Thy honor and glory."

He had scarcely concluded when a sweet, heavenly influence pervaded his soul. His burden was gone. All within was heavenly peace. He lifted his voice to God anew, this time in thanksgiving for his many and unmerited blessings. As he rode along, the trees seemed to say, "God is good." The little birds, as they moved with light wing from tree to tree, seemed to be saying, "See how good God is." As he looked up, the very skies seemed to say, "The heavens declare the glory of God." "What a sweet experience this is," thought he. "Oh! that all men could know what it means to be a Christian. Had I a thousand lives and a thousand tongues I would willingly give them all to His service. But my children! I have led them wrong. Do, O Lord, help me to bring them back to the right."

Mr. DeLuph remained in this happy frame of mind until he reached home. When he entered the house he called all the family together and declared to them how wonderfully and sweetly God had saved him.

What a scene it was; The entire family, except his son, who was at the store, at prayer. First his wife arose with face as if it had been all but transfigured under divine influence, and declared that she was at peace with God. Then two of his daughters, before the family retired that night, professed saving faith. One other daughter and his son were yet unsaved, and they were made the objects of special prayer.

How wisely God can plan and lead! For more than forty years He was leading one man, and preparing him, not to take hold of the world by the force of his eloquence and thus bring men and women to the feet of Jesus, but simply to let his light shine for Him. All had known Uncle Hiram, and no doubt admired his consistency as a Christian, but few, if any, patterned after his virtues. But Uncle Hiram will be properly appreciated now. From his influence, unconsciously exerted this day over one man, will start an outgoing tide of holy power that will never cease until it reaches the shores of eternity. Uncle Hiram could preach but little, though he did so much love to try. But what did God care for his lack of power as a pulpiteer when he could use his very exclamations of joy with such force?

From this simple incident, then, let us learn this valuable lesson: every consecrated life is an important life. When God distributed the talents He gave to every man according to his several ability. In every one who is truly consecrated, the life and talents, whether much or little, are Christ's. And the soul that is fully yielded stands ready to respond to any demand of its Lord. It is like the instrument that is kept properly tuned; it responds readily to the skillful touch of the musician. No one else can get the music out of it. This is true in the thoroughly consecrated life. God can touch it, for He knows how, and from it He can get music to His own honor and glory. The cause of so many barren Christian lives may be found in the fact that the instrument is out of tune with its Maker and Savior. The singing is not with the spirit and with the understanding. The praying is not from the heart, but a cold response to what is called "duty." Worship is a task, and the many services of the church irksome. If sinners are spoken to, it is not in a way that convinces them that we are impressed with the importance of our own message. But God can and will, sooner or later, use the soul that abides complacently in His love. He can touch that soul and it will respond to His demand.

God has not destined that every life should rise with the splendor of a meteor and attract the admiration of the world. This would not, in the very nature of the case, be best. But little stars keep vigilant watch night after night, when the meteors have come and gone.

It is quite evident that God wants some lives just to shine. This was the case with Uncle Hiram. But let every Christian occupy his place with fidelity to the God who placed him there, and at last, though his life may not have been so eventful as others, God will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And this will be enough.

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10 -- AN ANSWERED PRAYER

"How is Carl this morning?" asked Mr. DeLuph, as the doctor was passing hurriedly by the store.

"Worse, I fear, sir," replied the doctor. "I am going now after other medicines that I fear will be needed."

"Poor family," said young DeLuph. "It will all but kill them to give up that boy. I am so sorry for them. Mr. Green is the one I sympathize with most, because he has less to sustain him at this hour."

At the Green mansion all was confusion. Since twelve o'clock in the night there had been a complete change in Carl's condition, and the symptoms were not such as to inspire hope. The family had been quickly notified of the change, and all were in the room, ready to respond at once to any call.

Mr. Green walked nervously about the house, hardly stopping at any particular place, as if he were searching for something, but knew not what. He felt sure that the hour was approaching for the final trial, and how could he meet it?

There is a certain amount of suffering connected with scenes and experiences of this kind, that must be endured; there is no remedy. It is true, if we have long periods before the end, in which to prepare for it, that we can then concentrate our forces, and, maybe, show less demonstration, but the pangs of sorrow, nevertheless, try us severely.

