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MRS. SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS AND HER
CHILDREN.

ENOSBURG FALLS, VERMONT, 1874.

IN THE ENEMIES' LAND

A

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

BY

SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS.



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INTRODUCTION.

After many years of servitude and patient waiting on the Lord to bless my feeble efforts to serve him, obedient to his command I present my personal experience to the cold gaze of the critic. I realize the sacredness of home and the duty I owe unto my God who so wonderfully has watched over me during my pilgrimage here within this land of boasted morality and religion.

Trusting the Holy Spirit's blessing will rest upon this record of truth, that it may live forever and bring forth the fruits of the spirit to enlighten, encourage and strengthen the readers, that they may grasp the cross of Christ, however heavy, and press forward for the prize, a peace which the world cannot take away, a rest that is only known to the people of God.

My object is not the exposure of any who have withstood me in my struggle for perfection, for the Lord made me see that his mercy extends unto all people, even unto those that deny his holy name. Luke 10:23, 24. By their works we are to know whether their lives are in tune with the gospel keynotes, Peace on earth, good will to men. Should a different spirit show itself on any page of this book, I trust the Lord will give the reader grace to know that it has crept in unawares and did not proceed from my heart nor from the Almighty whose goodness and mercy is shown in all his works, whose power and strength must be acknowledged by all nations, and will eventually bring all hidden things of darkness to light.

This record of truth proves that the strong arm of the Lord will sustain and strengthen his persecuted children who trust in him, as his faithful witnesses

have testified in all ages. Luke 24:48. May the evidence given bring tidings of great joy to those that languish in solitude or are passing through fiery affliction with no hope of deliverance. The Lord is strong and powerful and will deliver and reward all that patiently wait his appointed time.

I caluminate no one, but simply relate the truth, when I disclose the skeleton within my own closet and reveal unto the world secrets hid for many years. Though they may fall among thorns or on stony soil, I trust that the Holy Spirit will bless the seed sowing in this little volume.

That every reader of these pages may have light given to understand the truth according to the scriptures and inherit eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, is the prayer of the author,

SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS.

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”—John 8:32.

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IN THE ENEMIES' LAND.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY REMINISCENCES. — THE CHRISTMAS PARTY. — A STRANGE MARRIAGE.

While no human life exactly duplicates another, Nature and Destiny alike closely guarding the sacredness of the individual, make many lives so replete with startling incidents and strange leadings of Providence as to deserve special record. Mine has been one of these marvelously chequered histories.

In the year 1875 I WAS bidden, ~~as~~ by a Divine Voice, to write out these reminiscences. Over twenty-five years have passed since then, and many pages of unfinished manuscript lie before me in confusion, like the tangled threads of my own life, which only the hand of the All-Wise can ever unravel. As the afternoon shadows begin to steal across my pathway again I take up the uncompleted task, feeling that I am better fitted to write such a record than when I began. For now I can write from the standpoint of the Psalmist, who "remembered the days of old," that he might thereby teach others the lesson of a personal faith in a personal God; a faith which in my case, however it may have suffered temporary eclipse, has ever been my abiding source of strength.

For Christ's sake I suppress the names of some of the chief actors in this story. In no point is it fiction, but that truth which is stranger than fiction, and, on this account, so often ignored and pronounced "incredible."

The point of chief interest, because therefrom dates the fiery trial through which for many years I was called to pass, was my marriage with Lewis Giddings, a soldier of the Civil War. And here I may say, out of justice to himself and others who have lost their health, and, enfeebled in mind and body, have no power to battle with the strong, that he was not responsible for the disgrace brought upon himself and family through the deep-laid plots of wicked and designing men; a class well described by the Psalmist:

“He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor; he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face; he will not see it.”

Thus they thought in regard to me. Being a poor and friendless girl, what should hinder me from becoming their easy prey? But although I was caught in their snare, like many another before and since, they found that they had not my weak strength alone to battle with, for that would have been small indeed when opposed to the wiles of such influential men; but the strength of the Lord who, I believe, has caused me to pass through these strange experiences that I might, in my more mature years, “bring to light the hidden works of darkness” and expose the crimes practiced upon the poor who have no human helper.

My maiden name was Sarah Powell. I was the daughter of Martin Powell and Emily Farnsworth. They were married by Levi Miller, Esq., February 24, 1844, in Lewisville, St. Lawrence county, in the State of New York, at the home of her father, Moses Farnsworth.

My paternal grandfather was Miles Powell, whose

wife was a daughter of Solomon Stearns, of Highgate, Vt., where their marriage took place.

I was born May 9, 1847. The beautiful country and the deep waters of Racket river, which flowed near my home, impressed my young heart with mysterious awe. Why did the river sometimes flow so silently and smoothly, and then again with such angry haste? Whence came that wonderful force which broke up the ice in the spring and set it floating in great cakes down the current, to vanish before the heat of the lengthening days? Whence came the dew by night, and the showers by day, for the refreshment of the tiniest wayside flower that opens its eyes heavenward? I loved to watch the lightning flash and listen to the deep roar of the thunder. The drifting of the winter snows; the coming of the flowers; the changing seasons,—all these were so many great and beautiful mysteries of my child-heart.

As I grew older I began to realize that there must be a Supreme Creator, and that this wonderful world was the work of his hands. I took an interest in the Bible for the revelation it gave me of the character of this great Being, who had given his only Son to redeem a fallen and lost race. I longed to be his child; but how could I, a poor little country girl, find favor in the eyes of this mighty King of Heaven? I whose heart no one seemed to understand but my dear, faithful old Tige, who was my constant companion, and licked my face consolingly when I whispered to him my fears that Satan would get us both, and we should be thrown into the dreadful lake of fire—the terrors of which, even at this early age, greatly impressed my childish imagination. Almost from infancy my religious impressions were deep and vivid. I determined to do all in my power to find favor in the sight of this great God of the universe.

The grave of my only sister was on my grandfather's farm, where I passed my childhood days. I often sought that grassy mound, and, lifting my tearful eyes

heavenward, would beg the Lord to be a father to me and keep me from harm. These feelings increased with my years, and my heart cried continually unto the Lord to send me some proof of his love. I promised him that I would be willing to suffer and endure all things for his sake; if he would only give me assurance that I was indeed his child. I often cried myself to sleep, praying the Lord to have pity on me.

My request was granted. Thereby the world became my foe; but I would not exchange, for all its pleasures and honors, the proof which my eyes have seen and my ears have heard that I am his. And now, as his witness, I testify in Jesus' name that the age of signs and wonders has not yet passed.

I was about fifteen years old when I passed through this singular experience. I had entered into my closet as commanded, and while praying earnestly for some evidence of divine favor, a sense of something strange suddenly came over me, filling me with such awe and fear that I sprang to my feet and ran into the next room.

A golden light flashed around and on every side of me like electricity, while another and separate light—a white light—shone on the Bible which I was holding open in my hands. To my astonishment, the letters seemed changed into silver, revealing to me what I had not before understood—that the Bible is a spiritual book, and can only be interpreted through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. I saw new meanings on every page, and the Lord had indeed fulfilled his promise: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." Joel 11, 29. It seemed to me that all sorrows and fears had forever vanished.

The next day, while I was washing dishes—for I was a servant girl at this time—I felt a consciousness that the Comforter was departing from me. In great

fear and distress I started for my secret place of prayer; but ere I reached the door this illumination from the Holy Spirit—for such I profoundly believe it to have been—left me, and with the suddenness of a lightning flash I was stricken blind. In a few minutes my sight gradually returned, but the Lord had indeed put his laws in my mind and written them on my heart, never to be forgotten, and the peace which passeth all understanding was mine.

For several months I kept these things in my own heart, like Mary, pondering over them in secret and longing for more light and knowledge. Then, hearing of the Spiritualists, I hired out as a servant girl in the family of Hiram Winslow, a very noted medium, of Madrid, N. Y., hoping that I might find in this new doctrine the further spiritual enlightenment for which I craved. Perhaps it is needless to say that my hopes in this direction were grievously disappointed.

Mr. Winslow explained to me that those lights which I had seen were the spirits of departed friends, and proof that I was capable of becoming a great medium. I listened to his instructions and sought with all my heart to follow his advice, with the result that I soon became a convert—perhaps I should write it pervert—to Spiritualism, thereby losing my faith in Christ, and all my new-found joy.

His beloved wife was very sick. Mr. Winslow sent to New York City and other places for great healing mediums to visit her. They were always told of the lights I had seen, and I soon found they all thought alike in regard to Christ, considering him only a man, and the Bible valuable as mere history, but not in any sense an inspired book. They tried to make me think I was mistaken in regard to the white light shining on the Bible, and it always annoyed them to have me insist that I saw the letters changed into silver. I could agree with them on every other subject, but I clung to the inspired Word of God; and when enter-

ing the room where they had their circles, I always put my little Bible in my pocket, and prayed unto God the Father not to let me be led astray.

In vain I sought to get a communication from my only sister. I never saw the least sign of any spiritual manifestation. They claimed that they could not get a communication when I was present, and after a time I was not allowed in their circles. I loved and read the "Banner of Light," and my Bible was almost wholly neglected, and soon became a book of darkness which I could not understand.

When I first saw those lights I gave careful heed to all my ways, and resolved that I would live without sin. I made it the rule of my life, and one from which I have never wilfully departed, to do nothing I was afraid to have known, and to always stand on the side of right, without fear of man. But, finding the Spiritualists a very kind and sincere people, I was the more easily led astray by their erroneous teachings, and consequently passed through a period of deep spiritual darkness, in which I seemed forsaken of God.

In the summer of 1866 I went to work in the woolen mill at Enosburgh, Vt., boarding in the family of Mr. S., senior, to whose wife I soon became strongly attached. They had a son who, with his wife, visited the old folks nearly every day and with the younger Mrs. S. I soon contracted as great a friendship as with the elder.

Old Mr. S. and his wife were very pious people. He was a Freemason, and his greatest ambition for his son was to see him high in the order.

The marriage to which I have alluded took place under the following strange circumstances:

I was invited by young Mrs. S. to attend a Christmas party to be held in her home, she promising to send a conveyance for me early in the morning. Mrs. S. afterward asked me if I objected to a certain young man who worked with me in the mill making one of

the party, stating at the same time that he was a particular friend of her husband's; but fearing that he might be disagreeable to me he had hesitated to invite him.

While it was true that I had no special liking for the young man, I did not wish to keep him from the party. So I answered in the negative. She then left the room and held a brief conference with her husband.

Returning, she again repeated her remark that her husband still believed there was an objection on my part to his attending, and as the party was got up almost entirely on my account, my wishes should be consulted. She begged that I would myself tender him the invitation, as they both feared he would take offense if not invited. I declined to do this at first, but after much persuasion consented.

As I had feared, the young man, while he seemed delighted and thanked me for my kindness over and over again, seized upon the invitation as a pretext for my accompanying him. He would make arrangements with his friends, he said, not to send the team for me as agreed upon, but would himself call with a carriage at any hour I might mention. I was much annoyed, and even went so far as to tell Mrs. S. that I "would not be seen in the carriage with him," to which she answered, in surprise, that her husband held him in high esteem as one of the nicest young men in town, and surely no possible harm could result from my riding to her home in broad daylight in his company. At last I reluctantly consented.

Mr. S. came punctually at eight o'clock, with a double team, to take his parents to the party. I told him I was expecting Mr. Giddings to call for me. He looked at his watch, and answered carelessly that it lacked but a few minutes of eight, and we should probably overtake them.

I put on my hat and wraps and seated myself at

the window, in no very pleasant frame of mind, to wait for the coming of my escort. The clock struck nine, ten, eleven; still he did not come. I thought he was angry because of my refusal to go with him at first, and had taken this way to vex and humiliate me. Then I wondered that Mrs. S. did not send down to see what caused my delay. The fire was out and it was cold, but still I sat at the window, watching for some person to come.

At a quarter to twelve Mr. Giddings passed by the house, but on the opposite side of the street, walking with head downcast and not even looking toward it. I had not long to speculate over his strange conduct, when he returned and knocked at the kitchen door. I opened it, and very naturally my first words were of surprise at his not keeping his appointment. In answer, he begged my pardon, and expressed his sorrow for disappointing me. He explained that a friend had hired his horse the night before, agreeing to get back early in the morning, but had broken his promise; hence the unfortunate delay.

I accepted his excuse, and about one o'clock he brought the horse and carriage to the door, and we started.

Soon we came to a turn in the road. Seeing that he was taking the wrong direction, I seized the lines with an energetic protest. "Had I ever been over that road before?" he asked. When I replied in the negative, he said that it was not a much longer way than the other, and would bring us to the house in time for dinner. I felt, by a kind of intuition, that he was deceiving me, though I could not imagine for what purpose. Neither of us felt inclined to talk, and so we rode on for about two miles, when he began to laugh and wave his whip from the carriage as if beckoning to some one.

"Do you see that white house?" he asked, still laughing and waving his whip.

"Yes," I answered; "but what are you laughing at?"

"Only a joke," he replied. "I am going to take you to that house, and when you come away you will be my wife."

"Lewis Giddings!" I cried, in consternation; "what do you mean? I would not marry you for your weight in gold."

But he only laughed as he turned his horse into the yard and drove up to the house, still treating the whole thing as a joke.

"Do you suppose I could force you to marry me in broad daylight," he asked. "The minister is a friend of mine and will think it strange if I go so near and do not stop."

Just then the minister came out to the carriage and shook hands with Mr. Giddings, who introduced me as "a young lady from the factory." We were out driving, he said, and had thought of stopping, but as it was getting late perhaps we had better postpone our call till another day.

The Rev. Mr. P. said something about the harness, and my escort getting out of the carriage the two men walked to the horse's head and held a conversation in low tones. Then Mr. Giddings began to unhitch the horse from the carriage, without, however, looking at me.

The minister then invited me into the house, saying that Mr. Giddings had decided to stop awhile, and seemed surprised to see me hesitate. I at last allowed him to help me out of the carriage and show me into the house. Then he went out for a few minutes, returning in company with Mr. Giddings. The latter took a chair as near to me as he could, while the minister asked me several questions about my home and parentage, which I only took as courteous attempts at conversation, though I certainly thought it strange when I saw him take a blank book out of his pocket

and record the answers. After a few minutes of this kind of questioning he put the book back in his pocket and said, "Let us pray."

We all knelt, Mr. Giddings close by my side. I was too angry to join in the prayer, and was in fact entirely oblivious to the words. Then we rose. My companion grasped my hand and held it as in a vise. I tried to draw it away. It seemed to me that the minister spoke the words "husband and wife," but was quite sure I must have misunderstood, and only wondered what it could be he really said.

Mr. Giddings let go my hand and we both sat down. We exchanged a few words with the Rev. Mr. P., who also sat down and began to write what Mr. Giddings told me was my marriage certificate.

"You cannot make me believe that," I said, shaking my head.

He then appealed to the minister, who told me I was indeed married to Mr. Giddings, and this was in truth my marriage certificate.

I begged him with tears in my eyes not to make it out, but he assured me that I was really married and of this the certificate was proof. In spite of my protests he rolled up the document and laid it in my lap. I would not touch it, but when I was told the carriage was ready, I rose and went, the certificate falling from my lap to the floor.

Rev. Mr. P. helped me into the carriage, laughing and joking with the man who was now my husband. Some one came to the door with the certificate, which the minister handed to me, telling me I "had better take care of it." As I paid him no attention, Mr. Giddings himself reached out his hand for the certificate, but Mr. P. held it back, saying that I was the one to whom it properly belonged. He continued to urge me to take it till I snatched it impatiently from his hand and threw it under the seat.

I was indeed more angry with him than with any-

body else; for Mr. Giddings had an object; but what possible object could the Rev. Mr. P. have in thus marrying me without my consent to a man who was practically a stranger?

It must be remembered that I was not yet twenty.

In my distress I tried to pray, but could not, for I was at this time, as previously related, in a state of spiritual darkness, which may have been one reason why I was left to contract such a strange marriage.

I was finally won over to acknowledge the union, for I was heart-free at the time, and my husband made such protestations of penitence for the deceit he had practiced upon me, and begged my forgiveness so many times, saying that he felt he could not live without me, and knew I would never consent to be his wife unless he resorted to some such stratagem, that I believed his story and forgave him. Later I was to be cruelly undeceived, and find myself the victim of a base plot into which I am sure he would never have allowed himself to be drawn had not his weaker brain been made the tool of others who plotted this marriage for purposes of their own.

Though I had gone astray into the by-paths of Spiritualism, yet I had still a sincere desire to do right, whatever might be the consequences. I thought perhaps that it was God's will that I should be this strange man's wife, little as I had desired or expected such a union; and I had not forgotten my promise made to God in early childhood to suffer any trial he might send upon me in exchange for evidence that I was his child.

I knew not then for what I was praying, more than did the mother of Zebedee's children, when in her fond ambition she asked for the highest place in the coming kingdom for her two sons. Well it is for us that we so seldom know through what thorny paths our prayers are to lead us; that we so often fail to realize that the cross must come before the crown; that the price of the greatest spiritual victories is to be baptized with

our Redeemer's baptism of tears, and drink of the same bitter cup. Philippians, third chapter, verses 14-17.

CHAPTER II.

MY HUSBAND'S PECULIAR MALADY.—AN AMUSING INCIDENT.

My husband bore the character of a moral man. He was of a good family, being connected with Joshua R. Giddings, of Abolition fame, was gentlemanly in his manners and well educated. He did not use liquor in any form, and I supposed him to be free from small vices, but afterward found that he was a great smoker, though he managed to disguise the fact that it was some time before I made the discovery.

A more trivial matter, rather amusing than serious, though it was all a part of the tangled web of deception thus strangely woven around me, came out a little later when, during a visit to some of his friends in Canada, his Aunt Nancy suddenly remarked, as she looked across the dinner table, "I did not know that Lewis' mustache and beard were so dark."

His cousin William, who was at the table, cast an amazed glance at his wife, which she returned. Then both looked at me, and asked laughingly, "Do you really think you have married a man with black whiskers?"

I answered in the affirmative, only to be informed, to my astonishment, that his beard was as light as his hair.

My husband laughed the matter off, and in spite of my surprise and chagrin I could not but laugh, too. It was not long after this conversation before his mustache and beard began to fade from a handsome jet black and return to their normal sandy hue.

The reader may wonder that I could be so easily

deceived, but the ignorance of women has made them more or less subject to deception ever since the old Serpent beguiled Eve in Eden, and in things of far more importance than a mere matter of personal appearance. How many of my sisters—intelligent, educated women, and even college graduates—are unaware of laws so framed as to encourage men to crime, while the girls, after a certain age, are left unprotected, to be held if they fall as so much merchandise in the most revolting form of white slavery the world knows? Let us be just, and lay a large part of the blame for this state of things where God's Word lays it—Isaiah xxxii., 9: "Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters." Surely this scathing indictment may be made against the women of this land and age with equal justice; especially if raised by prosperous circumstances above the trials and temptations of their poorer sisters, they shut their eyes to the real facts which lie all about them, and cannot be persuaded that their own criminal indifference is responsible in a great degree for the dark tales of lust and cruelty sometimes brought to light by the press, but which more often wait in oblivion the great day of final reckoning.

In a week after my marriage I made a startling discovery. One morning I awoke early, and some time before my husband. When he finally aroused, I saw that his face was twitching violently. I said nothing, but watched his movements closely from under my half-closed lids. Suddenly he sprang up and began to dress. Then I saw with horror that his hands and arms—his whole body in fact—were drawn out of shape and his face so strangely distorted that he scarcely looked like a human being.

When dressed he rushed from the room, and finding that he did not appear at our usual early breakfast hour, I put up a lunch and carried it to the factory, where we were both employed, as we had been previous

to our marriage. About nine o'clock he came up to the loom where I was at work, seemed much pleased at my thoughtfulness in bringing the lunch, and was quite himself. He apologized for the morning's episode by saying that he suddenly thought of some work which ought to have been finished the night before, and should anything of the kind happen again he begged that I would pay it no attention or consider it strange, for there would always be, as in the present case, some good reason.

I passed over the matter in silence, but concluded to tell his mother, who seemed the most fitting person from whom to seek an explanation. She told me that ever since her son returned from the army, sick with a terrible camp fever, during which he was violently delirious and his life despaired of, he had been subject to these strange attacks; that I had better not mind his actions at these times, or let him see that I noticed anything peculiar. These "army fits," as she called them, were caused by the hardships and exposure he had undergone. It was a long time before the actual truth dawned on me—that I had married a man subject to attacks of insanity and during these periods utterly irresponsible as to his words or actions.

My husband being a steady, hard working young man, had saved up a few hundred dollars. After his return from the army he invested his money in a saw mill, located near the shore of Lake Memphremagog, in Canada, and it was there we resided during the first summer after our marriage.

One morning, a few days after our removal, my husband's partner rushed into the house in a state of great excitement, exclaiming that "Lewis was killing his horse." I ran out to the barn and there I found the horse, which was a valuable one, cowering in a corner, shivering and trembling under the blows Lewis was raining upon it, as he kicked and pounded the poor creature with insane fury. At first I was horror-struck

at his cruelty. Then, when I looked on his drawn and distorted face, I saw that he was in one of his "fits." My sudden appearance made him cease his abuse of the animal at once. He seemed ashamed and began to apologize, telling me not to be afraid, that he should never hurt me, etc. I inquired what the horse had been doing.

"She has torn the hay out of the manger, and was tramping upon it," he replied.

Several times afterward the same thing occurred, so that I made it a point to always go out to the barn when I knew he was there attending to the horse, for in my presence he never ventured on any abuse of the animal.

One day he was getting out logs, and, tired of sitting still in the house, I took a walk to the place where he was at work. There, to my horror, I found him again beating Jeanette. She was lying in a hollow, so exhausted by his cruel treatment that she was unable to rise.

The sight went to my heart. I rushed forward with a scream, and threw myself upon the trembling, panting animal with my arms about her for a shield. Again my unexpected appearance seemed to act as a check on his madness and cause him to come to himself.

It was characteristic of these attacks that while they lasted his insane fury was sure to be wreaked on the thing nearest to him. And what made them seem more peculiar and terrible was the fact that in his normal state of mind he would not voluntarily injure a living thing, nor could he be induced to so much as kill a chicken.

Meanwhile, in spite of these eccentricities—to call them by the mildest possible term—he was seemingly very fond of me. He often alluded to himself as being "odd" at times, but assured me, with many affectionate protestations, that his hand would never be raised against "his darling," as he always called me; yet all

the while he seemed haunted with a fear, amounting at times to absolute terror, lest he might be left during one of these strange turns to so far lose control of himself as to do me an injury. And I have often seen his eyes fill with tears at the thought.

His partner frequently expressed astonishment that a man whose nervous system was such a complete wreck should have been able to marry a young and healthy girl, in every way the opposite of himself. Others frequently made similar expressions of surprise, and it seemed no less strange to me than to anybody else. For several years after my marriage the period of spiritual darkness to which I have alluded continued. I felt forsaken of the Lord, which accounts for the fact that I could not pray to him in my distress. At the same time my heart was still fully set to do God's will, so far as it should be revealed to me. I read in my Bible that the unbelieving husband should be sanctified by the believing wife; and, convinced as I was, that this strange environment of circumstance was ordered by God, I continued to do, as I thought, my wifely duty by clinging to this poor wreck of a man, whose weakness of mind made him, as I shall soon have occasion to relate, the victim of the unscrupulous and the designing.

My husband had great confidence in his partner, who was a relative, and trusted him fully. But I soon noticed that he used this confidence to take undue advantage of my husband in financial matters, and I frequently tried to call his attention to the fact, but never with success.

He had paid with his own money for all the machinery in the mill, but he was to have four acres of land, which brought him slightly on the debit side in his relation to his partner. The latter advised him to build a house on this land, but I opposed the project, seeing that it would only bring him more deeply in

debt to a man of whose honesty I had begun to have grave suspicions.

Mr. Giddings, however, decided to build. I drew the plan of the house, but his partner's wife objecting, it was built entirely in accordance with her desires, and not at all with mine.

When this house was nearly ready for occupancy, his partner began to press him to make payment for the land, claiming that it was a separate matter from the mill property. At the time the written contract was signed, which was before our marriage, Mr. Giddings noticed that the land was not mentioned, and spoke of it to his partner, who answered that the land was meant to be included, and its omission was due to an oversight. A man who was a relative, and supposed to be a great friend to my husband, had been witness to the paper, and also this verbal agreement; but now, when it was questioned, he refused to give his testimony. At mention of the transaction he began to grow red in the face, and stammer out excuses. He and my husband's partner "had always been friends," he did not wish to get into any trouble with him; he "was willing to testify to anything that was in the paper, but really he did not remember any verbal contract," etc.

At this stage his wife stepped in from the kitchen, mixing-spoon in hand.

"What do you mean, George?" Martha indignantly demanded. "You know well enough that you was witness to that agreement. Didn't I tell you that William had an ax to grind when he gave you that present a while ago? You didn't know that I listened when the paper was being signed, for I was sure that some mean advantage was going to be taken of Lewis. Now I am ready to go into court, or anywhere else, and swear that the land was included."

Her husband cowered before his wife's honest indignation, and finally admitted that he remembered

the transaction. So this little scheme for defrauding us did not work, because there was one brave woman prepared to testify to the truth; and my husband's partner decided to let the land go according to the original agreement, and have it so written in the deed.

The ways in which the poor can be swindled are legion, and the story just told will illustrate how, in their ignorance of legal matters, they may be led to accept a verbal agreement, only to find that it is not binding in law, because not put down in black and white, and thus they are often cheated out of their small holdings.

In our straits, I thought to earn a little money. So much a thousand was paid in the mill for packing shingles, and thinking to save my husband the expense of hiring a helper, I packed his share myself, and also enough of his partner's to come to fourteen dollars, which sum he placed to my husband's account, and paid me nothing.

I finally grew desperate. The life which I led was so miserable in many ways not here set down—for to enter into details would only be to pain myself as well as the reader with the dark retrospect—I resolved to put an end to my life and all my earthly trials at the same time. Accordingly I began to think over various plans by which it might be done and my death appear an accident.

One morning a violent gale was blowing. The lake was full of "white caps," and, looking out over its agitated surface, the thought occurred to me that here was the longed-for opportunity. I would drown myself, and have the world to suppose it all accidental, and comment as it might on my venturing out on the lake in such a wind.

I told Aunt Nancy that I was going to the postoffice, and in great alarm she followed me to the boathouse, begging me with outstretched arms to come back. I paid no heed to her expostulations, but got into the

boat, raised the sail, and was soon pushed by the violence of the wind out into the lake, and beyond sight of the house. Then, with mind still bent on my desperate purpose, I unhitched the sail and let it flap in the wind, expecting, and hoping every moment that the boat would capsize. To my astonishment it only drifted round and round in a circle. I went to the front of the boat, sprang upon the edge, and grasping the sail, tried in vain to tip it over; but my frail bark, instead of capsizing, only drifted and plunged in the billows.

A sudden sense of awe fell upon me. Why was the life I tried so desperately to cast away thus preserved, as by a miracle? Overwhelmed by the strangeness of the marvel, I raised my eyes heavenward. I could not pray; my heart seemed turned into stone, for I still thought the Lord had forsaken me. But standing up in the drifting, tossing boat, with nothing about me but that lonely waste of surging waters, the thought came to my mind that perhaps God had a work for me to do, and would not have me die till it was finished. Was this the explanation of the seeming miracle? It was as if the same Voice spoke to my heart that long ago on the storm-swept sea said, "Peace, be still!" Soothed and comforted, I remembered God's goodness shown to me so many times in the past, and I said within myself, that perhaps the Lord would yet accept my service. Again I remembered my vows, and reaching my hands heavenward, I promised, if by the smallest act or word my life could be made to yield the least blessing to humanity or glory to God, I was willing to live; to take up my cross and accept cheerfully whatever he might send me, even as I had promised him in my early days.

I then arranged my sail, and, the wind being shifted, returned to the boathouse. I had been gone from early in the morning till dinner time. My husband and friends all thought me surely drowned; and, when I

appeared suddenly among them, received me as one from the dead; which is scarcely a figure of speech, as it was a gale of such unusual severity as might well daunt the most experienced sailor.

After the trouble about the land, my husband could see that he had been wronged by his partner in many ways, and we decided that it was best to return to Enosburg, Vt.

Ephesians 4: 1-3, 11-14, 28-32.

CHAPTER III.

MY EXPERIENCE AS A SERVANT.—DARK HOURS.—THE
HEAVENLY BAND.—A WARNING VOICE.

We came back in the fall of 1867, and were entirely penniless, for all my husband's money had been invested in the mill and buildings. They sawed on shares, and his partner objected to a division of the lumber. I went to work in Mr. M. A. Kent's woolen mill, where I received six and a half dollars a week. My husband was out of employment all that winter, and many things combined to make our situation one of extreme poverty. He had purchased a piece of land, and, being unable to make payment, the sheriff attached our beautiful Jeanette, though she was afterwards redeemed.

My husband was that winter taken into the Masonic lodge. In my childish inexperience—for I was then only twenty—this honor greatly delighted me.

For the first four years after my marriage I do not remember praying but twice, or at most, three times. No ray of spiritual light seemed to pierce the cloud of thick darkness which hung about me. Still, when I was most saddened and most desperate, thoughts of the goodness of God as experienced by me at various times would flash over my mind, and keep me from sinking in utter despair. One of these occasions was just before the birth of my first child. *I remember* pleading with God that he would be a Father to my unborn babe, and keep it from such trials and sorrows as its poor mother had endured. I never more truly

prayed than did I at those times, from the inmost recesses of my agonized spirit.

My first child was a son, born March 27, 1868.

Of course I was delighted with my "young Mason," as I heard Dr. A. call him, and in spite of his feeble hold on life—for he weighed but three pounds at birth, and was a most fragile mite of humanity—laid great plans for his future, when he would himself be old enough to wear the Masonic apron and be hailed as one of that fraternity, which I then honestly esteemed the most noble and glorious on earth. For they were all very kind to me, and I thought of them as a band of brothers pledged to aid each others' families in adversity. Of course my own would share in their benefactions, and I rejoiced anew at my good fortune in being a Mason's wife, and having so many brave and noble men to protect me.

I was ill at the home of my husband's parents, who were very poor. While I was sick, Mr. S. and his wife came to see me. Mrs. S. was moved to tears when she saw my lack of ordinary comforts, and the next day sent down a supply of food, accompanied by many sick-room dainties which we in our poverty could not have purchased.

Arrangements had been made for me to go to work in the family of Mr. S. as soon as my health would allow, and when Howard—as we named the baby—was three weeks old I sent word for them to come after me. Mr. S. told my husband he would come when the infant was four weeks old; but his wife and her mother insisted that I should come at once, and pass the period of convalescence with them rather than at my father-in-law's.

As soon as I arrived at their home, everything possible was done for my comfort by Mrs. S. and her mother. The latter took my poor, feeble boy under her especial care and watched over its cradle constantly. Owing to the hardships of the previous win-

ter, I was obliged to bring him up by hand, which I was too ignorant to do properly, and to her motherly knowledge and tender care I owe it that my baby lived to grow from his feeble estate into manhood. Surely, if

"Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn,"

the sympathy and practical help given me by these noble women, in my hour of extremity, is proof that our sex are by no means so cruel to each other as the caricaturists like to make it appear. I seriously question, if more women in circumstances of distress, have not been helped by women than have men by men, under similar conditions.

Mr. S. had fulfilled his father's ambition, and became a high Mason. He was a man of deserved reputation for kind and genial manners. I never heard him speak a cross word to his wife or any member of his family. He was also exceedingly kind to me, and, knowing him to be high in the Masonic order, I naturally looked upon him as a brother to my husband and myself. After a few weeks he became more and more familiar. At first I did not mind his attentions, considering them as merely given in jest; but as they continued, his caressing actions, though always given under a mask of pleasantry, began to annoy me seriously. I at last forbade his touching me, but without effect; so I concluded to try other tactics.

The dishes were always washed in the woodshed, and this being the time when he was generally about, I selected a stout stick from the woodpile and concealed it beside the dishpan. *When his hand was lifted to pat my head*—a favorite action of his—I caught up the stick menacingly, and, turning sharply around, told him indignantly that he must keep his hands off me.

He turned pale. The stick was amply stout enough for the purpose, and I knew I could at that moment have used it with serious effect, so filled was I with the

just wrath of my insulted womanhood. He was so completely taken aback that he did not reply for a moment; then he remarked incredulously:

"You cannot love your husband?"

"But I do, Mr. S."

"That is impossible," he answered. "I know the circumstances of your marriage and the trick by which Lewis Giddings obtained you for a wife. That alone absolves you from any bond to be true to your husband."

"I am bound to be true to the father of my child," I exclaimed. And then added, as a sudden thought struck me:

"You and my husband belong to the same lodge. Are you not bound by your obligation to be true to him as a brother Mason?"

He answered that he "DID NOT CARE FOR HIS MASONIC OBLIGATION," and turned away.

This was to me a surprising avowal; but how many women can testify bitterly to its truth!—lodgemen's wives and daughters who have trusted their honor and reputation to a secret bond, which they have been told is one of the most sacred and binding on earth, to find that it is only a false pledge to deceive and ensnare the innocent.

For several reasons I kept these insults to myself, and did not even tell my husband, for some time, as I feared that in his anger he would bring the matter at once before the lodge. For I supposed that this would cause a terrible commotion; perhaps put Mr. S. in peril of his life. And all this I wished to avoid. Besides these considerations, my husband was a great sufferer all that summer, mentally and physically. He was afflicted with boils and abscesses, some of such a size that they had to be lanced, and at the same time his "army fits" returned with greater violence than ever. They usually attacked him in the morning when he first awoke, and, though lasting but a few moments,

used to fill me with terror lest he might, in one of his paroxysms, kill or fatally injure our little child, as he would often, at such times, seize hold of our little babe and shake him, quite unconscious of what he was doing.

Once he left the marks of his violence imprinted so deeply on the tender little body that Mrs. E., the kind old lady who took care of him, was horrified at sight of his bruises, and called me into her room, in a state of great indignation, to make inquiries—or rather to charge me with thus cruelly abusing my baby.

I stood speechless with horror that she should think me capable of such cruelty, and at the same time I was ashamed to explain the matter by telling of my husband's strange attacks. My own arms were continually black and blue from this cause. He would grab hold of me on first awakening and try to bite, growling like a dog, or making some other strange bestial noise. At one time my arms were in such a condition from the marks of his teeth that I kept my sleeves down when washing, and Mrs. S. took such offense at my refusal to roll them up that she did the washing herself.

However, Mrs. S. stood my friend. She refused to believe me guilty, and, following me into the pantry, finally coaxed me to tell her how these marks came on my poor baby. When I at last confessed the truth, both she and her mother declared that my husband should never again step foot within the house. But he came in unnoticed, as he was in the habit of taking his supper and breakfast there, and then followed a scene it would be in vain for me to attempt to describe. But while the female part of the household were giving my husband to understand, in very decided language, that I was never again to live with him, Mr. S. came in and showed true Masonic love for his distressed brother by interceding in his behalf, saying that he

did not understand children, was not aware what he was doing, and thus generally smoothing over his offense, while he worked on the feelings of Mrs. S. and her mother by representing what a terrible thing it would be to break up a family, etc.

One night I went to my room. My feeble babe was on my arm. *In my agony of soul I pressed my little son to my heart*, feeling that my sorrows were greater than I could bear. Again, I wondered whether the Lord had forsaken me, and once more the old horror of great darkness fell upon my pathway, only lighted dimly, as by a torch shining through a cavern, by the thought that perhaps the Lord had some object in thus trying me, and in his own good time would appear for my deliverance.

As I stood thus in the middle of the room, holding my infant child in my arms, there suddenly came to my ears strains of sweet music. I went to the window and called to Mrs. S. to come up and hear how beautifully the band played. For I supposed this to be the source of the music, and that coming across the water gave it its peculiar sweetness. She came up stairs, and we both leaned out of the window, but Mrs. S. could hear nothing of the music; and said it must be my imagination, as the band did not play in the village that night; a fact of which she was certain, her husband being a member.

Her words startled me. I feared I was losing my reason. Night after night I heard the same music; and now I had a new fear added to my misery. Was I going insane with my trouble? I thought of my baby and cried out in great distress with the terror of such a dreadful prospect.

I awoke one night to hear those dulcet strains, flooding, as it seemed, the whole room.

"There is no imagination about this," I said to myself. "It is surely real music that I hear, and it must come from Mr. Leach's." I went to the window,

but instead of looking towards Mr. Leach's house I looked up into the air. Suddenly I realized that it was from thence these celestial harmonies were raining down upon me. A sweet and blessed calm fell upon my perturbed spirit. I was *not* going crazy. It was actual music that I heard, and these were angelic strains sent from on high for my comforting, and to show me that I was not quite forsaken of the Lord.

In spite of my rebuffs, Mr. S. grew more bold in his advances, and would contrive expedients for sending his wife away in the early morning, she,—poor woman!—never seeming to suspect that he was actuated by any other motive than the tenderest regard for her health and well-being. I also noticed that he took particular pains on those days to send his hired man to work at the farther end of the farm, while he remained in the house, playing on the organ and singing hymns—for he was church chorister, and otherwise trying to act the agreeable to me.

On one of these occasions *he took his pocket-book, and began tossing it up and catching it again*; finally telling me that it contained a considerable sum of money, of which he would make me a present. "You had better keep your money and pay your debts. When I accept a present," I said, "it will not be from a man obliged to borrow money to pay interest on what he is owing." But even this sharp reply did not silence him. He again took up the old line of argument, saying that I owed no duty to my husband, not having married him from choice, and added that, sooner or later, I should have to accept presents from my husband's brother Masons. My husband could not take care of me; so I should be obliged to accept their support.

I felt that a crisis was at hand. I must go away, but whither? Long ere this I would have taken my feeble babe and fled, even if no better prospect opened before me than to wander through the streets homeless, but

my heart always failed me as I looked at the little pale face of my infant boy and thought how I would have no food to give him.

One night I asked God to look upon me in my distress and provide me with another place, so that my child should not suffer. My prayer was soon answered in a way quite unexpected.

The next day I went down to my husband's Uncle Seth Kendall's and found Aunt Polly alone.

"Are you going to live with Mr. S.'s folks all winter?" she inquired.

I shook my head, and answered, half crying, and scarcely able to speak. "I do not know what I shall do. My only hope is that the Lord will send some one to take me away."

Aunt Polly bent forward in her chair and looked keenly into my face. We gazed for a moment into each other's eyes, and then I saw her countenance suddenly change, as if she took in the situation.

