

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHICH BRIEFLY RECORDS THE PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF REV.
PETER MULLENS.

IT must have been three or four years after Henry took charge of his parish, and I had entered upon the duties of my profession, that I met him one morning upon the street, wearing that peculiar smile on his face which said, as plainly as words could have told me, that he was the bearer of news.

"Who do you think spent the night at The Mansion, and is even now reveling in the luxuries of your old apartment?" said he.

"I was never good at conundrums," I replied. "Suppose you tell me."

"The Rev. Peter Mullens."

"Clothed, and in his right mind?"

"Yes, clothed, for he has one of my coats on, which I have told him he may carry away with him; and in his right mind, because he has the coat, and expects to live upon the donor for a few days."

We both laughed over the situation, and then Henry told me that Mullens was in a good deal of perplexity on account of the fact that he had two "calls" on hand, to which answers must be made immediately.

"I have agreed with Mullens," said Henry, "to invite you to dinner, in order that he may have the benefit of your advice."

"Thank you. Is there a fee?"

"Nothing stipulated, but I think you had better bring a pair of trowsers," he replied. "Mullens, you know, wants to see

the advantages that are likely to come from following your advice, and if he has them in hand he can decide at once."

The prospect of dining with Mullens was not an unpleasant one. I was curious to see what he had made of himself, and to learn what he was going to do. So I congratulated Henry on the new light that had risen upon his domestic life, and promised him that I would meet his guest at his table.

On entering The Mansion that day in my usual informal way, I found the Rev. Peter Mullens lying nearly upon his back, in the most luxurious chair of the large drawing-room, apparently in a state of serene and supreme happiness. He was enjoying the privileges of the cloth, in the house of a professional brother who had been exceptionally "favored." For the time, the house was his own. All petty cares were dismissed. All clouds were lifted from his life, in the consciousness that he had a good coat on which had cost him nothing, and that, for a few days at least, board and lodging were secure at the same price. His hair was brushed back straight over his head in the usual fashion, and evidently fastened there by the contents of a box of pomatum which he had found in my old chamber. He had managed to get some gold-bowed spectacles, and when I met him he presented quite an imposing front. Rising and greeting me with a cordial and somewhat patronizing air, he quickly resumed his seat and his attitude, and subsided into a vein of moralizing. He thought it must be a source of great satisfaction to me that the property which had once been my own, apparently, had been devoted to the ministry, and that henceforth The Mansion would be the home of those who had given themselves to the church.

Mullens evidently regarded himself as one who had a certain pecuniary interest in the estate. The house was to be his tavern—his free, temporary home—whenever it might be convenient for him to pass a portion of his time in the city. Indeed, he conducted himself as if he were my host, and expressed the hope that he should see me always when visiting the town. His assumptions amused me exceedingly,

though I was sorry to think that Henry and Claire would feel themselves obliged to tolerate him.

At the dinner-table, Mr. Mullens disclosed the questions in regard to his settlement. "The truth is," said he, "that I am divided on a question of duty. Given equal opportunities of doing good, and unequal compensation, on which side does duty lie? That is the question. I don't wish to be mercenary; but when one Church offers me five hundred dollars a year, payable quarterly in advance, and the other offers me five hundred dollars a year, payable quarterly at the end of the quarter, with an annual donation-party, I feel myself divided. There is an advantage in being paid quarterly in advance, and there is an advantage in a donation-party, provided the people do not eat up what they bring. How great this advantage is I do not know; but there is something very attractive to me in a donation-party. It throws the people together, it nourishes the social element, it develops systematic benevolence, it cements the friendship of pastor and people, it brings a great many things into the house that a man can never afford to buy, and it must be exceedingly interesting to reckon up the results. I've thought about it a great deal, and it does seem to me that a donation-party must be a very valuable test of usefulness. How am I to know whether my services are acceptable, unless every year there is some voluntary testimonial concerning them? It seems to me that I must have such a testimonial. I find myself looking forward to it. Here's an old farmer, we'll say, without any public gifts. Hosannas languish on his tongue, and, so far as I can tell, all devotion dies. He brings me, perhaps, two cords or two cords and a half of good hard wood, and by that act he says, 'The Rev. Mr. Mullens has benefited me, and I wish to tell him so. He has warmed my heart, and I will warm his body. He has ministered to me in his way, and I will minister to him in my way.' Here's a woman with a gift of flannel—a thing that's always useful in a minister's family—and there's another with a gift of socks, and here's another with a gift of crullers, and here's a man with a

gift of a spare-rib or a ham, and another with a gift of potatoes, and"—

Mr. Mullens gave an extra smack to his lips, as, in the midst of his dinner, this vision of a possible donation-party passed before the eyes of his imagination.

