

Elizabeth: The Disinherited Daugheter

E. Ben Ez-er

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ELIZABETH THE DISINHERITED DAUGHTER

BY E. BEN. EZ-ER

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PREFACE

This booklet is little more than a compilation. The materials were abundant for a much larger book. Elizabeth's divine experience was so striking, so valuable to the cause of truth, that it has not been essentially abridged. But the results in biography, though well known to all who knew her, have been cut down to the smallest dimensions that would allow that brilliant experience to shine out.

Elizabeth had a lifelong conviction that God required the publication of His remarkable dealings with her, and in her approach to the river of death solemnly enjoined it upon her youngest son and executor. His own convictions also agree with the requirement. Here are obvious reasons:

1. The early history of Methodism has suffered by the dropping out of many striking illustrations of her power. By neglecting to record them permanently while well authenticated, they are now beyond recovery. As this providential work moves on gloriously, making world-wide history, these few preserved incidents of her early triumph become more and more valuable by the lapse of time.
2. Providentially this experience is too rare and too far back in American Methodism to be lost out.
3. The controversy in which this experience was so strong a factor has not become obsolete. The "horrible decrees" have indeed been very generally driven from the pulpit, but not entirely. Our work as polemicists will not be finished until they leave the schools and the books, and cease to be pillows for the multitudes who lull themselves to slumber over the notion of "sovereign grace and waiting God's time," and cease to goad despondent souls to despair, with the charge of being "from eternity passed by" as unredeemed "reprobates."

E. ARNOLD.

Thousand Island Park, 1893.

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PART I.

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CHAPTER I.

THAT STRANGE LETTER.

It was in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The dwelling was a plain frame structure, spacious, and of the style of that day (the second story projecting a few inches beyond the first), and was kept painted as white as snow. It stood in the south suburb of the then little city of Middletown, Conn., between two hills on the right bank of the Connecticut River, at the bend called "the Cove." The first break in the happy family circle was made by the departure of a daughter to another State to engage in teaching. Few letters were written in those days, and the postal service was a slow and small concern. But this absent school-teacher had written with much care and vivacity to the dear circle at home as regularly as the months came around. But now, for long, anxious weeks, no tidings from the absent one had reached that saddened home at the Cove. "Why don't we get a letter from Betsey?" was often asked by the fond parents, the loving sisters, and thoughtful little brothers; but no satisfactory answer could be given.

The father would hasten to the city as often as "mail day" returned and watch for the ponderous stagecoach, but come back more moderately, with a shadow upon his countenance, and "No letter!" "No letter!" would deepen the sorrow of the circle. One day the son "Siah" was sent, and in an unusually short time was seen coming over the hill with a speed so unlike a disappointed lad that the watchful mother was "sure the dear boy had tidings." Her lip trembled as she motioned to the father and called out, "Where's Esther? Where's Sam? Call 'em all in. Siah's coming real fast; I guess he's got a letter from Betsey!" "How he does ride!" says Hannah. "Dear fellow, I most know he's got a letter!" "Yis, yis," says little sharp-eyed Sam; "see, he holds suthin' white higher'n his head." Sure enough, on comes the rider, flourishing in his hand the long-looked-for message from the absent one!

It was but the work of a moment for the excited lad to leap upon the block, throw the bridle over the post, and run in, letter in hand, vociferating, "Don't ye worry any more about Betsey; she's all safe and sound. See, it's in her own handwrite." "Yis, daddy, and stuck together with that same red wax you gin her," says little Sam.

Ruth breaks the seal and finds a large sheet, and closely written. A glance from the father brings the house to silence, and she begins to read. Never a letter began with more tender words or in a sweeter spirit; but all sounds so precise and awfully solemn that the voice of the reader falters; tears fill the eyes of the mother and sisters; the father turns pale; little Sam looks frightened and grips his mother's arm, while Josiah sobs aloud. But the resolute reader moves steadily on, and only breaks down when she reaches the name, "Your loving daughter and sister, Elizabeth Ward."

These words stung that proud father to the quick. To hear his darling's name attached to such a letter, and find his cherished plans thwarted forever, was more than he could endure. He arose in a paroxysm of wrath and left the house. The mother, watching him, became greatly alarmed, for she had never seen him so angry.

As the boys lead the horse to the stable the girls take the letter to their room, where they weep much, pray some, and read over and over again that strange document.

CHAPTER II.

ELIZABETH'S ALIENATION FROM THE ANCESTRAL FAITH.

Elizabeth Ward was the eldest of six children. She had a tall, straight form, rather stern and dignified airs, a keen black eye, and a beautiful countenance, though rather on the masculine order. Her father, Samuel Ward, was a wealthy farmer and stock grower and a skillful horseman. He had determined to give this, his eldest daughter, a liberal education, and have her assist in the instruction of her sisters. She proved so easy to learn, and showed such aptitude and application in study, that he afforded her the best opportunities given young ladies in New England at that day. And in his pride of horsemanship he took much pains to make her a skillful equestrienne, and never seemed prouder than when riding out with Elizabeth by his side upon an elegant steed in costly equipage. To carry out his notions for the perfection of her accomplishments, he sent her to Pittsfield, Mass., among wealthy and cultured relatives, to devote a year or two to association with elegant society. And to avoid that horror of the real Yankee's dreams, "shiftlessness," she was to take up a small select school for employment. There too, as at home, she must have a splendid horse at her command, and no cost must be spared to make her equipage, as well as wardrobe, as elegant as the best. Morning and evening rides must be kept up for health and recreation, but not less to indulge a doting father's pride.

She found her new situation very agreeable. Her relatives were educated and fashionable, and soon became very dear to her heart. Her school consisted of a suitable number of misses from wealthy families, as cheerful as the larks and as gay as butterflies. Her opulent friends very readily entered into her father's plans, and were especially delighted with her experience and skill in horsemanship; and a sufficient number equipped and joined her in this healthy movement to insure her the best of company in her morning and evening rides. And her popularity as an equestrienne fed her pride, and her gay letters home were full of it, and very agreeable to her proud father. Nor did the rapid improvement of her associates in this elegant accomplishment, under her teaching and example, escape the notice of their fond parents and of their townsmen, and "The way that tall schoolmarm rides is wonderful!" was spoken by many an observer, and many a young woman envied the proud troop "their chance to learn how to ride a-horseback."

In the daily excursions of these gay cousins they sometimes passed, on a retired street, the meeting place of "a new and strange people called Methodists." Jesse Lee, George Roberts, Francis Asbury, and others, mighty men of God, had just gone over New England like a thundering legion, proclaiming everywhere a "free salvation for all, even for John Calvin's 'reprobates.'" They had glorious success, even in cold New England, and of the fruit of the revivals which attended their labors formed many small but excellent "societies." One of these was established in Pittsfield.

The sweet and moving singing of these people arrested the attention of our

heroine and her friends as they occasionally rode by; and, pausing in their saddles to listen, enough of a tune would get into their heads and keep ringing there to turn their course that way again. Catching a charming tune, they "must get the words, at least a verse or two." So, from pausing outside to listen, they grew bolder, tied their horses, and civilly sat down inside, not only charmed with the songs, but curious to hear the fervent prayers and testimonies and occasional shouts of this bright-faced company. When their friends said anything against this people as being "unpopular," or "despised," these young fashionables would sing them a Methodist verse or two, and perhaps join in the ridicule by mimicking their shouts. And yet in their sober judgment they honored these honest and devout worshipers for their fervent piety and zeal, and wondered at their rapturous joys. But they were quite mistaken in their confidence that an occasional attendance upon worship so spiritual was perfectly safe. The Holy Spirit dwelt with this people. These gay young attendants became the subjects of mighty prayers and powerful exhortations. Bows, "drawn at a venture," threw arrows with great force. The Spirit directed one to the proud but honest heart of Elizabeth Ward, and she was "thoroughly awakened." Perhaps in the few prayer meetings these young people had dropped into within the past year they had imbibed more gospel truth than in all their former lives. But the songs which had so captivated them, many of which they had learned to sing, had struck those truths into the mind indelibly, and had so enlisted the moral nature of Elizabeth that the Holy Ghost had written convicting impressions upon the inner tablet of her heart. She did not long resist this new "conscience of sins." She clearly saw and deeply felt that she was a sinner, and on the way to ruin. In more of desperation than hope she set out to "flee from the wrath to come."

In this state of alarm, she walked alone to the Methodist prayer meeting, made known her convictions and purposes, and sought instruction and help. She returned from that meeting feeling that she had almost entered a new world. Gospel hope, now for the first time in her life, began to spring up in her heart. She had settled the question of submission to her Maker, and began to seek Him with purpose of heart, resolved to confess and forsake her sins and seek pardon and peace in Jesus Christ. Still, as to several of the counsels of her new religious instructors she was undecided, because not yet convinced. They advised her to seek the Lord "by prayer and supplication." To "ask," to "knock," to "call upon Him," and especially to "cry unto the Lord with her voice." But she had been taught from infancy that "none but the elect should pray; nor even they until regenerated by sovereign grace;" and that "no woman should pray or speak in a public assembly." But a heart overwhelmed with a crushing sense of sin at length broke out, almost against her decision, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and such hope of relief sprang up while she prayed as to settle the question of prayer; and thence on for weeks all the relief she found was in prayer and confession; a few crumbs of comfort to encourage her to persevere in seeking; for she began to wonder why she had not found peace, when she had sought so long and tried to give up all for Christ.

