

be the soprano, although you question my ability, and May and Birdie shall assist me, and sing contralto, then Dr. Wilbur will be our basso, and Stuart the tenor, there, is not that "a very grand quartette?"

"Excellent! especially the basso," laughingly rejoined Ernest.

"What a pity there is no having Uncle Harley to sing with us: we will scarcely know how to get along without him now," said Marion.

"Thank you dear, I prefer the other end of the church."

"And I prefer having you there, sir, as you cannot be in both ends at the same time," she replied with a smile.

"But, mamma, it will be hard work for Nora, to set there Sunday after Sunday, and never sing," broke in Cora—

"I hope not—but she shall sing sometimes to keep her in heart, but Lela's voice is our greatest treasure, therefore we must be very tender of it."

"That is quite right, Mrs. Percy, do not let her strain it," said Mr. Ostend. "I have no doubt these little ladies will do charmingly."

Then at his request, we allowed him to hear many songs from our family party, both singly and collectively, and the tears in his eyes told better even than his hearty thanks, we had given him pleasure.

When he was gone, we talked a long while over our good fortune, and were as proud over the prospect of earning three hundred dollars among us, as if we had chanced upon a gold mine.

This morning, Mr. Raymond (who, by the way, in our home-conclave, has in the most natural of manners, slipped into Uncle Harley—as the result of our daily intercourse,) told me the organ will be put up this week, so by Sabbath after next, we will be ready to assume our new duties, as we are to have the freedom of the church at all hours of the day, for practising—oh! will it not be a treat, to touch the keys of an organ once more? I could fancy myself at home!

Milly or Sandy will perform upon the bellows, so we will have quite a family affair of it! This shows us a hope for Stuart and college, in a couple more years, if we do not touch this church money until then.

## CHAPTER XX.

OCTOBER 1.

"No more German or pleasant evenings, for me for the next two months," said Stuart coming in one day this week, and giving his strap-full of books a toss into his room.

"Why, what is the matter now?"

"I have entered for the prizes, and shall have to work like a slave this next quarter, if I mean to come out ahead."

"What will you have to do? you must not attempt too much at once, your lessons are very difficult already," I said anxiously.

"Oh! it is not so very bad, only I shall have to keep pretty steady, I am to write the lives of Euripedes, Pericles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintillian, Socrates, and any six of the modern poets and orators I please. Then I am to compare them, write a treatise upon the style of each, and after that—the most troublesome thing of all—to construe one hundred lines of each, in whatever two other languages I will, only one must be ancient, and the other modern, and the more variety one has in the latter, the higher the prize will be,—if I only knew some Italian!"

"And do you think it possible to do all this without giving up your other lessons?" I asked in dismay.

"I hope it is, I need only work a little harder and later, and I am pretty well grounded in languages, ancient and modern; thanks to my kind home teachers."

"And you own untiring industry my fine fellow," said Ernest. "What are the prizes to be? Worth trying for?"

"The honor of winning them, would be that. The lowest is a set of books, to the amount of twenty-five dollars; the second, fifty dollars worth of books, to be chosen by the gainers of the prizes. The third and highest is, the freedom of the professor's library, for a year, fifty dollars worth of books, and a silver medal of good scholarship, and besides all this, should the good behavior and scholarship continue an opportunity to graduate next year. Is not that worth trying for?"

"It is indeed, and you are determined to try?"

"With might and main, and win too," he said, emphatically.

And we feel quite sure he must be successful, for he has such a will, such indomitable perseverance, and untiring industry, and such hope too.

"He has such a vast amount of hope, he ought to have been a Percy, and borne our motto 'ESPÉRANCE,'" declares Lela proudly.

## OCTOBER 8.

This has been a beautiful summer, and the beauty and brightness linger long, loath to depart, it seems.

This Autumn-time has always been the most dear of all the year to me. There is such a fullness of beauty, such a mellowed glory over all things. We see the hand of God, a tender loving God so plainly, so fully, so untiringly over all.

The shadows lie longer, more deeply and more gently, making the sunlight more bright and precious. To-day has been a real glimpse of the days that live only in my memory, I could have closed my eyes and dreamed I was in Italy. I longed to do it, the desire was strong upon me, and I wrestled firmly and continuously to subdue it, I was tired of work to-day, I was cross at it, I wanted to forget it in toto, to lie down some where in the shade and shut my eyes tightly, and clasping my hands over them to dream, dream. With the balmy air of this Italian day about me, to think over "the days that are no more," gone forever: lost in that vast and turbid sea of memory, that surging, restless sea, ever in motion, with each wave casting upon the shore of the Present, some shattered spar, some gay bright shred, from the wrecked and long lost Past.

But in this by-gone—as far back as to-day has borne me—there are no weary and unhappy memories, all is goodness, and unparalleled mercy, each hour is marked with a white stone. For every day, in memory's book I find a leaf turned, a passage marked,—a flower pressed—I remember nothing of evil in all that time; no thorns, no ruts in life's pathway, but garlands of roses, and sweet blossoms, singing birds, bright skies, and pleasant glens covered with soft unwearied green.

