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# THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

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FRONTISPIECE.



THE  
UNSPEAKABLE GIFT:

OR, THE  
Story of Benjamin and Ruth.

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BY E. W.

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# The Unspeakable Gift.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ORPHANS.

“**B**EHOLD the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ ‘Christ, our pass-over, is sacrificed for us.’ ‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.’”

These were the last words of Mrs. Davis, a dying Jewess. Two of her children, Benjamin, a boy of fifteen, and Ruth, a girl two years younger, stood by her bedside. The lad, who had the

Hebrew cast of countenance and curly black hair, was looking sadly on the prostrate form of his mother. His gentle sister had Jewish features also, and her dark tresses fell loosely round her sorrowful face.

But one year had passed since Mrs. Davis had been left a widow. Her husband had made no provision for herself and her children, for all his money had gone at the gaming table. Her father, a wealthy merchant, had, however, allowed her a handsome income till within the last three months. Her failing health had led her mind toward eternal things. The religion of her forefathers did not satisfy her yearning soul. The ancient writings she saw not the beauty of, and the traditional rites and ceremonies of her fathers, with their ceaseless round of duties, she saw not the full meaning of. She knew that death had to come in between their sins and the great Jehovah—and now that there were no sacrifices, what could she do? All the traditions did not satisfy her.

One day at an old book-stall she pur-

chased the Christian's book, the New Testament ; then with a superstitious dread she took it home and read it in secret. Therein she discovered God's way of salvation, and simply received the grand truth, that the sacrifice she needed had been offered by One sent from heaven.

To her father, a rigid Jew, she made the confession of her faith in Christ, since which time she had never seen his face nor received from him any help. Her health entirely broke down, and the little remaining money being nearly exhausted, the family had been obliged to remove into a dingy lodging-house in a low quarter of London. Nearly everything available had now been pawned for bread.

Benjamin day after day sought for some employment but failed. To his own people he would not go. He was willing to work, but to beg he was ashamed. Now he watched his mother's spirit pass away, and he and Ruth were alone. The brother and sister stood in silence till light had almost gone. The stars were just lighting up the heavens and the moon shed her pale light into the

room. At last their pent-up feelings gave way and the first real sorrow was relieved by the sobs of the Hebrew orphans. They sat alone with the dead till sleep overpowered them. The hours passed away, and when morning dawned they gazed on the still form of their mother.

Benjamin, with a mind beyond his years, now resolved to act for himself and his sister. After a frugal repast of which he forced himself to partake, and pressed his sister to do the same, he and Ruth descended the stairs, paid the rent due that day and also a week in advance, then after locking the door of their room they passed out.

"Ruth," said Benjamin, "we will be homeless rather than allow the parish to bury our mother, and we will not appeal to grandfather, for he shall never see my face because of his cruel treatment of her. If this is our religion I will have nothing further to do with it; you need not fear, you shall never want a crust while these hands can work."

"But where are we to get the money to

pay the undertaker, Ben? Why did you give that woman all the money?"

"Because we shall now be able to do what we please with our own things," said Ben.

They sought for a broker, and he bought the few household goods, promising in return to bury the dead.

Before the sun set that day the orphans stood by the graveside of their fond mother. According to promise she had been buried by a Christian clergyman.

The boy linked his arm in that of his sister and walked away. He looked neither to the right hand nor to the left for pity. An almighty and compassionate Friend, however, was regarding them from above, and the eye of the Christian clergyman looked kindly on the mourners. Something in their demeanour called forth his interest. He made inquiries about them, but too late to render any aid.

The mourners had no home to return to, so they walked along the crowded streets towards St. Luke's Workhouse. Many of their Hebrew brethren would have gladly helped

them, believing that the children were not responsible for what their mother had done. But the boy shunned the whole race because of his grandfather's desertion, and kept aloof from acquaintances who might have assisted them.

They stood that summer evening opposite St. Luke's Workhouse with not a penny in their pockets.

"Ruth," said Ben, "there is the only shelter for us to-night, what shall we do?"

"I will not go there, Ben, and neither will you."

"What are we to do, then? We are penniless. I do not mind for myself, it is for you I care."

"But," said she, "I have father's last gift in my pocket. This gold necklet which mother would never pledge."

Ben looked at the trinket and then at his sister. At the same moment he espied a pawnshop, and hesitating no longer he entered and got seven shillings and sixpence without a rebuff, and they thankfully strolled away from that cold, grey workhouse.



THE ORPHANS AT THE GRAVE.





Ben remembered that they were in the neighbourhood of Jane's cottage. Jane had been an old servant of their mother. They soon presented themselves at her door. She knew them spite of their shabby garb; their poor appearance made no difference to her kindly heart. In her clean little kitchen a good meal was quickly spread, and the poor wanderers were pressed to eat, and soon recovering in a measure from their distress they were able to tell their old nurse of all their sorrow. She made arrangements for the night, and Ruth, as in earlier days, was soothed to slumber by faithful Jane, and Benjamin was relieved of any further anxiety as to his sister.

After the morning meal she said, "I know, Master Benjamin, you are courageous and you will want to work for your sister, but as long as you like you can stay here, and when you are able to pay me, do so. My little sitting room is poorly furnished, but it is clean and comfortable. It is yours as long as you want it."

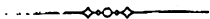
Benjamin up to the age of fourteen had

been at a first-class gentlemen's school in Bristol. He had made good use of his time, but his capabilities seemed of no use at the present moment. He had no testimonials to recommend him, nor any friends. What could he do? He had early shewn a talent for business, and now the thought struck him that he would invest five shillings in hardware and travel, as many of his brethren had done before him. He purchased among other articles a couple of table spoons. Their bright look attracted the attention of Jane's neighbour, who insisted on giving double the amount Ben had expended upon them, and was well pleased with her bargain. The profit, together with the sale of two pairs of spectacles, enabled Ben to increase his stock the following day. He knew how to buy and how to sell, and thus day by day he was able to maintain himself and sister, and pay Jane as well.

"Ben," said Ruth one morning, "do you think we shall ever see Isaac again? Where can he be? I shall never forget the day he went away."

Isaac was their elder brother, and had been brought up strictly in the Jewish faith. At dinner, about six months before, he was arguing with his mother, being angry with her for having embraced the christian faith. One word had led on to another until at last he had hastily left the dinner table, saying, "You shall never see my face again in this world."

He knew not then through what difficulties his mother would have to pass. He had a hasty temper, and was often sorry for his impulsive actions. This youth of eighteen had cause to repent bitterly this rash action when sorrow was of no avail. It could not bring his mother back again.





## CHAPTER II.

### A VISIT TO PALESTINE.

“**A**NNAH, dear Hannah, I have come to say good-bye, for I am off in a day or two to the land of our fathers. Father has often said that he would like to go to Jerusalem and other places in our ancient land, and now the longed-for wish of my heart is at last to be gratified. I have been reading some of the writings of the holy prophets lately, and the more I read the more interested I am. Asher says they are not fit for me to read; they are too difficult to be understood, but I do not think that the great Jehovah would have inspired the prophets to write that which is beyond our comprehension.

“I want to see some of the places that those enemies of ours once dwelt in. Some infidels, Asher says, have written home accounts of the magnificent ruins of some of the buildings of Edom, Moab and Ammon. If this be true, what a confirmation it is of the predictions of our great Jehovah. Who but He could foretell the fall of nations while yet in their splendour—centuries even before their glory passed away?

“Oh, Hannah! how I wish you were going with us; but that I know cannot be. I am sure you would not leave your invalid mother.” But seeing the tears in the eyes of her friend, Miriam said, “I will write you full accounts of all I see at each stage of our journey,” and with a loving adieu the girls parted.

Hannah was the sister of Asher Abrahams, a handsome young Jew who had won the heart of Miriam Isaacs, and with her father's consent on her return from their proposed tour in the Holy Land she was to become the bride of Asher.

Miriam, just on the verge of womanhood,

was tall with raven hair. Her brow shewed freedom from care, but bespoke a force of character not usually met with. The expression of her face was grave as if she was seeking something beyond her. This was so, for though she had often listened carelessly to the reading of the scriptures in the synagogue, yet now her mind was awaking to their solemnity.

On one occasion in the synagogue, when fashion and costly attire seemed the engrossing object, Miriam watched with interest the arriving of the congregation. All seemed to be gathered with no thought of the day or place.

At the appointed time a minister stood up to read, and Miriam heard, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." The words, "I will require it of him," arrested her, and seemed to mingle

with her every thought. She would say, "If I marry Asher, I cannot see how he can be responsible for me. This responsibility of the husband for the wife must be a tradition. Adam was not responsible for Eve. She had to suffer. I wonder whether this Prophet has come. I think it must mean the Messiah." After this she eagerly searched the scriptures, and her mind began to receive that which holy writ opened up to her.

The day came for Miriam and her father, with other tourists, to commence their journey.

After sea voyage and railway travelling, and sight seeing at various places, they arrived at Joppa. The landing process was not a very pleasant one. By means of a kind of basket they were lowered into a boat, which after various fruitless efforts, at length landed them on *terra firma*.

Thanks to the railway, travellers now are soon in the holy city. To the careless observer the railway to Jerusalem is only the enterprise of a company, but to the student of scripture it may eventually help

in bringing back Jehovah's "banished ones" to behold the true King David in His beauty.

When Jerusalem came in sight Miriam lifted her eyes to the city of her fathers, and with much emotion drove through its streets to a modern, European-looking hotel. But a short time since she had read of its scanty population and indifferent accommodation—the Turkish rule making the life of her brethren one of sorrow – and now she was within its walls to see it all for herself. That same power has now sanctioned the holy city to be approached by steam engine and iron roads.

Upwards of 40,000 Jews flock the streets, and more than 70,000 now inhabit the land of promise. The Russian outcasts, with their corkscrew curls, looking the personification of a down-trodden people, are returning in vast numbers to the land they hold so dear. To her surprise she saw Jerusalem fast filling with new buildings, and everything seeming to wear an aspect of business.

Why are five millions out of the seven



millions of our persecuted but distinct race being thrust out of Russia at the present moment? Can it be true, she thought, that the time has come for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and her sons and daughters to rest in the land of our fathers? With all the persecution my people have undergone we still increase, and what a wonder of wonders it is that we as a nation have kept so distinct.

“They are building now in the direction prophesied of by Jeremiah : ‘Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord ; it shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more for ever.’ We live in strange times.”