One day, in the retirement of her room, her mirror revealed a gayety of apparel that struck her as unsuitable for a poor, guilty sinner. The fashions of that day were very profuse in ornamentation; and as she saw herself in the glass, her eyes red and heavy with weeping, and yet her attire as gay and vain as if prepared for a ball, she felt sure that her mode of dress had all this time been a hindrance to her; and she then and there concluded to reduce all to plainness, much like the people who had led her to penitence. The pride of dress and equipage seemed now to be about the last idol to give up, and, all of her own counsel, she did the work very thoroughly; and as to her abundant jewelry, the result of her

spontaneous zeal was rather ludicrous. "Determined that it should never prove a snare to any other poor soul as it had to her," she passed it all under the hammer until there was nothing left but unseemly lumps of gold and silver; the precious stones were utterly demolished.

From that work this hitherto gaudy maiden came out as plain as a Quakeress, and hastened to the Methodist prayer meeting. Seeing her thus evidently taught of the Holy Spirit, they took hold of her case with new courage as she bowed with them crying for mercy. The prayers of the early Methodists were something wonderful, and this broken-hearted penitent drank into their wrestling spirit. They claimed for her the "exceeding great and precious promises," with mighty faith; she claimed these promises with them. They took hold on Jesus; she put her hand with theirs into His with a strong and steady grip, and He accepted her.

The conversion of Elizabeth was instantaneous, and exceedingly clear and powerful, and its assurance overwhelming. Her long night was at once turned into day, and that clear daylight was also a blaze of glory. Her joy was ecstatic. Her tall form, which had been gaudily adorned, but now attired for the meek and lowly Saviour, was at times prostrated by divine power, and her regenerated soul filled with the rapture of heaven. Night and day, for weeks, her only relief from ecstasy was by settling into solid peace, thus alternating from the quiet valley of "peace that passeth understanding" to the glory-crowned hilltops of "joy unspeakable."

After a sufficient time had elapsed to demonstrate the genuineness and unfading glory of her experience, Elizabeth wrote home a plain account of it, concealing nothing. This was the astounding and alienating letter that so stirred up things at the Cove.

CHAPTER III.

THAT ALARMING MESSAGE.

The Wards, at the Cove, continued to be much troubled over Elizabeth's letter. Had a note or a messenger announced her serious illness, or her elopement or sudden death, the first pang would have terminated in some sort of relief, or at least a breathing place; but this letter was suffocating, and the dense fog seemed to grow darker as it stretched into the future. "A religious fanatic!" "A Methodist lunatic!" "Has our darling set out upon such a life?"

"I'm afraid it will kill your father; it struck him dumb. I can't draw him into any conversation about her; and he is so angry!" Thus the troubled mother would talk and cry. The sisters and brothers listen to her, and, without comprehending "the prospect so awful in Betsey's future life," would keep dumb, like "daddy," and cry, like "mammy."

Finding no relief at home, Mrs. Ward consulted their aged parson, "Priest Huntington," and placed the ominous letter in his hands; and he took the troublesome document home for professional analysis. It is not to be supposed that the Holy Spirit left this letter to pass through such a crucible alone. The experience it told was substantially His work, and the hand that wrote it was not wholly without His guidance; and now the cultured mind which examined it was that of a logical analyst, however

strong his prejudice. The old parson was struck with its simplicity and soundness, and hastened to the Cove to "pronounce Miss Elizabeth's experience genuine, and even wonderful," and that he believed her to be "one of God's chosen vessels to bear witness of His sovereign grace."

So favorable an opinion from such an authority greatly relieved the apprehensions of the family; all but the incensed father, who would neither talk nor allow others to talk to him about the absent one for several weeks.

All these were not only precious weeks to Elizabeth, but lengthened out a most valuable epoch of her life. At length the wily parson succeeded in getting to the stormy heart of this enraged and unhappy father, and portrayed in glowing colors the clearness of Miss Elizabeth's "effectual call" and "blessed hope," and managed to bridge over "that awful slough of Methodism" by descanting gravely upon some of the "mysterious leadings of sovereign grace." "And now, if our dear lamb of the Saviour can be rescued from those deluded people and carefully instructed in 'the doctrines of grace,' what an ornament she would be to our church with such a brilliant experience, and such 'a burning and shining light!'"

Whether the hard heart of that father relented, or whether, weary of brooding over his disappointed hopes of a worldly sort, his pride saw prospect of indulgence in another direction, we leave it for subsequent events to determine. The kind parson was successful, and Elizabeth was soon ordered to return home.

CHAPTER IV.

ORDER OBEYED.

The order to "close up her school and return home" did not disguise the anger of the father over the radical change in Elizabeth's religious condition and associations. But she had ever yielded unquestioning obedience to that father's commands; and so with all practicable dispatch she now prepared to comply with the stern and precipitant demand.

It was painful to be suddenly torn from her agreeable relatives in Pittsfield; for, although she had departed far from their notions of doctrine, dress, and usage, and fully adopted the principles and spirit of a new and despised people, they had never reproached her for her religion, but, deeply impressed with the genuineness of her experience and sweetness of her Christian spirit, had regarded and treated her with tenderness and respect.

It was not easy to bid adieu to her pupils who clung to her with much affection. But it was the hardest parting from the church which had led her to the Saviour. But here, too, grace triumphed, and she spoke rapturously of meeting that dear people "where parting will be no more;" and, catching, as if by divine suggestion, a strong presentiment, she declared her impression that even in this life they should enjoy each other's society again--"even in this blessed place, where my sins were forgiven and I have received such valuable lessons and enjoyed such glorious seasons of communion with God and His people. Pray for me!"

"We will continue to pray for you, dear sister; and we too hope that our heavenly Father may so order your lot that you may meet with us again in the place of your espousal to Christ; but let us so live that we may all meet in glory." And then they broke forth into song:

"Amen, amen, my soul replies;
I'm bound to meet you in the skies,
And claim my mansion there!"

CHAPTER V.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

Elizabeth's reception at her father's surprised her by its coolness and reserve, as if she were a stranger or a visitor.

At once a happy thought struck her with great force: "If my religious profession puts such a distance between me and all my father's family, the throne of grace must, if possible, unite us." So, before retiring for the first night's rest, she asked and obtained authority to set up a family altar, and for some months at least one of that family enjoyed freedom of spirit and tenderness of heart.

Parson Huntington visited her with much paternal kindness; and although, in presence of her joyous piety, he often seemed embarrassed, yet he remained true to his first conclusion as to the "effectual character of her call and blessed hope." But the promised "teaching" found her a less tractable pupil than he had hoped and led the father to hope. She ever treated his instructions with profound respect, but seemed to be a dull learner. Alas, that she was all the while imbibing more than they or she supposed! Still, the predestinarian aliment did not set well on her palate, or nourish her young and tender graces of spirit. Her father sought to confine her to that sort of diet--at home, at church, everywhere; for his only hope of rescuing her from Methodism seemed to center in a thorough course of Calvinian instruction, excluding with rigid surveillance everything Arminian.

But she longed for the food her soul had fed upon with such relish and profit; and, after a while, hearing that the little Methodist society of Middletown held noon class meetings, not far from the church which she was required to attend, she often managed to slip out during part of the intermission and go and commune with that humble few in class meeting. This fellowship, with a diligent attention to closet devotions and Scripture study, and conducting family worship, kept up a subdued but living piety.

But at length her clandestine attendance of class meetings was discovered, and father and parson were highly indignant, for they saw their cherished hopes blasted, and, in their mortification, severer discipline was decided upon. "She must be closely watched and confined at home; her favorite horse taken from her; her conducting of family worship suspended; her familiarity with her sisters" (who somewhat sympathized with her) "much abridged." The kitchen maid was dismissed, and the tall, delicate Elizabeth was driven to the drudgery of kitchen and washroom, and ordered to "be quiet and diligent as a servant," under charge of having proved herself "unworthy of a daughter's place in the family!" To this servile toil Elizabeth submitted without a murmur, and patiently plodded on, her strong constitution and

heroic courage and steady faith bearing her up. But the accusation of "ingratitude and disobedience" was so false and severe as to be very depressing to her spirits. And, never having been inured to hard labor or parental censure, these double tribulations were almost crushing; and to help her courage she kept up the low, almost inaudible hum of the sweet tunes she had so loved to sing among her chosen people, and, thus abstracted, toiled on week after week.

Such patience proved provoking, especially as what could be detected of the tunes, in the snatches heard, indicated to her father's enraged feelings a stubborn attachment to that people from whom he was trying to wean her; so even this little comfort was sternly denied her; and, while strength was gradually giving way under her heavy burdens, she was compelled to toil on in silence. Under all these sore trials not only her angry father but the evil one kept up the accusation of "stubborn disobedience."