The following day her son, Mr. Philo Kendall, of East Berkshire, called at the house to see if he could hire me, as his wife was greatly in need of household help. I asked him when he wanted me, and on his replying, "Now, if you are ready," I ran up stairs, packed up my things, and was ready to start in an incredibly short space of time.

My wages while in the family of Mr. S. went entirely to my husband's board account, which was put at \$1.50 a week, so that after supporting myself and child I was left with not a cent in money. Mr. Kendall paid me a dollar and a half, his wife making me presents from time to time, which brought my wages up to two dollars a week. It was also arranged that Mr. Giddings should be there on Sundays, without charge, I doing his washings and ironings.

I was thankful indeed for the shelter thus provided myself and child, especially as Mrs. Kendall's mother, Mrs. Marsh, discovered that in spite of the kind care

taken of the baby at my former place, he had been kept so much of the time in the cradle or tied in a chair that he was in danger of becoming a cripple; but by her unceasing efforts this sad fate, of which she assured me she had known several instances resulting from a similar cause, was averted. This is recorded here for the benefit of other young and inexperienced mothers.

I worked at Mr. Kendall's for about four months, when I was obliged to leave on account of ill-health, and went back to the home of my father-in-law. But my husband's mental condition still continued very bad, and his army fits grew alarmingly frequent, only that now, instead of abusing myself and baby while in these paroxysms, he took his poor old mother for his victim. For this and other reasons we concluded to go to house-keeping.

There was an old deserted place at the Falls, where no one had lived for years, called the old Mill House. Two of my husband's brother Masons told him that if he would fix it up we might live there free of rent as long as we chose, as it was of no use to them in its present condition. We accordingly lived there, Mr. Giddings making the repairs necessary before we could occupy it with comfort.

That winter my health was very poor, and I earned nothing in consequence. My husband was employed in the saw-mill, and, working beyond his strength, so aggravated his nervous affection that he did many strange things. For instance, one Sunday, a few weeks after he began to work in the mill, he sprang out of bed with a whoop like an Indian's, and insisted on my occupying a chair in the middle of the room while he executed *a regular war-dance about me, as if around some victim at the stake*, stopping at last only from exhaustion. Every Sunday—for, singular as it may seem, these fits always attacked him on that day—he would go through the same performance. I used, at these times, to lock the doors and pull down the curtains,

wishing to conceal all knowledge of his affliction, as far as possible, from the world. I really longed to die, and had not, consequently, that terror of him which might have been felt by a happier woman. I could even feel amused at his freaks; for like other insane people his words and actions were often of a comical order. I attribute to this lack of fear the fact that I escaped with my life during that terrible winter, for it was often in extreme peril.

One day he caught up a butcher-knife, and made a motion with it as if to take off my scalp. I treated the matter as a jest, and laughingly threw my head back, intimating by the gesture that he had better begin on my throat. This had the effect of making him abandon his original design and *draw the blunt edge of the knife several times across my bare throat*. It may seem almost incredible to the reader, but I sat smiling and perfectly calm. I felt like a prisoner in a dungeon, to whom death is a welcome relief, and while expecting every moment that he would reverse the knife and I should feel its sharp edge, I hoped that the stroke would fall, thus freeing me from life, but without the sin of suicide resting on my soul.

His fits of insanity took different forms. This winter he seemed to imagine himself an Indian on the war-path, and certainly he acted the part admirably. I grew so used to these attacks as to expect them regularly every Sunday, but was never harmed. When through working at the mill he ceased to have these violent turns.

The following spring (1869) my second child was born, a little girl. When she was four weeks old I resumed work in the woolen mill; here she was carried in her cradle, there being no one in whose charge I could leave her.

I will pass on to another and still stranger experience, which occurred in September of that same year. While sleeping, I seemed to hear, as in a dream, these

words gently whispered in my ear, "God calleth thee not yet. Move not even a finger, or the tender cord of life will be severed." I still lay as if asleep, listening to gentle words of comfort mysteriously whispered in my ear, when the voice spoke aloud and in an altered tone—this time of command. "Now open your eyes," it said; "be calm and repeat these words after me."

I opened my eyes. They rested on a fearful sight, for my husband was sitting, or rather squatting, on a large trunk, with his head between his knees, while his face was horribly distorted, his mouth being drawn so as to show all his teeth. He held in his hand an un-sheathed razor and looked like a wild animal ready to spring on its victim, as he would probably have done had not the surprise of meeting my gaze fixed calmly upon him arrested him in the act. He exclaimed, with a muttered oath, that he never intended I should open my eyes again till I "opened them in hell."

"Oh, I thank God! My spirit will be free!" I exclaimed, and began to praise the Lord in language not my own, for it flowed in rhythm from my lips like an impromptu psalm.

At this time his mood changed. "I will keep and torture you," he said, with a blood-curdling look and accent; and then he sprang out of the room.

The razor was a new one, which he had just bought and appeared to highly prize. The next morning I could not find it in its usual place. In my fear that when he found it gone he would accuse me of hiding it I told Mrs. Mitchell, a friend, of its disappearance. Together we searched the house, and even went upstairs and turned over the boards of the loose floor, but could not find it. For two or three Sundays he looked for the razor in its accustomed place, but to my surprise said nothing. One Sunday he asked me if I had seen it. When I replied in the negative he turned away without making any answer.

He never purchased another razor, nor did he ever

again allude to the subject ; but a short time afterward he took my large butcher-knife, broke it over the stove and threw it out of doors. I purchased another, which he broke in a similar way, and afterward, in great wrath, forbade my ever bringing another into the house. At that time I did not understand his proceedings, but now I believe that he was conscious of being subject to homicidal tendencies, and feared if such weapons were allowed to remain around, he might be tempted to use them with murderous effect during one of his attacks of mental derangement.

Hebrews 12 :1, 6, 7, 13, 17, 28.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SPRING LOT.—A SUCCESSFUL PLOT.—I UNITE WITH THE CHURCH.

When not working in the factory, I took in washing, and this, with the milk I sold, supported the family. My husband worked in the saw-mill some of the time, but did not take up his wages, which I supposed would go to pay for a piece of land that he had bought at the Falls. Instead of this, his employers charged every cent of it to our rent, though the arrangement had been, when we took the old Mill House, that if we could live in it we should have it rent free. His two Masonic employers had a receipt made out which he signed.

I was bitterly disappointed, and also much amazed that Masons would take such advantage of a mentally weak brother. I thought it would certainly be taken up by the lodge, for of course Masons always stood by a wronged and injured brother. But to my great surprise, nothing was done about the violated agreement.

My husband had sold Jeanette some time before, and thus made a payment on the land above-mentioned. We had a valuable colt, the price of which, together with his wages, we calculated would nearly finish paying for it. But one day I saw the son of another Masonic brother lead the colt past our house. *I ran out and asked what he was doing with the colt.* He informed me that my husband had purchased the Spring Lot, as it was called—a piece of land comprising about eleven acres, and with a mineral spring upon it, from which it derived its name—and that his father had taken the colt in payment.

I went to his house at once, and explained how my husband had been cheated out of his wages, and also that the saw-mill in Canada was not yet paid for, and we were behind in our payment on the three-acre lot in the village. I pleaded that we should now have three pieces of encumbered property, with a fair chance of losing them all. He appeared to pity my distress, said he was exceedingly sorry I felt so bad about it, but refused to annul the bargain; advising, however, that we try to keep the Spring Lot, as it was a valuable piece of property.

Mr. Giddings sold his saw-mill in Canada, also the house and land and about three hundred dollars' worth of lumber, taking notes in return. These notes were lost or stolen in some mysterious way, and before he reached home, as my husband could give no account of them, we were no richer for what his Canada property brought him.

The Spring Lot seemed indeed a valuable piece of real estate. My husband took cattle to pasture, and thus paid the interest and taxes till a neighbor, who owned the farm adjoining, hired the pasture and paid him enough to clear both, and some over. When the time had expired, he notified Mr. Giddings that he did not want the land any longer. The next year we discovered that the line fence had been removed. The farmer professed to know nothing about it and refused to allow us to pasture cattle there till we put up a new fence. This we were too poor to do. So, as we could not take in pasturing, his own cattle pastured on our land, of which we lost the use and were prevented by our poverty from seeking any redress.

This state of affairs continued for some time, during which the support of the family devolved entirely on me. I was employed in the factory summers, and took in washing in the winter. My husband's health was so poor he could work but little, and though troubled by the condition of the Spring Lot, I could not spare

the twenty-five or thirty dollars it would require to fence it, with the chance that after being put to that cost the fence might be again removed as mysteriously as before.

One day the farmer came and asked for the deeds of the Spring Lot. He explained that he was sent by the town clerk, who was examining the records, this being part of sixty acres of land, the taxes on which went to the use of a certain college. On his agreement to return the papers as soon as possible, my husband being away, I gave them up, though rather reluctantly, supposing it would not do to refuse a request backed up by official authority.

Weeks passed, and the papers were not returned. In answer to my inquiries, the farmer told me they were in the town clerk's office. I tried to have my husband get them back, but could not make him see the importance of attending to the matter. So the documents were never returned, but some time afterward I was greatly surprised to learn that the farmer claimed ownership of the Spring Lot, and held the deed of this most valued piece of real estate, which we had struggled so hard to keep, and on which we had already paid over three hundred dollars, including the cost of the colt. I knew my husband's mental condition entirely unfitted him for business, but it was not until he lay on his deathbed, years afterward, that this, with other mysterious transactions, was fully explained.

Much as I grieved over the loss of the land and Canada property, this was by no means my greatest trial. I could bear trouble if accompanied by a conscious sense of God's comforting presence. But this I did not have. I was still in darkness, burdened by the knowledge that I was not in full communion with God. I had turned aside in By-path Meadow and, like Christian in the dungeon of Giant Despair, bemoaned bitterly my sad case. But, like him, I too, found in time the key called Promise. I no longer

took comfort in reading the "Banner of Light," and turned to my neglected Bible. I longed to be once more able to pray, but the faculty for praying in my own words I seemed to have almost if not quite lost. I therefore made up a few brief prayers out of different Bible passages, and wrote them down, thus compiling for myself a kind of liturgy which I imagined to be more acceptable to the Lord than any words of my own. One was: "Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me for Christ's sake." Another: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, for Christ's sake."

In these words of the faithful of old time, my heart continually cried out unto God, being always careful to pray in the name of Christ. The Bible so commanded, and I had never lost my faith in the inspiration of God's Word since the day, years before, when that wonderful light had shown on its pages. Yet at the same time, strange as it may seem, I had no faith in Christ as a Redeemer. I believed in God the Father, but not in God the Son, and did not understand why I was left in spiritual darkness.

After several months of this earnest seeking after God, Mr. Hall, a young Baptist minister, came into the place and held some meetings, which I attended. Under his faithful preaching I found again the hope I had lost. Once more Christ was, as it were, new-born in my soul, and like Mary I "rejoiced in God my Saviour." Again, I felt strong within myself. I thought I had great spiritual experience. I was several years older and wiser than when I first found my Saviour. With the knowledge I had gained I was sure Satan could never again deceive me, or the wisdom of man make me turn aside unto lies. I would prove my gratitude to the Lord for leading me back into the truth by never again denying my blessed Saviour, and vowed again I would live without sin.

About that time an Episcopal minister began to come to my house twice a day for milk. Out of the fullness of my heart I told him of my experience; of my first joy in believing, and how I had turned aside to follow man's instruction, neglecting my Bible and reading the "Banner of Light," instead of looking to the Holy Spirit for knowledge, wisdom and understanding. He referred me to the third chapter of St. John, fifth verse, and also to Matthew 16:18. He told me that I had not entered in by the door into the sheepfold, but was trying to climb up to heaven some other way; that Christ did not come to save sinners alone, but to establish a church, and that water baptism was the door through which every one must enter in order to be accepted. If I did not thus enter through the door into this the only true church, being the one Christ himself had founded, I was as liable to again go astray as when I became a Spiritualist.

My heart inclined toward the Baptist church, as it was while attending Baptist meetings that I had found my Saviour, but the Rev. Mr. H. said the Baptists did not believe in written prayers, and the fact that I had searched the Bible to learn how to pray, and had repeated written prayers for months, convinced him that it was the will of God for me to unite with the Episcopal church. He brought me books to read on these points, and finally led me to accept his views so far that on December 15, 1872, I and my two children were baptized; and on May 11 of the following year I was confirmed by Bishop Bissell.

I expected to find great spiritual help within the church, but was grievously disappointed. The members were a very kindly but worldly and careless sort of people. Before uniting with the church I noticed that the rector did not seem to believe in conversion and baptism by the Holy Spirit, and I began to have scruples about joining. But when I talked with him about it, he said that he believed the lights which I

had seen at my conversion were purely imaginary, he having never personally experienced anything of the kind; at the same time there was no sin in my belief, and my views in regard to these and other points relating to my religious life would be no bar to my joining the church.

My astonishment was great when, the next Sunday after my confirmation, he began to preach a series of sermons especially directed against the doctrine of conversion or spiritual baptism, the last one being so much worse than the others that I with difficulty controlled my desire to testify against what I believed to be such false and anti-Biblical doctrines, by rising up and leaving the church.

The next day I called on my rector, and telling him how his sermons had grieved and surprised me, assured him that if he ever again preached against what I believed to be one of the most sacred truths of Scripture, I should leave the church and forever.

He received my remonstrance very kindly, and said he was sorry I took the matter as I did. He never again preached against the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth, yet many things showed very clearly to me that he was as far as ever from believing these truths.

The first summer after uniting with the church I attended a Sabbath-school picnic. After we reached the grounds the rector was called upon for a speech, and stepping on a log, made a few remarks, received with much hilarious laughter, to the effect that he had been asked to make a speech, but all he had to say was to enjoy themselves as much as they could. The picnickers scattered to put this advice in practice; but in the Sunday-school celebrations which I had attended when a child there were always religious exercises; and as I looked on the many careless and giddy ones about me it seemed terrible to make this an

occasion for mere pleasure, without a single attempt to have any religious impressions upon their minds.

Saddened by these thoughts, I strayed off some distance into the woods thinking I was all alone in these feelings, when I met Mrs. Crampton, an old lady, who had also strayed away from the others. I found, to my delight, that she was in full sympathy with me. We spent nearly the whole day together, and to me at least it was one of great pleasure and profit.

Just before the picnic broke up I called our rector's attention to the fact that there had been no religious exercises, and my hope that the day might not be permitted to end without something of the kind; but was only told in answer, that the Bible said there was a time for everything, and this was a day not for worship but pleasure.

I felt again that I had made a mistake in uniting with the Episcopal church.

Yet, while there was no spiritual union, I received much kindness from the members. I belonged to the Ladies' Auxiliary, and my children went to Sunday-school, but the social advantages gained did not make up for the sad lack of spirituality.

I will give one more instance that happened one day when calling on a friend. While there our rector also called, and her husband, who was an infidel and a Mason, began to make fun of religion and ridicule the Scriptures.

"You know the Bible is not true," he remarked, turning to the rector. "You do not believe the doctrine you preach."

"If I don't believe it, what makes me preach it?" was the careless reply.

"It is your profession, and the way you get your bread and butter," laughed the other, "the same as doctors or lawyers get their living, by their profession."

I noticed that these imputations were not resented.

The rector took them in good part, and soon both went away, talking and laughing in the same bantering fashion.

I felt very indignant, and after my friend's husband returned, I remarked that "had such an observation been made to me he would soon find out that I could give a reason for the hope within my heart and the truth of the Scriptures, though without a college education, like his Masonic brother."

"I should know better than to speak to you in that way," he answered; "but I knew the rector would take no offense. He is like other ministers. None of them believe what they preach, and you in time will lose your faith in these things." Through the grace of God this taunt of the enemy of righteousness was never fulfilled. Dark days were indeed coming, but through this abundant grace I was kept from falling where many another might have succumbed. I was called to this bitter experience, and passed through it unscathed, not from any strength of mine, but "kept by the power of God"; kept, as I firmly believe, in order that this record might be written, and thereby some knowledge of the hideous crimes practiced upon the poor be brought before the people of this land which boasts so loudly of "liberty and equal rights."

Acts 20:19-24, 26, 27, 32.

CHAPTER V.

DAYS OF POVERTY.—MY CHILD OF PRAYER.

Notwithstanding numerous set-backs, we succeeded, in 1871, in paying for the village lot. The next year my husband was persuaded to build a house on this land, but as we could at the time have bought a place on Main street for four hundred dollars, which would be nearer the factory, and where I could take boarders, I did not favor the building.

Mr. K., of whom my husband bought the land, had induced him to pay much more than its true value, at the time of purchase, by agreeing to lay out a street on the east side, which would give him a chance to sell building lots at a high price. But this agreement was not mentioned in the deed, and, after the bargain was closed, Mr. K. claimed that he did not agree to put the street through until the house was built. The winter our horse was attached he renewed his promise to lay out the street, making ours a corner lot and thus greatly increasing its value, but the house must first be built. This was an indispensable preliminary condition, and my husband decided to build, although my desire was to buy, where I could get work or take boarders. I had even some hope that I could open a little store, and thus support my children and sick husband more easily than by working out by the day.

We moved into our new house in the spring of 1873. We had a fine cow and a good-sized hennerly, and on these I was forced to depend largely for our support. Imagine, then, my consternation when, one day in the following autumn, my husband came in with the milk, and told me I must make it go as far as I could, for it was the last we should ever have from our cow. He had sold her.

I looked out and saw a man driving her off almost on a run, but too far down the road for me to overtake him. I never knew the name of the purchaser, nor did my husband know. He had sold her for twenty-two dollars, which was less than half her real value.

From this time dated a period of the most extreme poverty; for, though I went out to work by the day, I could not earn near so much as when living on Main street; and in December of that year, the second mortgage had to be put upon our place in order to obtain the means by which to live.

My own life was such a dark mystery, and it seemed to me so impossible under such conditions to attain that state of perfection for which I longed, that in my disappointment I had prayed to God for a child who would serve him at all times, and vowed, like Hannah of old, that I would bring it up to serve the Lord entirely.

Naturally I looked forward to a son, but God gave me, instead, a lovely daughter, born on the second of April, 1874.

An amusing incident occurred when one of the neighbors brought a Bible to my bedside, and we found that her "birthday verse" in the last chapter of Proverbs referred to "the son of my vows."

"Lo, and behold it is a daughter!" I exclaimed, merrily, at which one of my female friends to whom I had confided my hopes, seeing that I did not take the disappointment so much at heart as she expected, asked if the sex of the child was not a trial to my faith.

"No," was my glad answer. "She is just as much the child of promise as if she had been a son."

And thus it proved through all her brief earthly life. Sarah—for she bore her mother's old-fashioned Bible name—held a place in my heart all her own. With a mother's fond pride I watched the rapid development of her childish charms into the budding graces of girl-

hood, and looked forward to the time when she would be called to do some great work for the Lord, little thinking that his plans and purposes for my darling might be very different from mine.

The next summer I went out to work by the day, but the following winter I was again in feeble health, and my husband able to do but very little for our support.

I still had the hennery, and occasionally went out for a day; but we suffered greatly for the ordinary necessities of life, especially for lack of fuel. We were fortunate, however, in having a slab fence. This supplied us with wood enough to cook one meal a day. The rest of the time we were without a fire, and my children, in order to keep warm, had to wear their winter wraps, and sit covered up in quilts. In spite of the hardships of their condition, the natural gayety of childhood could not be repressed, and they used to amuse themselves in puffing out their breath and watching it ascend in steam through the frosty atmosphere. My husband took an agency and was away much of the time, so that, on account of my delicate health, the chores largely devolved on Howard. Though only a child of seven, he cut up nearly all the wood we used that winter.

I remember, on two or three occasions, when we were having a terrible storm, and my feeble little boy was trying to hack some wood from our slab fence, our nearest neighbor, E. C. Burt, a cousin of my husband, called to Howard to come over and bring his sled. The invitation was quickly complied with, and Howard soon returned, his little sled loaded with hardwood, telling me that he could have two more loads. The scene that followed would have taxed an artist's pencil. Little Anna ran to help her brother unload the wood, and baby Sarah clapped her little cold hands and laughed, while I hastened to build a good fire without delay, believing that the Lord had sent us the wood as

truly as if it had indeed fallen from the skies. I accepted it as another token that he had not forsaken us, and soon had a good supper ready, to which we all sat down with thankful hearts. Howard prattled all the time in his childish way of our neighbor's kindness and how he would pay him when he got to be a man, and able to buy his mother everything she needed. Anna's thoughtful little face plainly expressed her belief that this wonderful brother of hers was quite capable of fulfilling all his promises. My own heart, meanwhile, was filled to overflowing with gratitude and praise that the Lord had made me the mother of such lovely children, and granted me the blessed assurance that he would still continue to provide for their wants.

Several times before this we had been reduced to severe straits, when I saw our last loaf of bread on the table, without the faintest idea where our next meal was to come from, but in some unexpected way, He who clothes the lilies of the field, and cares for the fowls of the air, always supplied us our food in season. My husband had taken orders for several books, but was unable to get the money to send for them. I asked him why he did not try to borrow the money from some of his brother Masons, for surely they could not refuse, being sworn to aid him in all circumstances of distress. He replied with an oath that "the Masons were good for nothing except to get all the money they could out of a man, and make a slave of him." He said they had got him completely in their clutches, and ended by wishing them all in a very hot place, declaring that he should never ask a favor of a single one.

He then went up street, but soon returned, telling me that Wellington Woodworth had become surety for the books. Neither Mr. Woodworth nor the neighbor who sent me the wood were members of the Masonic lodge, nor had we received any aid whatever

from the fraternity; but one day, somewhat to my surprise, I received a call from one of the high Masons in the lodge—Mr. S.

Luke 12:2-4, 6, 7, 11, 12.

CHAPTER VI.

A NOBLE SACRIFICE.—MY STRANGE MARRIAGE EX- PLAINED.—A CONSPIRACY.

He expressed all the deep sympathy for us in our poverty-stricken condition which one would naturally look for from a Masonic brother. Then, after some conversation, filled with expressions of kindness and desire on the part of the lodge to help us, he asked if I supposed he had given up the proposition made to me six years before.

I must state, by way of explanation, that he had never in all those years revealed by look or word that he remembered the improper proposals made to me when I was in his employ.

"I have waited all this time," he continued, on my answering that of course I supposed he had, "to see you situated exactly as I now find you,—in a place where you must see that it is your duty to accept my offer. You are certainly too wise to refuse and let your children starve before your eyes; for, as you well know, your husband can never support you."

"I refuse to listen to such words," I exclaimed with indignation. "Never will I feed my children with the bread of crime! Better, a thousand fold, that I should see them in their graves. I will keep them innocent and trust their welfare with God."

"Your religion is all nonsense," he answered with a smile. "Perhaps you think the church people are your friends; but you will soon find out that their godliness is a mere form. I can report falsehoods about you, and no one will doubt my word. What will they think of you?"

"I do not fear your falsehoods," I replied. "The Lord will not leave me long in the power of such a man as you. HE will prove true in spite of all the wicked things you may say about me."

He then drew a graphic picture of the situation I and my children would be in without food or friends, with the promise that he would support me like a lady, and put me forward in society; that his carriage would always be at my service, and no suspicions would be entertained, as people would only think that he was aiding the family of a Masonic brother. He ended with the threat that if I remained obstinate he "would ruin both me and my family"; to which I replied that I did not fear him. I believed God would protect us, and should keep on trusting in the Lord as I had trusted him from a child.

He repeated his remark that my religion was all nonsense, and he would prove his word true in less than six months. He then asked if Mr. Giddings had ever revealed to me the secrets of Masonry.

I shook my head, for I did not choose to admit that he had in reality given me the signs and told me of the horrible oaths he had taken, and which were the same that I saw years afterward published to the world in Anti-Masonic exposures.

My husband, among other things, had told me that the secret word given to him was the name of God, which was only to be breathed in a whisper. Mr. S. referred to this and asked what there was in the name of the God of the universe that was such a secret as to incur the death penalty if spoken aloud; or in any way revealed. He then added in explanation. We have to use these oaths and passwords for a blind when the members first enter, in order to make them think they understand all the secrets, when in reality they know nothing about it till we get them where we want them,—in a place where they can't come out on us. If we get suspicious of a man the time is short for

him to tell his story. We won't trifle with a man as they did with Morgan. Do you suppose that Morgan was really put out of the way for the secrets he revealed?"

"Of course I do, and you can't make me believe he was killed for any other cause."

"That is what a great many Masons think," he answered, "as well as you and other people who are not in the lodge and know nothing about it. We have had to be careful, since the Morgan affair, to whom we reveal the true secrets of Masonry. Do you really think 'a poor and distressed brother' means a Mason too poor or too sick to support his family?"

I answered him it was certainly my belief. As the reader is aware, it had been a cause of much amazement with me that my husband's brother lodgemen had always seemed to rob him instead of giving him help, as they were sworn to do.

He then asked me if I supposed that a Master Mason knew anything about the real secrets of Masonry, assuring me that this was far from being the case. No member was allowed to know these till they had passed a certain time of probation, and it was seen that they could safely be trusted. Their ignorance, however, was made to serve a useful purpose in backing up the high Masons, and making it appear that Masonry was really what it pretended to be—a "purely moral and benevolent institution."

"I have seen men stagger and nearly fall when the real secret was whispered in their ear," he continued; "but we had them right where they couldn't come out on us. Now, what do you suppose that one word can be, that will make a man stagger and nearly fall, and is sure death to a man who even threatens to expose it?"

"You ought to be able to tell, but I of course have no means of knowing."

"You certainly should know," he replied, "when you are that word."

I had not the slightest idea what he could mean till he slowly spelled out W-o-m-a-n.

"Now you have our greatest secret. Woman is the true Freemason's god, and the word syllabled thus, W-o M-a-n. Wo-man refers to the penalty of death in case any affair of this kind should be 'revealed,' instead of 'ever concealed.'"

He went on to strengthen his argument by citing the example of King Solomon, who had a thousand wives and yet was the acknowledged founder of Masonry, and the wisest man that ever lived. So the more wives a Mason had the better and wiser he was.

I then understood why Masonry claims King Solomon as its first Grand Master, and pays such distinguished honors to his memory. It also began to dawn on me—though I was more fully taught by later experience—that this was really the Masonic religion, and the man now expounding to me its principles was as sincere in his faith as the Mormon with his plurality of wives.

It is true that Solomon was the wisest man until he took to himself heathen wives, who overthrew his faith in the true and living God, and then he became a worshiper of idols; a participant in the obscene and cruel rites of Moloch. The lesson of his disastrous end ought surely to convince every man of the danger of trifling with vile women; though Masons, as a rule, do not choose their "gods" or mistresses from the ranks of the fallen and corrupt; but, on the contrary, seek the purest and best to be their victims, degrading them finally to, perhaps, an even lower level than themselves, when, "made tenfold more the child of hell," the tempted (in her turn) becomes the tempter.

My visitor then went on to talk of the Morgan affair. He said that Capt. Morgan was not killed for the secrets he revealed, but for those they feared he

would reveal. As soon as he found out the true principles of Masonry, he began trying to change the rules of the order in regard to woman. This they could not do. If changed according to his idea it would not be Masonry. The object of the order was to gain possession of women, and if this, its greatest secret, were blotted out, Masonry would cease to exist.

Matters, continued my visitor, finally came to a crisis when some of his lodge brethren tried to get possession of a woman who was a friend or some distant connection of Morgan's—he was not certain which. These designs Morgan opposed so strenuously that they were forced to give up their purpose; but this led to very serious trouble between him and the other members, who accused him of violating his Masonic oath, because he had sworn to help worthy, distressed brothers instead of thus opposing them. From that time on Morgan was a thorn in the side of the lodge. The next time they tried to get possession of a woman by virtue of this unwritten law of Masonry they were careful, remembering the trouble he had made them before, not to let him know their designs. In some way Morgan found it out, and in his anger threatened to expose them, and give their Masonic secret to the world. He never expected to be killed for his exposure of the degree work, but he hoped to frighten them into giving up what had caused the trouble between him and the lodge, by their dread that he might go farther and expose this inmost secret of Masonry—its heart and kernel to which the other was but the outside husk. They succeeded at last in getting him imprisoned in some place where he could be kept safely till it was decided what to do with him. Meetings were held in the various lodges to consider his case. There was a division in regard to the matter, and some wanted to save his life. In fact, the Masons, according to my informant, held Capt. Morgan in great respect as a man of high character, and

felt as badly about putting him to death as would any outside the lodge. In vain he pleaded for his life, and promised never to make the dreaded exposure. They feared to trust him, and it was at last decided that their own safety required that he should die. Accordingly they drew lots, and the men to whom it fell to make way with him were obliged to be his executioners, or themselves suffer the same penalty.

At this time I knew but little of the Morgan affair. I had not heard his name mentioned since childhood, when I used to hear my grandfather relate the story of Morgan's murder to his sons, accompanied by words of warning to avoid secret societies, and always be on their guard when dealing with lodgemen. I dared not take a long breath while he was talking for fear his story might be suddenly cut short should the narrator begin to realize that he was revealing the true secret of Morgan's death; the real principle of Masonry. To defend woman, so terribly degraded by the Secret Empire, Morgan gave his noble life.

But this worshipful successor of King Solomon—for I think he was Master of the lodge at the time my husband joined, and still occupied that position—began to make another revelation which filled me with greater horror and amazement than anything which had preceded it.

He began by asking me if I still believed that it was by the will of God I had become the wife of Lewis Giddings.

"Certainly," I replied; for in truth I had never faltered in the belief that my strange marriage was ordered by the Lord, for some mysterious and unknown purpose. Imagine, then, my astonishment and chagrin, when I learned that, so far from this being the case, the plans for its accomplishment were really laid in the lodge. He, and two or three of his brother Masons, so Mr. S. assured me, had plotted the whole thing. They had meant from the first of my coming

to the place—a stranger and a friendless girl—to get possession of me. Not seeing any other way by which to carry their point, they told Lewis Giddings that they would get me to be his wife, and promised as soon as one child should be born to take him into the lodge free, provided he made no opposition to their demands. Their supposition was that if burdened with even one child I should be driven, through lack of means to support my family, to accept support from the lodge-men. He informed me that they were three or four months in plotting the affair, the most difficult point being to get me into the carriage without rousing any suspicion on my part. They finally thought of the party, and by this simple stratagem accomplished my marriage with even more ease than they had anticipated.

He reiterated his threat that he would ruin both me and my children, and again assured me that the lodge had planned my marriage, and the Lord had nothing to do with it, etc. He then went off, leaving my mind in a state of utmost desperation.

I was aghast at these terrible revelations. It was not, then, from my husband's love for me, and fear that he should never get me by my free consent, or even the will of God, that I had been drawn into this evil marriage. It was all a base Masonic plot, conjured up for the vilest ends.

I felt no suspicion when he first entered the house that this lodge potentate had been drinking, but I have reason to believe that he was just drunk enough to tell the truth. He seemed quite unconscious of having lost his Masonic "jewel," for he kept assuring me over and over again that this great Masonic secret was one that could never by any possibility be revealed; in happy oblivion of the fact that he was giving it away at that very moment.

I had no doubt, considering all the strange circumstances of my marriage, that he told me the truth.

All my faith in the Lord seemed to vanish as I listened. What had before seemed blessings looked now like cruel mockeries. "Foolish child," I moaned, "to trust in God, only to be overcome at last by my enemies. Oh," I cried in my bitter despair, "it is all in vain to serve the Lord; but I will never bow to the authority of the wicked, and let myself be forced into a life of sin. Never! no, never! Yet how can I and my innocent children escape their power?"

In my agitated walk through the room I stopped before the sofa where they were seated enjoying a merry game with baby Sarah, and felt thankful for the childish ignorance that hedged them in from any knowledge of their mother's cruel sufferings.

Then a terrible thought crossed my mind. These wicked men had succeeded in ruining my own life, but I would save my children. That very night my innocent little ones should go beyond the power of these vile monsters of iniquity to work them any harm; and the Lord would surely receive them into his heavenly kingdom. In my extreme agony I thought of others who, poor and defenseless like myself, were trusting in the Lord, only to be deceived. I longed to tell them that their faith was all in vain; that it was not a God of love and mercy in whom they were trusting, but a God of wrath, who allowed the poor and helpless to fall, without hope of deliverance, into the hands of the wicked. I would not have them deceived as I had been. If they must perish, let it be open-eyed, and not trusting in a false hope of deliverance. My heart went out to the poor girls and unprotected women who, reduced to like terrible straits, had succumbed to the enemy of their virtue and sold themselves for bread which perishes. I would write a letter warning the people not to trust in a God who had so deceived me by failing to fulfill his promise. After I and my children were in our graves somebody would

doubtless find the letter, and thus it would be brought to public attention.

I took some paper and began to write, in my anguish first relating how I had sought the Lord when a little child, and had promised to suffer and endure all things for the assurance that I was his. I had kept his commandments before me; I had tried faithfully to walk in his way and fulfill my part of the covenant. It was not I who had broken it. First, he had allowed me to be deceived by the errors of Spiritualism, leaving me to pass through years of darkness, seeking for my lost hope. I related how, in a moment of despair, I had sought to take my life by drowning, yet, when I had done everything possible to aid the elements in capsizing the frail boat, he had wonderfully preserved my life, as I then believed, for some good purpose.

In this, too, I had been deceived. Even the celestial music I had heard, and the voices of warning and comfort which I had accepted as tokens that a heavenly Father was watching over his child, I now thought were only as the wandering lights seen over marshy wastes, that delude the unfortunate traveler to his death among the treacherous bogs. In the faith that God had ordered my marriage, I had been willing to suffer on in tears and sorrow, rather than defeat his purposes. Now I knew that it was only a plot of wicked men. God, instead of fulfilling his word, had left me in their power, and let my children starve before my eyes.

I wrote thus far, and then stopped in astonishment at my false statement. Certainly my children had not starved as yet. My charge against the Highest, as it now stood, was a false one. It must be changed to the future tense. He *will* let them starve before my eyes. I moaned, as I looked on my helpless little ones. Again I took up my pen to write, and again I came to a pause. How could I be sure that the charge was true, even in its altered form, unless I waited on the

Lord a while longer, and gave him opportunity to provide and save us from our enemies.

I had fully intended, on finishing the letter, to take my children's lives as well as my own. But now other and better thoughts checked its farther progress. It began to dawn upon my mind that I was not after all fulfilling my part. It was my own passionate wicked heart that had departed from the Lord—not he from me.

My letter was not correct down to the last point. I resolved to wait a little longer on the Lord before I rashly took things into my own hands. Then, if my children were indeed left to starve, I would leave the letter behind me for a witness that one soul in dire distress had trusted God in vain.

Jeremiah 42:9-11.

CHAPTER VII.

SORROWFUL DAYS.—THE ORPHANS' HOME.—A CANVASSING EXPERIENCE.

With a heart full of bitterness I waited for my husband's return. I fully expected that he would deny at once, and with the greatest indignation, that any such plot had been laid by his brother Masons. On the contrary, he assured me that it was all true, and told me, with an oath, that I was a fool to suppose the Lord had anything to do with my marriage. The sooner I gave up the idea that God either knew or cared what was going on in this world, the better it would be for me. We might, if I only chose, be rich in a few years. I was the one to blame for our present state of poverty. I would be quite a decent woman if it were not for my pious notions, etc.

I listened to his profane and abusive tirade, too shocked and sick at heart to reply. But when he further told me that he was the natural guardian of my children and meant to make a fortune out of our girls, who were to be brought up for the lodge, giving me to understand that he should at once begin to prepare them for the life they were to lead, and that I was where I could not help myself, all the outraged motherhood in me awoke.

The dread that my husband would teach the children lessons of immorality which could never be effaced and might ruin them for all their after lives, together with the discovery I had made regarding my marriage, and the base use which the lodge intended to make of it, so worked on my nervous system that, for three days and nights, I do not remember partaking

of any food or drink, but passed the time in fits of spasmodic weeping that alternated with periods of unconsciousness, during which I lay as one dead to everything about me.

On the evening of the third day I sent my little boy over to the same kind neighbor who had given us the wood, with the request that he would come over to my house, as I was ill and wished to see him. I shall never forget the practical good sense with which he talked, or the kindly and encouraging way in which he put the situation before me. So far from despairing of my children's future, he assured me that I was now given all the greater opportunity through their father's unworthiness of teaching them right from wrong. I need have no fear. A mother's influence was always the stronger. For my children's sake I must bear bravely this added burden of responsibility.

After my conversation with him I again took courage. To his wise and timely counsel I owe, under God, the preservation of my reason during this terrible time. I saw that everything depended upon my seeking to neutralize and supplant, in every possible way, the impression made in my children's minds by their father's vicious teachings, with such precepts of purity as can only be learned through the grace of our Lord.

I also felt it my duty to seek legal protection, and to this end I went to see an attorney. Never doubting that this was a land of law, and that I could invoke its aid to save my children from being ruined by their unnatural father, I related the whole case,—my forced marriage, and the dreadful fate now hanging over my young daughters, the oldest being then only about six years of age. But conceive my shocked bewilderment when he told me the surprising and shameful fact that there was actually no law in Vermont by which my husband could be arrested, and fully confirmed what the latter had said when taunting me with my helplessness to withstand

him. Their father was considered in law the natural guardian of his daughters, and till they were past eighteen could make any disposition of them he chose. No legal cognizance could be taken of his acts unless he injured their health.

I know not how the law now stands in Vermont, but this was the way it stood in 1875.

The attorney showed me great sympathy and kindness, but legally he was as powerless as myself. He promised, however, to do what he could. He called on my husband and succeeded in frightening him into better behavior, so that he did not dare execute his threats or use any violence on his family, though in his treatment of me he still continued to be very abusive.

Again I seemed left in partial darkness. I did not know whether the Lord was really leading me, or I was left to battle in my own strength. I could not feel it my duty, after what had passed, to live any longer with my husband, and determined to secure a divorce, or at least a separation. I believed I could support my three oldest children, but could see no way to provide for a feeble infant which must of necessity be left to the care of strangers, and the fear that it would fall into careless or cruel hands rent my heart with the most profound grief.

