

PROPERTY OF

The
University of
Michigan
Libraries

1817

ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS

to Mary Roberts' grand-
mother of Robert Donahue.

= To Mary =

Long may you live
A happy life.

Unknown to sorrow &
to strife.

Cheered with the
thought - that -
when you die,
I'll live in bliss
beyond the sky.

J. A. W. [unclear]

To Mary:—
Except this note taken
of authentic ground, your
well-wishes

John W. B. B. B.

W. B. B.

John W. B. B.



*My dear Mother
My dear Father*

**THE
LITTLE NORWEGIAN,**

AND

THE YOUNG WOOD-CUTTER.

TRUE STORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

**"ANNIE LORIMER," "BIDDY MALONE," "THE
CAP MAKERS," &c., &c.**

**"When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord
will take thee up."**

PHILADELPHIA :
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 821 CHESTNUT STREET.

Juvenile
Collection

F
C
W. S. E.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by
THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District
of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY WESTCOTT & THOMSON.

Juv. Coll.
High
5-21-69
772402-138

Tr. to spec, chil
1-4-2011

THE LITTLE NORWEGIAN.

CHAPTER I.

FAR at the north of Europe is a neat peninsula, made up of two countries, Sweden and Norway. They are separated by the Scandinavian mountains. It is a bleak and desolate land, and most of the people are very poor. Travellers tell us that they are generally honest and hospitable. The shore of Norway is cut up by small bays or inlets, which are called fiords, and from these the people obtain fish. The reindeer is their principal animal, serving for them as the horse, cow and

sheep do for us. The reindeer draws their sleds when they are journeying, its milk furnishes cheese, butter, and leben, or curds, of which they are very fond; his flesh is their meat, and his skin furnishes their clothes. Altogether you see he is a very useful animal, and I do not know how the Norwegians would get along without him.

Perhaps you may suppose that the Norwegians must dislike their country, and long to leave it for a fairer land; but, on the contrary, they love it very dearly, and are sorry when circumstances compel them to make a home elsewhere. Poverty has driven many of the Norwegians from their native soil. When fish and deer are scarce, and the summer has proved too short and cold for them to raise a good

crop of corn, they begin to wonder if there is not some place where they can go and have a comfortable home. Many of them have heard of America; some have even been here, and returned to bring colonies of their countrymen to settle in the West; and so it happens that during some years vast numbers of Norwegians emigrate to the United States.

About twenty-five years ago, there lived, near the town of Drontheim, a man named Christian Spelter, with his wife and family. He had a daughter Katrinka, about ten years old, and two sons, Peter and Charles. Their house was small and uncomfortable, situated on the high shore of Drontheim fiord, whence Spelter obtained most of his living by fishing. They

were very poor and grossly ignorant; not one of them could read. After a chilly, unprofitable summer, a severe winter set in earlier than usual. Spelter was in a very bad humour; there was but a small stock of provisions laid in for the winter use of his family; fish were scarce, corn was high, and his most valuable reindeer had just died. At this time, a second little daughter was born. The poor baby met but a cold welcome; no one was glad to see it.

“We have too many mouths, and too little food to put in them,” said the mother.

“Of what use is a girl?” asked Christian.

“Dear me! another child to work for!” exclaimed Katrinka.

“Girls can’t fish!” said Peter.

“Girls can’t plant or hunt,” said Charles.

But the wee child could not understand all this talk, and did not know whether they were pleased with her or not. They called her Christina, wrapped her in a blue flannel dress, and kept her lying most of the time in a box full of bird’s feathers; and for all no one thought her of any use, or had been glad to see her, she grew fat and merry, and throve wonderfully. By and by they began to think she was rather a nice little creature, and to like her tolerably well.

In countries far to the north, like Norway, the days and nights are very different from ours. The winter has almost no day at all; the sun just

rises a little way above the horizon, and sets again; so after a few hours, more like twilight than daylight, night comes back. In the most northern part of the country, the sun is not seen at all for several months in the year. But to make up for this winter of night, is a summer, when the sun scarcely sets. He dips away out of sight for a very little while each day, and then comes back, bright and warm. In the north, he does not hide himself at all during summer. All summer the people are fishing, and planting, and doing all they can to get ready for winter. Many of them have no regular time for going to bed; they just sleep when they want to. I suppose they feel as if they get enough of sleep in the winter. Summer was

a happy time for the children of Christian Spelter, and when Christina got old enough to run about, she enjoyed it as much as any of them. The boys spent a good deal of time climbing about the rocks that overhung the fiord, hunting for birds' nests. They found a great many feathers in these, which the birds had used to line the nests and make it warm; and the boys would carry them home to make their own beds for winter. They also got eggs sometimes to eat, and when they did not want them to eat, they would make a tiny hole in each end, and blow the inside out of the shell; they then strung the empty shells on long grass. Sometimes they made Christina necklaces of egg-shells, which she thought very beautiful; but, like many

other beautiful things, they were very frail. It was very cruel for Peter and Charles to steal eggs to waste in this manner, but they were not as much to blame as those who have been taught better, for no one had ever told them that it was wrong. They often caught birds to kill and smoke for winter use. Several times Christina had a tame bird, chosen from those her brothers caught, which she kept in a little cage of twigs.

At evening, she frequently accompanied her sister Katrinka, who went to a richer neighbour to assist in milking, to aid in adding to their own scanty supply of butter and cheese. Once or twice she went out in the winter to ride on her father's sledge, and how delighted she was when the

fleet-footed deer whirled them over the snows, shining under the beautiful northern lights. Christina ate her simple meals of corn-bread and curds, wore her coarse flannel garments, and slept in her box of birds' feathers, covered with a quilt, as contented and happy as any little girl that ever was born. I dare say many little children in this country would have laughed heartily to see the way in which Madame Spelter and her two little daughters dressed. The mother had a dark blue worsted dress, which was made very short, a gay cotton handkerchief was crossed over her bosom, on her feet were thick woollen stockings and large heavy shoes, and over all was an immense cloak, with a hood which served to draw over her head instead

of a bonnet. The girls were dressed like their mother, except that instead of having short frocks their gowns were long, hanging about their feet, and, instead of the gay handkerchief, they sometimes had a green little apron: altogether they looked like a pair of odd, dwarfed old women.

Time passed on and Christina was growing to be quite a large girl. She was of a very amiable disposition and had a bright happy face. She seemed to have nothing to do in the world; her mother and Katrinka could perform all the domestic tasks, her brothers went hunting or shooting with their father, and Christina was left to do as she liked. When it was summer, she roamed about, making miniature houses and gardens, or played

with some little animals which her brothers had caught and tamed to be her pets. During the winter, she amused herself by the fire or slept curled up like a kitten in her feather-bed.