At length she broke down under her burdens and troubles. Health, courage, and joy in the Lord gave way together. For the drill of Parson Huntington in Calvinian theology for nearly a year past now came up, enforced by the instructions of childhood, with fresh power; and she began to suspect that she was one of the "ordained reprobates," "passed by and doomed from eternity to endless ruin!" The whole system of "free grace," impartial atonement, and the Spirit's assurance, in the light and joy of which she had exulted for months in Pittsfield, and been so comforted in these subsequent months of hardship and false accusation, strangely faded before these childhood and recent instructions; and gradually this pupil of Augustine and Calvin sank into the doctrinal abyss of the "horrible decrees." Nor would her broken and depressed spirits allow these sudden conclusions to affect her as abstract dogmas. They struck her, by Satanic power, like lightning, as terribly personal realities. "I, even I, Elizabeth Ward, have been awfully deceived! I am one of the reprobates! I have preferred my father's commands to God's favor! I have committed the 'unpardonable sin!'"

How unaccountable is desponding unbelief! how ingenious and active under diabolical management! The Holy Spirit quoted to this poor, despondent girl "the precious promises," but she "refused to be comforted," and hastened to pass them all over to "the elect." He called to mind her rich experiences. They seemed to her far off in clouds of dim dreamland, and she called them a reprobate's delusions, "sent" on purpose to make her "believe a lie that she might be damned." He called her attention to the blessed word, to prayer and praise. She promptly swept all such observances away from reprobates to the ransomed "few," and, gnashing her teeth in anguish, sank to utter despair!_

We will not attempt to describe a conscious reprobate, "passed by" and "ordained from eternity" to all eternity a lost soul! Such was the dark, dank night that settled down upon Elizabeth as she sank under her burdens, her temptations, and cruel, wicked unbelief. In this dismal, hopeless "hell upon earth" she pined away for weeks and months, utterly shrinking from Bible reading, prayer, song, or religious conversation, and studiously guarding against religious reasoning, and even thought, as abominable for a "reprobate."

It is not easy, in this age of religious liberty, to understand or apologize for such intolerance as Mr. Ward and Parson Huntington exhibited toward this innocent Methodist girl. But it should be remembered in charity:

1. That that age was about a century nearer the long period of persecution than this.
2. That a stern and terrible system of religious doctrines prevailed throughout New England at that day, not fruitful in charity, nor respectful toward any faith that differed from it.
3. That Methodism was new there then, and generally misunderstood, and such of its features as were correctly read were intensely hated--even such as are now admired and revered.
4. That parents, especially fathers, were then allowed by public opinion to hold more control over the consciences of their children, and variations from ancestral faith, and even ancestral error, not so frequent as now.

CHAPTER VI.

GREAT VICTORIES.

Seven months of despair had now worn slowly away. This poor supposed "reprobate" had all that time been buffeted by Satan without mercy. She had wasted to a skeleton. Her large, sharp eye had become heavy and lusterless, and her ruddy cheek pale and sunken, and every expression sad and hopeless; and the "enemy of all righteousness" got into a hurry to secure his prize, and brought all his arts to bear upon the suggestion of suicide!

Such a temptation aroused her to a sense of her real danger--no longer the victim of ingenious devices to harbor gloomy forebodings, but a wretched sinner, about to destroy soul and body in hell, on the verge of destruction to character, and all good influences by an act of her own! Desperately, in spite of her dread of prayer, she cried to God against that dreadful temptation, and instantly she had full victory over it. The eyes, long dried in the desert of despair, were moistened with tears of wonder and gratitude. Astonished at such a clear answer to prayer, she prayed again for deliverance from Satan's power and all his enchantments, and they fled away like the shadow of a cloud. Her dungeon flamed with light, before which the horrible decrees also vanished, falling into line, and following their author to the land of darkness, never to trouble her more.

The light shone on, more and more; and although at dead of night, her room seemed to her to shine above the brightness of the sun at noonday; and the doctrines of free grace seemed to flash about her with transcendent glory, until investing her entire being. She knew she was not a reprobate; for God had heard her desperate cry against that greatest of sins. She saw in God's own light the blessed assurance that Jesus died for her and for all; and in driving away the enemy and the dense cloud of error, that had long shrouded her dungeon in Egyptian darkness, she clearly saw glorious demonstrations of divine clemency in store for her. She deplored her unbelief, and humbly sought forgiveness and full restoration; and there, and then, by faith in Jesus, she accepted Him again as her Saviour.

Instantly her raptures returned, with more than their former power and glory, and she went off into a perfect gale of ecstasy. Such sounds had never been heard in that mansion before, and the family hastened to learn the cause. There lay the wasted form upon what they thought to be the bed

of death. Her thin arms were stretched upward, and her pale hands came together with frequency and energy quite remarkable. Her countenance seemed lighted up with an unearthly glow, and her words were ready and full of heavenly felicity, and uttered with a strength and sweetness of voice quite beyond her power. All these evidences, added to the fact that their tender and anxious questions remained unanswered, and their presence and weeping seemed entirely unnoticed, struck them as demonstrations that "the angels had come for poor, dear Betsey," and that in her triumphant flight from her cruel sufferings "she had already passed beyond them, and would never speak to them again."

After some time, however, she seemed to them to have been brought back by their lamentations and self-accusations, and, hushing them to silent attention, she assured them that this was "not dying," but "living, and preparing to live," by a return of her first love and a glorious victory over temptation and error.

From that blessed night her convalescence was much more rapid than anyone had thought possible. Peace of mind is a marvelous restorer, especially when despondency has driven health away.

On a beautiful morning, a few weeks after, Elizabeth was agreeably surprised by an unexpected announcement made at the door of her room. She had had remarkable liberty that morning in conducting family prayer, which by consent of her parents she resumed soon after her recent victory. Her father came to her door, and, in a voice which sounded so much like the good days gone by, announced his plan for "a short ride." Her own horse was at the block; and as the strong arms of her father placed her in the saddle the noble beast gave signs of joy over her returning health.

The horseman by her side, in the ride of that and several following mornings, seemed agitated by conflicting emotions, yet making special efforts to be social and attentive. O, how she enjoyed those morning rides! Yet now and then she felt, though she could scarcely tell why, that a strange agitation, embarrassed her father's spirits. Was he trying to muster courage to acknowledge his wrong in persecuting her? Was he really "under concern" for his own soul? or was he unhappy because she was not more gay and worldly? It was useless for her to conjecture; he was a reticent man, and allowed no one to meddle with his thoughts.

She had now nearly regained her usual strength, and the time drew near for her to attend church. One morning, after a pleasant ride of unusual length, drawing near home, the father broke out in tremulous tones: "Now, Betsey, you won't go with the Methodists any more, will you? I can't allow it--no more at all. I command you to have nothing more to do with that people."

They had reached the block, and the agitated girl hastened to her room, and most of the day and evening she was seeking the "wisdom that cometh from above." She easily settled all questions but one. She saw clearly what system of doctrines she must subscribe to and advocate and exemplify; what means of grace she needed and must have and honor by her attendance; and she knew where her heart centered, and where her covenant vows must be taken and fellowship cultivated and enjoyed. All was plain as noonday except her father's commands and her duty to him. This last problem she laid before the Lord; and no sooner was it fully committed to him than the Holy Spirit quoted the filial duty with a peculiar emphasis to her heart: "Obey your parents in the Lord." "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."

Her line of duty was now fully decided, cost what it might. Saturday morning they were again in their saddles, and side by side, beginning a long ride in silence. Elizabeth was desirous of telling her story and kindly explaining her views of duty, and, obtaining permission, she began at the beginning and rehearsed the dealings of God with her up to that hour. She then declared her filial affection and her readiness to obey implicitly in all matters where duty to God and conscience would permit. Finally, she appealed to her father "not to hinder or embarrass her, seeing the Lord had so marvelously rescued her from the power of the enemy and snatched her from the very jaws of death and ruin."

All this time the stern man had kept silence. They were nearing home. He opened his mouth and firmly told her that he "should at once and finally disinherit her if she went to Methodist meeting again!"

No more was said. Elizabeth that day looked upon all the familiar objects about that dear old home of her childhood as no longer hers in any sense. Her pets, especially her noble horse; her home, in which she was born and reared; the sick room, where she had suffered unutterable horrors and gained such memorable victories; her own dear room, where she was finally to spend that, her last night, as having any right there. She came, at last, late in the evening, to sweet slumbers in the "peace that passeth understanding."

Early Sunday morning she was plainly attired and slowly walking toward her beloved church, a plain chapel in a part of the city of Middletown near two miles from the Cove. There she feasted upon the word and publicly gave in her name as a probationer in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

From that moment she was afloat--out on the broad sea of life, without a home; a disowned, disinherited girl! She left home this morning, a comfortable, stately, dear old home of wealth, elegance, and affection. She must not return to it to-night. She was but yesterday an heiress. To-day she is poor, a wanderer in the earth. But she has at last a church-home, and her life really begins to-day. Father and mother have cast her off for her religion, but "the Lord hath taken her up." She is not without friends. Several doors are open for her. Almost before she knows she is homeless she has resumed her work of teaching and has a delightful home in a Methodist family.

Thus favorably situated for study, she takes up the doctrines of the Gospel as believed and taught by the Methodists, and makes rapid proficiency. Her pastor, one of the flaming heralds of early Methodism in New England, furnished her with the best of reading, and all her associates in the studies and active work of Zion wondered at the rapid progress of the disinherited girl. Little could they realize how vividly those doctrines shone in her heart as she came out of the "fiery furnace," and how intensely interested she now was in principles which had cost her so much, yet were worth, in her account, infinitely more, and well deserved to be studied and propagated.