Miriam looked up and saw the speaker

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was a fellow traveller. He was a Jew, but one who had recently believed in Jesus. He had been led to see from the prophet Daniel when Messiah was to come : " Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks." Reckoning by weeks of years was usual among the Jews. Every seventh year was the sabbatical year. Sixty-nine weeks thus amounted to four hundred and eighty-three years. From the year when Nehemiah went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild Jerusalem, to the death of Christ was exactly four hundred and eighty-three years. Chroniclers have established these facts. Forty-one years after the death of Christ Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was laid in the dust. The glory departed from the kingdom until the dawn of that day of splendour when the rightful King will come out of Zion and the Redeemed of the Lord shall dwell safely under the everlasting dominion

of the Redeemer of the sons of Judah. Hail, blissful day ! when Christ shall usher in His glorious kingdom.

About a week after this Miriam saw a lady leaning on the arm of this same fellow-traveller, and circumstances occurred which brought about an introduction.

Morris David was the gentleman's name, and since embracing the Christian faith he had married Anelia Downing, the daughter of an eminent Scotch minister—one who adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour. These two, so lately one in heart, became also one in purpose. Each felt that they had been divinely commissioned to go to the Jewish people and endeavour to point them the way to the eternal city.

Morris David was a well-taught Hebrew scholar, and seemed in every way fitted for the task. He was a wealthy man and travelled independent of any society, and his means and his abilities were willingly spent for his less enlightened brethren. He had earnestly sought in the law and in the prophets for all that related to the long expected Deliverer, and like many another

Jew he had found that the time had long passed for the coming of Messiah ; but this knowledge, instead of leading him into infidelity, had made him study the history of his people, and especially the writings of Josephus. He plainly saw that Titus and Vespasian had but fulfilled the judgments predicted by God on His guilty nation, and that, for the sins of his forefathers, the daughter of Zion was sitting as a mourner. God had punished them for their iniquities though he afterwards dealt with their enemies. Where are the nations now who vanquished the children of Israel ? Where are the descendants of the proud Assyrian ? Who is left now to wear Egypt's diadem ? The cities of Edom, Ammon and Moab are no more. Relics lying in the dust only tell the tale of departed glory. When these cities were still in all their strength God foretold their overthrow. Of all the kingdoms of bygone ages is there one extant, but Persia, whose king restored Jerusalem to the Jew ? Where is there a nation so scattered as the Israelites, and yet remaining one in custom—one in religion—

one in hope—and withal one in expectation of seeing their Deliverer and King ; while alas they are still blind to Him who came and offered Himself a sacrifice for sin.

Miriam was left very much to her own choice of amusement and occupation. Her father was a wealthy merchant, and his mind was taken up with his business affairs. He was not what was called a strict Jew. He cared nothing for his fathers' God, though he had longed to see his fathers' land. Miriam, left to her own devices, was thrown very much in the way of Mrs. David, who took a great interest in her welfare.

Meetings for the reading of the scriptures were being held twice a week, and Miriam was invited to attend. Her father's carelessness as to eternal things did not lead her to fear any reprimand in that quarter. When she entered, two small books were handed to her, one a hymn book and the other a New Testament. She was early, so she opened the Testament and read the first chapter of St. Matthew, and with awe and wonder closed the book. That, which

to a careless reader is only a list of difficult names, was to Miriam a most interesting study. She could trace her own genealogy to Israel's youngest son. She was a daughter of Benjamin. She knew how highly the genealogies were valued by her people, and here in this little volume she saw traced clearly that Jesus of Nazareth was son of David. This must be true, she thought, or its correctness would have been refuted. She then opened the hymn book and read :—

“ But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Took all our guilt away ;  
A sacrifice of nobler name,  
And richer blood than they.”

During the meeting she heard the old, old story—that heaven's treasury had provided the ransom for her soul. She longed to read the little book, the first chapter of which had so surprised her, and when she rose to return it Mrs. David asked her to accept it. No sleep came to Miriam's eyes until her longing had been in a measure satisfied. She had read of Jesus

as Son of David, and ere she slept she found that Jesus, Son of David, was Son of God also. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." She saw Him to be the incarnate God. She had looked for a King and a Deliverer; but she found that she, with her nation, needed not only deliverance from earthly thralldom, but a Saviour.

With what joy did she, the following morning, peruse the New Testament. As she read, it explained to her much she had found hard to understand in her own scriptures. God was teaching her, and He led her in the right path to know the more perfect way. When she had read the predictions of the holy prophets with regard to her people and knew how history, which she was so fond of studying, verified the fulfilment, she thought such a God as this, who can foretell the fall of nations while yet in the height of their glory, and that centuries before their downfall, must command my trust. He does not seem to

ask for it blindly. He has endowed me with understanding, and by the prophets has spoken to me, and now He asks me to trust Him. Oh! wonder of wonders if I do not. Oh! Thou giver of every good thing, help me to trust Thee. Thou knowest my feeble faith and my wicked heart, still I would trust Thee. Help Thou my unbelief.

Mr. David and his wife had arranged to join a party to go to many places of interest in the land of Palestine, and now they felt sorry to leave Miriam. When their projected departure was spoken of, Miriam said with earnestness, "Oh! how much I should like to join you: I think my father would let me go," and on the impulse of the moment she sought and gained his consent. But much as she had been left to her own devices she found her father would not allow her to travel without him. One morning as the sun was rising over the hills around Jerusalem the caravan set forth. Much had been seen in that city to interest Miriam, and her father having important business to transact there she had the prospect of visiting it again.



Going to Gaza she had counted on her return journey sixty-seven successive terraces. Israelites of old had upturned the rich mould on the hard rocks, and walls cut from these rocks had risen terrace after terrace, and vine-clad hills, rich with verdure, were seen, reminding one of the hanging gardens of the king of Babylon. Turn which way she would Miriam saw the remains of the magnificence of the past. There were remnants also of their cedar forests, and in the mountains fruit and luxuriant trees reminded one of "a land flowing with milk and honey." What multitudes were fed from the produce of a land thus blessed of God. Who is left to tell of the grandeur and magnificence that once graced the land of promise?

Miriam saw the mementoes of the past — columns lying unheeded by the Arab and the Turk; ruins of cities, baths and aqueducts lying here and there, that must once have been Israel's pride and glory — lying there surely to tell of Israel's glory; but there also to tell the story of God's wrath on his chosen race for their sin and

folly. Moses foretold the wreck ; Isaiah, ages after, predicted its overthrow. While numerous throngs flocked the highways to go to the feasts at Jerusalem, prophets foretold that the highways should be desolate and the wayfaring man should cease.

In the time of the Romans, when the glories of Palestine were much debased, there were forty-two different highways, as Josephus informs us ; and now in that very land where the court of Solomon was in all its grandeur, where the ivory palaces received the Queen of Sheba and where luxurious vegetation met the eye—how all is changed. The ruthless Arabs are there, as said the prophets : “ The spoilers shall come from all places through the wilderness.” The poor peasants take little interest in their land, as they otherwise would ; for often down comes the Arab and robs them of their flocks and harvest. As Jehovah predicted, the land enjoys her Sabbaths now ; but ere long the songs of Zion and the strings of the harper will pour forth their melody. The cities shall

be rebuilt, and the foundations that are now discovered will again bear upon them buildings of greater splendour than Miriam's forefathers beheld. Zion's weeping daughter shall lift her head once more, and joy and gladness shall be heard in her streets.

The Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman, as Daniel's image prefigured, have had their imperial sway in the land which was Jehovah's delight ; but soon, very soon, king David's Son and king David's Lord will be Zion's King.

Miriam was brought to the land of her fathers that she might see the literal fulfilment of the sayings of the prophets. As she looked on the ruined piles she searched the scriptures, and her new-found friend was the means of drawing her mind out towards the wonders of the ages. But amidst all the excitement of travel Miriam's fond heart looked back to days for ever gone, when her only sister had shared her joys and her sorrows. This sister was now to her as dead. This visit to the holy land had been taken by her father in order to

drown thought, and to help him to forget his youngest child, who had married, been left a widow, and had embraced the christian faith.

Our readers will perhaps recognise that this daughter was none other than Mrs. Davis. Miriam does not know that her only sister is in the land of silence, and that her orphan children are struggling against the storm of want and friendlessness. But the Hand that had bereaved them was with them now, and faithful to His promise was giving them strength to struggle on, and each blast, each wave, each storm was driving them towards the land where Mrs. Davis awaits her beloved ones, and above all, where the Saviour will welcome the weather-beaten mariners, to give unto them an eternal calm in the realms above.

With their Bibles for their guide the travellers beheld the desolate wastes and the forsaken cities spoken of by the prophets, but the words of Ezekiel brought solace and comfort. "The mountains of Israel shall yet yield fruit to Israel." More abundant in gatherings than eyes

have ever yet beheld will gladden the hearts of the returned captives. The reproaches of the heathen will no more be heard.

From Mount Tabor the eye fell on plains and some ruins, and here and there were hamlets and gardens. They saw the ruins of those ancient cities, Capernaum and Bethsaida. The city of Nain was now but a hamlet.

As they gazed upon the blue waters of the sea of Galilee they saw no towns on its banks such as had flourished in brighter days. Of Jericho also there is now nothing but ruins and desolation.

The plain of Esdraelon, covering three hundred square miles, once clothed with verdure, is now desolate. Under a brighter dispensation, under a perfect government, this wilderness shall blossom as the rose. The rugged bare mountains shall once again be clothed with verdure.

They saw the site of Samaria, but where now is the royal throne of Omri its founder? That city, once famed for its strength and its beauty, is now no more; only marked

by its stately columns here and there. Where now is the valley, once luxuriant with vegetation, that stood at the foot of Samaria's hill? The terraced hills at the head of the valley rise like a panorama, and in a feeble measure shew out the glory of bygone ages; endeavouring, as it were, to hold with tenacious grasp the relics of other days. In the midst of all this natural grandeur its kings outvied each other in wickedness, and now, as Isaiah and Hosea prophesied, the judgments of God have descended, and the ruined cities have fulfilled His word. "Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim;" their woe has come. The foundations of Samaria are discovered, and their stones thrown into the valleys.

The "couches and beds of ivory," the wine bowls and the music were exchanged for the land of Chaldea, and amidst the revelry of the oppressors the Hebrew mourned for the songs of Zion. The harp hung on the willow by Babylon's waters. The songs of Zion could not be sung in a strange land.