They had it would seem, timely warning of the approaching crisis in Carl's case, but the affectionate family clung to him the stronger as what they esteemed the end drew near.

Young DeLuph said, "I must go up to the mansion and see the last of Carl. Poor boy, how I do regret to learn that his symptoms are worse, and no hope is entertained for his recovery. It does seem so strange to me that a young man of such promise, with so much of this world to make life worth living should be so unexpectedly snatched into eternity. But I will see the last, and maybe I can see or hear something that will help me to become a Christian."

It was only the evening before that his father had come home from the farm with so much of the glory of God in his heart that he must tell it. And his mother and two of his sisters were converted. Young DeLuph was a willing pupil, ready to know as much as he could learn of this new influence and power that had so mysteriously taken hold of so many in the town. There is a peculiar power attached to Christianity. Let two or three persons of rank in a community profess religion, and show it in their lives, and it at once arouses the community. Nearly all great revivals of religion start from individual conversions. And the force and depth of most revivals depend largely upon the thoroughness of the first conversions. When once God has shed His light and love in a sincere heart, softened and sweetened his character and experience, the world will detect it. Such an one appeals to the world in the strongest possible way, with his tears, his pathos of voice, and the strong love that moves his heart.

Carl had been having sinking spells since midnight, and the strongest drugs could scarcely revive him. His breathing was heavy and distressing. He was very weak from constant suffering, and it was with great effort that he could rally.

When young DeLuph looked into Carl's face, as he lay emaciated in frame and struggling for life, he could scarcely suppress his tears. At this moment Carl opened his eyes and saw young Mr. DeLuph, and said, "I am so glad you have come; I want you to see how a Christian can die."

"You had better not talk," said Grace, as she leaned over Carl.

"He can talk as much as his strength will allow," said the doctor. "It will not affect his condition now."

Carl closed his eyes again and began to breathe heavily. This lasted for a few minutes. The doctor said, "Unless we can get a reaction soon, he will pass away."

Just then Carl began to struggle as if for life. It was a trying time. Such a wrestle with the monster death. Presently he asked, "Where is father?"

Mr. Green. was seated just outside the door, with face buried in his hands. His only audible expressions were the most awful groans. But he heard Carl's call, and came immediately to his bedside.

"Oh, papa," said Carl, and he spoke with great difficulty, "I cannot die until you promise me to become a Christian. Dear papa, won't you promise me now?"

Mr. Green looked down into the pleading eyes of his child as he waited for an answer, when his stubborn nature yielded to the right, and the strong, stalwart man became as submissive as a little child. He said, in great agony of spirit, "O, yes, Carl; anything for your sake, only do not leave me, my precious boy. Yes, I will be a Christian; yes, anything for your sake, if you will not leave me."

"But, papa, would you be willing for me to preach if God would only let me live?"

"Yes, my dear boy, if you wish to do so, only do not die. You shall have your wishes so far as I am concerned and as far as I can help you."

By this time the room was in a high state of excitement. The outbursts of weeping and rejoicing could be heard for a considerable distance.

The doctor said to Grace, "I am so glad to see this. This may start a reaction; if so, he may yet live."

"Cousin Grace," said Carl, "come and pray God, if it be His will, to let me live for papa's sake, and that I may preach His love to others."

At this moment the sick chamber was converted into a prayer-meeting. Carl's wishes must be done, and all kneeled to address that God upon whom we call in the hour of our infirmities; and who always answers our prayers by sending the things for which we ask, or better. Grace led in the prayer. She prayed most fervently for Carl's recovery and restoration to health, and that he might be a chosen vessel of God to do good. When the prayer closed all arose but one; that was Mr. Green. He remained kneeling, convulsed with weeping. The sight was a touching one. Carl

placed his hand upon his father's head, and said in his own pathetic way, "Papa, why do you weep so?"

"Oh! my dear Carl, how can I leave this place until I know that I am a Christian? I cannot! I cannot! I must be saved! I just cannot live this way. Life is unbearable."

Mrs. Green knelt on one side and Carl on the other, with their arms affectionately twined around Mr. Green's neck.

"Oh! it is so dark," said Mr. Green. "You speak of light; but it's all night to me. Is there no relief from this awful state?"

Grace said between her sobs, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. He can give you relief."