The family where Katrinka went daily to milk was that of Carl Hentrelmann. As I have said, they were better off than the Spelters. They had a larger house, more comfortable clothes, and a better supply of winter food and fuel. Their chief possessions were some fine reindeer. They were also more intelligent, several of them could read, and they beguiled many of the long winter hours by reading books and papers. They did not do as we in a land of books are so apt to, read one and lay it away for ever, but

each was read and re-read, and talked about until its contents were almost known by heart. In one respect these two families were on an equality, each was ignorant of God, his goodness to them and their duty to him. No Bible, no prayer, no church-going for them; they were as regardless of piety and the salvation of their souls as the beasts that perish. Carl Hentrelmann was a shrewd, active man, fond of his large family of children, and ever on the alert to improve their condition. He had long talked of emigrating to America, but for years the aged and infirm parents of his wife and himself had prevented it. The old people died, and yet Carl delayed a few years, that his sons might be of age to aid him in his project. At length, he re-

solved to leave his household in the care of his wife and eldest son, and go to seek a home in the boundless western territories of the United States. Very many of his neighbours were ready, if he brought back a favourable report, to look upon him as their leader, and follow him to the land of his choice. Among these was Christian Spelter. A few evenings before his departure, Carl entered the home of Christian.

“Neighbour,” said he, “there is to be a school opened between us and Drontheim; I shall send my children, will you not send yours?”

“I think there is no need of schools,” said Christian; “my dame and I have lived very well without them.”

“You would be much happier for a

little learning. Just think how reading whiles away the long winter nights."

"We work, make fish lines, bird-nets, and many things, and for that matter we can sleep when we have nothing else to do."

"One gets tired of so much sleep, and then one can read while the rest work."

"It is of no use," persisted Spelter.

"But, neighbour, I have heard that in the land where we are going, men get rich and great, just in proportion to what they know; every one there can read and write."

"My family and I will go there to dig riches out of the soil, that brings forth so abundantly, where there is but little snow, and the days are long."

“Take my word for it, neighbour, you will be sorry if you don’t send your children to get a little learning.”

“It is all folly; but talk to them, they shall do as they like.”

Carl now turned to the young people.

“I am too old, I am nearly eighteen,” said Katrinka, tossing her head.

“We have hunting and fishing, and don’t want schooling,” said Peter and Charles, boys of fifteen and sixteen.

“And how old is the little one?” asked Carl.

“Nearly ten,” replied her mother.

“I’ll go to school,” said Christina, who was of an inquiring mind, and also very fond of Carl’s youngest daughter, who was also to go.

“Very well,” said Christian, “she

shall go if she likes, she does no good at home, and may be as well there as any where."

"But learning will do her no good," said the mother, "but then I don't know as anything will. She was not born to bring luck with her. I was sure of it from the first. If she does no harm I shall be satisfied."

This kind of talk did not grieve Christina; she was used to it, and so long as no one abused her, she was well content. She was of a kind, forgiving temperament, and as fond of her parents, sisters, and brothers, as are many children who are more tenderly loved.

Christina now went to school with the children of Carl Hentrelmann. They were very diligent pupils, and laboured faithfully that they might

astonish their father on his return, while Christina found in books a new and wonderful source of pleasure. Their teacher was a young lad who thought little of promoting the eternal welfare of his pupils. He taught them to read and spell, and to speak and read a little English, and this language Christina acquired with unusual facility. Her teacher, pleased with her success, greatly encouraged her, telling her it was the tongue spoken in that far land where her home would one day be, and which she must speak if she would prosper there. He also encouraged her by saying that she might be of great use to her people as an interpreter when they were strangers in a strange land. Little Christina's eyes lit up with delight at this thought.

“I will yet be good for something,” she said, triumphantly.

Carl had enjoined it upon his children to take great pains to learn English, and when the school closed as the winter drew on, his eldest son succeeded in persuading the teacher to spend a few weeks with them to give them further instructions. Christina, eager as any, daily went over to the neighbour's, there to learn more of the coveted tongue. And so a year passed by.

Carl came back full of golden tales of the prairie-land. He spoke of broad green fields where flowers and grasses grew to nearly his own height; of broad and rapid rivers that never were frozen, of sweet, balmy springs, of fervid summers, and abundant har-

vests, when the barns were filled to overflowing with fruit and grain. It seemed as if he told a fairy tale.

Thousands of Swedes and Norwegians were that spring pressing to America. And now the hum of preparation arose about Drontheim, and those that were to accompany Carl, made ready to depart. Poor Hentrelmann found them a troublesome band at the very outset. They would not prepare sufficient or proper food for the voyage. Indeed, many of them could not. The chief article of food that they took was what they called bread, made of coarse meal mixed with a little salt and hot water and dried in thin sheets, until it had about the thickness and general appearance of common brown paper. This wretched

fare was packed in barrels to eat by the way. There were so many that all could not go at once. Carl went with the first division, and the others followed in a short time. With those in the last ship went Christian Spelter and his family. Trouble attended them from the first, the steerage was more miserable than usual, the weather was hot, the voyage was long and rough, and on the way their provisions began to fail. Eager for anything to eke out the slender stock of bread, they seized the sour and wretched refuse of the ship. A diet unfit for swine could not serve for human beings, and by the time they were ready to leave New York, the cholera broke out among them. By one route and another, they hurried on, terrified by the

strange disease among them, spreading the pestilence wherever they went, dreaded by all and still urged on from the populous acres of the middle states to the free prairie land beyond. Some, among them Spelter and his household, bitterly regretting that ever they had left old Norway, which grew dearer with increasing distance, took the route by the lakes. As yet, no one of the family had been ill, but, like all the others, they were half frantic from fear. Among these poor creatures terror seemed to have conquered every other feeling. Natural affection was apparently lost; they left their dead and dying, unheeded, by the way, for strangers to nurse or bury. Parents abandoned their children, husbands their wives, children forsook

their parents in their extremity. Was not this a verification of the apostle's declaration concerning the unregenerate, "without natural affection?"

CHAPTER II.

News of the unhappy Norwegians preceded them; and at places along the route preparations were made for the care of their sick and dead. This was particularly the case in the lovely village of L——. Here, at intervals, the Norwegians arrived for several weeks. They were to take stages for seven miles to the depot where the cars left for B——, at which place they would again take boats. Stages and wagons of all kinds were always in readiness to take those who were well enough to travel on their way. Arrangements were also made for the

unfortunate victims of the cholera. The village of L—— was blessed with an excellent doctor. He was a godly and generous man; one who never shrank from the performance of his duty. He had been very successful in his treatment of cholera. He was not alone in his efforts to do good. There had gathered to aid him a band of pious souls, whose names are written among those to whom our Lord shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came to me."

On the overhanging bank of the river, a beautiful spot had been selected, well shaded from summer heats by the forest trees, cool and still, when all else was scorching in the blaze of noon. Here sheds had been erected and furnished with clean and comfortable beds, and everything necessary for the care of the sick. Thither were the sufferers conveyed, and the good doctor and his assisting friends bestowed on them every attention. Kind Christian women left their homes to sit all night in these infected huts, ministering to these sick strangers in a strange land. They asked no reward for their labours but the blessed consciousness of duty faithfully performed; but a much greater than the payments and plaudits of earth shall

be theirs in that hour when the Judge shall say to them,—“Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.”