Though three years after Assyria's king

had besieged Samaria and taken captive her sons and daughters the city was rebuilt, yet this could not efface the prophecy of its final overthrow. The stones in the valley and the ruins on Samaria's hill are there to tell the story of its fall. The discovered foundations declare what noble buildings were once upborne by them. But a time is soon coming when Israel will plant vines on Samaria's heights, and the terraced gardens will appear in bold relief, grander by far than the hanging gardens of the Babylonish monarch. Palestine will blossom as the rose, though the glories of Chaldea have passed away. The river of Babylon still flows on amidst the city's massive ruins; but the Israelite will no more be a captive there. In his own land he will sit under his own vine and fig tree, none daring to make him afraid. The vast plains will be covered with verdure, and the vine-clad hills and fields will be running over with corn and wine. No fear of evil beast—no fear of the Turk or the infidel then. The now cowering Israelite will lift his head among his princes. After

tribulation and suffering the long-looked-for Deliverer will come. The Sun of Righteousness will arise. The royal David with His kingly robes will sit on David's throne, and in that day Israel will behold the marks of the wounds received by their King when He came in lowliness and humiliation. In virtue of His victory, and as Son of David, He claims the kingdoms for His own, until that time when He shall deliver the kingdom up to His God and Father.

Hail! glorious future, when redeemed creation shall join in one to praise the sacred name—the name above all other names—the precious name of Jesus.

After visiting many places of interest our friends returned to the holy city—holy indeed now to Miriam. When first she trod its streets her mind dwelt much on the awful sufferings of her forefathers, when Titus marched in triumph through its gates; of the thousands of her kinsmen whose blood deluged the streets of that noble city; of the pangs of hunger that no words can fully describe; and of the devas-



tation of noble piles and of the fall of the temple of her nation.

Who can portray the sorrow of the captives who had been in former ages led in chains to Babylon—away from their boyhood's home to serve in another land? Their depth of feeling is told out in a measure when in the days of Ezra the aged captives returned to their own land under the benignant reign of Cyrus, and once more beheld a restored temple. Those who had seen it in its original grandeur now bowed the head and wept. Here was sorrow; but what was this compared to the misery of those who suffered in the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman conqueror.

Miriam had painted such pictures in her mind; but now the scene is changed. Calvary and Gethsemane were more to her than all beside. The altar on which the many sacrifices were offered by those who had gone before was no more needed, for both the altar and the sacrifice had been on Calvary, and her soul with adoring wonder could dwell on that scene, and with

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unbounded thankfulness that she was free from the law that had bound her—free through death, and that the death of her heaven-sent Substitute. Those words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” told of His heart of love for His enemies.

Amidst her new-found joy she thought of all her sister had undergone for her faith, and she was only waiting for an opportunity of confessing her own faith to her father.

On their arrival in Jerusalem a budget of letters awaited Miriam’s father. At the reading of one she saw his countenance change; but he soon recovered himself, and turning to Miriam he bade her prepare for home: business demanded his attention.

Miriam thought that the present moment was not the time to make her confession. She did not wish to add to her father’s evident anxiety. She thought she would postpone it. The confession, however, to her father never was made, for two days after their return to London Colin Isaacs

was found dead in his counting-house. Sitting before a half-written letter, he had passed into the land of silence. Evidently grief had hastened her father's death, and she was thus suddenly left alone when most she needed a protector.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE CONFESSION.<sup>1</sup>

**M**IRIAM, naturally of a candid nature, could not conceal while in the holy land from her affianced husband the new faith she had embraced. She did not make an open confession ; this she left till her return, but in each letter Asher saw with grief the tendency of the mind of her he loved so well ; angry he could not be. He had made preparations for the nuptials, which were to have taken place in about six weeks after the return from Palestine, and Asher thought that when Miriam became his bride his influence over her would set aside all foolish notions, and that no further

trouble would beset him on that point. No marriage settlement had yet been made, but Colin Isaacs had told him the amount he intended settling on his daughter, and also of a small annuity of fifty pounds in Government securities left her by an aunt, which was unknown to Miriam. Her father had, however, branched out too largely in speculations, and every resource was seized.

On this eventful morning letters had been opened by Colin in which he had seen the coming crash, which could only be warded off by the loan of some thousands of pounds, and in the act of writing for this the hand would no longer move, the mind could no longer think, and the spirit left its earthly tenement. No pitying eye and no tender heart broke the sad news to Miriam. In searching for her father she found him thus. No words can depict the girl's grief—not only for her loss, but also for the delay of her confession of her Saviour. And in this confession she might have led her father's mind and heart to brighter things. She had been thinking

more of the effect it might have on herself than on her father. Delays are often dangerous. Her original motive was right ; but she should have listened to the words, " Now is the accepted time ; behold now is the day of salvation," and have left results to her Father in heaven. Vain regrets were useless ; but the sorrow was intense. It was too late even to *pray* for her beloved father. Still, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " He that believeth not shall be damned " is written in words indelible ; but, " how shall they hear without a preacher ? " is written by the same divine pen. If we could lift the veil of the future, even for an hour, how earnest would it oftentimes make us for the salvation of lost sinners.

Miriam in her grief was alone, till a hand laid gently on her recalled her to her senses. There stood Asher. He had been in search of his bride, and thus had found her. He drew her tenderly from the painful scene. But all attempts on his part to soothe her were unavailing. Her grief was so keen that all earthly comfort

failed. At last between her sobs she said, "Asher, I am a Christian, and would that this had been said to him who has gone, I know not where." Then after another burst of sorrow, she said, "Oh! would that he had known my Saviour to be his. Oh! that the unspeakable gift had been his also."

Asher was dumbfounded. Stern as his race was towards one who had embraced the christian faith he could not leave her now. It is only a passing fancy, he tried to make himself believe; but in his inmost heart he knew the strong character of the woman at his side, and in beholding her a Christian he felt for the first time a respect for her faith. In vain he tried to persuade her by every argument, it was all to no purpose. His words called forth utterances from her that completely silenced him. Words failed him further, and with an adieu he left her to do the office of a son and brother in this emergency.

As the day wore on he again sought Miriam, but she begged to be excused. She would see him the next day. He

came to plead with her to go to his mother till he could bring her to a happier home.

“No, Asher, the confession of my faith has been made to you earlier than I expected; and with it, dearly as I love you, I must give up all thoughts of you. I can never unite myself to one who denies Him I love far better than my life.”

“But, Miriam, will you face poverty and loneliness after all the luxury that has been at your command?” With these words a cold shudder passed over him.

As they sat there Miriam’s eyes had been constantly cast towards a strange man, who seemed to be making himself at home in different parts of the house. Asher knew well who he was and wished to spare Miriam the pain of knowing. He would not tell her.

Rising, she walked up to the man and asked boldly what his business was there.

“My business, madam, is to guard the property of those who have employed me.”

Coarse as the man was he did not wish to pain the young lady. But Miriam’s



second question called forth the answer, "I am a bailiff, so have a right here."

A bill of sale had been given by her father to secure a sum of money for the emergency, which led to this issue of events.

Thus was poor Miriam situated. On the one side, poverty and hatred; on the other the offer of a comfortable home and one to cherish and love her.

Asher's love was too strong to give her up because she was so situated, and this noble action on his part only made the trial harder for her to bear. But she was firm to her purpose. She neither accepted the shelter of his mother's home nor his life-long protection; and after an agonising adieu she ran to her room with the firm resolve to see him no more.

Asher walked away and said to himself, "Oh! would she suffer this for a faith that was not true? Oh! Miriam, my heart is for ever thine. Come what will, none other shall take the place that you have held."

What feelings were hers! but not like Asher's. She knew where to go for

strength, and the suppliant was not denied. The girl thought she had only poverty before her ; but she knew she had a God above her.

The next morning a letter from Asher awaited her—not again pressing his suit, but telling her of the annuity that was her own. Here Miriam saw his solicitude for her, and she just penned the words : “ I am so grateful to you—so very grateful.—  
MIRIAM.”

This repaid the heart-broken lover. She would have known from her father’s legal adviser in due course ; still the present knowledge comforted her.

The funeral took place ; but Miriam was alone, yet not alone, she had her heavenly Comforter.

When all was over Miriam packed her personal effects and sallied forth to seek a lodging. She found one that was plain and neat. She was not quite penniless, and the next day she drove to this humble abode. To her father’s legal adviser she sent her address, and by return of post a cheque arrived from the kind-hearted

lawyer, though the quarter's dividend was not quite due.

That evening Miriam sat down to her lonely repast. The events of the last few days seemed a dream. Her present and future she left in the hands of her Father in heaven, and with a true feeling of thankfulness she retired for the night, with the firm resolve that on the following day she would seek her only sister and share what little she had with her. She was thankful for that little, for it enabled her to be free at least for a time from facing the cold-hearted world. Let us not say that, however, but rather the stern realities of life, for there are many kind hearts up and down this wide earth, and Miriam found some. She thought that her footsteps were not known, but Asher traced them. How to assist her without her knowing it perplexed him.

Miriam had not known much of the world, it is true, but on becoming an inmate of the lodging house she found she had got into the house of a kind-hearted christian woman.

The day after her arrival her whole absorbing thought was, Where shall I find my sister? Praying to God for guidance she left the house, and in walking she knew not whither, was accosted with, "Good-morning, miss. I beg your pardon for addressing you, but I am Jane, who used to be servant at your sister's, if you remember. But I hope you are not in trouble, miss."

Miriam's sombre garb bespoke this. Miriam was overcome, and merely beckoned Jane to follow her, and led the way to her lonely lodging. Jane did all she could to soothe her.

"Oh! Jane, I do remember you, but would that I could get to my sister."

"Ah! miss, that cannot be, for she is in the land where storms can never come."

This trouble coming so quickly on the other was too much for Miriam, and she fainted. Her weak frame gave way under the pressure, and she was borne to her little room. The rest she needed was hers now, and solace, too, for in a few hours another was at her side earnestly



MIRIAM IN BED.



watching the sleeping form of her mother's only sister.

The evening was cold ; a fire was kindled and the kind-hearted landlady laid the tea. The kettle was singing on the hob, and the toast had just been brought in. A lamp was burning on the table, and Ruth was seated by it earnestly watching her aunt, who languidly opened her eyes and with astonishment beheld the scene.

Ruth was quickly at her side, and although four years had passed since last they had met, Miriam recognised her niece and clasped the young girl to her breast. The tears that had refused to flow the last few days started and relieved the fevered brow and the well-nigh broken heart.

Miriam was refreshed with a cup of tea, and was then ready to hear the story that Ruth had to tell, and in rehearsing their sorrows to each other they both found comfort and solace.

Poor Ruth Davis needed comfort indeed. She was endeavouring to obtain employment, for the last two months she had been living on Jane's bounty. Benjamin, tired

of his way of living, had thought he would do better in America ; so he had started abroad, promising to send for his sister. No tidings had yet arrived as to his whereabouts, and Ruth was alone. She had not gone for succour to the Father of the fatherless. She was indeed in a dangerous position, although she knew it not. She had no christian principles to guide her, and no Jewish laws to observe. She was floating into an unknown future, as it were, without a rudder, compass or chart. But the God of the fatherless was hers, and true to His word He was fulfilling His promise, "Leave thy fatherless children to me : I will preserve them alive." (Jer. xlix. 11.)







