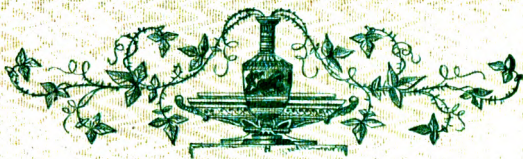


OUR CHATHAM STREET
UNCLE



FRONTISPIECE.



O U R

hatham Street Uncle:

OR.

THE THREE GOLDEN BALLS.

BY

MRS. J. McNAIR WRIGHT.

AUTHOR OF "GOLDEN LIBRARY," "CORNER STALL," ETC.



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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE THREE GOLDEN BALLS.	5

CHAPTER II.

NAOMI'S DAY	49
-----------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

NAOMI'S EYRIE	65
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER	86
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG DISCIPLE	115
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI.

THE GARNET CROSS	148
----------------------------	-----

	PAGE
CHAPTER VII.	
TWO FESTIVALS	171
CHAPTER VIII.	
A JEWISH WEDDING	222
CHAPTER IX.	
OUT OF SODOM	253
CHAPTER X.	
UNDER THE THREE BALLS	287
CHAPTER XI.	
DISSOLVING VIEWS	309





OUR CHATHAM-STREET UNCLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE THREE GOLDEN BALLS.



O speak of our uncle on Chatham Street is not to suggest any kinship between us, nor need any one infer that his wife is our aunt, or his children our cousins. Our uncle is a general sort of uncle: he is a popular uncle, noted chiefly for lending money in small sums to his needy nieces and nephews. Our uncle's first appearance is not attractive: he

is very short and very stout, he has a high nose, a small eye, and close curled hair. His pockets are always buttoned up, and his whole person would not suggest charity. I cannot say that his second or third appearance would be any more agreeable than the first. He is an honorable man on the theory of Brutus, that *all* are honorable men; he advances the money above mentioned only on ample security, and — well, I find that this ghost of truth *will not* be laid — our uncle is — a pawnbroker.

Having thus introduced our uncle, we will make his premises familiar. Indeed, as we are now to spend some time at our uncle's, taking occasional excursions into the neighborhood, let us enter his quarters with all due formality on a Saturday morning. Our uncle is Mr. Solomon Moses Simpson: there are nine uncles of this name on this street; which of them is our especial uncle of this tale, it is not worth while to tell. To begin at the beginning

of the establishment, there is a large front door, and over it the mystic "Three Golden Balls" imported with the trade as its insignia from Germany. It is an ancient trade, having its laws and regulations, which unfortunately are all for the benefit of the owner of the balls. Beside Solomon's front door is a window, where various articles, chiefly jewelry and silver-ware, are hung up ticketed for sale. A narrow passage-way leads to a large room provided with counters, where business *is* — business; shelves laden with pledges, rolled up in parcels and marked; a trap-door, where one can go down to a cellar full of rough, heavy articles, also pledged. Almost directly above the trap-door was a wooden tube of large dimensions, reaching through the ceiling, and penetrating even to the third story. Beside all these conveniences for business, was a stall with a desk and chair, the high throne of the modern Solomon. Let us add that there were

three stalls near the counter, having sides but no backs, and barely large enough for one person to stand in, facing the counter, and we have described the public part of this cheerful property. From a door near Solomon's private desk, one might go into a dark entry, and thence to a dismal kitchen, smelling extensively of onions, mackerel, and fried mutton, with frequently a redolence of soap-suds. This kitchen had a charming view of a damp, mouldy, brick-paved back area, nine by twelve feet in extent. Climb up stairs from the dark entry, and you come to a dining-room and a parlor, both back rooms, small, gorgeous, and greasy. Mounting up again, the three family bedrooms; a still higher ascent, and behold the attics, occupied by kitchen-maid and clerks. This is the whole domain of our Uncle Solomon Moses Simpson, of the "Three Golden Balls." There is a peculiarity in Mr. Simpson's establishment that it will be well to notice:

nothing is a fixture ; the very carpets are not nailed down, and the curtains look as if they expected to be removed any moment. Nothing is like any thing else : the chairs are of all sorts and sizes ; the dishes never belonged to one set. There is plenty of every thing, but every thing has fastened to it a small metal "ticket." If any thing falls short, there is an unfailing reservoir of every thing known on earth beneath, in the second and third stories front. There are regularly returning periods when Solomon Simpson sweeps through his domicile, and all things suffer change, except perhaps the family beds and wearing apparel : the family jewelry is not an exception. However, as soon as every thing has been swept out of the family rooms, plenty of other articles mysteriously settle in their places, and nobody seems surprised or disturbed.

It is Saturday morning. The breakfast-table

is spread in the dingy dining-room : the service is of every imaginable kind of ware, from delf to gilt edge. There is a fine castor, a heterogeneous collection of cutlery, a tin coffee-pot, a plated water-pitcher, an undeniably silver milk-cup. The damsel from the kitchen puts down a dish of hot cakes, and vigorously rings at the head of the stairs a huge bell, ticketed, of course, probably the spoil of a third-class hotel. Now comes into the room a girl of eighteen, carefully helping a crippled child. She sets the cripple in a chair by the table : the child is Hagar Simpson ; the young girl Naomi, our uncle's niece.

Naomi, with a brisk hand, drew up the curtains, threw open the window to the entrance of the fresh October air, and by a few magical touches greatly improved the appearance of the room. Meanwhile Mr. Solomon Simpson had come in, cut the chops, and now, turning the carving knife and fork upside down, ham-

mered on the table with their handles with all his might.

“Yes, Uncle,” said Naomi, turning a fair, calm face to the impatient master of the house.

“Vy dost not do de vork pefore it ist time to eat?” demanded Mr. Simpson.

“Mother and Judith wanted so many things she could not get down soon,” explained Hagar.

“Put down te vindow, girl; vilt freeze us all!” cried Solomon, as his niece took her place at the head of the table. Naomi quietly obeyed, and then began to pour the coffee, standing to do so, as she was barely of middle height.

Naomi’s father had been an Englishman; and she was brown-haired and fair, while she inherited the eyes and features of her Jewish mother. She was scrupulously neat in her dress; her white linen collar and apron, and plain black alapacca, contrasting strongly with

her tawdry surroundings. Only in the crimson net that fastened up her hair did she betray the Jewish love of bright colors; and against this net, lending a glow to her fair cheek, a Quaker could have uttered scarcely a word.

"Vere is mein vrow and Judith?" demanded Mr. Simpson, after helping liberally the small party at the breakfast-table.

"They are getting dressed for synagogue," said Naomi. Mr. Simpson grunted. "Vell enough," he said presently: "ve must do someting to shtop de rabbi's mout. I haves no times to pe religious, eh, Naomi?"

"I wish you had," said Naomi calmly.

Mr. Simpson broke off on another theme. "If I did lie in ped likes te vimen, vere woult de business be, eh, Naomi?" and then, without waiting for an answer, he stuffed his mouth full of mutton, and, rushing to the staircase, rang the bell frantically.

"Dat vill fetch 'em," he said, coming grin-

ning to his seat. The first effect of the bell was to bring Rose from the kitchen.

“Pring von of dem fellers from de shop to his preakfast,” ordered the master of the house: “dey must eat vile they can’s’t. Saturday ist von puisy day for me, eh, Naomi?”

“Vy art so silent, girl?” he demanded presently, as his niece had only said, “Yes, uncle,” to his last remark. “Art shust like ty mutter before she run away mit te Englishman: art not thinking of runing away mit one, eh, Naomi?”

“No, uncle.”

“Ven you runs,” said Mr. Simpson, taking his cup of coffee at one gulp, and piling Hagar’s plate with hot cakes, “Ven you runs, Naomi, run mit a Tutchman.”

“I shall not run at all, uncle.”

“Ach very gut; but vy ist so silent, Naomi?”

“I was thinking, uncle.”

14 *Our Chatham-Street Uncle.*

“Vimin ant girls have no bisness to tink,” said Mr. Simpson magisterially. “Pring more cakes, Rose. Eats de preakfast quick, mein poy,” he added to his clerk, a spruce young shylock named Daniel, oiled, perfumed, and ornamented with pinchbeck jewelry.

“I have been thinking,” said Naomi, “that I could help you in the shop to-day if you like, uncle.”

Mr. Simpson had a mouthful of cake, but hammered applause with his fists on the table, until he was able to say,

“Dat ist gut, dat is shust right: may tink day ant night, Naomi, ant vill always tink so well. Judith woult not do so much.”

“I’ll be so lonesome,” said Hagar sorrowfully.

“I’ll arrange every thing nice for you before I go down, and will tell you splendid stories all this evening,” said Naomi.

“Evening is te vurst time for me,” said Simpson.

"I cannot stay in the shop this evening," said Naomi decidedly. "I should be too tired, and to-morrow is my Sunday.

"I must have Naomi this evening," said Hagar.

"Vell, vell, I vill takes vat I can gets," said Mr. Simpson resignedly: "vimin vill always have tere vay, Naomi;" and pushing back his chair from the table, Mr. Simpson hurried to the lower regions, whence he soon sent up his two remaining clerks with orders to "hurry." With these clerks came in Mrs. Simpson and Judith her daughter. They were large, showy women, attired in thick, high-colored silks, with an abundance of jet trimming. Their magnificence was enhanced by imitation lace collars and sleeves, and by breast-pins, ear-rings finger-rings, watches, chains, and belt-pins.

Fourteen years before our story commences, Solomon Moses Simpson had come from Ger-

many, and had soon married a widow with one daughter, Judith. Mrs. Simpson had been a pawnbroker's widow; Solomon was a pawnbroker himself. They had begun business in an humble way far down the Bowery, as old-clothes dealers, but had swiftly risen to the possession of the institution on Chatham Street.

Hagar, deformed from her birth, was the only child of this marriage. Solomon was not without affection; and whatever could be spared from money-making, he lavished on Naomi his niece, and little Hagar. To use his own expression, he "got on very vell mit te vrow ant Judith;" and, as in full glory they attended synagogue or promenaded Grand Street, they served the double purpose of "stopping the rabbi's mouth," and being walking advertisements of the flourishing business Solomon was driving. Naomi had been two years in her uncle's household. At

first Mrs. Simpson had been disposed to look coldly on her as an alien and an intruder, a creature of Gentile blood and faith, not strong enough to labor as their servant, and lacking all interest in their pursuits and views. But Mrs. Simpson soon changed her mind, and regarded Naomi with great favor. In a short time after going to her uncle's, Naomi had assumed the whole care of Hagar, who had ever been greatly in her pleasure-taking mother's way. Naomi was always on hand to wait upon her uncle, so that her aunt and Judith could sleep and visit to their heart's content. Again : Naomi, though what her aunt considered miserably plain in her own dress, was very dextrous with her needle ; and her talents in that line were in frequent requisition ; while, lastly, the girl did not care to keep Saturday or attend synagogue, and therefore was left on the Jewish sabbath in full charge of the domestic department. Naomi had

always claimed Sunday, the first day of the week, as her own. Perhaps Mrs. Simpson might have refused this time ; but the girl had a quiet way of insisting upon her rights that invariably carried the day. Her uncle regarded her as a paragon of good sense, and generally ended every remark made in her presence with, "Eh Naomi?" and as long as Naomi did not turn the pawnbroker's partiality to account by getting fine dresses or jewelry, nobody found any fault with it.