Early one morning a steamer, whose steerage was thronged with Norwegians, reached the dock at L——. The cabin passengers first landed and went their way, then the emigrants began rushing from their hot and stifling quarters to the place where the wagons were waiting for them. But the ship's clerks knew that there were lying in the steerage many ill, and some even dead, and, placing themselves on either side of the doorway, prepared to make each family take its own sufferers to the shore. For so terrified were the Norwegians, and so lost to natural affection, that it

was their practice to abandon the victims of disease as remorselessly as if they were brutes. Spelter, his wife, Katrinka, and the two sons, came forward to go with the rest. The clerk held him back, knowing that he had brought on board another child, even then pale with approaching illness. Spelter had gathered a few words of English, and seeing what the clerk wanted, boldly pointed to his three children, saying, "all, all." But the clerk was not to be deceived; indicating Christina's sire, he refused to permit him to pass without her. Reluctantly the father went back, and took from a distant corner his wretched child. Hastening to the shore, as soon as he had passed the dock, he flung his helpless burden down by the

road-side, and, with the rest of his household, crowded into a cart, leaving her there to perish.

But God, who is rich in mercy, brought help to little Christina. Just as her unfeeling parents cast her down the good doctor came near, hastening on his errand of love. He had the child conveyed into a shed and placed on a couch, and then summoned to her aid a lady, who had just finished composing the limbs of a poor woman, over whose dying bed she had watched the night before. Christina was clad in a clean night-dress, and measures were begun to arrest the progress of the disease. So had the Lord made good the merciful words, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up."

All through that summer day, the child lay near to death. Many a tear fell on her unconscious face from the eyes of her gentle nurse, a mother whose children had all gone before her to the skies, and left her desolate. Christina reminded her much of one not many months in her grave; but as she recalled the child's triumphant death, the lighting up of the glaring eyes as she cried, "I am going to Jesus!" she greatly feared that the emigrant girl had not that blessed confidence.

And, alas, she had not. If Christina had then died, she would have died unreconciled to God, ignorant of the loving Saviour who came into the world to save sinners.

"How is your patient?" asked the

doctor, entering the shed just at evening.

“ I hope she is better,” replied Mrs. G——.

“ Better she certainly is. Give her this medicine, and in an hour I hope she will fall into a refreshing sleep. But you must not stay here longer. You were up last night. Our servant is an experienced nurse, and she wants to do what good she can by sitting up to-night. I will send her down here in fifteen minutes, and then do you go home.”

Mrs. G——, of course saw the wisdom of this plan, and shortly resigned her place at the bedside to Kate Mahon. The doctor's powder had the desired effect, and Christina was soon wrapped in profound slumber. Once

during the night she awoke free from pain, and able to glance about her. A small lamp shed its light about the shed. Opposite her bed was another, over the occupant of which Kate Mahon was bending.

It was the bed of a dying emigrant. Christina did not know this, and being too weak to take much interest in any thing, soon fell asleep again.

When she awoke, before she opened her eyes, she felt a kind hand smoothing the coverings about her, and a gentle voice whispered, "poor child!"

Christina opened her eyes, fixed them gratefully on Mrs. G——'s face, and surprised her with a very sweet English "Thank you!"

"Can you speak English, my child?" exclaimed Mrs. G——.

“ A little.”

“ Where did you learn ?”

“ At school, in Norway.”

“ Are you better ?”

“ Much better, lady.”

“ Now, you must not say any more; we must keep you quiet to-day,” said Mrs. G——, recollecting herself. “ By and by, when you are stronger, I shall love to talk to you.”

Nearly all day, Christina lay weak and listless, taking little notice of anything, and scarcely thinking. At sunset, she had a refreshing drink of chicken tea, and began to feel a little stronger. She re-called the moment when her father put her down by the road-side, and turned away with the rest of the family. “ They have gone to the far west,” she said to herself.

She felt no fear at being alone among strangers, no anger or pain at being deserted, for she had never seen any of her people tarry on the journey to nurse the sick or dying, she had only shared the lot of all, and would not complain.

All night she slept soundly, and before she awoke in the morning, the doctor and Mrs. G—— were standing by her bedside.

“Do you think she is well enough to be moved, doctor?” asked the lady.

“Oh, yes, quite.”

“Then I will take her to my house. Do you know the little creature speaks English? I am greatly interested in her.”

“That will be a fine place for her to get better. It is enough to cure a

sick body just to go in there," observed the physician.

Just then, Christina awoke, feeling quite well and cheerful, and greeted them with "Good morning!"

Mrs. G—— brought her some breakfast, and when she had eaten, sat down by her side, to converse with her. In all their conversations we will give Christina's answers and remarks in plain English, though she really spoke the language very brokenly, as was only to be expected.

"What is your name?" asked Mrs. G——.

"Christina, ma'am."

"Can you read English?"

"Only a little."

"Did you ever see a Bible?"

"I do not know what it is."

“Do you know anything of Jesus Christ?”

Christina shook her head, saying, “Who is Jesus Christ?”

“One very good and kind, about whom we should all know. You are now getting better. Before long my carriage will be here, and I shall take you to my house. I will be kind to you, and teach you, and I hope you will soon know about our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Christina looked pleased. The lady's kind ways had won her heart; she felt sure some gratification was in store for her. “I am glad to go,” she said. For some minutes she sat thinking deeply, then looking up, said,— “For how long, ma'am?”

“How long, what?”

"How long will you keep me, ma'am?"

"I cannot tell. Always, may be."

Christina shook her head decidedly.

"I cannot go. I cannot stay always."

"And why not?"

"I must go to my people."

"But they have deserted you, left you alone."

"I can follow them."

"You do not know the way."

"Every day Norwegians go west. We all get together by and by. Carl went first. They find Carl. I shall find them."

"But these other Norwegians may be those you have never seen."

"We are all one, ma'am. We come from one Norway; we go to one west; we speak one tongue."

“I will not keep you longer than you wish to stay with me, Christina. Come to my house and get well and strong. I will be kind to you, and teach you while you are there; and when you feel that you can stay no longer, I will help you to go away comfortably.”

“I will go, then, with you,” said Christina, with all a child’s ready confidence. She was indeed a strange mixture of a woman and a child. Artless, confiding, playful, ignorant of the world, she had yet a firm purpose, undaunted energy, and an intense desire to do her people good, to prove that she was not an idle, useless, helpless one.

In a short time the carriage came to the shed; Christina was lifted into it,

supported carefully on pillows and shaded from the sun. The carriage moved slowly along, but the distance was not great, and Mrs. G——'s house was soon reached. Christina was carried by the driver through a beautiful garden, across a piazza curtained with vines, and into a delightful sitting-room. While at the shed, Mrs. G—— had put on her a nice worsted wrapper. She was placed in a large chair, near a window that opened to the floor, and Mrs. G—— threw over her a soft shawl. While the lady had gone to prepare the patient a strengthening drink, the little Norwegian gazed enraptured on a scene such as she had never imagined. The child of the distant north was overwhelmed by the beauty of our June.