One night my husband was away, my children locked in profound slumber. I had just retired, when I felt a hand pass lovingly over my head. As it smoothed my hair and was drawn caressingly over my face, I was conscious of one peculiarity. I could feel the touch of but three fingers. The fourth, the little finger, seemed to be lacking. It must be mentioned that at this time I was subject to violent fits of weeping, succeeded by alarming attacks of numbness, caused by the distress of mind with which I looked forward to what seemed to me a starless future. Now, as I felt that soft hand pass over my face and forehead more gently than a mother's, I began to realize

that these attacks which so seriously endangered my own life, and that of my unborn babe, was the result of my lack of faith. As the reader knows, I was not now a believer in Spiritualism, but the existence of ministering angels is certainly warranted by Scripture. I felt that this soft touch on my head was indeed the hand of some celestial visitant, sent of God, and the experience soothed and comforted me beyond expression. Once more I resolved to wait patiently on the Lord, and again that sweet peace to which I had so long been a stranger filled my heart.

A few days later, on April 10, 1875, my little Ernest was born—a child of sorrow indeed, for he was born in spasms which continued till his death, a fortnight later. So terrible and heartrending were his screams that the nurse was made nearly sick, and as she afterward told me, it was three months before her nervous system recovered from the strain.

After he was laid out I went into the bedroom all alone and looked down at the lines of sorrow stamped upon the pale baby face, settled now into the stillness of death. Something seemed to whisper in my ear, "*The little one is gone!*" I thought of that gentle, angelic touch, and the significance of the missing finger seemed at once to flash on my mind. I had now my three eldest children to care for, but the little one was indeed gone, and brief as was his life, and full of suffering, I grieved as much over his loss as if I had been the happiest of mothers.

About this time my attention was attracted to a notice in some paper of the Orphans' Home at Burlington, and it seemed to me the Lord had pointed out the way in which my children could receive the care and Christian training which I would be unable to give, as all my time and energies would necessarily be absorbed in earning the money for their support.

I appealed to my rector, who kindly wrote to the ladies in charge, and places were secured for my chil-

dren in that institution. I was obliged to sell some of my furniture in order to get the money to take them there.

Mrs. Hickock, who was then President of the Home, received me with great kindness, but at the same time put me through a severe cross-examination, which forced me at last to unburden my heart of its sad story, and tell her all about my present distressed condition. She sent a line to the matron, authorizing her to give me supper, breakfast and a night's lodging at the Home, free of charge; also to have me taken to the station in the morning.

I could not endure the thought of leaving my children thus abruptly in a strange place. As I had a little money I decided to board myself on crackers for a few days till I saw my little ones fully established and contented in their new home.

I went to the American House and asked the clerk to give me the cheapest room in the hotel without meals. He looked at me sharply for a moment; then remarking that he would see the proprietor, invited me into the parlor. In a few moments a tall gentleman appeared, greeted me courteously, and after such close questioning that I was obliged to state my errand to Burlington, and the reason why I desired to remain for a few days, told me that I should have a room in the hotel and pay what I felt able, but only on the condition that I took my three meals a day at the hotel table, which would be without charge. He would not hear of my taking a room and living, or rather starving, on crackers. I was astonished at such kindness from an entire stranger, and could do no less than accept it. On my departure the clerk told me there was no charge, but I insisted on making some little payment, which of course fell far short of hotel rates, but satisfied in some degree my sense of self-respect that found it difficult, even in these circumstances, to accept of charity. The clerk took the

money, but with evident reluctance. I was very young at the time—only twenty-eight—and my condition attracted much sympathy. In fact I have always found that the natural tie of our common humanity goes far beyond any secret society grip or password for securing aid when in distress.

On the third day I went to see my children and was kindly received by the matron and her assistants. They took me to the door of a room where a lady was teaching the little ones to sing. I watched them unobserved, and was delighted as well as surprised to see how readily Howard and Anna, who were musical from infancy, had caught up the simple airs, and with what spirit they sang. The elder ones stood. Even baby Sarah, who, unable to walk, was seated like the others of similar age in a low chair, tried to join in, and clapped her chubby hands gleefully.

I stayed for a few hours; was shown the beds where the children slept and the many provisions made for their comfort; then bade my little ones farewell, and leaving in their hands a few simple presents, went back to the hotel. The next day I returned to Enosburg.

I had taken an agency for "The Bible Looking-Glass," and several papers, together with a variety of cheap pictures. My first field of work was in the town of Richford, Vt., where I arrived, a complete stranger, late in the afternoon. I noticed a hotel bearing the same name as the one in Burlington where I had been treated with such kindness. This naturally predisposed me in its favor, and I concluded to apply there for a night's lodging, but meanwhile there was time enough to do a little canvassing before dark.

I walked up to the door of the nearest house. The lady invited me in, and said that as soon as she was through washing the supper dishes she would look at my book. She entered into a conversation with me, and in response to her questioning I told her I was a stranger in the

place and intended to stop at the hotel. She learned also that my children were in the Home and I nearly penniless. To my surprise she invited me to stay with her that night, an invitation which I readily accepted.

The next morning, before starting out, I told her, with tears in my eyes, how I had dreaded taking an agency, knowing that agents were often looked upon as a nuisance. She comforted me much by telling me that her sympathies were excited as soon as she saw me coming up the walk to her house the previous evening, for she saw plainly by the expression of my face that I was in deep trouble; that she thought others would feel the same, and that I need not fear being treated unkindly by any person in Richford. Not content with bare words of encouragement, she invited me back to her house that night. I stayed with this generous widow all the time I was canvassing in Richford.

In spite of her kindness, my heart was heavy as I set out on a work so unusual. But her words were true. With an inward prayer that God would incline the hearts of the people to subscribe for my book, I went from house to house in prayer, seldom being treated unkindly. I canvassed successfully all that summer, making a profit of one dollar and ten cents on my poorest day, and sometimes making even as high as six dollars a day.

I soon learned to enjoy my new vocation. There were many pleasant things connected with it besides the large pay I was making. I met many kind people, and had the pleasure of occasionally speaking words of comfort to those in distress. I had also many interesting experiences, one of which I will relate, as it may amuse the reader, besides having the advantage of a moral.

I called one day at the home of a church deacon in Enosburg. His wife, with whom I was somewhat acquainted, received me very kindly and invited me to stay to dinner. She introduced me to her husband and

explained that I was taking orders for an excellent book entitled "Bible Looking-Glass."

"Canvassing, ha?" he remarked gruffly.

I assented.

"Well, I have my opinion of women who will leave their homes and go tramping round the country. Such tramps ought to be arrested and put to work."

I assented to all he said, as if his opinion was worthy of the greatest respect, while his poor wife looked ready to faint.

"I never expected one of those vagrants would take dinner in my house," he went on in the same insulting manner; "but as my wife has invited you I suppose I must let you have something to eat."

I met his glance across the table at me with a smile, and assured him I "appreciated his kindness."

"Been in the business long?"

"I have only canvassed the town of Richford."

"Get many dogs set on you?"

"No, sir, not one."

"Well, that's queer. I keep a dog on purpose to set on tramps. You was lucky to get into the house before I saw you."

"It is better to be lucky than rich," I replied, with a smile that seemed to puzzle him.

"Meet many Jews?" he asked.

"Very few," I replied.

"The most fun I have," he continued, "is setting my dog on Jews. One of them fellows came into the field the other day. I let him get his pack open. Then I whistled to my dog and told him to 'get.' I wish you could have seen him scramble his things into his pack when he saw the dog coming. How he run and swore! I had to lay right down and laugh, I was so tickled."

How my heart was shocked and my face took a serious turn.

"I would not mind you setting your dog on me if it would afford you any pleasure," I said in disdain, "but

I am sorry you set your dog on Jews. What do you suppose they think of us Christians, or our Saviour, whom we profess to follow?"

"Never thought of that," he said, getting very red in the face, while his wife cast upon me a look of gratitude.

"Perhaps if you knew a little more about us tramps you would not censure us so harshly."

"Perhaps not."

"Would you like to know how I came to be tramping about the country?"

"Certainly," he said, still looking very confused.

"I have three small children, the oldest eight; the youngest cannot walk. As my husband is unable to work their support devolves on me. There are three things I can do. I can earn fifty cents a day by going out to work washing, and a dollar a day by working in the factory. In either case my children would have to be left alone, with no one to care for them. Then, last and most despised of all, is canvassing, in which I can average about two dollars and a half or three dollars a day. This enables me to have my little ones boarded in the Burlington Home for Destitute Children, where they will have Christian training, be kept neat and clean, and be kindly cared for. You and I are communicants of what is claimed to be the only true Church of Christ. As you are a church officer will you please tell me which one of these things I ought to do?"

"Never looked upon canvassing in that light before," he admitted, clearing his throat in an embarrassed fashion. "You are surely justified in the work you have chosen, and I will pay for all my women folks buy of you."

His surly mood had entirely changed, and as he took his hat to go out to the field he turned to his wife and said:

"Trade all you want to with this lady, and it will be all right."

Full advantage must have been taken of this permission, for I remember that my profits on what they purchased amounted to considerable.

But fresh trials were coming, by which my faith was to be severely tested, and I was to discover, with new amazement, what the malignant spirit of the anti-Christ is able to accomplish in the church.

Nearly every Saturday I went home and cooked up enough food to last my husband through the following week. I also did his washing and mending, as well as mine. This gave me the opportunity of attending my own church every Sunday, and also Sunday-school, where I had a class of small scholars.

One Sunday, as I entered the church, I was surprised to see the horrified glances cast upon me by the congregation. Even people who had always been in the habit of speaking and treating me in the kindest manner now turned their heads away as I approached, and refused to take any notice of me.

Then I knew Mr. S. had executed his cruel threat, but I could not understand how it could take such widespread and immediate effect. The Sunday before the congregation were as friendly as usual. I dearly loved the church and the church people, and tried for their sakes, whom I counted as beloved brothers and sisters, to bring the truth before them. But in vain. I was shunned as if I had the leprosy. I could not approach near enough to tell my story, or hold any conversation by which I could find out what charges, if any, had been made against me.

I was coming home one day from a canvassing trip when Mr. S. met me on my way from the depot, and said in the very kind and social manner he knew so well how to assume, and which would have led a stranger to suppose him the best friend I had on earth :

“You see I am right. Religion is only a profession. The people and the rector have all turned against you and are siding with me. Would they do that if there

was anything in their religion? Folks are saying that you are to blame for all this trouble between yourself and your husband, and for putting your children in an Orphans' Home. They are even saying that you ought to be tarred and feathered. Now, don't you wish you had listened to me?" he added with a smile.

"Never!" I cried defiantly. "I would rather be despised by all the people on earth. And as to the tar and feathers, I am not afraid. But it does look as if God had forsaken me."

"It is strange you can't have more sense in your head," he answered. "One word from me would make everything all right. Even the rector says you 'are a disgrace to the church and community.' And certainly it is a disgrace to abandon your helpless children to the care of strangers and go tramping around the country, cut off from all decent society."

He then added that, so far as help from a divine Power was concerned, he would be a better friend to me and my children than the Lord had proved, and predicted that, as I had lost my faith in the church people, I should soon lose it in God.

"Your words are vain and without weight," I cried. "I have trusted in the Lord from a child and will continue to trust Him. I will wait His appointed time, when I know He will bring you to justice and make you remember this hour. If I only had faith He would surely overthrow all these great mountains of sin that hedge me in on every side. The Bible tells how the hireling will flee. You know the rector has no reason to turn against me. You may deceive him, but you cannot deceive the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life to save mine. These terrible sufferings can do me no harm. The Lord has power to right every wrong."

I wrote down this conversation as I had written down others, not knowing how soon the exact language might slip from memory, and wishing to preserve a truthful record as far as possible, and prove to the world which

is strongest, might or right. Now that more than a score of years has elapsed the comment which I find written down at one place in the manuscript, that "God will sometime bring this record to the light of day, in order that men may know how he can and will defend the right," has, it seems to me, an almost prophetic significance.

Though a Mason's wife, I had fortunately taken no vows upon me to shield Masonic wickedness, and I went at once to the rector.

"If you considered I was doing wrong, my rector," I said, "why did you not, instead of telling other people your bad opinion of me, come and talk with me about it?"

A surprised and sorrowful look overspread his face.

"You have certainly been misinformed," he answered. "I believe you have done the best you could under the unfortunate circumstances of your lot, and have never blamed you in the least."

I then told him the remark that Mr. S. had reported as having been made by him, and which had evidently spread all over the village.

"The truth is this," answered the rector after a perplexed pause: "Mr. S. came to me with a long complaint of the trouble you have been having with your husband. Of course I had to say something, but I tried to say as little as possible. I simply remarked that 'such work was a disgrace to the church and community.' I never said you were a disgrace."

"My husband cannot well disgrace the church," I said, "for he is not a member. Mr. S. and a few of his brother Masons are more responsible for the trouble we are now having than either my husband or myself, and if you continue to keep that man in the choir and allow him to retain his official position I shall leave the church."

"But you certainly do not hold the church responsible for the falsehoods Mr. S. is reporting?"

“You know very well that Mr. S. believes in neither God nor the Bible. Why should an avowed infidel be allowed to hold office in the church where his only object is to defile the purity of its members and work all the harm it can?”

The rector mused for a moment. He seemed really perplexed to find an answer.

“Neither the organ nor the stove believe in God,” he said, finally, “but they are necessities. So it is necessary to have singers and church officials, and we cannot help it though we may regret it, if they are not always such as we would like to have. Would you have the organ or the stove put out of the church because they do not believe in God?”

I answered that neither the stove nor the organ were capable of sinning against God. Were it otherwise, I should certainly advise putting them out. He well knew that Mr. S. was an immoral man and a blasphemer, which could not be said of either of those articles of church furniture.

To this he made a general reply, that Mr. S. would have to answer for his own sins, and advised me not to pay any attention to the stories he was circulating. The people all knew I was doing the best I could, and he hoped I would not leave the church for any such reason. He then remarked on the duty of exercising charity toward each other, saying that we all had our faults and failings, and needed at times to have them covered up by its broad mantle, etc.

I knew the Bible commended charity above every other Christian grace, and I endeavored conscientiously to follow at least this part of his counsel. So I remained in the church and tried to accept patiently the undeserved coldness and slights of those who should have rallied round me in my hour of trial, instead of leaving me, so far as Christian help and sympathy was concerned, to fight the battle alone.

A few weeks after I learned that there was going to

be a grand meeting of the Masonic lodge, and was told by my husband that it was a special meeting at which every Mason was required to be present. As I neglected to write down details I do not now remember whether it was one to which members of other lodges were invited, nor can I give the date. It was a very warm evening, and as I was baking and ironing together, doors and windows were wide open.

Somewhere between the hours of ten and eleven I noticed a number of men congregated at some distance from the house, but supposed them to be strangers from out of town, who were taking a stroll about the village, it being a bright moonlight night.

I kept on with my work till I heard a sound as of a loud disputing. The thought occurred to me that the men I saw had been drinking, and I put down my windows, intending, if I saw them start for the house, to lock the doors. They stayed in the same spot for some time, and occasionally I heard their voices raised as if in a violent quarrel. Then all was quiet.

I looked out again. The group had disappeared.

On another evening, a short time after, I was at home, and my husband absent, when, looking out, I was surprised by the sight of a group of men standing by the corner of the fence. At the same time I noticed a man coming down the hill almost on a run. He stopped and began talking to the others, gesticulating at the same time in an angry and excited way. Then two of the group went out into the road, seemingly as spokesmen for their comrades, though the other seemed to do most of the talking. The two then went back to their fellows grouped in the corner of the fence, the newcomer still continuing to loudly dispute some point with them, though I was too far off to hear what was said. In a little while the men dispersed, a few going down the road, while the others took the way to the village.

A day or two after one of my neighbors, with whom

I had not previously had any trouble, came to my house and began a most violent tirade of abuse. Her language was much too vulgar and profane to be repeated here; but she told me, in substance, that for all my professed piety I was thought less of by the church and community than she who made no such pretense; that I was considered so vile a character, in fact, that some of the village people had twice got together to tar and feather me. She knew all about it, because the tar had been heated at her house, and she assured me, furthermore, that when they set about it the third time it would be done.

To picture my state of mind would be impossible. In spite of the fact that a Mason had twice threatened me with this fate, it seemed to me incredible, as it doubtless does to the reader, that such an outrage could be thought of in a civilized community.

In my distress I went to the house of Mrs. Mitchell, whose name has been mentioned on a previous page,—one of the few friends who stood by me in those days of persecution. When I stated what I had heard I saw a frightened look flit suddenly across her face, as if my words had confirmed some dreadful suspicion of her own.

“My husband has told me of the attempted outrage,” she answered at last. “But I thought he only said it to scare me, and see what an absurd story he could make me believe. Now I am afraid—or rather I am sure—it is true. Why don’t you go away—to Burlington? You can canvass there and be near your children. You are not safe here. Your enemies may let the matter drop for a while, and then at some unexpected moment get together again and accomplish it.”

But this advice it was not possible for me to take under the circumstances, for having applied for a divorce, I was obliged to stay at home some of the time. Had I left it altogether in the manner proposed my homestead claim would have been forfeited.

Her husband came in while we were talking. He was a rough man and a hard drinker, but perfectly sober on the present occasion. After passing the usual salutations he told me, in a half-jocose way, that he was near coming down to see me the other night. He added that "the boys" were getting up a crowd for that purpose, and he was among them. He went on to explain all about it so far as he knew. As the best way to thwart their designs he had joined the mob, pretending to be of the same mind. At the last moment the leader backed out and threatened to have them all arrested. But there were enough in the crowd who were on my side, even without the defection of their leader, to have turned the balance in my favor. He assured me that had the opposite side carried their point so far as to come to the house there would have been a free fight between the two factions. He ended by advising me to see an attorney, as he was afraid another trial might be made. If I would do so, he knew the men well, and promised to give the necessary evidence.

My information, when I laid it before Attorney Ladd, greatly excited him. He caught up his hat, and with the exclamation that "this must be attended to at once," left the office. How industriously he followed up the case I learned incidentally from a remark of my husband when he came home, that "Attorney Ladd was rushing about the village like a hen with her head cut off, and it looked as if he was going to put the whole neighborhood under arrest."

Mr. Mitchell, who had given Mr. Ladd a list of about twenty names of those whom he knew to be concerned in the projected outrage, played his part well, and complained bitterly that the attorney had come into his shop "with fire in his eyes," threatening to arrest him, when, to use his own aggrieved expression, he "hadn't done nothin'; only been out with the boys to have a little fun." Mr. Ladd made a pretense of special wrath against Mitchell, as if he considered him

the chief ringleader in the mischief; and so clever was the blind that nobody in the gang suspected who had given them away. Nor should I now publish Mr. Mitchell's name were he not in his grave and beyond harm from any earthly power.

It should be mentioned that this "outrage" was in both instances planned to be accomplished on a lodge-meeting night, so that the real instigators of the plot could testify that they were not on the street, and the blame—if blame there was—would fall on their tools,—men who were not Masons. Lodgemen have a great aversion to doing their own dirty work, but there are always enough "lewd fellows of the baser sort" outside, who can be bribed or flattered into doing it; and then, should the popular indignation ever be excited, by the discovery of some deed of darkness, like grimalkin in the fable, it is they who will get the singeing while the lodge goes free.

Many of the participants in this affair have already gone to their account, and I have waited patiently through long and weary years for God, in his providence, to bring these facts to light. It must not be supposed, however, that the whole, or even any large proportion of the lodge, were concerned in, or even had any knowledge of these outrageous proceedings. Indeed, I have learned by investigation and reading—for these experiences induced a desire to find out all I could from accessible sources of information—that murder, seduction and like gross crimes are never plotted in open lodge meetings, but in "rings," consisting of but a few members, yet with the whole lodge machinery back of them to aid the accomplishment and shield them from punishment if discovered.

It is stated in history that Capt. Morgan's death was plotted in Masonic rings, called "committees," composed of high Masons, who passed the fatal word from one to another, shielded by their lodge oaths; how well, the vain efforts to convict his murderers amply testify.

The people have little knowledge how the poor, and especially defenseless women, are being persecuted by the hidden hand that works in darkness to defile and destroy those who, like Daniel, stand firm for the true God, and will bow to no lodge potentate, or share in the dainties offered to Baal. How many such can truly say, as did the psalmist: "*My soul is among lions. . . . deliver me from the workers of iniquity and save me from bloody men.*"—Psalms 17:4-6-7-8-9-12-13-15.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MYSTERIOUS PAPER.—MANSIONS IN THE SKY.—OLIVER
COOPER'S VISION OF HELL.

My husband's mind seemed all right that summer, but his bodily health was very poor. In this more sane condition his old affection for me seemed to revive. He grieved much at the idea of my leaving him, and seemed sincerely penitent for the conduct which had led to such a step. He begged me to withdraw my suit for a divorce and bring the children home, in which case he would deed me the homestead, and never again mention the subject which had caused our greatest trouble.

Touched by his pleadings, my heart began to relent. In his miserable physical condition it seemed almost cruelty to desert him, and I began to question seriously my duty in this regard. God could yet make our marriage, which vile men had plotted so much to their dissatisfaction, work out results to his honor and glory. If I stayed with my husband might he not be led to become a Christian? If I left the father of my children might it not be to thwart the divine purpose for good?

These considerations induced me at last to withdraw my suit. If the Lord would let me live to see the father of my children confess Christ as his Saviour, I felt that the sufferings I had endured, or those which might yet be in store for me, should I continue to live with him, would not be borne in vain.

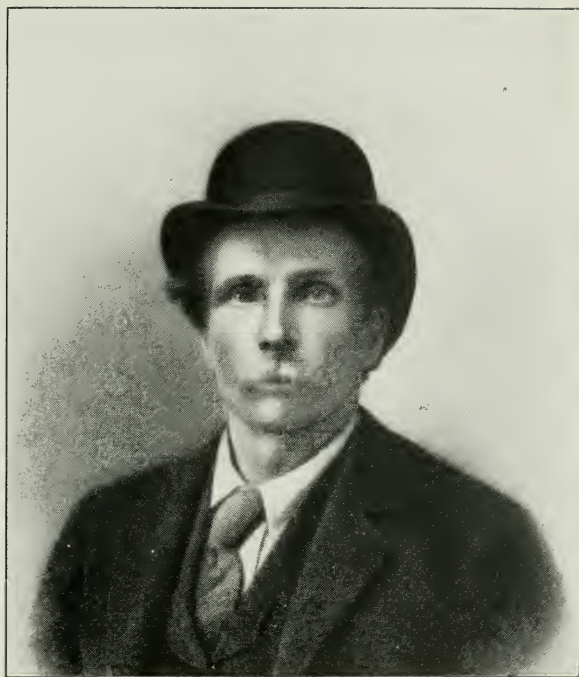
It was soon noised around that my husband had offered me the deed of our homestead. This item will explain why I was one day surprised by a call from

Mr. J.—a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic who lived at the upper end of the village.

He told me that the day before, while passing the office of Lawyer Marsh, a man called him in and offered him five dollars if he would drive to the Centre with all haste so as to get a paper put on record before night. He seemed in a great hurry and gave him to understand that it was not a thing of which he was to speak to any one. This naturally excited his suspicions, the more as he happened to catch sight of Lewis Giddings' name on the paper; for the thought occurred to him that possibly my husband had mortgaged the place before deeding it to me.

He asked the man what they were going to do with Lewis Giddings and was informed that it was none of his business; his business was to drive him to the Centre as fast as he could. He at first refused, not wishing to go on any such errand without knowing more about it. The answer was a threat to get some one else; and, seeing that they were bound to get the paper on record, he concluded that he might as well have the five dollars as anybody else. So he drove the man over to the Centre, but so sure was he that there was fraud in the affair that he waited till morning before telling me of the circumstance for fear of being watched.

I thanked him and went at once, as he advised me, to the office of Lawyer Marsh, who had made out the mysterious paper. There I found, to my consternation, that an attachment had been put upon my home, but was comforted when the attorney assured me that it was not worth the paper on which it was written. As I had not left my homestead, I could hold it against this or any other writ of attachment that might be served. So this new device to distress me came to naught. My kind informant got his five dollars, and the lawyer his fee for drawing up the paper, so that the only loss was on the side of our would-be oppressor. My husband deeded me the place and all thoughts of



Lewis Gaddings
"Felix" of Lincoln Lodge
No. 78
Ernestburgh, Falls, Vt.

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divorce were given up. A day or two later a tax collector walked in without knocking and angrily told me that several years' back taxes on the property must be paid immediately. "Tell me how much money is due and you shall have it," I replied.

Stepping up close to me he said: "It is sixty-five dollars, and I am going to have it now." "Will you allow me to get the amount, or shall I tell you where the money is and permit you to help yourself?" I inquired. With a gesture he said, "How long will it take you to get it?"

I appeared not to notice his rudeness and replied, "Only a moment."

"I will give you five minutes to get the money," said he.

Before the time expired I handed him the required sum. After counting the money he tried to apologize by saying he would wait awhile for part of it. I insisted that he should keep the whole amount and had to manifest considerable dignity before I could get him to keep the money and give me a receipt in full.

It was with a light heart that I went to Burlington for my children. After paying their board I had only money enough left for our carfare. Mrs. Hickok questioned me closely on this point, saying that it was a cold winter, and if I took my children I must have something for our subsistence. She then returned a large part of what I had paid her, kindly adding that the Home had taken my children, not to distress but to help me, and if I were never able to pay it back it would be all right.

My husband, in his efforts to keep his family comfortable, worked that winter beyond his strength, and when spring came his exhausted condition of mind and body was so noticeable that I again secured a place in the factory.

But a new sorrow awaited me. I had become in some measure used to the coldness of the church

people. For myself I did not mind being treated with indifference or even scorn, but when I saw the same feelings manifested towards my innocent little ones my mother's heart rose in righteous indignation. In Sunday-school the unfriendly attitude of the other children showed very plainly that they had imbibed the prejudices of their parents, fostered by the lying spirit of my enemies. Even in the public schools their little lives were made bitter by a system of petty insult and persecution; little Anna, who was a very sensitive child, being reduced to a state of almost constant tears.

I was much comforted, however, at this time of trial, by the words of Sister Helen Marguerite Folsom. This lady, who belonged to an Anglican sisterhood in New York, had given several hundred dollars to St. Matthew's Church, and was taking her summer vacation in Enosburgh. Being told that she wanted to get two little girls to take home with her to New York to educate, I went to Mr. Brewer's, the place where she was stopping, thinking that I would ask her to take Anna, so that the child need no longer suffer thus cruelly.

When I stated my errand, she asked me very kindly to explain my circumstances. I told her that my sorrows seemed greater than I could bear, but that which wrung my heart the deepest was to see my children ill-treated in church and Sunday-school, and also in the district school. "I have tried to serve the Lord since I was a child," I groaned, and yet my life has been a failure. Surely I must have sinned in some dreadful way to bring down so much suffering on my children's innocent heads."

Sister Helen Marguerite drew her chair close to mine, and looking intently in my face, asked me what sin I had committed for which I could think myself and children forsaken of God.

I answered that I could not tell, except that after being especially baptized by the Holy Ghost, as I be-

lieved, I had fallen away from my faith in Christ.

She seemed much interested and desired to hear the story of this experience; but I hesitated to relate it, fearing that she would be incredulous. But she insisted so firmly, and yet kindly, that I could do no less than tell her of the marvelous light I had seen shining on the sacred Word, the celestial music and the heavenly voices.

She sat back in her chair, closed her eyes and remained silent for some time. When she again opened them and looked at me it was to speak the strangest and yet the sweetest words of comfort that I ever heard.

"You are not having this sorrow because the Lord has forsaken you," she said, gently; "or for any sin you have committed."

"Then why do the people of God treat me in this cruel way?" I asked.

"The *professed* people of God," she said, with emphasis, "have always persecuted those who were better than they. You are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

"Surely no one in this Christian land can be persecuted for righteousness' sake?" I said, doubtfully.

"On the contrary, there are a great many who are persecuted for that cause. And they would be put to death now, as in olden times, if the civil law did not protect them. I feel, in my own mind, that you have told the truth. You are a child of God's special care, and you dishonor Him if you think for a moment that He can or will forsake you."

When, on leaving, I begged her again to take my little girl, she gave me a smiling but firm "No."

"It would be a sin for me to take the child from such a mother as you. I must take children who have no parents capable of bringing them up. The Lord has marked out a way for yourself and children, and I must not take the work out of His hands. Take

heart. Your children will fill the places God designed for them. Give yourself no uneasiness for their future. You have a divine Care-taker, who will certainly provide."

After a time, feeling righteously indignant at the way my children were treated, I took them out of Sunday-school and left the church, feeling that my act was justified by the command in Revelations 18:4: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins." This called down upon me the condemnation of the church members. Detraction and slander pierced me like the tongues of venomous serpents. I wandered indeed in the Enemy's Land, among strangers to all righteousness, my sorrow unrelieved by any word of sympathy.

Yet the trials through which I passed, though they seemed at times unendurable, failed to make me the sober, long-faced Christian which I longed to be. For I supposed that laughter and jesting were incompatible with a perfect life. By nature I was mirthful and quick to see the ludicrous side of things. There were times when I wept bitterly over the strange conduct of the church people, but often it took some amusing phase, so that I could even laugh over it. Few could get ahead of me in a joke. In fact, idle words were my besetting sin, and this I realized so keenly that tears often filled my eyes when I thought of having to give account of all my idle words before the great Judge.

For several days I had been unusually burdened on the account of my own unworthiness; and, one night, when my husband had gone to lodge-meeting I fell asleep weeping and praying that at least my little Sarah might be kept free from sin and stand spotless on the Day of Judgment.

The dream which followed I shall always remember, and believing it can do no harm to any, and perhaps be a comfort to some, I will here relate it.



SARAH GIDDINGS.

A shadowy arm and hand seemed to rise by my side. I looked at it in dazed wonder, when I heard a voice say, "Behold the mansions Christ has prepared for you."

I looked where the hand pointed and saw two mansions standing side by side, one white, the other of gray stone, surmounted by spires of great height. The voice spoke again: "They will be like a school. You will be taught what to do. Let not doubt disturb you."

As I continued to gaze, the sky seemed formed of huge rocks, which projected over the mansions that were "many," and stood in pairs, side by side; one was white, the other was stone, in the east, west, north and south, so that I could see no way to pass from one to the other.

As I was viewing this strange sight I beheld two mansions of greater size, which stood far above all the rest, their towering spires seeming to project between an opening in the rocks where, far away and apparently at an immense height, I saw a speck of blue sky. I then became aware that what I at first thought was the sky turned to rocks was only an enclosure of rock. I looked from the mansions the hand first pointed out to me; and, as my eyes measured the long distance to the two which stood side by side so far above the others, I thought to myself that, in time, I could make the long journey and be in Heaven.

"Thank God!" I gasped, "I shall reach Heaven at last!"

"Not Heaven," replied the voice, "but the last mansion you will pass through. Do not fear. Your account will be made out there. Christ himself will place it in your hand. Immediately after you will stand before the great Judge, and answer all questions at his command."

I awoke, to find it was a dream, yet my heart was filled with peace, and since then I have never grieved

or been anxious to know what I shall answer the Judge when I stand before him at the last great Day. I shall owe nothing to the law, but be like a debtor who can show his account fully canceled.

One day, while canvassing, I took dinner at the home of Oliver Cooper. In the course of conversation I remarked that I never had but one dream worth the telling, yet that one had greatly comforted me and strengthened my faith.

At their request I related my dream. When I had finished, Mrs. Cooper asked her husband to relate a dream he once had. He was much agitated at recalling it, and said it was no dream. He had seen the hell, or place of torture, where drunkards go after death. They seemed to be confined in places like stalls, heated, as an oven, by unseen fires. Imprisoned within these walls of heated rock, the wicked suffered according to the deeds done in the body. Among them he saw and recognized people he had known. There were different degrees of heat. Some appeared to suffer but little, while others writhed in the extreme of agony. This frightful vision so appalled him, even in the recollection, that the thought of it, he averred, would send cold chills over him in the hottest weather. He then told his wife to relate the rest, and her story added new interest to the account.

He had been drinking, and was so intoxicated that two of his companions had to help him into the house and on to the bed. As the dinner was ready she invited them to sit down and eat. In a few moments, to their great amazement, her husband came out of the bedroom nearly frightened to death, but perfectly sober, and told them what he had seen.

The next night he went to a Methodist meeting at the school-house, where he related his strange vision, and was converted. For several years he lived a sober, Christian life, but for a year or two, I regret to say,

had fallen into his old habits. However, he was never so hard a drinker as before this remarkable dream, or vision, which, in spite of frequent relapses, continued to have a strong influence upon him while he lived.

Twenty years after I related those dreams to a friend, Mrs. Garcia Eldred, who inquired if I had ever read the works of Swedenborg. I had never even heard of him, but when she brought out one of his books I found, to my surprise, a description of a similar vision of the other world, in which he also bore witness to seeing a place enclosed in rock, the first abode of the spirit after passing out of this life. As Swedenborg lived and wrote two hundred years ago, this seemed to me, to say the least, a very singular coincidence.

I relate these dreams, or visions, hoping that some may be impressed for good by the recital, but cannot forbear a word of warning. I do not wish the reader to suppose for an instant that I would advise any unlawful prying into the things of the other world, as in this way I have known many to be led astray as well as myself in times past. My opinion is that it is always better to wait patiently on the Lord for whatever he may choose to reveal and be satisfied to lean on that "sure word" of Scripture which can make us wise unto eternal life.

John 20:29-30-31.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ONLY HEIR—UNLAWFUL PROCEEDINGS.

Before my husband gave me the deed of our place, and after the death of his parents, who had meanwhile died leaving him heir to half an acre of land and a small house, a man who lived in the village met me on the street one day and told me that he had bought the old place; the papers were at that moment being made out by a justice of the peace.

In much surprise I hastened home and asked my husband if he had indeed sold his father's estate. "Not that I know of," he answered, but finally he said, after a moment's thought, that some months before he met Dr. A., who told him he wanted his signature to a paper. He followed him into the office of the justice, and the doctor laying his finger on a certain line in the paper told him to "sign there." "I turned the paper over to see what it was he wanted me to sign, and saw 'Mortgage' written in large letters at the top. The doctor snatched the paper and told me I was not there to read the document, but to witness it, and commanded me again to sign my name. He spoke so peremptorily that I wrote my signature. He then told me to remember that I had signed such a paper, and I answered that I should not be very apt to forget signing it, for it might be, for aught I knew, my death warrant."

On hearing my husband's story I went directly to Lawyer Fields, to see what could be done. He said the first step was to get the paper from the doctor and find out what the document really was that my husband had been made to sign.

Dr. A. claimed that my husband had sold him the place, but gave up the paper with the remark that I was powerless to do anything about it, as the property was his.

The lawyer looked at the paper and then said with a laugh, "This has been made out according to Canada law. It is a mortgage, bill of sale and deed, all three combined; but, according to Vermont law, it only amounts to a mortgage."

The document was dated at the time my children were in the Burlington Home, and was to satisfy a claim of fifty-eight dollars, the house and land to become the doctor's if the money was not paid within a year. As Dr. A. did not allow my husband to read the paper, the latter supposed that he wrote his name merely as a witness. Consequently, at the end of the year, the doctor calculated that he could enter at once into possession of the little inheritance left my husband by his father.

As the land alone was worth one hundred and fifty dollars at that time it will be seen that a brother Mason expected to get double and treble of the sum actually owing to him. Lawyer Fields, however, told me to give myself no uneasiness; that, as this place joined my own home, of which I held the deeds, and the latter was valued below five hundred dollars, I could keep both pieces of property under the terms of the Homestead Act.

I felt that the doctor had forfeited all right to the money by thus taking advantage of my sick husband's condition, especially as Lawyer Fields assured me that it could never be collected, the transaction being so plainly illegal. It therefore remained unpaid till some years later, when Dr. B. J. Kendall, a cousin of my husband, who was a man of means, and had been very kind to us, being about to move from the place, and fearing we might some time be made trouble, called on the doctor, settled all claims up to October, 1883,

and gave my husband the receipt, telling him to "be sure and take good care of it."

A year or two after my husband and son worked all summer for this same doctor. In the fall, when Mr. Giddings came to settle up, the doctor told him that he had turned the wages of both on this old account. He had a receipt, "paid in full," all ready, and bade my husband sign it as peremptorily as on the former occasion. And again he did so, cowed as before by the doctor's manner. But he had enough sanity remaining to be conscious after it was done that he had been wronged, for he came home much excited, saying he and Howard had lost all their summer's work.

I went with him to the doctor's office to see what could be done about it.

"Doctor!" I exclaimed, as soon as I entered the office, "it won't do for you and others to take advantage of my son as you have of his poor sick father. You must at least pay my son for his work, or I shall enter complaint to an attorney."

"Mrs. Giddings," he answered, "I am not surprised that you should feel bad about this. I am very sorry for you, but I have waited on Lewis for years; and you surely could not expect me to pay him money when he is owing me. We have settled, and all is satisfactory between us. He was willing to turn Howard's wages, and here is the receipt signed in full. You see you can do nothing about it. Your husband is guardian of his children and can do as he pleases with their wages."

I allowed the doctor to expatiate a while on his own patience in waiting so long, and how everything was perfectly satisfactory between him and my husband. Then I said, quietly, "If this old account has not been paid Dr. Kendall must have forged your name. Would you know your own signature if you should see it?"

"Certainly," he answered, looking a trifle ill at

ease. When I produced the receipt he assumed an air as if greatly delighted to find that the bill was paid, and said he now remembered being in a great hurry at the time Dr. Kendall paid him the money, so that he forgot to cross it off his books. He complimented me greatly on being such a business woman, and assured me over and over again that he would rather pay a hundred dollars than wrong my husband and son out of their just dues.

Though the former was no longer subject to the violent spells of which I have given some account, he was insane all the next summer; but his mental disorder took another form. He would keep himself hidden all day up stairs to emerge about dark from his retreat, look about him for a moment in a wild, startled way, and then go off over the fields, to spend the night in what wild, aimless wanderings I never knew. At daybreak he would reappear, enter his hiding-place once more, and remain invisible until the shadows again fell.

I knew that he was entitled to a pension, as his mental disability was incurred while in the army. So, a few weeks before the birth of my fifth child, I called on our family doctor, stated my husband's condition, and asked his help in procuring a pension.

The doctor looked at me a moment as if in kind pity.

"Mrs. Giddings," he said, "I am very sorry for you, and would be glad to help you if you would allow. But you will not. We have offered to help you, and you have refused. You would refuse again just as you did before."

"No one has offered me help."

"Yes, there has. You have had the offer of as nice a home as there is in town, and all the money you want, but you prefer working as you do to accepting our kindness and support."

These remarks fairly took away my breath, for now

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I knew that the doctor must be aware of the vile offers made me by Mr. S.

"You surely would not expect me to live a wicked life for a nice home?" I gasped, looking with tear-filled eyes into his deceitful face.