A young man belonging to the Methodists of that city now enters into our narrative. He is above the ordinary size, about twenty-eight years of age, and some four or five years before this was clearly converted under the preaching of Bishop Asbury. He also is a teacher, and a very sound, logical student of Methodist doctrines and usages.

It is not many months before it is noticed that a mutual attachment seems to be springing up between this young man and Elizabeth, above the ordinary

sympathies of teachers and church classmates. And as they had been acquainted from childhood, and fully understood each other's history and families, and were members together of a society of plain people, they did not consider a long courtship necessary. They were both of Yankee stock, both escaping from Calvinism and ardently attached to Methodism, both studious and competent to teach, and loved to teach, and both were active workers in the church they ardently loved.

So Joshua Arnold, aged twenty-nine, and Elizabeth Ward, aged twenty-one, were united in holy matrimony in the charming month of May, the last year of the eighteenth century. Thus closed the maiden life and homeless loneliness of the disinherited daughter.

She had been ruthlessly turned out of a stately mansion which she loved as her birthplace and childhood home, disinherited from her rightful heirship to several thousands, and disowned by her family, whose well-being she had faithfully labored to promote, and all for no fault of hers, but wholly for a matter of conscience and principle. But in less than a year she was settled in life in a home of which she was mistress, with a worthy husband, of church membership and affinities like her own, and in the free enjoyment of church privileges and holy fellowships, for which her persecuted soul had "panted as the hart panteth for the water brooks."

PART II.

THE GREAT WORK OF LIFE.

* * * * *

CHAPTER I.

ELIZABETH AS MISTRESS OF THE "COTTAGE CHAPEL."

One of the most natural consultations of the newly married couple is the plan of their first house. How chatty and cheery a pair of newly mated birds appear, in counsel over their nest-building! This schoolmaster and mistress are home from their toil and care for the day, and are again devoting an evening to the scheme of their first dwelling. It is not a large or magnificent concern, but it has already been neatly draughted, carefully considered, and builders' estimates footed up. All seems to be about right; but Elizabeth has gone off into a brown study. Her countenance betrays unusual agitation, and her pensive eye is filled with tears. Her husband supposes she is thinking of the mansion from which she has been spurned, as contrasted with the humble dwelling they are planning, but she hastens to correct the mistake and assure him that her musings were in the opposite direction entirely. "I was thinking of our dear people, and how much they need in this suburb of the town some place to hold meetings in. And this thought struck my mind almost like an inspiration: Why not extend our plan up high enough for an 'upper room' for meetings?" This notion, carefully considered, not only in these consultations but in the prayers that closed them, impressed them both as a divine suggestion. The house was

built accordingly. An outside staircase gave access to the upper story, which was all finished off in a rough, cheap manner for a chapel, and immediately and for a few years was occupied by the Methodist people of the south part of Middletown and of the farms adjoining, for prayer meetings, class meetings, and occasional exhortation and preaching.

Among the church privileges which had cost this disinherited daughter so dearly few ever equaled in sweet enjoyment this cottage chapel arrangement. She no longer had to steal away and snatch a few minutes once or twice a month to associate with the advocates of free grace, as she once did, nor be shut entirely away from their beloved society, as for nearly a year, in that terrible season of persecution and despair. The church she loved came to her door. Her home echoed their prayers, songs, testimonies, and shouts. She lived, toiled, ate, and slept under the shadow of the hallowed "upper room," so often, like the one in Jerusalem, "filled with the Holy Ghost." She knew, as no one else could, how much such privileges had cost her, but still insisted that they never cost a tithe of what they were worth. Nor was the gratification of this ardent lover of Methodism the chief result of this chapel arrangement. There the Church found asylum from persecution; and if we may estimate the value of such a refuge from the alarm of the enemy it must have proved a precious boon. Often were the pious band obliged to come early and lock themselves in to escape the fury of the mob, which would curse and mock without. But sometimes, unable to reach them or seriously to annoy them by their howlings, they would vent their spite upon the premises. Now it would be by breaking windows. Again, finding the windows guarded with thick board blinds, they would tear down fences, fill the well with wood, etc. In several instances it came out in one way and another that some attendant of the "standing order" furnished the rum that stimulated the rabble to make these attempts to drive off these "deceivers of the last days, that should deceive the very elect." But "the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew;" so that in a few years the place became "too strait for them." Even members of the mob of one meeting would be "awakened" while listening for something to mock, and scarcely able to restrain themselves, while with their comrades they would come early to the next meeting, get fastened in with the pious and the penitent, and, making humble confession, seek and find salvation, and become lively members of the church they had persecuted.

Who can estimate the amount of good done in that "upper room" at the dawn of the nineteenth century? "When God writeth up his people" of how many will it be counted, "This man was born there?" Who can stand on the hill where once stood that unpretending home with a "meeting house" on the top of it, and look over to University Hill, crowned with those Methodist halls of science and art, and see no connection between the humble seed-sowing and the waving harvest?

Soon after the supersedure of this chapel loft Mrs. Elizabeth began to reckon her work nearly done in Middletown; and, a good offer being about that time made for their valuable situation, she began to hope and pray for the accomplishment of a cherished longing to live near the place of her spiritual birth.

Mr. Arnold had followed two lines of business from his majority: Teaching through the long winters of New England, and coast trading summers. He was brought up a farmer, but fancied that he had but little genius for that vocation. After his marriage and settlement he shortened up his summer sailing, giving himself time during spring and autumn to cultivate, or at least plant and reap, his rich little place.

With the growing cares of the family the wife and mother was desirous to "get him away from the water" and settle down upon a farm. As they pondered the question, and committed it in prayer to Him whom they trusted to "set the bounds of their habitations," they seemed to hear in gentle whispers, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough;" "Arise, for this is not your rest."

So they concluded to sell out their first home, bid adieu to the beloved church at Middletown, and try to find a home somewhere near Pittsfield, Mass.

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES AND ENJOYMENTS.

The religious ecstasies experienced by Elizabeth in Pittsfield during her young convert days had impressed her very deeply, and left a pleasant notion of a paradise upon earth. It was a sort of dreamy vision of the glory of Zion at her best. It had come to her many times in the intervening years with marked force. It was not the picture of wealth, or ease, or luxury, or any worldly good; but the notion of a settlement near the place where she first found pardon and peace to her soul, and where she could enter again most heartily into those rich fellowships and rapturous enjoyments which she then found, heightened and intensified by a deeper and broader experience, maturing now for near a decade.

But Providence seems to have had other and higher designs, and evidently guided her course to the indulgence of these blissful fancies. In a short time they had purchased and settled upon a rich farm, of moderate size, upon the Housatonic River, in Lenox, near Pittsfield, Mass.

Precious, indeed, were now her privileges. The word was ably preached and was a feast to her soul. Her church associates were all that she had desired, and much more numerous than she had expected, and they were living all around her. She was also near her beloved relatives, and that sacred place where she first found the Saviour, precious to her soul.

"There is a spot to me more dear than native vale or mountain;
A spot for which affection's tear flows freely from its fountain.
'Tis not where kindred souls abound, though that on earth is heaven,
But where I first my Saviour found, and knew my sins forgiven."

She was greatly blessed in all these privileges. It seemed, indeed, "a heaven to go to heaven in." But still she found emotions of loneliness, at times, which she could not explain--an indefinite fear lest she become so filled and satisfied with these religious luxuries as to lose sight of stern diligence in the Master's work.

CHAPTER III.

ELIZABETH AS AN EVANGELISTIC LABORER.

Rejoicing greatly with "the ninety and nine," the pious zeal of Elizabeth wept over "the lost sheep in the wilderness," and she longed to go out among the mountains as a personal coworker with the chief Shepherd and bring them to the fold. In fact, her ideal of the destitute regions she had dreamed of was substantially answered by territory near her home, and providentially brought to her notice.

On "Washington Mountain" were several neighborhoods of irreligious settlers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Our itinerant ministers had occasionally passed; over the foothills and given off a message or two among these neglected inhabitants, but in the main they were destitute of Gospel truth and the means of grace. Elizabeth had not been more than a year or two in the adjoining valley before she more clearly saw that evangelical labor, as well as religious privileges, had providentially called the family to their present location.

True, she was a woman, and the Master had chosen "men to preach," and "women to guide the house," and win souls in a quiet manner. But she could attend faithfully to household affairs, and also do something as a private member to lead sinners to Jesus, even though miles away on the dark mountain; for she was an expert rider, very spry and strong, and only thirty years of age, and had a fleet, easy horse that could climb those slopes and fly across those table-lands and be back home in a few hours.

So, in the name and fear of the Lord, this cultured woman began among the rough settlers of Washington Mountain as a religious visitor from, house to house. At first her visits were between 1 P.M. and sunset; but as the people became awakened, and gathered in groups, requiring more exhortation and wrestling prayer, she spent more time with them, frequently mounting her boy behind her for company, and always reaching home before she slept. Local preachers and exhorters followed up the work. The circuit preachers, by an occasional visit, gathered the lambs into folds, and thus the fields were cultivated, while this pioneer woman searched out other destitute groups and introduced them to Gospel privileges and blessings.