The piazza which ran before the window was veiled with honeysuckles, now in full bloom. Looking down the steps into the garden, Christina saw bushes golden with fragrant currant, blushing with flowering almond, and syringa like heaps of drifted snow. Under all these lay the vivid green of the well-kept lawn. Besides this, there were beds of painted tulips, wide borders of pinks, gaudy peonys—white, pink, and crimson, and early roses, displaying all their charms. No wonder the doctor had said the very sight of such a place was enough to cure one. Christina sat drawing deep breaths of air loaded with the sweetness of a thousand flowers. All about her was calm, inviting to perfect rest. In the trees around, the birds fluttered

4*

with a song of joy, while over the flowering shrubs bees buzzed and rainbow humming-birds darted. Mrs. G—— came in with a cup.

“Drink this, my child.”

Christina took it and mechanically obeyed, never withdrawing her eyes from the lovely picture without the window. Mrs. G—— watched her with a smile; the child's face was fairly radiant with the new-found joy.

“What do you think of it, Christina?” she said at length.

“O, ma'am, he who wrote the tales in Gretchen's fairy-book must have lived here! But he could not tell how wonderful it was. How can you ever go away from this window? Do you not hate to have night come and the dark hide it all? Are you not glad

that here the days are many and long?"

Mrs. G—— was ever anxious to speak of God. "Christina, if this is so beautiful, think of the one who made it all."

"Who, ma'am?"

"The God who lives in heaven, who made you and me; who made the world and all things in it."

"Ah," said Christina, meditatively. "I think I have heard of him at Gretchen Hentrelmann's. But only a little, not much. He must be very good, and Oh! how much he can do, how much he knows!" and Christina raised herself up in her chair in the eagerness of her gaze upon the marvels of the garden.

Mrs. G—— took a seat near, and

waited in silence for the child's delight and curiosity to accustom themselves to the new sight. She lifted up her heart in earnest prayer, that God would give her right words to speak, so as to make this emigrant girl acquainted with the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. She reflected how she had lived all her life uninstructed in her duties toward God and her fellow-men, and how short in all probability would be her stay in her house. That stay might be her only opportunity to learn of a Saviour, and salvation through him; how much then did she need wisdom and zeal in the task of instruction now to be begun.

Presently, she said, "Christina, do you now know who made you?"

"A spirit?" said Christina.

“A good or a bad spirit?”

“A good spirit,” replied the girl, glancing at the birds.

“Do you know what it is to be good or bad?”

“To lie, is bad; to learn, is good.”

“And why?”

“Because the teacher said so.”

“How came the teacher to know?”

“He knew many things,” said Christina.

“God, the spirit who made us and all things, is good, and loves what is good. What he bids us do, is good, and we must do it to please him; what he says we shall not do, is bad, and will offend him, so we must never do it.”

“How shall we know?”

“There is a book called the Bible,

all of which is the word and will of God. We must study that and mind all it says. Then if we pray to God and ask him to teach us, he will help us to feel what is good, and to love to do it; while we fear and hate the bad."

Christina had removed her gaze from the flowers, and fixed her eyes intelligently on her teacher's face.

"Are you good, or bad, Christina?"

"Bad," said Christina, frankly. "I tell a lie sometimes."

"Do you feel good and happy, when you tell a lie?"

"Oh, no, ma'am."

"Do you love this good Spirit who is called God?"

"No, ma'am, I never tried to love him."

"Can you pray?"

“What is it to pray?”

“It is talking to God, asking for what you want, and thanking him for being kind to you. Listen, while I teach you a prayer. ‘O God, teach me thy will!’ Say that, Christina.”

Christina repeated it until it was fixed in her mind. “How often shall I say it?”

“As often as you like. Very often, I hope. But when you say it, do not think of anything else, fix your mind on God, and really want him to help you to know his will.”

Mrs. G—— now rose, not wishing to fatigue the child by too long a conversation, and taking a pair of large scissors from her basket, went out into the garden. She was gone some time, and when she came back Christina was

asleep. She placed the bouquet she had gathered, on the table near her, and shading the light from her eyes, went away to her household duties.

The next day Christina was able to walk about the room, and soon was quite well, though her brown cheek had become pale, and her form was thinner than before.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. G—— at once began to instruct Christina in reading, writing, and sewing, as well as in the more important matter of gospel truth. She found that the strongest incentive the child could have, was to tell her that she might one day apply all she learned to the benefit of her people. Urged by this idea, she was willing to labour incessantly, but Mrs. G—— wisely mingled household work, and play in the garden, with the hours of instruction. Christina was taught to set a table neatly, to wash dishes, to sweep, scrub, and make beds, and also to cook

several plain dishes. She learned how to make tea and coffee, to cook potatoes and meat, and make biscuits; so before long she was able to get a much more comfortable meal than she had ever seen her mother prepare.

“You will find that in this country you will get very different food from that you have been accustomed to, and only think how useful you will be when you can show your neighbours such simple kinds of cooking. You must also learn to keep your house tidy; that is necessary for comfort and health,” said Mrs. G——, as she had the girl instructed in these things. Christina proved apt to learn. She entered, with all her heart, into every plan for her improvement, and as she was intelligent and possessed a re-

tentive memory, Mrs. G—— soon found that she was making the best possible use of all the instructions given her. Christina also made rapid progress in reading and writing. She would sit by Mrs. G——'s side for hours, reading, and at times the books were laid down for a little conversation.

“Is all this true?” she asked her kind friend, one day, after reading a chapter from the Bible.

“Yes, every line is truth; it is all the word of God, who cannot lie.”

“Ah, then, if God is so great, he can never care for such a poor little girl as I am. Even my mother says I was born to be nobody.”

“That holy Bible says, ‘Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto

the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off.' It also says, 'The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,' and that he dwells in every humble heart."

"But," said Christina, "may be this is all meant for grown folks. Very likely children like me are not fit to understand it, and it is not said to them."

"On the contrary, there is an especial invitation for children. Jesus Christ, the Holy Son of God, who came into this world to die for men, said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.' He also said to grown people, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in nowise enter into the

kingdom of Heaven.' The Bible also calls to the little ones, saying, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'"

"That is very kind," said Christina, thoughtfully, "and I dare say that many children who have heard those words have loved God, and he has taken them to heaven. I wonder how they did it? I am sure my heart is so bad that I could never *begin* even to be good."

"That is very true. We are told in the Bible that, 'all we as sheep have gone astray.' 'There is none that doeth good, no, not one.' 'The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' If we ask God, he will help us to see our vileness and weakness so fully, that we shall never

more expect to be able of ourselves to turn to God or please him.”

“O, ma'am, what shall we do then?”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved. God has ‘laid upon him the iniquity of us all.’ He died that we might live. If we will just give up all hope of helping ourselves and go to him, he will make our peace with God, and God will receive us as his own dear children.”

Thus in various conversations, Mrs. G—— showed this little Norwegian, that we are all by nature utterly sinful. That God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. That unless we receive the forgiveness of our sins, we shall be for ever unhappy, but if we by grace become of the num-

ber of the sons of God, we may rejoice for ever. Then Christ was held up to her as the way, the truth, and the life, and she was told that God will not cast out any who come in the name of that blessed Redeemer.