Mr. Green raised his face heavenward, with his hands clasped, and cried in the greatest of agony, "O, Thou rejected Savior, if Thou canst love a poor sinner like me, wilt Thou forgive my sins and folly, and make me this moment a Christian?"

Just then he looked up inquiringly into Grace's face, and said: "Grace, tell me what this good, sweet peace is that I have in my heart? Oh, tell me what it is."

"Where is your darkness now?" said Grace, in her own sweet way.

"O, I do not know; it's all gone now. O, is it possible that I am a Christian, even I? O! how good God is; how heavenly this experience ! How much joy I have lost ! How much suffering I have endured for not having known this peace before! Now, Carl, my dear boy, papa can say, 'Let God's will be done.'"

It is impossible with pen to picture the rapturous scenes of such an occasion. The emotions of joy, the happy faces, all speak with an eloquence of their own. And these scenes are renewed and reenacted in another world, for there is more rejoicing with God in the presence of the angels over one repenting sinner than over ninety and nine just persons needing no repentance.

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11 -- THE GOOD WORK BEGINS

It was in the early morning that the circumstances of our last chapter transpired. The happy family remained in Carl's room talking over the achievements of grace until a late dinner hour. Mr. Green is leading the discussion now. His tongue is loosed, and his heart is light. Now he has something that is worth talking about. He at times walks the floor and expatiates on the subject of religion with the freedom of a young theologian.

Carl, late in the evening, called all the family around the bed and gave them what he thought might be his parting message. After this he said: "Now, Cousin Grace, sing to me, 'In the

Christian's home in glory,' and I shall then go to sleep and leave my case again in the hands of the Lord. I am willing to live or die, as He knows is best for me."

Grace began to sing with the true spirit, in her clear, distinct way:

"In the Christian's home in glory
There remains a land of rest,
For my Savior's gone before me
To fulfill my soul's request."

How sublime these words! How many tired pilgrims of earth have sung this beautiful song as their last! How much hope and anticipation is embraced in it. The Christian's home; his home in glory; his home of perfect rest; his home with the Savior. Who would not want to go there?

When Grace had concluded the song, Carl said, "Now Lord, my last wish is fulfilled; let me rest and awake refreshed, or take me to Thyself in heaven. Lord, Thy will be. In a few moments he was lost in a sweet: refreshing sleep.

The doctor came, and leaning over till he could closely examine his breathing, burst into tears, saying,. "Mr. Green, Carl is much better.- I hope now we shall be permitted to keep him with us."

Mr. Green responded with a fresh gush of tears, and joyously exclaimed, "Thank God! Thank God!"

Through the night Carl slept well, only waking at intervals to take the medicine. By the next morning it could be easily seen that he was better. While he was very weak he was more nearly free from pain than he had been at any time since the accident.

About nine o'clock in the morning old Mr. DeLuph came up to see Carl. He was still religiously alive, and the only theme discussed that morning between him and Mr. Green was that of religion. They had found the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and they must talk. After a while Mr. Green said, "Mr. DeLuph, I am glad you came this morning. You saved me the trouble of sending for you. I want you to go with me on a little mission down in the village."

"Most gladly will I go with you, Mr. Green," he responded.

The two started off in the direction of Mr. Green's store. Just a little way from the store stood the village bar. Mr. Green stopped at the store and got the keys to the bar. "I notice, Mr. Green," said Mr. DeLuph, "that the bar hasn't been opened since the morning of Carl's accident, and the man you had attending to it is walking around the village as if he were out of a job."

"Yes," replied Mr. Green, "you know at our last ball my Carl got drunk, very drunk, and his mother had to leave the pavilion and go home and put him to bed. When she told me of it next morning, I grew furious for a moment, and coming down in the village discharged the man because I thought he had furnished the liquors. This he knew to be most positively against my orders. But

since then I find that Carl got the liquors from the refreshment stand where I had placed them myself. But I was in so much trouble that I neither explained to the barkeeper nor cared to open it again."

"I see," said Mr. DeLuph, "that it makes a lot of difference when it's your own boy that drinks."

"Indeed it does," said Mr. Green, "but I want you to see a bar closed this morning permanently, after the Christian idea, never to be opened again by me."