"It is plain to see which way your inclination points," I said to him.

"Yes, that is what troubles me," he responded. "I wish to do right. There may be no difference between having your pay quarterly in advance and the donation-party; but the donation-party, all things considered, is the most attractive."

"I really think it would suit you best," I said, "and if the opportunity for doing good is the same in each place, I'm sure you ought not to hesitate."

"Well, if I accept your advice," said Mr. Mullens, "you must stand by me. This place is only six miles from Bradford, and if I ever get hard up it will be pleasant to think that I have such friends at hand as you and Brother Sanderson."

This was a new aspect of the affair, and not at all a pleasant one; but I had given my advice and could not retract it.

Mullens remained at The Mansion several days, and showed his white cravat and gold-bowed spectacles all over the city. He was often in my office, and on one occasion accompanied me to the court-room, where I gave him a seat of honor and introduced him to my legal friends. He was so very comfortable in his splendid quarters, so shielded from the homely affairs of the world by his associations, and so inexpensive to himself, that it was a hardship to tear himself away at last, even with the prospect of a donation-party rising before him in the attractive perspective of his future.

He had been several days in the house, and had secured such plunder as would be of use to him, personally, when he surprised us all by the announcement that he was a married man, and was already the father of a helpless infant. He gave us also to understand that Mrs. Mullens was, like himself, poor, that her wardrobe was none of the most comfortable, and that

her "helpless infant" would rejoice in garments cast off by children more "favored" than his own. His statement was intended to appeal to Claire and Millie, and was responded to accordingly. When he went away, he bore a trunk full of materials, that, as he said, "would be useful in a minister's family."

Henry and I attended his installation shortly afterwards, and assisted him in beginning his housekeeping. We found Mrs. Mullens to be a woman every way adapted to the companion she had chosen. She was willing to live upon her friends. She delighted in gifts, and took them as if they were hers by right. Everything was grain that came to her mill in this way. Her wants and her inability to supply them were the constant theme of her communications with her friends and neighbors, and for ten long years she was never without a "helpless infant" with which to excite their laggard and weary charities. Whenever she needed to purchase anything, she sent to me or to Millie, or to her friends at The Mansion, her commission,—always without the money. She either did not know how much the desired articles would cost, or there was such danger of losing money when sent by post, or she had not the exact change on hand; but she assured us that Mr. Mullens would call and pay us when visiting Bradford. The burden thus rolled upon Mr. Mullens was never taken up by him; and so, year after year, we consented to be bled by this amiable woman, while the Mullens family went on increasing in numbers and multiplying in wants. It became a matter of wonder that any religious society should be content with the spiritual ministrations of such a man as Mullens; but this society was simple and poor, and their pastor had an ingenious way of warming over his old broth and the old broth of others which secured for him a certain measure of respect. His tongue was glib, his presence imposing, and his self-assurance quite overwhelming.

But at last there came a change. New residents in the parish saw through his shallow disguises, and raised such a storm of discontent about his ears that he was compelled to resign his

pulpit and to cast about for other means of living. No other pulpit opened its doors to him. The man's reputation outside of his parish was not a desirable one. Everybody had ceased to regard him as a man capable of teaching; and he had so begged his way and lived upon his acquaintances, and had so meanly incurred and meanly refused to recognize a thousand little debts among his early friends, that it was impossible for him to obtain even a temporary engagement as a preacher.

There was nothing left for him to do, but to become a peddler of some sort, for which office he had rare natural gifts. Leaving his family where they were, he took an agency for the sale of the Cottage Bible. He drove a thrifty business with this publication, going from house to house, wearing always his white cravat, living upon the ministers and deacons, and advertising himself by speeches at evening meetings and Sunday-schools. Sometimes he got an opportunity to preach on Sunday, and having thus made his face familiar to the people, drove a brisk business among them on Monday. His white cravat he used as a sort of pass on railroads and steamboats, or as an instrument by which it was to be secured. Every pecuniary consideration which could be won from a contemptuous business world, by the advertisement of the sacred office which he once held, he took the boldest or the most abject way to win.