When Christina read of Ananias and Sapphira who were cut down in their sins, of Saul tormented by evil spirits, of Ahab and Jezebel upon whom God poured forth vengeance, and the rich man who burned in torment, she was in great distress. "Have I not told lies? Have I not disobeyed what I knew were God's laws, even since my kind friend has been teaching me what is right; have I not coveted, and been cruel and idle? Oh, what shall I do, how very sinful I am! No one was ever so wicked before."

Thus would she exclaim to herself. It is ever thus when the Holy Spirit convinces one of sin; the enormity of our individual transgressions rises up so before us, that, like Paul, we feel ourselves the "chief of sinners."

Mrs. G—— saw the conflict that was going on in the girl's mind, and earnestly besought the Lord that he would carry on his good work of grace, until she was brought out of darkness into his marvellous light.

One day they were seated together, and Christina was reading of the death of our blessed Saviour. She burst into tears, crying out,—

"Oh, who could help loving him when he has done so much for us! How can I help loving him when he has done so much for me!" She then

buried her face in her lap, and for some time wept silently. Rising, she went away to the little room Mrs. G—— had given her for her own. There she knelt down and besought the Lord Jesus to have pity on a poor, sinful child, wash away her sins, and help her, as long as she lived, to live only to serve him. This is a prayer that the compassionate Lord never refuses, and Christina rose from her knees, feeling that she was answered. Her whole face grew radiant with joy. She stole down stairs, too happy to speak her feelings just then, and wandered into the garden. Every bird seemed pouring out praise to God. Each golden-winged insect seemed to tell of its Creator. The flowers had a new beauty because they were made

by him; they were the gifts of God, the love-tokens of the Master of all. She strayed on through the flower-gardened walks, and by and by her joyful thoughts broke forth in a little hymn she had lately learned,—

“Come we who love the Lord.”

As she sang the last verse,

“We’re marching through Emmanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high,”

she thought how unspeakably glorious must be that heaven, of which this beautiful world is not the faintest shadow. As she went on, lost in a reverie, recalling what she had read of that home reserved for us above, her countenance told the bliss of her soul.

Mrs. G—— met her on the piazza.

“You look very happy, Christina,” she said.

Christina seized her hand, and looking up to her with a rainbow countenance, wherein smiles and tears of joy contended for the mastery, she cried,—

“Oh, I am happy, so happy! Jesus Christ loves me, and I love him!”

“Dear child,” said Mrs. G——, bending to kiss her, “may you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER IV.

GOD says, by the mouth of Isaiah, to backsliding and disobedient Israel, —“Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

Christina had ‘sought the Lord while he might be found,’ and ‘called upon him while he was near;’ she therefore ‘rejoiced in God, and was glad in the God of her salvation.’

In her was truly begun a new life; her motives were different; every act seemed dictated by love to God. Always an engaging child, she now became doubly attractive. Mrs. G——

loved her more and more tenderly, and shrank from the thought of giving her up. As for Christina, she had never changed from her first purpose. The idea of a life distinct from that of her people, had never crossed her mind. God gave her strength and wisdom to follow her duty; and, in after years, those who at that time endeavoured to persuade her to pursue a different course, felt that surely he, for his own glory, and the temporal and eternal advantage of many a poor Norwegian, had kept her steadfast.

“The summer is going fast,” said Christina to her friend one day. “It seems but a little time since you brought the little sick stranger to your home. How happy I have been here. But I soon must go.”

“My dear child, had you not better stay here? You shall be to me a daughter. You shall cheer my heart, left lonely by the death of my dear ones. Whatever I have shall be shared with you. I will love, protect, and teach you, and you shall be the stay of my feebleness and age.”

Christina's eyes filled with tears. She tenderly kissed the hand laid caressingly on her cheek, as she replied, —“O, dear, kind lady, no one has ever been so good to me as you. I can never say how much I love and thank you. You are a friend that God raised up for me. And yet I cannot stay with you. There is something in my heart that tells me to go to my people.”

“Christina, have your people not cast you off?”

“They have no love of God, ma’am; and you have told me that man who knows not God, is like the beasts that perish, they are ‘hateful, and hating one another.’ Still they are my own nation. My father, my mother, my sister and brothers, have gone toward the setting-sun. There I must follow them.”

“But will they receive you, will they welcome you?”

“I do not know that they will welcome me; but I will go in and take my place among them. I shall sit down in my father’s house. I will be humble and gentle, by God’s help. I will work as you have taught me; and God will move their hearts to love me, and listen while I tell them of the love of God.”

“It is a long and weary journey, and you are so young. I dread to have you undertake it.”

“I did not feel afraid when I thought of it, when I first came here. And now when I believe God watches over me like a father, and will direct all my steps, how can I feel; but that he will bring me safely to the end, and make me of use.”

Mrs. G—— said no more. She felt as if this purpose had been fixed in the girl's mind by Him to whom she had given her heart. She had prayed earnestly that the child might be guided aright, and now she would no longer resist what might be the voice of God, saying, to the youthful spirit, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

She devoted herself with redoubled

zeal to teaching her useful things and instilling into her mind right principles. She had the satisfaction of knowing that Christina could write well enough to correspond with her, and she procured her a writing-case containing a pencil, ink, pens, a pack of stamped and directed envelopes, and some note paper. She promised to send more when these were exhausted, and made Christina say she would try and write every fortnight. She also gave her an English Bible and hymn-book, and a Bible in her own language.

Christina made her Bible a *study*. She was not content to glance over it or read a chapter, but she took a question book and aided by it, studied faithfully. When she could not an-

swer a question, she went to her teacher for help. Mrs. G—— gave her this question book, and also said she would send her each month a Sabbath-school paper.

“How glad I am I was sick and kept here,” she said one day to Mrs. G——, as they sat in an arbour of the garden with their sewing. “If I had gone on with the rest, I should may be never have heard of the good Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I should never have learned so many useful things, which by and by I can teach others. Oh, when I first was taken ill on the boat, I was so frightened and miserable, for I knew they would leave me, but I did not know what good would come of it.”

“Thus often, Christina, God may

lead out of darkness into light. In all your life let this be a lesson to you. When you are in the midst of trouble, when all around you seems sad and strange, believe that God has his own good purpose in it all, and that he will in the end make it plain. Not always in this world, but surely to those who love him, in the world to come."

The roses and the lilies had bloomed and passed away until another spring. White berries hung in unseen clusters on the bushes. Scarlet sage burned in the distant borders; flaunting margolds mocked the sunlight; gorgeous dahlias held up their crowded cups to catch the dew; the clusters of the mountain ash were waiting for the frosts to dye them with crimson. The time had come for Christina to go

away. A company of Norwegians were going to the same place where Carl Hentrelmann had led his company, and with them Christina was to go. Frank and fearless, the little Norwegian kept up a brave heart to the last. The emigrants had to stay one night in the village, waiting for conveyances to the railroad; that was her last evening with Mrs. G——. They sat in the vine-clad portico, till the moon was high, the lady giving good counsel, the girl listening eagerly.