"I haven't asked help of any person only of you as a physician, to help me bring the true state of my husband's health before the government."

"You surely cannot expect me to do that, and get your husband a pension, which every one knows he is entitled to, unless you will show some respect to my opinions and those of others. Now I ask you once again: Will you accept our kindness, a nice home, and all the money you want, on the same conditions you have refused before?"

"I can never consent to live a vile life or keep a wicked house," I answered.

With a heavy heart I sought the office of another doctor in the place. He also was a Mason. I told him the same facts which I had related to his brother physician, and begged him to come down and see my husband, so he could give him a certificate of his condition, and thus aid me in securing a pension.

"Certainly," answered the doctor. "Everybody knows he is entitled to one."

So saying, he turned around to his table, drew some paper toward him and took up his pen as if to write.

"Now we must be very careful about the evidence and have everything correct," he said. "You must answer under oath all questions required by the government. The first question is: Have you any means of support aside from yours and your husband's labor?"

"No, sir," I replied.

He explained again that I would have to make a sworn statement, and must be very careful of what I said.

After a moment's pause, during which he looked

and acted as if he thought I had told him a falsehood, he repeated his question for a third time, and told me of the penalty (fine and imprisonment) for taking a false oath.

"You must know I have no means of support other than my own labor," I said.

"I do not know that," he replied, still in the kindest tone. "You may have been offered means of support and refused. In that case your husband cannot get a pension. The government is not going to pension a man and his family whose wife has means of support."

Womanlike, I burst into tears. At this he began to talk very sympathizingly. He did not consider the laws right in all respects, but the government had too much business on its hands to inquire into the details of every case. The question was, Had I, or had I not, been offered means of support aside from my own labor?

"The government would surely not desire me to accept a wicked life to support my family," I said, for he spoke too plainly now for me to mistake his meaning.

I was well-nigh dumfounded to hear him reply, in almost the identical language of his Masonic colleague, that "there was a difference of opinion in regard to right and wrong." He told me again that if I should swear that I had no means of support, having had support offered me and refused, I should be imprisoned for taking a false oath and defrauding the government. He drew a graphic picture of the distress of my young family, if their mother had to go to jail. The government would certainly send its detectives round, and I should be found out. Yet all the time he was expressing the greatest sympathy, and his manners were of the suavest and gentlest. This art is one that is understood to perfection by the true Freemason. Others of a lower degree may be rough in manner and rude of speech, but the ini-

tiate who has attained the true secret of Masonry has all the polish of a thorough-going Jesuit, the same talent at sophistry, the same plausible way of making it appear that "the end justifies the means."

This may shed some light on the much-talked-of "pension frauds." Who can say how many families of poor and sick soldiers have had their necessities thus cruelly taken advantage of, and to secure means to live have sold themselves at the demand of the Secret Empire? The law passed to pension men who never did the government any service was not passed out of kind regard to the men themselves, but in this way a larger number have been brought upon the pension roll from which Masonry can choose its favorites or its victims. Men are pensioned who never participated in even a skirmish, while others are kept out, for no reasonable cause, who were in the hard-fought battles of the Civil War. I heard one man say that he enlisted and got a large bounty. The war closed before he had the chance to be in a single engagement, and, according to his own statement, the time he passed in the service was "a regular picnic." He had a large family of healthy children and grandchildren, yet he drew a pension of twelve dollars a month for years. I have known of a soldier in the same town who received but fourteen dollars a month, and died of disease contracted in the army, yet have never heard of a single instance in which a pension detective troubled himself to look up these cases of wrong practised upon poor, disabled soldiers and their families, however flagrant and well known.

We struggled on in our poverty till about the year 1880, when I made another application for a pension, paying to the attorney who wrote for me to Washington, one dollar, the pay received for doing two large washings. I soon received a letter from Charles E. Farman, pension attorney, making inquiries about my husband's condition. This I answered at once,

giving full particulars of his case. Unfortunately the attorney's next letter fell into my husband's hands, who took it himself from the postoffice.

"You have applied for a pension?" he said as he entered the house.

"Yes," I answered, with a glance at the large yellow envelope which I knew must contain the attorney's reply.

"On the ground of my being insane?"

"Yes."

He did **not** seem angry, but greatly agitated, and after saying, "My God!" several times, asked me if I realized the consequences.

"Yes, and the government owes you a large amount of money which ought to keep you and your family comfortable. These attacks that you have are insane spells. You are certainly entitled to a large pension, with arrears of pay, and on that ground."

"I think I had better answer the letter myself," he said.

The next day, when I came home from church, he was writing to the attorney. He read the letter aloud to me. It was very nicely worded, and certainly contained nothing to disprove his statement that I was in error in attributing his disabled condition to insanity. He "was not insane," he wrote, "but very nervous."

There were some papers made out, but when the attorney called for an examination, which he did two or three times, my husband persistently refused, fearing, no doubt, that if pronounced insane he would be put in an asylum. On this account the pension business was dropped until 1883 or 1884, when our condition was again so distressed, and several years having elapsed since I was offered the questionable support of the lodge, I concluded to try the same Dr. R., who would so gladly have aided me, had not my inability to swear that no support had been offered me proved such a stumbling-block in the way.

I informed him that I had already applied for a pension on the ground of my husband's insanity, and again requested him to make out a medical certificate of his condition.

Dr. R. then explained that it would take a great deal of money to procure a pension; which, in my circumstances, I could not afford. He ended by inquiring the ages of my children, and especially of my eldest daughter.

I told him, "fifteen."

He then asked me several questions, and, among others, "if she was a well-developed woman."

As this seemed to me an improper question, and utterly irrelevant to the business I had come on, I hesitated in answering. Seeing this, he explained that he only wished to inquire whether she was healthy, like myself, or if she inherited her father's nervous disability. He then advised me not to do any thing more about securing a pension, as it would take so much money I should only distress my family. He encouraged me by saying, in a very kind and fatherly way, that my children were getting large and would soon be able to help me more.

A few nights after, my husband came home and told me he had been made a grand offer. On certain conditions one of his brother Masons would settle quite a large sum of money upon our daughter as long as she lived.

I will mention here that she was not a strong girl but since the age of fourteen she had been obliged on account of our poverty, to work in the publishing department of a patent medicine company in the place.

For several weeks he urged me to consent to this shameful demand, and when he found that I repelled it with all the horror natural to a mother, he relapsed into such a state of chronic ill-will that, for the two following years during which I remained his wife, he never spoke to me a kind word.

It was several months before our daughter was aware of what caused the trouble between us, and then it was her father who revealed it in one of his fits of insane anger. Her grief and horror when she discovered the terrible truth can only be faintly imagined. She wept so incessantly that her companions at the place where she was employed were obliged to aid her in order that she might keep up her share of work and not lose her situation.

One thing I considered very strange. The Mason my husband claimed was the one who had demanded our daughter she assured me never took any notice of her beyond the most ordinary civilities. "If you ever learn the truth, mother," she often said between her sobs, "you will find out old Dr. R. is the guilty man."

Such a terrible accusation against one of the leading lights of the church must not be allowed. I told her that she had misjudged Dr. R.'s kindness, and forbade her ever again accusing him. For I firmly believed what my husband had told me regarding the guilty one whose name was often mentioned, and struggled continually against the hatred which the very mention of his name inspired in my heart.

Through all this dreadful trouble I continued to trust in the Lord, hoping that some way would be provided so that I should not be obliged to break up my family by getting a divorce, for I still hoped that the day might come when my prayer would be heard, and my husband restored to soundness of mind and become a Christian.

But there came at last a crisis in our affairs, when duty to my child demanded that I no longer hesitate.

My husband came home late one evening and angrily told me that "there was to be no more fooling; I must conform to his wishes."

I comprehended but one thing in the horror and agony of that moment; that what I did, I must do

quickly. I wrote a letter to Hon. Judge Royce, of St. Albans, and also addressed a letter to the State's Attorney, supposing that he lived in that city, or, if not, that it would be forwarded. I received a letter by return mail from Judge Royce, saying that I could see him in his office at any time I chose to come to St. Albans. I also received a letter from Attorney Ball, stating that he would be at the American House the next day.

I went to St. Albans and entered complaint against my husband to Judge Royce. He sat for a few moments in deep thought. "These men," he finally said, "understand a private law known only to a few, and this they are trying to enforce. I am afraid they may use violence, as there is no law for your daughter's protection."

"Is it possible," I cried, "that there is really a law in Vermont which allows such a crime to be committed?"

He assented with a nod of his head.

"Then lock me up in jail, or where else you please," I exclaimed, passionately; "for if you don't I shall surely kill the father of my children. Yet I have tried to serve the Lord from a little child, and it is strange, after giving me so many proofs of his love, that he should allow me to be driven to such a terrible crime."

I then told him my story; the plot by which my marriage had been consummated, the threat of my husband's brother Mason to ruin me and my family, and how lodgemen were now taking advantage of my husband's enfeebled mind.

Judge Royce heard me through in silence. He was a man whose legal training forbade his speaking from impulse, or without due reflection.

"I have never known of a woman consenting to such a life after she was eighteen," he finally said. "They have to get possession of them before that age. The law is all wrong, but there are so few of us op-

posed that we have very hard work to get anything done right in the Legislature. The other party seems to be growing stronger all the time. You can get no divorce on the complaint you have brought, terrible as it is. By Vermont law, as it now stands, her father is the guardian of your daughter, and can dispose of her as he likes. The law does not ask the mother's consent; and so, for this reason, you cannot enter suit in court on such grounds."

I was silent. It seemed as if fate was closing hopelessly about me, hedging me in on every side, and leaving no avenue of escape; for was not Judge Royce telling me the same thing that Attorney Ladd had told me years before?

"No one can blame you," continued Judge Royce. "You can kill your husband or any man who attempts to enter your house for such a purpose, and I will clear you by making it a case of self-defense. In fact, on the day that private law was passed, which these men are now trying to enforce, we came near having a fight in the Legislature. We who opposed it told the other side, when they succeeded in passing the bill, that, should any attempt ever be made to enforce it, there would be bloodshed. However, on thinking this over, I should advise, as the better way, that you change the ground of complaint to one of abuse, for surely there could be no greater case of abuse, and any court in the land will sustain you in your suit for a divorce."

He advised me to enter my complaint to the State's Attorney. I said I had already written to him, and was now going to meet him by appointment at the American House.

Our interview then terminated, and I went to see Mr. Ball, but at the close of our conversation I was surprised to learn that this gentleman, though he was State's Attorney a few years before, did not now hold that office. This, of course, prevented mine from

becoming a State case. I never understood how he, a private attorney, came in possession of my letter, or took up what was only intended to be a State case.

He told me at what time to go to his office in the courthouse, informing me that he had a partner who would attend to my case. My daughter and I both went to the courthouse, saw his partner, and entered our complaint. When I found that both men were Masons I hesitated about trusting my case in their hands, and told him the reason. He assured me that I was mistaken in attributing the sins of a few bad men to the whole order; that the Freemasons would never uphold my husband in abusing his wife and children, but that their obligations extended to me and my family. They would see that right was done by me.

He was very polite, and seemed to take such an interest in my case that I began once more to think I had been lacking in charity. It thus happened that my case was tried in private court, and it is with great reluctance that I now uncover the past. This duty I owe to God and my fellow-beings to expose this wicked system, and the vile laws under which it seeks protection in its assaults on virtue.

I was told by Judge Royce that few men comparatively knew of the existence of this private law, and it is certainly a significant fact that, while I have talked with many on this subject, I have never yet seen a man outside of the Masonic lodge and the legal profession who knew of its existence. But it must be plainly evident to a candid reader, from what has gone before, that the high Masons are acquainted with this iniquitous statute and know well how to enforce it on the families of poor brother Masons of lower degree.

Is it not time that the eyes of American women were opened to see that the degradation of one of their sex,

however poor or ignorant, or friendless, is the degradation of all?

I believe if statistics could be obtained they would astonish the world, and make the church stand aghast with horror that it had been warming such a viper in its bosom. And in this connection I must record the fact, though with sorrow and pain, that I received no word of sympathy or help from a single member of the church to which I belonged, in this my hour of greatest need.

We are fast approaching the evil hour when this spirit of Anti-Christ shall unite church and state, and bring on that time of trouble, such as was never known before—so sharp and terrible that, for the elect's sake, lest there be no godly seed left in earth, those days are, in mercy, shortened.

How long must pure women bear the disgrace of their fallen sisters? Why not put the sin and shame of that army of Magdalenes—the most serious problem with which Christianity has to deal—where it properly belongs? And, when this is done, it will be found that it is the demoralizing secret system which shields the men by whom they are enticed to their ruin, and is the chief inspirer of those vile private laws which leave them at the outset with no protector.

1 Corinthians 3:13, 14, 19, 20.

CHAPTER X.

EXPERIENCE WITH ATTORNEYS.—LEAVING HOME.—A CONSPIRACY.

My business delayed me till the next morning, when I took the train to my home. Two strangers were on board, one of whom I was sure must be the officer sent to serve the writ on my husband. I felt naturally shocked at the idea of coming home on the same train with an officer, and when I left the cars started off on a quick pace. But he soon overtook me, and inquiring courteously if I was Mrs. Giddings, asked where he could see my husband. I answered that he had worked in the woolen factory (which was true, only it had been several years since). I told him to inquire there. I then, by taking a short cut across the fields, reached home a short time in advance of the officer, who, I will here mention, was a Mason, but attended strictly to business, and showed no particular sympathy for his lodge brother in distress.

For a little while my husband, sobered by the step I had been forced to take, refrained from any abusive treatment of his family, but his weak mind soon yielded to the influence of the vile men who had him so completely in their power.

I must draw a veil over many sad scenes which I could not have borne, save through the grace of God, which I can truly say has never failed me, but has proved strongest when my need was greatest. But my husband's treatment of us finally became so unendurable that it was impossible to live at home with him, and application to my attorney gave me no satis-

faction. I was only told that I must put up with it or leave; for though I held the deed of the place there was no law by which my husband could be made to leave until my divorce was granted, when they would see that my property rights were secured.

As a last resort I put my children in the Orphans' Home at St. Albans, and went to work in the overalls factory in that place, securing two rooms and boarding myself. I was so near the Home that my children could come Saturday night and stay over Sunday. Thus I kept home ties to a large extent intact. Meanwhile my husband stayed on the place, the income from which helped to supply his wants, as he was unable to work, the rent of the house helping to pay his board. I had a fine garden, but that summer all my much-prized currant bushes were mysterious removed, and my rhubarb plants and hop vines followed the same way. My husband, when questioned, knew as little about it as I.

Still another method was taken to distress me. Two men who were in partnership unbeknown to me purchased my only cow of my husband, taking part of her value to satisfy a debt he had contracted, and claiming they paid the rest to him in cash, though he said he had no recollection of ever receiving the money. This was plainly illegal, as Vermont law prohibits a creditor from taking the family's last cow. I saw one of my attorneys, who said it was too late to get back the cow, as she had already been purchased and driven off. I was getting somewhat dissatisfied with my Masonic attorneys, who had, it seemed to me, designedly made out the papers in such a way that my interests were not protected. I therefore applied to a Roman Catholic lawyer, naturally thinking that his religion forbade the thought that he could possibly belong to the fraternity.

He told me he would charge nothing for talking with me about the case. I then related my loss, to which he replied that the cow was certainly mine by law; that

wherever she was I had a legal right to her, and if I would give him ten dollars he would in three days drive her to my door.

Neither I nor my daughter had so much money, but I wrote to my son Howard, who was then in Potsdam, N. Y., studying portraiture, and stated the situation. He was of consumptive tendency and paid his way while learning the business by working early and late, washing glass for the firm, and doing outside chores, and often rising as early as three or four o'clock in the morning, that he might have time for his studies. *Yet he sent me five dollars out of his scanty earnings*; I managed to add another five and gave it to the attorney, who put me off with various excuses. At last, after he had set several different times for getting the cow, which failed to materialize, I asked him to tell me definitely whether he intended to do anything about the case.

A peculiar look crossed the attorney's countenance, and smiling blandly, he told me that, as I desired him to tell me the truth, it simply amounted to this; that he should not do anything about it, as it would not be for his interest to offend influential men like the one who had purchased my cow, and who, I may add, afterwards became State Senator.

I reminded him that in that case he ought to return the ten dollars, as it was paid him only on agreement that he should get back my cow.

He looked at me with a smile, as if to see how I would take the disappointment, and then answered insolently that he "had got the ten dollars and was going to keep it."

I was not surprised to learn, afterward, that though a Catholic he was a Mason, and one with the lodge ring who had so deeply wronged myself and family, and were now trying to distress me still further.

With a smile that I tried to make as bland as his own, I thanked him for telling me the truth, thus saving me



HOWARD GIDDINGS.

any further trouble, and left his office. A Mrs. Shirley, who worked in the American House, told me that he obtained ten dollars from her in a like fraudulent way, and I afterwards learned of several other poor working women from whom he had taken money on false pretences.

Though outwardly calm and even smiling, when I left his office, I did not mean to be thus cheated without making some complaint. I saw Judge Royce and asked him what I could do about getting back my money. He replied that while I could without doubt force the attorney to refund the ten dollars he knew all the crooks in law and might put me to many times that expense before the case was through. He would, therefore, advise me to let the matter drop.

With all the terrible facts that had been revealed to me, my husband himself soon brought even more startling evidence, by telling me that if my case came to trial the Masons had their plans laid to take me to the insane asylum. He informed me that I would not be allowed to say a word, but as soon as I entered the court room two Masonic doctors were to inform the court that I was insane, and then proceed to carry out their scheme by taking me off to the asylum, and keep me there as long as I continued obstinate; in which case I should never see my children again. He begged me with tears in his eyes to withdraw my suit and comply with their request.

I told him I should never yield to them. Though my baby was but two years old, *I would be separated from her forever, and die in the insane asylum* rather than consent to their vile demands. I could scarcely believe that a wrong so terrible was actually in contemplation, but I hastened at once to my attorney and asked him if he had heard anything about my being insane.

He nodded, and replied in the affirmative.

"Who told you, and how did you hear it?" I exclaimed.

"Several people have told me so, and I have been the recipient of a number of letters from parties in Enosburg, some claiming that you are insane and others denying it. But when the case comes to trial the contrary can easily be proved, as you are now supporting



BABY GRACE.

yourself and children. You need not be in the least alarmed."

I had no relatives or intimate friends to take an interest in my case, but in my trouble I thought of Dr. R. We were both members of the same Episcopal church, and he was also godfather to my youngest child. He received me in his usual kind and almost

parental fashion; but when, after some words of indifferent conversation, I related what I had found out from my husband and attorney, his whole manner seemed at once to change. He looked at me with a strange kind of glance, as if he had indeed great doubt of my sanity, and replied:

“You are a little off; a little off.”

I tried to talk with him on matters connected with my case, but he refused pertinaciously to enter into conversation with me, and only repeated again, “A little off—a little off.”

I left his office, and went to that of Anson Ladd. I begged him to excuse me for calling as he had nothing to do with my case, and then told him of the scheme I had discovered to get me into the insane asylum, and also how Dr. R., who I had been so sure would stand my friend, had treated me. Now I felt that I had not a friend, but I had kept a record of my persecutions, and I begged that should they succeed in their design, and put me in an insane asylum, he would take measures by means of this manuscript to bring the real truth before the people. For it may be mentioned from the time I learned that my marriage was plotted by Free Masons I commenced to keep this record, trusting that some time the facts now related in these pages might be brought to light, to God’s glory, and the exposure of the evil deeds plotted in secret against the poor.

Mr. Ladd sprang from his seat and began to pace up and down the floor. He was by nature a very mild-tempered man, but he now seemed quite excited, even angry.

“These men may soon find that the halter will be on their own necks!” he exclaimed. “They are almost at the end of their rope, and the trap will spring when they least expect it.”

His appearance convinced me that he believed a plot had been actually laid to imprison me in an insane

asylum. But to my inquiries whether they could succeed in accomplishing it, he only repeated his remark; nor did he seem inclined to explain it or say very much on the subject.

I went to my attorney, and told him how Doctor R. had treated me. I then showed him an appeal to the Grand Lodge which I had written and asked him to present it at a meeting of that body, for I believed there were honorable men among them who would not uphold their brother Masons in the advantage they had taken of myself and sick husband.

He again assured me that I had no occasion for alarm; that they could not possibly make me out insane.

I told him that if I was insane I had a record in manuscript which would prove I had been insane for several years; that I meant to make a number of copies of it, and send it around to enough people to insure the truth being brought to light. The lodge would find it could not hide its crimes by putting me in an insane asylum.

"How far does the record date?" he asked, in a disturbed tone.

"Ten or fifteen years."

"How much manuscript have you got?" he further inquired, with still more disturbance in his voice and manner.

"Enough to bring the truth before the people," I answered.

He then told me that he could do nothing about presenting my appeal to the Grand Lodge until after I obtained my divorce.

"Can you get proof of your marriage?" he asked.

"I have written to Mr. P., the minister who married me, and the witness, but have received no answer. I have nothing but my marriage certificate."

"That will not be accepted in court. You must have witnesses or you cannot get your divorce."

I could not procure the witnesses, but decided to let my case come to trial.

My life, dark as it seemed at this time, was brightened by a new token of the Lord's goodness in providing me with agreeable employment in the overalls factory at St. Albans. It was the pleasantest place in which I ever worked. The proprietors seemed to have the interest of their work-people at heart, and the wife of one, Mrs. Stark, knowing that I thought of securing rooms in a certain block, asked me to wait till she had consulted her husband. They then made arrangements to clear out a certain large room in the block occupied by the factory, and had it partitioned off into three apartments, including a nice pantry. The kind-hearted lady and her husband were greatly delighted when my children and I were at last comfortably situated in rooms right across from the hall where I worked.

I took it as another proof of the Lord's kind care, and flattered myself with the hope that my darkest sorrows were past, and a brighter future already dawning.

A short time after I had begun housekeeping a young married couple asked that they might board with me. I finally consented. This was followed by so many other applications that I finally left the factory for the more profitable occupation of running a boarding-house.

A few days before my divorce suit was to come off, my attorney sent for me to see him at the American House. When I entered the hotel parlor I was astonished to find this hitherto polite and urbane gentleman in a towering rage.

"Your divorce case is coming off in a few days," he remarked in a very agitated and angry manner, "and I want you to understand that you are not to say a word in court except to answer the questions asked."

Up to this time my attorneys had both been exceed-

ingly kind and polite, though I had not been entirely satisfied with their actions in regard to my affairs.

"Don't you dare mention your property in court!" he bellowed fiercely. "Don't you dare say a word except to answer the questions the Court may ask you."

I was rather amused than frightened to see him pace up and down the parlor, angrily gesticulating with his long arms, and uttering his mandates in a voice like thunder. I calmly reminded him that he and his partner had promised me I should have my homestead when the trial came off, and asked him what occasion there was for talking to me in this threatening manner.

He yelled that my property was an after-consideration. When I got my divorce I could sue my husband off the premises.

I remembered what my husband had told me, that their plan was not to allow me to say a word in court, and understood very well his reason for talking to me in this bullying fashion. He hoped to frighten me so that I should be afraid to explain my case in court. And as the explanation flashed over my mind, I almost laughed to see him gesture and rage, feeling assured that the Lord would yet bring the plans of my enemies to confusion, and make them see their weakness.

On leaving the hotel I sought the residence of Hon. Judge Royce, and told him how my attorney had forbidden my saying anything to the court, and asked him if I would be obliged to remain silent while my lawyers presented just as much of my case as they desired, or if I should be allowed to explain, in the event of their trying to use deception on the court, possibly to make me appear insane.

Judge Royce then told me to go to the Weldon Hotel and ask the waiter to let me see Judge Powers, at the same time giving me particular directions what to say to him. I was first to ask, "Is this Judge Powers?" and on his answering in the affirmative, say: "Judge

Royce sent me here to talk with you." He had me repeat the words over after him two or three times, and then dismissed me, saying that Judge Powers would know what he meant.

I did so; but after I had repeated the formula given me, I told him about the peculiar conduct of my attorney, and ended by asking him if he was a Mason.

"Not in court," he answered. "My oath as Judge is higher than that of a Mason."

I then related how I had been obliged to support myself and children, and some of the time my husband; that my attorneys had made out the papers in such a way that I had been forced to leave my home, and through their neglect even my cow had been taken. But I had put up with all this and tried not to offend them.

Judge Powers assured me that his being a Mason would make no difference; he would see that I had a fair trial. He appeared much grieved at my story, expressed his sorrow that such a woman as I should be obliged to get a divorce, and promised that my case should come to trial right away.

The next day I received a letter from my other attorney, telling me to be at the American House at a certain hour. I went up to the hotel and was scarcely seated before the attorney began, civilly enough, yet with a covert sneer in his tone: "So you have been to see Judge Powers! What did you do that for? Was it to prejudice him against your husband? You may lose your case by taking such a step. I am sure you would if I was Judge."

I reminded him that they had promised I should have my homestead when my case came to trial, but his partner had said it must not be mentioned in court. He told me, in the words of his partner, that my property "was an after-consideration," and I must sue to get it. He said again, that I had prejudiced my divorce case with Judge Powers by going to see him, and ap-

peared much vexed, though unlike his partner, he treated me with outward civility.

I did not dare tell how I was sent to Judge Powers, fearing they would blame Judge Royce. I preferred to bear the blame myself. So I allowed him to think I had gone of my own accord and without advice; a thing of which I would certainly never have thought.

My case came to trial the next evening.

I left my boarders eating supper and went at the time appointed. The court was sitting in a private parlor of the Weldon Hotel. The first question asked me was, What had caused the greatest trouble between myself and husband?

I gave the facts as I have previously related them, and stated that I had been told that the only way to protect myself and family was through a divorce.

I was again asked if there was not some other cause of trouble, and again said, "No."

My daughter was questioned and confirmed the statements I had made.

I will state here that when we first went into court my attorneys were asked if my husband had put in any defense, and replied in the negative. The reason was, because he could not find an attorney willing to appear against me.

My son Howard was then called upon to testify. He was asked if he had heard anything which led him to believe that his father and mother had trouble on those grounds, and then, at the request of the Court, related some of the circumstances.

Judge Powers then turned sharply to him and said: "Now, tell us when you first became aware of this." A hectic flush overspread the face of my noble son, and after a moment's silence he answered that he could not tell, being too young at the time the trouble first began to understand its nature. He well remembered the last time when he knew of trouble from this cause. It occurred the winter before he went to Potsdam. He



ANNA GIDDINGS.

1904

had heard his sister cry as she told their mother she was afraid she would lose her place in the Spavin-Cure building, if the proprietors should discover how her constant weeping unfitted her for work.

After the testimony was all given in, one of my attorneys informed the Court that there was no proof of my marriage, as it was not on record, and there were no witnesses.

Judge Powers quietly asked me if I had a certificate, and where it was. I took it out of my handbag, having been previously advised, though not by my attorneys, it need scarcely be said, to take it with me.

"Is that sufficient proof," asked one of my attorneys, in a very doubtful tone.

"Yes," returned the Judge. "It is an old certificate. I consider it sufficient proof. It is no fraud. It is witnessed and signed by the clergyman who married her. The different hand-writings and the age of the certificate is surely proof of her marriage."

There was silence in the courtroom for a few moments. The Court then asked me if there was any property.

"There is. A house and three acres and a half of land."

"Who is now in possession of the place?"

"My husband."

"Is there any loose property?" asked the Judge, after a moment of silent consideration.

Before I had time to answer, one of my attorneys said "No." I did not dare dispute his assertion, and kept silent. Judge Powers then turned to my attorneys.

"There *must* be some loose property," he said, and, turning from them to me, remarked:

"You have household furniture, surely?"

"Yes, sir," I replied.

He paused again, seemingly for consideration, and then told the attorney I was to have my homestead and

custody of my children, and he wanted him to see that I came into immediate possession of all the property, household furniture, including loose property of every kind.

I have never forgotten the angry looks cast upon him by two members of the court, or the answering look, almost of terror, that flitted over the Judge's face, as if he had involved himself in some unknown danger.

I heard him say in a low tone to the attorney, as if in explanation or apology: "I *had* to do the best I could by this woman. There was no other way. It is the most wicked case that ever came before me. I hope I shall never have another."

They looked into each other's eyes for a moment. Then the attorney bowed as if he understood.

"You must not thank me for doing my duty," replied Judge Powers, when I thanked him for his kindness. "You are worthy of all I have done for you, and more; and now I want to say to you, Never be afraid so long as right is on your side. If you ever have a case in court, make sure that it is understood. Many people lose their cases for this reason, that they were never understood by the court."

I felt like falling on my knees and pouring out my grateful thanksgivings to God, and my heart was lifted in silent prayer as Judge Powers bade me good-bye and left me at the door. Not so my gallant attorneys. They accompanied me through the broad hall and down the stairs into the street, telling me all the time how the Masons had stood by me like brothers, and would always be my friends; that I had every reason to respect the order and ought never to forget how much they had done for me, etc.

I made little or no answer. My deliverance had come from on high. I was in no way indebted to my Masonic attorneys, who had been so careless of my interests. Through their negligence—to call it by the mild-

est possible name—I had been driven from my home and suffered loss and damage in many ways. Nor could my attorney's threatening gesture, when he commanded me to keep silent and only answer the questions of the Court, be effaced from my memory. I felt that this was an instance where God used the wrath of man to praise him; for had I not been thus warned, I should not have seen Judge Royce again before my case came to trial; Judge Powers could have easily been deceived, and their insane dodge successfully accomplished.

I intended at that time never to reveal these facts to the world on account of respect and gratitude for Judge Powers, but year after year the old ring followed on my track like so many bloodhounds, to injure and cause me annoyance; I therefore feel it my duty to God and humanity to continue this painful narrative to the end.

It was not till years after that I realized how easily the Secret Empire could have imprisoned me in the torture den of a madhouse, such as the Waterbury Asylum, where terrible abuses were committed under a superintendent, the revelation of which, as it happened no longer ago than 1896, and at the time created the intensest excitement throughout the State, must be still fresh in the minds of many. Great pains were taken to smother the evidence but without avail. Public indignation ran too high. An investigation was demanded, which brought out many shocking facts. Vermont law, which made the cost of caring for the insane poor devolve upon the State, was responsible for these wrongs. I quote from the "Burlington News" of November 9, 1896:

"Under such a system no one is particularly interested in ascertaining whether in cases of commitment to the asylum the person is really insane, or whether his legal residence is in Vermont. The State pays the freight, and the slightest possible attention is given

to the patient's real condition, or the question whether he is legally entitled to the public care."

Such a law, it can be plainly seen, is an instrument ready-made by which to inflict vengeance. Doctors can be obtained to testify to their victim's insanity, as no attention is given to the patient's condition. I have since learned that the crimes attempted by vile lodgemen—in my own family—have been accomplished in the families of others.

I would like to call the attention of Master Masons everywhere to the oaths they have taken, and ask them to consider of what construction such oaths are capable, and how these unholy vows can be used to silence their protest, even against crimes the most heinous, and committed upon their own families, who, it is popularly supposed, Masons are especially sworn to protect.

Psalms 31 : 11, 13-15, 21-24.

CHAPTER XI.

A SUBJECT WORTHY OF THOUGHT.—THE HIDDEN HAND
IN LOCAL POLITICS.—THE MYSTERIOUS CONDUCT OF
MY LANDLORD.

A short time after my divorce was granted I received a postal card through the mail, which read as follows:

ENOSBURG FALLS, VT., Jan. 12, '88.

"MRS. GIDDINGS: I have a corporation tax of \$1.27 against your place here, which must be paid before Feb. 1st, or I shall have to the sell the same.

“—————,
VILLAGE COLLECTOR.”

I suppress the name, not wishing its publication.

At this time I supposed my taxes were all paid, having a receipt in full, signed by another collector. I had not been notified of my corporation tax, or that would have been as promptly paid. I saw the card was evidently intended for my annoyance and felt convinced enemies were still on my track.

My homestead was valued at four hundred dollars; I was supporting myself and children and here was a threat to sell it for one dollar and twenty-seven cents. Had it been impossible for me to raise this small amount, there was no law to hinder him from making his threat good by putting an attachment on my place, making an untold amount of cost, and selling it at auction, thus robbing me of my home. Fortunately my boarding-house was paying expenses, and a little more, which enabled me to pay my taxes and all outstanding debts.

But what of other women with small homesteads and

without resources, who are sick and not able to earn money, and burdened with small children? Their little homes are liable to be taken from them and sold for taxes; where the just and righteous thing would be to exempt these small holdings entirely. And if this were done the loss to the State, all taken together, would not amount to the vast sums lost annually by the practical exemption of the wealthy tax-dodgers.

Surely the nation can gain nothing by pauperizing its own citizens. The problem of the vast and increasing army of the homeless and what to do with them, is ever with us. For multitudes of poor families it is a constant struggle to pay the taxes on their little homesteads; and when the heads of the household are feeble women, what wonder that so many give up the battle, and their children are left to grow up without the protecting, steadying influence that radiates from one's own fireside!

"He who provides not for his own hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," is as applicable to the State and nation as to the individual. A nation without laws to protect the home, however great its outward prosperity, is always a "decadent nation." We have had much to say of Spanish cruelty and greed, but did ever Spanish tax-gatherers make a more insolent demand on some far-away Filipino in his straw-roofed hut than this tax-collector in Christian New England, who for one dollar and twenty-seven cents would have put an attachment on a poor woman's home?

Though meant to annoy and insult me, I feel that the hand of the Lord was in this occurrence, as it gives occasion to relate some facts I should not have learned had I not been a Mason's wife, regarding the way in which the Secret Empire secured the incorporation of the village.

Several meetings, held to discuss the measure, made

it very evident to the promoters that it could not be carried, save by trickery and stratagem.

One day my husband told me the lodge had hit upon a plan for incorporating the village that was sure to succeed. The clock in the hall was to be put forward about fifteen minutes, to which some of the Masons were to set their watches. Orders were then given to appear on the scene at just the right moment by the changed time, but not before, lest suspicion should be excited, open the meeting, and carry the vote for incorporation. The Masonic element was in the majority, and as their watches agreed with the clock, they, of course, carried the election. When the opposite party arrived on the scene, there was a natural suspicion of fraud, but they had gained their point. This explains how the village came to be incorporated against the will of a majority of the inhabitants and a tax placed upon the poor without their consent.

Of course, the same *ruse* could not be tried the second time; and on an occasion when another important subject was to be voted upon the Masons packed the meeting and opened it, while they had their emissaries button-holing the men on the opposite side, detaining them around the hall door and on the street, talking it over and remarking confidently, "Plenty of time! Plenty of time!" whenever some victim showed uneasiness. Thus their point was carried before many voters reached the hall, and business which should have occupied three or four hours was rushed through in fifteen minutes.

This shows what can be done in the small arena of local politics. Can it not also be done on a larger scale in the State and nation—pass measures utterly opposed to the will of the people, and even plunge the country unexpectedly into a foreign war, or a more deadly civil strife? The whole system is so arranged as to give to a few the power to carry their point, right or wrong, over the heads of the many.

In the "New York Tribune," August 18, 1899, is a notice of the death of Andrew D. Best, one of the principal managers of the railroad strikes in 1886, '87, '90 and '95. It is also mentioned that he was a member of the Masonic fraternity, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of St. John and Malta, and several other fraternal societies.

The tyrannical power exercised by the labor leaders over members of the unions is well known. Can it be otherwise, when they place at their head members of this most despotic of all organizations? The mandates of their Masonic superiors must be obeyed unquestioningly, and the working-man who from conscientious principles refuses to join is crushed as it were between two millstones—the greed and tyranny of capital and the abuse and boycotting of his fellow laborers. For years I have been aware that an invisible hand is craftily manipulating these unions. Now that I know Masonic leaders are at the helm, the mystery is unraveled.

There are intelligent working-men in these unions. I would ask all such to investigate the character of an organization, which is controlling the hosts of labor by causing its most trusted lieutenants to be placed at their head. Long-sealed pages of history are now being opened to the wondering gaze of the world, showing that Masonry has really been in all ages a conspiracy against the poor, masked under a guise of sympathy for their wrongs. Masonry is swearing the laboring men into these unions, taking from them the sacred right of individual opinion, and thus reducing them to a state of slavery, unconscious, it may be, but none the less real.

We are told in God's Word not to put our trust in princes. Why, indeed, should the honest poor put their trust in men who glory in titles like these: Royal Master; Grand Elect, Perfect and Sublime Mason; Prince of the Tabernacle; Prince of Mercy; Grand

Inspector; Inquisitor Commander; Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, and so on.

Now that my life-work is so nearly done, I feel a peculiarly tender sympathy for other poor and friendless ones—they whose children are being ground down and made merchandise of by the same invisible power which is so largely responsible for the present disgraceful condition of our nation—the fraud, trickery and general corruption prevailing in governmental affairs. I entreat every laboring man into whose hands this book may fall to put his trust in the living God and not in Mason-led labor unions, remembering what the wise man has said: “As a roaring lion and a raging bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people.”

The reader who has followed me thus far, will not need to be told that, through all my life, though I have known what it is to be poor, homeless and friendless, the Lord has most faithfully rewarded my trust in Him, and in His strength I have continued to stand on the side of right to this day. By His Holy Spirit He has warned me against the flattery of deceivers. I have seen the designs of wicked men, though they stood high in the church and in society, brought to confusion, and their plans overthrown. What God has done for me, He can and will do for others.

It does seem as if all of Satan's army is organized against the honest people, whose only offense is in not conforming to the world. I will here refer the reader to an item taken from the “Christian Cynosure”: “The labor unions of Chicago are about to introduce (Nov. 13) an ordinance into the City Council which shall provide that police protection be denied in time of strike to non-union laborers. A more barefaced or insane attack on good government is, indeed, difficult to imagine.”

Surely no person who has the welfare of the poor at heart would ask for such a barbarous law, nor force an honest laborer into their order against their con-

science. We need laws that will protect all people in their just rights. The master who would wrong his hired help should be made to pay a heavy fine, and hired help imprisoned if they wilfully damage their employers.

But to resume the thread of my story. My chief trouble, the winter after I obtained my divorce, was my inability to procure good milk, and thereby hangs a tale which it may be profitable to relate.

My boarders being mostly railroad carpenters, had to have a very early breakfast, which necessitated my procuring the milk from the creamery the night before, but it often turned sour when set aside, and no cream rose.