By means which we shall hereafter learn, Naomi had been led into the society of those whom her relatives styled "Gentiles," and had for some years attended a mission chapel ; but only within the last six months had the instructions she had received taken hold upon her heart, and new aims and hopes had possession of her soul. In the Nazarene, reviled by the rabbi and Mrs. Solomon Simpson, Naomi had recognized the Son of God, and

King of Israel. The leaven of grace was working in her heart, and quietly altering her life.

So calm and kind had Naomi ever been, that the change in her was not yet apparent to her uncle's family. They were used to find her diligent, cheerful, and sympathizing; and she was so still. But Naomi was learning that there was something more and better in life than to drift along with the current, calmly content with being in nobody's way: she was finding out that every Christian is bound to be, as much as in him lies, a power in the world. The child of God is not to be merely a reservoir of grace, shutting up in himself a supply, but a full and steady stream, blessing and ennobling our common humanity.

This morning was the first in which Naomi had gone visibly out of her usual way. She had heretofore quietly contemned the whole system of pawnbrokery, unimpressed by her

uncle's arguments in favor of it, undiverted by its profits, holding herself aloof as far as was possible from all that concerned it. She would neither enter the shop, nor decorate herself with any pledges. But here, on this October Saturday, she was freely offering to take part in the bustle and toil of the busiest shop-day. Solomon Moses was both surprised and delighted.

When Mrs. Simpson, Judith, and the two clerks had sat down to a fresh supply of breakfast brought up by Rose, and Daniel had followed his employer to the shop, Hagar volunteered the information that "Naomi was going to help father down stairs to-day."

"That is good sense," said Mrs. Simpson, nodding over her coffee-cup at her niece. "Since you do not keep sabbath, nor go to synagogue, you had better help the uncle." Mrs. Simpson, being New-York born, was without her husband's inaccuracies of expression.

"Yes," said Judith with a little sneer: "it is very convenient that you are a Christian."

"It is more than convenient: it is profitable," said the calm Naomi.

"What! is father going to pay you for shop-work!"

"No, but to be a Christian is profitable for the life that now is, and for that which is to come," said Naomi.

Judith laughed — "Oh, I didn't know but you were going into the shop for a watch like mine."

"After we've been to synagogue, we will go and buy some new bonnets," said Mrs. Simpson; "and, Naomi, you get time to-day to gather up the clothes: Rose shall wash to-morrow."

"I don't want to gather up the clothes, for I think it is wicked to work to-morrow," said Naomi.

"Not for Rose: she is a Jew, and will not

keep a Christian sabbath. She keeps to-day."

"Only by walking about Grand Street, and going out in the evening; and that does not make a sabbath. Sabbath means 'rest,'" persisted Naomi.

"Then we'd better all stay in bed to-morrow," said Judith: "that will be a 'rest.'"

"The way you work things, aunt, one gets no real Sabbath: it is two days for dressing up and walking about."

"We'll wash and clear up to-morrow, then," said Judith.

"I can't have any thing to do with it," said Naomi. "I'm not even going to pick up the clothes for Rose. If you read the holy books to-day, and learned what the rabbi tells you, it would seem better; but as it is, aunt, I can't make out any sabbath at all."

"You needn't complain: you have your own," said Mrs. Simpson.

"That is true, aunt; but I was thinking of you all. If you hold to the holy books, I wish you followed them."

Naomi's words were blunt, but her manner was earnest and respectful. Mrs. Simpson laughed. "We shall get on as well as our fathers did long before we were any of us born, Naomi."

Rose was left to clear off the breakfast-table, which she did in a very slovenly manner, being in haste to set out a lunch, and get off for a day's recreation. Mr. Simpson and his clerks were too busy to stop for a regular dinner on Saturdays: therefore Mrs. Simpson and Judith availed themselves of the opportunity to dine from home, leaving Naomi to preside over the lunch. The grand dinner of the week was on Sunday, when some of their Jewish friends were always present.

Naomi helped Hagar into the parlor, and established her in a faded brocatel chair,

which, after a view of high life, was hiding its dimmed splendor in a pawnbroker's shop. Our Naomi was fond of light and air ; so she opened the windows, rolled up the curtains, dusted the room, set Hagar's canary's cage close to its little mistress's big chair, put a box of beads, some worsted, a pencil and some books, on the window-sill, and then, closing the window for fear her sickly cousin would get cold, kissed her good by, and said she must run off to the shop.

Mrs. Simpson and Judith in brilliant array, with feathers flying, parasol fringes waving, yellow kids and lace kerchiefs freely exhibited, sailed in the dingy little parlor, nodded to Hagar, and sailed out again, glittering and rustling. Hagar, whom Naomi's care kept a neat little image, rested her thin, pale face on her hand, and meditated.

If she were straight and strong, would she care for dress, and for walking up and down

the crowded streets, or eating and drinking with the other Jews, as her mother and Judith did? Would she like to be as Naomi, waiting on everybody, ever in demand, and never with a minute to call her own? Would it be nice to go to a Christian chapel, and hear of Jesus of Nazareth, who healed the sick, the lame, the blind, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead? Did she wish she were like Aunt Anna of whom Naomi told her, old, and sitting at life's extremest limit as one might sit by a half-open golden gate, whence glory brighter than sunshine fell around her? To her ear the tramp of feet, the faint echoes of the city's multitudinous cries, came from the outer world: would she like to be a part of that busy strife and turmoil and change?

Thus Hagar mused in her faded chair by the gloomy back window.

Meanwhile Naomi had gone up to her own room,—a room she shared with Hagar. From

this room she had banished as many as possible of the misery-suggesting "pledges" from the shop below. It was a small room, severely plain and scrupulously neat. There was an old-fashioned mahogany bureau there, with a black marble slab and a dimmed mirror. Naomi went to it to smooth again her already smooth hair; and getting into a reverie that was half a supplication, she let fall the brush, and stood leaning forward, hands clasped, and looking upward, transforming herself unconsciously into a living copy of our favorite picture of Faith before the Cross. It was only for a short space, however; for Naomi glanced about to see that all was in order, and then ran down to the shop.

"Dat ish a gut girl," said Uncle Simpson. "Here ish dish counter near me: shalt have't vere can asks me all ash ist necessary. Daniel ant de oter poys ist not to ty mind, eh, Naomi?"

No : they were not at all to Naomi's mind, though she was evidently greatly to theirs ; and she at once took her appointed place at the small counter nearest her uncle. Solomon proceeded to enlighten her.

" Here, Naomi, ven dey pays all as ist on te ticket, dey gets de pledge back ; dad ist fair. If dey prings you a ticket for iron tings, you calls out to young Simon, te cellar poy, to fetch it up. If dey has tickets for jewelry or silver, you prings dem to me ; if it ist for what I keeps above, you calls up te spout, and if de tings ist on te shelves, vilt easy find em ; eh, Naomi ? "

" Yes, uncle," said Naomi, endeavoring to get this mass of information arranged in her mind, and now watching the stream of comers and goers that ebbed and flowed through the small door from the entry. The door to the salesroom was half of glass, that Mr. Simpson might oversee the clerk who attended to that part of the business.

Naomi could see now and then a decently attired person enter the front room, and accost the clerk. The young man either concluded the affair very summarily himself, or, if coming upon a knotty point, jerked a little bell for aid, and Solomon fled to the rescue. Daniel and his coadjutors treated their customers superciliously indeed: there was none of the suavity and address shown by regular shopkeepers. They snatched the article timidly presented, pronounced their ultimatum, leaned back, and obdurately refused to reconsider; and might have been sketched for an illustrated rebus on —

“Come on, come on: this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.”

During the morning, there was only one deviation from this line of action, and that was when an individual in plain clothes entered through the glass door. He was at once

waited on by Mr. Simpson himself, who was unexpectedly behind the counter, as if that were his legitimate position, and who showed a sudden excess of caution in conducting his business, and a scrupulous exactness that was not visible at any other time that day.

"Who was that, uncle?" asked Naomi, as her relative passed her on his way to his customary station.

"A detective," replied our uncle, shrugging his shoulders with a queer grimace.

"Why, what did he want here?" said Naomi the unsophisticated.

"Looked in all in de vay of hish pisness," replied Solomon nonchalantly.

Here a woman presented to Naomi a ticket for twenty cents on flatirons; and the money being ready, Simon made a plunge into the cellar to procure them. Naomi's kind face won the information from the woman, "I put 'em in Thursday to get money to buy soap for

the washing I took in ; and now here's the children's breakfast-money goes to get 'em out, so I can iron the clothes and get my pay."

Naomi felt as if the poor twenty cents burned her fingers.

"Howsumdever," said the woman, as Simon emerged from the realm of cobwebs, bearing the irons. "I've got soap for next week, and the children will have their supper. It's nothing when you're used to it."

"It's my Mary's coat," said the next claimant, "in for fifty. She left it for cleaning, and she'll be after it to-morrey. I'll get no more of her wages, an' she knows I pledged it."

Naomi glanced at her uncle. A jerk of his thumb informed her that "Mary's cloak" had gone up the spout ; and a call at the foot of the wooden tube soon brought the garment rattling down, done up in brown paper.

And now came a woman with a large bun-

die. "A dollar on it," she said, unfolding it.
"It's good."

Naomi glanced from the blanket to her uncle.

"I've seen it before," he said briefly :
"vifty."

"Only fifty ! It's good, most new !" urged the woman. "It's our last blanket," she said to move Naomi.

"Te blanket hash holes in it," said Solomon : "vifty."

"Fifty," said Naomi, strengthened to say it, because, as she bent over the bundle to look for the holes Solomon had averred were in it, the woman's breath came to her heavy with whiskey.

"Take it," said the woman crossly. Naomi, being new to the trade, took the blanket to her uncle to get it ticketed and obtain the money.

"Don't take it, uncle," she said hurriedly.

"She is robbing her children's beds to buy whiskey."

"Dat ish none of mine pisness," said Solomon. "De pledge vill bring vifty at te auction."