“You are but a little girl, Christina, and you will have many temptations; the allurements of sin; the promptings of your own corrupt nature; and, it may be, the persecutions and reproaches of those who ‘say in their hearts, there is no God.’ Your heav-

only Father alone can keep you steadfast unto the end.

“O my child, remember that how long soever your life may be, it is but a moment in comparison with the existence beyond the grave. Be merciful to your immortal soul, watch zealously your every act, that your footsteps slip not into eternal woe.

“May God help you to serve him, to fight a good fight, to keep the faith. If you have temptations, fly to Jesus, who was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin, and who knows how to succour them that are tempted.

“Read your Bible constantly, pray without ceasing, and by God’s blessing you will become daily more humble, loving and diligent; more like Him

who lived to be our example, died to save, and rose again to glorify us.

“There is no place where God is not. You may speak to him wherever you are. He will be with you in joy or woe, in peace or trial, in fear or pain, and ever ready to sympathize with you, and arm you with strength to overcome. ‘He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed with white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before the angels.’—

“You can do a great deal of good if you try, relying upon God to bless your efforts. Though you are so young, you can be a teacher of holiness to your people. For this end God may have kept you here these two months,

that you might learn of him, and hereafter lead others to him."

Thus the kind lady talked as they sat together on that last beautiful evening, and her words sank deep into the girl's heart, to guide and comfort her in the years to come.

Long after Christina was wrapped in the profound sleep of healthful youth, Mrs. G—— was seeking for her the blessing of God.

And so, on the morrow, Christina went out from the sheltering home, out from the hospitable village, her young heart full of love and devotion, to be, in her humble and childish way, an evangelist to the poor Norwegians in our western lands.

CHAPTER V.

THE tedious journey was accomplished at last. At sunset one evening, Christina arrived at a collection of rude shanties, hastily put up by the settlers for their first abodes, and one was pointed out to her as her father's home. Nobody seemed either very glad or sorry at her unexpected return,—it was taken as coolly as if she had been out for an hour's play. But this Christina had expected. Entire indifference had ever been shown her by her family, and she looked for nothing else. Mrs. Spelter was sick in her bed; another child had been

added to the family—a girl, named Gretchen. Katrinka was fretting about the work, and even more ungracious to the new baby than she had been to Christina. Christian Spelter and his two boys were busy in the clearing. Everything wore a rough, deserted, uncomfortable air. All was so different from Mrs. G——'s, that at first the girl's heart grew sick and weary of the life before her; then she looked up, and took courage.

If all within doors was forlorn, all without was beautiful: the fertile plains, the green belts of woodland, the swift-flowing streams, the clear skies, the birds, the flowers, the thousands of gay-winged insects. She grew glad again, and was strong to make the dwelling worthy of its fair sur-

roundings. Quietly she set about her self-imposed tasks. The house was small, and it took but little labour to reduce it to order. Then who could hush the crying infant so quickly as Christina. Mrs. Spelter found it was much pleasanter to have a well-made bed, palatable gruel, toast, and broth, and clean garments, and she began to cheer up and think of getting well. Katrinka, while she left to her younger sister far more than her share of domestic labours, insensibly fell into her tidy ways of doing work. The boys felt more respectable when Christina had neatly mended their clothes, and Christian's brow grew brighter as he came home to a clean hearth, a neat table, and a well-cooked meal. It took weeks to work these changes.

Other weeks passed before the brothers were persuaded to make a cradle for wee Gretchen, some benches for the house, and to clear up the space immediately before the door. During October, Christina found time to go to the woods and transplant some vines to set about the doors and windows. Then Mrs. G—— had promised to send her seeds of flowers and vegetables early in the spring, and she meant to plant a garden. She felt sure her brothers could be persuaded into making a fence during the winter, and would aid in the digging.

Everything was told to good Mrs. G—— in her frequent letters, and Christina was made glad on Thanksgiving-day by a box from that excellent friend. The whole family were

amazed; for although the box had really cost but little, it seemed worth a fortune. Christina rose in their estimation immediately. In the box were gay chintz curtains for the little windows, which Christina kept so bright. A brilliant cotton table-cloth for the rough pine table, that made it look like a splendid article of furniture as soon as the cover was spread, and the few gaily bound books that the box contained were placed on it. A pair of pretty prints in wooden frames were found very ornamental to the cabin walls, and a painted vase for flowers at once inspired the boys to make a mantle-piece to hold it and a plain but good clock. Two patch-work quilts, drawn from Mrs. G——'s complete stores, filled dame Spelter



THANKSGIVING DAY.

Page 76.

with delight; and when it was found that hidden safely in their soft folds were a dozen blue plates, some knives and forks, and half a dozen cups and saucers, her joy knew no bounds, while her husband at once promised to erect a corner-cupboard.

Mrs. G—— had also sent a quantity of strong calico, two pieces of heavy muslin, and some flannel. She had provided patterns for various garments, and the ambition of Mrs. Spelter and Katrinka being aroused, they set to work with Christina's help to make up a store of clothing. This timely gift aroused the energy and ambition of the whole family. No one thought a house with window curtains, a clock, and a gay table-cover, should be untidy, so everything was

kept in order, and it was found very easy, after the first effort. The father and sons would not be outdone. They went to work with hammer and saw, and got the cabin better fixed up to keep out cold and rain. The room above stairs was decently finished as a sleeping-room for the boys, and they even went so far as to make two strong and very respectable looking bedsteads. After all, there was a great deal of latent good in the family, it had only needed to be developed, and perhaps you wouldn't have found a more promising set among the poorer emigrants, than the Spelter family were, the spring after their arrival in the west. While Christina's hands had been so busy, her tongue had not been silent, she told again and again

what the Lord had done for her. And as her faith wrought so vigorously, all felt sure it was a living reality. They at once connected her Christian spirit, her aptness and diligence at work, and her making so influential a friend as Mrs. G——, with her knowing how to read. Early in the spring, Katrinka and the boys declared they would learn to read. Christina was their faithful teacher. It was slow work, for nothing would do but they must learn to read English, and they spoke that very brokenly. Still Christina was always zealous and patient, and if they sometimes were obstinate and idle, they sometimes were diligent and teachable; and by degrees they learned to speak intelligibly, and took the first steps in reading. They

all liked to hear the Bible read; its wonderful stories enchanted them; and by their remarks, the happy Christina saw that some of its golden precepts were sinking in their minds.

Spring came, the fence was made, the garden planted. The vines that Christina had set out grew finely. The cabin was white-washed; and except Carl Hentrelmann's, there was not such another home in the hamlet as that of the Spelter's.