## CHAPTER IV.

### BENJAMIN EMIGRATES.

**F**OR his sister Benjamin had worked bravely ; but as he grew older his aspirations were above his present position. The christian principles, which for a short time his mother had inculcated, seemed lost on the boy. He was now without any human supervision. None to restrain or advise him in his youthful ambition, and divine direction he did not seek. He knew but little of the christian faith, and the Jewish law he disregarded. He seemed drifting hopelessly from the right way.

One evening he came home full of the idea of emigration. This shocked Ruth

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very much. But young as she was she knew that nothing would turn him from the course he intended to pursue, so she was silent.

He had saved a few pounds, which he offered to divide with his sister to keep her till he should be able to provide a home for her.

A week or two later he bade her farewell, and she with wistful eyes watched the vessel fade out of sight. Poor girl, she had no comforter but Jane. She had not learned where to flee for refuge in distress. She was a wise little woman, however, in her way. So she thought, I will put the money in the savings bank (as Jane refused payment), and try to earn something for myself, and when I see Benjamin I will return it to him.

Benjamin, now a youth of eighteen, had wondrous fancies as to how he was going to succeed, building castles in the air. He had faced the world in a measure, and very bravely too, but of its deceit and wickedness he knew little. However the eye that never sleeps was following him.

It was evening when he landed, and he soon found himself in the streets of New York, an insignificant stranger among the seething mass.

He turned into a boarding house, and was told he could be accommodated, but must share his room with another lodger. This he was willing to do. He hung his overcoat behind the bedroom door and proceeded downstairs, and then remembered he had left his purse upstairs, so he returned. But imagine his dismay—overcoat and purse were gone, and the new lodger also, who was never again heard of.

To the onlookers this was only a joke, but to poor Benjamin it was a hard and bitter experience. Still, there was one who lent a pitying eye to the youth. It was the master of the boarding house. He was an honest man, however dishonest others might be. He said, "How much, my lad, have you lost?" Benjamin mentioned the sum. To him it was a little fortune, but to the man it seemed a paltry sum to come to New York with. Poor Benjamin was famished, and had been just about to order

a meal when the catastrophe happened. The host saw the weary, hungry look of the tired voyager, and kindly said, "Step in here a minute." In his private apartment Benjamin was soon ensconced, and in a very few minutes an ample repast was placed before him, such as his meagre purse would not have justified him in purchasing. He was about to say I cannot pay for this, when his host forestalled him by the words, "Eat, and welcome, and keep your dollars, if you have them."

The house was full just then. It had a good repute, and John Newton (for this was the proprietor's name) went to his customers and placed the matter of Benjamin's loss before them, and in a short time he returned and handed to Benjamin several more dollars than the stolen purse had contained.

The evening was very cold, and the kindhearted landlord begged the acceptance of his son's overcoat. Thus in an hour or so all these events happened, and poor Benjamin, amidst all his troubles, was better off than he was before. Still he felt

his lonely position, in spite of his determination not to lose courage.

The next morning he sallied forth to look for employment. He then found out how difficult it was to be in New York city without a credential or influential introduction. Day after day passed, but none seemed to want a lad who knew no trade and whose education was defective. At last his boots were worn out, his clothes shabby and his countenance dejected, and he had not a dollar at his command.

At a less expensive boarding house than the first he had met with a very plausible young man, and one evening as he was returning, thinking that this would be the last evening he should be able to pay for a lodging, this new acquaintance overtook him. The evening was a lovely one. Twilight had not yet set in. The two walked on together until Benjamin's comrade was stopped by a policeman, who told him that he had been suspected of stealing. Benjamin's kindly heart pitied him, and he said, "He has no more done it than I." At which words the police officer said,

"Then perhaps you are as bad as he," and both Benjamin and his companion were lodged in gaol.

Who can depict Benjamin's agony of mind to find himself in such a place? He felt he could not write to Ruth, and had to bear his trouble alone.

Six weeks was Benjamin there. When the trial came on he was released as there was no charge proved against him.

Let us now cross the Atlantic and pay a visit to Ruth. As the days passed on and no news came to her, she was heart-broken. The girl, with all the suspense she had undergone, was not fit to seek employment, and kind-hearted Jane put her veto on it—at least for the present. If Ruth had only known to whom to go in her trouble it would have been easier for her to bear. But she was ignorant of the gracious Saviour upon whom Christians can cast all their care.

Yet amidst all the trials of her young life the words of her loved mother had not been lost altogether.

The day that Jane had met Miriam, Ruth

had been at home alone. As the day wore on she was gazing sadly out of the window, when all of a sudden above the chimney heights she saw the "passover moon," and she knew it to be such. She well remembered the feasts of a few years before, when her father and mother were living and her brothers at home, and of all the preparations for that time-honoured feast. She was old enough to know that vain regrets were useless. Still a longing feeling for the old times was there, and with it came the remembrance of all the old associations that were gone; and now she was left alone. Then she thought of her beloved mother and of her last words, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Oh! what does it mean? What can it mean—for my mother to suffer all she did—all the desertion and poverty for what she believed? Her mind was opening up to receive the dawning rays of a brighter Sun than ever lent light to the passover moon—a Sun that would lend warmth to the divine seed sown by the last words

of a dying mother. The unspeakable gift was for Ruth also, and a time was coming when with a grateful heart she would receive it.

A sound of footsteps aroused her, and Jane appeared with the tidings of Miriam, and bade Ruth be quickly ready and take the train to Miriam's abode. And this accounts for her being found by her aunt's bedside, as already related. She could scarcely realise all she heard, and for the moment wavered as to whether she would go or stay. She had a tender heart and would willingly nurse her aunt, if needs be. Then arose the thought, How did she treat my mother? One day, when we had not a crust of bread to eat, she passed my mother in the street.

Ah! but Ruth did not know what anguish of heart that action had cost Miriam, who had been taught to believe she was doing right, and blindly acted so. Miriam had never been really happy since, and on this eventful evening when she heard from Jane of the death of her sister, this action was uppermost in her mind, making the sad



news all the more painful, and caused her to be completely overpowered. The time will come when all mysteries will be cleared up, and then how insignificant will the things seem about which we felt so deeply. Noble martyrs there have been at the stake and at the headsman's hands, but many a martyr there has been also who has not had cause to shed his blood, but whom blinded bigotry has wounded and whose heart has been broken.

Ruth's better feelings soon got the mastery, and in a short time she was where we saw her, at the side of her sleeping aunt. In her the young girl found a mother, one who though young would shield and guard her; for Miriam was better able, both physically and mentally, to fight the battles of the world than was Ruth, and she had learned that to do so in the strength of the great Helper was an easier path than she had anticipated. Even within the last few days how she had been guided; how she had been sheltered! It seemed as if all the battles had been fought for her. She was also soon to learn that

her divine Helper would work in her to will and to do of His good pleasure, and give her to know both His protecting and His preventive care.

At this juncture, when all had been as it were snatched from Miriam—father, lover, home and friend—how merciful was the Providence that brought to her this friendless girl. The One above, who so well knew her case and understood her temperament, had given her work to do, to call her mind away from herself and her troubles, and to centre it on an object that needed her care.

How anxious are we to plan our path, and yet how often we find that we are not equal to its emergencies. When we leave ourselves in the hands of Him who ruleth all things well, though difficulties may arise in our path the strength promised is ours, and above all, the great Promiser is with us to lead us on to the perfect day.

Miriam had found her vocation, and for Ruth how well it was that she had such a friend.

It is said that every dark cloud has a

silver lining ; but how many a poor girl may be gazing at the dark clouds and needing a friend to point her weary eyes to the silver lining. Surely there are among earth's bereaved ones many who, like Miriam, might find consolation in aiding the distressed. If they but knew more of the constraining power of the love of Christ they would more willingly render their ransomed powers to Him as a reasonable service. However poor a sacrifice it seems in comparison with all His tender mercies, yet who can tell the value of the smallest sacrifice in His eyes? They who have been redeemed at such a cost should be ready to spend and be spent in their Lord's service.





## CHAPTER V.

### BENJAMIN'S RELEASE.

**A**S the doors of the prison opened in the early morning a motley crowd was eagerly watching, and some rushed to meet fathers, some brothers, and not a few to meet their daughters—those whose parents had led them into paths of sin, not perhaps wilfully, but through example and neglect. Still even the worst seemed to have some human being to meet them. Among the released prisoners was the slight, pale, dark-eyed young Jew. Upon his brow there were no marks of crime and vice, the downcast look he wore was not from the shame of guilt, his circumstances were pressing him down, down, even to despair. He had not a friend, not a coin, and he knew not

whither to go or whence any food could come. As he passed along he muttered to himself, "Gentile dogs ; is this the way you treat me ? I'll have no more of you. My own nation would not treat me so, if I only knew where to look for them." He scarcely realised even the day of the week. At last he remembered it was the Sabbath. He then asked the way to the nearest synagogue. He had not entered such a place since his mother's conversion, but now turned his steps as directed, and was soon repeating the prayers that he had known from childhood. He seemed, however, to find no solace in them, and heart-sore he left the building. But a fatherly eye had been on the youth and it followed him. Utter despair had taken possession of him when a cheery "good-morning" sounded in his ears, and on turning his head Benjamin saw the face of a Jewish elder looking kindly upon him.

"Good-morning" was all Benjamin could say.

Ezra Myers said, "My lad you seem in trouble."

"I am," was Benjamin's response. But he was too proud to make his wants known.

Ezra still walked by his side, and was determined not to leave the lad till he knew his address. On they walked for some distance, till Ezra thought it well to say, "You live a long way from the synagogue."

"No, I do not, for I have no home."

Ezra then with brotherly love said, "Come home with me."

Benjamin quickly accepted the kind offer. There was no patronage in the manner of the rich Jew to arouse resentment on Benjamin's part. It was simply the outcome of brotherly love. There are kindly hearts everywhere, and God can use whom He will.

When the two arrived, Mrs. Myers had no need to be told that one of her own nation was her guest. His shabby attire did not prevent his receiving a welcome to her hospitable board. Benjamin was very silent. His late trouble had completely cowed his spirit, and his was a nature that

must be fully candid or fully reserved. Still the eye of Mrs. Myers was often cast upon her guest, for in him she seemed to see the features of her youngest brother, with whom she had often played in her parental home on English shores. The expression, the whole bearing recalled her brother to her—one whom she had greatly loved, yet one who had broken his father's heart, and who had at last beggared his wife and his children. This she had only recently heard of, and she had endeavoured to seek them out to give them a helping hand, but her efforts had been fruitless.