It must not be supposed that "old Mullens," as people learned to call him, was really distressed by poverty. Never paying out a cent of money that came into his hands if he could avoid it, he accumulated a handsome property, which he skillfully hid away in investments, maintaining his show of poverty, through all his active life. Henry shook him off at last and helped me to do the same. We heard of him not long ago lecturing to Sunday-schools and buying wool, and it is not ten years since he appeared in Bradford as an agent of a life-insurance company, with specially favorable terms to clergymen who were kind enough to board him during his visit. I shrink from writing here the stories I heard about him, concerning the way in which he advertised his business by mixing it with his public

religious teachings, because it associates such base ideas with an office which I revere as the highest and holiest a man can hold ; but when I say that in his public addresses he represented the Christian religion as a system of life-insurance of the spiritual kind, I sufficiently illustrate his methods and his motives.

He passed a useless life. He became a nuisance to his professional brethren, a burden to all who were good-natured enough to open their houses to him, and a disgrace to the Christian ministry. Wearing the badge of a clergyman, exacting as a right that which was rendered to others as a courtesy or a testimonial of love and friendship, surrendering his manhood for the privileges of ministerial mendicancy, and indulging his greed for money at the expense of a church to which he fancied he had given his life, he did, unwittingly perhaps, what he could to bring popular contempt upon his profession, and to associate with the Christian religion the meanest type of personal character it is possible to conceive.

Amid the temptations of this poor, earthly life, and the weaknesses of human nature, even the most sacred profession will be disgraced, now and then, by men who repent in dust and ashes over their fall from rectitude, and the dishonor they bring upon a cause which in their hearts they love ; but Mullens carried his self-complacency to the end, and demonstrated by his character and influence how important it is that dunces shall not be encouraged to enter upon a high walk of life by benefactions which rarely fail to induce and develop in them the spirit of beggars. I am sure there is no field of Christian benevolence more crowded with untoward results than that in which weak men have found the means for reaching the Christian ministry. The beggarly helplessness of some of these men is pitiful ; and a spirit of dependence is fostered in them which emasculates them, and makes them contemptible among those whom they seek to influence.

Though the Rev. Peter Mullens is still living, I have no fear that I shall be called to an account for my plain treatment of

him, as he will never buy this book, or find a friend who will be willing to give or lend it to him. Even if he had such a friend, and he should recognize his portrait, his *amour propre* would not be wounded, and he would complacently regard himself as persecuted for righteousness' sake.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH I SAY GOOD-NIGHT TO MY FRIENDS AND THE PAST
AND GOOD-MORROW TO MY WORK AND THE FUTURE.

THUS I have lived over the old life, or, rather, the young life which lies with all its vicissitudes of pain and pleasure, and all its lessons and inspirations, embalmed in my memory; and here, alas! I must re-write the words with which I began. "They were all here then—father, mother, brothers and sisters; and the family life was at its fullest. Now they are all gone, and I am alone. I have wife and children and troops of friends, yet still I am alone." No later relation can remove the sense of loneliness that comes to him whose first home has forever vanished from the earth.

As I sit in my library, recording this last chapter of my little history, I look back through the ceaseless round of business and care, and, as upon a panorama unrolling before me, I see through tears the events which have blotted out, one after another, the old relations, and transferred the lives I loved to another sphere.

I see a sun-lit room, where my aged father lies propped among his pillows, and tells me feebly, but with a strange light in his eyes, that it is so much better for him to go before my mother! She can do better without him than he can without her! It is sweet to learn that she who had always been regarded by her family and friends as a care and a burden to him, had been his rest and reward; that there had always been something in his love for her which had atoned for his hard lot, and that, without her, his life would be undesirable.

I read to him the psalms of assurance and consolation: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil." I repeat the words of the tried and patient patriarch: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I join with the family in singing the inspiring lines which he had never undertaken to read aloud without being crushed into sobbing silence:

"There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found;
They softly lie and sweetly sleep
Low in the ground.

"The storm that wrecks the winter sky
No more disturbs their deep repose
Than summer evening's latest sigh
That shuts the rose.

"I long to lay this painful head
And aching heart beneath the soil,
To slumber in that dreamless bed
From all my toil.

"The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its sire,
Shall never die."

I press his hand, and hear him say: "It is all well. Take care of your mother."