The morning work in the shop was tolerably brisk ; but when lunch was despatched, and twelve o'clock had passed, the crowd trebled. Naomi grew sick at heart as she watched the stream of pale, pinched faces, — faces old and worn, faces anxious and timid, faces bloated and bad. Up to Naomi's counter came a little child, holding in her thin hands a small torn shawl. "Something on this?" she whispered. Naomi, as usual, looked at her uncle.

"Notting on dat!" he exclaimed.

"We ain't got nothing else to bring," urged the child.

"Notting on dat," said Solomon the inexorable.

"We're so hungry: mother's off on a spree," said the small customer.

"Take it away: te mutter ish not mine piness," said Solomon. Naomi handed back the shawl, but slipped ten cents from her own pocket into her little client's blue fingers. The child darted off through the crowded shop; and Naomi turned, as Daniel, near her, said, "There's a green one: never been in a pawnbroker's shop before."

Naomi looked towards the subject of this remark, and saw a pale, neatly-dressed young man, with a square parcel in his hand, standing near the door, with an expression of distress and bewilderment on his countenance, that at once aroused her pity. The poor fellow suddenly met her earnest gaze, and pressed towards her counter.

"As much as you can give me on these," he said, unfolding two small and very pretty colored engravings, in plain gilt frames.

Naomi took the offered pledge to her uncle. "Von tollar," he said coolly: "shmall pictures ish a trug in te auctions."

"Only one dollar!" said the young man, as Naomi reluctantly made the offer. "That is so little: make it two. I need the money so much!" He was surely new to the trade, or he would never have tried to awaken sympathy in a pawnbroker's shop. Naomi, however, was as new as himself, and, full of compassion for his evident distress, repaired to her uncle. "He wants two dollars: I'm sure they are worth that, uncle."

"Ach, vimin, vimin," said Solomon, keenly examining the pictures: "I vanter how te world vas mate vidout vimin to advise. He vill not redeem dem, Naomi."

"Then give one to Hagar and one to me, uncle, they are so pretty."

"Two dollars den," said Solomon reluctantly, though the pictures were well worth that

advance : “ te vimin vill have dere vay, but I vill always pe sorry.”

The young man went his way with the two dollars ; and Naomi was attending to an ill-looking boy, who came to redeem an overcoat from the shelf, when her uncle briskly stepped to her side, and returning the parcel to its place, and flinging the fifty cents at the lad, said sharply, “ Counterfeit — get out.”

“ Dat ish a duffer : I knew he would scheat you, Naomi ; it ish all in the vay of pisness to him.”

“ But, uncle, that old thing isn’t worth more than a counterfeit note,” said Naomi, eyeing the ragged and dirty coat with much disgust.

“ It vill vork up into shoddy since te var,” replied Solomon, returning to his place.

A few moments later, Naomi was at her uncle’s side : he pulled her sleeve, and, indicating with motions of his finger three separate

stalls of which he commanded a full view, said with a grin, "Ivory, apes, and peacocks: dat ish te peculiar treashure of Solomon the pawnbroker ast it vash of Solomon te king."

Naomi looked where he pointed, and saw in the stalls a negro, a flashily-dressed Spaniard, and a woman gaudy in red ribbon and cotton lace.

The negro was offering to the astute Daniel three silver table-spoons; the Spaniard was receiving money on a watch and chain; and the pledge the woman had under consideration was a gentleman's seal-ring.

"Te Spaniard ist von great gampler: he does pawn the vaches as he does vin," explained Solomon; then, struck perhaps by the strong contrast between Naomi's pure, pale face and her surrounding, he gave her a little push, saying, "Go vay: dey ish not gut enough for you to see, Naomi."

Naomi's next customer was a decent old

lady, whose gray hairs were laid smoothly under her plain cap : she offered a bombazine bonnet, with an old crape veil. "I must stay home from church to-morrow," she said confidentially to Naomi ; "but I was not paid for my work, and we must have something to eat. Give me what you can, my dear."

"Where do you live?" asked Naomi, examining the bonnet.

"Number thirteen, Pell Street, second story front."

"Take your bonnet home : I will come and see you after supper," said Naomi softly. "That is not very far away."

And so the afternoon hours slipped by, and the gas had long been lighted. Uncle Simpson became perturbed ; Daniel and his clerkly coadjutors flew about distractedly ; the Simon of the cellar crept up and down from the darkness with his lantern at his belt, looking like a great glow-worm ; in the flickering

shadows of the salesroom, the clerks took a ghostly appearance; the crowds grew more clamorous, redeeming pledges with their newly-received wages, or depositing some articles to get wherewithal to help them over Sunday. Glad indeed was Naomi to hear the big bell ringing at the head of the stairs; and swiftly did she run to her room to wash and brush off some of the feeling of the shop before she went to her supper.

Her aunt and Judith were home in high good humor over their new bonnets, which Naomi praised as well as she was able.

"Are you tired of the shop, Naomi?" asked her aunt.

"I'm very tired, aunt," replied Naomi.

"Every one to their mind," cried Judith. "I wouldn't stay in the shop all day: you should have seen the crowds in the synagogue, Naomi,—so much finer than a Christian congregation, where the people hardly look worth a sixpence."

The family sat down to tea. The table was long, as the clerks all ate with the household ; but to night, being a busy one, our uncle and his aids did not get in early to the evening meal. There was no gas in the back rooms of the house ; and by the dim light of two ill-trimmed lamps, with smoky shades, our friends sat down to eat. Mrs. Simpson and Judith were together by the tea-board, while Hagar and Naomi were far off at the other end of the table. Mrs. Simpson and her elder daughter were discoursing of dress and gossip, fast and loud ; and Naomi, having carried her own and Hagar's cup to their places, for she was completely out of reach of her aunt, talked to Hagar in low, earnest tones. The child seemed so much interested as to forget her supper ; and presently taking a little purse from her pocket, — a gilt and velvet affair, that had been pledged for a quarter and never redeemed, — took from it

a fragment of currency, and handed it to her cousin. Naomi wrapped this small treasure up in a similar piece of her own ; and then Hagar said, " Go now : don't stay long. Ask her, Naomi : she is pleasant to-night."

Naomi, with some hesitation, went to her aunt.

" Aunt, may I have a loaf of bread ? "

" What under the sun ! " cried Mrs. Simpson.

" I want it for a poor old woman," began Naomi.

" I'm not to blame for that," interrupted her aunt.

" Let her take something to the shop," said Judith.

" Give it to me, aunt ; and on Monday I'll go to Mrs. Phillips, and see her new bias dress, and cut you one just like it."

" Will you, though ? "

" Yes, surely ; and I'll take a good look at

Rebecca Moses's new hood for Judith. I know I can copy it."

"For gracious sake give her the loaf!" said Judith: "who ever heard the like! If you couldn't sew so well, Naomi, we'd send you to the asylum!" and she leaned back in her chair, and laughed heartily. Undismayed by ridicule, Naomi turned to go to the kitchen, her aunt calling after her, "A small stale loaf, Naomi; not the last baking!"

And now in a few moments see Naomi, with the loaf in a basket, her waterproof wrapped about her shoulders, with the hood drawn over her head, emerging from the area-gate, and soon entering a tiny shop, where a red-haired, jolly-faced old man sat mending a watch.

"Why, here is Naomi!" he exclaimed, looking up.

"I want you to take me up to 13 Pell Street, just for a few minutes," said Naomi.

The old fellow whistled dubiously. "I

want to take some bread to a poor woman," explained Naomi.

"Well, come on then : I'm your man ; but did you get the bread out of those Jews ? Whew ! that's like getting blood out of a turnip !"

"I don't like that," said Naomi, standing still by the door.

"There, now ! well, I won't do so again. Come on, child. I must be back in a hurry. I don't like to leave the shop alone."

It was a very small shop, hardly more than a big window, where the old man worked, and space for a chair, and room behind that for the door to swing open. The old man buttoned his coat up tight, took his big cane, locked the door, and walked stoutly along by Naomi.

"What do you know of this poor woman ?" asked Naomi's guardian.

"Nothing," said Naomi.

"Then," replied her friend, half stopping, it is very foolish to go there. Ten to one you'll be swindled."

"I shall not give her any thing unless I am satisfied about her," said Naomi, walking straight on.

They went swiftly along, turned two corners, and stopped at No. 13. Naomi scanned the front of the house.

"That is the room, — the second front," she said, betraying no hesitation, and ran up the narrow stair, her companion following panting behind.

Naomi knocked resolutely at the door; and, sure enough, there was the very old woman who had come to the shop to pawn the bonnet.

"A pleasant evening to you, my dear," said the old lady. "Walk in. Is this your father?"

"No: this is Timothy," said Naomi.

The room was bare of every thing but the most necessary articles. There was a little fire in the stove, and propped up in a chair was an aged man.

“It’s my old man,” said the woman. “He was hurt in an explosion five years ago, and I take care of him.”

Timothy, as Naomi called him, looked carefully at the room and its inmates, and his face gradually settled into an expression of calm satisfaction.

“I was sorry you had to offer your bonnet at the shop,” began Naomi’s soft voice.

“Yes, dear: it’s all the bonnet I have; and the best pleasure I find now is to get to church on Sundays, and come back and tell the old man the sermon.”

“I thought you had better not leave it,” said Naomi.

“It is the last bit of mourning I have for my girl. She died three years ago. She was

a rare hand at working worsteds, and did embroidery for Ewing's grand store; and that kind and helpful she was, it was a sore thing to part with her!"

"But it was the Lord's will," said Naomi.

"Yes, dear, the Lord's will. Here is the last bit of canvas she was trying a new stitch on, and her needle just as she stuck it in, and her thimble as she dropped it." The old lady took down from the mantel a pasteboard-box, opened it, closed and replaced it, adding, "She was took very sudden-like."

"I brought you a loaf," said Naomi, "and this for meat. I hope you'll be paid next week, so you won't come to the shop. Never go to our uncle's if you can help it." She slipped the bits of currency into the woman's hand, and gave her the loaf.

"Dear heart," said the old woman, smoothing Naomi's waterproof with her wrinkled hand: "the blessing of the poor go with you."

Let your alms come up in remembrance before God. We don't often get in a tight place like this, dear ; and it's like we may not need helping again : but a look at your face will be good for our eyes."

Here the old man in the chair, realizing how matters stood, began nodding vehemently, and nodded right along like a mandarin in a tea-shop, until Naomi had made her adieux, and disappeared below the level of the landing.

"There, Timothy, were they worth going to see? Was I swindled?" demanded Naomi triumphantly, as they walked homeward.

"They're good as gold, Naomi," said Timothy.