Ezra said to his guest, "May I ask your name?"

"Benjamin Davis is my name; I lately sailed from London," and then again silence reigned.

On hearing the name of Davis, Mrs. Myers' face flushed and paled alternately with an emotion she could not describe.

Benjamin added, "My father and mother are dead, I have their photographs," and drew them out, with the hope of preventing further questioning. At the sight of the

likenesses Benjamin was startled by the cry from Mrs. Myers, "My brother!"

The youth then eagerly told all he could of his family history, and remarked that in a pocket book of his mother's, which since her death had always been carried by him, was a letter to his father written by Sarah Myers on her arrival years before in New York city, and others, too, that fully identified Benjamin as their nephew. Thus, when the lad thought himself homeless and friendless, he was received by his uncle and aunt with open arms.

Ezra Myers was rich. Twenty years before he had begun with a small capital, and having energy, perseverance and a great capacity for business he had prospered. Almost everything he touched had turned to gold, and now with a mansion and a large sum at his bankers, and profitable railway shares, &c., Ezra was at the height of his ambition. Still he had no child to inherit his wealth. To Sarah Myers the fact of being childless was, as indeed it ever is to all Jewish women, a great source of trouble. All her wealth



did not satisfy her. She had an affectionate heart, and with delight it now turned towards her newly found nephew. When from him she heard of her niece, Ruth, she pictured to herself how her house would be enlivened by the two young people.

Arrangements were soon made. Ruth was written to, and Benjamin was put under an experienced tutor. Ezra and Sarah were determined, too, that he should have a college course, and eagerly they waited for Ruth to arrive. As to her refusing to come, such a thought never entered their heads.

Benjamin said, "When I first thought of coming to America, and told Ruth I would soon prepare her a home, I little thought to have such a home as this to welcome her to." All that love and affection could do for Benjamin was done. The boy's hard experiences had taught him to value what he now possessed. Indeed it seemed all like a dream.

Would this good fortune have been his mother's choice for him? Benjamin did not give himself time to think of this. He

was happy in his present bright surroundings and prospects.

When the long expected letter from Benjamin arrived, Jane ran to Ruth with it. The contents, however, were so romantic, and the position offered her so unexpected, that Ruth could not realise it. She went, however, to her aunt, and unfolded all to her. Poor Miriam was silent. Now that she had found a companion in her niece, it seemed as though this treasure also was about to be taken from her.

Happy had been the few weeks they had spent together, and now were all their pleasant associations to cease? The days had not gone by without Miriam telling Ruth that she was a Christian, and this, together with her teaching, made Miriam so much like the mother Ruth had lost that she seemed impelled to stay with her. She could not have explained why she felt so drawn towards her aunt Miriam as to make her hesitate to join Benjamin, but her choice was made, and looking up amidst her tears she said, "Auntie, I love my brother, but duty does not call me to him



THE LONG EXPECTED LETTER CAME AT LAST.



at present. I shall stay with you if you will let me."

Love to her brother would have been one of Miriam's first lessons to Ruth. But she thought of the girl's mother, and of the influences and surroundings of the Jewish home that Benjamin was now in ; so she could not press Ruth to go to him.

The girl's mind was just opening to receive the great truths of salvation, and Miriam felt it was better she should remain with her for a time, so instead of pressing Ruth to leave her, she fondly clasped the young head to her breast and wept aloud.

"Entreat me not to leave thee,  
Nor from thee now to part,  
And break not thou the love-wrought chains  
That bind us heart to heart.  
Whither thou goest I will go,  
Thy God He shall be mine."

So Ruth wrote a letter that night to her brother, telling of the whole circumstances connected with her aunt, of their grandfather's death, and also that Miriam was a Christian like her mother.

“Oh! Benjamin,” she wrote, “do you not remember mother’s last words? I do so want to be like her, and how can I be if I leave aunt Miriam? It is so wonderful your finding aunt Sarah, but she does not believe in the ‘unspeakable gift.’ Would mother like you to take up with the faith of our fathers again? Oh! Benjamin, it is all so perplexing; but here I must stay, much as I love you, and may peace be with you. Let me hear from you often.”





## CHAPTER VI.

### BOUND FOR AUSTRALIA.

**W**E have related how that Ruth's brother, Isaac, left his mother in anger, and we will now follow the self-willed son. Once outside the door Isaac said to himself, "Brought up in the faith of my fathers as I have been, now they want me to turn Christian. It never shall be."

He went to a shipping office and succeeded in being appointed second steward in the steerage, and the next day he sailed for Melbourne.

Excitement and anger strove for the mastery, and not till the vessel was well out at sea did Isaac fully realise the course

he had taken. The sea passage did not tend to make him feel better. Onward sailed the ship, farther and farther away from the land of his birth ; it was now too late to change his mind. His whole surroundings of course contrasted greatly with the former comforts of home. Underneath his impulsive spirit lay not only a kindly heart but sincere love for his mother. He loved her too well to easily let her bear the name of Christian.

As the vessel sped on her course that mother's prayers ascended to the heavenly mercy seat for her wayward boy, for she felt she would never see him on earth again. She had expected persecution, but had not anticipated it from her own boy. She had thought she had sufficient influence with him to overcome all prejudice on his part, but she had forgotten how she had trained him. His very nature had imbibed the Jewish hatred to the name of Jesus and the christian faith. And his mother had to feel the effects of her own mistaken instructions ; still, she had been willing rather to part with her son than with her



Saviour. She was assured, too, that He who had saved her could and would save her boy, though He would have His own time and way of doing it.

More than five weeks Isaac was on the stormy deep. He found that even on the ocean wave the name of Him whom he so despised was known. Three of the steerage passengers often united in singing—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear,  
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.”

He turned away from it, but though he tried to forget it, the sweet melody would remain in his memory. In the dark hours of night that name above all other names was echoing in his ear. That name linked him with his mother, from whom he had so rudely torn himself. And do what he would he could not banish the words.

One summer evening he found himself walking the streets of Melbourne with only a few coins in his pocket. He strolled on with a strange sense of loneliness.

Sweet sounds from a building caught his ear and he stopped to listen, for the strains seemed familiar. He heard—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear.”

He stood fascinated—he dared not move. He listened to the end. The words, “Thou Prophet, Priest and King,” he repeated to himself again and again. He was dumbfounded when he realised that this was what Jesus of Nazareth was to the believer. Isaac thought, Yes, the Nazarene was one of my nation, and yet how would these people treat me?

“And to the weary rest.” God knows I need rest—of mind and body too.

He entered the building and there heard the Scriptures read.

The meeting was composed of warm-hearted colonial Christians. When the service was over Isaac rose to go, he knew not where, when to his surprise he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and on turning his head he saw the benevolent smile of an apparently well-to-do farmer, who in warm

and hearty tones said, "You are evidently from the old country. What brings you here, my friend? and where are you bound?"

"I do not know what brought me here, and as to where I am bound I know not, I only landed this evening."

"Then it is evident I can answer the last question, To a hearty welcome at my house. My good woman and I endeavour to show hospitality without grudging."

Strange words to Isaac. However he felt their power, and the consciousness of being alone in a strange land made him thankfully accept the invitation.

Ere long he was encircled by the rest of the band, who on hearing he was a new arrival said, "There is an eye that shapes our ways, rough hew them as we will," and then, turning to Isaac's newly-found friend, also said, "You have acted and we will pray ; this new-comer will need a guard and a guide too in this strange land, but he will find that some of England's sons will be ready to aid him if he is willing to work."

As to monetary affairs, they surmised

that Isaac had come to better himself or he would have remained at home, and because they had themselves landed almost penniless, they thought it was probably the same with Isaac.

Thirty years previous to the evening which found Isaac among them, many of that little group had begun a new life on those shores after a six months' voyage in an emigrant vessel.

William Reynolds (Isaac's host) remembered those days; how he had landed almost penniless, and had rented a small cottage with his little ones, who cried to him for bread. He remembered how he had been supplied with food from the emigrant barracks till he got employment.

William Reynolds had never expected help from any save his God. To Him he looked for his daily bread and for strength to earn it. So with perseverance and constant application to duties, and blest with health and strength, he was now able to take the newly arrived Isaac to a comfortable home.

It was about nine o'clock on a lovely

summer's evening when Isaac found himself coming out of the little chapel.

The stars were just appearing as the moon was waning. Everything was looking fresh and green.

Isaac could not utter many words. His thoughts were busy. He said to himself, "Is this the manner of the Christians? If this is a specimen beside me, would that I were one." Reynolds himself was somewhat silent for a time.

On they went, till through a wide gateway they entered a thick avenue of gum trees which extended for some distance, and then a good-sized lawn appeared, and an ascent brought them to the threshold of a large and pretty farm house. A verandah ran round the building, beneath which bright flowers were to be seen, fuchsias and geraniums as large as shrubs being planted here and there underneath the windows. Mrs. Reynolds was busy preparing supper for her expected husband.

Turning to greet him she saw Isaac, and welcomed him in a warm and motherly way. To our weary voyager it seemed

such a haven of rest, that only those who have been tossed friendless on the stormy deep can realise.

After supper the big family Bible was opened, and in deep and earnest tones was read, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Our voyager retired for the night and was soon lost in slumber. The previous night he had been on the restless ocean without an earthly friend, and now in a few short hours the weary young Jew was in the bosom of a christian family and surrounded with comfort.

He was aroused the next morning by the lowing of the cattle and sweet songs from the feathered choir, and, as usual, expected to open his eyes on a ship's cabin, instead of which to his wondering gaze was unfolded a true picture of farmhouse comfort, and this recalled Isaac's memory to the previous evening, and he quickly dressed himself and went down to the kitchen.

Reynolds, with a hearty grasp of the

hand, welcomed his guest to his board, and the good wife greeted him with a bright smile as she deposited the savoury bacon and eggs on the table.

After the meal the big Bible was again brought out, and the first chapter of St. John was read by the host, and a simple earnest prayer was offered up to the giver of every good thing.

Not the faintest suspicion had entered the mind of Reynolds as to Isaac's nationality, and to the latter's own surprise he detected in Reynolds' comments on what he had read not only a devout and earnest spirit, but also a love and a reverence for the Jewish nation. He spoke of God's ancient people, and prayed for them too. He quoted the words of Jehovah to Abram, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."

Isaac concealed his nationality, he did not wish to make it known; want of confidence in the Christian and in the christian faith was the cause. He said, however, "Do you really think a blessing attends the one who shews kindness to the Jew?"