One morning my boarders pushed away their coffee cups with an expression of dissatisfaction. I saw there must be something done or they would leave. I believed that the proprietor of the creamery was not to blame, but his foreman, who was, I am sorry to say, a leading member of the Methodist church. Taking two cups of milk, one purchased of the proprietor, the other of his dishonest employe, I stood them over night, with the result expected: One had a covering of thick cream, the other had turned sour.

As this was a serious matter, involving the daily bread of myself and family, I made a complaint to the man who had so often stood my friend before, Hon. Judge Royce. He advised me to say nothing about it, but promised that I should get no more poor milk. Nor was I again troubled in this way. The next time the Legislature met at Montpelier, the strict Vermont milk-law was passed, which has proved such a blessing to many poor families in this State.

It would be well if men in high position would more often interest themselves to see that justice is done in these seemingly small matters. One good law, if enforced, may prove an inestimable blessing, but my experience has taught me that there are many laws pur-

posely framed in such a way that unscrupulous men can take advantage of the poor when there is no one to protect them in their rights.

Mr. and Mrs. Stark told me that in the spring they would find me a furnished house and guarantee me twenty boarders; but he was taken sick that winter, and died. I therefore decided to take more railroad boarders.

Mr. P——, an official of the Vermont Central, whose office it was to hire the brakemen, was recommended to me as a gentleman of the highest Christian character. I went to his house and asked him if he could furnish me boarders in the spring, and how many. He questioned me very closely as to whether I had a husband, the number of my children, etc., and who had custody of them. He then said:

“I believe you are the kind of woman who will keep a good, respectable house. Now, if you will keep such a house, and allow no drinking, I will send you all the men you can board. Give them to understand that they must behave themselves, and if they do otherwise, report them to me.”

This necessitated more room, and I accordingly asked the owner of the block if he had any more vacant apartments. There was a large hall over the tenement I was occupying, which he offered to partition off into several sleeping rooms; and he even asked me to visit the hall with him while he drew a chalk-mark on the floor, according to my suggestion, to mark off the several divisions. As he promised to have them ready in three weeks, I had cards printed, and was preparing to take the rooms as soon as possible.

A few days after he came to see me, fidgeted in his chair, looked very red in the face, and finally told me that he wanted me to vacate the rooms. He refused to give any reason at first, but finally said that my rooms were needed by the factory company. I inquired at their office, only to learn from the proprietors them-

selves that they had not asked for the rooms, nor were they wanted.

When I informed my landlord, his only reply was to say that I must go, and go at once. I told him I must have time to look up other rooms, and should exercise my legal right to stay till the month was out.

When I moved, my vacated apartments were taken by another family, who paid but three dollars a month, whereas I had always paid five. Here was a mystery. I could not but suspect that my enemies were at the bottom of this wrong, and made up my mind to be very cautious, not knowing the time when another sly attack might be made.

I found a house convenient for my purpose, into which I moved, paying ten dollars a month. Mr. P. kept his word and sent me all the steady boarders for whom I had room. That year, besides paying all expenses, I cleared over one hundred and twenty-five dollars, though I gave away every day on an average from three to five meals to men who came to my door hungry yet had no means to pay their board. I also had the satisfaction of doing a good work among my boarders, some of whom were addicted to drink, but through the influence of Mr. P., who was a great temperance worker, and that of my own family, many drinking men signed the pledge and joined temperance organizations. Some came to my house who had lived a tramp life so long, seeking for work, that they were covered with vermin. Even these poor young men I received as I would wish a son of mine to be received under the same circumstances—by loaning them clean clothes and otherwise helping them to take a new start in life and become self-supporting.

I had to use great caution to keep a knowledge of their condition from the other boarders. If I had the least suspicion of an applicant I assured him he should not be turned away if it was found that he required a mother's care, and requested him to change his clothes

at once. Giving him some of my son's garments to put on, I carefully gathered up for examination the suit of which he had divested himself, with the sheet on which I required him to stand while making the exchange. If vermin appeared on the underclothes of any, it was put in a kettle of boiling brine. I sponged their pants with strong tobacco tea, of which two or three applications were always sufficient.

They were then ready to appear at the polls at the next election and exercise their freeman's right of voting men into office who were to be the lawmakers for women like myself, who, though supporting themselves and families, are reckoned in with paupers, idiots, insane, and convicts, as not entitled to the franchise.

My children were a great comfort to me and did all they could to lighten my cares. Again, I am sorry to say, I turned aside to worldly ways and was looking forward with a mother's natural pride and ambition to seeing my children well educated and able to hold their places with the best in society. My son Howard gave promise of becoming a celebrated artist, while my darling Sarah showed such a decided bent for literature that I resolved to give her a superior education, hoping some day to see her a popular authoress. My youngest son was a smart, hustling little fellow, fond of business and the newspapers. He insisted upon having a daily paper, and to keep himself in change procured a basket and sold apples at the foundry and shops. In vacation he supplied himself with money by being "water-boy" on the excursion trains, etc.

Anna took as much interest in the education of her brother and sisters as I did. It was her earnings, when but fifteen years of age, that first gave her brother Howard a chance to study art. In fact, my children were all my heart could wish, barring the fact that none of them was physically strong. Howard was in especially poor health, and I often feared (what after-

wards proved to be the case) that consumption had laid its fatal grasp upon his system.

He was much interested in the moral welfare of the boarders and took particular pains to get them to church, as well as to the four o'clock meetings held in the hall of the Reform Club.

I well remember how Anna, having just returned from a meeting of the club, came into the kitchen one Sunday, where I was preparing cream for the freezer, and said: "A number of our boarders signed the pledge



MY YOUNGEST SON.

today, and Howard took the lead, Mother. I wish you could have seen how handsome he looked."

"Why, Howard!" I exclaimed, "you never smoked nor took a glass of liquor in your life. What made you sign the pledge? People will think you a reformed drunkard."

"I may be free from such vices," he answered, "but I have other little sins which ought to be repented of; pride, for instance." And his half-reproachful smile reminded me of my growing worldliness.

Sarah had very little time to help about the work,

as she attended school. I thought best to give her some light task, such as washing the supper dishes and emptying the flytraps. She cheerfully washed the dishes, but neglected to empty the flytraps.

"Sarah," I said one day, when dinner was nearly ready, "be quick! Put those traps in boiling water and clean them out."

She walked to the table, looked from one trap to another, and started to leave the room.

"Sarah, mind me! Empty those traps at once, and be quick about it!"

She came back, took one of the traps and a moment after it was plunged in a pan of suds. She had taken another when one of the boarders came in.

"Mrs. Giddings," he said, "see how Sadie is emptying the flytrap!"

I looked, and there stood my beautiful darling at the door, the cover off the trap and a smile on her face, as she watched the little captives escape from their prison house.

"Sarah! Sarah!" I called. "What do you mean, to let those flies escape?"

She turned with a kind of queenly grace and I was surprised at the look of defiance in her soft hazel eyes.

"Mother," she said, "I will never kill a fly. If I have anything to do with the traps, I shall give the little things their freedom, just as I have always done."

When I remembered how in her childhood she would allow a mosquito to feast on her chubby little hands rather than kill it, I told her that of course if she thought it a sin to scald flies, she need not empty the traps.

She was anxious to be confirmed, but I had neither time nor money to spare to get her confirmation suit, which I desired should be of the finest material. In a year or two I would be able to keep a hired girl, and would have more leisure. Then I could select my darling's veil and confirmation clothes, which must

be fit for a queen. She surprised me one day by announcing that the next time there was a confirmation class she should go right from school to the church and be confirmed in her everyday school-clothes; and I seemed to wake, as if from sleep, to a sense of my broken vows. As I looked on her beautiful face my



SARAH GIDDINGS.

heart was burdened with sudden fear lest I should be chastised through some sorrow befalling her. In terror I cried to the Lord to let the punishment for my forgetfulness rest only on me. Why should it fall on her—she who was always so conscientious, so careful of the comfort of others? How often she stood

ready with mufflers and mittens when the men had a hasty call to take the train; with careful hands she placed the long line of overshoes and mittens back of the stove where they could be kept warm and dry. Thoughts of the sorrows that might be her destined portion rent my heart with grief and repentance, that I should have so far drifted back on the tide of worldliness as to call down such a possible judgment on my precious one. It was difficult for me to hide my tears of discouragement as I went about my work, feeling that after all those years of striving I thought I was as far from perfection as when I first resolved to live without sin.

I paid for Sarah's tuition at the convent school at St. Albans, for I meant that she should have a finished education and grow up an accomplished as well as beautiful woman.

One instance of the peculiarly tender care with which I watched over my child of promise may here be given. At school the teacher one day asked the scholars how many had seen the sun rise. All hands went up except Sarah's. She begged that I would waken her the next morning in time to see the sun rise, but so tender was I of her that morning after morning slipped away. I could not bear to rouse her from her sweet slumbers, and so, strange as it may seem, she never saw a sunrise till the celestial morning broke on her vision.

I Peter 1:7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 23, 25. ,

CHAPTER XII.

BOARDING-HOUSE EXPERIENCE—MORE WORKINGS OF THE ENEMIES—A WORD TO THE W. C. T. U.

About a year after Mr. P. began to send me boarders, many damaging charges began to circulate regarding him; charges which his whole life and appearance disproved. He finally resigned and went to Chicago, where he obtained, as I afterwards heard, another and far better position than the one from which he had been driven.

A Free Mason took his place. In less than a week I saw a change come over some of my boarders. They became boisterous, took to smoking in the house, and, finally, informed me that their new employer was making fun of them for having joined a temperance society; for not daring to make a noise in my house; for being tied to a woman's apron strings, etc.

One night they asked me what I would do if they got drunk. I answered that in that case they would have to get a new boarding-place, as I should certainly allow no drinking in my house. Whereupon they gave me to understand that they should break their pledge, and take a glass of liquor whenever they wanted it; that their employer had said he would have no temperance man about him; any one who worked for him must be man enough either to drink or let it alone. They added that they had a right to do as they pleased in their own rooms, either in the way of carousing or bringing in company.

In words quite as decided I gave them to understand that their rooms were as much under my control as

any part of the house, and no improper company would be allowed.

They continued growing more boisterous, and one night, soon after this conversation, set up a terrible howling in their rooms. I told them the next morning they must find a new boarding-place, or behave. The succeeding night things were no better, but even worse, for they kept up such a hideous and prolonged yelling and howling that none of the household were able to sleep. Fearing they would alarm the whole neighborhood, I went out at 2 o'clock to see how plain the sounds could be heard on the street. It was as if pandemonium was let loose.

I began to understand the motive of their employer in putting them up to make such a disturbance, as it could then be claimed that I was keeping a disorderly house. I said very little to the men the next morning, except to repeat my warning, that they must behave themselves or get a new boarding-place; but I went and reported them to Mr. E., telling him that they claimed he was putting them up to conduct themselves in this disorderly manner. I gave him notice, at the same time, that if he paid no heed to my complaint I should make it to the authorities, and if that proved unavailing, to the ladies of St. Albans.

Mr. E. made no talk with me, but as soon as the men returned from their trains summarily ordered them to leave. They had not calculated upon this, and were much aggrieved at having to leave so good a boarding-place. "We only meant to keep up the racket for a week, because he dared us to do it," one of them said, with tears in his eyes, adding that their employer had promised to raise their pay if they would show themselves men enough to make a disturbance. Of course, a whole week of such riotous proceedings would have caused my place to be raided as a disorderly house. That this was the intention of my enemies I had abundant proof afterwards. The men

obeyed Mr. E., and left, but told me that in revenge they proposed to get roaring drunk, which some of them did, coming back a short time after, intoxicated, and with a bottle of liquor. They found another boarding-place that night, but having tasted liquor the demon of appetite was roused so that they kept up the debauch for several days, and in this condition visited their employer's office and loaded him with drunken abuse. I heard that he afterwards said he "had never been so imposed upon in his life."

I commend the above incident for consideration among the W. C. T. U. women, especially those who are connected with the department of work among railroad men. They may thus be led to see that the character of railroad officials has much to do with the morals of the men they employ and also to investigate the influence of the Secret Empire on the cause of temperance and good order generally. Masonic officials will obey the bidding of the lodge, no matter how much it may conflict with their duty to the men they employ.

But another trouble was on its way, beside which all my other trials seemed small. Our family circle was to be broken, and one pet lamb—the most dearly cherished—to be borne away to fairer scenes.

Isaiah 34:16, 17; Isaiah 35:4, 5.



SARAH AND ANNA GIDDINGS.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY CHILD OF PROMISE CALLED HOME—A GLORIOUS VISION.

I had often told my daughter Anna that, sooner or later, some means would be taken to make us trouble, but she did not share my fears. This riotous behavior on the part of our boarders took her by surprise, and the shock so affected her that I became seriously alarmed for her health. I saw she was failing every day and must have an entire change of occupation and scene. At this crisis I was so fortunate as to obtain a situation for her at Houghton & Dutton's, in Boston; and one bright spring morning she departed for her new place of employment, Sarah accompanying her to the depot.

"Mother, I am sure that we shall never see Anna again," were her first words on returning. "She had hardly strength enough to get on the train."

I saw that she herself was ill. She was shaking as if in an ague fit, and complained of cold chills; but I thought it only a nervous affection, caused by her grief at parting with her sister, and tried to comfort her with bright pictures of Anna's restored health. This was on Wednesday, and till Sunday, 3 P. M., the nervous chills, as I thought them, continued, but intermittently, when she complained of being "tired out," and took to her bed. The physician did not seem to consider her case serious, but assured me she would be all right in a few days.

He came daily for two weeks. Fortunately, I had money enough to meet the unusual demands made by

her unexpected illness, and paid him at each visit. At the end of the fortnight she seemed no better. Still she only complained of being "tired." I then changed doctors, and tried another physician. He doctored her for a month, but all the time she grew weaker. At the close he said he could not locate her disease, and did not know what more to do for her. A consultation resulted in another change of physicians. The new doctor tried a regime of tonics and told me she had serious trouble of the heart; that if he could get one natural beat from it he should have some hope, but it fluttered constantly like a frightened bird. He asked me if she had at any time received a severe fright, as in no other way could he account for this feature of her condition.

I could think of nothing but the excitement of her sister's going away and the disturbance made several weeks before by the boarders. She was then attending school, and my anxiety had been so entirely for Anna, who was at home all the time, that I had not noticed how it affected my younger daughter.

I was fortunate during this hour of trial in having a good hired girl and an excellent nurse, as well as a sympathizing friend in Miss Mary R. Keith, for I was so overwhelmed by grief as to be entirely unfitted for either doing my work or watching by my child's sick bed.

It will be remembered that Sarah was promised to the Lord before her birth, but I had failed to fulfill my vow to bring her up entirely for his service. A few months before her illness, my heart had been much pained by seeing what appeared to me a growing tendency to worldliness. One day she begged that I would allow her to curl her front hair like the other girls, saying she "could be just as good as with smooth hair." But while this may appear to most mothers an innocent matter, to me it seemed an entering wedge for vanity, and I refused. Some days later I saw that

she had banged and curled her hair. At first I was grieved. Then I saw that the more fashionable style became her better than smooth hair, and passed it over. Every day I grew more proud of her beauty, and anxious to dress her in the colors which showed it off to the best advantage. She was anxious to learn to dance, and I promised to let her go to dancing-school the next winter. I grew careless of her spiritual well-being, and with my boarding-house cares and worldly ambition, became forgetful of higher things.

And now to my natural grief was added the old trouble. I had again turned away from God. What excuse could there be for my folly, when he had been so kind to me in times past? I felt as if it would be almost mockery for me to call again upon his holy name.

When the truth became apparent that she could not recover, I asked her if she would be willing to go, should the Lord call her. "Oh, I cannot die so young," she gasped; "I have always been so full of fun." She lamented that she had never done any good in the world, saying that if her life could be spared for a year, she would give up all worldly pleasures and every thought should be of God. I answered what I indeed felt bitterly, that I myself had encouraged her in those pleasures that could not last, but told her that we are not saved by works, and, if she had faith in Christ, there was naught to fear; that this life was but a journey from one world to another, to some a long and wearisome pilgrimage, to others but a short and flower-strewn way, and that she was one of the Lord's favorites whom he takes to himself before their eyes are dimmed with tears or their tender feet have a chance to wander in the world's thorny ways of sin.

She looked up at me gratefully with her dark, speaking eyes. "Your words, dear mother, comfort me like an angel's," she said; "I am willing to die; I am willing to go." She gave away her little keep-

sakes with a loving parting word for each, and every shadow seemed to roll from my dear child's pathway.

When she gave her little red pitcher to Baby Grace, who was too young to know the meaning of death, she tried to represent in words fitted to her infant comprehension the great change that awaited her.

"Sadie is going away from Gracie a long way off," she said, as she drew her little sister's sunny head down to her's, where it rested weakly on the pillow, and held her in a long and loving last embrace. "They will put Sadie in a box, and Gracie will ride in a carriage. Then they will put the box in the ground and cover it up, but Gracie mustn't cry or feel bad. For Sadie won't be there. Sadie will be up in the sky. Sadie can never come back, but some day, if Gracie is good, the Lord will let her go and see Sadie away up in the sky."

She very tenderly exhorted her brother Howard to become a Christian, and then expressed a wish to talk with the boarders on the same subject, saying that in this way she might be permitted to do a little work for the Lord before he took her home.

Her beautiful submission should have reconciled my rebellious heart to let her go, but in vain Christian people, and especially Miss Keith, who was a dear old saint, tried to have me look to the Lord for comfort, and reminded me that his grace was sufficient for me; it was impossible to receive comfort from any source. My faith failed me, and I gave up to despair, as entirely as if I had never known the Lord, and felt in my heart I would never again call on his holy name. Yet my kind heavenly father was but preparing to teach me another lesson of his wonderful, unchanging love.

On May 27, 1889, I was standing by her bedside. It had been a beautiful day, and the sun was near its setting. She roused suddenly and opened her eyes with a far-away expression of surprise, while a beau-

tiful, happy look came over her face. Then she closed her eyes again, wearily, as if what she saw was a mistaken fancy. She roused up the second time and opened her eyes with the same pleased expression, succeeded by the same disappointed look, as if so rapturous a sight could not be true.

Again she lay in a seeming stupor, but when she opened her eyes the third time I saw a joyous look come over her glorious face, as if she knew she was not mistaken. I caught my breath as she seemed to slowly change before my eyes into a glorious vision of unearthly beauty. Her smiling lips moved as if to speak, but no sound came therefrom. She then nodded her beautiful head as if to say, "Yes; I am coming." And then, in a moment, the spirit fled, leaving the glory still upon her upturned face. Even the Grim King of Terrors seemed to respect her beautiful form, for she did not look as one dead. Her flesh still retained the hues of life, as if over her death could have no dominion. My grief all vanished at this token of God's love as my beautiful darling passed into a glorious immortality. The peace which passeth understanding once more took possession of my heart, and I could only praise God for his goodness and loving kindness to me and my family in sending this angel into my home though for so brief a time. Without a pang she had passed away from all earthly trouble, leaving behind her only sweet and precious memories.

It had been feared that I would lose my reason, but, to everybody's astonishment, they found me rejoicing and praising God. With the aid of Miss Keith, my own hands robed my darling for the tomb without shedding a tear. I seemed overwhelmed, not with grief, but with joy at the marvelous way in which the divine goodness had been made to pass before me in that vision of the glory into which she had entered.

Thus, when I had given up in despair and refused

to pray, the Lord again gave me proof of his wonderful, unchangeable love.

I trust the vision of my darling's glorious departure may not have been in vain, and that all readers of these pages may be given grace to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and enter into the peace and everlasting joy of God.

Rev. 14:1, 5, 12, 13.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CRAFTY PLOT FOILED.—MY GOODS DETAINED UNLAWFULLY.—AGAIN I AM DELIVERED OUT OF THEIR HANDS.

During my daughter's sickness, I am sorry to say, several of my boarders took advantage of this time of sorrow to leave me with unpaid bills. I was short of money even to pay for my child's casket, but the undertaker kindly agreed to trust me until July first. In this emergency I decided to borrow three hundred dollars from the bank, which the president offered me at a surprisingly low rate of interest, after he learned that my place was insured for six hundred dollars and free of all encumbrance.

About half an hour after my call at the bank a stranger came to the house and asked to see my insurance policy, saying he had been sent by the company to look it over. I let him take the document. He glanced it over, threw down seventy-five cents on the table, put the policy in his pocket and walked off. Before I could recover from my astonishment I received a call from the bank president.

He seemed ill at ease, and after expressions of sympathy for my recent bereavement—he was very kind and courteous in his manner—gently reprovèd me for attempting to deceive him in regard to the insurance on my place, as he had found, upon inquiry, that there was none, but he added that he thought the property worth enough to be good security for three hundred dollars.

"I have not deceived you," I said. "My house was insured at the time I left your office." I then related

how the agent had called and taken away my policy, and pointed to the seventy-five cents still lying on the table, in corroboration of my words. I received the surprising explanation that on his making inquiry of the agent, the latter had told him that there was no insurance on the house; that it was not worth fifty dollars; that no one would insure it, and conveyed to his (the president's) mind that I was a dishonest woman, who was trying to misrepresent my house.

"Did the agent actually insure your place?"

"Certainly," I answered; and stated what sums I had paid and the different dates.

He sat for a few moments making mental calculations, and then said that seventy-five cents would be about the sum due me if the policy was canceled. With entirely changed manner he said he would look at my place, and felt sure that, with my three acres and a half of land, they afforded ample security. A day or two after he came down again in a state of greater disturbance, and said, with even more seriousness than on the former occasion, that he should think I would naturally suppose that he would make inquiries of the town clerk. He had done so, and received word that there was a mortgage on my place held by a man in Enosburg.

I told him it was an old mortgage, paid long ago, and produced the papers. The last payment on the note was Aug. 14, 1880. I noticed at the time that it had not been properly discharged, but the holder told me to leave it with him and he would see that it was done. When I went after the mortgage he said it had been discharged on the town record, and that was all that was necessary, as my holding the papers was sufficient proof that it was paid. He finally wrote the word "Paid" and handed back the paper. I urged that he write "Discharged," which he finally did, but refused to sign his name. As he had always before this treated me in a very kind and brotherly way, I did

not like to vex him by persisting in my request, and took the paper, though tears were in my eyes when I left his house.

I had paid him nine per cent interest, though the legal interest in Vermont is but six per cent. My husband had contracted the debt and agreed to pay this unlawful rate. He had not paid a cent, however, on either the principal or the interest. The man who now refused to properly discharge the mortgage was in possession of thirty-five dollars or more obtained by clear usury, but the attorney who figured it up told me it would be no use to try to collect it back, as to do so would cost me as much as the amount was worth.

I showed the mortgage to the bank president, and he seemed satisfied, saying that he would himself attend to the matter. A few days after he called again with the mortgage, and remarked that he had never had such a time in his life before as in trying to get it discharged. He had written to the mortgagee to no purpose, and finally had to go to his house and demand that it be done. Opening the paper, he showed me that it was at last properly discharged on the second of June, 1889. But, though now duly canceled, he finally refused to lend me the money, for he saw that I was in some mysterious way the victim of secret machinations, and feared to get mixed up with affairs he did not understand.

The landlord had not called for his rent for two months, as I supposed, through sympathy on account of my trouble; but about a week after my daughter's death he called, and in a very angry and excited manner demanded his rent.

"Look here!" he roughly exclaimed, "you must pay me my rent or I will put an attachment on your place in Enosburg and sell it in two weeks at auction."

I at once handed him the twenty dollars due him. He demanded fourteen dollars in addition for a stove

which was standing in the house at the time I moved in, and which I had never bought. I refused to pay for it, but was met by the threat that if I did not he would put an attachment on my place in Enosburg and sell it in fourteen days.

I soon learned that my landlord was buying up my debt accounts with the evident desire to rob me of my home. I asked an attorney if it was possible for him to do as he had threatened. He thought I would be allowed thirty days' grace; but if it could be made to appear that I was unable to pay my debts, he was not sure that my landlord could not make his threat good, and sell it in two weeks. Again I could see the imprint of the hidden hand, and knew I must do something speedily to checkmate its secret plottings. I mortgaged my place to my daughter Anna. She took the morning train and passed through Enosburg Falls to North Enosburg, walking from there to the Centre, a distance of two miles.

She was not strong, and the road was very rough, so that when she reached the residence of the town clerk, having hurried all the way in terror lest she might be too late, she was nearly exhausted. The town clerk was away, but she explained the very urgent nature of her business to his wife, who assured her that no attachment had yet been put upon the place, and that her mortgage should go on record first—which was her legal right as having arrived first.

My daughter stayed till she saw her mortgage duly recorded. A day or two after my landlord notified me that he had put an attachment on my place and would sell it in two weeks. I then wrote to the town clerk to see if this was really so. His answer I will here give in full:

“ENOSBURG FALLS, June 24, 1889.

“MRS. GIDDINGS: I have looked the records over as far as 1864, and do not find any mortgage on the premises owned by you in this town except the one given

to Anna Giddings on the 20th of June, 1889. I also find a writ of attachment filed here June 22, 1889, in favor of H. P——.

Very truly yours,

“W. W. HUTCHINSON,
“Town Clerk, Enosburg, Vt.”

The undertaker, as before stated, agreed to wait until the first of July for his pay, which I could then easily make out from the board-money. But on the 22d of June, only three weeks from the time of my daughter's death, the account for her casket had been purchased and included in the attachment by my landlord, a man said to be worth one hundred thousand dollars, and who could not, with his purchased accounts, bring a hundred dollars against my place.

A day or two after I was visited by the sheriff from Enosburg, in a state of great excitement.

“Mrs. Giddings,” he exclaimed, “your daughter cannot hold a mortgage on your property for money earned while she was a minor. You must have that mortgage discharged at once or stand a trial for fraud!”

I told him I was perfectly willing to stand a trial, and, finding he could not frighten me, he went away. This gave me a chance to test whether my daughter's mortgage would hold. I consulted an attorney. He believed it would, and said if allowed by the court it would nullify the attachment, and the accounts which Mr. H. P—— had purchased could not be collected. It is probable that he, too, consulted an attorney, and found that he had gone too fast and too far, for soon after I returned home his carriage drove up to the door, and his crestfallen attitude showed that he knew himself beaten.

“I have often said I would never have anything to do with a woman,” he remarked, discontentedly, as he entered. “They will always contrive somehow to get the upper hand of me; but I supposed you were an

honest woman. I never thought you were one that would take such a mean advantage of me."

"In what way have I taken advantage of you?" I asked.

"By refusing to pay these accounts which I have bought up honestly."

"I have not refused. I will pay them cheerfully if you will take off the attachment and pay your own costs."

This he agreed to do, if I would hire the three hundred dollars of him. I consented to this, as the best thing I could do under the circumstances; but it should be remembered that I paid double the interest I would have done had not my enemies prevented me from hiring the money of the bank. After my daughter's death I had discerned so plainly the secret working of their unseen hand in my affairs that I decided to leave Vermont altogether, and move to a town in New Hampshire, where I had written to obtain situations for myself and daughter in the woolen mill. Being in a hurry to go, I went with him at once to the attorney's office, where the money was paid over and a new insurance policy drawn up on my place for three hundred dollars, though the agent had declared it worthless and canceled my policy to work me injury and prejudice me at the bank.

My debts were all paid but the grocery bill, which the holder, Mr. Shattuck, had refused to sell to Mr. H. P——, and for the payment of which he most kindly agreed to wait. The day we were to start for New Hampshire my daughter Anna went down to the station to see that our goods were properly shipped, but returned in such a state of nervous excitement that she was scarcely able to speak.

"Mother!" she gasped; "they have put an attachment on our goods, and claim that Sarah's casket has not been paid for."

The reader will not wonder, remembering how brief

the time which had elapsed since her sister's death, that she should nearly faint at the false and cruel charge so heartlessly made, with the evident intention to disgrace us as dishonest people who were fleeing to another state to escape paying our just debts.

I was prepared for something of the kind, and as soon as she was able, I returned with her to the freight depot, taking with me the receipted bill of the undertaker.

I showed it to the men in charge, and asked to have my goods released.

"Pay ten dollars and we will forward the goods."

"I will not pay ten cents."

"Are we to have all this trouble for nothing?"

"Get your pay from the parties who have caused the trouble," I answered. "I am not responsible."

He still refused to release the goods, but while I was considering what to do a man who had been listening to the conversation said to me in a low voice: "There has been no attachment placed on your goods. Don't pay him a cent." Having said this, he immediately passed on, as if he did not wish the remark to be overheard.

In a short time another man came by, also a stranger, and asked me if I had any debts in the state.

"No, sir; only a grocery bill to Mr. Shattuck, who has agreed to wait, and knows of my moving."

"They are working some kind of a sly game that I don't understand. I think they have some one out trying to find an unsettled account against you; but they have no business whatever to hold your goods."

He passed on like the other man, but turned and came back. "There," he said, "the man with the brown coat is the one who is responsible for detaining your goods. He is making you all this trouble, and I would advise you to see an attorney about it. You can make it a dear job for him if you try."

I waited long enough to throw off suspicion from

my informant. Then I stepped up to "the man with the brown coat."

"I am sure the company is not responsible for this annoyance," I said calmly; "but I shall see an attorney at once and find out if you are upheld by law in thus keeping my goods."

His manner suddenly changed. He went into his office, but soon returned, and with so many expressions of regret and sympathy that it led me to think he must be one of Mr. Gidding's Masonic brethren; he assured me that if I saw an attorney it would only make me expense, and that my goods would be released at once.

We missed our train in consequence of this long delay, and were obliged to take a night train, but we went on our way rejoicing, for as our destination was a small place off the line of the railroad, we hoped to escape the secret power which had thus far followed us up.

But vain was our hope. About a week after our arrival, I went to work in the woolen mill. I liked the work, and found pleasant associates among the hands. I did my best to make sure that all the cloth which came from my loom was perfect, and cleared forty-five dollars a month. After a few weeks I was changed about from one loom to another. This did not seem to me strange, supposing it was more for the company's convenience, but I noticed significant looks exchanged between the hands. I was finally put upon a loom in the back part of the factory. Shortly after one of the girls said to me: "I am sorry you are not going to have work in the factory much longer."

I asked, in surprise, what made her think so.

"This is a poor loom and poor warp," she answered. "When the overseer wants to get rid of any of the help, he puts them to work on this loom, where they can't make much. Then they'll get discouraged and leave,

or else so much fault is found with their work that they are discharged."

The action of the overseer in giving me this poor loom occasioned much resentment among the hands, who all knew the reason. One young man who had been a loom-fixer, and an excellent weaver, took it upon himself to see that my loom was kept in order. With this help, I succeeded in working out my warp without complaint.

For two or three weeks I was out of work, contrary to the arrangements I had made with the company, by which my daughter and myself had been guaranteed employment. She, by the way, had been given none at all. I finally went to the superintendent, and told him I thought we ought to be furnished with work according to agreement. He answered that a woman with so large a family as mine ought not to expect to work in a mill. He preferred young girls, and did not mean in future to hire women with families. I told him I had stated my age when writing to the company and it was understood before I came there. Still, if I was too old to work for them, what objection could there be to giving my daughter a loom according to agreement?

This he refused to do, and when I urged him to state his reasons he replied, insolently, "You have kept that girl in the shade too long. She must come out now and take what she can get to do."

"Please explain yourself," I said.

He only repeated his previous remark.

I asked him again who had told him of my exceeding carefulness for my daughter. He looked embarrassed, turned red, and was silent. I could not but draw my own conclusions that he was a Mason, and had been informed by some of his Masonic brethren.

"Please explain how you came to know so much about my daughter," I repeated.

"Her looks are enough to show every one that she

has never suffered the hardships common to people in your circumstances," he said at last.

"Well, if I am too old to work in the factory, there is an empty boarding-house which belongs to the company. I understand they are anxious to have it occupied. I shall be pleased to move in there and take factory boarders, if you will allow."

He refused in words that I will not repeat, adding some vague and certainly uncalled-for threat that we "would yet have to come down and find what real poverty was."

His threat did not disturb me, however. I knew that I had enough money to keep myself and family in comfort for a year or two, even if no work was forthcoming. Still we did not intend to sit down and fold our hands. I had already two boarders, which was a very material help. Anna wrote to her old employer, Houghton & Dutton, and immediately received a telegram in response, telling her to report for work on Monday.

She started the next day, but first went, in company with me, to bid farewell to the factory people among whom we had a few warm friends. There was a spice of pardonable mischief in her farewell to the superintendent, nor could I refrain from thanking him for the kindness he had done her, as it had been the means of procuring her a much better situation. I assured him his kindness would be long remembered by myself and family.

I think some of the help informed Mr. C., the owner of the mill, of the treatment we had received, and a few days after my daughter went to Boston, he called at my home and expressed great regret. He had supposed that we were both at work in the mill. When he learned the contrary, he had inquired the reason of the superintendent, who gave him no satisfactory explanation. But why did I not take his boarding-house? he asked; I would find it more profitable.

When I told him I had applied for the house and been refused, he said I "should have it at once, and move right in."

A little while after he called again in a state of the greatest anger and excitement, and informed me that he had seen the superintendent and received a point-blank refusal. When expostulated with for what Mr. C. naturally considered an unwarrantable assumption of authority, the superintendent only looked in his face, and in an insolent manner made the astounding statement that he (Mr. C.) had nothing to say in regard to affairs connected with the mill; that he had full control over the property, and Mr. C. could not draw a dollar except with his consent.

As he told me this he paced up and down my little parlor in a state of the greatest excitement and indignation. He was a single man and sole owner of all this large property, while his superintendent had begun life in the mill not worth a dollar. The strangest thing about this strange revelation was its truth. By slow degrees this man had contrived to worm his way into the confidence of his employer till the latter promoted him to be superintendent. But when the papers were drawn up he had carefully managed, by having certain words inserted in such a way that they would not be noticed, or their meaning understood by a non-legal mind, as to actually appoint himself the same as guardian over Mr. C., so far as the mill property was concerned. Though sole owner, as I have said, he could not draw a dollar of the funds or have his demands fulfilled except as the superintendent saw fit to allow, in any of its affairs.

Among the strange providences which have been so manifest throughout my life, I deem it not the least strange that the Lord should send me to another state in order to make me the unconscious instrument of bringing to light the guileful arts of this old deceiver,

by which he had contrived to so get the advantage of his kind friend and benefactor.

Mr. C. took measures at once to get back the control of his property. I was told that he had not success in New Hampshire, but he finally went to Massachusetts, and employed Boston lawyers. After some two or three years of vexatious litigation, he succeeded in getting possession of his property, and was once more a free man.

I was afterward informed that this superintendent was a Free Mason; another illustration of what my whole acquaintance with the order has proved, and that it is not safe to trust Masons in any capacity, private or public. I do not mean that there are no reliable Masons, but had Mr. C. been a member of the order (which he was not), and an honest man (which he was) and bound to keep all a brother's villainous secrets, he would have been at a much worse disadvantage. Masons may wrong and defraud those without, but the great object of the system is to deceive and enslave those within.

My chief object in writing this book has been to honor and glorify God, who kept me from harm during all those years, and to show that such is the fact, and to warn the honest Mason, especially if poverty or misfortune overtakes him, that he can never know when or where the cords of secret iniquity may be tightened around himself and his helpless family, even to the extent of demanding his most cherished object of affection to be sacrificed on the unclean altars of the lodge Moloch.

Ezekiel viii:12-18.

CHAPTER XV.

MY SON'S FATAL ILLNESS.—A LESSON OF IMMORTALITY.

On Thanksgiving Day I was expecting my son Howard home from Potsdam, and was much disappointed when he did not arrive. He had been detained at St. Albans by a severe hemorrhage, which was the precursor of his last fatal illness.

I wrote to his father of his condition. He came at once, and from that time took almost the entire care of his invalid son. Like most consumptives, Howard was hopeful and clung to life. He had an idea that he would recover if he could go to Colorado, and twice had his trunk packed, ready to go, but was each time taken with severe hemorrhages that weakened him so he was unable to leave home.

Directly after getting my divorce, Mr. Giddings obtained a pension, with some back pay, which did not, however, date back as far as the time when I first made application for him. He purchased a farm in Johnson, Vt., and with his first money made a payment on it. Afterwards his pension was increased to twenty dollars a month. With this he bought a house and lot in the village. He was unable to work on the farm, and I foresaw that he would soon lose both places, as they were heavily mortgaged. He wished to pay Howard's board and his own, saying he had never done anything for his family, and asked me to buy the house and lot in Johnson and apply on their board. We moved to Johnson, and he gave me a deed. Not liking the location, I sold it for three hundred dollars.

A few days after a man came in who told me that Mr. Giddings owed him, and if I did not give up the money at once he would put me behind prison bars.

I told him Mr. Giddings owed me. I had the money and I kept it.

A few weeks after I moved back to Enosburg. I had been absent five years. I received no calls from any one, and was the subject of much unfriendly gossip, because I allowed the sick father of my children to board with me. I saw his bodily health slowly failing, and was thankful to have him united with his family during what proved to be the last three years of his life.

During my absence my homestead had been let, and I found about twelve dollars' worth of manure had been illegally taken away, and my meadow badly cut up. The farmer who bought the manure explained this unjust act by saying that the tenant owed him eight dollars which he could not get any other way. It would not pay to have a lawsuit, so I had to pass over this petty wrong, as I had been obliged, for a like reason, to pass over so many others. This may seem a trivial matter, but the poor can only be robbed in small ways, which they feel quite as much as the rich feel losses a hundred times as great.

Howard's health continued to fail, yet it was not his bodily condition which filled me with the greatest anxiety. Before leaving home he had always been a very religious boy, but I was soon conscious of a change in him that greatly pained me. Previous to this he had been all a mother's heart could desire, and my greatest hope and comfort. Alas! a few years of contact with the world brought to me the sad experience which has been that of so many mothers, before and since. Young boys sent from home soon grow so wise in their own estimation that "what mother thinks" is considered of little value. When they grow older and become aware that woman is looked upon as merchandise, to be bought and sold, and their weakness taken advantage of, as was poor Eve's when the Serpent beguiled her in the Garden of Eden, is it a mat-

ter for wonder that a mother's advice is little heeded and her old-fashioned religion considered of small account?

The much-quoted saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," remains true till our noble sons go from us and are persuaded that in order to be men they must keep secrets from mother and join secret fraternities. My son did not smoke or even drink tea or coffee. In all these respects he was a model young man, but he was a member of an Artists' Union. Regarding this union, which was a secret society, the manner in which their meetings were conducted, the form of initiation, or the influence exerted on the members, were things on which his lips were sealed to her who should have been his confidant. I only know that he sent money to the union for fees and assessments up to within a few weeks of his death.