Hagar was waiting anxiously for Naomi. The rattle of cups and plates yet filled the dining-room, as Solomon and his hurried clerks, one by one, got liberty to eat their suppers. Mrs. Simpson was gathering up the

clothes for the next day's wash, and doing it with many animadversions upon Naomi, and unavailing regrets at having been persuaded out of the "stale loaf."

Judith was apparently asleep in the big chair.

Naomi settled herself on a lounge, — which, being unredeemed, was doomed to the auction the next week, — and placing Hagar by her, with her head on her lap, she smoothed the child's hair gently, while in a low voice she repeated the history of the day. She told of the pawned flatirons, of the wee girl who had gone off rejoicing with her tattered shawl, of the young man and the pictures. "I know he was a nice young man," said Naomi.

"Maybe his mother is sick, and he takes care of her, and can't get work," said Hagar, who was fond of weaving romances.

"Yes: or his sister, or his wife," said Naomi. "I would like to have asked where

they lived ; but, of course, I could not. I'm glad I found out the old lady, though. Her name is Roberts, she told Timothy."

"Well, it must be nice to see things," said Hagar with a sigh. "What did you go in the shop for, Naomi?"

"To find ways of doing good," said Naomi.





CHAPTER II.

NAOMI'S DAY.



RIGHT rose the morning of the sabbath, Naomi's sacred day. When Hagar awoke, Naomi was standing by the bureau, dressed in her best, a black silk made from one of her aunt's.

"Oh, dear!" said Hagar: "now I'm going to be alone all day. I always feel alone when you're gone. I don't know as you'd better lend me your Bible, Naomi; because Judith said she'd tell the rabbi of me if I read it. But I'd like some of those little papers you've

got in your trunk, and one of the cards to learn a verse of."

"Very well; and you can read in the Book of Psalms that Judith had at school," said Naomi, laying her shawl and bonnet on a chair by the window. You must try and keep the day holy, Hagar, as you never keep Saturday."

"The rest of them don't *really* keep seventh-day sabbath," said Hagar; "and I'd rather keep your day, Naomi, and I'm going to believe just what you do."

"We must believe what God's word tells us," said Naomi, taking her Bible, and sitting down on the side of the bed. She read a chapter to Hagar, explaining it as well as she could as she went on; and then kneeling with her cousin's hand clasped in hers, she offered their morning prayer.

The next thing in order was to dress Hagar, and arrange the room; then to obey the tardy

summons of the breakfast-bell, and go down to pour coffee for her uncle.

"I vash up till two o'clock," said Mr. Simpson, rubbing his eyes: "vy did not sthay to pour mein tea, Naomi? te vrow vas off somevere, and I vas all alone."

"I am sorry for that, uncle: if I had known aunt meant to leave the table, I would have staid to wait on you."

"Vere did go?" reiterated our uncle, hammering the table with his fist.

"To take a little help to a poor woman, uncle."

"It is pad vays to go about at night: du must stay home, Naomi."

"Timothy went with me, uncle."

"Timothy! I do hate that Englishman!"

"There, now, uncle: why should not nice old Timothy take me about, as well as if he were my father?"

"I did hate dein fater!" cried our benevolent uncle.

“Now, uncle,” said Naomi reproachfully.

“Vell, it vash all for dein mutter’s sake, Naomi: vilt not plame dein olt uncle. Vy, girl, his English friends dit not vant him to marry dein mutter, shust as if she vast not gut enough for him. She vast gut enough for te king: if she was living now, te king shoult not have her.”

“Yes, uncle,” said Naomi soothingly: she had heard this story a hundred times.

“I pe pound ty poor voman vast not a Jew!” cried Mr. Simpson, striking on a new theme.

“No, uncle,” said Naomi.

“Ash, I know it: Jews ish not so peggar poor. Christians ish the poor vons; pegging ist part of their pisness. Jews shoult not give of tere substance to te Gentiles.”

“Moses in the law commends charity to all who need,” said Naomi.

“I does not care von penny vor Moshes nor

te law neiter : ash art not te rabbi, Naomi, I vill say so much pefore you. I cares only for von good piles of monish."

"You brought nothing into the world, uncle, nor can you carry any thing out," said Naomi sadly.

"Dat ish true ; put no need pringing it up, Naomi. If I cannot carry mein piles monish out of te world, I can leave tem to mein Hagar and Naomi," said our uncle testily ; and then added in a softer tone, "I know Azrael cannot be pought mit monish, Naomi : ven he comes I must go ; but may it pe long before he knocks here, Naomi."

"I hope so, uncle ; but it is wise to get ready for his coming."

"Does mean I make my vill, girl?" exclaimed the pawnbroker.

"No indeed, uncle ; but prepare your soul."

Our uncle shrugged his shoulders. "I

would be von great fool to keeps in mein mint vat I cannot bear," he said. "I must go to te shop, and gets it in orte, ant look over mein pooks, Naomi. Christian governments are very hart on te Jews, to make us keep first day sappath; eh, Naomi?"

And so, as in the Saviour's parable, one went to his merchandise, but the other to feast in the King's courts that day. Naomi was soon ready to go out; and, Bible in hand, bent her way toward Spring Street, where she spent her sabbaths. Here was the home of Naomi's best and oldest earthly friend, whom, though not really akin to her, she called Aunt Anna.

When Naomi's parents had come, young and inexperienced, to a strange land, Providence led them to a room in the same house with Aunt Anna. The kind heart of the dame warmed towards the youthful foreigners: she was their friend, counsellor, comforter; she gave the infant Naomi a hearty welcome, and

was unwearied in kind offices both to the mother and child. Naomi's father died about the time Solomon Simpson came from Germany: the widow retained the room in which she had lived since coming to New York, and was supported partly by her needlework, and partly by her brother Simpson. When six years old, Naomi was left an orphan; and her Uncle Solomon agreed to provide for her, and leave her in Aunt Anna's care, as his wife declined to take charge of her. But our uncle grew constantly more and more fond of his niece, and when she was fourteen insisted upon her becoming an inmate of his own family. His Jewish prejudices were not so strongly exercised against Aunt Anna as against other Christians; for he could not forget that she had nursed his favorite sister during a contagious disease from which others fled, and that but for her the sufferers might have died alone.

Since Naomi had been living with her uncle, she had insisted upon spending every sabbath with Aunt Anna; and though her uncle would have been glad to see her less of what he called a "Gentile," he had ceased to oppose her going.

Naomi's light steps took her swiftly through the Bowery and Spring Street, and brought her safely to Aunt Anna's door, which she entered with the bright, eager face of one who is sure their presence will bring only satisfaction. Aunt Anna was reading by her front window: her comely figure, and placid, venerable face bent over her book, were, in their way, as good to see as Naomi glad and young.

Now we are ready for our "good day," said Naomi, sitting down by her old friend, and resting her arm fondly on her shoulder. "If poor little Hagar could only be here, I do not know any thing more that I would want. We have more than an hour before we need start

for church ; and I'm going to talk as fast as I can ; for you are the only one I really *talk* to, Aunt Anna, unless it's Hagar. I've been doing as you told me, looking for some good to do ; and I looked for it in the shop."

Aunt Anna started a little. She had her suspicions about that same shop ; and she doubted not, if Naomi went there often, her eyes might be opened to things of which she now had not the least idea. The old lady had never thought it her duty to hint to Naomi that our uncle did not conduct business with strict probity ; but she was now likely to find it out fast enough.

"There is nothing wrong in that, is there?" said Naomi, as her auditor remained silent.

"No : not if you do good, and get no harm yourself, child. I can't help thinking of the question, 'Can one touch pitch, and not be defiled?' What ever made you think of going into the shop to look for your work, Naomi?"

“It has been like a nightmare to me ever since I went to uncle’s,” said Naomi: “it seems to me as if human misery flows in and out our shop, like the tide flows in and out yonder, casting up all sorts of doleful things; and I did not know but by going there I might soonest find sorrows that I could lighten, and poverty to help. I think I have already, Aunt Anna.”

“Well, as far as your uncle and the clerks are concerned, you are with them every day; and, as you say, you may find, in those who come to the shop, some who need your help: but you must remember as much sin as sorrow goes in at that shop, Naomi.”

“I wish,” cried Naomi, “that there were no pawnbrokers’ shops!”

“Well used, they might be a great blessing,” said Aunt Anna; “but here they are generally a means of abuse, extortion, and illegal trade. You will find out much that is bad about them.”

"Not any more than I know," said Naomi confidently: "just about the worst there is, is that they will let people pledge articles absolutely necessary to their families, only to buy liquor."

"That ought to be an offence against any one's conscience, but it is not against law."

"Oh, of course, uncle will not transgress *law*," said Naomi; and then she remembered the detective.

She told her old friend about Mrs. Roberts, and her evening visit; and then, having read aloud a chapter in the Bible, they set out for church. In the afternoon, there was Sunday school, and then a quiet hour before tea.

"It seems," said Naomi, "as if I would like to do a great deal of good, and I get discouraged because I can't."

"You must be content to do a *little* faithfully," said Aunt Anna. "If you are *sure* you are working with an eye single to God's

glory, you will not grow weary, even toiling for a *little*. It is when we are really, though may be unconsciously, working for self, that discouragement creeps in."

"How is that?" asked Naomi.

"Because the Lord is an all-wise and all-powerful Ruler; and we will be content to let him serve himself with our *little* or *much*, just as he prefers, when he can have either. It is when we wish to gain praise of men, or self-applause, that we are resolved to have the Lord serve only with the *much*."

"That is new to me; and I'll think of it while I go get a pitcher of water to fill your kettle, Aunt Anna."

Naomi went down to the street-hydrant for the water. A thin, pale young man was just turning from it: it was the young man who had pawned the pictures. A boy sat on the curb-stone, sailing straws in the gutter.

"Do you know who that man is?" asked Naomi.

"Yees," drawled the boy.

"What is his name?"

"Puddun n' tame," said the Spring-street Ishmael with a leer.

Naomi walked back to her friend's room disgusted, but she had seen the stranger enter the opposite house.

"I saw the very young man that pawned the pictures, Aunt Anna!" she exclaimed. "He went in opposite with a pail. Do find out about him: I just know he's got a sick wife, though Hagar is just as sure it's a mother."

"How much dreaming is in young heads!" said Aunt Anna.

"But you know you might be just such a true friend to them as you were to father and mother. Do, Aunt Anna, find out all about it."

"All about what, child? But sure enough, I have seen a very decent-looking stranger

about there. I will ask a woman I know on the first floor."

"I hear Timothy coming," said Naomi. "I will set the table for you, Aunt Anna, while he reads 'Saint's Rest' to you."