To-day, all Nature seems resting in thankfulness, after

past endeavors, and gathering strength, after the burden and heat of the summer day, for the winter of strife and cold unkindly labors to come.

I seem now to myself—thinking of this dreamy, balmy day, of the sky blue, fair and sometimes golden—to be sitting in the calm and quiet of *my* autumn, the bright spring—the glad summer gone, the winter of old age near.

## OCTOBER 15.

Stuart works incessantly—takes no recreation or exercise, save the walk to and from school, and a half hour's work in the garden when it is too late for him to read by day-light. I am fearful that such unceasing application will tell upon him, but he says—

"I am all the better for hard work, and take my pleasure upon Saturday evenings, when we practise at the church."

But although he says so, Mr. Raymond always has to take his place for the greater part of the time. He will not tell us how far he has got, or what he has done, but laughs and declares,

"I mean to keep it a secret until it is finished."

We have given entire satisfaction, as far as we can hear, in our church music, Mr. Raymond says,

"You created quite *une grande impression* the first Sunday, I am congratulated and complimented upon every hand."

We have sent Howard to school at last. It was a great trial, but it is done, and I am glad. He is such a frail, delicate boy, especially since his illness, and so sensitive, so keenly alive to any slight or unkindness, that I could hardly make up my mind to send him out into the rough, unfeeling world of school-boy life.

But I know it is right he should go out and struggle and strive, and endure the ills and crosses of life, mingling with those of his age and sex. A household of girls is not the very best place to develop the greatness and manliness of a boy's character.

And moreover, he will learn better, now he has a stimulus to make him strive to excel; that is, after the strangeness of being all day among boys instead of his gentle sisters

has worn off. I trust he will catch the spirit of emulation, and strive not so much to be first as to be best, to be more honorable, more wise, and as learned as any of his comrades.

To-day was his first day—my precious boy, my only son, he has come home weary and disgusted with the whole race of boys, and a perfect horror of the school, to which his Uncle Ernest this morning introduced him. He stood at the window looking out upon the fading day as I came in from giving a lesson this afternoon.

"Well, how does my little son like school?" I asked.

"I do not like it at all. I hate it. I wish every old school was—I do not know what."

"But that is very wrong, my dear boy."

"I do not care, I mean to say what is the truth, I hate it. I hate it as badly as possible, and I will never like it, I know," and he stamped his foot down fiercely.

"Howard, Howard, my dear son, you grieve me!"

"Forgive me, mamma, dear mamma," and his arms were around me in an instant, "I did not mean to, I am sure, but oh! that hateful school, if you only knew what great, ugly, disagreeable boys there were at it—how can I ever go there?"

His tone was one of such heartfelt dismay, that I saw it would require much patience and gentle counsel to reconcile him to his new life. So in my own room, with the shadows of the old trees darkening over us, I talked to him a long while—telling him of all the struggles and trials of his father's boyhood, when he, an orphan, had no mother's hand to soothe his trials, but at foreign schools and colleges was obliged to battle his way single-handed.

And then too, of the noble, determined way in which Stuart, in the depths of poverty, in a shabby dress, had endured everything during his earliest school days—such trials as, please God, my little boy should never know, He giving me health and strength. Then I bade him remember how much was expected from his father's son, this will I know be his chief stimulus, for like Nora, although he is such a little boy, he is proud beyond measure of his name.

Then I told him to remember—that now his sisters and I worked to provide him with necessaries, but that bye and bye, we would expect he and Stuart to do the like for us; that though we toiled now, then they must be our support, our consolation and our protection.

I think, little boy as he is, he understood all this, and that he will endure his daily path with more patience.

Perhaps it is wrong for me to nourish this feeling of family pride in his heart, I hope it is not, I do not want to do wrong, but this pride will guard against evil associations, I hope; and we have so few safeguards now, alas! that I cling to this the more fervently, and breathe an earnest desire to guard him aright, my ESPÉRANCE—my Percy!

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CHAPTER XXI.

OCTOBER 20.

ANOTHER addition to our family and the last, the very last, now every nook and corner of our *citadelle* is crowded, and no matter who comes, what occurs, and under what form admittance to our commonwealth is sought, we will cry "no! no!! no!!!"

One evening last week as we were sitting together, doing just as we liked, as we always do, during the first hour after tea, Ernest suddenly looked up from his paper and cried:

"Here is a letter for you, Bertha!"

"Give it to me then," answered I, smiling, and holding out my hand to receive it.

"I mean there is one advertised," he replied laughing.

"You forgot who you were talking to, evidently, Uncle Ernest. You forgot mamma considers as head of the family she must set her face against anything which savors of exaggeration," said Lela quizzically.

"But did my remark?" opening his eyes as he asked.

"Thou saidst, fair uncle, 'here is a letter,' when lo and behold, upon cross-examination, no letter was there to be found; so you see, according to the strictest sense of the law laid down by mamma, your remark should have been rendered thus—'Bertha there is among this list of letters advertised, one which bears your name.'"

"Hark at wisdom, sitting in the curls black as ebony of