* * * * *

Ten years went by. A missionary in the West found part of his field of labour lying in a village settled principally by Norwegians, most of whom understood English. The first Sabbath that he preached in the school-house, he noticed a family consisting

of a father, mother, two grown up daughters, two sons, fine, honest-looking young men, and a little girl. Their earnest attention to the services, their hearty singing, their reverential attitude in prayer, attracted his attention. After service, he was invited to dine with them. He accepted the invitation, and found their abode one of happiness and prosperity. It was a pretty white cottage, in a charming garden. About it lay acres of well cultivated land that yearly yielded an abundant harvest. Fine cattle fed in the pasture lands, and the barns were filled with the increase of the soil. The house was comfortably furnished, and the neatly served meal bore witness to good house-keeping. The pastor found that all the family, but the youngest

girl, little Gretchen, entertained a hope in Christ, and were anxious to have a church established in their village, that they might unite themselves with it. The missionary remained with them overnight; walking in the evening with Christian Spelter, through one of his fields, that he might have a quiet conversation with him concerning the way the Lord had led him, he learned how little Christina, following those who had deserted her, became to them a messenger of peace, and that by reading God's holy word, and the good books sent by Mrs. G—— they had been led into gospel light and peace.

“Since then,” said Mr. Spelter, “God has blessed me in all my hands have undertaken.”

THE YOUNG WOOD-CUTTER.

“Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

THE YOUNG WOOD-CUTTER.

ONE of Christ's miracles is recorded in Luke as follows,—“Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And he said, ‘Young man, I say unto thee, arise,’ and he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and he delivered him to his mother.”

Stephen Knowlton was the only son of his widowed mother; for many years he was dead in trespasses and sins, but ‘Jesus of Nazareth passed that

way,' and in infinite mercy called his soul to eternal life, so that the angels sang that he who was dead was alive again, and that the lost was found. Stephen was a smart boy. Now a smart boy is a very dangerous boy, until he has dedicated all his abilities to God. Satan is constantly on the watch for smart boys; they make better servants for him than any one else, they can do so much mischief; but if they yield to him, they find that he is a hard master, and his wages—death.

Stephen's mother was a Christian. She had two daughters, one older and one younger than Stephen. Anne, the elder, was a gentle, pious girl; Nora, the youngest of the family, thought of little but play. Mr. Knowlton had been a wood-cutter, and when



THE YOUNG WOODCUTTER.

he died, his wife had to labour hard to support herself and children. Stephen and Anne, as they grew able, began to afford her some help. At length when he was fourteen, Stephen took his axe on his shoulder, and went out to be a wood-cutter, like his father. Stephen was a large boy, strong of arm and brave of heart; he was also very obedient to his mother, kind to his sisters, and used to boast that he had never told a lie. Yet, with all his good qualities, Stephen lacked the one thing needful, both in this life and the next. Stephen cared little about religion; he called it dull, did not like to go to church, and thought the Sabbath longer than any other day. It is a bad sign when one finds the Sabbath tedious. Heaven is an eter-

nal Sabbath. When Stephen was about twelve years old, his mother was once too ill to go to church. Anne was taking care of her, so she sent Stephen to church, in hopes that he would remember the sermon and repeat a part to her. The church was a new one, and not yet finished; it was neither ceiled nor plastered, and Stephen spent his time in gazing about, so that when he left he knew just how many posts, rafters, and panes of glass there were in it. When he returned home, his mother said,—

“Well, my son, what about the church?”

“Why, mother,” replied Stephen, “there are so many, (mentioning the number,) posts, rafters, and panes of glass in it.”

“O my son,” said his mother, sadly, “God has seen how you trifled this day in his holy house, and is angry with you. Remember, my son, if you do not seek his face, and delight in his service and in his earthly courts, you can never meet with him above.”

Stephen cared little for his mother’s reproof, but he was sorry he had grieved her; so the next Sabbath he went to church, and having paid strict attention, was able to repeat nearly the whole sermon when he returned to his home. Sin is a terrible disease. It had seized upon Stephen as it has on all other mortals, and only the great Physician could cure him. But Stephen knew and cared very little about his soul.

As I have said, at fourteen Stephen

went out as a wood-cutter. He found plenty of work, for in a day he did nearly as much as a man. One day he was chopping wood, when a gentleman, with a small travelling-bag in his hand, turned into the forest and sat down on a log near him. Stephen politely saluted him.

“God is giving you a fine opportunity, young man,” said the stranger.

“Sir?” said Stephen.

“God is giving you ample chance to seek his face,” said the gentleman.

“Here you have nothing to hinder your thinking of his goodness towards you, and of your duty to him. Do you ever think of these things?”

“No, sir,” said Stephen.

“I thought perhaps you did not, and so, hearing the sound of your axe,

I turned from my way to speak to you. Here you are in the forest. You are not disturbed by any sound except the strokes of your axe. You have no foolish conversation or actions to occupy your thoughts. All day long you are among these grand old trees pointing up towards the sky, reminding you, if you will, of heaven. You hear the little birds and see the flowers so wonderfully made, telling of the wisdom and love of God. You see yourself, so much nobler than the trees, or birds, or flowers, and know that you must live for ever in happiness or misery; for which are you preparing?"

"Of course, I want to be happy," said Stephen.

"Then you must seek God now, in

your youth; true joy is found only in his love," said the stranger.

Stephen made no reply.

"I beg you to think of these things, young man, and I will leave you a few little books which I hope you will read." So saying, the gentleman took several tracts from his bag and having given them to Stephen, went away. Stephen put the books in' his pocket, but he could not get the stranger's words out of his mind, as easily as he got his books out of his sight. Often when he heard a bird sing or saw a flower, he would remember what the man had said, and conscience would urge him to seek the Lord, but he tried to put these thoughts away.

"Religion is so dull," he would say to himself.

One day he was cutting wood for Squire Davis, when the minister rode by.

“ Ah, I hope the Squire is not having his fine grove cut down,” he said.

“ No, sir,” answered Stephen, “ he sent me here to cut down the dead trees, and here is one that I don't know whether it is dead or alive; I guess, on the whole, I'll leave it another year.”

Said the minister, “ Our Lord related a parable of one who ordered his gardener to cut down an unfruitful tree. The gardener prayed him to spare it another year, that with care it might bear fruit. The owner in this parable signifies God, the unfruitful tree, one who has never served God—

are you a fruitful or an unfruitful tree, a Christian or a rebel to God?"

"I am not a Christian, sir," replied Stephen.

"Then seek the Lord at once," said the minister, "before he says of you, 'Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?'"

Stephen made no answer, and the minister rode on. The words of the minister went to his heart, and he was greatly troubled. He saw his duty, yet did not wish to perform it, but hardly dared to acknowledge this even to himself.

One day he had finished eating the dinner he had brought to the wood, and having nothing else to occupy his noon hour, read one of the tracts given him so long before. He read it through.

“Always the same thing,” said Stephen to himself, “I must be a Christian, yet I can’t be one. If I am one, I am told that I shall be happy, if I am not, I’ll be miserable? Now, why must I be miserable? I am not half as bad as some folks.” So he talked to himself, and his hard heart refused to acknowledge that he was a creature of God’s wrath. After a number of months of this mental conflict, one evening as he was returning from work, he met a friend some years older than himself.

“Stephen, have you heard this new preaching at the village?” said he.

“No, what is it?”

“Universalist,” said the friend.

“What kind is that?” asked Stephen.

“Why, a kind that says we won’t be punished for our sins, but we’ll all be forgiven, and go to heaven at last.”