When the lamps in the street were first lighted, Timothy prepared to take Naomi home. Timothy was Aunt Anna's half-brother, and took a much wiser and more fatherly interest in Naomi than her uncle did. It was partly to be near Naomi, and watch over her in the turmoil of Chatham Street, that Timothy had taken his small business as a watch-mender down to the neighborhood of the "Three Golden Balls." The numerous pawnbrokers, however, kept him busy mending unredeemed pledges of jewelry.

Timothy had more worldly and less heavenly wisdom than Aunt Anna. As he walked home with his young protégé, he told her plainly that she must expect to find the

presiding spirits of the shop a set of rascals. This offended Naomi, who thought it a reflection on her uncle.

This did not daunt Timothy, however, who told her he had his eye on Daniel, who was a villain, and she must treat him accordingly.

"I'm afraid they're a thievish set," said Timothy.

Entering the parlor at her uncle's, Naomi found Judith entertaining a pawnbroker named Abraham, Hagar asleep on the lounge, Daniel and Simon playing toss-up at the table, and her uncle watching them.

"Heads, I wins!" cried Daniel. "Mr. Simpson, which do you bet on: back one of us; down with a fivepence!"

"Vait till you trows," said our uncle: "ven I sees vich side is up, I bets; I always goes mit te vinning side, eh, Naomi?"

After her peaceful sabbath, this was a rude,

disturbing scene to Naomi. She went to the lounge to rouse Hagar to go to bed.

“Sits you down, Naomi; ve vill have a tish of oysters. Simon shalt fetch tem from von cook-shop!” cried Mr. Simpson.

“I had rather go up stairs, uncle.”

“Ish sick, or sleepy, Naomi?”

“No: but this is my sabbath, and I had rather read quietly up stairs.”

“What dull times you Christians have!” cried Judith.

“Go vay, ten,” said our uncle: “I vill have no oysters. Ist von dull girl, Naomi.”





CHAPTER III.

NAOMI'S EYRIE.



ACCORDING to her promise, Naomi spent the greater part of Monday amid the intricacies of a bias-dress and an opera-hood for her aunt and cousin. She worked in the little parlor ; and Hagar, occupying her chair by the window, talked to her cousin in her usual fantastic way.

“ Don't you wish, Naomi, that we lived in a great castle in a wood, where the walls were all hung with tapestry, and every thing had been there for three hundred years. I like

old things if they are grand, and *stay*. But here, Naomi, things are old, and some are grand ; but every once and a while they all rush off to the auction-room, just as I get acquainted with them. Now, there's that lounge, Naomi : I make stories to myself about it ; and there is a beautiful young lady, that is just as good, and very sick, and she talks so sweet about going to heaven ; and close behind her I see standing that angel that spoke to Hagar in the wilderness, and he tells her about that river up in Jerusalem above. Now, Naomi, isn't it a real shame, that, before that girl dies, the lounge will be dragged off to the auction, and, of course, the angel will be gone too."

Naomi was kneeling on the floor, shears in hand, cutting her aunt's black silk, brocaded with a yellow leaf, into the proper biases. She looked to the lounge, but saw neither sick girl nor angel. "Because God has

crippled your feet, Hagar, he has given to your mind stronger wings than to mine. You see more in the world of fancy than I do in the world of New York," she said.

Here our uncle came in.

"Comes to te shops, Naomi!" he said: "tem dumb boys have got dings so mix up, you comes help tein old uncle sthraiten tem."

"Naomi promised to work for us to-day," said Judith, coming in very frowzy and half dressed, as she generally was in the morning, her shoes down at the heel, a soiled calico wrapper hanging loosely about her portly frame.

"Vell, Naomi?" said Mr. Simpson impatiently.

"Wouldn't it do just as well if I helped you to-morrow, uncle? If not, I'll speak to aunt about waiting."

"I can vait," said our uncle, seating him-

self on the arm of Hagar's chair, and pulling her ears. "Te vimmen vould not vait if te roof fall in for tere haste. Vat ish te use of dress, — dress all te times. I veres my coat till it veres out mitout no fixing, eh, Naomi?"

"I'm sure," said Judith, "that you wouldn't expect mother and me to look worse than our friends. You must surely want us dressed like folks, instead of nuns or Quakers."

"Dat ish true," said Mr. Simpson: "you two ish my valking sign-boards; and it is vell to have you gilt and fine. Vill help me to-morrow, Naomi?"

"Yes, uncle. If Judith will run the machine after I get the work basted, I can do all I promised to-day."

"I'll get your hood done, Judith, if you'll sew."

"Well," said Judith lazily, going to the dining-room, and beginning to thread and dust a sewing-machine.

“Ich von gut girl, Naomi; shall see te pooks, and learn te vays of pisness, and vill be a pawn-proker deinself some tay. Ish ash gut ash a man, Naomi: ist not like te vimmen at all.”

This was unusual praise; and Naomi was sure some new demand was coming. She, however, replied with spirit. “I hate pawn-broking, uncle: it is not fair.”

“No, it ish not,” said Solomon; “te law and duffers nearly ruins us poor pawn-prokers. We gets out of bocket every tay, Naomi.”

“I know better than that, uncle, or you would not keep in the business a week.”

“Ah, knows dein uncle has von eye to business!”

“You give only about one third or quarter value on things, uncle, when you know they will never be redeemed, and then you sell them for full value; and only to see what an interest you get on your money!”

“Dat ish vat I likes,” said Solomon laughing.

“But it is the worst kind of usury,” cried Naomi valiantly; “and no Jew should be a usurer, for see what the law and the prophets say about taking usury. Your own holy books condemn you, uncle.”

“I does not care von fig for te law nor te prophets, Naomi: I cares only for piles mon-ish. But I haves read te holy books, chilt; and I finds mein father Jacob did take such percentage for doing Laban’s pusiness, ash in twenty years it vash more nor all te principal. Vat ish my vays to that, Naomi?”

“And then, uncle,” said Naomi, still cutting and basting, “you take pawns, even beds and clothes, when you know the people will use all the money for whiskey, and leave their families freezing!”

“Ish viser nor te laws, Naomi? They does not tell me I must finds if mine cushtomers likes visky more nor pread and cheese.”

“And uncle,” continued Naomi, still bringing up her accusations, “I have seen a law that requires that what unredeemed pawns bring at a sale above the money lent, legal interest and costs, must go to those who left the pawns, and I never saw any body get back any thing.”

“Nor tid I,” said our shrewd uncle. “If I finds von such, Naomi, vill sent him to Par-num for a show: he would be more curiosity nor von great sea-shepment, mein girl!”

“Well,” said Naomi, “I wish you felt, ‘Better is a little with the fear of the Lord’ than great gains from pawnbroking as it works in Chatham street.”

“I must go to mein shops,” said our uncle, who had seemed to regard his niece’s spirited attack as an excellent joke. “Tem tree Hebrew children I left alone down tere vill get ash lazy ash can pe if I am away.”

“Naomi,” said Hagar, when her father had

gone, "don't you wish we lived where every thing was our very own, and nobody was poor nor bad nor sorry?"

"That will all be when we get to heaven," said Naomi.

"I read such sweet verses this morning: 'There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.'"

"That is good news for me," said Hagar.

"And this verse too," continued Naomi: "'Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.'"

"What must we overcome?" asked Hagar.

"We must overcome evil with good, as to others; and as to ourselves, we must overcome our love of sin; and as to Satan, we must overcome his temptations," said Naomi, thus setting forth the claims of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

That was a busy day; but after supper Hagar said, "Come, Naomi, stop work for a while, and let us go to our seat. The evenings will get so cold we can't go much longer."

"Naomi, you promised my hood," said Judith.

"I will work on it to-night and in the morning," said Naomi. "It is most done."

Naomi wrapped Hagar up in a large shawl, put on her own cloak, and helped the child up stairs.

They entered one of the front rooms. In the dim twilight of early evening, it was a grim, queer place. The ceiling had gathered the blackness of many years: cobwebs festooned the walls. Here towered a high-post bedstead, keeping ward over bales of matting and carpeting; here were ancient sideboards, where once glass and wine had shone, now covered with dust, haunted by spiders, or resigned to the revelries of mice. Chairs

that had held their own at weddings and funerals, and social gatherings, were piled along the sides of the room ; pictures that had drifted to the pawnbroker, wrecks of some commercial tempest ; mirrors, tarnished and marred, that once had smiled back to beauty, or frowned in quick accord to wealth, — all these had found their way to Solomon Moses Simpson ; and he had some secret alchemy for converting them all to gold. Solomon had an adage, “ Every ting ist gut for someting ; ” and he dealt in a wider diversity of articles than his brothers in trade.

Through these piles of goods and chattels went Naomi and Hagar to the window. It commanded a view of the street better than could be obtained elsewhere in the house. To this window-sill Naomi had had a strong seat fastened, and furnished it with a stray carriage-cushion. In the summer evenings she would throw the window up ; but now

she had carefully covered the cracks with lising. She lifted Hagar to her place, and sat down beside her. Before them, on either hand, Chatham Street and the Bowery stretched long vistas of glittering light. The street-cars flashed along with colored lamps ; omnibuses, hacks, and private carriages rolled up and down, rattling over the pavements, and lending their share to the general brightness. In the houses, the windows nearest the ground freely displayed their brilliant wares ; while through casements higher up they could see the artisan at his labors, the woman at her needle, the mother by the cradle,—all the thousand scenes that the full light of day had hidden were now revealed by the treacherous gas.

“ Dear me,” said Hagar, “ isn’t it splendid ! It is like a panorama, and better than a magic lantern ! Just look at all the gold balls, — three times nine, twenty-seven, — Naomi : only think,

so many things to be pawned! And then all the other places in the city too. I remember the shop we lived in way down, down ever so far: how the folks would come in to pawn clothes! I've seen men take their coats off to sell. Mother and Judith used to sponge and press, and do over, and sell them for new. And then the dresses that came,—ladies' maids, and actresses, and ballet-dancers, and even beggars,—and such a fuss of ripping and dyeing! I'm glad we ain't there now. Say, Naomi, do you know these shops with the balls out always make me think of the stories I have read of folks selling Satan their souls?"

"I'm afraid there's a deal of soul-selling of another kind," said Naomi. "It began in Eden, as the Books of Moses tell you."

"Yes," said Hagar: "when Adam sold himself and everybody else for an apple."

Naomi smiled a little. "Who bought back all our race from the adversary, Hagar?"

"Messiah is the Deliverer," said Hagar.

"Jesus of Nazareth bought us back with his own life," said Naomi earnestly.