We all bend and kiss him; a few quick breaths, and the dead old heart is still—a heart so true, so tender, so pure, so faithful, so trusting, that no man could know it without recognizing the Christian grace that made it what it was, or finding in it infallible evidence of the divinity of the religion by whose moulding hand it was shaped, and from whose inspirations it had drawn its life. Then we lay him to rest among the June roses, with birds singing around us, and all nature robed in the glowing garb of summer, feeling that there are wings near us which we do not see, that songs are breathed which we do not hear, and that somewhere, beyond the confines of mortal pain and decay, he has found a summer that will be perennial.

The picture moves along, and I am in the same room again, and she who all her life, through fear of death, had been subject to bondage, has come to her final hour. She has reached the door of the sepulchre from a long distance, questioning painfully at every step: "Who shall roll away the stone?" and now that she is arrived, she finds, to her unspeakable joy and peace, that the stone is rolled away. Benignant nature, which has given her so strong a love of life, overcomes in its own tender way the fear of death that had been generated in her melancholic temperament; and by stealing her senses one by one, makes his coming not only dreadless, but desirable. She finds the angels too, one at the head, the other at the foot where death has lain, with white hands pointing upward. I weep, but I am grateful that the life of fear is past, and that she can never live it again,—grateful, too, that she is reunited to him who has been waiting to introduce her to her new being and relations. We lay her by the side of the true husband whose life she has shared, and whose children she has borne and reared, and then go back to a home which death has left without a head—to a home that is a home no longer.

The picture moves on, and this time I witness a scene full of tender interest to me in my own house. A holy spell of waiting is upon us all. Aunt Flick comes in, day after day, with little services which only she can render to her tenderly beloved niece, and with little garments in her hands that wait the coming of a stranger. It is night, and there is hurrying to and fro in the house. I sit in my room, wrapped in pity and feverish with anxiety, with no utterance save that of whispered prayers for the safety of one dearer to me than life. I hear at last the feeble wail of a new being which God has intrusted to her hands and mine. Some one comes and tells me that all is well, and then, after a weary hour, I am summoned to the chamber where the great mystery of birth has been enacted. I kneel at the bedside of my precious wife. I cover her hands and her face with kisses. I call her my darling, my angel, while my first-born nestles upon her arm, wrapped in the a-

mosphere of mother-love which her overflowing heart breathes out upon it. I watch her day by day, and night by night, through all her weakness and danger, and now she sits in her room with her baby on her breast, looking out upon the sky and the flowers and the busy world.

Still, as the canvas moves, come other memorable nights, with varying fortunes of pain and pleasure, till my home is resonant with little feet, and musical with the voices of children. They climb my knees when I return from the fatigues of the day; I walk in my garden with their little hands clinging to mine; I listen to their prayers at their mother's knee; I watch over them in sickness; I settle their petty disputes; I find in them and in their mother all the solace and satisfaction that I desire and need. Clubs cannot win me from their society; fame, honor, place, have no charms that crowd them from my heart. My home is my rest, my amusement, my consolation, my treasure-house, my earthly heaven.

And here stoops down a shadow. I stand in a darkened room before a little casket that holds the silent form of my first-born. My arm is around the wife and mother who weeps over the lost treasure, and cannot, till tears have had their way, be comforted. I had not thought that my child could die—that *my* child could die. I knew that other children had died, but I felt safe. We lay the little fellow close by his grandfather at last; we strew his grave with flowers, and then return to our saddened home with hearts united in sorrow as they had never been united in joy, and with sympathies forever opened toward all who are called to a kindred grief. I wonder where he is to-day, in what mature angelhood he stands, how he will look when I meet him, how he will make himself known to me, who has been his teacher! He was like me: will his grandfather know him? I never can cease thinking of him as cared for and led by the same hand to which my own youthful fingers clung, and as hearing from the fond lips of my own father, the story of his father's eventful life. I feel how wonderful to me ~~has~~ been the ministry of my children—how much more I have

learned from them than they have ever learned from me—how by holding my own strong life in sweet subordination to their helplessness, they have taught me patience, self-sacrifice, self-control, truthfulness, faith, simplicity and purity.

Ah! this taking to one's arms a little group of souls, fresh from the hand of God, and living with them in loving companionship through all their stainless years, is, or ought to be, like living in heaven, for of such is the heavenly Kingdom. To no one of these am I more indebted than to the boy who went away from me before the world had touched him with a stain. The key that shut him in the tomb was the only key that could unlock my heart, and let in among its sympathies the world of sorrowing men and women, who mourn because their little ones are not.