“That is good; I’ve been always wanting to hear something like that; I’ll go to-night,” said Stephen.

That evening he went to hear the new kind of preaching! He was glad to listen to assertions such as his friend had mentioned, and said to himself over and over again as he went home, “that is fine. I will believe that; I’ll be a universalist.” Ah, said conscience, you know very well that that is not the religion of the Bible. The Bible tells you God is righteous and hates sin, that he is angry with the wicked every day. He has provided a way of salvation through Christ, and

if you do not accept it he will visit you with his wrath for ever."

But Stephen refused to hear his conscience. Wherever he went, he talked loudly of his "new religion," as he was pleased to term it. He had an excellent memory, and was able to repeat nearly all the discourses he had heard, and by this means he out-talked and put to silence many of his companions among the wood-cutters.

Fortunately he did not do more than silence them. He often rejoiced after it pleased God to bring him to a knowledge of the "truth which is in Jesus," that he had never made a single convert to Universalism. However, he was not a firm believer in the doctrines he advocated; he knew they were untrue; but he desired to believe

them, and talked partly to convince himself.

Several times the weakness of his creed was forcibly brought before him. Once, he was among the mountains, cutting wood with several others. Having remained at their "camp" all night, a terrible thunder-storm arose. One immense tree near by was struck by lightning, and the party feared that they would meet the same fate. Stephen was in great terror. He saw himself in danger, and had an overwhelming fear of death. His soul was unprepared to meet his God. But the storm passed over, and through God's mercy they were preserved from harm, and Stephen endeavoured to forget how he had felt. The more uncertain he felt about Universalism,

the more he talked about it. After he had been striving to deceive himself in this manner for about a year, he was working for a gentleman named Jameson, usually called Deacon Jameson. While at his work, the Deacon came into the woods near him, and after a while, said,

“Why, Stephen, I hear you have turned Universalist.”

“Yes, sir,” said Stephen; “I think it is the only sensible or agreeable religion,—at least, it is the only one I never found any fault with.”

“And how is it with your conscience; has that never found any fault with it?” asked the deacon.

“Other religions are hard and unreasonable,” said Stephen, evading the deacon’s question; and then he began

as usual to explain and praise Universalism, and find fault with other creeds. When he had finished, the deacon simply said,—

“Tell me truly, Stephen, do you really and fully believe in Universalism?”

“Yes, sir, I do,” replied Stephen, hastily, and instantly his conscience reproached him for having uttered a falsehood. Stephen could not banish this from his mind. He had been charged to give a truthful answer to a plain and solemn question, and he had deliberately uttered what was false. Yet his pride would not allow him to confess it. “If I tell the deacon that I told him a lie,” he said to himself, “he will of course ask me how I can profess and uphold a doctrine which I

do not believe. Now I don't know about other religions, they always puzzled me and made me feel uncomfortable, but this is an easy one. I'll believe this, any way." Several times, when Deacon Jameson came near him, Stephen hoped that he would renew the conversation, and that he might in some way change or soften the positive assertion he had made. But the deacon never mentioned the subject again, and Stephen was too bashful to begin a talk about any matter with so great a man as he considered Deacon Jameson. He felt constantly uneasy and ashamed in his presence, and was glad when his work was done, and he was able to go home. Mrs. Knowlton was much troubled by having her son hold views so greatly opposed to many

y *

important truths contained in the word of God. Her Bible she loved and revered, and endeavoured to make it constantly the rule of her conduct, and her daughters were following her example. Stephen seemed utterly to have forsaken the God of his fathers; prayer and Bible reading he constantly neglected. But Mrs. Knowlton persevered in prayer for her misguided son, and her prayers were answered.

The means of turning Stephen from the error of his ways were soon provided, though they were alike fearful and unexpected. Stephen was engaged to cut wood for a farmer about a quarter of a mile from his own home. While felling a large tree, he did not observe when it began to totter, and

before he had time to escape, it fell, crushing his leg between its trunk and a partly decayed log that lay beside it. Stephen fainted, but after a short time recovered, and became aware of his situation. His limb was terribly mangled, and it might be hours before any one came near him. He was a powerful and determined lad, and after several exhausting efforts, he tore a portion of the old log and released his limb. After a moment's rest, he summoned all his strength, and began to crawl towards home. Slowly and painfully he accomplished the distance, and at last lay fainting at his mother's door. Aid was instantly procured, and the surgeon sent for. When he came, he decided that the leg must be cut off. Stephen could scarcely con-

sent to amputation; he did not fear the pain, but he dreaded the mutilation, and the consequent loss of his accustomed means of aiding in the support of his mother and sisters. But the choice lay between losing his limb or his life, and he yielded, loudly murmuring against the dealings of Providence. Pain and loss of blood brought on a high fever, and for days his life was despaired of. But he was neither delirious, nor insensible to his condition. He saw his danger, and trembled at approaching death. All his sins and his carelessness arose in terrible array before him. In those fearful hours, he saw that Universalism was a broken reed, which failed him when, in his extremity, he most needed to lean upon it for support.

Then, from his terror-stricken heart, went up to heaven the great cry,—“God be merciful to me a sinner.” His prayer was heard. Health and strength gradually returned. Through all the long days and wakeful night-hours of weakness, but rest from pain, he ‘communed with his own heart, and was still.’ Conscience, the accuser, stood before him as a stern recorder of his sins, but Jesus the sacrifice, the great High Priest, was ready to mediate between his soul and an offended God. Great is the mercy of our Lord. Jesus beheld the soul dead in trespasses and sins, and touching it, said, “Arise,” and filled it with his divine life. Stephen found his long-neglected Bible a well-spring from which his soul drank and was satisfied.

The thought of his falsehood to Deacon Jameson was constantly in his mind; he felt that he could not rest until he had confessed it. He was some ten miles from the Deacon's, but as soon as he was able to walk upon his crutches, he set out for his house, being too poor to hire a conveyance. Feeble as he was, his progress was slow, and though he set out early in the morning, it was late at night before he reached his destination. The Deacon met him cordially.

"I only heard of your accident, yesterday," he said, "or I should have visited you."

"I felt that I must see you, Deacon," said Stephen. "I had a confession to make to you. I told you when you asked me solemnly, if I

really believed in Universalism, that I did. Sir, I did not, it was a falsehood, and I have been miserable ever since. I pray your pardon, sir, for trying to deceive you."

"I gladly pardon you, Stephen," answered the Deacon, "but you know there is One who heard your words to whom confession is due."

"I have confessed my trespass to God, sir, and I trust for Christ's dear sake, he has forgiven that and all my other sins. Now, sir, I can bless God for what men call my great misfortune. It was God's means of giving me eternal life."

Thus ever looking upon his trial as the shadow of the coming blessing, Stephen never had a murmuring thought concerning it.

Means of support were also provided for him; he was a good accountant, and became a clerk and book-keeper in a village-store. After some years, he was taken as partner, and now supports his mother and sisters comfortably.

More than the widow of Nain rejoiced over her son restored to her from his winding-sheet, did this widowed mother joy over her son who had lain so long in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity.

THE END.