"Yes," said Hagar, dreamily; "and I like what your last part of the Bible tells about him so much. It's nicer than what is in the books father takes in the shop, only Judith don't like me to read it. I like those other books, though, Naomi. There was the "Children of the Abbey:" why, I dreamed of that all night; and I felt so sorry that father carried the books off before I knew how it turned out about Paul and Virginia; and there was "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," Naomi: the folks in that were awfully stupid, and the nice girl wasn't nearly so nice as you are. Still, Naomi, after I've read those books I feel tired and cross, and not as peaceful as I do after reading the holy books, or your part of the Bible."

"I wouldn't read them," said Naomi:

“there are real folks that it is better to think about than the make-up people in those books. See that old woman with the bag on her back, stumbling along in front of Abraham’s: she has spent all day poking in sweepings and dust-barrels. And over there in the Bowery, do you see our old man with one leg: we’ve seen him there every night for a year. I’m sorry for him a little; but, if he didn’t look so wicked, I’d be sorry for him more.”

“See the women going along with bundles of work! I know that little woman wants to take the cars, only she hasn’t money to pay,” said Hagar eagerly.

“And only look at the poor little children running the streets so late: you and I never had to do that, Hagar; we are better off than most.”

But just here happened the strangest event in all their observations from their eyrie in the

second story. A policeman came along the Bowery, and grasped the one-legged beggar. There was a small crowd gathered at once: but the officer kept a little space cleared; and another wearer of a star coming up, Naomi and Hagar, looking eagerly, saw the beggar so manipulated that in a few seconds he stood on two as sound legs as any man, and was then marched off vociferating and struggling between the two policemen, all the small boys in the streets hooting after him.

“Why, Naomi! Just look: that is more than a fairy story!” cried Hagar.

“To think he was making believe all this while,” said Naomi indignantly. “I told you he looked bad.”

“I wish there were no such people in the world: there won’t be in Jerusalem when it is restored. I have heard the rabbi say, that, when the holy city was taken away from the Gentiles, there would be none in it poor or

deformed or sick ; but that all should be as rich as kings, as holy as priests, and even the little children as wise as prophets," said Hagar.

"That all might have been if they had not rejected Messiah," said Naomi ; "but I do not think God promises to restore the city where they crucified the Lord of glory. It is only in heaven that you will find such things as the rabbi promises, and there not just as he means them."

"But the Jews refuse Christ, and you say we can only get to heaven through him. Will there be no Jews in heaven, Naomi ? "

"Yes, indeed. God will give them a better mind. The Testament promises that in heaven will be some out of all the tribes of Israel. Now, you had better come to bed, Hagar : you'll get cold."

In Naomi's room was a small stove, with kindling and fuel arranged all ready to light. Naomi lit the fire, and, when Hagar was warm,

put her to bed : when this was done, she read in the Bible and prayed, as usual. She did this when Hagar was in bed, because the child's malformed limb prevented her from kneeling down.

Naomi then drew her little table near the stove, brought up their favorite seat,— a barrel-chair which she had made herself, and which was therefore untainted by the shop,— and, being comfortably established, took up scarlet wool and Judith's newly-begun hood, and went to work, meanwhile singing the Christian's home-songs of Jerusalem above ; lulled by which melodies, Hagar fell asleep.

As Naomi worked and sung, she meditated ; and by and by the song came more slowly and brokenly from her lips, and presently meditation superseded song altogether. She was thinking of our uncle and his business. It was not the least use to argue with our uncle. He was not, indeed, a chevalier with-

out fear, and without reproach ; but he was without shame, and invulnerable to reason.

“ It is a mean business,” said Naomi ; “ but then it is not illegal. It’s a cheating business, and yet only in the custom of the trade, and as the law allows. Of course, uncle wouldn’t be dishonest. Uncle Solomon is very good to me, and would be unhappy if I left him ; and I ought not to leave poor little Hagar. Then I suppose I could not take care of myself anywhere else ; though I would not be afraid if I thought it was my duty to go. The Bible says not to sit in the seat of scorers, and to withdraw ourselves from all who walk disorderly ; and I’m sure here they scorn the Saviour, and are disorderly even as to their own faith ; and yet it seems just as if God had put me here. I mean to speak to Timothy about it.”

Naomi did, indeed, speak to Timothy about her position the next afternoon, when she took Judith’s ear-ring to him to be mended. When

she had stated the case much as she had discussed it with herself, the old man whistled and worked away at the ear-ring a while ; then taking a small Bible from a drawer at his elbow, read this verse, " I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil ;" and made this comment : " Stay there if you can keep your garments white, Naomi."

However, we left Naomi knitting and thinking. She worked until twelve o'clock : the house was quiet, and she was preparing for bed, when Hagar woke, and wanted a drink.

Naomi belted a long, dark wrapper about her, flung her hair, which she was brushing, back over her shoulders, and, lamp and mug in hand, descended to the kitchen. A light shining under the shop-door made her start with fear of fire ; and, throwing it open, she stood face to face with Daniel. The trap-door was open, and a light came up through it.

Daniel wore a paper-cap like a printer, a leathern apron like a shoemaker, and Simon's lantern was in his hand.

"What is the matter?" demanded Naomi.

"Nothing at all. I am just going to bed," replied Daniel coolly.

Naomi regarded him suspiciously; but as he shut the trap-door, and blew out his lantern, she turned away. "What is that light left in the cellar?" she asked, looking back.

"To scare thieves and rats," replied Daniel.

Early next morning, Naomi took her uncle aside, and told him what she had seen the previous night. He laughed and nodded. "Do not trouble its little head mit such tings," he said. "Daniel ish going to act in the theatre, and he was only practising his part of von of de drie Heprew children in the fiery furnace."

"You know I do not believe *that*, uncle,

any more than his story of a light to scare rats," said Naomi.

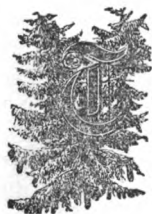
"Vell, you does not pelieve nothing elsh, it ish von consolation," said our uncle with non-chalance.





CHAPTER IV.

OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER.



THE Prince of Dreamers tells us that upon Mount Innocent walked one Godly-man, upon whom two of the children of the Evil One cast dirt, which presently fell off, and left his garments no less spotless than before. I suppose Mr. Godly-man did not go out of his way to walk near the dirt. He walked where the Lord set him, and walked heavenward.

So in this Babel of mammon and pleasure-worship, amid the dust and ashes of this fam-

ily of our uncle, walked Naomi, pure and true.

It is not time. nor place nor circumstance that makes our Christianity. The flames of the fiery furnace could not so closely wrap around the three captives in Babylon, that the Son of God could not come close beside them; the troops of Pharaoh could not so closely press upon the heels of flying Israel, but nearer still towered up the cloudy pillar, whence the Lord looked forth. The Lord sets his children sometimes in hard places; but they need not therefore fall: his hand could clasp his pilgrim as fast and as sustainingly on the rugged slopes of the Hill Difficulty, as in the smooth extent of the land of Beulah. How often do people cry, "If I were only differently situated, I would do and be better; if things were thus and so, it would be so easy to be a Christian"! My dear friends, never, never. Your theory is an utter fallacy: where God puts you is

just the very place where you can and should be a Christian. If our Naomi had left a Christian home to live where her sabbath was profaned, her God denied, and probity and charity were below par, we would argue illy for her future; but in just these circumstances God placed her, and there she grew in the Christian life.

"I'm so inexperienced; and in such a home I am afraid I'll be a discredit to the name of Christian," said Naomi to her counsellor, Timothy.

"The Lord never puts too great difficulties in anybody's path," said Timothy: "keep your garments white."

"But can one touch pitch, and not be defiled?" Aunt Anna says."

"No more they can't touch it with their hands, child, for *that* they've no business to do; but our righteousness is a dress of Christ's make, that pitch won't stick to. I tell you,

Naomi, if your spiritual dress has got the true Zion stamp on it, nothing from without will blacken it."

"But from within?" said Naomi.

"Yes, yes: there's where the evil comes from; but prayer is a powerful good bleaching-powder for that kind of clothes."

Among other matters that Naomi laid before Timothy, standing beside his chair as he worked, was her encounter with Daniel in the shop at night: she also repeated her uncle's explanation.

Timothy worked and whistled for some five minutes. "Naomi, did this touch you in any way? can it harm you?"

"Why, I suppose not, unless he sets the house on fire," said Naomi; "but I'm afraid he'll deceive and injure uncle, somehow."

"Your uncle is old enough to take care of himself."

"But we are, in some sort, each other's

keepers, and oughtn't to be selfish," said Naomi.

"Naomi," said Timothy deliberately, "every thing that concerns yourself, your happiness or sorrow, your present or future, your right and wrong doing, you may tell me in welcome; and I'll advise you to the best of my ability, being that you are a girl without any father and mother. But I never want you to tell me any thing about your uncle, unless it touches upon you also."

Having said which to Naomi, Timothy remarked to himself, "The house of our Uncle Simpson may tumble some time, and I don't want her to think she helped pull out the foundations."

At breakfast the morning after Hagar and Naomi had seen the arrest on the Bowery, Daniel said, "Old Josey's game's up. He's been playing cripple on the Bowery this year past, with one leg strapped up; and yester-

day they found him out, and will take him to the island."

"How was that?" asked Simon.

"His mate peached on him," said Daniel.

"He shoulth have pin a Jew: Jews do not peech on von anoter," said Solomon.

"That is true," said Daniel: "they hang together, and so grow rich."

Naomi had, until her seventeenth^o year, gone to a good school: she wrote a fair clear hand, and was an excellent accountant. Her uncle found it very convenient to have her help him in keeping his books. Naomi, who labored under a supposition that irregularities in business were always connected somehow with the ledgers and daybooks, finding her uncle's all straight, was quite confident that he was acting at least legally.

Naomi now went frequently to help in the shop, and got acquainted with many who were regular customers. The woman who

had pawned the flatirons seemed to think nothing of that kind of business: one day it would be her best bonnet and shawl, to get money for fuel; then the irons to be able to buy soap or starch for her laundry-work; then her best bed-quilt as soon as the irons were out.

"She does not look like a drinking woman," said Naomi to her uncle.

"She dosh not trink; put it ish von day's feast ven te monish ist in, ant ten it ist famine till more dosh come: she hast no judgment, Naomi."

The woman's story was a little different. "People put off paying me: and then I wash by the month; and this week one of the ladies put in three dozen new collars; and of course, as she would not pay me extra for them, it put me out of pocket, doing so much starching."

"That was very unjust," said Naomi.

“There is plenty of injustice put upon us,” said the laundress. “Some folks seem to forget we’re the same flesh and blood.”

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor,” thought Naomi: “the Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble.”

On Saturday, the young man who lived near Aunt Anna came in, and pawned a small gold ring: he received less than half value for it, and went away more melancholy than before.

The woman who had brought the blanket, and who had redeemed it, now came in with a man’s coat.

