

til this night, when it could be borne no more, it gained for a short time the victory.

But I rest me upon the thought this is over now, he will put it away forever, and I have gained my brother.

JULY 31.

As I came in this afternoon from my day's work, Harley met me at the door, and as we stood in the quiet light of departing day, he took my hand tenderly in his, and stood for a little while silently looking out upon the long shaded walk of our old garden. Then turning suddenly round, he said in a low tremulous voice, so low I scarce could hear him:

"Has my sister Bertha forgiven me my wilful madness, my wicked presumption of last night?"

"My dear brother!" was all I said.

"Oh Bertha, the agony of last night after I left you; the terrible ordeal I passed through in the dark still night, wrestling with my ill gotten passion, ere I could conquer it, forever! If the struggle and sufferings of a loving heart crucifying its own hope, can atone for the grief I must have caused you in stirring up your old remembrances, touching with my rude, ruthless hand your Shekinah, you may have the assurance that I have fought such a battle, as please God may come to a man but once in a life-time, I have fought and conquered. Henceforth, I can say humbly and gratefully, Bertha Percy is no more to me in the way of earthly passion, than an angel standing in the 'Presence.' But she is my sister, my little sister, whom I will protect, God giving me strength, as long as life lasts."

I leaned my head upon his shoulder and gave way to a burst of tender grateful tears, for all the mercies vouchsafed to me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Do not linger with regretting
Or for passing hours despond!
Nor thy daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond." ONE BY ONE.

AUGUST 1.

I HAVE passed it, another mile-stone is my life-path; the second record is made—alone waiting and watching two whole years.

It seemed so long in the perspective—but is so short in the retrospection. I have done so little in the right way, lived to so little purpose—acted so feebly the drama of life, doing so many things I ought not to have done, leaving undone those that I ought to have done, oh I may well join my hands and bowing head and heart before my Judge, confess, there is no health in me.

It is so hard always to do right, so very easy to do wrong. I wish it were not so, when "I think I will do well, evil is ever present with me."

Alone in my own little room to-day—this day which renews my sorrow and loneliness, I have laid bare before me my inmost thought, thinking long and painfully of my many short comings, and with my whole heart I have wrestled with my God for strength to be faithful, earnest, and true.

Walter, dear Walter, have I done very wrong? have I missed many things you would have done? am I too selfish—too easily wearied—too prone to make others bear my burdens for me?

Pray God for me, darling, that He will grant me more light, and strength to do my duty to Him and to thee.

How short a time it seems since I sat at his feet a gay thoughtless thing, a very child, loving only the bright fair things of life, yet like many another child, worshipping the pure and holy—with my whole soul.

I know I did, else I could not so entirely have appreciated the noble manhood, which was guiding and guarding me ever. I had such faith in that strong right arm—such entire dependence upon the firm clear mind that made its law, oh I loved and honored him so reverently.

Too much, too much, alas! alas! I made his image to stand between my soul and God's eternal love; I loved him first, he weaned me from the worship, the love, the duty, I owed my Maker; therefore am I desolate. I prayed—in words never—but always in fact, to be let alone in my happiness, to live ever afar from heaven, with the idol I had reared, but God loved my soul and would not hear me, and so to-day, He raises my love and hope unto himself through my buried dead.

AUGUST 25.

We are a somewhat broken family this month past, and even this short separation makes us dearer to each other. All write (who are absent,) of the joy it will be to come back to the old house, and the old ways once more, although they are having merry times abroad.

How, even these few brief days parting makes me feel, what the parting with one of my loved ones would be—it seems a type of that long last farewell upon the shores of time, where one goes on and on, over the waters alone, but fearlessly—while the other stands shivering and weeping upon the shore. Oh I will not sadden my heart by these thoughts—but verily, I shall rejoice, when all the birds are winging their flight to the old grey home-nest, once more.

Mr. Raymond, or as it is always now, "my brother Harley," has his six weeks vacation, and has gone North to his boyhood's home, carrying Howard with him, and they write many a pleasant letter from the quiet New England village, where only an old man, a very old man, Harley's grand-father, still lingers beneath the stars, of a long line of kindred the last, and he is very near the confines of the better land.