By this time the door was unlocked and the two walked in. A good, keen hatchet was brought out from behind the counter. With this instrument the work was to be done.

"Now, Mr. DeLuph, don't be afraid that you will break what you see. I want everything broken, bottles, glasses, jugs, kegs, barrels and all. I shall not leave one thing here."

Then the barrels were rolled out and down the steps very unceremoniously. When this was done the cases of bottles and glasses were brought out and placed in a pile. Mr. Green then began to knock the heads from the barrels and kegs.

"Mr. Green," said Mr. DeLuph, "you can remove the bungs from the barrels and kegs, pour out the liquors and save the barrels for other uses. These bottles can be saved in like manner and used for something. You might find a need for them some day. And these glasses are all right."

"I said I was going to show you how to close a bar religiously, didn't I? Well, this is the way to do so. Who wants a set of old barrels and bottles sitting or stacked around, constantly reminding you of an old bar? I want to stamp out the thing and its very memory so perfectly this morning that it will never haunt me again. And I shall show you how to do it if you will watch me for a little while."

When the contents of all the vessels were emptied on the ground, the barrels were placed in uniform style, and the bottles and glasses placed in the center of them and fire put to them all. And as the two stood under the light of that fire they witnessed the last of Belfour's bar. And never has another been established there.

Many a mother and wife watched the fire consume the last of the contents of that bar, and from their hearts said, "Thank God!" It meant much for them; happy homes, better husbands and sons, more clothes and comforts for the family, and better food for the table.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Green, "isn't the work complete?" "Yes," replied Mr. DeLuph, "nothing left but the ashes and broken glass from the bottles."

"Yes," said Mr. Green, "and I shall have them removed and dumped in the creek today."

"Now, Mr. DeLuph," said Mr. Green, "it is time to talk about something else. We must have preaching Sunday. We have professed religion, and we must not put our light under a bushel. I am in this thing heart and soul. Who can we get to preach for us?"

"Uncle Hiram," answered Mr. DeLuph at once. "He cannot preach so much, but he's one of the best men in the world. But where can we have preaching? We have no suitable place."

"In Carl's room, of course," said Mr. Green. "We will let the preacher stand in the door, and we can fill the room and entry. Carl must hear the first sermon."

"Very well," said Mr. DeLuph, "I will see Uncle Hiram, and you can make arrangements for the service Sunday morning."

In good time everything was placed in order at the mansion. Grace, of course, had charge of that part of the work. The entire village was notified by Mr. Green at the mill. And all had a pressing invitation to be present.

It was a novel proposition that preaching should be had at that rich, gay home, which such a short time since was the center of worldliness. What a change had taken place! It was the one theme discussed in the homes and on the streets.

As the hour drew near Sunday morning, a vast congregation began to gather; the room was filled, then the entry, and others stood on the verandah and watched from the doors. Uncle Hiram was on hand in good time. This was a much larger congregation than generally greeted him. He had heard many things concerning the religious stir in Belfour, but he knew not whether to believe it all. But it was quite plain now that some mighty power had been working in the village. This was not the old Belfour that he had known. And look at his amen corner Christians! Mr. Green and Mr. DeLuph! Could he really believe what he witnessed then? The congregation seemed restless and uneasy, as if they were out of place.

Uncle,, Hiram opened the services with, "O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise."

Few could join in the singing, having sung no religious songs for so long. But there was a little company of those who felt that this song voiced their sentiments. Yes, a thousand tongues, and these through all eternity, could not tell what the happy child of God feels. They borrow the strongest words, and most replete with meaning, but these do not and cannot tell it. And when they have tried by every method of speech common to men, they are still conscious that the half has not been told. No wonder the poet should sing,

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me."

Uncle Hiram did not stress any particular line of doctrine, but talked of our joys and our experiences, dwelling much on the goodness of God and the hope of heaven. He had been directed

to the right line of thought for that occasion. The old man's face would light up at times like the martyr Stephen's, and he would say, "Glory, glory!"

He did not preach long, but by the time he was ready to close there was weeping and sobbing all over the rooms.