“Don’t take it, uncle: it is her husband’s coat, I know; and she is pawning it secretly to get money to be drunk to-morrow,” urged Naomi.

“It ish none of mein pusiness, Naomi. I take vat tey prings: it ish her own lookout. mein girl.”

Later in the day, a miserable, bloated man came in, and pawned a kettle and frying-pan.

“It ish te huspant of de vomen ash prought te coat, Naomi: now vill boths have ein sphree, I dinks.”

“Oh, uncle! how can you?” cried Naomi.

“Vy not? te pots ant pans vill pring monish.”

“But these wretched creatures vill drink and fight and riot — only to think of it!”

“Cain vash von sharp lawyer, Naomi, ven he saysh ‘Am I mein proter’s keepers?’ Nein, Naomi: I ish not mein proter’s keepers, neither mein sister’s keepers; it ist ast mooch ast I canst do to keeps meinself.”

“But we *are* each other’s keepers, uncle: if every human being just went on for himself what would we all do; we need other people’s help.”

“Jews vill help Jews, Naomi: ve are von race alone. I say like Tavid in te Pook of

Psalms apout te Gentiles, 'Let tem pe confounded.' ”

“You have read the holy books a good deal, uncle ; but you twist them up so they do not do you any good. Rabbi Israel studies the holy books, and see how different they make him.”

“He ish almost ash gut ash 'ein Christian ; eh, Naomi ? ” said our uncle, laughing.

“Yes: he is a real good man,” replied Naomi.

“Petter nor dein uncle ; eh, Naomi ? Vell, chilt, I improves ; but the vorlt vash not made in von tay, Naomi. Te rabbi, mein chilt, keeps to te holy pooks, and looksh for his rewart ven te Holy City ish restored. Now, Naomi, dein uncle ish von Hebrew of te vorlt : he dinks ash New York in te hant is vorth more ash te Holy City in te push.”

On Saturday afternoon, about five o'clock, Naomi asked Timothy to go with her to see old Mrs. Roberts.

As they went along, Timothy bought a beef-steak. "Since when did you begin to board yourself?" asked Naomi.

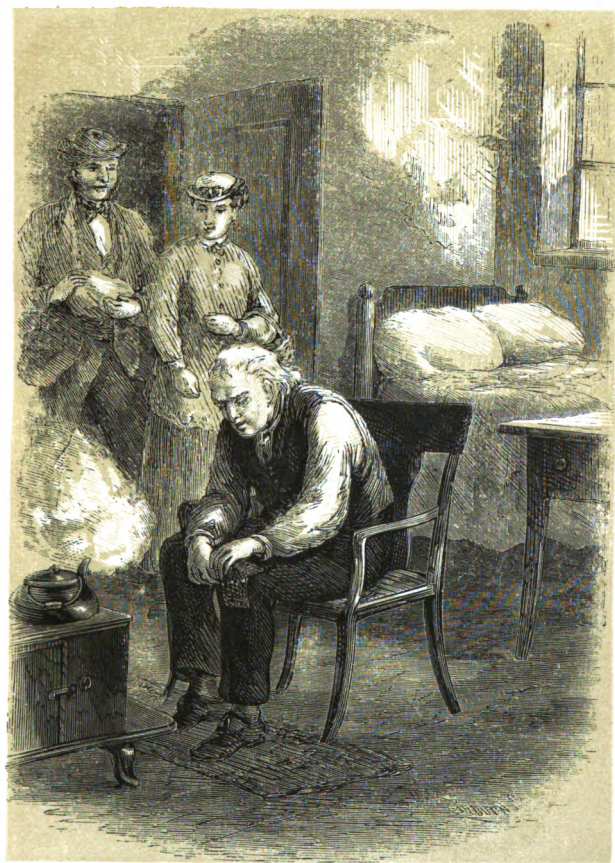
"I'm putting out a little of my money to usury in the bank of heaven," replied Timothy.

They found Mrs. Roberts out; but the old man sat in his big chair by the stove.

"My old lady's gone home with her work," he said. "When we were young, I worked for her; now times are changed, and she works for me."

"Find it pretty tedious sitting here?" asked Timothy.

"Sumat so," replied the old man; "but I keep in mind that a man had patience to wait a long while by the pool, as it tells in the Testament, and the Lord came to him after a while; and so by and by the Lord will come for me. Likewise, I don't sit here most of the time."



"THEY FOUND MRS. ROBERTS OUT." — Page 96.

“Lie in bed?” suggested Timothy.

“No: I’m feeble-like in my mind; got my head hurt ’long with the rest of me; and I wanders. Most of the time I’m a boy or a likely lad again. I see the old folks and friends and places like as they used to be afore I growed old. I don’t feel like as I was, just this old wrecked-up old man in this chair at all. I sits and hums and laughs, and the old lady she sews for us both.”

Naomi was listening eagerly to these “remarks by the old man,” when, thinking she heard a door open, she looked about. Timothy was very near the old lady’s cupboard, and perhaps had just shut the door. While Naomi was considering it, the old man said quite brightly, “I see you do that, — I see you; and God he did too. We don’t often get meat; but I see you put that ere beefsteak in our cupboard.”

Presently the old lady came in, carrying a

small basket, wherein were several tiny parcels.

"I got my pay to-night, my dear," she said ;
"and I settled up for the rent, and bought the old man a morsel of tea. It does me good to see you, my dear : old folks get lonesome when left to themselves ; and we haven't had no young faces about since our girl died."

"I want you to go up to Ewings's store with me, Timothy, will you ?" asked Naomi when they left Mrs. Roberts.

"What now ?" grumbled Timothy : "some worsted fandangoes for yourself, or a new errand for Judith ?"

"Neither," said Naomi ; "but I saw they advertised for nice knitters and crochet-workers, in 'The Times' this morning, and I want to see if I can get some work."

"Doesn't your uncle give you what's right ?" asked Timothy.

"He gives me my board and clothes ; but I

hardly ever get a penny of my own. I had a dollar for New Year's last month ; * but that is all the money I have had for a year. I want something of my own, so I can give something away once in a while."

"What will your folks say to this, though ?"

"They won't care," replied Naomi. "I shall do it evenings and early mornings in my room, and not take up my time from them. I can't do much about the house anyway; for aunt don't like Rose interfered with. I know we are very untidy, and that it is a duty to be neat and clean; but I cannot make our house so, only my own room."

Said Timothy, "If you can't do all you want, do all you can."

While Naomi and Timothy go home, we make an entire change in the scene of our story, and go in at the tenement-house opposite Aunt Anna's.

* The Jews' New Year comes in September.

There is a small, tidy room in the third story, with plain white curtains at the windows, a clean carpetless floor, a clock and a few books on a shelf, a grate with a little fire in it, and seated in a large old-fashioned chair, and wrapped in a shawl, a young woman, evidently an invalid. She sat with her thin hands clasped on her lap, and her face overcast with care. As she sat there, the day darkening about her into night, her husband came in, — the same young man we have mentioned several times before. He sat down near his wife, and took from a paper a small chicken, and from his pocket an orange.

“I hope you did not buy those out of your wages, James,” said the wife.

“No : these are from — other money.”

“What you got from your uncle ?”

“Yes.”

“He must have sent you a good deal.”

The young man turned away to hide his troubled face.

"Did you pay up our rent and coal bill, James?" asked the young woman, the cares of their poverty pressing very heavily upon her.

"Yes," said James; and from his despondency added, "and have only twenty cents left to last till next Saturday."

"Oh, dear!" sighed the wife.

"However," said the young man, "I see we have plenty of meal and potatoes; so don't let us worry. I'll cook this chicken for you, or part of it." So under his wife's directions, as this was new work to him, James put tea to draw, cooked some porridge, and fried a small portion of the chicken.

"I wish that nice old lady would come in again while you are home, James. I know you would like her."

"I don't want to see her, even if I would like her: it mortifies me so to live cooped up here and so poor."

"Yes: but then she acted so good and motherly. Mrs. Quade is neighborly; but she is so different."

"Yes: different from us; it is terrible to have such neighbors."

"But we must have washing done, James; and I told her, if she would do it, I would do some sewing for her. I can sew a little while at a time, I guess; and she agreed to it."

James Waters sat down, and covered his face with his hands: in his estimation they had sunk very low.

"James," said his wife, "your tea is boiling over, and the chicken is burning."

It is often a great blessing, that there are little cares of life to draw us from great troubles. James began to attend to his cooking, and set the tea-table, when there was a knock at the door. "Come in!" cried James petulantly, mortified again at visitors while he was doing housework, and thinking it was

Mrs. Quade of the first floor. The door opened for Aunt Anna.

"O James, this is Mrs. Vail! Good evening, Mrs. Vail: you see my husband has to be housekeeper while I am laid up."

"Good evening, Mr. Waters," said Aunt Anna. "There are few men so fortunate as to be able to do these things handily, as you do."

"I hope there are few so unfortunate as to have to do them," said James a little sourly; and his wife looked distressed.

"It is very new to us, anyhow," said James. "My wife has been used to live comfortably among her own people; and now, between a scoundrel of a landlord disappointing me of a nice set of rooms by the Central Park, and my having to take up with this place, and work different from what I was brought up to, it goes pretty tough."

"My husband is a wood-engraver," said Mrs. Waters.

"I came in, Mr. Waters, because I mean to be neighborly, and to tell you not to worry about your wife while you are away; for I hope to drop in to see her every day, and she is to send for me if she wants any thing."

"Thank you," said James awkwardly.

"And I'm going to give myself the pleasure of bringing her a pitcher of nice soup to-morrow. I'm sure she will relish it."

This sounded like charity to James, who said quickly, "Oh! but she will not need it. I am going to make her soup of some of this chicken to-morrow."

"Yes: I daresay," said Aunt Anna; "but then I have had sixty years more experience in housekeeping than you have, and your soup will not be so good as mine."

She then bade them good evening, having a very sensible regard to their supper. On her way home, Aunt Anna was laying plans how she could help these young people, who were both poor and proud.

Aunt Anna was living on an annuity she had received from a gentleman for whom she had kept house many years: she had enough for her humble wants; and, by good management, she was able to help her poorer neighbors.

One of Naomi's first inquiries the next day was, if Aunt Anna had "found out" about the young man; and she accompanied the question with the information that he had pawned a ring.

"I thought he had visited you again; for I saw an orange on the table last evening, and he was cooking a bit of chicken for his wife. She mentioned having had some grapes and lemons a week ago, that had been 'so nice:' he doubtless pawns what few treasures they possess to get her suitable food. She has had a fever, and is now kept from getting well by low diet and anxiety."

"I do wish I could see her: is she pleasant?"

is she pretty? and do you suppose they are good folks?"