Harley writes: "I could not live here, although I loved the village dearly once, for all about me the records of the loved and lost are strewn, a tree, a house, a purling brook, to which some memory clings, meets me at every turn. And the violets and ivy in the old church-yard, grow over the hearts of my nearest kindred."

But Howard says: "It is splendid, I make hay, and ride home on the top of the hay-load every evening. Every time

the sweet fresh smell of the fields comes to me, I think of home, and stand still, and take an extra 'snuff' for every one of you, and I shall bring them to you Uncle Harley tells me, in my rosy cheeks."

Then adds, "please do not think I only remember you when I smell the hay, for indeed I think of you all every minute in the day, and dream of you by night."

Dear son, his rosy cheeks will indeed be a whole heart full of freshness and beauty to me, my poor pale, studious boy.

We were rather astonished by an invitation from Louise and her mother, for all three of the girls to pay her a visit, and the hesitancy we were under as to whether it should not be accepted by at least one, was put to flight by the "descent" of Ada, into our midst, with the word that she had been sent by express, for fear of a refusal.

So Marion and Birdie went with her, but Lela was carried off by Jennie, to spend the remainder of the vacation with Mary Lee, in her beautiful home, upon the borders of Lake Erie.

Then this last week our kind old friend Mr. Ostend, sent Stuart and Clare upon some collecting expedition for him, in the western part of our beautiful State.

So Mrs. Wilbur, Estelle, Ernest and I, with the three little children are a quiet party enough, doing nothing especial, but read letters, write letters, and expect letters the live-long day.

"And dream letters the live-long night," Ernest declares. The boys are to make it convenient to come home by the way of Louise's Virginia home, (a long way round by the way,) and escort the girls back.

I am glad to have them away, especially when every letter is brimfull of the joyous times they are having, some North, some South, but all happy. I say I am glad, and so I am, yet now that the time draws near when we must expect them, my heart bounds swiftly towards them, reaching out to meet them—and I know how I have missed them, how we all have.

"There," says Estelle as she directed a letter to Marion to-day, and another to Lela, "there is the last package of love and kisses I mean to send by a white winged messenger.

The next will be eye to eye, and lip to lip. Oh! I shall never weary of hearing their sweet voices."

"Or of feeling their kisses, or holding them closely in one's arms, Aunt Estelle," says Adele.

And so we will build no more paper bridges, whereon to pass our loving remembrances, but will stand side by side again.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SEPTEMBER 9.

I WONDER just what one would do if they knew the future, and the events that future was bringing them. The good, and evil in our short lives are closely interwoven, so closely that oftentimes the shadowy darkness of the threads of sorrow, casts a gloom over the golden line that lies next them.

But this thing, the advent of which has set us into a maze, is a very golden cord, where upon, I trust we may hang many a jewel of promise in the coming days.

It is even the verification of our old hope, nay more than we had dared to expect could ever be, even after long years of careful effort;—for here we are endowed with an established school, the revenue from which will set all our doubts upon many things at rest, and that without one endeavour upon our part. The work of establishing and popularizing this school has all been done; and we have only to accept, and be grateful.

But I run on, in my congratulations, when facts would be much more to the purpose.

A few days since I received a note from the lady to whom the girls go to school, requesting an interview; thinking it related to some new studies for them, I went at the time appointed, and to my amazement received the offer of the entire establishment.

Madame Degrade who is a handsome widow, is about to bestow herself and her neat little fortune, upon some happy suitor.

And "mon mari," who is at present in this country upon a visit, desires to carry Madame back with him to "La Belle France," as his bride.

"And what can I do? mon ami is determined and can wait no longer than a month, and I am in despair. What is to become of the school? Mes élèves for the next year all engaged, and in two weeks they will be here, not a seat is vacant!"

Then with a thousand and one apologies for her presumption as she named it, she remembered that I gave music lessons and thought perhaps under the peculiar circumstances, "I would be so generous, so good, as to overwhelm Madame with obligations by taking the charge of the school."

"It will be such a favor that I will do what I can to show my sense of your goodness."