I have noticed that a young man as soon as he joins the Masons, however frank his manners before taking this step, invariably changes for the worse. This is just as true when he joins some minor order patterned after Masonry. I have noticed in men who were entire strangers to me a slyness of manner and a soft, catlike tread, which convinced me that they belonged to some secret order; and in every case I have found on investigation that this was so. The secret society mark on a man is something that cannot be rubbed out when once he receives it by anything short of the cleansing blood of Christ.

Surely this is a question that especially concerns every mother. Shall our beloved sons, for whom we have periled our lives to give them existence, be drawn into these secret snares set for their feet? these fraternities that bar out from their confidence with the seal of a secret vow? that herd together "the precious and the vile," and whose influence is today felt all through our land—though few trace it to its right cause—in the neglect of God's Word, and the wide-

spread atheism now prevailing? I soon discovered, to my great grief, that he, with others of his fellow-students, had become an admirer of Ingersoll, and no longer put faith in his mother's God. At the same time he seemed entirely unreconciled to death, and indeed he had much for which to live. He was a universal favorite, and but a few months before his death was surprised by the gift, through W. H. Billado, of fifty dollars from his neighbors and fellow-townsmen, whose kindness I here take pleasure in recording with thanks. He had been offered a high salary as superintendent of an art gallery in Massachusetts, and was rising rapidly in his profession, which he loved with all the ardency of genius. In vain I tried to talk with him of the many times that I had proved, not only God's existence, but His abounding mercy and faithfulness; in vain I reminded him of his sister's glorious death as proof of the immortal life awaiting all who put their trust in Christ. He seemed utterly indifferent to all I said. Grieved and disheartened, I finally resolved not to mention the subject to him again, and a wall of silence grew up between us, the remembrance of which even now brings tears to my eyes.

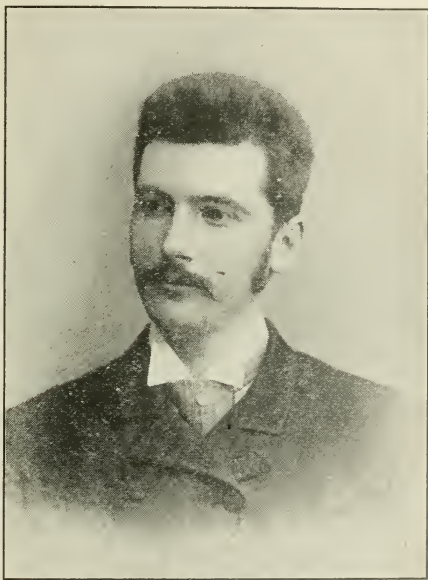
But one bright spring day I was in the yard sowing flower seeds. Howard sat beside me in his invalid's chair, which had been moved out of doors that he might enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. It occurred to me that now, when all nature was rising in a glorious resurrection from her long sleep, entombed under the winter snow, I would try once more to impress upon his mind the folly of the infidel's hopeless creed. Showing him some of the seeds that were nearly as fine as grains of sand, I quietly asked:

"Do you think anything so small can come up and bring forth flowers?"

"Of course," he answered, with a look of wonder,

as if he thought his old-fashioned mother had very little judgment.

I still held the seeds in my hand and argued on the other side. How was it possible for the germs of life to exist in anything so small? Then, putting some in the ground and stirring them up with the soil, I asked



HOWARD GIDDINGS.

him to pick out the seeds. He bent over and scanned the dirt carefully, but the buried seed was undistinguishable.

“You know very well, mother, that it would be impossible for me, or any one else, to pick out seed so fine, since it has been mixed up with the soil.”

"Well," I returned, "I want some flowers, and so to be sure of having them I will put in some coarser seed that I can see."

He stared at me for an instant, as if he thought my senses were deserting me, and then said:

"Of course, the seed will come up. Even if too small for us to find, it is not too small to contain the germs of life."

"If that is so, why should there not be somewhere in this earthly body a germ of immortal life which we cannot see?"

He leaned back in his chair and gazed up at the sky, as if the thought had struck him in a new light. It was several moments before he spoke.

"Well, mother," he said at last, "you have made a better argument than I ever heard Ingersoll make. Certainly every seed must go into the ground and die before it can spring up in a new body, and it does not matter if the seed is so small as to be invisible. The germ of the new life is there, whether we can see it or not. It looks reasonable that this mortal body should have within itself some germ of spiritual life. Surely it is of far greater value than these little flower seeds."

From that hour the influence over him of Ingersoll's teachings perceptibly weakened, and he seemed to return in some measure to the old faith of his childhood.

Like most consumptives, he was very ambitious and kept up to the last. He dressed himself as usual the day he died, but when night came I noticed that he seemed in no hurry to retire.

"You feel too tired to go to bed, my son?" I finally asked. To which he replied, "Yes, mother, I do." Then, starting up, he walked quickly into the little parlor bedroom. I heard him groan, and ran into the room. He sat on the side of the bed, gasping for breath, though he complained of no pain—only a creeping numbness.

“Howard,” I said, when I had made every effort to relieve him, but without avail, and saw that the end was rapidly approaching, “I can do no more. Christ is your only help. You must look to Him.”

“Yes, yes,” he answered faintly, and his lips moved as if in prayer, and with a murmured “Good-bye,” he was gone.

After his death I found a poem in his pocket-book which I will here copy. These touching lines I have often read through blinding tears, and believe he placed them there with the hope that they might awaken in some Christian hearts, as well as in mine, feelings of pity rather than blame for these lost lambs astray from the Shepherd’s fold.

THE SHEPHERD’S APPEAL.

“Have ye seen my lamb that has gone astray,
 Afar from the Shepherd’s fold,
 Away in the deserts ‘wild and bare,’
 Or off on the mountains cold?
 Have ye ever sought to bring it back
 By a word, or a look, or a prayer?
 Or followed it when it wandered lone,
 And tried to reclaim it there?”

“Ye gather each week in the place of prayer,
 And ye speak of your love for me,
 And pray that your daily life may bear
 Some fruit that the world may see.
 Ye mean it well—but when once away
 Do ye live that life of prayer?
 Is the soul of the lamb that’s gone astray
 Your chief and your greatest care?”

Ye speak of the good that ye mean to do
 Among your fellow-men;
 Yet ye tarry full oft ’mid the joys of earth—
 They are watching your footsteps then;

And while ye have stopped for pleasure or ease,
 The lamb that has gone astray
 Has wandered the farther 'mid darkness and sin,
 Along the forbidden way.

"Ye meet in your counting-house rooms for gain,
 And count the cost each day;
 Do ye ever count what the cost may be
 Of the lamb that has gone astray?"

"The cost of that soul can far outweigh
 Your stocks and your piles of gold;
 Can ye leave your gains and your wealth for a day
 To gather it into the fold?"

"It is perishing now in the bleak and cold,
 While you might have saved its life.
 Are ye thinking too much of your ease and your
 gains
 To enter the Christian strife?"

"When the reckoning's called and the balance made,
 Will the wealth of a single day
 Atone for the loss of the dying soul,
 For the lamb that has gone astray?"

I am thankful that the Lord understands the heart, and I trust that in ways unknown to me the Good Shepherd, who never fails nor is discouraged like us, has sought and found all of his stray lambs of every name and race.

The first child of my agonized prayers is buried in the Main Street Cemetery at Enosburg Falls; and on the headstone are engraved these words, which have often comforted my sorrowing heart:

"Into Thine hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."—Psalm xxxi:5.

For it is not to the grave we commit our loved ones,

but to Him, the ever-merciful who knows the hearts
he has made and, in life or death, is still the same—
strong to sage and mighty to redeem.

Psalms 130.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. GIDDINGS' LAST SICKNESS.—ON HIS DEATHBED HE
MAKES A STARTLING REVELATION.

Mr. Giddings' mental condition had much improved in proportion as he failed in bodily health. He would talk in a sane and collected way on any topic, but occasionally showed symptoms of mental aberration. One day he was subpoenaed to appear as a witness in a law case at Johnson. I urged him not to go, fearing it was a plot to get away his farm and he promised me many times before he went that he would neither sell nor dispose of it in any way. But as soon as he stepped into the house on his return he told me he had made a trade with which he was sure I would be pleased. He had it all down in black and white.

With great exultation he pulled the paper from his pocket. I found it contained the statement that if he sold the farm within six months he could have all over and above the amount of the mortgage. He had given a deed on these conditions and received nothing for his farm.

"But how would it be if he failed to find a purchaser?" I asked. This was a view of the subject which appeared not to have occurred to him before. His countenance fell, and I pitied him so much that I tried to comfort him by treating the matter as a light thing.

Of course he lost his farm. There was no lawsuit, and I think the subpoena was a mere pretext for getting him to Johnson and swindling him out of his land.

Still I consulted him about the children and allowed him to manage out-of-door affairs, for he seemed per-

fectly rational, though I could see that his physical strength steadily declined day by day.

I had continued to pray all these years for his conversion, and felt greatly dissatisfied with myself, thinking the fault must lie with me, that he had not been converted long ago. I was in the habit of going into a small closet to pray and one day when I had sought this retreat with heart unusually burdened, I carelessly shut the door behind me. It had a spring lock which snapped to, making me a close prisoner. There was no ventilation and I knew if no one came to my relief I should smother in a short time. Yet death did not seem to me such a very unwelcome event, for I was suffering from the same old feeling of unworthiness that had more than once tempted me to take my own life. I felt myself beginning to suffocate. Not to call for help would be suicide. The temptation not to do so passed away and I called out as loud as I could, and was heard by Mr. Giddings, who came down stairs much alarmed. He looked down cellar and in the woodshed, but was finally guided to the closet, where he found me laughing with Bible in hand. He was much affected at my narrow escape.

"If you want to pray you need not hide in here," he said, as tears filled his eyes.

A few weeks after, we were in the kitchen. He was seated nearly back of me and I was startled to hear him all at once burst out crying, and sob as if his heart would break. I thought at first I would not appear to notice him, but finally, as he continued to weep, I turned around and said:

"Lewis, what ails you? Are you sick?"

"Yes," his reply was, between sobs; "I am sick in body, soul and spirit. I know you have no confidence in me and will not believe me sincere when I say that if I could have one ray of hope that I could be forgiven for my past life, I should be the happiest man in the world."

"Of course you can be forgiven," I said, soothingly.

"There is no forgiveness for me. I must have sinned away the days of grace long before this late hour."

"In that case you would not be sorry for the sins you have committed. You would be past repentance. It is the Holy Spirit striving within you that makes you sorry for your sins, which is sufficient proof that the Lord has not forsaken you."

"I do not know how you can talk so encouragingly to me after I have allowed those blackguards to take such advantage of you, and after the deception I used in getting you to be my wife. I know your life has been one continual sacrifice since our marriage. How can you believe me sincere, or that God will ever forgive me for my sins?"

"If I had not forgiven, would I pray for you? You have been the subject of my prayers for twenty years or more—so long that I nearly made up my mind that the Lord would never grant my request."

"Why didn't you let me know you were praying for me? I would have been a Christian two years ago if I had known you were praying for me or saw any chance that I could ever be forgiven."

"I would have let you know it, but I supposed you thought me insincere. Have you not always talked as if you thought me a hypocrite?"

"How could you think I thought so?" he asked; "a woman who has lived such a life as you have? It was my own guilt that made me talk in that way, for I am sure if I ever had faith in anyone being a Christian, it is you. God knows, if there ever was a saint, you are one."

From that time he became a constant reader of the Bible. I had grown so discouraged in those years of waiting as to think that, if my prayers were not answered, I would cease to pray for others; for surely if I had any favor in the sight of God, he would not let the father of my children perish."

He began to fail rapidly, to stagger in his gait, and at last to walk with a cane. He went out one day for a walk, fell on the street and was brought home in a wagon. From that time he never took a step alone but made his way from room to room with the aid of chairs.

We called in Dr. R. He greeted me in the kitchen in the same fatherly way as of old; then went into Mr. Giddings' room. The first thing I heard him say to his patient was this:

"See here, sir! The Soldiers' Home is the place for you. Your wife has a divorce, and you have no business to be living with her."

I entered the room. Mr. Giddings' eyes were rolled back in his head and his mouth was drawn in lines of keen agony.

"Dr. R.," I said, "if I am not his wife, this is his home. Nearly all the work on this house he did himself. And these children are as much his as they are mine. I consider that his place is in his own home and with his own family. He surely has as good a right to board with me as a stranger."

Mr. Giddings cast upon me a look of gratitude, which I can never forget, and a faint smile passed over his face that settled into an expression of pleased relief.

"I do not consider him dangerous," said the doctor. "In his paralyzed condition he may live for years, and I certainly think, however you may feel to the contrary, that he ought to be sent to the Soldiers' Home, as this is no place for him in his condition. He may be helpless for years."

I firmly refused, but in this and subsequent visits the doctor continued to talk about the impropriety of Mr. Giddings staying with his family, assuming such airs of virtue as might have deceived the very elect.

In his weak and nervous state, these talks troubled Mr. Giddings greatly. One day he burst into tears, and when I questioned him as to the cause he said he was

afraid of being taken away by force to the Soldiers' Home.

He was much comforted when I assured him that I should not allow him to be taken away, and whoever tried to take him would do so at their peril. Though relieved from this fear he still continued to fail, till I had to draw him from one room to another in a large chair. He was much grieved for his past life, and often bemoaned his wasted years.

I reminded him that the laborers who worked for an hour received the same pay as the others who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and that there is more rejoicing over one sinner who repents than ninety and nine just persons that went not astray. This always seemed to afford him great comfort.

In looking back I can record these days as the happiest of my life. All the sorrow and privation, and even the reproach I had suffered by allowing him to remain with his family, was now well repaid.

He had applied for an increase of pension, and decided that he would write to the pension department himself. He was about to sign his name just as Dr. R. entered.

"What are you doing now?" the doctor asked gruffly.

"Writing to the Commissioner to see if he won't hurry up my case."

"Don't you know better?" thundered Dr. R. "You will have all your pension taken away if you go to interfering with their business. The Soldiers' Home is the place for you and they will see to your pension."

His air of arrogant authority was truly Masonic, and in Mr. Giddings' weak condition he carried his point in preventing the letter from being sent. It was preserved, though not dated or even signed, and I copy it here, as it may prove of some value as a proof to the public how poor and disabled veterans of the Civil War

have been wronged, though the fault is seldom laid where it properly belongs.

ENOSBURG FALLS, VT.

"Hon. Commissioner of Pensions.

DEAR SIR: On or about the 23d of June, 1863, we started from Occoquan, Va., on a seven days' forced march to Gettysburg, Pa. I marched the whole distance; was nearly exhausted when I arrived on the field. Went into action, was 48 hours without rations. After the battle closed was engaged in guarding prisoners all night. From starting point until the close of battle and guarding prisoners, occupied a space of time of about eleven days of almost continual labor, which had a tendency to the breaking down of my whole system. I was a tough and healthy man when enrolled, and was sick when discharged, and never have regained my former health. I noticed for a good while that my legs had the appearance of failing and now I am unable to walk. The Doctor says my legs are paralyzed. I hope that I will receive what I am justly entitled to in the settlement of my claim. I did the Government good service and never failed to do my duty, and what I am justly entitled to I leave to you or to others in authority. In writing this letter I have not copied a word, neither have I been aided by any person; only a simple statement of facts from memory which I experienced. Hoping that you will attend to this business at your earliest convenience,

"Very respectfully, _____."

"Address:

"I, Sarah Giddings, do solemnly swear that this letter was written by Lewis Giddings in November, 1894.

"SARAH GIDDINGS.

"State of Vermont, Franklin County. Sworn and subscribed to this 10th day of January, 1895, at Enosburg. "JOHN G. JENNE, Justice of the Peace."

I did all I could to keep him quiet and his mind at rest, which, now that the disease had fastened on his

limbs, seemed perfectly clear. He was greatly desirous to get his back-pay, thinking that then he could leave myself and family comfortable, and one day he asked me to get his writing materials in order to write again to the Commissioner. His poor, stiff, shaky hand could scarcely hold a pen, but to pacify him I acceded to his wish, and got him ink and paper. He was bolstered up in bed, trying to write, but had not proceeded far when the doctor again came in and angrily snatching away the letter accused him of committing a fraud on the Government in representing himself as "helpless." He was not helpless so long as he was able to write.

Again the letter was left unfinished.

After his physician had departed, Mr. Giddings, who had then been confined to his bed for several days, burst into tears and asked bitterly:

"What do you think of Dr. R.'s saying I am not helpless? Here I am, unable to get myself so much as a drink of water."

I tried to soothe his feelings of distress and disappointment by repeating comforting words of Scripture, but it was another thorn planted in his pathway by hands that, in their double capacity of physician and brother Mason, should have done all that was possible to soothe his passage to the grave.

This unfinished letter, which bears trace in every line of being penned by a man in the last stages of mortal disease, I will also copy:

"ENOSBURG FALLS, Dec. —, 1894.

"Hon. Wm. Loehren.

"KIND SIR: I had noticed for some years that nervous debility, the disease for which I am drawing pension, is gradually on the increase. Several weeks ago I was entirely prostrated. Have not been able to take a step since. I can use my arms some, but my legs have entirely given out, and I have got to have some one to stay with me continually, for I am entirely help-

less. Please to make a special case of mine and attend to it as soon as possible."

"I, Sarah Giddings, do solemnly swear that this is the last letter written by Lewis Giddings.

"SARAH GIDDINGS."

"State of Vermont, Franklin County. At Enosburg, Vt., this 10th day of January, 1895, personally appeared Sarah Giddings and swore and subscribed to the above before me.

JOHN G. JENNE,

"Justice of the Peace."

The doctor continued to say that there was no immediate danger; he might live for years; but one night I received information which convinced me to the contrary. I had just laid down and the light was out, when I heard a voice say to me in a whisper, "I think he will live about five days—five days."

I could not understand why this should be told me. As on former occasions, I felt only wonder, and the thought never occurred to me to speak and question the voice. I told my children about it, but they could not believe their father would die in so short a time, as he was to all outward appearance quite comfortable. But there came a change. His appetite, which had been quite good, suddenly failed. Still the doctor claimed that he was liable to live for years.

One day he again burst into tears and seemed in great mental anguish. I sat down by his bedside and asked if he was worse, but he kept on repeating over and over, "Oh, what shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?" and finally asked me if I thought he was going to die soon.

I told him what the doctor said. He replied that if he knew he was not going to live, there was a confession he wanted to make, and nearly every day after he asked me to send for a justice of the peace, that he might confess what was on his mind. But I feared that any such painful recalling of the past would be disastrous to him in his weak state. It might have

the effect to again unhinge his reason, and I could not bear to think of his dying with his mind under a cloud. So on these occasions I always tried to divert his attention by reading from the Bible and talking about religious things till he was quieted.

Still the burden on his soul—whatever it was—seemed to increase; and one day he burst into another fit of weeping. "Wife!" he called out, the name he always called me by, even after my divorce.

I hastened to his bedside.

"There is something I must tell you," he said, looking up into my face with his hollow, burning eyes. "The man you have all along thought guilty of making improper proposals for our daughter is entirely innocent."

I sprang back, horrified.

"Lewis Giddings," I exclaimed; "why did you ever put such an accusation upon an innocent man, making me hate the sound of his name, and the very sight of his costly mansion?"

"The villains made me. They would have had me put in the insane asylum if I had not consented to the deception."

"But why did you not tell me this before?"

"I did not dare do it," he answered; "did not dare call my soul my own. They had me completely in their clutches. They could make me do anything with that dreadful threat—the insane asylum."

I began to realize that all I had suffered in wrong and hardship was nothing to the agony which had been inflicted on this poor, weak, sick brain, thus held in fetters that he had no power to break, and forced to keep these dark secrets, now just revealed on the brink of the grave. I could only gaze on him with feelings of the profoundest pity as he went on to unravel still further the thread of their dark scheming. It was a subtle and deeply laid plot; if I undertook to expose them, I must be led to accuse an innocent man.

He would resent it. I could bring no proof, and should the case ever come into court such an accusation would lend color to the charge that I was insane, and in any event the guilty ones would be shielded.

I asked him how many were in the plot. He could not tell, except that the ring was composed of only a few members who could, however, use the whole lodge machinery to further their purposes, and make unwitting tools of those not in the conspiracy.

"I never consented willingly to their demands," he exclaimed. "I was frightened into it and forced to do as they said. They were determined to break up our family. They knew that if you consented I would never, when my mind was right and I realized about it, live with you. If you refused to consent, at the times when they had me under their influence, you could never live with me. In either case, the family would be broken up."

I had listened so far with amazed horror.

"Don't you ever dare tell me who the guilty ones are!" I exclaimed. "I am afraid I shall kill them if you do. I have been tempted many times to commit murder, and if I have not done so it is because grace has been given me to wait on the Lord and remember that vengeance is His."

My suspicions at once rested on the doctor. For this I had reasons. At the same time I had no actual proof that he was the guilty party. As I thought over the matter more quietly, it seemed to me incredible that so much villainy should exist under such a saint-like exterior. He did not come that day until nine o'clock in the evening, by which time I had grown calm enough to receive him without showing in my countenance any trace of the terrible ordeal through which I had passed.

Mr. Giddings, in his confession, admitted that our marriage was plotted in the lodge. At the same time he had a sincere affection for me, and knew that only

by using some strategy could he secure me for his wife. He felt positive in his own mind that I would be true to him, and at the time of our marriage never intended to join the Masons. Mr. S. had informed me correctly of the conditions. They were to take him into the lodge as soon as a child should be born of our union. This explanation accounted for his objection to children, and I refused to live with him without children; and when we returned to Enosburg the villains demanded that he fulfill the rest of the contract, so that they could aid him and his family without causing suspicion. He was to take no further part in the plot, only to keep silent and make no opposition. When they found it was impossible to win my affection they were determined to do me and my family all the injury they could.

Among other things he told me was that he knew of their intention to raid my house when I lived in St. Albans. Their plans were all laid, but their courage failed them at the last moment, and they thought of another and more ingenious way to accomplish the ruin of myself and children. They put up my boarders to make the disturbance previously narrated. As our support depended entirely upon the board-money, they supposed I would tolerate the noise until they could convince the public that I was keeping a disorderly house, and thus give some shadow of excuse for a raid. But after the second night of confusion, my threat to complain to the ladies of St. Albans—a thing they had never thought of my doing, foiled them in their iniquitous plans.

After they had taken him into the lodge, and found they could neither persuade nor bribe me, they began to bear harder on their unfortunate victim. They took the times when they saw his mind was unbalanced—which was often the case for weeks and months, so that he could remember little or nothing of what had transpired—to persuade or frighten him into bad bar-

gains, and even to deeding away pieces of property about which he knew no more than I, for he never had the least recollection of making out the deeds. He was going up street, one day, when he met a man who spoke to him about selling the spring lot to the farmer, and he was never more astonished in his life. Not a thing could he remember regarding the affair.

It should be said here that the farmer was not a Mason. Advantage was sometimes taken of his weakness by unscrupulous men outside the lodge. But as a rule, it was from men who had knelt with him at the lodge altar, with whom he "met on the level and parted on the square," that he suffered the grossest abuse, the direst wrongs; men who knew how to use his Masonic oath to bind him to secrecy, so that the poor victim, caught and held fast in their terrible net, could scarcely make a struggle.

I was much comforted by this confession. Many things were now made clear to me that had been mysteries before, and it was a great relief to me to know that it was through the secret machinations of evil men rather than his own will, that our family had been disgraced by a divorce.

He was anxious to be baptized, and by a confession of his Christian faith make some atonement for the past. He was baptized December 15, 1894, by the rector, and died on Christmas day, on the twenty-eighth anniversary of our strange marriage.

After being baptized, he expressed his wish to receive communion. The Episcopal clergyman who administered the rite promised to come the next morning, but day after day slipped away, and the dying man, who was much grieved at this strange neglect, waited in vain for the last rites of the church. I felt it myself so keenly that when he died with this, his last wish, ungratified, I sent for a minister of another denomination to conduct the funeral. The rector expressed much regret when I told him the reason, and explained

that it was so near Christmas his time was all taken up with preparing for the usual church festivities, and thus the matter had slipped from his mind.

The only kindness ever shown us in this time of trial by the Masons, or the Grand Army Post with which he was connected, was in providing watches for him the last few nights he lived. After he was dead a Mason came to the house, and asked me "if Mr. Giddings had requested a Masonic funeral." When I said "No," he inquired if I would like the Free Masons to form in a body and march to the grave. I told him I had no objection, but would like to have the Grand Army march first. I never supposed that they would consent to this, and was much surprised when they agreed to the arrangement and marched behind the Grand Army veterans.

Looking back on these sad, dark days of my married life, I thank God that, sustained by His grace, I was faithful even until death to the father of my children. But I thank Him still more for the hope vouchsafed me in his last hours, and that perfect confidence with which I now leave him in the hands of One who knoweth our frame and can strike the balance of accountability with the unerring justice, mingled with mercy, of which poor human judgment is utterly incapable.

Psalms 37.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY EFFORTS TO GET A PENSION.—THE TRUE SECRET OF MANY PENSION FRAUDS.

After Mr. Giddings' death I concluded to make an effort to get a pension for my youngest daughter. I therefore called on Dr. R., and asked him if he would like to settle for doctoring Mr. Giddings, or wait till the pension papers were made out, and settle for both at the same time.

"On what grounds did you get your divorce?" he inquired.

I told him, "abuse." He asked the question again, and I repeated my answer.

"What I want to know is, what was testified to in court?"

I answered that there were some very sad and painful charges brought against my husband which I begged to be excused from telling. The doctor refused, however, to accept this excuse, and said he wished me to tell him exactly what was said in court.

"You know as there was no law in Vermont to protect my family I was obliged to get a divorce in order to obtain the custody of my children."

In an instant his kind, fatherly manner seemed to change. His mild countenance assumed almost the ferocity of a demon, and, shaking his fist at me, he exclaimed, hoarsely:

"Yes! yes! you had your choice, and you took it; and now you will suffer the consequences. You remember what I tell you," he repeated, still shaking his fist; "you must take the consequences!"

"If I suffer, it will be in a good cause," I calmly an-

swered. "The Lord is able to take care of me yet. I have no fear of suffering seriously."

The doctor's angry shake of his fist was like a lightning-flash, showing me in an instant the meaning of the mysterious voice, and its strange and seemingly false prediction as to the time of Mr. Giddings' death. The first five days that he lived after I heard the voice he was well able to make his desired confession; the next five days he could have done so, but was very feeble; but the last ten days he was, so far as business was concerned, the same as a dead man. Now I understood my lost opportunity, and the reason why the Lord sent an angel to tell me of his nearness to death. I then greatly regretted my refusal to send for a magistrate as he had so earnestly requested, to take his dying confession while he was able to make it; but, as before stated, I was afraid of the mental strain upon him; and now it is too late for the world to ever have his affidavit confirming the statements made of the crimes attempted upon our family and exposing the guilty men who were responsible for keeping him out of his pension, and causing our separation. I rose to leave the house. The doctor accompanied me to the door, still somewhat excited, but making a strong effort to resume his natural manner. After stepping out of the door, I turned around and said to him:

"Doctor, the Lord has delivered me more than once out of the hands of the vile men of this town. You know how, in spite of all their wealth and influence, their plans have been foiled. You have seen this as well as I?"

"Yes, yes," he replied, uneasily. "I know."

"I do not fear your threats," I remarked, as I left his house. "The God who protected me in my childhood will take care of me in my old age."

When I told my daughter how the Lord had opened my eyes to see the truth about Dr. R., she clasped her hands and exclaimed,

"Thank God. I have waited all these years for you to be convinced that Dr. R. is really the guilty man. Mother, how could you be so blind? Think how he abused father!"

In fact, he had once treated Mr. Giddings during his last illness with such brutal tyranny that I came near turning him out of doors, and was only restrained by the remembrance that we were both members of the same church.

Mr. Giddings was undergoing a surgical operation. My daughter and I had left the room, when we heard the doctor's voice, and, soon after, a sound of distress from Mr. Giddings. I sprang to the door, and went in. He had fallen from his chair and was lying on the floor, while Dr. R. was standing over him, telling him in loud and imperative tones to "get up." This command, as brutal as it was unreasonable, was given, it must be remembered, to a man with no strength to rise, or even to move his poor, helpless limbs. When I entered the room he was clutching hold of the bedside in a vain attempt to obey, and crying piteously. I caught him up and seated him in the chair, asking him, as I did so, how he came to fall. He did not seem to know. I wiped the tears and perspiration from his face, and fanned him, while the doctor stood by assuring me that he was not hurt, and trying to explain conduct so unbecoming in a physician, by saying that he wanted to test his patient's ability to get up by himself.

I have omitted to say that before Mr. Giddings' death he made me promise to see Mr. M., and tell him the whole story; for he considered Mr. M. an honorable man, who, if he once understood how the lodge had tried to take advantage of a sick brother, would feel that his lodge vows obliged him to help me in securing a pension. But I believed that this would be unnecessary; that after his death the lodge ring that had worked us both so much mischief would cease to

molest me, and as my promise was made more to pacify and comfort a dying man than anything else, I did not feel bound to keep it. I still half-believed that Mr. M. was not in ignorance of the conditions on which my husband was taken into the lodge, and would need no explanation of their base designs. But when Dr. R. shook his fist at me, many thoughts flashed through my mind; among others, the recollection of this promise. I decided that I would tell him, and see how he treated me.

I was received with kindness, and told my story.

"They have got to go somewhere, I suppose," said he in a business-like manner. "They cannot go to my house," I remarked; and I reminded him that he had a little daughter who would soon be fifteen, and added, "Would you be willing they should go to your house?"

I supposed he would be angry at this plain question. Instead, his face softened. He sat, thinking, for several moments. Then he turned to me and said, his eyes nearly suffused with tears:

"Mrs. Giddings, I am very sorry for you. As soon as the Administration changes I will do all I can to get you a pension with your husband's arrears of back-pay."

He manifested great sympathy at parting, and again I put faith in the promise of a Free Mason, only to be deceived, as I had so often been before.

The pension attorney at Washington informed me that having been divorced, I myself could get no pension, but my minor daughter was entitled to one, and in order to secure it to her I must be appointed her guardian. I therefore visited the office of the Judge of Probate at St. Albans, to get the necessary papers made out; but as soon as I entered, the very sight of me seemed to excite his anger. "Out! Out!" he commanded, motioning me away with his hand.

I wanted to ask when I could see him; but the Judge still motioned me to go, and with such an expression of

impatience that I was obliged reluctantly to obey.

I waited till almost night; then went back to the office, and begged that I might be given a few moments of his time. He was perfectly unoccupied, nor was there any one else in the room; but he still said he was "too busy" to attend to me. I asked him to mention some day when I could see him, but he replied that he was busy every day and could set no time.

Soon a pension paper came from Washington, with a blank for Dr. R. to make out and sign, regarding the cause of Mr. Giddings' death. This necessitated my again calling on Dr. R.

I laid the paper on the table before him, and asked if he would make it out, but he only pushed it back towards me, saying that neither I nor my child could get any pension.

"The pension attorney at Washington tells me that my little girl is entitled to one," I answered.

"There are many people entitled to pensions who can't get them."

"For what reason is the money withheld?" I inquired.

"Because they can't get it," he said, leaning back in his chair, and laughing vilely. "I can tell you of a good many instances." He then went on to relate the case of a soldier's widow, living near Bakersfield, who was so poor that she had to go out working by the day, and yet could not get a pension, though she never had trouble with her husband, and her youngest child was but four years old at the time of his death, from disease contracted in the army.

"She and her children couldn't get a pension, and you can't," repeated the doctor; and again he refused to make out the paper.

Seeing it was useless to say any more, I took it to Mr. McAllister, the notary public, who had always treated me kindly. He seemed much surprised, took

the paper, and said he would see Dr. R. right away. He was sure he could get him to make it out.

I saw him a few days after. He said he could not persuade Dr. R. to make it out, and finally gave me the paper. I then took it to Mr. M., who was very cool and told me he had no time to attend to the business.

I then gave it to the State's Attorney, who said he would see that Dr. R. made the necessary statement. After a few days I called on the attorney. He said he had seen Dr. R. twice, but he had refused to make out the paper, and there was no law to compel him to do so. So I was obliged to return it without the attending physician's statement.

I then went to Morrisville, to see Congressman Powers. For while he was a Mason, I believed he had a strong regard for the right, and could not be won over to any union with evil-doers.

I felt sure he would assist me, nor was I disappointed. He said that as soon as he went to Washington he would see that her claim was numbered, from which time she could draw her pension. A month later he succeeded in getting her claim numbered; but I had as yet failed in obtaining the necessary guardianship papers.

After Dr. R. had shaken his fist at me, I saw the examining surgeon, Dr. S., and asked him if he remembered examining Lewis Giddings.

"Certainly," said he; "and it was one of the strangest cases that ever came before me. I hated to put him under keepers, as it seemed to be my duty. The man came alone; no complaint had been made to me that he was insane; yet his had the appearance of being a violent case. However, I thought that if he was really as bad as he appeared to me to be, the doctors in Enosburg would surely have taken care of him; and after three days' pondering of the case I decided to call it 'nervous disability,' which was the mildest form in

which I could state his disease, and entitled him to the highest rate of pension."

I informed him that Mr. Giddings only drew twenty dollars a month.

"That is a shame, and a disgrace to our nation," exclaimed the examining surgeon warmly; "for that man was slowly dying of disease contracted in the army. Nothing else could have so broken down his constitution. His legs were partially paralyzed, nearly to his knees, which must have been caused by the long march he took to reach the field of Gettysburg. Every soldier engaged in that battle should have been pensioned, and I can't understand how that man was kept out so long. I should have thought some one would have taken up his case, and gotten a pension for him as soon as he came out of the army. He must have been entitled to one, or he would not have been in the condition he was in when I examined him. He lived two years longer than I then thought it possible for him to hold out."

I informed Dr. S. that I had on two occasions, several years before, entered complaint to two doctors of his condition, but they took no notice of it.

"Then they should be held responsible," said the examining surgeon with warmth. "They need not come before me and say they did not know it. Any physician, however unskilled, would know that man was insane as soon as he saw him; and I know by his condition when I examined him, that he had been insane for years, and entitled to the highest rate of pension since his return from the army."

I explained to him that I had to get a divorce in order to protect my family, and I understood that my widow's pension would be withheld from me on that account.

"If it is," said the surgeon, "those doctors should be held responsible for not taking notice of your complaint."

I again saw the Judge of Probate, but he still refused to do any business with me. I told him I would stay in St. Albans over night if I could only see him in the morning; but all in vain.

I wrote to the Judge of the Supreme Court, telling him that Judge B.'s refusal was keeping my little girl out of her pension, and asked him if he could not do the business. His answer I will here copy:

"The Supreme Court of Vermont.

"—, March 27th, 1896.

"MRS. GIDDINGS: I have no authority to appoint a guardian for your daughter. Judge B. is the one you should apply to. I have no doubt he will do what is right."

To be thus cruelly and indifferently referred back to the very man of whom I had made complaint was, to say the least, not very satisfactory. But as a last resort, I went to the Notary Public, and said that if the Probate Judge should again refuse to appoint me guardian I should make an appeal to the ladies of Burlington and St. Albans. He looked startled, and said that would not be the best way. He would himself write a letter to the Judge of Probate, and if I would go down to St. Albans, Tuesday, he was sure I would be appointed guardian.

There must have been magic in the letter, for when I entered Judge B.'s office a queen could not have been received more graciously. He gave me the best chair in the room, motioned everybody else aside, and attended to my case in the most smiling and affable manner.

March 31, 1896, I received my appointment.

I sent my guardianship papers, obtained through such tribulations, to Congressman Powers, but was surprised to receive a letter from the Pension Attorney, saying that there was nothing on file at Washington regarding my daughter's case, and calling for the evidence over again. Fresh papers were accordingly



GRACE AND BANJO.

made out, and I registered them to Congressman Powers. They were duly forwarded to the Attorney. A few days after, my daughter's pension was granted, June 16, 1896.

This had gone on for over two years. Had I been a feeble woman, or only capable of earning my fifty cents a day, I could not have borne the expense, and consequently no pension would have been granted.

Not long ago I saw in the papers a notice of the death of Judge B., from which I quote: "He enlisted in 1861, a private, and was mustered out in 1862. In 1867 he was elected Judge of Probate, which he held until 1898. In 1872 he was elected Railroad Commissioner, and served the State in that capacity till 1878. He was a life-long member of the Episcopal church, and had been church warden since 1877. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, and in politics a Republican."

The Judge drew a "total disability" pension, and at the same time drew his large official salary, the same as a well man.

I will also copy a part of Mr. Giddings' pension certificate.

"No. 400062.

(Reissue.)

"United States of America, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions.

"It is hereby certified that in conformity with the laws of the United States, Lewis Giddings, who was a private, Co. G, 13th Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry, is entitled to a pension at the rate of . . . twenty dollars per month, from August 27, 1888, his pension being for nervous debility following fever, and slight deafness of both ears, resulting in severe deafness of right ear, and slight deafness of left ear.

"Given at the Department of the Interior this twelfth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and

eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fourteenth.

“JOHN W. NOBLE,
“Secretary of the Interior.

“Countersigned,
“HIRAM SMITH, JR.,
“Acting Commissioner of Pensions.”

Contrast the treatment Judge B. received with that given my poor, sick husband, and say if here is not proof sufficient that Masonry takes upon itself to misrepresent cases and withhold evidence from the government, and thus controls to a large extent the pension fraud system at Washington. It has its favored ones; men who are ready to be its tools, women who are willing to serve its vile ends, to the ruin of themselves and their children. Others, who refuse to take the wages of unrighteousness, find themselves at a disadvantage, hindered instead of helped, whichever way they turn, and not always do they know the reason why. The public attention has been often drawn to “pension frauds;” seldom to the secret agency by which most of these frauds are committed.

Dr. R. had never asked me to pay Mr. Giddings' unsettled account, but after several months had passed he referred it to the town, thinking, no doubt, that by so doing he could bring disgrace upon my family. As it was known that we were always careful to “owe no man anything,” several came to me to make inquiries.

I explained to them the doctor's conduct. I also wrote half a dozen letters to different men in town, stating that I had paid all of Mr. Giddings' funeral expenses, and would have paid Dr. R.'s account had he done his duty as a physician. The doctor's attempt to disgrace our family only brought dishonor upon himself and the fraternity which had shielded him in his crimes. Everyone knew Mr. Giddings was a Mason, and the fact that they would allow a brother's

name to be thus published in the paper and posted in public in order to collect a bill or bring reproach upon his family, created much unfavorable comment.