In this rapid riding and visiting, as a true shepherdess, hunting up the lost, she cautiously occupied mostly fair afternoons, and on an average, in moderate weather, only one or two afternoons a week. But in a few years even that amount of time, well employed, produced glorious results. Her work in this line was somewhat like that of a modern "Bible reader," only that it was much more rapid. What would her father have thought, when teaching his proud daughter horsemanship, if he had been told what use she would make of it?

What a contrast between the riding done by this woman now, and a dozen years ago in the same county! In skill, and speed of movement, and grace of attitude she is much the same; but how different her dress, her countenance, her aims and hopes! Her father then was proud of his darling; now, how mortified and angry would he be could he see her spring to her saddle and start off toward Washington Mountain, in search of souls! "God seeth not as man seeth." Then he beheld the "proud afar off," but now "giveth grace to the humble," and crowneth her labors with divine approval and success, while he giveth to her heart the "peace that passeth understanding," and the sweet promise that "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever!"

What Mrs. Elizabeth did to save souls on the mountain was only in the line of extraordinary labors, and was not made an excuse for neglecting any of

her ordinary church duties. As before observed, her visits being mainly in fair weather, and only once or twice a week, except in times of revival, she counted them as many people do one or two weekly recreations, not allowed to interfere with anything else.

Indeed, they did not satisfy her own zeal for extraordinary work. She scattered some of the young people of the mountain among the Methodist families of Lenox and Pittsfield as domestic help, greatly to their advantage. She invited her church associates to her house for extra prayer meetings, for the special benefit of serious persons from the mountain and other neglected neighborhoods nearer her home, thus bringing them under strong religious influences. Of course all the young laborers from the mountain, working for families not too far off, would want to attend such meetings and see their kindred, and their employers would encourage them and lead them to faithful cross-bearing on such occasions.

She even set up a private school for neglected children, and her church classmates put some of their own children into it "to help leaven it," as she suggested, and it became, in answer to their united prayers, a revival school. One family^[1] who thus assisted her had two little boys converted in her school, right among the ragged, ignorant children, and they grew so strong in the work of these daily prayer meetings that one of them^[2] became an able itinerant minister, and the other,^[3] in the wilderness to which both families subsequently moved, became a class leader, having for several years some of these same schoolmates (then, like himself, in midlife) in his class, and even Mr. and Mrs. Arnold themselves and several of their children! So glorious are often the compensations of true zeal, even in "the life that now is."

[Footnote 1: That of Thomas Hubbard.]

[Footnote 2: Rev. Elijah B. Hubbard.]

[Footnote 3: Jabez Hubbard.]

CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL TO A WILDERNESS COUNTRY.

How mysterious are the leadings of Providence! The most inviting scenes, the happiest state of society, the richest farm lands, the best educational facilities, sometimes fail to content even good people who live not to get rich, but to fulfill their mission in the service of their "generation by the will of God."

The young man marked by the Redeemer for a Gospel herald is not the only sort of Christian who feels uneasy in the crowded nursery, and groans to be torn out and transplanted on some bleak hillside where, shaken by fierce winds, his roots may strike deep, his branches spread wide, and he bear much fruit.

Families have thus caught the emigrating spirit in sufficient numbers to form clans of pioneer evangelists, and torn themselves out of little Edens to found colonies in dreary moral deserts; and as "the kingdom comes" with more rapid strides such single-eyed emigrations will become more frequent.

CHAPTER V.

VOLNEY, OSWEGO COUNTY, NEW YORK.

We are now suddenly introduced into a new country of heavy timber. The people have settled near together, and yet so thick are the woods, and so small the clearings, that nearly every family is alone, and cannot see out in any direction but by looking up toward heaven, a habit they learned before settling in these woods.

It is a Massachusetts colony from Lenox, Pittsfield, and Washington Mountain. These people came here for two purposes: to "get land for their children," and to "take the new country for God and Methodism." But the last object was first, and ever held its rank.

As you call around upon these detached families you find them thoughtful, intelligent, and decidedly religious; although each family is alone in the woods, they are not very lonesome, for familiar sounds reach them almost every hour of the day. The deep-sounding cow bells, the dinner horns, the ring of the ax, and the thunder of the falling tree keep them in happy remembrance of their brethren and of their diligence and success, and often wake the anticipation of the coming Sabbath, when they will blend their songs and prayers around the mercy seat.

And now the longed-for Sunday morning has dawned. The woodman's ax lies still, the dinner horn hangs upon its peg, and no treefall breaks the sacred silence. The half-burned "backlog" is buried in ashes on the broad stone hearth, and the door of each log cabin is simply shut--it needs no lock--and from every direction all the people are seen approaching a large log dwelling in a small clearing of central situation. It is the newest house in the settlement, as its occupants have been here only a few weeks. But they are well known in the colony, and have cordially "opened their doors" and "provided for the meetings."

Joshua and Elizabeth Arnold are once more in their much-loved relation to Methodism, the master and mistress of the "cottage chapel." And now, as the meeting hour draws nigh, you see the people entering this little clearing by two or three footpaths and two highways, a few in wagons and sleds drawn by oxen, but mostly on foot. They are plainly but neatly clad, and every requisite of becoming Sabbath decorum is plainly to be seen in both adults and children, and even in young men and misses. The family chairs are occupied by the aged and the ailing, while most of the people sit upon benches without backs. The singing is superior, both in the structure of the tunes and the fullness and sweetness of voice of most of the singers. Such tunes as China, Mear, Northfield, Windham, Exhortation, etc., set to our most solid hymns and sung with the understanding and in the spirit, have never been excelled, and probably will not be in this world. The preaching also is excellent, and the hearing corresponds. Tears are abundant, and responses neither scant nor misplaced, and impressions deep.

At the close of the public service nearly all "remain for class meeting." The speaking is clear, direct, and candid; the singing spontaneous, brief, and spirited. When the class meeting closes, hand-shaking and shouts close the scene, and most of the people return immediately home.

No tobacco smoke has polluted the air of the place. No gossip or worldly talk has profaned the sacred day. Such as by distance, feebleness, or any other cause would be likely to fail of coming back to the late afternoon or evening meeting are led, if possible, to remain and eat with the family. From half a dozen to a dozen usually accept of the cordial invitation, and find a strong evangelical influence in the very atmosphere of this place of worship.

At the closing meeting in the latter part of the day some fruit usually appears from the personal labors bestowed upon guests between meetings; thus putting the divine seal upon the hospitality and influence of the cottage chapel.

The picture of this day is substantially the description of the Sabbaths of years at this meeting place.

CHAPTER VI.

HARDSHIPS OF THE NEW COLONY.

It is no small undertaking to reduce heavily timbered lands to farms, especially where there are few, if any, kinds of timber of any market value, as was the case in the Oswego wilderness subdued by this Massachusetts colony and others who settled in with and around about them. All the land had to be cleared twice, and much of it three times, of some tons per acre of encumbrances. First, the trees must be felled, cut up, rolled into heaps, and burned to ashes. Then the huge stumps must take a few years to decay, and then be torn out, piled up in heaps, and also burned. Last, but not always least in labor and cost, a burden of stones had to be drawn off from portions of most of the farms and piled in heaps or wrought into walls. But our colonists were sober, diligent, and persevering, and under their cheerful toil the wilderness was reduced to fruitful fields. The temporary log houses and stables soon gave place to comfortable buildings; and the "clearings" met as the woods disappeared before the ax.

The log chapel dwelling, sacred though it was as God's house and heaven's gate, was one of the first to disappear. A goodly frame house was just covered and its floors laid, but no partitions set up, when it was gloriously consecrated by a most powerful quarterly meeting.

This was in the summer of 1823. Rev. Goodwin Stoddard was the presiding elder, a mighty man when fully aroused. Sunday evening he preached in the new house during a fearful thunderstorm, and seemed girded like Elijah running before the chariot of the king. While Jehovah spake in the clouds, and for a long time the heavens seemed to be "a sheet of flame." He also spake by his servant, and the response from the people was in tears and sobs, groans and shouts; and at the conclusion of nearly every sweep of the preacher's wonderful flights could be heard above the whole a shrill shout from the hostess, followed by a tornado of amens! When the sermon closed the storm ceased, and the "slain of the Lord were many." Memorable night! The people found neither slumber nor weariness, and when the morning dawned very few had not found a brighter dawn.

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUARTERLY MEETINGS.

These meetings, held in the summer season upon these premises for near a dozen years, were greatly enjoyed by Elizabeth and the family. The circuit was large, and most of its two or three dozen appointments would be represented at what they called the "quarterly visitation." For two or three hours before noon on Saturday the people were pouring in from all parts of the circuit, and some from adjoining circuits. Besides what would consent to sit down to dinner, "lunch" was freely distributed, which very few refused after a long ride or walk. This lunch business was very handy, and not unpopular. No plates were used; the people in house or yard took in their hands the cold meats, biscuit, cheese, and doughnuts, while pans of milk and pails of water, provided with tin cups, were set conveniently. After the Saturday sermon the preacher in charge distributed the guests among the hospitable homes of the society. But as the Quarterly Conference was yet to be held the local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and class leaders, and usually their families, either stayed there or, perhaps, a few of them, at the nearest neighbors'.

However scattered during Saturday night and Sunday night, they had a rallying time at the place of meeting before starting for home Monday, when, by more or less delay, time wore on, and the "lunch" came around again. Fifty to a hundred meals, and two or more general lunches, were not remarkable at the cottage chapel; while for lodging, divided bedding and shawls scantily covered upon beds, benches, and floors, the women and children in the house, and a little new hay divided among the men and boys in the barn, made their rest somewhat tolerable.