“Undoubtedly,” said Reynolds, “I only wish that I was placed in the position of shewing kindness to one of God’s favoured people. Not many of that nation shew themselves in these parts; but if ever one does he may be sure of finding a welcome here.”

This encouraged Isaac, who was beginning to wonder what he was going to do in the future.

About mid-day, after walking with his host over the grounds of the farm, Isaac said, “I am very grateful to you for your hospitality, it is unheard of. Words fail to express my thankfulness.”

“But, friend,” said Reynolds, “whatever are you going to do? and where are you bound? Forgive my inquisitiveness.”

Isaac was silent, he was too proud to utter words that would in effect appear to ask for shelter.

“Come, come, my friend, rest here awhile, and let me help you. Have you a liking for agriculture? If so, I should be glad of your services.”

Isaac was bound to confess that he knew



nothing of it, but said, "I am willing to turn my hand to anything."

"Then you will do," said Reynolds, "I can board you and give you £1 per week to start with. You would not get that at home, but food is cheap here. We do not trouble much about credentials in these parts; a mind to work is about all we want here, still perhaps you would feel the better to shew your credentials."

"I have none," said Isaac, "but I have one thing that would, it appears, commend me to your favour, and until this morning I thought it would be one of my drawbacks."

"What is it, my friend?"

"I am a Jew."

The look of astonishment, then the look of pleasure, and the warm grip of the hand told to Isaac the kindness of heart and the true benevolence of his newly-found friend.

All this had more effect upon the Jew than much that is preached. This was action and not words.

I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed, was just now the true condition of this young

Israelite. But underneath a proud exterior there were the qualities of perseverance and application, and an earnest wish to do right.

To come from England without a friend or a letter of introduction, and to find that the fact of his being a Jew had won for him a post in a strange land, had opened his heart not only to his host but to a desire for more knowledge of the Christian's book. When that evening he sat down once again to hear God's holy word it was with a listening ear and a longing heart to know more of the faith of this plain, open-hearted, benevolent man who had so befriended him.

But when fervent prayer went up to Jehovah for blessing on the Jew, and thanksgiving for his presence in that family circle, Isaac thought, "if this is what Christians do I will learn more of them;" and in earnest petition that night he sought divine aid, and truly thanked God for His goodness to him.

Example is better than precept, and how many have been won by kindness. Many

give their gold and many wish well to the Jew, but the great thing is to reach his heart, then, as with Isaac and this honest colonial farmer, much will have been accomplished towards removing his prejudice against the New Testament.

Isaac at the first opportunity sat down to write to his mother and to ask forgiveness for having left her as he did. Eagerly did he wait for the return mail, but no reply came. His letter was, however, duly returned by the post office officials. He wrote several letters but all were unavailing. This was a great sorrow to him. He felt he would like to return to England and know what had become of his mother, but he did not think it right to throw up such an opportunity as had been offered him—to give up a certainty for an uncertainty; to return to his native land meant up-hill work there. His father's gambling propensities had impoverished his family, and his grandfather having forsaken them had been to Isaac a great source of disappointment. When he came to analyse his feelings he could but acknowledge that his

anger at his mother's embracing the christian faith had chiefly been on account of his own injured prospects, it having deprived him of his grandfather's aid.

He had no choice now but to try and forget the past, and with commendable energy he worked to obtain the means to return to England to seek out if possible his mother, brother, and sister. A secret feeling of dread as to whether his mother was yet alive troubled him at times, still he tried to drown the thought in work. His energy and perseverance very soon won for him the respect of his employer, who gave him further remuneration.

Away from the haunts of vice and temptation, Isaac's leisure hours were spent in a manner that was beneficial to him in several ways. He not only practised agriculture but studied its theory also, and amidst nature and her surroundings Isaac's soul rose to nature's God. Whether beholding the lofty summits of his adopted land, or the glories of the spangled heavens, or reaping the golden grain, or shepherding the flocks committed to his

care, his heart was again and again turned to his Creator in wonder and adoration. The scriptures bade him love that God with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength ; but this he found impossible, the more he tried the greater he found his want of power.

After the age of thirteen, the age when the Jewish parent throws all responsibility upon the child, he had taken part in the service of the synagogue, where he had seen his grandfather wearing the veil or fringed garment when approaching the ark in which the rolls of scripture were kept. Often had he seen his mother, even before he could lisp that word, kiss the name of the Almighty affixed to the roll attached to the door-post. Early had he imbibed a reverence for the sacred roll, but with it all he had no power to love its divine Author, though God, as Creator, he adored and revered. He was grateful to Him for all His benefits ; all His works called forth his praise, but to be in the presence of such a holy God appalled Him. He would often say to

himself, "Oh! that like my forefathers I could propitiate Him with a sacrifice." And then his mind would turn away to the land of his fathers, and to the city where God had placed His great name to be worshipped. "Would," he thought, "that there were a priest, and that I could offer the sacrifice, then I might hope for forgiveness—but all is darkness."

One night the chapter Reynolds read was from the first epistle to the Corinthians, in which occur the words, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," and when closing the book he said, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

The following morning Isaac heard read, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He had heard this once before with the outward ear, but to-day the words sank deep down into his heart, and that night he borrowed the Christian's book. He was well read in the Old Testament, the rites of the law of Moses he had learned. The sin of Israel in turning to idolatry, and of their being scattered over the face of the earth, he

was not ignorant of. All this he knew in the letter. He had been educated up to the age of sixteen (about the time he left home), and his mind having been awakened by his early training he had a thirst for knowledge. History opened up to him a vast amount of instruction, and taught him much that was connected with his own people.

In the midst of these surroundings Isaac received the key to unlock the treasures of the Old Testament, and in doing this he found he had the key to unlock much of the treasures in the New Testament. Before long he found that he needed no priest on earth, for Jesus, the "great high priest," had entered the heavens for him. He needed no sacrifice because the Lord Jesus had offered Himself for him, and that great sacrifice had been accepted. His very presence in the courts above proved it. Would God have raised Him from the dead if sin had not been atoned for? When Isaac found that the heaven-sent Sacrifice in all its intrinsic value was for him, what new feelings it aroused within

him. The wonder and adoration that God, as Creator, called forth from him still remained, but was far exceeded by the gratitude of his heart when he knew, though in a feeble measure, the great love of the Giver of the sacrifice. His heart, that hitherto had seemed so cold and dead, now welled up in love to Him who not only loves but *is* love itself. He no longer dwelt on his want of love to God, for God's infinite love was so spread out before his mind that he was filled with wonder and praise.

“Oh, fix our earnest gaze,  
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,  
That, with Thy beauty occupied,  
We elsewhere none may see.”

What a glad day was that when Isaac boldly confessed to his kind benefactor that Jesus was his Lord and Master.

Tears rose in the eyes of Reynolds and his wife, but the latter fairly broke down for joy and gladness. A simple godly woman she was, but her duties so occupied her that friends sometimes thought her



cold; to-night her heart rejoiced with thankfulness for the conversion of her Hebrew friend. Not many hours passed away before the lowly band that encircled Isaac on the first evening of his arrival surrounded him. Their prayers had been answered, one more brand had been snatched from the burning, another stone had been taken from the quarry of nature to adorn the temple not made with hands.

Isaac had been accustomed to think of but one religion, and now he had no scruples in joining this little Christian band. They wanted a worker, and he was ready. He was useful in the Sunday school, and after a time he became superintendent and also a local preacher. His discourses fell with power upon the hearers. Many of these were ignorant, not of the way of salvation but of much that was written of their Saviour in the Old Testament scriptures—the “Line upon line, and precept upon precept” that God had given to his ancient people. The Infinite had come down to the finite. He had taught them, as it were, of the coming One. By numerous types He

had given them the shadows of heavenly things. What better earthly picture could there be of the heavenly Lamb than the paschal lamb? and it was no chance that caused the true paschal Lamb to be sacrificed at the time of the Jewish passover.

Christ is the antitype of the ark. He went beneath the billows of judgment for the Israel of God, and, like the ark of Noah, which rose safely with its living freight, has been raised to the heights of glory.

Many other types and shadows Isaac saw had been fulfilled in his Redeemer, and he explained them simply to his hearers. Many knew not that Isaac had been a Jew, and they wondered why he took such interest in the Old Testament scriptures. It would have been a wonder if he had not.

What Isaac taught he had learnt from scripture for himself, and thus it came with greater force upon his hearers. The questionings of his inquiring mind had been accompanied with heart searchings, and God's spirit had revealed much to him.

Why his forefathers should have had

such rites to perform had often puzzled him. He had seen no meaning in the brazen altar for the sacrifice till he saw that the brazen altar could stand the fire, and thus was a fit emblem of the great Redeemer, who is at once the altar and the sacrifice, who alone could stand the judgment of a sin-hating God.

The brazen serpent lifted up for a serpent-bitten people was to him but an historical fact, till he saw Jesus made sin for him.

Some tell us that sin is a will contrary to God's will, and so it may be, for "sin is lawlessness;" but He who knows what sin is has made Him who knew no sin to be sin (or a sin offering) for us. Oh! reader, look, and thou shalt live; look to Him who died for Adam's fallen race.

The light were ever burning in the tabernacle of old—emblems of Him who has come into this benighted world to lighten its darkness. The Israelite could not behold that light which shone on the mercy seat, he could not enter into the holiest but believers have boldness to

enter by the blood of Jesus. These beautiful types are written for our learning, that in beholding them we may be enabled to lift our eyes to the great Antitype now in the glory. Not till faith gives place to sight, not till earth is exchanged for heaven, shall we fully see the beauties of the One who was portrayed in types in the Old Testament to that people blessed above all others, yet a people who so hardened their hearts as to turn to idols and slight the mercies proffered them.

Ten years passed away, and during this time many changes happened. Isaac bought a small piece of land, built a hut, and little by little enlarged his border, so that at the end of that time he was surrounded by 1,600 acres of fruitful land. He possessed a large flock of sheep and many head of cattle. He had been prosperous and a blessing attended him.

He now employed an agent to act for him and embarked for England. After a pleasant voyage he landed one Saturday night in London, and the next morning was seen hastening towards his old home.

As he had expected, other inmates were there. None could tell him aught of his relatives, and sadly he turned away. He did not feel alone, for he had his heavenly Friend, and he felt he should be guided aright. He got into an omnibus, and opposite him was a familiar face, though bearded now and somewhat thoughtful. It was Asher Abrahams, who was Isaac's senior by some twelve years. He had known him before leaving England. The two looked at each other, and each recognised the friend of his youth.