The little graves, alas! how many they are! The mourners above them, how vast the multitude! Brothers, sisters, I am one with you. I press your hands, I weep with you, I trust with you, I belong to you. Those waxen, folded hands, that still breast so often pressed warm to our own, those sleep-bound eyes which have been so full of love and life, that sweet, unmoving, alabaster face—ah! we have all looked upon them, and they have made us one and made us better. There is no fountain which the angel of healing troubles with his restless and life-giving wings so constantly as the fountain of tears, and only those too lame and bruised to bathe miss the blessed influence.

The picture moves along, and now sweeps into view The Mansion on the hill—my old home—the home of my friend and sister. I go in and out as the years hurry by, and little feet have learned to run and greet me at the door, and young lips have been taught to call me "uncle." It is a door from which no beggar is ever turned away unfed, a door to which the feeble, the despairing, the sorrowing, the perplexed have come for years, and been admitted to the counsels, encouragements, and self-denying helpfulness of the strongest and noblest man I know. The ancient mistress of the establishment is

quite forgotten by the new generation, and the house which, for so many years, was shut to the great world by the selfish recluse who owned it, is now the warmest social center of the town. Its windows blaze with light through many a long evening, while old age and youth mingle in pleasant converse; and forth from its ample resources go food and clothing for the poor, and help for the needy, and money for those who bear the Good Tidings to the border. Familiar names are multiplied in the house. First there comes a little Claire, then an Arthur Bonnicastle, then a Ruth, and last a Minnie; and Claire, so like her mother in person and temper, grows up to be a helpful woman. I visit my old room, now the chamber of little Arthur Bonnicastle, but no regrets oppress me. I am glad of the change, and glad that the older Arthur has no selfish part or lot in the house.

And now another shadow droops. Ah! why should it come? The good Lord knows, and He loves us all.

In her room, wasting day by day with consumption, my sister sits and sees the world glide away from her, with all its industries and loves, and social and home delights. The strong man at her side, loaded with cares which she so long has lightened, comes to her from his wearying labor, and spends with her every precious flying hour that he can call his own. He almost tires her with tender ministry. He lifts her to her bed; he lifts her to her chair; he reads to her; he talks calmly with her of the great change that approaches; he sustains her sinking courage; he calls around her every help; he tries in every way to stay the hand of the fell destroyer, but it is all in vain. The long-dreaded day comes at last, and The Mansion—nay, all Bradford—is in mourning. A pure woman, a devoted wife, a tender mother, a Christian friend, sleeps; and a pastor, whose life is deepened and broadened and enriched by a grief so great and lasting that no future companionship of woman can even be thought of, goes to his work with a new devotion and the unction of a new power. There is still a Claire to guide the

house, and the memory and influence of a saint to hallow all its walls, and chasten all its associations.

The picture sweeps along, and presents to my imagination a resistless river, calm in its beginnings, but torn and turbulent as it proceeds, till it plunges in a cataract and passes from my sight. Along its passage are little barks, each bearing a member of my family—my brothers and sisters—separated from me and from each other by miles of distance, but every one moving toward the abyss that swallows them one by one. The disease that takes my sister Claire takes them all. Each arriving at her age passes away. Each reaching the lip of the cataract, lets go the oars, tosses up helpless hands, makes the fatal plunge, and the sob surge and of the waters, wind-borne to my shrinking ears, is all that is left to me. Not all, for even now a rainbow spans the chasm, to promise me that floods shall never overwhelm them again, and to prove to me that tears may be informed with the same heavenly light that shines in living flowers, and paints the clouds of sunrise.

The noise of the cataract dies away in the distance, the river dissolves, and I sit inside a new and beautiful church. The old one has been torn down to make way for a larger and better one. It is communion-day, and behind the table on which is spread the Christian feast of commemoration sits my boyhood's companion, my college friend, my brother and pastor, Henry Sanderson. The years have strewn silver over his temples and graven furrows upon his face, but earnestness, strength, and benignity are the breath and burden of his presence. An event is about to take place of great interest to him, to the church, and to a large circle of business men. Mr. Bradford, for the first time, publicly takes his stand among the Christian family. He is old now, and the cane which he used to carry for company, and as a habit, has become a necessity. He takes his place in the aisle, and by his side my own dear wife, who from her childhood has stood loyally by him and refused to unite with a church until he could do so. The creed has been revised. The refinements and elaborate definitions and non-es-

ential dogmas have been swept away, and the simple old Apostle's Creed, in which millions of disciples and saints have lived and died in the retiring centuries, is all that is read to him, and all to which he is called upon to respond.