At this distance of time and custom one would be sure that the hostess, after such a siege, would be worn down, nervous, and melancholy; but those who understood her best could have borne witness to a change of spirits, if any, in the opposite direction. As early as Monday on ordinary occasions, and Tuesday after the great quarterly visitation, the brick oven was sure to turn out its usual supplies for the family.

Nor could the holding out of strength and spirits be credited principally to a good constitution; but while much was due to the pious joy with which she did all, more, perhaps, is to be laid to what her Yankee friends called "faculty." Solomon's temple was not more accurately prepared than this housewife's arrangements for receiving and caring for her meeting guests. Nor was she less skillful in selecting and directing such youngerly women from among the guests as she needed for helpers and waiters. Her stock of aprons was marvelous, and the dispatch with which she equipped her corps and clothed their ruddy countenances in smiles was only equaled by the speed with which everything was finished in time for meeting call, and her "girls" and herself in their places in good time. And whatever woman in the meeting did not do her part of the praying, speaking, singing, and, on occasion, shouting too, that woman was not Elizabeth Arnold.

When Zion's hospitable entertainers shall be acknowledged before assembled worlds, and all their liberality and painstaking in the spirit of their Master, who fed the multitude, shall be mentioned to his glory and their credit through his grace, will not the humble name of Elizabeth Arnold be

spoken with the honorable mention of that host of noble, patient toilers who fed the people, that they might thus detain them under the influence of Him who stood waiting to feed them with the bread of eternal life?

CHAPTER VIII.

EXTENDS HER LABORS.

After about a dozen and a quarter years the Arnold place lost the meetings both of the circuit and of the society.

The changes of business and travel left the place quite one side, and the meetings had been gradually removed to more central and convenient locations. Mr. Arnold had been called by the church to hold meetings as an exhorter, and had sought out some destitute neighborhoods as his chosen field. It was natural and appropriate for his wife to accompany him.

They were both good singers, and had sung together a third of a century. They were ready speakers and mighty in prayer, and in the quiet way of lay workers they went from house to house, and to a family in a place they presented the great salvation in conversation and psalm, and commended the people to God in prayer.

It was not long before they collected in congregations; and while the "licensed" exhorter, who really "preached many things to the people in his exhortations," always led the meetings, the real exhorter followed with cutting appeals. This destitute region was thus visited occasionally for several years, and this couple had the honor of being its successful pioneers in Christian evangelism. In a central position has long stood a Methodist Episcopal church, and members of its society, fifty years after these humble labors, acknowledged them in the hearing of the writer as the means of their salvation.

Elizabeth was now between fifty and sixty years of age, was no longer the nimble rider, but somewhat heavy and clumsy; she preferred the carriage seat to the saddle, but still in her numerous visits to the sick and such as she could bless by religious calls she continued her old method, as being more independent. Many wondered at the ease and skill with which a woman of her age and size would spring on and off and manage her horse. She would modestly reply, "My dear father taught me how, and I have always liked it."

She early became a skillful nurse, and was for many years a diligent visitor of the sick, especially among the poor and the ignorant. Her saddle horns were hung with budgets of medicinal herbs and little comforts, and she would find out the sick and suffering, and administer both to their physical and spiritual wants, and return to her household duties almost before her family knew she had been gone.

About this time a new field of labor was providentially opened to this Christian worker. The Presbyterian and Baptist churches in that town began to employ "evangelists" to hold "revival meetings" of a new order; but when the people appeared to be thoughtful, and they got them into the "anxious meetings," they found it almost impossible to get them to praying or the church to praying for them directly and earnestly, especially the

sisterhood of the Presbyterian church; so the deacons and elders, in their strait, begged Mrs. Arnold to "come over into Macedonia and help." Much as she had suffered in her early religious life from predestinarianism, she never was a bigot, and so she, like Paul, "gathered assuredly" that the call was of the Lord, and "without gainsaying" went and helped them publicly and from house to house as best she could. The result was that during the balance of her active life she was urged into and did much of this inter-church work in their periodical revivals, and obviously with good effect.

But, grateful as were these churches for such help, and encouraging to her heart as the fruit appeared, she ever labored in these Calvinistic associations under more or less embarrassment. To be at once true to her principles and true to interdenominational courtesy left her rather a narrow platform to work upon; but, limited as it was, she would not transcend it in either direction. When, however, she could find revival work within reach among her own people she ever gave such calls the preference; and from their arrival in the new country down to the retirement of infirm old age, more than a quarter of a century, "Sister Arnold" was known for many miles around as "an excellent revival laborer."

Several allusions have been made in this narrative to her shouting; but it should be understood that she was not in the habit of "shouting before getting out of the swamp." The order of her work was solemn, steady, earnest, and in mighty faith; but when the struggle was over, the victory gained, sometimes that solemn countenance would become suddenly luminous and her shrill shouts would pierce the very heavens. These loud exultations, however, were indulged in in no meetings but those of her own people, and grew less frequent as age crept on, giving place to tears of joy and whispers of praise.

CHAPTER IX.

AS A CAMP MEETING WORKER.

When health and distance would permit, Mrs. Elizabeth could be depended upon as a tent holder and laborer at every camp meeting. She had a superior tent, and it was in its place and order from the first to the last hour.

It was a little odd that Mr. Arnold had very little camp meeting zeal, when his wife had so much. He would go when entirely convenient, enjoy a few sermons and some pleasant conversations with friends, when he "must go home, see to things, and regain the rest he had lost." "Mother and the children were sufficient to see to the tent, and enjoyed such mode of life better than he did."

With her the camp meeting was neither a place of recreation nor weariness. Its single object was to save souls. True to this purpose, she forecast for weeks to obtain as tent guests thoughtful persons of honorable character whom she could bring and hold under the influence of the meeting until they were converted.

For one meeting a Presbyterian deacon, who lived in a neglected neighborhood, was induced to bring his children and near a dozen more, all young people nearly or quite grown, and stay through the meeting. Of course

these guests would help stock the tent, and would feel bound in courtesy to attend the meetings of the tent as well as preaching at the stand, and the good deacon have to do his share in conducting these tent meetings. When the deacon returned home he carried with him a beautiful flock of the Saviour's lambs; and while the most of his own children joined his church, several miles away, the rest of these lambs were gathered into a Methodist fold at their own schoolhouse, the nucleus of a church which now has a good church edifice and has long had a prosperous existence. It is worthy of remark that to this day this church is next neighbor to the one founded soon after upon the work of the exhorters before alluded to.

CHAPTER X.

"THE CHAMBER ON THE WALL."

The active part of the married life of Joshua and Elizabeth Arnold was over forty years. During that period their house--as may be inferred from preceding pages--was the ever welcome home for the itinerant preacher. The presiding elder and the preacher in charge often met there to counsel together. The junior preacher, who was usually a single man, made it one of his homes, where he came to rest and study. The "best room," with its fireplace, bed, table, etc., was occupied more by the preachers than by all other company, and was known as "the preachers' room." Both circuit preachers frequently passed a night there together in their rounds; but the senior, having a home somewhere, would speak of this as the junior's home, and of himself as "his guest," as well as the guest of the family. Sometimes all three of the itinerants would meet there for days at a time. Such were seasons of great joy all around, and of some little pleasantries, although cautiously indulged in in those days.

On one such occasion, as the three preachers and the family were sitting around the large fireplace on a winter evening, and conversation had about quieted to a lull, one of the elders hunched the junior, and with a significant wink suggested to him to ask counsel of Sister Arnold, who was busy sewing by the candle-stand. Now the said junior was a very promising boy of nineteen, but, withal, a little too boyish to quite suit the ideal of this grave woman. So while he stated the question she listened with her attention mostly upon her work. "Mother Arnold, I have, as our Discipline requires, counseled with these my seniors upon a very important question." She glances at him very slightly. "It is the question of marriage." Another glance, which is enough to wilt a boy of ordinary courage, and instantly her eye is on her work again. He rallies, however, and begins again: "I am advised by several to marry, and am thinking seriously of doing so. I now desire your advice." Slowly her spectacles mount to her forehead, her keen black eye seems to look right through him, and she slowly and gravely replies, "Well, my advice is, that you wait until you get to be a man." The effect of such a shot may be better imagined than told; not only there, but elsewhere, as long as he stayed on that circuit. He did wait, and in waiting made a more judicious choice, and one of the sons of that wise marriage is now one of our bishops.

Severe as this sounds, it was a word in season, and fully met the approval of the senior brethren, and of the junior himself, who greatly venerated her, and ran a very successful, although short, race, and left an excellent influence behind him.

Eternity alone will fully declare how valuable were the counsels of this "Aquila and Priscilla," who in this itinerant's home took many a young "Apollos" and "expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly."

But while nothing Mr. and Mrs. Arnold did for the meetings at their home or anywhere excused them from personal activity in those meetings, no pains or expense in entertaining the preachers were ever a substitute for the regular support of the Gospel by prompt and liberal payment through the stewards.