When he closed, Mr. DeLuph arose and said, "Uncle Hiram, all this may seem strange to you; but for your own encouragement, let me relate the circumstances that led directly to my conversion. The first impressions were made on me here by Miss Grace and Carl. A talk with them led to my conviction. I went to my farm one day the past week and stopped to talk with you. You were stripping fodder. All at once you threw down your fodder and began to praise God. I knew you did not see me, and so I rode away. That scene so distressed me that I wept freely. I tried hard to banish it from my mind, but could not. I started home, as I was not in a proper frame of mind to transact business. On the way my distress was such that I asked Jesus to come to my heart. He did so, and oh! what a heaven it has been to me since. I felt that I ought to say this much for your encouragement. And, Uncle Hiram, you have done me so much good. You were in part the means of leading me to Christ."

By this time Uncle Hiram was full of praises. He could not suppress his emotions.

Mr. Green arose and told of the incidents leading up to his conversion, and then turned to Grace and said, "She did all this. We owe much praise to God for sending her here. What you see here is due to her consecration to God. She has helped us all to Christ."

Then an old man arose and said, "Once I was a happy Christian, but I have long since lost the experience. I am the most miserable man in Belfour. Pray for me."

Then a young lady told how that she had been a Christian before coming to Belfour, but she had fallen in with the young folks, joined with them in their worldly amusements, lost the sweet experience, and now she, too, wanted to be restored to favor with God.

Finally Uncle Hiram proposed another prayer, and that it be offered especially for those who had made requests.

Grace led in this prayer. She was overcome with joy. Her pure soul reveled in a sea of bliss. That prayer closed with many a shout of praise.

While Uncle Hiram was singing one of his characteristic songs, young DeLuph, who had been much moved through the service, arose, went across the room, and, putting his arms around his father's neck, said: "It is all right now. I have the blessing." Then came his last daughter, her face beaming with delight, and wept freely on his shoulder.

Many others that day either renewed their friendship with God or received their first love.

The first religious service held in Belfour was a most delightful one of prayer and praise.

Grace was especially happy. She could hardly believe what she saw. But from her pure heart ascended continually praises and thanksgivings to God for His goodness. As the congregation dispersed, and Grace returned to her room for a little rest, she sang more joyously than ever before the little song:

"'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to lean upon His promise,
Just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord'"

* * * * *

12 -- THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING ---THE CLOSE

Three weeks have passed since the events recorded in our last chapter. Carl is very much improved. He has been sitting up in a chair in his room. The worst is passed, and his recovery seems sure.

Religious services have been held regularly every Sabbath, and the interest has not in any wise abated. The Green mansion was converted into a chapel while Carl was confined to the house, and all services were held there. Many more, both young and old from time to time professed conversion, now the town was pretty well under the influence of religion. Immense congregations attended each service, and much interest was manifested. It was apparent that something must be done to provide a suitable house of worship. So, on the third Sabbath that religious services had been conducted in the mansion, after a delightful service: had been held, Mr. Green arose to make a proposition. There was nothing new in this feature of the service, as he and Mr. DeLuph did this frequently. But the surprise lay in the nature of his proposition.

"My friends," said Mr. Green, "when I look around this room today and see so many bright faces; when I gaze into your eyes and read the motive that brought you here, and hear the sweet testimonies of those of you who profess faith in Christ, I feel that of a truth God has done much for us." I realize that we should, and that we do, feel grateful to Him for such unmerited kindness to us. But as happy and comforting as these heart expressions of our gratitude may be, I do not think that they ought to end here. I like a gratitude that not only expresses itself in words, but also in actions. Our gratitude should not die out, or be lost to sight with our words. I believe that they should crystallize into a material form. And especially do I believe this ought to be the case just now. We have no church building, and really no suitable place in the village where we can meet and worship God. We can arrange temporarily in the pavilion, but this, as you well know, is not a suitable place. But we can make out with it until we can do better. And as soon as Carl is able to be taken there we will arrange that place for religious services. I want this pavilion, with everything else I possess, dedicated to God. We shall need it no more for the uses to which it has been hitherto put. But we want a church--a church that shall stand as a monument before our children and the world of our gratitude to God for His goodness in saving us from sin and sending His Spirit to us; a fit place to worship Him in. So I have this proposition to make to the entire village: Between now and the next Sabbath study about and pray God to impress you with the amount you should give toward this cause, the same to be paid within three months from Monday

after the next Sabbath. We want nothing but contributions that in some sense measure our gratitude to God for what He has done for us. And just here you will permit me to suggest a name for that house of worship. I would prefer that it be called Grace Chapel. As many of you as favor this name, please say, with your contribution, 'For Grace Chapel.' Or, if you should find a more appropriate name, I will readily consent to it."