Home at last! Received into the fold where he has always belonged! A patriarch, seated at the table of the Lord from which he has been shut away by children in experience, wisdom, and piety! He is my father now, the grandfather of my children, and the little wife who has trusted him and believed in him all her life has at last the supreme happiness of communing with him and her daughter in the holy festival.

Why do I still watch the unrolling canvas? The scenes that come and pass are not painful to me, because they are all associated with precious memories and precious hopes, but to those who read they must be somber and saddening. Why tell of the news that reached me one day from Hillsborough? Why tell of that which reached me six months afterward from the same place? They sleep well and their graves are shrines. Why tell how Aunt Flick, from nursing one with malignant disease, came home to die, and left undone a world of projected work? Why tell how Mr. Bradford was at last left alone, and came to pass the remnant of his life with me? Why tell of another shadow that descended upon The Mansion, and how, in its dark folds, the lovely mother of my friend disappeared?

It is the story of the world. We are born, we grow to manhood and womanhood, we marry, we work, we die. The generations come and go, and they come without call and go without significance if there be not a confident hope and expectation of something to follow, so grand and sweet and beautiful that we can look upon it all without misgiving or pain. Faith draws the poison from every grief, takes the sting from every loss, and quenches the fire of every pain; and only faith can do it. Wisdom, science, power, learning—all these are as blind and impotent before the great problem of life as ignorance and weakness. The feeblest girl, believing in God and a hereafter, is an archangel by the side of the strongest man who questions

her simple faith, and mounts on wings where he stumbles in doubt and distress, or sinks in darkness.

To those of two homes who are living, through six long and ever-memorable evenings, I have read my book, and now they are all with me to-night as I draw the chair to my library-table, to write these closing paragraphs. The center of the group is Mr. Bradford, an old, old man, though he is still strong enough to hold my youngest upon his knee. Henry sits near him, talking with Millie, while the young people are gathered in a distant corner, conversing quietly among themselves about the events I have for the first time fully unveiled to them. Their talk does not disturb me, for my thoughts linger over what I have written, and I feel that the task which has been such a delight to me is soon to pass from my hands. No work can come to me so sweet as this has been. I have lived my life again—a life so full of interest that it seems as if I could never tire of it, even though death should come nearer and nearer to me, waiting for my consent to be pushed from the verge of earthly existence.

I hear the quiet voices around me. I know where and what I am, but I cannot resist the feeling that there are more forms in the room than are visible to my eyes. I do not look up, but to me my library is full. Those who are gone cannot have lost their interest in those who remain, and those who are gone outnumber us two to one. My own, I am sure, are close about me, looking over my shoulder, and tracing with me these closing words. Their arms are intertwined, they exchange their thoughts about me all unheard by my coarse senses, and I am thrilled by an influence which I do not understand. My sister sits by the side of her husband unseen, and listens to the words which he is speaking to my wife, and hears her own name pronounced with grateful tenderness. Mr. Bradford has a companion older than the little one who sits upon his knee and plays with his great gold chain, but sees her not. There are

wistful, sympathetic faces among the children, and they cannot know why they are so quiet, or what spell it is that holds them. A severe, restless little woman watches her grandson with greedy eyes, or looks around upon those she once had within her power, but regards us all in impotent silence. Of them, but apart, companions in the new life as they were in the old, are two who come to visit their boys again—boys growing old in labor and preparing to join them in another school, among higher hills and purer atmospheres, or to be led by them to the tented shores of the River of the Water of Life. The two worlds have come so near together that they mingle, and there are shadows around me, and whispers above me, and the rustle of robes that tell me that life is one, and the love of kindred and friends eternal.

To-morrow, ah! golden to-morrow! Thank God for the hope of its coming, with all its duty and care, and work and ministry, and all its appeals to manliness and manly endeavor! Thank God, too, for the long dissipation of the dreams of selfish ease and luxury! Life has no significance to me, save as the theater in which my powers are developed and disciplined by use, and made fruitful in securing my own independence and the good of those around me, or as the scene in which I am fitted for the work and worship of the world beyond. The little ones and the large ones of my own flock are crowding me along. Soon they will have my place. I do not pity, I almost envy them. Life is so grand, so beautiful, so full of meaning, so splendid in its opportunities for action, so hopeful in its high results, that, despite all its sorrows, I would willingly live it over again.

Good-night!