But beyond the regular "quarterage" they appreciated the need of "presents." And probably, in the forty-two years of their active business life together, seldom, if ever, did a Gospel minister make a pastoral visit at their home and go away without carrying with him some little token of the veneration and love there cherished for his holy office and work, or of remembrance of his lone family, so much of the time deprived of his presence, and of many delicacies which he had among his people far away. The "fatted calf," lamb, or fowl would in many places be dressed for his feasting, while the family at home, in some inferior quarters, were having rather dry fare, if not scanty fare; the thought of which would often mar the pleasure of his most sumptuous entertainments.

Economical, not to say penurious, stewards demanded an "account of everything given to the preachers;" but Mrs. Arnold insisted that besides salary matters presents were needed, and it was the privilege of that house to give them at pleasure, and the left hand must not know what the right hand conferred. Often the minister himself knew nothing of it until some one of his family searched the box of his carriage seat, which they were not slow to do when it came from certain parts of the circuit--some article of provision for the table, common and plenty enough in the cellar or dairy of the farm, but not certain to be flush in the parsonage; some tidbit or condiment to humor a delicate appetite; some choice fruits or knickknacks for the children; some material from the sheep or flax of the farm spun by her own diligent fingers to be made up in the lonely parsonage for the wife or children, or underwear for the man of God. When the minister's family was within reach of this very busy mother in Israel she would often relieve the loneliness, and sometimes the wants, experienced in his "long rounds" by her visits to the sacred rooms, which in those early years of Methodism were oftener parts of some kind member's home than a regular "parsonage" or "rectory." So when the weary itinerant would return and find that his family had not been entirely neglected in his absence he would take new courage to pursue his toilsome way.

As already intimated, Mrs. Arnold usually made the "junior preacher" of the circuit an object of motherly care. He was generally a single man in those early days, and often scarcely out of his boyhood. Many a worn garment was overhauled and repaired; many a pair of new warm socks or mittens was laid with new underwear upon his pillow.

Although for several weeks of the year he and his horse had made the Arnold place a pilgrim's rest, never was a dollar paid the place for board, nor was the circuit permitted to charge him a farthing upon his salary for that or the presents he had received in that welcome home.

The junior preacher seldom served the same circuit more than one year of his apprenticeship. When he left this, his favorite home of rest, of study, and of repairs, the parting scene brought tears from all eyes; and long did the echo of those loving adieus ring in all ears, especially as uttered by

that matronly voice, "Do well, and farewell. God bless you!"

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. ELIZABETH ARNOLD AS A MOTHER.

Eight children were given to this pious couple--five sons and three daughters. Two of the daughters were recalled between the ages of two and four. Lovely and much loved, they were still resigned to Him who demanded their return, and that, too, without a murmur.

The remaining daughter and all the five sons were converted in the morning of life and joined the Church so dear to the parents, and the two younger sons became ministers of the same, and all the six lived to advanced age. The writer once overheard Mrs. Arnold answer the anxious inquiries of a young mother who had several little ones she was yearning to see early saved: "O, sister, it is all of the Lord. But it is true that He has wonderfully blessed our family altar, the visits of our dear ministers, and the meetings in our house for many years. And as you are a mother, and seem anxious to learn a mother's duty and privilege, I will frankly give you my experience. I did not play much with, our children, nor caress them much. I hadn't time, and I didn't wish them to be babies too long nor waste much of their precious morning of life in play. I did not flatter nor praise them very much. I was afraid of fostering pride. But I have instructed them in our glorious doctrines with diligence and all the skill I could command. But their early salvation and lifelong piety and usefulness seemed to be laid on my heart by divine power, and the spirit of prayer for them was one of the abiding influences of the Holy Ghost. God had plainly answered my prayers for my brothers and sisters till they were all converted, and would not my heavenly Father answer my prayer for my own offspring? O, sister, it was no task for me to pray for my children. My life was in it.

"When I fed them I prayed the Lord to give them the bread and the water of eternal life. When I took off their garments I asked the Lord to strip them of sin; and as I clothed them, that He would clothe them with the garments of salvation. When I laid them down to sleep I prayed that they might be fully prepared for the bed of death, and to sleep at last in Christian graves. And when I took them up from their slumbers, how earnestly I prayed that they might have part in the resurrection of the just! And, my dear young sister, I was not content with prayers for my children, nor with our family prayers with them; but as they grew old enough I took each one to my own little prayer room with me, and poured out my soul for that one. And I seldom retired to my pillow until I had "tucked up" my sleeping little ones, given them a word of counsel, and offered a prayer for them; and I had no trouble in getting their wakeful attention. I assure you, dear sister, that a Christian mother's advantage just here is very great. Don't let any hurry or weariness rob you of that hold upon the hearts of your children."

CHAPTER XII.

DOUBLE DILIGENCE.

Mrs. Elizabeth Arnold was a very busy woman. During the forty-two years of her mature active life she could almost be said to have accomplished double work. Both her conscience and her nature seemed to be all alive to the rules of our Discipline: "Never be unemployed;" "Never be triflingly employed." Her large size, large brain, and preponderance of bilious temperament seemed to call for much sleep and moderate motion. But her motions were quick and efficient, and her sleep could not have averaged over six hours in twenty-four. But eighteen hours a day could not satisfy her longing for "the improvement of her precious time." So she managed, when alone or not engaged in reading or conversation, to keep up what at a little distance might be taken for mere humming, but what was really intelligent singing, simultaneous with the most active work of her hands. It might begin with a hymn, but would glide on beyond into her own words of praise or prayer in impromptu music. This free, original singing was the settled habit of her most driving business hours, and was not annoying to others. But how those black eyes would sparkle and those florid cheeks glow with heavenly light as her whole soul seemed absorbed in this spontaneous singing, while the work of her hands went briskly on, leaving in speed or finish no mark of absence of mind or false motion.

But this was not her only method of doubling her diligence. Her experience and wisdom brought her many inquirers after the truth, and demands upon her conversational powers were many and imperative. Yet those busy, provident hands, long acquainted with needles, seemed to make them fly and click in about even race, with the mind and the tongue, "Diligence in business," "singing with grace in the heart," and "conversation seasoned with grace" mingled in her methods of "redeeming the time."

PART III.

RETIREMENT.

* * * * *

CHAPTER I.

HOMES OF EARLY METHODISTS.

From the earthly point of observation how sad is the breaking up of Christian homes! The genuinely hospitable homes of the early Methodists were peculiar. There were elements in their hospitality which do not quite find their equal in our day. The old circuit system set everything in motion. Not only were the "circuit riders" circulating everywhere, but quarterly meetings, "two days' meetings," and even regular circuit preaching, whether on a week day or Sunday, stirred up the people. And as they were scattered in residence, and traveling was slow, every comfortable, hospitable Methodist residence became not only a free stopping place, but a house of entertainment, where both soul and body found refreshment, and the one just as free and cordial as the other. The guest did not embarrass the host or hostess, for nothing but plain fare was

expected; and as to spiritual refreshment, he left a blessing behind him, and with rekindled joy went on his way rejoicing. So also it was when his turn came to entertain.

The homes of the early Methodists, especially in the country and in the rural villages, were much more permanent than in this day--not rented, but mostly owned by their occupants--and every year seemed to add to the sacredness of these hospitable old abodes. The trees, the watering trough, the well sweep, the plain old buildings, the very ground, seemed consecrated to God and his cause.

But the kind host and hostess "have finished their course" and been called up higher. The honored old place is honorable no longer. The tenants or new owners, or, worse still, ungodly children, have desecrated everything. The old-time guests pass it with a sigh. The hill, the brook are there, but the aged horse looks in vain for the welcome open gate and watering place, and, drooping his head, walks slowly by in sadness. Ministers and church people tread that yard no more. The very ground seems backslidden. Sabbaths have fled. Prayers and praises are no longer echoed. That light is put out, and "how great is that darkness!"

The time came for Joshua and Elizabeth to yield to infirmity, and retire from active life. The hard work of the new country told seriously upon even strong constitutions. Some of the members of their society older, and some even younger, than themselves had yielded and gone.

For long, happy years they had kept up an establishment of an unusually hospitable order for even a cordial church and a free, social age. They had been more able, more willing, more zealous, and had more "faculty" for it. But old age came on then earlier than now. The "threescore years" of which they had so long sung had already gone by. Their younger sons were away in the itinerant ministry. The old farm was too broad for their age and infirmities, and they found the order given to Daniel, "Go thou thy way: ... for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. xii, 13), appropriate to their condition, and allowed an elder son to remove them to town, under his care, and near church. In this retirement they enjoyed choice church privileges. Several of their old-time friends had collected in and near the place, among whom were a few of their old Massachusetts classmates and, above all, the aged and excellent local preacher^[1] who was praying for Miss Elizabeth Ward in Pittsfield when she was converted, and who had for so many years lived near the family and had preached in their house nearly or quite as much as all other ministers. He and his venerable companion had retired there, too, with one of their sons.

[Footnote 1: Rev. Thomas Hubbard.]

But besides these retired neighbors, their retreat being but five miles from their old farm and whilom cottage chapel, several of the village residents had long been camp meeting and quarterly meeting associates. So, with a dutiful son and near-by church, this superannuated couple, surrounded by congenial society, surrendered their beloved public life and sought an evening of rest, in which to ripen for heaven.