Grace was much surprised at all that had transpired, as Mr. Green had said nothing to the family of what he intended to do. At first she felt a little embarrassed that the church should take her name. Her modesty would not allow her to consent to the use of this name if it were done in honor of her. This, she felt, was a distinction that she did not merit or covet. It was not fame that she was seeking, but to simply and modestly do God's will.

When the congregation had dispersed, Grace said, "Cousin Rob, may I ask if the name you suggested today for the church had any connection in your mind with my name? If so, I feel that I ought to have the privilege of asking you to change that part of it. It is no desire of mine, as you well know, that my name should be placed so conspicuously before the village. The little service that I have rendered in all this religious awakening has been no more than any Christian ought to have done under similar circumstances. And I do not in any way take to myself the honor of any good done; it is all of our heavenly Father. He, out of His great love for us, did it."

"That may be true," said Mr. Green, "and I appreciate the true Christian spirit that you show in this, as in all other matters since you have been with us, but I must insist that I have the proper name for our new church. So give yourself no more worry about the name of the chapel, as you are not in any wise responsible for it. This is a wish of ours, and you must accord to us the privilege of giving it at least a part of your name."

"I must submit if you insist," said Grace, "but I fear it might not be for the best"

"You just be quiet, then," replied Mr. Green, "and we will see that it is properly named. Not only so, but in three months from next Monday, on the date of the contributions, we will be prepared to have it dedicated."

"You mean, then, to begin at once, Cousin Rob?"

"I do. One week from now I shall begin to place the material on the ground ready for the builders to commence work."

"I am so much rejoiced, Cousin Rob, to see you thus enthusiastic in the work."

"How could I be otherwise Grace, when our heavenly Father has been so good and kind to me? Carl's recovery is due to answered prayer. He was brought back from the very gates of death, and is with us today, in answer to importunate prayer. And the change in our home and community, how marvelous it is! Why, Belfour is a little heaven on earth. The people are so happy. The character of the place has so much changed of late. For my part, when I gave my heart to God, I gave Him my family and my property as well. I want not a dollar now that does not belong to Him. And my business, from now until I cease to control it, shall be carried forward with the desire of

glorifying Him. I want the remainder of my life to be spent for His glory and the of my fellow men."

Through all this conversation Mr. Green had shown great earnestness. It was easily seen that he intended to throw his entire life into the work of the Lord. Just here is one of the secrets of true Christian living. It is impossible to have the "fullness of God's Spirit" in the Christian life unless that life is fully consecrated to Him. Many so-called Christians wonder why they do not enjoy more of religion than they do. The reason is not hard to find. They have made but a partial investment in spiritual matters, and the returns correspond exactly with the investments. This, you see, is a natural, as well as a spiritual law. Anyone receives good out of the spiritual life in proportion to what he puts into it. Let the consecrated man throw himself, his family and his possessions into his Master's cause, and the wealth of glory is his. In other words, when he gives himself and all to God, then God, in return, gives to that man the riches of His glory in abundance. And oh! that the Christian world could learn this lesson, that it is only as we give that we receive. Give the old heart to God, and He will give a renewed one in its place. Give the old life to Him, and He will give a renewed life in its place. Give the renewed life, with everything else that we possess to Him, and He will give to that man the sweetness of His own abiding presence.

On the next Sabbath, when the congregation had gathered, the contributions were received. It was a surprise to all when old Mr. DeLuph announced that they amounted to nearly ten thousand dollars. The committee was then and there appointed to take charge of these contributions, and arrange for the building of the church. Mr. Green and Mr. DeLuph were placed in charge of the work. In three months the house was completed, the full ten thousand dollars collected, and not a man was asked to contribute. The entire amount was made up of voluntary contributions.