My letters must have had some effect on town-meeting day. The article, "To see if the town would vote to pay Dr. R. twenty-four dollars for doctoring L. A. Giddings in his last sickness," was read low and hurriedly. Then a member arose and moved that it be "passed over," which was done without a word, much to the amusement of several in the hall who were watching the doctor's evident confusion.

I may say here that as soon as Dr. R.'s true nature was revealed to me, my eyes were opened to see that all churches which fellowship secret societies, are a part of that mystic Babylon from which God's people are warned to come out, that they be not partakers of her guilt. I found that the outrages attempted in my own family had been accomplished in the families of others who were church communicants, and always by Masons. Pure and lovely girls within her fold had fallen a prey to these wolves in sheep's clothing, and she who claimed to be the Bride of Christ had never lifted her voice in defense of these helpless innocents; for "the wicked walk on every side, and the vilest men are exalted."

I reported Dr. R.'s savage threat to the rector; also to the bishop; but no notice was taken of my complaint, and the doctor still continued to hold office in the church. I then felt it my duty to cease attending her services.

Observation and experience have both taught me that no one can remain in these lodge-ruled churches and not partake, in greater or less measure, of that golden cup which she holds in her hands "full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication," or risk partaking likewise of her awful doom, when at last her sins reach unto heaven, and God remembers her iniquities.

Revelation 18.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A THEME FOR CONSIDERATION—AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE AWAY MY LAND—THE STATE'S ATTORNEY'S ADVICE TO A TAX COLLECTOR.

I have been a tax-payer for over twenty-five years, and have never made the town or State any expense. I have brought up my children to be good citizens, training them to be honest, kind and industrious, yet my rights were continually trespassed upon, the new street, to which some slight reference has been made in a former chapter, proving a very convenient source of annoyance.

One petition called for a street to go over my grounds in a sort of circle, leaving a small piece of land between the road and a tenement house. The owner of the house told me one day that this was just what he needed to enlarge his lot, but as it was too small to fence in, he should not pay me much, especially as the selectmen had given me to understand that they should not pay me a cent for damage. Yet, while they were thus intending to spoil my property and give me no remuneration, I had already paid taxes which amounted to over four hundred dollars. And moreover, this is one point for the consideration of all honest people—my husband's taxes were nearly always collected of me, and I was obliged to see that his were duly paid before I could be credited on the tax collector's book with the payment of my own.

But with all the persecutions I had suffered, I did not feel that my case was as bad as that of many others, who, trusting in their own strength, had fallen victims to the enemy. For their sakes, more than my

own, I wrote letters and sent them broadcast into nearly every State in the Union, telling them my story and the wrongs which had been done me by this secret foe of the family and the home. These letters were written chiefly to ministers, and I was surprised at the cowardly spirit manifested by many, who claimed that "the church was not to blame"; "I must be charitable"; "there are none righteous, not one," etc.

But I considered that if we could not be righteous, it was our duty to be honest and truthful and as near righteousness as possible. I began to think my letter-writing had been all in vain, for no one seemed to understand that secret societies are foes to the people of God; that their very essence is evil, teaching selfishness and a pretense of brotherly love where none exists; binding the honest man in the same bundle with the adulterer and the thief, and making him bow at the same unclean altar, where woman and wine is worshiped and the Christ ignored and rejected. But, when I was well-nigh discouraged, the Lord showed me, as He did Elijah, that I was not alone, but he had reserved unto himself a people who would not bow to Baal. I saw the following in a newspaper which happened to fall into my hands, and, as may naturally be imagined, it aroused a high degree of wonder and interest:

"ATTACK ON MASONRY.

"HORRIBLE PICTURE DRAWN BY A CHRISTIAN WORKER.

"BOSTON, Jan. 17.—At a meeting of the New England Christian Association, J. P. Stoddard, the Corresponding Secretary, made an address on a chart, in which he said that a Mason's pledge of secrecy is a viper in his home, and he isn't worthy to be called a man if he submits to it. In Congress they have 74 majority in joint ballot. He said Masonry is heathenish and Christless. Christ is recognized in Knight Templarism, but the best authorities say these are not

essential to Masonry. He said every Knight drank wine out of a human skull and invoked double damnation upon himself if he exposed the secrets. The 852 lodges in this city are bleeding the church to death, while Christian missions languish. He commented on the importation and use of liquors during the Knight Templar conclave as a fit illustration of Masonic iniquity, and declared that pageants and pleasures, as seen at the conclave, were only a blind under which the leaders made a successful assault upon liberty and religion. 'The plans of Masonry,' he said in closing, 'are far-reaching and include the domination of this secret order over the world, and unless the church is awake it will succeed.' "

I read and reread the article. Here was a brave man, who dared to stand for the right and defy the world. I decided to write to him, and received a prompt reply. I found, with astonishment not to be described, that so far from standing alone, the Lord was mustering his little army of the faithful against the proud hosts of Babylon, who were yet to fall before them—not by might, nor by power, but by his own Holy Spirit of truth, which he has promised to put within them. His letter, from which dates my first acquaintance with any anti-secret works, I will here give to the reader:

"REV. J. P. STODDARD,

"N. E. SECRETARY OF THE

"NATIONAL CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

"218 COLUMBUS AVE.

"BOSTON, MASS., July 25th, 1891.

"*Mrs. Sarah Giddings.*

"DEAR AND AFFLICTED SISTER: I am in receipt of the roll and inclosed letter you sent me, postmarked the 17th inst. I have not had time to look over the manuscript, but your letter reveals a remarkable experience of trial and many victories. The deceivableness of unrighteousness that lurks in these secret schemes

or Satan is cropping out on every hand, and yours is only another instance showing that it is a betrayer of confidence and a destroyer of virtue in the name and under pretext of morality and even religion. I cannot now write you at length, but be assured that you have our sympathy and prayers in your struggle against the enemy.

“Yours, for the Lord’s work,

“J. P. STODDARD.”

Mr. Stoddard at the same time sent me anti-secret tracts. I hesitated about circulating them, not wishing to do injustice to the honest men who might be in the lodge; but the attempts to take away a portion of my little homestead for a public highway still continued, and the peace of my family was thereby constantly disturbed.

Mr. K., the man of whom Mr. Giddings purchased our place, was determined to make me furnish the outlet for the street, to accommodate himself in selling lots. He was irreligious; in fact, an infidel. In vain I told the selectmen of his promise to put through the street. For eight years I was annoyed by the passage of teams through my dooryard, as the street had been laid out to the line where Mr. K. had it stopped. When told that I could not be allowed anything for my land, I asked them to give me as many rods as they took from me, as Mr. K.’s land joining mine was for sale. Even this reasonable request was refused, although it was a standing offer for four years.

I was often treated to profane and abusive language when I expressed my annoyance. “It would take forty dollars to enter your suit in court,” said one of the selectmen to me, with a sneer. “I don’t believe you can raise so much money. What could *you* do in bringing a suit against the town? You would lose your whole place, if you should undertake it.”

To avoid more trouble about the road, I offered, on

certain stipulated conditions, to let the town put a sidewalk on my land if they would draw writings and put in all of the conditions in regard to grading and the protection of my shade trees. A strip of land was bought of Mr. K. for the proposed street, and when the selectmen came to survey it, I told one of them if they would make the walk I would sign a paper made out according to this agreement as soon as presented. Six months passed away, and no notice being taken of my offer I supposed they were ashamed to accept my proposition and had purchased the whole street of Mr. K., as I had only land enough between my house and Mr. K.'s land for a door-yard. Meanwhile my door-yard, which I had worked in the woolen mill and gone out washing by the day to pay for grading up, was taken for a public highway till the dust raised by the teams in passing became so unendurable that I was obliged to close up the driveway to my house. As a result the selectmen came, one Saturday afternoon, to look over the land for the new street.

I remarked to a lady who was staying at my house: "One of these men is a stranger to me, but I am sure he is a Mason."

I accosted them as they were going away, and inquired if they were going to open up the new street, as I was greatly inconvenienced by having the driveway to my house fenced off. The man I had spotted as a Mason, and who turned out to be one, answered gruffly: "The first thing to do is to take all these trees off."

In vain I expostulated. My land, he assured me, had been put on record six months before and belonged to the town. As I had not been notified, I forbade his coming on the land for any such purpose, saying that if he and the other selectmen wished to do any business with me it must be through my attorney.

The next day, being the Sabbath, was passed in

quiet, but early on Monday morning (Aug. 28, 1899), I was warned by a noise outside as of blows from a hatchet that they were taking possession of my land. They had already a stake driven down which I calmly pulled up, at the same time ordering them off my land.



“They stood in consultation under a large apple tree.”

The selectman who had told me that the first thing to do was to take off all my trees, drove another, which I also pulled up. In his anger he raised the ax to strike me, when my little Grace, a girl of fourteen, grabbed the ax-handle, and a lady who was present looked calmly in his face and said: “See here, sir, I am witness to this!”

He sullenly lowered his ax with a muttered threat to arrest us both.

A telegram to my attorney at St. Albans, who came on the two o'clock train, put a stop to these outrages for the time being, or rather caused them to take another form. Again they came to look over my land, having gotten up a petition for which they had to go into neighboring towns to obtain the names.

They stood in consultation under a large apple-tree which my daughter Anna had always called hers, being set out in her name when she was a very small child. They decided that if the street crossed my land her tree should be its center. This would involve the cutting down of six or eight more trees.

My daughter Grace took a snapshot of the group, but two of them, seeing her design, stepped back of the tree. They are thus nearly hidden from view in the illustration, but their figures are plain enough to give the reader some idea of the size of the tree, whose growth we had watched year by year until it seemed almost like one of our own family. All my children had played beneath its shade, or found leafy retreats in its strong branches. There they had studied their lessons and read their story-books. Surely we should have laws to protect not only the homes of the poor, but "the household tree," which is often the one luxury they have to enjoy.

An utterly false charge was made by the selectman and industriously circulated through the village, that I struck him several times with the stake, and that he raised his ax in self-defense to ward off my blows.

A lady who was witness to the outrage just narrated, wrote a contradiction, which was printed the next week in the "Enosburg Standard." I will give her letter in full:

"STRANGE PROCEEDINGS.

"A woman's right to defend her own homestead was practically illustrated the other day at Enosburg

Falls, and as many of the village residents have received wrong impressions in relation to this affair, the writer, being an eye-witness, desires in the interest of justice to state that Mrs. Giddings was not the aggressor, but has been, throughout, the wronged and injured party.

"On Saturday last, two selectmen of the town came to look over the land for a road in front of her house. She accosted them as they were going off, and learned, to her surprise, that in addition to two rods and a half which had been purchased of her neighbor, they were intending to take, also, a strip half a rod wide of her land for the proposed road, without damages. Most surprising of all, it had been so recorded, though she had never been notified and had signed no writings. The whole thing was plainly illegal, and when she forbade them to come on her land or take an inch of it for the projected road, she was but exercising her just rights.

"In defiance of her prohibition, however, the two selectmen appeared on the scene early Monday morning and were proceeding at once to take possession of the land and cut down her shade-trees. Selectman had already driven one stake. Mrs. Giddings pulled it up, at the same time ordering him off her premises. He drove another, which she also pulled up. He then ordered her off and raised his ax, as if intending to strike her. Very naturally she raised her only weapon of defense, the stake she had just pulled up and still held in her hand. He was advancing nearer, with ax upraised, when her daughter Grace, a little damsel of fourteen, rushed between and seized his ax-handle, which he at last sullenly lowered. Thus the matter ended for the time being.

"It can hardly be expected that the selectmen who had to turn back with all their road-making apparatus, in melancholy procession, will easily forgive being routed by a woman; but they ought to have sufficient

manliness to face the music and not misrepresent her in such a cowardly fashion.

"The writer is from Massachusetts, and may be pardoned for asking if it is possible that a woman in Vermont has no right to resist an underhanded attempt to steal her property; no right to protect her little home-



GRACE GIDDINGS.

stead when illegally seized upon, without calling down upon herself such a display of ruffianly outrage?

"ELIZABETH E. FLAGG."

I will also quote another item, taken from the same paper: "The selectmen held another meeting here, Monday, to begin work on the road known as the Pearl street extension. This is a matter over which there has been a great deal of discussion, and more or less ill-feeling. It will be remembered that last year the selectmen laid out the street on land owned

by Mrs. S. P. Giddings and Mr. W. A. Kendall. Land damage of \$70 was awarded to Mr. Kendall, who accepted the same. Mrs. Giddings gave a strip of land one-half rod wide, and asked no land damage, but made some conditions, as she claims, though it is not recorded, regarding a row of trees which was on the strip, and also in relation to grading. It seems that on Monday the selectmen proposed to cut down the trees, to which Mrs. Giddings objected, claiming that the agreement was that they were not to be disturbed. Quite a discussion followed, and no further steps were taken by the selectmen. Attorney H. N. Post, of St. Albans, was in town, Monday, on business."

For eight years, on an average of four to six times a year, this farce has been repeated, the selectmen coming to look over the land, and claiming that they were to lay out the street at once and cut down my trees. These performances altogether, as nearly as I can calculate, have cost the town between one and two hundred dollars. These men draw their two dollars apiece each time, and I, being a woman, have no resource but to help pay the taxes for disturbing my own peace. This is one of the many ways in which the poor are robbed and made homeless by the terrible arraignment of the vile officials of our time.

The "New Era" of February, 1900, contains the following:

"In 1866, five-eighths of the people in the United States owned their homes, and only three-eighths were the prey of landlordism. In 1886, three-eighths owned their own homes, and five-eighths were reduced to the rank of tenants. Since that time the confiscation of homes by the money-power has gone on in an increased ratio, and it cannot be a great while before the final result will be reached, and the entire population of laborers become homeless and landless.

The terrible crimes committed to get possession of those homes will never be known until the books are

opened on high, and all the deeds of darkness brought to light.

In 1875, while canvassing, a poor blind woman told me her piteous story, how she and her husband were robbed of their home, consisting of eleven acres of land and comfortable buildings.

A wealthy farmer, whose land joined theirs, tried for several years to get possession of their place. Three or four other poor families living in that town had been driven from their homes by various false accusations, or some trouble about roads. (She could not remember full particulars about their cases.)

The farmer, who at last succeeded in getting their home, first moved his line fence onto their land a few feet, and not many months after moved it still further on their soil. Knowing his object was to involve them in a lawsuit, they said nothing.

One day this wealthy man came to their home and ordered them to move the fence ten feet onto her husband's land, so as to straighten the fence. This her husband did, allowing the rich landowner a strip of their land about ten feet wide.

A few months after an officer came to her house with a paper to arrest her husband. She never knew exactly what the document contained, but she was sure that it embraced a false charge. I ascertained that it was a libel suit.

The court made a decision against her husband. He was compelled to mortgage their home to pay costs.

Not long after, an officer came with another paper, and told her husband that they must leave their home or he would put them in prison.

Since they feared the officer would accomplish his threat, they vacated their house. Her husband, who had always been a day-laborer, was broken down in health, and unable to work as in his younger days. The grief of losing his home and the disgrace of a lawsuit was the means of his dying within a few weeks.

Before this sorrow the poor woman had never been troubled with her eyes, and the doctor said her constant weeping was the cause of her being stricken with sudden blindness.

At the time she related her story to me, her daughter was obliged to work out by the day and take in washing for their support.

One poor old soldier who was wounded several times in the Civil War, and owned a small home of three-fourths of an acre, was robbed of a strip of land, and his fine row of shade-trees cut down, no return being made him for the damage. There was a farm on the opposite side of the road, and no trees, but that property was spared, as its owner could oblige the town to pay him. The poor, childless old veteran came to my house and told his story. He received no sympathy, he said; the selectmen who cut down his beautiful trees, the pride of his heart, adding insult to injury by laughing at the distress of himself and feeble wife.

I once had a talk with a tax-collector, which is interesting enough to give at some length:

"I do not know as it will do for me to tell you what the State's Attorney told me just after I was elected tax collector," he said.

"I do not think you can tell me any news in regard to the law. I know there are white women who are bought and sold, and held in a condition worse than negro slavery."

"You did not know it was safe to take possession of them for taxes, did you?"

"Certainly not," I said, incredulously. "I don't believe any man would dare be so vile."

"They would not dare, if a woman could get her suit in court; the State's Attorney told me it would be safe, for no attorney would dare bring such a case into court."

"This puts me in mind," I answered, "of what the little boy said to his mother: 'Well, mamma, I could

love you better than papa, but you see we men must hang together.' So I suppose a gentlemanly attorney would not dare bring so vile a suit against a man."

"That is just it. I will tell you, word for word, what the State's Attorney told me when I was first elected to the office, if you will agree not to be offended. You are interested in such things, and may make a little use of it, only I don't want you to bring my name into it. It would not do for it to get out that I told you."

"If I don't tell your name, can I tell the rest?"

"If you think it will do any good, or help your sex. I always like to do as I would be done by, and I did not go to the State's Attorney because I wanted to take advantage of the poor, but I wanted to know just what the law was, and I found it was even worse than I expected. The attorney told me, that in case a woman could not pay her taxes it would be safe for me to take her or anything she had."

"You don't pretend to say you could take her daughter?"

"Yes; if she was past a certain age and under a certain age. The attorney told me that it would be perfectly safe if a woman could not pay her taxes. No attorney would dare take up her case, and the best way for her to do would be to keep quiet and not let it be known. I know it is not right, but things will never be any better until the women demand to have it different."

"You would vote to have it different, I suppose?"

"Certainly; but the men can do nothing till the women demand it."

This conversation was enough to convince me of the terrible crimes being practiced upon some of the poor female tax-payers.

I could relate many such cases, but believe I have already told enough to convince the reader that these acts of oppression are being constantly committed, and

there is urgent need for every Christian patriot, in the name and strength of the Lord to demand righteous laws by which the small holdings of the poor shall be protected, and every laboring person be allowed land or property exempt from taxation to the value of fifteen hundred dollars. The extra per cent in taxes should be added to the tax of those who own property valued at three thousand dollars or more.

Thus the poor will be entirely relieved from the burden of taxation, which should be placed on those who have heaped up great fortunes by absorbing the wealth created by the labor of the poor, and then use their wealth in corrupting legislatures and buying laws by which they may still further rob the poor.

I trust that the Holy Spirit will stir up the hearts of those who may read these lines to realize the terrible condition of a nation in which the rights of the poor are not respected, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse.

Isaiah 16:3, 4, 5.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CURRENT PHRASE—UNINTELLIGIBLE DEFEAT IN AN
ELECTION—A WOMAN IN THE CASE.

It is disheartening to see professed Christians keep silent while Godless and tyrannical laws are enacted, and the power of the rich and oppression of the poor increase every day.

In one of our American towns two women were in court charged with shoplifting. The evidence against them was conclusive; they were taken in the act, and confessed their guilt. Counsel for the shoplifters asked for suspension of their sentences on the ground that they were "highly connected." The assistant district attorney joined in the request, and the judge suspended sentence.

On the same day a woman was arraigned in court, in the same city, charged with stealing a pint of milk from a doorway. She testified she stole the milk to feed her hungry baby. As she was not "highly connected," she was promptly sent to jail for ten days. No counsel pleaded for her, and the assistant district attorney was silent. No mercy was shown her, although she stole to feed her starving child.

Unthinking men and women are yielding to the current belief that the poor and the criminal are one and the same. While certain kinds of crime are usually committed by the poor, who seek temporary relief from an almost unbearable destitution, the higher grade of crime finds its natural home among the well-to-do, and is developed more frequently among those who are considered the better class.

Let us consider what cause lies back of the new tendency in woman to form hatchet-brigades and strug-

gle single-handed against vice. It is the courage of a pure soul that leads women forth to battle for right and justice, but patient waiting on the Lord is more becoming the saints. Matthew 26th chapter, 51st and 52nd verses.

Man is too easily led by vain and selfish ambition, and falls an easy victim to the snares of the designing.

He who trusts a prostitute will become prostrate himself. Sensuality is death to the heroic soul.

If this is to be a nation of morality and religion, we must have brave, honorable men, and pure, gentle women. Then divorces will cease. When the same chastity and purity are demanded of the sexes alike, soul-unity will become the rule. As long as there are two standards of morality, the will of our Lord can never "be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

I will quote a few words from an address delivered to an assembly of her own sex by a woman whose name, in shame and pity for her, I withhold. Enough, that as she is the wife of a famous man, it would be everywhere recognized. She says:

"When man finds in woman a thorough appreciation of his work and aims, when the mind of woman becomes the perfect supplement and complement of the mind of man, as the Creator intended it to be, and gives over trying to be superior, then will all the discussions as to woman's rights and privileges cease."

Women who make such statements only expose their ignorance and lack of common sense, and bring contempt on their own sex. The Creator never "intended" woman's mind to be "the supplement and complement of the mind of man." He gave her a mind of her own, endowed with a quicker perception of moral purity, a keener intuitive grasp of right, and the mother heart to rise in generous indignation when the innocent are ruined and the weak overpowered through man-made laws, in the framing of which she is allowed no voice.

True men do not admire women who under any

circumstances advocate compromise with sin which wrecks the peace of sorrowing mothers. Men do not respect women who say such things, whether they do it from a desire to be popular with the other sex, or, as was probably the motive in the instance just given, to win votes for their husbands. If she who gave this remarkable advice to her sex could be placed where so many of her sisters are placed today, under the iron heel of legal tyranny, she might "appreciate" less what man has done for her. How do American women, by the way, appreciate such wholesale abuse as was recently heaped upon them by a certain police magistrate in New York? I clip from a paper of June 24, 1899, both this item and the above being published the same week:

"WOMEN ARE LIARS, SAYS A MAGISTRATE.

"NEW YORK, June 23.—A case wherein a plump, healthy looking woman brought her cadaverous appearing husband, who is dying of consumption, into court, on the charge of non-support, furnished occasion to Magistrate ———, in the Center Street Police Court, the other day to relieve his mind of some rather uncomplimentary opinions relative to women. He disbelieved the charge made by the woman and discharged the man, and then relieved himself of the following: 'Women cannot tell the truth. I would not believe any of them under oath. Nine-tenths of them are liars. If some one told them a man had murdered a thousand people they would say it was a million. I would rather take the word of one man than a hundred women.'"

Some light may be shed on the above item if I explain that at the time I was trying to obtain a divorce, my attorneys tried to make me ask for one on the ground of non-support. Then these unpleasant charges, the true cause of my divorce, would not need to be referred to; but I was fully able to support myself and family, and refused, in spite of all their argu-

ments, to subscribe to a lie by seeking a divorce on false grounds. I am convinced that many like cases have been hushed up in a similar way. If I had not insisted that the truth should be told, my poor, sick husband could have been dragged into court to answer to a charge absurd on its face, while I, being strong and healthy, would have certainly lost my case, and, perhaps, been called a "liar" as well as this unfortunate young woman, whose charge of non-support against her consumptive husband was plainly only a cover for far more serious accusations.

There are cases where lawyers can stifle justice by persuading women to keep quiet and not disgrace themselves and families by letting these wrongs and outrages come to light.

I was determined to let the lodgemen know my case, and seeing some detective advertisements, I selected several and wrote to the addresses named, in a hasty business manner, signing only S. P. Giddings, and making a Masonic sign which I had seen my husband use. All wrote me they were Masons. Some were both Masons and Odd Fellows, and also belonged to other secret societies. In reply, I sent each of them some anti-secret tracts, marking certain passages, in order that they might understand my case was against the lodge, and signed my name in full.

I was much amused to see shortly after, the advertisements of several lady detectives appear in all the papers from which I had taken the former addresses, one being but a few doors from the office of the New England Anti-Secret Association. But I paid these "ads" no attention, and patiently waited to see if the detectives to whom I had written would look up my case.

A few months passed, when I received a mysterious letter, postmarked New York, and containing only these words:

"Write to Collamer & Co., 1006 F St., Washington, D. C."

I threw the letter aside. But after a few days my woman's curiosity got the upper hand, and, thinking they might be pension attorneys, and as my widow's portion had been withheld from me I wrote, as directed, to "Collamer & Co." In reply, I received a letter from them, saying that they were not pension attorneys, but got arrears of pension. I put my case in their hands to collect Mr. Giddings' arrears of pension from the time of his discharge from the army, but the claim was not allowed, and, as near as I could learn, his claim for arrears of pension was not considered.

The following letters will explain more fully:

"January 31, 1901.

"DEAR MADAM: After all this delay we regret to inform you that the claim filed by us on September 25, 1899, for the children of your husband, is disallowed as per inclosed notice—the reason being because the soldier was paid in full and \$25 over. The writer is to see Senator Proctor this evening, but there is not the least use in even referring this matter to him under the circumstances. We therefore reluctantly drop the subject. We have none of your papers other than your letters to us. Regretfully yours,

"COLLAMER & Co.

"Mrs. Sarah P. Giddings, Box 13, Enosburg Falls, Vt."

"Form 77.

Claim No. 115,274.

"NOTIFICATION OF DISALLOWANCE.

"Treasury Department,

"Office of Auditor for the War Department,

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 29, 1901.

"*Collamer & Co., Washington, D. C.*

"SIRS: The claim for pay, bounty and allowances of Anna D. Giddings and Hugh A. Giddings, children, and Sarah Giddings, guardian of Grace O. Giddings, minor child of Lewis Giddings, private, G, 13th Vt. V. Inf., has been examined and disallowed by Certificate No. 351,549 for the following named reasons—viz:

"Soldier was paid pay and clothing in full. He also received \$25 bounty, to which not entitled. There is no law authorizing payment of bounty for service in the above named organization. Respectfully,

"F. E. RITTMAN, Auditor.

"January 30, 1901."

At the time Mr. Giddings enlisted he received a bounty of twenty-five dollars, which was given by the town or state. Now that he is in his grave those unjust officials accuse him of not being entitled to the small bounty which was freely given to him. His pension certificate is sufficient proof that he was not justly pensioned and that his heirs are entitled to his arrears. Please see pages 174-175 and 191. These beautiful lines from an unknown author may awake the conscience of some reader :

Is this the land our fathers loved,
The freedom which they toiled to win?
Is this the soil whereon they moved?
Are these the graves they slumber in?

Shall tongues be mute, when deeds are wrought,
Which well might shame extremest hell?
Shall freemen lack the indignant tho't?
Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?
Shall Honor bleed? Shall Truth succumb?
Shall pen, and press, and soul be dumb?

Perhaps in this connection another detective story will be interesting, though it belongs properly to an earlier part of this volume.

A short time after my divorce was granted, I came up to Enosburg, and called on Attorney Ladd. He congratulated me on being so successful in securing my home and obtaining the custody of my children.

"We thought we had the rascals," he remarked, using very similar language to that employed in his

excitement when first informed of the plot to take me off to the insane asylum. "But they have slipped the noose this time, and will have a chance to go on a while longer; but I think we shall get the halter on them yet. Both the doctors told me you were insane," he continued. "One said you had been delirious for years on religion, but he did not think you dangerous unless your religious frenzy should take a violent turn. At the same time he spoke with such respect and sympathy of yourself and family that a person who knew nothing of the case would never suspect the game they were playing. But I saw through their scheme. Unless they could somehow make way with you, they feared exposure of their villainy. But they made a mistake when they came to me. I knew too much about the case."

Mr. Ladd smiled complacently, as at some amusing recollection, and continued: "I knew by the sudden attention they paid me that they had some game up, before they told me a word. As soon as I found out what it was, I saw Judge Royce, for I knew if any one could foil them in their plans he could. But he seemed so strangely indifferent that I gave up hopes of getting any help from him, and laid my plans as to what I should do in case they took you from your children. I do not believe there is another family in the State so near perfection as yours, and every one knows it is you who has supported them, and not their father, who has always been a hindrance rather than a help. I believed these facts would go a great ways, and knowing there were others on your side, I calculated on giving the villains a hard tussle without the Judge's help. But one day two strangers came into my office and told me that Judge Royce sent them to find out what I knew about your case.

"Are you willing to take my word without investigation?" I asked.

"Yes," they answered. To which I returned: "You

are no detectives; you don't know your business,' and resumed my writing.

"You should have seen how disappointed they looked as they told me they had come a long way, and that Judge Royce had sent them with instructions not to mention the subject to any one only Attorney Ladd. They made some inquiries, which I refused to answer, and gave them to understand that I should have nothing to say about you, good or bad."

"Why, Mr. Ladd!" I exclaimed; "when you knew so well how I have been treated for years!"

"Yes, but you see I had an object in view. Had I told them all I knew they would have gone no further, and had only one man's word. I wanted them to have more."

"'If you know your business,' I finally said, 'you will go to the records and get the dates of the birth of all Mrs. Giddings' children, and then go to the woolen mill and look over the time-books.'

"They did so, and found that your name appeared on the book when one of your children was but four weeks old. Another time you had been only a week out of the factory when one of your children was born. I then gave them the names of the twenty men who got together to tar and feather you in '75. I told them to go to these men and find out all they knew against you. They came back and reported that most of the men, when questioned, denied any knowledge of the affair; but Mitchell and a few others were willing to tell what they knew about it. I then gave them the names of the two doctors and others in the ring. Do you know, they got positive proof from these blackguards that everything you have accused them of was true. They were here two weeks, and covered up their real business by claiming that they were looking over property to purchase. Before they went away I told them what I knew about the case."

As the Constitution of the United States is not

wholly undermined and the press not yet muzzled, I will quote from the Saturday Globe of September 21, 1901, the following: "THE MARTYRED GARFIELD'S WIDOW.—Mrs. James A. Garfield is also living. In wealth, in retirement and in the enjoyment of her beautiful home at Mentor, the widow of the President who fell a victim to misguided political strife probably now thinks of the days, a score of years ago, when millions watched with her in spirit at her husband's bedside and wept with her at his grave. The nation never knew Lucretia Garfield as it knew the wives of other Presidents. She never cared for society, and as mistress of the White House, during the brief period of her husband's occupancy of the Executive chair, she was little seen. She was in ill health much of the time. Mrs. Garfield's maiden name was Lucretia Rudolph, and she was the pupil of her husband at Hiram College long before he married her. They began their home-life under modest circumstances, and accumulated little during the President's lifetime. His estate, at death, amounted to \$25,000. His life insurance was \$50,000. Could he return now and see the wealth and luxury of his family he would, indeed, be amazed. His widow to-day is worth a million. When he died, Congress voted her his salary for a full year, in addition to an annual pension of \$5,000. A fund was raised by the public amounting to \$363,000. Cyrus W. Field invested this for Mrs. Garfield, and it has nearly trebled now. In addition to her vast wealth, she has what is infinitely more precious—the memory of the repeated expressions of her husband, during his long illness, in which he spoke of her love for and devotion to him."

I will here relate the condition of another woman of my native land, the wife of a poor, disabled Union soldier, who acknowledged to me that she had sold herself for money, and said: "Mrs. Giddings, I do not live this kind of life through choice, but I am

afraid to die, and this is the only way that I can keep myself and children from starving."

These cases, as well as my own, show that the government money is not rightly expended. Too much power is given the officials. Those in authority should be held responsible for the proper distribution of public money. It is the duty of the people to see that right is done to all classes, and the officials should be made to understand that they hold offices of responsibility and are servants of the people. Search out the officials who are guilty of treason and the secret empire will behold its weakness.

The lawlessness which prevails in many of our country districts and has frequently come to the surface in developments of the lynching spirit, once unknown, would be incredible to one unacquainted with the real facts.

It is stated that there are more murders committed in the United States than in any other country in the world, and in this country murders are less frequently punished than elsewhere. In 1890 there were 7,386 murders committed in the United States. In 1889 one murderer out of forty-five was executed, while in 1895 but one murderer in every seventy-four. Lynchings, on the other hand, have greatly increased. In 1899 there were ninety-two people lynched in the United States.

The "Burlington Daily News" of September 21, 1900, said:

"In Canada last year in all twenty-five persons were tried for murder, with the result that there were eleven convictions, all followed by the infliction of the death penalty, nine acquittals, three prisoners detained as insane and two cases in which the prosecutions are still pending. The proportion of murder cases in the United States is much larger and the Canadian newspapers are congratulating themselves on the comparative freedom of their country from crimes of violence.

The Ottawa 'Journal' attributes the difference largely to the lax laws and the lax administration of the law in the United States. 'In Canada,' we are told, 'there are practically no delays. There is no appeal to the second court. No stop is possible except by the action of the minister of justice, which is rare and to which the majority of Canadians strenuously object under any circumstances. Of twenty-five accused murderers in Canada last year, eleven were hanged, or nearly one in two. Of the 840 accused murderers in the United States in partly the corresponding year, 109 were executed or one in seventy-one.' "

Is it not the duty of every person whose eyes have been opened to see how the mystery of injustice is working in church and State to do what he can to aid the few who are struggling against the tide of iniquity? Secret society men put their hired tools in seats of office, while noble men who would honor the office are crowded out. It is thus that the enemies of woman, the foes of liberty and of all the good and pure, come to the front, and we complain of "the rascals in office," and are either blind, or wilfully shut our eyes to the reason why they are there.

Women can do much to hinder knaves and tools from getting into office, even without the ballot. Though a poor woman, without friends or influence, I have several times, with the help of the Lord, turned the tide of elections in the town and county where I live. On one occasion I started out with an excellent book, as if on a canvassing trip. After I had finished showing it, I would incidentally remark, in a careless manner, on the fitness of one of the political candidates and the defects of the other, and was sure of a voter every time. The wives would take an interest in the elections as soon as they realized that the question between the two candidates was one of moral character, and would influence their husbands. I recall one particular instance where, after showing my book to the

lady of the house, I asked if her husband was interested in the approaching election.

"No," she replied; "he does not intend to vote at all."

I then called her attention to the fact that one of the men would be an honor to our town, and related a few things I had heard in his praise. The result was a talk from the wife to her husband, which so influenced him in favor of that particular candidate that he not only changed his mind about voting himself, but was out nearly all night with his team looking up other voters.

On another occasion, a town representative was to be elected. One of the candidates had been hired to join the Masons, on the promise, as I was credibly informed, that he should be elected for this office. Otherwise his name would not be allowed to be put up.

I received the news after nine o'clock in the evening, and could see no way, the election being on the following day, to frustrate their plans. Yet I felt it important that this should be done. I felt that, perhaps, this young man's soul, who had thus sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, might hinge on this election. He must be taught his folly, if possible, through the bitter lesson of defeat. But how? I thought over different plans during the night, but it was not until morning broke that I thought of a feasible one.

I took my satchel and started out as if I was about to take the morning train. A kind Providence guided me, for I had gone only a short distance when I saw a man I had not seen for nearly thirty years. I stopped and asked if it was such a one. He answered in the affirmative.

"I am sure you must have forgotten me years ago."

He looked at me a moment before he recognized me.

"This is Mrs. Giddings?"

"Yes; and I am out on the strangest mission you

ever heard of. Will you allow me to ask you a question?"

"Certainly. Ask anything you like, and I will answer truthfully."

"Are you a Mason?"

"Indeed, I am not."

I then informed him of the word received the night before; that I was sure Mr. H. had sold himself for office, and was not a suitable man to represent our town.

"You may rest assured he will not be elected," was the gratifying answer.

I knew this gentleman was a man of influence, and felt that the Lord had sent him in this crisis to overthrow the plans of the crafty. I had lived in the place over thirty years, and knew whom to acquaint with this Masonic attempt of electing a man to office who would be a hireling for the lodge. Every person to whom I spoke promised not to vote for Mr. H.

To one influential old gentleman that I met I said: "Such a Republican candidate has sold himself to the Masons. Will you use your influence against him?"

"Stand for the right and I will be with you," he returned, laughing.

I did not stop to argue or talk, but simply said, as I passed from one to another, "Such a candidate has sold himself to the Masons. Do you want a free man to represent your town? Then don't vote for him. He has sold himself." I only walked up one side of the main street and down the other, but felt sure the tide had turned against the Republicans, as he had been nominated on that ticket. The town had always gone Republican before, except one year, when we had a Greenback representative.

A more surprised set of men I think were never seen than were the Masons when they realized the fact that defeat and not victory had perched upon their banners.

On going forth in the strength of the Lord I did not know that I was connected with the election in any other way than that of undermining the schemes of the artful. Imagine my consternation, therefore, when, some months after, the wife of a Mason called at my home and said:

"Mrs. Giddings, I think you ought to know how it happened that your land was recorded as a gift to the town. Before being elected Mr. H. promised that, while he was a selectman, he would prevent the road being laid out. Also that, before his term of office expired, he would record your land unbeknown to you. In return for so doing he was to be elected town representative."

In amazement I rejoined: "There must be some mistake, for his own uncle told me that the condition of his being elected town representative was that he should join the Masonic lodge. Mrs. E. sent me word, the night before the election, that he had accepted those terms."

"I know that the condition, which you mentioned, is what his wife and his mother believe," she responded, "but the Masons would never have nominated him merely for joining the lodge. I have just told you the true reason. Having fulfilled his portion of the agreement, he was so sure of being elected that he even engaged the band to play at his reception."

Believing such conspirings are common, I was more determined than ever to do all in my power for the deliverance of my own sex, who have all manner of wrong done them under the sanction of vile men in power, who rob the poor of their homes, and force them from respectability into the worst forms of vice.

Being assured that the Lord was with me, and would still defend me, I was more amused than terrified when, on January 8th, 1900, two of the selectmen called at my home. One of them said, "We have come

to see if you will let us have that strip of land recorded for the new street. The trees will have to be cut down."

"If you don't give the land," chimed in the other, "when the road is made you will not be allowed to use it. Several have been to us and suggested that we make the street and build a high fence, so that you cannot get from your house to the new road."

On my refusing to give the land they departed.

The August following the selectmen decided to make the street on land which had been purchased of Mr. K. Consequently, they assembled in the office of the town attorney for consultation. One of the selectmen was a leading churchman and a lay-reader. He told those present at the meeting that he could make the road and not get into any trouble with me. Hence they resolved to leave the making of the street entirely to him. The other two selectmen did not even look over the land.

The lay-reader called on me and said in a very friendly manner that they were not going to take any of my land for the road.

The first day that he worked on the road he commenced to scrape down in front of my house. I saw from his appearance that he was evil-disposed. When soil to the depth of three feet had been removed I offered to sell material for grading very cheap. "Wonder if she thinks the town will buy anything of her?" said the teamster, laughing. "She will have to go by the way of St. Albans street," said the selectman, with a sneer.

"You are destroying the road which I have had possession of since my house was built twenty-eight years ago," I answered.

"We are not on your land," said the selectman. "The town attorney is back of us, and has told us that, if we choose, we may go down twenty feet all along your line. You will have to use St. Albans street."