Hardly could aged people be happier or more quiet and free from worldly care. The storms of life were past; the crowd of business, the rush of labor, the study of complicated lines of duty--all these have gone by like a storm, and left a great calm. Still they find some little to do with what little strength they can command and the limited income left them.

CHAPTER II.

JOSHUA ARNOLD.

No life experience of Elizabeth would seem at all complete without a chapter giving a somewhat connected view of her companion, near a half century by her side, in her toils, liberality, and church work. Did she, when driven by persecution from her father's house, take up, under stress of calamity, an inferior associate for life? Let us see. If, as many claim, the wisest matches are founded on contrast, this must have been par excellence. For if we except their large size and mutual endowment of sound common sense, there was very little natural similarity. In Connecticut the farms of the Arnolds and the Wards joined, and yet they were not intimate as families, for there was, for that day, too great disparity in property and style. Both were moral and intelligent, but the large Arnold family on the hill, though in comfortable circumstances, did not train in the same "set" with the elegant establishment at the Cove.

Of the numerous family (of almost giant size) of Ebenezer and Anna Miller Arnold there were only two sons. Ebenezer, among the eldest, had the ancestral name, took to a mariner's life, was a few years a sea captain, and lies at the bottom of the ocean. Joshua was the youngest of the family, the almost idol of his parents, and of a house full of lusty sisters, who vied with one another which should teach him most and secure most of his confidence. So he lived on until nearly thirty a bachelor. Such opportunities as were afforded the common farmers' boys of New England in the eighteenth century young Joshua diligently improved, and became a close student, and well qualified as a teacher of common schools of his day. His specialties were mathematics, penmanship, bookkeeping, business science and forms, and navigation. And he continued to do more or less in this profession until fifty years of age. He was converted among the first fruits of Methodist labors in that part of New England.

Then, every Methodist studied closely into her doctrines, and this young man became qualified to state clearly, and ably defend, all that was peculiar to that Church. The cast of his mind was logical, candid, patient--he was never inclined to hasty conclusions. He loved to dig deep, collect strong evidence, and wait till conclusions were sound and inevitable.

His brethren soon marked him for the ministry, and so advised; but, with his great modesty and high opinions of a divine call, he was not then, and never was, satisfied that he had such an essential individual commission. Without a full consciousness of duty in the line of that awful responsibility, this pious young man refused to look in that direction. He, however, cherished a high sense of the honor involved in the confidence of the Church, and felt impelled to lay himself out to do his best as a private member.

Under the ministry of such able Methodist preachers as Asbury, Jesse Lee, and George Roberts, young Joshua had imbibed the main doctrines of theology, and set out in earnest to "search the Scriptures," both "for correction" if wrong, and for confirmation in the truth he had received and experienced. Thus fairly started on the King's highway of truth, he became profoundly interested in Bible study; and continued both the study and the

intense love of it through life. He dug in this mine more than a third of a century without any human commentary, and found, to his great joy, that the poet had struck it: "God is his own interpreter, and He will make it plain." So diligently did he search for the "interpretation of Scripture by Scripture," that he largely learned the doctrinal Scriptures by heart, and also book, chapter, and verse; and to family and friends he was "both concordance and commentary."

Near the middle of his experience and biblical research Mr. Arnold was urged, almost driven, to take license to exhort, and more publicly divulge some of the treasures of his years of study. He had thus "improved in public" (as exhorting was then called) but a year or two when his brethren, finding more of the expository than hortatory in his discourses, urged that his proper office was that of a local preacher. But to this he had two objections: lack of a distinct call, and a settled fear that the Church was growing too numerous a secular ministry; so he utterly refused.

For the balance of his active life, as health and opportunity permitted, he "preached many things to the people in his exhortations," always laying for them a solid doctrinal foundation, and plentifully using Scripture language, both accurately quoted and wisely applied, and book and chapter usually given. His appointments for exhortation never lacked attendants or interest; and when called, as he often was, to "supply the appointment" of a circuit preacher, the substitute was not met with wry faces nor spoken of in frowns. Yet his highest apparent successes in speaking, if estimated by the excitement, were his brief speeches in love feast, not boisterous, but invariably stirring the deep of the heart of the meeting.

Joshua Arnold's singing was no way superior in kind and had no marked defect, unless it was that time sometimes yielded to sentiment. But the amount of psalm singing done in a half century by this peaceful man was certainly marvelous. The leading of most of the hymns in the social meetings was a very small proportion of it. Whenever he found a psalm, a hymn, or a chorus that struck a chord in his devout heart he laid it carefully away in his retentive memory, and it was instantly called up when he wanted to sing it.

But what was most noteworthy in his singing was that his happy heart, and soft, sweet voice, and abundant store of pious psalmody kept him singing wherever and whenever he could with propriety.

Mr. Arnold was the opposite of a business sharper. He was a moderate, patient toiler, but traded no more than he was obliged to, and always with frank, honest words, and very few words. He hated extortion, avoided debt, and threw nothing away in interest or in lawsuits, and was both careful and skillful in maintaining a good influence. Like his wife, he was economical and liberal; and the Christian liberality of their home knew no bounds but the limit of their means; nor was that limit dreaded, nor often, if ever, found, when it embarrassed the case on hand.

As Joshua Arnold was no ordinary man, so his personnel was rather peculiar: nearly six feet in height; large, but not fat; wore a shoe of size number twelve, and hat size seven and a half. His eye was blue, large, and mild; forehead broad and high; nose long and straight; lips long and thin; mouth and chin small and delicate; hair brown, fine, straight, and complexion florid. His motions were moderate, and temper very steady and mild.

CHAPTER III.

SEPARATION.

But this aged couple were to share their joys and sorrows in their retirement but a few years. Joshua was the first called away. He died in his seventy-seventh year, in peace with God and all men. Just before his speech failed one of his sons inquired how long he had been in the Methodist Episcopal Church. His answer came slowly but firmly: "Fifty-two years ago I said to this people, 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.'

'The word hath passed my lips, and I
Shall with thy people live and die.'"

And the good man had the desire of his heart.

Elizabeth was now a widow, and had nearly reached her "threescore and ten years." She was not much bent with age, though "compassed with infirmity." She still found some little to do among the sick, the poor, and the perishing, and was not gloomy or desponding in her loneliness. She wrote much to her scattered children, who were too distant to be seen often, and her letters breathed the spirit of heaven.

When possible to attend the preaching of the word she was "not a forgetful hearer," but kept up her old method of prayerful abstraction. She had during her whole religious life followed it. She would early enter the meeting as if she saw no one and go solemnly to her seat, and either kneel or cover her face for a time, and thence on until the voice of the opening service aroused her would be absorbed in devotion. As long as able to attend, her voice was heard in prayer and class meetings; and many came to her room for counsel and help in their experience.

It was marvelous to see what a change retirement and its quiet had wrought in the spirit and manner of this woman. The drive and hum of busy life were over; a heavenly calm had ensued--solemn, serene, peaceful--no agony of prayer, no ecstasy of spirit, no shouts of transport, no fiery trials. Her infirmities accumulate, but still she rejoices in sacred, hallowed peace. She becomes a cripple, almost confined to her bed, and continues so for years; but her mind retains its strength and serenity, and her whole heart rejoices in God, her immovable Rock.

The last decade or more of her life was marked as a continual feast upon the holy word of God. She learned what her blessed Saviour meant when he quoted and sanctioned that Scripture, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and also, his promise that the Holy Comforter should quote to the faithful such passages of the word they had studied as their circumstances might require.

So every day, and usually oftener, the Lord would give her a "passage to feed upon," "day by day her daily bread." On the last day that she could speak her pastor's wife inquired after her "passage for that day," and she instantly quoted Josh. i. 5, and Heb. xiii, 5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Just before her speech failed her she called to her a daughter-in-law and gave her a minute account of her graveclothes, which had been ready for several years, and she found everything as she had described them. Thus, as "a shock of corn fully ripe," she was at length gathered home. She died in Fulton, Oswego County, N. Y., in August, 1865, in the eighty-eighth year of her age, and in the seventieth year of her religious experience, and is buried by the side of her husband in Mount Adna Cemetery, where they together await the resurrection of the just.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUSION.

The "disinherited" Elizabeth was never restored to her rights and heirship as a daughter. As old age came upon that rigid father he partially relented and doled out a few hundreds to her where his other children had their thousands.

He even sent to Massachusetts for her to visit him on his deathbed and counsel him concerning salvation, and pray with him; and he indulged some hope under her prayers; but he made no confession of his wrongs to her, nor amends for his injustice.

Her two brothers and three sisters all credited their religious experience to God's blessing upon Elizabeth's prayers, counsels, and life; but only one of them ever undertook to restore what the father had taken from Elizabeth's right and given to her, and she did not do it until she was about to die without issue. With one voice they freely condemned her disinheritance and the persecutions she had had to suffer. But when, their souls being "ill at ease" under the remembrance of her wrongs, they spoke to her on the subject (for she would not introduce it), they would simply repeat, "Father so willed it, and you know, dear sister, that no one could ever turn him."

All became church members, and so lived and died, but all in Calvinian communions; while all of Elizabeth's children became Methodists, and two of her sons, as we have seen, itinerant ministers. She and her pious husband, as before stated, were industrious, economical, and liberal, and Agar's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was their prayer, and with its answer they walked happily and usefully through life, "serving their generation by the will of God," and passing in peace to their reward.

THE END.

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