Mr. Green gave five thousand as a "thank offering," as he said, to this cause. Mr. DeLuph gave one thousand, and the rest was made up of smaller gifts. When it was completed and furnished in up-to-date style, the simple name was to be seen just above the front entrance, "Grace Chapel"

Then, following the dedication, it was felt that there must be held a meeting, which was to last for two weeks. Two preachers were invited who were full of faith and the Holy Ghost. The previous week Mr. Green announced that the mill would stop at 10:30 A. M., for those who felt inclined to attend the services; that the mill would start again at one o'clock, when every hand was expected to be in his place; that he did not intend that the shutting down of the mill should in any way affect their wages.

These were two great weeks in Belfour. The entire community was brought under the influence of the meeting. Besides, the adjacent country was drawn into it. The large, spacious church was inadequate to entertain the immense congregations that gathered. Indeed, the word as preached was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed.

Now as a result the church was firmly established in the village. Men and women had entered fully and heartily into God's service. The village and surrounding community had undergone a complete transformation. "Old things had passed away; all things had become new."

There is no measuring the transforming power of the grace of God. It can work miracles when it has but a few honest hearts to begin with. Under suitable conditions this grace will spread like a contagious disease until it affects the hardest hearts and the most stubborn natures. Having begun, it knows no bounds, but the will that shuts it out of the human heart, or the faith that falters before it has accomplished its destined work.

Let every Christian pray most devoutly, "Lord, revive thy work, and let it commence with me," and it will not be long before there will be a revival in every community.

Grace remained in Belfour until after this meeting. It had now been nearly six months since she had left home, and her visit was at an end. Her health had entirely recovered. She could now see clearly that God was in all that had transpired. She knew that in obeying the impression received when at prayer, she had obeyed God. Her constant prayer had been, "Lord, Thy will be done." And though at times the way seemed dark, a kind heavenly Father had brought everything out right.

So, in a few days after the meeting closed, Grace returned to her home. What transpired after this may in part be seen from the contents of a letter from Carl, written while at college, whither he had gone to finish his education and prepare for the ministry. This letter was written to young DeLuph shortly after Carl had returned from a visit home, the nature of which is told in the letter.

College, May 18, 18--.

Dear Charlie: Your very kind letter of the 14th instant has just been received, and you can somewhat imagine my appreciation of it when I tell you that it was the first line received from home since I came back from yours and Pearl's marriage. I have been continually looking for a letter from mother and father, but so far have been disappointed. But I cannot be hard in my demands, or very exacting just now, as I know that father and mother are quite busy since the notable event just referred to; and I am quite sure that it is not due to any carelessness on their part, but simply to a lack of time.

But, Charlie, my dear old boy, I rejoice to call you brother, and had sister Pearl had no other object in view in marrying but to please me, she could not have done so more completely; for I know of no man I had rather call brother or for whom I have a higher regard. The associations at Belfour through the eventful past have drawn us very close together. So that you may rest assured you have my best wishes and prayers for yours and sister Pearl's future. But think what a happy day it will be for me when I shall graduate next month! My aspirations and ambitions in the way of equipment for my life's work will have been met. Then I shall enter most heartily into my chosen vocation -- and not only chosen, but that into which I feel called of God. But somehow I feel that my happiness would be incomplete were it not that I have won the heart and have promise of the hand of Grace. With her as my true, sweet wife, who first led me to Christ, and then wrestled with God in prayer until I was given back to life from the dead, how could I be otherwise than happy and successful? You know that she possesses so many of those noble traits of Christian character that pre-eminently fit and qualify her for this important place. And, if it is true, as is so often said,

that much of a preacher's usefulness depends upon his wife, you know that I can but succeed with her.

And Uncle Hiram has gone to heaven. Well, I felt that the end must be near when last I saw him. Blessed old man he was. Ere this he has entered into the joys of his Lord. In my fancy I see him as he reaches the heavenly Jerusalem about which he used to preach and talk so much. You will miss his influence in Belfour. And I know that you instinctively look for him, when you go to church, to occupy his accustomed place in the amen corner.

But such is the fate of all. God has decreed that all must die. And how true it is, the living are but stragglers from death's cold embrace! And soon He will bring us all to the judgment.

I am very busy with my studies preparing for graduation, and so will not write a long letter.

With an affectionate good-bye to you and much love to lister Pearl, and hoping to hear from you soon,

I am your friend and brother,
Carl.

* * * * *

THE END