They grasped each other's hand. Asher did not know that Isaac was ignorant of all that had happened in the family since he had left England. At the terminus Asher asked Isaac to his house, and Hannah Abrahams, with her brother, did all they could for the comfort of their guest.

Life has many changes. Man proposes, but God disposes, and through the winding paths of life He leadeth as it pleaseth Him.

“He leadeth me, He leadeth me,  
By His own hand He leadeth me,

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,  
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom."

We have followed Isaac Davis till he returned to his native shores. From Asher Abrahams he could obtain no tidings of his youngest brother, and bitterly did he reproach himself for leaving his family as he did; and he thought he had perhaps been the means of his brother's ruin, when as an elder brother he should have been at home to give him counsel and help, but vain self-accusings were of no avail.

Asher Abrahams pressed Isaac to make his house his headquarters while in England. They thought it was a strange coincidence that after so many years they should have met in an omnibus. Asher still held the memory of Miriam very dear, and consequently those connected with her were dear also, and he was, for some undefined reason on his part, pleased to have Isaac as his guest.

Hannah, since the death of her invalid mother, had been her brother's housekeeper, and in his absence had much leisure time at her command. She had missed the

bright company of Miriam, whom, as the expected bride of her brother, she had loved as a sister. She knew that Miriam had given up all for the sake of her faith, and she could not be satisfied until she had tried to fathom Miriam's creed. She had none to tell her thoughts to, her surmisings were pent up within herself. In this state of mind it was that she sat with her brother while Isaac talked of the ways of Providence.

When Asher invited Isaac to stay with them Isaac said, "I am obliged to you for your hospitality, but I must tell you at once that I am a Christian."

He looked up expecting to see looks of scorn or consternation, but while he met the piercing gaze of Asher he saw a look of relief on the face of Hannah, which was succeeded by a long deep sigh.

Asher said, "I am not surprised. Any man in the present day who has any sort of a mind must seek for himself, but blessed is the man who finds all his heart's questionings answered. I, of late, have looked into the prophets, and have seen from the

history they give of the nations how the far-seeing eye of the Eternal saw the ruin of those nations, ruin which He evidently allowed as punishment for their heinous crimes. But those very prophets have told of a King and a Deliverer for Israel, and the number of days foretold ere He should come has long since been fulfilled, and what is a man to believe?

“On the one side full proof is given of the truth of the prophets as to the rejection of our nation. Look at our persecuted race in every nation under heaven; every prophecy fulfilled to the letter, and yet Messiah’s reign has not yet arrived. I am bewildered, and at times seem on the borders of infidelity. My inquiring mind is never satisfied and cannot be at rest. You say you are now a Christian, and I can say I am almost an infidel, and should be quite one were it not for the wondrous fulfilment of so many prophecies; yet the chiefest of them all is unfulfilled.”

Hannah looked up eagerly for Isaac’s response when her brother had finished.

Isaac then in a firm voice said, “That



most important of prophecies has been fulfilled—in fact I am sure of it.”

“How? when?” quickly responded Asher.

“When Jesus, the Son of David, was born in Bethlehem’s city. When Christ the Son of the Highest was cut off, as Daniel foretold. When Jesus the heaven-sent Lamb was sacrificed for the sins of His people. He was the mighty Deliverer. To Him all the prophets gave witness; to Him all the sacrifices pointed. They were the shadows, He the substance.”

Silence ensued, when Isaac simply and earnestly pointed his Jewish friends to the King in His beauty, to the One “who gave himself a ransom for all,” that He might “save his people from their sins;” He who having once appeared to atone for their guilt will come again as their Deliverer; not then to be rejected, but to reign in righteousness over a remnant of those who will, through the long-suffering of God, once more be found in that land so dear to them.

Hannah drank in every word. It seemed to answer her heart’s questionings. Asher

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was silent ; he had thought there might possibly be something in this christian faith that had supported Miriam in her strange conduct, but now all seemed to wear a different aspect.

Isaac said, " You have never read a New Testament ? "

" No, but I will. "

That night Asher, till near the midnight hour, read Isaac's little book. Eagerness to know of Miriam's faith led him on, but soon she was lost sight of, and his interest became more and more intense. The genealogy of Jesus as Son of Man, then the proofs of His Godhead, His miracles, His holy life, and then His death and resurrection, all filled him with wonder. God's Spirit had caused the void in his soul that now he was filling with the water of life, and ere many days had gone by Asher closed the volume with the words, " My Lord and my God. "

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## CHAPTER VII.

### A COUNTRY HOME.

**ONE** morning towards the end of spring Miriam said to Ruth, "Shall we have a peep at the country to-day? I long to hear the singing of the birds, and to get a sight of the primroses in the hedgerows would be a treat."

Ruth was delighted. A basket with provisions was soon packed, and off the pair started with glee.

After a short journey by rail they found themselves deposited at a country station, about two miles from a village. They took a lane leading to this hamlet, stopping now and again to gather primroses and violets.

The pure air soon brought an appetite.

Seated on the heather in the warm sunshine the basket was quickly emptied of its contents, and again they set out on their journey.

On the rising hill they espied the ivy-covered church, and dotted here and there a few neat cottages with pretty gardens full of spring flowers, which, after the dingy London lodgings, afforded a pleasing sight to our two friends. The plump, healthy looking children were making their way to the village school. The sheep were grazing in the fields, and the cows enjoyed the green pasture of the meadow.

After their walk Ruth was thirsty, and wished she could obtain some milk, so when they came near to a farm she left her aunt to rest while she hastened toward the house.

It was a picturesque looking place, with a well kept and tastefully arranged garden. Ruth tapped at the door, which was opened by a matron of Quaker-like appearance (so severely plain and neat was her attire), with a manner that commanded respect. Ruth was rather disconcerted when she

saw her, but the lady (whose name was Grace Saunders) said, "What might your business be, young lady?"

"I beg your pardon, but I am so thirsty, and I came to ask for a little milk."

"With pleasure, come in and rest."

Ruth entered the kitchen, where everything was scrupulously clean, the whole aspect being that of homeliness and refinement.

An antique-looking eight-day clock was there with a polished oak case, and beside it a massive carved oak chest that had the same date engraven upon it as was cut in the stone door-way.

The panelled walls and carved mantel all shewed that the original inmates of this homestead must have long since passed away. Ruth was asked to follow Grace into the dairy, where long rows of pans of milk were set for cream. Flitches of bacon hung there also (it seemed to serve for larder as well as dairy). A large dish of butter stood beside a pile of new-laid eggs, and the shelves displayed all kinds of stores.

As Ruth emptied her glass of milk her aunt stood in the doorway ; thinking Ruth was rather long on her errand she had come in search of her. Miriam's eye took in the whole surrounding, and she at once formed her estimate of the company. "No common folks here," she thought.

Grace turned to Miriam and invited her to enter and be seated in the arm chair. "Madam," said Grace, "you look as if you needed a little country air to bring roses to your cheeks. You are tired, too," as indeed she was. "Allow me to offer you a cup of tea."

Miriam was only too thankful for the proffered hospitality, and seated comfortably gazed out upon the farm, and through the window well filled with flowers, watched the poultry feeding. Grace bustled about and soon the table was daintily laid.

Miriam had sat at feasts in tastefully furnished dining rooms, but never had she seen, she thought, so pleasing a sight as this appetising meal. Perhaps her weariness and the unexpected refreshment helped to make her appreciate it the more.



HAVING TEA IN A COTTAGE.





The travellers were made welcome, and after a pleasant chat and an ample repast they felt quite revived, and ready for their homeward journey.

Grace Saunders led them into the garden, and then asked them to rest in the parlour, which was more modern than the apartment they had recently left. A new wing had been recently built. The room, however, was the picture of comfort and of rest. Pretty views in crayons hung about, which Grace said had been done by a sister who had long passed away. Brackets with vases of violets here and there, all shewed the refinement that was also betrayed in the lady's demeanour. The perfume from the early spring flowers found its way through the opened windows, where ferns were gracefully mingled with the plants. Miriam thought she and Ruth would take back with them very pleasing recollections of their day in the country.

Grace had in the past known something of the world, although now living in this isolated spot. She knew the two visitors were of gentle birth. When they rose to

bid her farewell, with many thanks for her hospitality, Grace said, "Ah! me, thus we meet only to part: such is life. When I saw this young girl tripping down the yard she put me so much in mind of her whose hands drew the scenes on those walls. She was just a little older than this young lady when she was taken from me. We had only recently buried the old folks, and all these years no sunny faces have entered here to stay, and oh, how I long for young life again. This room I scarcely ever occupy. I love the seat in the old room, where I have sat with those dear to me who are now in a brighter home. No doubt you are hastening to loved ones who are waiting to welcome you; but as you were seated here I felt a yearning wish to bid you stay till the colour came back to those pale cheeks."

Miriam gazed wistfully at her hostess. She saw the evident sympathy felt for her sombre garb, though refinement of feeling kept Grace from questioning her guest.

"You judge wrongly," said Miriam, "we

have none to welcome us ; we live in lodgings in London."

" Oh ! " said Grace, " give them up and come and share my home. Pardon me for making the suggestion. I have been wishing for a lady who would occupy this room and the one above, if only to keep it aired. and that I might feel I had company. The long winter evenings are very dull."

" My means, I am afraid," said Miriam, would not be equal to pay what you would ask for these lovely rooms."

However Miriam was mistaken. She was surprised when Grace mentioned the very moderate sum that would quite content her. The offer was quickly accepted, and the agreement satisfactorily arranged. Grace gave a reference, and Miriam's referee was her father's legal adviser. Being strangers to each other neither thought it advisable to act apart from this business-like arrangement.

All proved to be satisfactory. What a glad evening was that when the two tripped gaily along over the road that led to the station. They soon arrived at their

dingy lodgings, and were able to make arrangements to return to K — in a few days.

At the time appointed the two were again at Myrtle Farm partaking of farmhouse luxuries in the quaint kitchen of the old homestead, and enjoying all the country sights and sounds.

In a few weeks' time both Miriam and Ruth were looking much better for the change. With renewed health came the desire for occupation. Miriam felt they must no longer be inactive, so she began to turn about in her mind the best way of increasing her income. Through the efforts of Grace Saunders it was not long before music pupils were obtained. In such a country place they were glad to engage the services of so accomplished a musician as Miriam. She did all in her power also to complete Ruth's education, and they shortly found themselves in a very comfortable position.

Their evenings were often spent with Grace, and oftener still the latter would bring her work into the parlour with them,

and listen to the duets of her two young friends as they sang sweet strains that had gladdened the heart of Grace in days gone by.