"I tell you what it is, Mrs. Giddings," said the teamster, "you have missed it by not giving them a road through your yard."

"They had a road through my dooryard for eight years, which is eight years longer than I ought to have allowed them to drive on my land," I rejoined. "I am a taxpayer. Having helped to purchase land for the road, I consider that the road should not be a damage to me."

"If you had given them the land and let them cut down the trees this would not be done," said the teamster.

I calmly remarked: "It would be a sin for me to make this town a present and encourage the men of my native land in robbing the poor of their homes or any part of them. Have you ever taken my circumstances into consideration? I have already buried two children with consumption."

The selectman responded: "We care nothing about that, and are only interested in saving the town expense."

Shortly after the road commissioner came and told me that he must take a strip of my land to widen St. Albans street. "You know," he said, "that a few years ago this was a wide street."

"I know it was," I replied, "but my fence has not been moved nearer the road. The fence opposite mine has been moved four different times into the road since I lived here."

"I do not know anything about that," he answered. "I know that this was formerly a wide street, and my impression is that you have moved your fence into the road. I am going to take a strip of your land to widen the street. Only look at it! That highway is not two rods wide."

"I am not responsible," I answered. "Can you tell me how many years ago this was a wide street?"

"I should say five or six. I am sure it was not more than seven years ago that I took particular notice of this street, and it was then wide. My impression is that your fence at that time was on the hill," he replied.

I rejoined, "My fence was never on the hill. Do you remember where the fence on the opposite side of the road was then?"

"No, I don't remember anything about that fence," said he.

I then asked: "Several years ago, when you noticed the width of this road, were my trees in the road or were they inside my fence?"

"On the inside of your fence," said he.

"Then I think I can easily convince you that my fence has not been moved into the highway since the time you mention. Those largest trees were planted in Centennial year. What year was that?" I inquired.

"Eighteen hundred seventy-six," spoke up the selectman.

"The fence was then nearer the road than it is now. When the men built the new fence I told them to set it as near the trees as possible on account of the street's being so narrow. When this land was purchased, in 1866, this stake and these stones were placed in this exact spot, as a landmark. The fence has always connected with this post, which accounts for the road's being narrower at this end of my land. The fence here is where it was in 1866. I trust that this landmark and my trees will convince you, gentlemen, that I have not been stealing the highway," said I.

"I shall have nothing to do about widening this street," observed the road commissioner. The selectman said that he must take down the line fence along the new street. As the fence belonged to Mr. K. I could not object. He told me that he would not inter-

ferre with the corner-post which was the landmark. Fancy my surprise when I discovered, the next morning, that the post had been removed and set on my land, northwest from where it stood originally. This made my trees appear to be so near the line that they could be easily destroyed.

Fortunately the old place where the post had stood had not been covered over. Being a strong woman I put my arm about the post and lifted it from its false position and placed it back from where it had been taken.

I then spiked braces on each side of the post, making it secure. Fortunately it rained that day, so that the men did not work. The following evening I carried boards from my shed for the construction of a fence. At about midnight a light was suddenly flashed upon me. I thought it was a dark lantern. I continued my fence-making and the light remained stationary for some time. As it slowly approached I perceived two bicyclists, who were keeping late hours as well as myself. I imagine they would have been more greatly surprised had they known the cause of my building a fence at midnight.

The selectman did not attempt to move the post again, but said: "I can take a strip of your land, one rod and a half wide, on St. Albans street, to widen the road, and you can't help yourself."

A justice of the peace informed me that the selectmen were not obliged to prove that the land belonged to the town. In order for me to hold the land, or get damage, I would have to get a surveyor, look up the old survey record, and have him determine the boundaries of the road. If I found that my fence was not in the highway I could collect damage or hold the land, but I would be obliged to pay all the expense myself.

An attorney confirmed this. I then understood why the homes of the poor were always trespassed upon

for widening streets, etc., while the rich man's land was always spared. The poor laboring men, or women, could not afford to go to the expense of proving the boundaries of the road, which would necessarily cost them more than their land would be worth, with a chance of getting into debt and losing their home.

In regard to my own home, I could prove that my fence was where the line was first made, and that the



THE GIDDINGS HOMESTEAD.

fence on the opposite side of the road had been moved into the highway. Yet that could not save my land, and the eighteen shade trees placed on the line to beautify our little home by loving hands that have been for long years cold in death.

Under the present system it is safe for vile officials, like vultures, to light down upon the homes of the poor and heap up their ill-gotten gains, while those who have worked for almost starvation wages and denied

themselves every luxury are forced to yield up their small possessions and submit to this tyranny, with no hope of deliverance except through death. And yet people wonder why murders and suicides are on the increase, and that the spirit of anarchy has taken root in the hearts of the American people.

To resume my story: The road which had disturbed the peace of myself and family for so many years was at last finished.

A Free Mason, who had caused me much annoyance, came to view the new street. The selectman pointed at the bank he had made on my side of the street. Both men smiled as they walked along, looking at my land. Yet there was an expression of shame on the Mason's face. They walked up to the place where my driveway had been. The selectman pointed at the bank, hit his pocket a slap and looked up at the Mason as if to say: "This is money in my pocket," or "I expect you to pay for this."

Instantly the Mason flashed a look of extreme scorn upon him, which betrayed that he would not pay for the job. He didn't glance below the driveway, but turned to go back. As long as I could see his countenance it wore the same expression of disgust.

My road on St. Albans street was cut off by a ditch, while a bank six feet in height separated me from the street on which I lived. The road which I, according to agreement, had used for twenty-eight years, and which had been nearly level with the village, was thus unjustly taken from me.

A few weeks afterward I received a dun from a tax collector. I told him how I had been treated by the town officers. He seemed indignant and said my attorney ought to be held responsible, for he could easily have put a stop to such abuse. He kindly advised that the best way for me to do was to pay my taxes and take my case before the board of civil

authority. If the board of civil authority did not do rightly by me he instructed me to take my case before the town meeting. I paid my taxes.

My daughter Anna and I presented our complaint before the board of civil authority. We also requested that my land, which had been recorded unknown to me, be discharged.

Among other cases which the board considered was that of a widow. This widow had given all of her property and several thousand dollars to the church. As her dwelling belonged to the church she refused to pay taxes out of her allowance on the ground that her house was church property. It was decided that she must pay taxes as long as she occupied the house.

"Very well," said the tax collector; "I will get the taxes or take her for it."

At this a knowing smile flitted over the faces of several of the men present, which reminded me of another tax collector's conversation in regard to what the State's Attorney said, as recorded in a former chapter.

I was told that my case would have to be put over until the next week.

On the appointed day I went again to the board of civil authority, but few of the men spoke to me.

The selectman who had scraped out in front of my house handed a cigar to Mr. McAllister, the justice of the peace, with an air of "we'll smoke her out." As Mr. McAllister did not light the cigar the selectman lighted a match and offered it to the justice, who refused to take it. The selectman puffed away vigorously at his cigar. All, excepting Mr. McAllister, passed into another room. As no other person attempted to smoke the selectman soon removed his cigar.

Mr. McAllister remained in the room where I was, and after talking with me, said: "If the selectmen have done anything unlawful they must be held re-

sponsible. I think that your case should go before the town meeting."

I was convinced that there would be nothing done about it, and when the town warning appeared in the "Enosburg Standard" my case was not mentioned, but the following letter from my own pen also appeared in the same paper, which I trust may help to prove that this is not a work of fiction:

From "The Enosburg Standard," Friday, February 22, 1901.

"HAS GRIEVANCE AGAINST THE TOWN.

"*Editor of 'The Standard'*—

"DEAR SIR: By request I submit the following to the voters of this town and to the readers of your valuable paper:

"I have been a taxpayer in this town since the year 1875, have never made the town or state any expense, have been honest in all things and lived according to the commands of God and in the faith of Jesus, as an investigation will prove. My interest as a taxpayer has never been taken into consideration. I have suffered loss and damage and my peace disturbed. For years I suffered in silence ashamed to let the truth be known. Now the Lord commands me to speak and bring the truth before the people.

"In June, 1891, the first petition for the street to cross my land was presented to me. I inquired of the selectman how much they intended to pay me for my land. He, shaking his fist, replied that they were not going to pay one cent. However, I insisted that they must give me as many rods of land joining my land as the road took; as the land adjoining mine was for sale this just request could easily have been complied with. I told them they could put the road anywhere they chose on my land and I would exchange rod for rod with the town. I never promised to make this town a present, and the land belonging to me recorded by the selectmen or man was a fraud. When Select-

man Cramton came to make the road I told him he could have the top soil anywhere on the hill for ten cents a load and the bottom soil for four cents a load or less if he thought four cents a load was too high price. He took away my road, which I was justly entitled to by agreement and had occupied since 1873. Thus the new road was a damage to me, and I was obliged to take my garden for a road.

"I have always been self-supporting and would scorn the very thought of asking the men or town to make me a present, but I do respectfully ask that they return to me all the money they have collected of me in taxes with interest, and as atonement for the wrongs I have suffered, set aside my house, Pleasant Hill, free from taxation in the name of the Lord, as long as wood grows and water flows, and make no further demands of me, that the selectmen may know hereafter that women tax-payers have rights which must be considered.

"Trusting that this modest request will be complied with, I am yours for right and justice to all,

"SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS.

"Enosburg Falls, Vt., February 18, 1901."

Having received a blank from the town officers for me to make out a list of all my taxable property, I sent the town clerk the following:

"Enosburg Falls, Vt., March 28th, 1901.

"*W. W. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.*

"DEAR SIR: Has that strip of land which the selectmen recorded as a present to the town been discharged from the records? I never gave the land and have requested the Board of Civil Authority to discharge it.

"Yours respectfully,

"SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS."

His reply was: "There is no record of there being any action taken on the matter you inquire about.

"*W. W. HUTCHINSON, Town Clerk.*

"March 30, 1901."

The refusal to discharge my land from the records proves that it is safe for dishonest officials to take from the poor their rights.

The Lord refers to such degenerate authorities thus: "And they covet fields and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away."

Christ says: "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayers."

A certain widow of this town owns a little home appraised at one hundred dollars. At one time her family was without food for three days, and at another time all that they had to eat for a week was sour milk given them by a neighbor. This poor woman told me that by selling eggs she was trying to get money enough to pay her taxes.

By paying taxes she was deprived of the very necessities of life, while many people can pay hundreds of dollars and still live in luxury. Thus it is that "they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," and lay them on the shoulders of the poor.

If the public money were rightly disbursed there is no need of the poor property-holders paying taxes.

The foolish expenditure of the State's wealth is shown in the following heading of a newspaper article:

From the "Daily Free Press," Burlington, Vt., Friday, October 13, 1899.

A ROYAL WELCOME.

Vermont's Splendid Tribute to Admiral Dewey, Her Most Distinguished Son.

HERO GREETED BY 40,000 PEOPLE.

Greatest Day in the History of Montpelier—The Capital City Does Herself Proud—A Profusion of Beautiful Decorations—Dewey Spends the

Morning Quietly—The Afternoon Parade the Greatest Ever Seen in the State—Triumphal Progress of the Admiral Through the Streets—National Guard Makes Fine Appearance—Many Organizations in Line—Jeweled Medal Presented to Dewey—Degree of LL. D. Conferred Upon Hero of Manila—Newspaper Men Presented—A Splendid Display of Fireworks—Showers of Rockets, Fountain and Fiery Dragons—Magnificent Set Pieces, Including the Battle of Manila, the American Flag and a Picture of Dewey—An Immense Bonfire, 75 Feet High, Set Off—The Admiral Enjoys the Scene—Went to Northfield Last Night.

Admiral Dewey publicly said that he wished to be left alone. Yet these vain displays were continued. Therefore he was not responsible for the legislature's jangling afterwards about who was to pay the expense of the Dewey celebration. Private individuals had pledged the amount, but after the display they sent the bill in to be paid by the State.

The following is taken from the Public Acts passed by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont :

NUMBER 123.

An Act to Defray the Expenses of the Dewey Celebration.

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont :

Section I. The State Auditor is authorized and directed to draw an order on the State Treasurer in favor of the Enosburgh Falls Savings Bank and Trust Company for the sum of fifty-six hundred sixty-nine dollars and thirty-nine cents (\$5,669.39) to defray the expenses incurred in respect to the celebration given in honor of Admiral Dewey in October, 1899, and to

indemnify the signers of the agreement providing for the same.

Section 2. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Approved November 16, 1900.

On the day of the Dewey jubilee a poor old woman, past seventy years of age, was languishing in the jail of the capital city. I became interested in this poor old woman, about whom the following appeared in the "St. Albans Messenger" of June 1, 1899:

"Mrs. Nancy Stevens of Middlesex held up the road commissioner of that town and his men Saturday with a revolver because they were widening the road in front of her house. She was arrested and taken to Montpelier after a lively fight with the officers."

I here insert an article which appeared the succeeding October in the "Burlington Daily News":

"Mrs. Nancy J. Stevens of Middlesex was brought before Judge Watson and adjudged violently insane, and sentenced to confinement in the State Asylum, at the expense of the State. She is the old lady who flourished the revolver in the faces of the road commissioners in front of her place last summer."

On reading the last of the above items I wrote to a woman suffragist living in Montpelier and inquired concerning Mrs. Stevens. The lady kindly replied that before receiving my letter she knew nothing of the case except what was printed in the newspapers. She had since learned that the road-men were acting under the direction of the Board of Civil Authority, and as Mrs. Stevens had threatened to shoot them the woman must either be an insane person or a criminal.

I next tried to interest a woman suffragist at Waterbury in Mrs. Stevens' behalf, and wrote in regard to an attorney's advising me to shoot men if they refused to leave my premises when ordered. I also explained the contents of a letter which I had received

from Mrs. Stevens while she was in jail, stating that it was through the advice of an attorney that she procured her revolver, and that the statements made by her were similar to the facts in my own case. I finished the letter by begging her to go to the asylum, see Mrs. Stevens and learn for herself if she were really insane.

Instead of her going to the asylum and investigating the case, as I was in hopes she would, the woman suffragist wrote me that "she had seen a nice man who had told her of Mrs. Stevens' career for years, and if Mrs. Stevens was not insane she was a criminal, and taking her to the asylum was the lightest sentence that could be imposed." She also informed me she knew nothing in regard to my own case; but she did know that "if women were what they ought to be here in our Vermont towns, they would have no reason to complain."

As to the truth or justice of her ideas I will leave the reader, after digesting the contents of this book, to decide.

From the "St. Albans Messenger" of January 8, 1900:

"The conditions of the insane asylum at Waterbury are in a congested shape as far as the number of patients is concerned. There are now in the institution five hundred and thirty-four patients. When the buildings were constructed they were planned to accommodate four hundred and eighty."

If women "who are what they ought to be have no reason to complain" they surely have a right to inquire the cause of so many people's being entombed in the insane asylum. This State has a healthful climate and beautiful scenery, while nearly all of the people are comfortably situated.

As I, through the power of God, escaped this vile den, I wish to call the reader's attention to the insane

asylum investigation, which took place in the year 1896.

The committee of investigation reported that the north wing, which is nearly a quarter of a mile long, is used for women. One woman, in the basement, was screaming frantically, and finally shrieked: "I want you to come and take me out." Nearly all of the women were middle-aged or past. Some came to the committee and begged piteously to be sent home. Others complained of the way they had been sent there. They found that Emma Hoyt had been secluded day and night from the 12th of June until about the middle of October, in a basement room, about eight feet wide by twelve feet long, with a cement floor and only one window, which was shaded by an opaque curtain, without clothing, bed covering or furniture of any kind. This room was in the north wing. Several attendants testified in court of sickening abuse of helpless patients, many women being confined in rooms without bedding or blankets and entirely naked.

Is not this enough to fill the heart of every true woman with indignation, that one of their own sex should be thus degraded?

As I wish the truths here related to be held in careful remembrance, I will call the reader's attention to the article in the "Burlington Daily News" of November 9, 1896:

"The increase in our State expenses is largely due to the cost of caring for the insane poor. The increased cost of our insane is chiefly due to the fact that the entire cost has been thrown upon the State. Under this system no one is particularly interested in ascertaining whether, in case of commitment to the asylum, the person is really insane, or whether his legal residence is in Vermont. When the towns bore the burden the town authorities were careful to ascertain that the alleged insane person was really insane,

and, if so, was insane to such an extent as to render his commitment to the asylum necessary; and they were equally careful to ascertain the insane person's legal residence. Under the present system the State pays the freight, and the slightest possible attention is paid to the patient's real condition and to the question as to whether he is legally entitled to the public care."

To prove that this insane law is still in force, I will quote a few paragraphs from the "Burlington Daily News" of October, 1900:

"The inaugural message of Governor Stickney is a straightforward, businesslike document. He would like to reform the abuse by which the towns fill up the State insane asylum with people who have no business there."

"Our State expenses for the past two years have been \$1,180,000, or very nearly \$600,000 a year."

"The insane, the care of whom (for the biennial period) cost the almost incredibly large sum of \$260,000."

"The legislature ought not to fail to pass a measure doing away with the immense abuse of the people's money in the care of the insane. This abuse is wholly due to the system under which the State 'pays the freight' on the pauper insane, instead of the towns, and all the riff-raff of the State, native and imported, is promptly passed along to Waterbury or Brattleboro, with but little investigation, and less endeavor to ascertain the patients' real condition or the persons or communities who are legally responsible for their support.

If our legislators "wish to institute a big, solid reform here is their chance."

I carefully read the laws passed by the legislature but found that no measure was taken for a reform. Judging from what I know and have read I conclude that hundreds of sane people have been robbed of their liberty and property through false pretenses.

A book agent told me that she knew of several cases in this State where sane people had been put into the insane asylum. They were supported by the State, and the guilty men who conspired against them succeeded in depriving them of their liberty and in getting possession of their property, which was generally sold at auction, regardless of its true value.

Through the trickery of her attorney a lady in one of the Western States was committed to the insane asylum. After five years' confinement she procured her freedom, only to find that twelve thousand dollars of her fortune had been squandered by the man who was appointed her guardian.

A Mrs. French, of Boston, was declared insane without a hearing, and made a prisoner in her own home. Being a woman of wealth, she succeeded in getting her case into court, and in securing her freedom.

Many other cases could be mentioned, but I think these to which I have referred sufficient to convince the reader that such practices are common. Considering the ease with which people having full possession of their reason may be committed to the insane asylum, and the abuses practiced upon the demented, rigid laws concerning the insane should be made and enforced. Personal liberty is precious above all things and to guard it against violation is the first concern of every citizen.

Rev. 13:9, 10.

CHAPTER XX.

CAUSES OF INTEMPERANCE AND ANARCHY.

In this State, liquor may be largely responsible for the abuses practiced on the helpless poor.

One of the men who persistently annoyed me about the new street has already served his time in the work-house for selling rum. In this small village, supposed to be a temperance town, six places were found where that liquor was sold. The selectman who threatened my life with an upraised axe was caught in the act of smuggling liquor from Canada.

Nearly all of the young men in this place, as well as many of the older ones, are said to be intemperate.

I will here insert an article which appeared in a Burlington paper of January 19, 1901. As I have no malicious intentions in the following, I withhold the name of the young man :

“STUDENT ON TRIAL.

“(Special to the Free Press.)

“Montpelier, Jan. 18.—The case of State vs. ———, of Enosburgh Falls, was brought for trial in the County Court this morning. It was claimed that the respondent while a student at the Montpelier seminary, furnished intoxicating liquor to students * * * last November, the occasion being the night upon which the mock session of the Legislature was held. The alleged furnishing took place in ———’s room.

“The students were all minors and the State claimed that the case came within the law which provided that a person could not furnish in his own house liquor to minors who were not members of his family. ——— was expelled from the school at the time and the trial

of the case has attracted considerable interest. The case went to the jury about 4 p. m. and they had not rendered a verdict when court adjourned. State's Attorney Hoar conducted the case for the State and W. A. Lord appeared for ———.

"At the opening of court the jury in the case of ———, the student charged with violating the liquor law, returned a verdict of guilty of two offenses of furnishing. This was a compromise verdict, for the State's evidence under the charge of the court tended to show six instances of furnishing. A fine of \$20 and costs was imposed and ——— was ordered into the custody of the probation officer when payment of the costs and sentence as to the \$20 fine were suspended as long as ——— should conduct himself properly."

The father of the student who was arrested is the man who sent me a dun, threatening to sell my place for taxes. (See page 125.)

I will relate the fate of one poor, motherless boy of this place. The first time that he tasted intoxicants he was forced to drink.

A few years later, while he and a companion were on a spree, Benny, as the young man was called, became entangled in the wagon-wheel and was dragged around the village all night. Several saw the team wandering about the street with something, which they supposed was a laprobe, dangling from the wagon. The next morning the towns-people were horrified to find that it was the lifeless body of poor Benny.

Another young man, having the advantage of a Christian home, was virtuous until he went away from home and was enticed by older associates to drink liquor. He was then taken to a house of prostitution. The liquor and vice so affected his nervous system that it was nearly three weeks before the men who took advantage of his youth and inexperience could get him to resume his journey.

Still another sad case is that of the son of poor but

respectable parents. Several men, termed moderate drinkers, compelled this youth to drink liquor, and then led him to a prostitute, who received quite a sum of money for allowing them to make sport of this schoolboy.

Such crimes as people under the influence of liquor are practicing upon the young people of both sexes ought to arouse every true woman of our nation to action. We should demand just laws for all people. The lawmakers, the officials and the attorneys should be held responsible for the present state of affairs.

I do not believe in war or bloodshed. Yet I do not know but that the people would be justified in making an example of vile officials and of attorneys who receive bribes. The Bible says that the Lord will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape. The Scriptures also say: "Pray not thou for this people."—Jeremiah 7:16.

Officials and attorneys who swear falsely and betray their trust by protecting crime are robbers and murderers. The black flag of oppression has long waved over the heads of honest people, and the red flag of anarchy has been thrown to the breeze.

IT MUST BE SETTLED RIGHT.

However the battle is ended,
 Though proudly the victor comes
 With fluttering flags and pacing nags,
 And echoing roll of drums;
 Still truth proclaims this motto,
 In letters of living light,
 No question is ever settled
 Until it is settled right.

Though the heel of the strong oppressor
 May grind the weak in the dust,
 And the voice of fame, with one acclaim,
 May call him great and just,

Let those who applaud take warning
 And keep this motto in sight,
 No question is ever settled
 Until it is settled right.

Let those who have failed take courage,
 Though the enemy seem to have won;
 Though his ranks are strong, if he be in the wrong
 The battle is not yet done,
 For sure as the morning follows
 The darkest hour of the night,
 No question is ever settled
 Until it is settled right.—*Selected.*

The following beautiful lines, from the pen of my beloved friend, Miss Mary R. Keith, seem appropriate to insert:

GO FORWARD.

“Ye weary slaves, by Moses led
 From bondage stern and drear,
 The Red Sea yawns on your advance,
 While vengeance flanks your rear—
 Go Forward!

Irresolute and faint with fear,
 We see them halting stand,
 While echoing down the halls of Time
 We hear the swift command,
 Go Forward!

Though into seeming jaws of death
 The onward journey lay,
 Obedience was their sword and shield,
 And forward moved they.

The Book of inspiration
 Reveals the mighty Hand
 That held the waves in bondage
 Till the sea was crossed by land.

Oh, weak and fainting spirit,
To care and toil allied,
Are many bricks demanded,
And is the straw denied?

Remember, O remember,
Your changeless Friend on high!
No manner of injustice
Escapes that searching eye.

Undo the heavy burdens,
And let the oppressed go free;
God's will is done in Heaven,
On earth so let it be.

“Over a ransomed world shall float”
The banner of love divine,
And the laws of Earth, oh Father,
Shall harmonize with thine.

Psalms 40:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.

CHAPTER XXI.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH ASSOCIATIONS.—A REMARKABLE
SERMON.—FALLEN LEAVES.—A SPIRITUAL SIGHT
AND REVELATION.

At this time, having broken with the lodge-ruled church to which I had belonged so many years, and having been forsaken by the people, I was in a condition of great loneliness. My heart craved Christian fellowship.

To satisfy this craving I united with several different Christian organizations. First, by letter, with the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons; also, with a temperance organization, the title of which, as given in full on the certificate, read thus: "The National Christian Men's Union for Total Abstinence from a Christian Standpoint, and Rescue Work." This order had the badge of a red cross on a blue ground, and had its headquarters in New York City, Col. H. H. Hadley, the famous rescue worker, being vice-president and director.

But again I was disappointed. When I expected to find help in bringing the truth before the people, I found the spirit of churchianity preaching charity and cautioning me not to say anything against the churches. I will here copy a letter, also a pledge, sent me a few months later. They prove what desperate efforts are being put forth to save the dying churches, to whom Christ's warning word is still as sure as when spoken to the church of Ephesus centuries ago: "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

"ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S RESCUE MISSION,
 "205-207 East 42nd St., Near 3d Ave.,
 "New York, July 22, 1895.

"DEAR SISTER: Do be careful about trying to 'reform churches.' Reach them by way of the Throne and by your example, and give your life to *personally* telling lost sinners about Jesus and His power to save. The world is full of those who *want* Him. Don't waste any time on those who *don't*. Leave them to Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

"Pardon the suggestion.

"Yours in Him,

"H. H. HADLEY."

The White Cross pledge sent me required me to subscribe to the following principle: "To reach and win to Christ the victims of drink and accompanying bad habits, and all non-church-goers into some church of their choice. * * * This movement is to strengthen existing churches in every locality; hence all who are connected with it agree not to criticize churches or church members, or those connected with any other Christian movement, even in private conversation, and to attend their respective churches on Sunday, and the prayer or class-meeting once a week, if possible, and to witness for Total Abstinence for Christ's sake, by wearing the Blue Button badge or the Lady's pin badge of the National Christian Men's Temperance Union, as often as convenient, and to induce other Christians to become badge-wearers, thus restraining by their influence the young and the weak from the drink habit and making Christian Temperance popular."

In joining the Auxiliary of the Christian Men's Union I supposed I was uniting myself to a people willing to labor for the restoration of the fallen churches to their original state of purity, for I loved the church still, and my deepest desire was to see her cleansed of these scarlet stains on her garments that should have been pure from every touch of defilement. How could

the churches be reformed if all criticism was forbidden? Could the lodge after it had worked such corruption in the churches, ask for any thing better than thus to gag the mouth of every professing Christian, and make him hold his peace, no matter to what evils he may be a witness, when his duty is to "cry aloud and spare not"?

I will here insert a part of a long sermon preached in one of the popular churches, which was printed in the "Burlington Daily News," July 21, 1900:

"WHO WILL HEAR OUR PRAYER?"

"A remarkable sermon by a Congregational minister of Plymouth Congregational Church, preached yesterday morning on the text: 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do the right?' The question: 'Who will answer our prayer?' was the subject of the discourse. In part he said:

"The one thing that perpetuates prayer in the sense in which that word is used in the Bible is the assumption that there is a Supreme Being who possesses all power, who is able and willing to answer human petitions, and whose one purpose is to do right. The significance of that fact is not due to the mere circumstance that it appears in the Bible. It is due rather to the fact that it still characterizes the bulk of the human race. Mankind cherishes to-day almost as generally as it did 2,000 years ago this faith that there is a Supreme Judge who will do right. That is the faith which accounts for these churches and temples scattered by the thousands over all the earth. That faith is implicit in all our religious services, in all the activity of our missionary societies, in almost innumerable actions of our life and customs of our civilization.

"It is hardly necessary to multiply illustrations to establish the truth of this assertion. This is a world of prayer. Our hymns are all prayer. Our Sundays are days of prayer. At least once every seven days millions of voices are mingled together in prayer for almost every conceivable thing.

“The prayers of the Boers are vain. Had they not perfected themselves in the use of the rifle, they would have been reduced to subjection long ago. All their praying is of no avail. Their nationality is a thing of the past. No such thing as a Boer republic will ever again be heard of. A few years hence not a hundred men will be found outside the survivors of the two African republics to regret their extinction. The faith of those men is a delusion. No one questions its sincerity. No one will dispute the depth and earnestness of their religion. But it has no foundation laid deep in eternal truth. The God to whom they have prayed does not exist. Here are men and women praying, beseeching the Almighty to save them! And they still remain outside our asylums for the insane!

“What this world needs to-day, and what each individual in it needs, is sanity and light. We need to put it far from our minds that we are violating some divine law when we affirm the supremacy of man. We are simply asserting the divinest law the human mind can conceive of. We men and women can make the sovereignty of love and the reign of justice a reality. Within ourselves and not elsewhere does that sublimest possibility lie. Not in the skies, nor in the life to come, nor in any deputed representative of Jehovah, for no such representative exists or ever did exist, but in humanity. We men and women have it in our power to determine and establish what is right. We men and women are clothed with the only divine attributes that exist or ever can exist. We men and women can answer every genuine prayer that swells in our hearts. We men and women are in our corporate capacity as the people, as humanity, as a nation, as society, the manifestation in time and on the earth of Omnipotence and infinite benevolence. In our hands, on our souls rests all that tremendous responsibility which we have been wont to invest the being of a God with. To human association and to that alone are we to look for the accomplishment

of any just or loving purpose in this world."—Rochester Herald.

Jeremiah 2:8-11-19. Ezekiel 13:8, 9-12, 13.

Is not this enough to warn every child who has any fear of the Lord to beware of the secret society churches, whose hirelings are teaching the people to trust in human associations? It is no pleasure for me to record the mistakes of my fellowmen, but a duty I owe to my God, to warn the people against those false preachers who are destroying souls and filling the world with confusion and crime.

Trusting my pilgrimage here may bless some weary traveler, I will record another token of God's love, and with pleasure tell the reader how the Lord in his goodness finally taught me, by one of those "parables of Nature" that lie all around us, a lesson of infinite sweetness, which I here relate, hoping it may bless some lonely, struggling heart, even as it blessed mine.

For several years I had set great store by the fallen leaves on my place, which I found very useful for banking up my house; but one year I was filled with astonishment to see my leaves carried by the wind and scattered on land belonging to a neighbor. He was an infidel, who seemed to delight in deceiving people with his false doctrines and taking unrighteous advantage of those too poor to defend themselves. Pharisee-like, I compared his life with mine, who had served the Lord from a child, tried to proclaim his truth so far as it was revealed to me, and always had compassion on the poor. Had the Lord taken from this scoffing infidel and given to me I should not have been surprised, but why should he take from me and give to him?

The next season my leaves were nearly ready to fall when one night there came up a terrible wind that howled and screeched like the voice of an angry demon. Surely, I complacently thought, this strange thing will not be repeated; but the next morning I saw my neighbor's land again top-dressed with my maple leaves!

Then a thought struck me which, like an arrow from the Almighty, pierced through and through my wrappings of Pharisaical pride. I thought of the many mistakes I had made, my wanderings from duty, my pride and impatience. Could it be possible, after all my struggles for a holy life, the infidel had a heart more acceptable to God than mine? For a whole year I grieved over my unfaithfulness, when, another autumn morning, I opened my kitchen door and again my neighbor's land was top-dressed with the beautiful red and yellow leaves from my trees. On everything in Nature seemed to rest a peaceful calm—everything except my own heart. I thought the Lord must be angry with me. I stood looking up into the sky with clasped hands and tearful eyes, praying that the Lord would again grant me favor in his sight, and blot out all the mistakes I had made, when there came to my ear, like a low whisper, "Poor child, the Lord is not angry with you, but the infidel is an object of God's kind care."

I looked away from the sky down to the peaceful earth, when, to my astonished vision everything seemed changed, and my eyes were opened to see a wonderful sight that cannot be described. I saw that all was good. Every object in nature seemed to be praising God—everything but man who had defiled the earth and filled it with sorrow. Yet he had pity on even those who deny His holy name. They, too, were objects of our Heavenly Father's care, who waits to be gracious and wills not the destruction of any.

I am but a dull pupil, for it took the Lord three years to teach me this simple lesson of love, and tear from my heart, I trust forever, the wretched Pharisee spirit so opposed to the mind of Christ.

Let none of his children grieve if cut off from communion with the visible human church. In the blessed day of Zion's redemption, the word of inspiration tells us, "Every one shall be taught of the Lord." Nor need we now depend on man-made organizations for

spiritual counsel and help; not even for fellowship.
 "Is not our fellowship with the Father and His Son
 Jesus Christ?"

Hebrews 8:10-13.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

Unanswered yet, the prayer your lips have pleaded
 In agony of heart these many years?
 Does faith begin to fail, is hope declining,
 And think you all in vain those falling tears?
 Say not the Father has not heard your prayer,
 You shall have your desire, some time, somewhere!

Unanswered yet? Tho' when you first presented
 This one petition at the Father's throne
 It seemed you could not wait the time, of asking,
 So anxious was your heart to have it done:
 If years have passed since then, do not despair,
 For God will answer you some time, somewhere.

Unanswered yet? But you are not unheeded;
 The promises of God *forever stand*;
 To Him our days and years alike are equal.
 "Have faith in God!" It is your Lord's command:
 Hold on to Jacob's angel, and your prayer
 Shall bring a blessing down some time, somewhere.

Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say unanswered;
 Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done.
 The work began when first your prayer was uttered,
 And God will finish what he has begun.
 Keep incense burning at the shrine of prayer,
 And *glory* shall descend, some time, somewhere.

Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered;
 Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock.
 Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
 Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.
 She knows *Omnipotence* has heard her prayer,
 And cries, "It shall be done, some time, somewhere."

F. G. BROWNING.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TRUE CAUSE OF RURAL DEGENERACY AND MULTI-
PLIED DIVORCES.—AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE.—
CONCLUSION.

The "Christian Cynosure" of December, 1897, contains part of an address delivered by the Rev. J. P. Stoddard at a Peace Convention in Mystic, Conn., from which I quote a short paragraph:

"When a hidden hand is laid upon the arm of justice, rogues rejoice and honest men may well be thoughtful. But when the tyrant tramples upon the marriage vow, sets at defiance the laws of both God and man by which the two are joined, and dishonors the motherhood of a nation, he strikes with deadly effect. When any clan or order separates those whom God has united in holy wedlock by an oath of concealment, that order commits an act of ferocious vandalism upon the home, more terrible in its consequences than the tomahawk and scalping knife on the border line of civilization. When thousands of those cliques and clans combine their influence, they become a power to wreck homes, incite feuds, array factions in hostile bands, and precipitate them into deadly conflict, more sanguinary than all the horrors of savage massacre."

I rejoiced to see the true cause of the general lawlessness and desecration of home ties now prevailing so fearlessly explained.

Great lament is made, and with reason, over the multiplication of divorces; but the agency of the lodge in bringing about this moral laxness is seldom noticed. It is surely a significant fact that divorces in our land are increasing in about the same ratio as the lodges, and

no divorce laws, however stringent, will strike at the root of the evil, while secret societies are multiplying in every town, village and hamlet, its night schools, where men old in vice initiate the young neophyte into "the true secrets" of the mystic craft.

In this connection, I wish to note another fact. During all the time of my membership in the church I never knew of a divorce among church people with which a Mason was not connected.

God pity the poor blind Christianity of to-day that encloses itself behind narrow sect pens, and cannot see beyond, or realize how futile are their denominational hedges that can be overleaped by the lodge-wolf at one bound. It is characteristic of these enemies of truth and purity that they "spare not the flock." So far as my knowledge extends, every crime practiced in the church of which I was a member for over twenty years, has been committed by lodgemen. And not on women who have already fallen, be it understood, but on pure girls, Sunday-school scholars, whose innocence should have been their protection. The only object of this anti-Christian system is to defile and destroy, and whether its members masquerade in bishops' robes or priests' attire, they are wolves in sheeps' clothing, seeking whom they may devour.

Church people are absorbed in foreign missionary effort. It is well to think of the heathen abroad, but what of our perishing heathen at home? Many weep over the girl-babies drowned in China. Would it not be better for some of the female children of this nation to be drowned than to be ravished, defiled, diseased and driven from place to place without pity or protection?

There is a selfish indifference which comes as the natural result of being perfectly comfortable oneself, and thus unable to take, in imagination, the feelings of another, robbed, oppressed, or the victim of circumstances to which we are strangers. Half the world does not know how the other half live, and this is pre-

eminently true of the women in sheltered, guarded homes, as regards the sorrows and temptation of multitudes of their own sex.

I believe I have told enough of my personal experience to disabuse any candid mind of the notion that the Masonic obligation is a protection even to the wives and daughters of the brother Masons. It is not *they* who are shielded by these unholy vows, but the men who work their ruin.

How many women, the wives of Masonic husbands, are passing through a furnace of affliction like mine? Who can tell? Their story is known only to God; but if my evidence can be a voice to the voiceless; if I can, with God's help, rouse the people of this nation to see how foul and dangerous a viper is coiling about their hearthstones, I shall thank him for every step trodden in anguish and tears.

Nor would I blot out even the darkest experience here related if by its recital some of my brothers and sisters in trouble may be helped to look beyond the clouds to the true Source of Light and Strength, or roused to take a hand in the battle now on us; a battle in which God is especially calling out his chosen people, as a great commander calls out his reserve forces when comes the critical moment.

My story draws to a close, and thankfully I can say, "It is finished," even though conscious that much has been withheld in this history that might be of profit. Again the heavenly mansions seem to rise before me through the mist of dreams. I see the rocks towering high above, and once more my eyes seem to trace the long, weary journey to the highest of those celestial dwellings where I thought to find it ended in the peace and rest of paradise. *Again the voice sounds in my ears, "Your account will be made out there."*

When these pages are published to the world, I shall feel that the special work to which I have been called is accomplished. With a heart full of gratitude to the

God who has sustained and strengthened me in time of trouble, I appeal to lovers of liberty everywhere, that they be not deceived by the boasted friendship of worldly institutions, for they contain strong delusions.
1 John, 2:26.

This record of my own experience I now give to the world, praying that God will use it as an instrument by which to strike off the fetters of sin from many a slave and bid him go free in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I appeal, not to sects or denominations, but to the people of every name and nation to have no fellowship with this dragon-enemy of the Bride of Christ, and be not deceived when it appears in the likeness of a lamb, nor terrified when it casts out of its mouth waters as a devouring flood. To them who are anchored on Christ the foundations must always stand sure, and no flood of ungodly men shall make them afraid.

“And He said unto me, Write.”

I have heeded the divine Voice, and now humbly leave the result with Him whose glory it is that He chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.

1 John 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20.



MRS. SARAH POWELL GIDDINGS,
Enosburg Falls, Vermont.

AUG 13 1931