So I was given to understand the furniture of her school-room and dormitories were mine at a nominal price.

Of course I expressed my obligations for her offer, and asked but one day's deliberation with my friends before I gave my final answer.

I left her trembling, wondering, half-blinded by hope and fear; could we do it? dare we attempt it? oh if we could!

After a long talk with Estelle and Earnest, we decided to wait until Harley and Stuart should return the next morning, and then come to a definite conclusion with their aid.

They came the next day, and after the greetings were over, we made known to them our expectations.

I knew pretty nearly what the word would be, so did we all, but it was a good thing to know we were all of one mind, especially as all will have some part of the work to do.

"Oh," Stuart said when it was decided, "it is worth thinking well of, if for only one thing, that now you and Aunt Estelle will have no more out-door work to do."

And so it is, although we have said little of that, but it will be a relief to live henceforth at one's own home.

And then, what is better than all, Stuart can go to college for a certainty, oh will we not work with a will, for that good end, he is sure of it now, God bless him!

There has been so much to do, so many changes to make, so many letters to write; so many people to see, both by Mad-

ame Degrade and myself, in order to feel assured the change would be satisfactory, that we will not begin until October. In the meanwhile we can hear from all who are interested in the change, and explain to them.

SEPTEMBER 18.

Of course before we could make any arrangements towards school-keeping, we were compelled to give the occupants of the offices in the front of the house, notice to quit, I dreaded this, but Ernest says:

"It did not seem to annoy or distress any of them, half as much as it did you and Marion."

For Marion, and indeed all the rest but Leanore are at home, and such a world of cleaning, moving in of furniture and arranging it after it was once in, as we have had this last two weeks, would be past relating, but it is all done at last.

The rooms in the front of the house are as square and as large, as the ones in our part are little and crooked.

Of two on one side of the hall, down stairs, we have made school-rooms, of the others, dining room and kitchen, then we have turned our once kitchen up stairs, into a bed-room for Ernest and Harley, and their two little rooms, which stand at the front door, into class-rooms.

The old barricaded windows and doors going out into the garden, have been besieged and overthrown, and this pleasant autumn day, the house looks so clean and cool, that methinks the old owners will walk over it to-night, and find the ancient lordly days renewed.

But still the little sitting-room which has been our home room so long, will be our home room still, our sanctum sanctorum, and only such as have especial favour shall gain admittance, for there is a neat little parlor below for company.

Estelle is to take charge of one dormitory, and poor little gentle Marion the other, I will abide at home still.

In a letter which I had from her, Nora says:

"I had a note from Mr. J—, saying the church in L— St. was undergoing some improvements, and would not be opened until October, so I need not hurry back; if you

think best for me to do so, I will accept Mr. Lea's invitation to travel with Mary, Jennie Chalton, and himself to the White Mountains, and wherever else we will, for the next month."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OCTOBER 2.

DURING the last week in September, came bright-eyed Louise Dutille, then in the afternoon of the same day Ada Lawrence, and Clara Robbins, with whom she had been spending the last week of her vacation. Dear warm hearted girls they could not say enough concerning their delight and gratitude at the change, particularly Ada who grows so enthusiastic and demonstrative that "Marion is obliged to come forward and quiet her down," says Louise.

We had just got this party quietly settled, and somewhat domesticated, when, Dora came with her sad face and dreamy eyes, which now are not nearly so sad and weary looking as they used to be, and this is the reason:—

The evening of the day upon which she arrived, she came into the room where I was standing by a window looking out, and busy pondering over many matters; so engaged indeed I did not notice her, until coming up she laid her cheek upon my shoulder, and said softly and gently:

"I have found the pearl for which you bade me seek, I think, I hope I have."

"I thought so, dear Dora, soon as I saw you, these sweet eyes have more peace, if not comfort and happiness in their look."

"Oh, it is so sweet, so restful, dear Mrs. Percy, the 'Great Rock in a weary land,' oh it is such comfort to rest secure from storms and tempests, beneath its shadow."

"Thank God that you have found it so at last, 'in all troubles a sure help,' I am glad for you."

"But it was all blackness and darkness, until that night I stood here with you; your words somehow seemed to