The simple melodies cheered the lonely one. But when for the first time Miriam played and sang—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee,  
Let the water and the blood  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleansing from its guilt and power,”

the hymn powerfully affected Grace as it never had done before. Miriam having been delivered from the burden of the law, and having been taught to believe in the sacrifice of Christ, she could speak from a full heart to the heart of Grace.

Then they sang—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear ;  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.”

Such hymns touched a chord in the

heart of their kind friend, and she found out that she too needed the same sacrifice—the same Jesus—as Miriam and Ruth had found.

“Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest carol ever sung,  
Jesus, blessed Jesus.”

Some happy months were spent in this peaceful abode, and in the midst of their pleasure, kind-hearted Jane was not forgotten. Many a summer hour did she spend with them away from the smoke of London.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### SOME MEETINGS WITH OLD FRIENDS.

**S**OME ten years passed away. Benjamin was still with his uncle and aunt. He had applied himself to study, and had come off with honours. Many a young man would have made good use of the knowledge he possessed, but not so Benjamin. If he had not had the prospect of riches falling to his share, or if others had been dependent upon his efforts, it is possible things might have been different; but he was without an aim in life. Wealth was at his command to satisfy every whim. He had no Christian principles to guide him, neither did he follow the walk of a strict Jew.

About this time his uncle died, and his

aunt did not long survive. Their property was all left to Benjamin.

For nine years he had heard nothing of his sister Ruth. When his uncle and aunt had found that she was likely to become a Christian they intercepted her letters, and thus a silence reigned between the brother and sister through no fault of theirs. The uncle and aunt acted in zeal for their Jewish faith, regardless of the feelings of their nephew and niece.

Benjamin was naturally generous, and now that he was alone he made up his mind to cross the Atlantic to see if he could find his sister. In the midst of his wealth he did not forget Jane, who had befriended him in his poverty. He was anxious to make amends to her, and thought that if he could find her he would no doubt hear of his sister also.

One evening, another such an one as that on which Benjamin and Ruth had gazed in sadness on the grey building of St. Luke's Workhouse, and then had wended their way to Jane's cottage, Benjamin found himself again at that door



where he had been so kindly received and sheltered from the world without.

Jane did not recognise her visitor, but when he made himself known all she could utter was, "Poor Miss Ruth ; good news at last."

Benjamin eagerly caught at the words, and said, "Can you tell me where she is?"

"Oh, yes, I saw her a few days ago."

Benjamin took the address, but ere he bade Jane good-night he placed a cheque for a good sum of money in her hand—enough to set her up in a little business, and to buy the house she lived in. Her husband had not worked for many months, and was likely to be an invalid for life. Jane had no children ; still she had found it a hard struggle to be the bread winner. Now when all their savings had gone help came in this unexpected way. She was now rewarded for what her kind heart had led her to do for the orphans.

Benjamin returned to his hotel, and the next day set out for K——.

By the same lane that Miriam and Ruth had gone on their first visit to K—— the

tall stranger wended his way toward Mertly Farm.

He heard sweet voices singing as he approached—

“Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me.”

It was now dark, for Benjamin had at first taken the wrong road, and was thus delayed.

The sounds of the piano ceased at his unexpected knock at the door. Ruth rushed to see who was the newcomer. In the doorway she saw the outline of a tall, broad-shouldered stranger.

“Does Miss Davis live here?” he asked.

Poor Ruth could not frame an answer; all her self-possession vanished.

Still the same voice repeated, “Does Miss Davis live here?”

Grace thought it time to come to the rescue. “Yes, sir, will you please to walk in.”

The stranger entered, and just as the dim light of the lamp fell on his face Ruth, who was gazing intently at him, cried out,

“Ben!” and in an instant his strong arms were around her, and with much affection he led her into the adjoining room. The girl and companion of his boyhood was now growing into womanhood, and he felt proud of his sister. Explanations soon set all right between them, and Aunt Miriam shared in their joy at meeting after such a long separation.

Ruth and Miriam had been so taken up with the return of their loved one that they had quite forgotten that he needed something else than words of welcome, but Grace Saunders had prepared supper. To her own bright kitchen the trio were invited to a table spread with a lavish hand. It was well-nigh midnight ere they separated, so much had they to tell each other.

Benjamin took up his quarters at Myrtle Farm. He settled a handsome sum of money on his sister, and spent his time between city and country. He had still no aim in life but the gratification of his own desires, and his one pleasure was in gambling, a taste inherited from his father,

whose thirst for gain had beggared his family.

Benjamin, however, was not to be left outside the fold. God had His own way of leading him. He had chosen the well-watered plains of sin regardless of his soul, and He, who had given His life for him, was allowing him to go on his own way for a time. As he sowed so must he reap; but this even was working together for good, to teach him the emptiness of riches, that he might at last find out the preciousness of the "unspeakable gift."

His elder brother might have saved him had he been near to guide and teach him the purer, holier way. What a responsibility rests on the older members of a family. Isaac had torn himself away from the bosom of his family just at a time when an elder brother was needed, and bitter were the fruits of his sin.

We left Isaac at the house of Asher. Asher was able to inform his friend that he had made inquiries of the lodging house keeper where Miriam had first stayed, and found that she had gone into the country

with her niece. Isaac knew that Ruth must be that niece, because Miriam was his mother's only sister, and they had no brother.

How to set about finding her they knew not, till Asher suggested they should go to the landlady again and make further inquiries. This they did, and when the pleasant-faced woman appeared she said, "I know not where the ladies are. It is so many years since they left me, but I remember them well. The only clue I can give you is that their luggage was addressed 'passengers to K——.'"

The two friends journeyed to the little station, but which way then to turn they knew not. No information could they get from the station master, except that the opposite road led to the village of K——. This lovely summer day the two friends went on, but they took the wrong road, as Benjamin did, and arrived at a neighbouring village some distance off. They retraced their steps and once more made for the village.

At the rural post office they inquired for

Miss Davis, and were directed to Myrtle Farm, down the long lane, at the end of which was an avenue of trees close by a pretty farm.

They approached together, but Asher's courage failed him. The man of the world hid at the side like a school boy, so that when the door was opened by Grace Saunders there was only one visitor.

"Does Miss Davis live here?" for the second time sounded in Grace's ears. She wondered what event was about to happen now, but ere she could answer Ben appeared. "Yes, Miss Davis does live here ; will you walk in ?"

Miriam received him very graciously, for in his eyes she saw his mother, and intuition told her who the stranger was. She was not, however, so impulsive as some of younger years, so she quietly waited to see how the scene would end.

The bronzed Australian yeoman seated himself, and with much emotion looked at the trio, for something seemed to tell him who they were.

Silence reigned for a few seconds. Isaac

was trying to think of words to tell his errand. Impulsive Ruth, standing in the background, eyed the stranger, and underneath the bearded and expressive face she saw her long lost brother. Quickly amidst the silence she sprang forward and caught the hand of her brother, and looking eagerly up into his face as if to make quite sure, half doubting whether she was right, said, "My brother."

Isaac, with big tears trickling down his cheek, responded with much feeling, "My sister." By this time Benjamin joined in the greeting, and the brothers and the sister were left alone.

Miriam had gone in search of Grace, who, as on a previous occasion, was preparing supper to welcome these guests. When Miriam returned she found Isaac in great distress, for in the midst of his new found joy he had quite forgotten Asher, who was standing leaning over the garden gate, amidst the perfume of flowers, and listening to the chiming of the church bells. He was thinking of other days, and wondering how matters would end.

Isaac hastened to apologise, and Asher was brought in. Miriam extended her hand without a word, and then sank down into the nearest chair. In the excitement of the moment her agitation was unnoticed by the others; but in that brief greeting the staid woman and the man of maturer years knew that each to each were still dear. No emotion did Miriam betray when all sat down to Grace's comfortable board.

Ere they separated all joined in singing—

“Not all the blood of beasts,  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away its stain.”

and when Miriam and Asher bade each other good-night, the latter softly said—

“Believing I rejoice  
To see the curse removed,”

and Miriam gazing wistfully up into the speaker's face said—

“We'll bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,  
And sing redeeming love.”



The two friends returned to London, and Hannah was greatly interested in all they told her of her old friends.

A few happy weeks passed away and Isaac returned to his adopted land, but not alone, for Hannah Abrahams was his bride. Through him she had learned the way to the heavenly Canaan.

Asher and Miriam were at last united. The hard trials had only made them dearer to each other.

Both were true believers in the heaven-sent Sacrifice, and gratitude for the "unspeakable gift" made them gladly yield their ransomed powers to the service of Him who had so generously dealt with them.

Benjamin and Ruth were now left alone. The former went from bad to worse. Gambling, his only vice, became his master. All the money he possessed he at last lost at one stake, and heart-sick and heart-broken, health gone and prospects blighted, he became very ill.

His sister nursed him through a terrible fever, which gained the mastery, and

Benjamin was fast hastening from time into eternity.

As he sowed so had he reaped, but the sad harvest was only in this world. He was plucked as a brand from the burning. Amidst his feverish tossings he cried, "Where shall I find rest?" and the words of the blessed Saviour were sounded in his ear by Ruth, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

The painful moaning ceased, the stricken Jew was still, and with his face lit up with heavenly light, his lips parted, and softly fell the words, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Poor Ruth was alone again now, though Miriam and Grace were at hand to comfort her. She became a constant visitor at her aunt's, enjoying a romp with her cousins.

Ruth's brother Isaac wanted her to come to him, but she still stayed on at the old house.

A neighbour of Isaac's, a young Scotchman, who had emigrated and who had done well, and was now on his way to visit his friends, called one day on Ruth with a message from her brother. Isaac was this young Scotchman's most intimate friend ; they worked together in the Lord's vineyard and were one in heart and in purpose.

William (Isaac's friend) went to Scotland, but among the Scotch hills and in the old homestead where his boyhood's days were spent he could not forget the sweet face of Ruth.

The next visit was quickly paid, and Ruth left Myrtle Farm to stay with Miriam for the few weeks that remained ere she set sail for Australia as William's bride.

No communication as to the marriage had been sent to Isaac, and when he met the vessel on its arrival, to see William and eager to hear tidings of his sister, how great was his pleasure to see her on the deck of the steamer looking radiantly happy, leaning on the arm of William.

The two homes are very happy ones.

The inmates often meet together to sing the praises of their Redeemer, and look forward to the time when they shall dwell together in a happier home than earth can e'er afford ; for all are wending their way towards the heavenly Jerusalem—a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. In the Canaan above the redeemed of God will for ever rest, for the battle has been won, the victory has been gained by the mighty Victor through the sacrifice of that “unspeakable gift.”

“ Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,  
Thou Giver of all good,  
Not heaven itself a richer knows  
Than the Redeemer's blood.”

THE END.



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