"She is young, pleasant, and pretty," said Aunt Anna; "but I fear they are not Christians. As you are so anxious to see her, I do not know as I can do better than to make you the bearer of a pitcher of soup which I took the liberty to offer them. Very likely the sight of a young face like yours may do her good."

In Aunt Anna's partial judgment, Naomi's presence was sure to be a blessing to every one.

Naomi found Mrs. Waters alone, sitting as usual by the fire, looking sad and careworn. The young girl found no difficulty in introducing herself. And having put the soup away in the closet, she stopped for a few minutes to talk.

"I am so sorry you are sick, and shut up in your room, it is such a lovely day. It is cold;

but the air is delightful : and then it must be so hard to have to stay away from church week after week. I know nothing of it from experience, for I am always well."

"Yes: we generally went to church at home; but here I don't care to go out; indeed, I do not feel as if I cared for any thing."

"That is because you are sick," said Naomi soothingly.

"It made me sick, and keeps me sick," said Mrs. Waters wearily. "It is so hard to live in such a place as this, and away from all one's friends. We have been disappointed in all our plans since we came here. Luck has been against us."

"There is no such thing as luck," replied Naomi gravely.

"Well, fortune or fate, or whatever you call it. James was deceived about our rooms, about his business, about the price of living;

and now he has to do porter's work in place of wood-engraving: his chance is poor."

"Do not call it chance or fate," said Naomi: "a good Providence is over all."

"I would be glad if Providence were less hard on us," said the young woman. "Our troubles have made me sick, and I keep fearing they will drive James crazy. He has gone out for a little walk: now we are such poor company for each other. He is fond of reading; but we can get no books here."

Naomi looked earnestly at the speaker. At once she seemed to see the course of those two baffled and discouraged hearts. They knew no help or comfort higher than themselves. They were going down, down. Where might their way end. Naomi, with her firm health and elastic spirits, saw clearly the apathy into which Mrs. Waters had sunk. And Naomi's was a sensitive nature, quick to sympathize, ready to plan, firm to execute.

"Yes," she said: "I have often heard of men driven to suicide, opium, poison, strong drink, robbery, or gambling, by troubles such as these."

Mrs. Waters leaned back in her chair, the muscles of her face twitching a little, and growing paler than before, as Naomi thus syllabled her own forebodings.

"And," continued Naomi, "don't you think your illness is one of his chief troubles?"

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Waters.

"Then if you could only cheer up, and get better; if you could look forward to being well, and think of many things you could do when you are strong,—one of the heaviest burdens would soon be gone. There are a great many things here for a woman to do. I know one, a real old lady too, who supports herself and her crippled husband."

"I should think she would die of discouragement."

"No; she is as cheerful as can be; but then she is a Christian."

"Does that make a difference?" began Mrs. Waters. "But there, there comes James."

"I must go," said Naomi: "it is getting nearly church-time."

James Waters came in; and as he opened his door, and stood face to face with Naomi, the very girl to whom he had pawned his ring and pictures, his countenance expressed absolute consternation.

"A young lady from Mrs. Vail," explained his wife, as he recovered himself, and came forward.

"I am going now: it is church-time," said Naomi. Then, with her own impulsiveness, she gave her hand to Mrs. Waters, and, bending over, kissed her, saying, "Cheer up now, and get well."

James held open the door, and then, mum-

bling something about "seeing the young lady down stairs," went with her in silence until they reached the lowest landing. Then looking much distressed, he stammered, "I hope — I suppose — a temporary emergency — a sudden necessity, I am afraid my wife might be worried" —

"If you mean," said Naomi, looking him steadily in the face, about our shop, of course I have not mentioned it before your wife, and do not expect to: it is no affair of mine certainly. But our shop is a poor place to get help from, Mr. Waters. Our uncle is a hard-hearted sort of uncle: it is his business to be so."

"Yes, thank you. We have no room now for those trifles; and my wife's illness — well, I mean to take them back shortly," stammered on James.

"Oh! if you could go all over our shop, you would see what hundreds have been dis-

appointed in just such hopes," said Naomi quickly. "Your wife says you like to read: perhaps Aunt Anna could lend you something to read aloud."

The young man hesitated: he had a foolish pride, that in his present fretted state urged him to refuse the simplest favor; but he had grace enough to say, after a little pause, "If you had a history or a good story, it might shorten the day a little."

He therefore went over with her to Aunt Anna's door, and, refusing to go in, waited until Naomi could find the book. After a hasty consultation with Aunt Anna, the young girl returned with a square copy of "Pilgrim's Progress," carefully wrapped up.

"I don't know as you will like this; but it is a handsome English copy, and has very fine colored engravings: as you are an artist, you will be pleased with them, I am sure." So she gave it to him, and turned away without telling him what the book was.

James went home and unfolded the volume. " 'Pilgrim's Progress,' as I live ! " he cried. What a sell ! but, hullo ! these pictures *are* fine : see this one, Ellen ! and what type and paper ! I daresay it cost half a guinea. He turned over the leaves, and his eye fell on the words, " Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment ; and I find I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second. "

Then said Evangelist, " Why not willing to die, since this life is attended with so many evils ? "

" Suppose you read it all, James, " said his wife, as he read these words aloud. " It is so dull sitting here silent all day, and I'd like to know how those pictures come in. "

So James sat down to read the fascinating tale of Christian's journey to the Land of Light ; and wiled by the quaint, strong language, they went on with the story until the

morning had passed away, and the clock surprised them by pointing to the hour of noon.

Meanwhile, Aunt Anna went to church, and, coming home, discoursed about the Christian's duty to his fellow-men, and made out a case very different from that established by Cain and our Chatham-street uncle.





CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG DISCIPLE.



FEW weeks before the commencement of this chronicle, Naomi had united with the church.

It was a conversation that she had held with Aunt Anna on that occasion, that had set her to look for some Christian work. Until then she had been content to fulfil what she considered her own private and special duties, and get along as well as she could.

“That is never the way to grow,” said

Aunt Anna: "you must take hold of something outside. The church in this world is the church militant: we must make war on Satan's kingdom somehow. What would you think of a soldier who in the enemy's country did nothing but stay in his tent, eat and sleep, and read his book of tactics?"

Timothy's remark meant the same thing, but was differently expressed. "If you're going to be a Christian, Naomi, don't be a dead-head."

It was well for Naomi, that, in these early days, she had some experienced friends to counsel and encourage her: her sabbaths spent in Aunt Anna's quiet room, going with her to church, teaching a class of little girls in Sabbath school, or, when the day was nearly ended, listening to the words of experience gathered from the long years of Aunt Anna's life, were of her chief blessings. "Self-examination and watchfulness, Naomi,

are needful, and of advantage," said Aunt Anna; "but we must not watch ourselves so closely that we forget to watch Christ. Mostly, however, people neglect to watch either themselves or Christ as they ought. It is well to examine, as one does in a drawing lesson, — first the pattern to see its excellence; then our work to see where it needs alteration, and how close we can come to the pattern."

"There are a many Christian cripples, child," she said again, "and I don't want you to be one of them. In the spiritual, as in the natural family, there are the maimed and diseased; and out of the abundance of the Father's love, I believe they are dear to his heart, though they ain't much credit to him, poor creatures."

Naomi's scheme of earning money for charity was well approved by Aunt Anna.

"I want to have something to give to the

poor," said Naomi. "And there are the Sunday-school contributions: I cannot ask my class to give if I never bring any thing myself; and then I wish to give when collections are taken up in church. Though," she added after a pause, "a great many who are much better able to than I am don't give to them. Miss Callen lets the plate pass by unnoticed half the time; and *she* is rich."

"Now, child," said Aunt Anna, "there's a fault you must cut off at once. You are looking at the wrong pattern entirely, forgetting the great Master, and taking heed to the work of some poor learner like yourself. You'll never have any comfort in charity, Naomi, if you measure your giving by those about you. Just look to Christ, who never stinted his measure, but gave *himself* for us."

"And then, Aunt Anna, when I look there, I get discouraged that I can do so little for Him who did so much for me. I do little,

and that little seems like seed that dies in the ground. What a satisfaction it would be to see that I was really accomplishing something!"

"Satisfaction," said Aunt Anna, "is a word that is often carelessly used. Satisfaction is something we can know very little of in this life: it is a cup, Naomi, of which here we can only touch the brim, but in the eternity of the blessed we can drink our fill."

And so the pearl of days had passed away; and Naomi went home to Chatham Street, carrying with her however, some new heart-cheer for Hagar.

Strong contrast to Sunday, came Monday, in the shop.

"Comes in te shops, Naomi," said our uncle: "it ish mein vorking veek. I takes mein pawns to auction, all ash have been here dree months."

"Oh, dear! this is hurricane week," said

Hagar, with a sigh ; “ every thing will fly off, and new things will fly in their places ; and nobody will know where any thing is.”

“ It ish te vay of te vorld,” said our uncle. “ It ish te vay I makes mein piles monish. Te vorld, mein chils, hash notting ash ist stable ; and, mein Hagar, hurricanes ist not to be despished : vat dosh clear te air so well ; eh, Naomi ? ”

So Naomi went to the shop. She had been there but a short time when a well-dressed lad entered, whose youthful face bore the stamp of strong drink and late hours. Like many another boy of less than twenty years in the city, he was on the road to destruction, — lacking that firm parental guidance that might have led him to an honorable manhood.

“ I want to spout my watch,” he said, pulling the indicated article from his vest pocket.

“ Ve does not spout vatches,” said Solomon ; “ ish worth too much monish.”

"Oh, you can't fool me, old uncle. If you don't spout watches, how come so many in your front shop?"

"Ve does lend on tem ash on te oter goots; but ve canst not sent tem up te spout; ve keeps it for articles in parcels," said Solomon, who was not very busy just then, and nothing loath to have his own kind of jest.

"Let me have some money on it, spout or not. Come, now, down with the dust. Give us fifty dollars on it."

"I gives you thirty tollars ons the vatch ant shane."

"I ain't going to let the chain go. How can I haze the governor if I let that go?"

"I gives twenty vor te vatch alone."

"Twenty dollars, you old miser; and it would bring a hundred any day."

"I gives twenty."

"I'll go some where else, then, double-quick."

"I gives twenty," repeated Solomon coolly.

"Make it forty."

"I gives vat I saysh."

"Thirty, now ; come, old cove, down with the dust. The old lady will give me money to get it out pretty soon."

"I saysh twenty," said Solomon ; and for twenty the watch was pawned.

"Oh, dear !" said Naomi, "only think how you are giving that wretched boy money to squander, and how he is cheating his parents."

"It ish none of mein pusiness," said Solomon, shrugging his shoulders. "The vatch ist ein gut vatch : vill pring seventy-five tollars, if it ish not reteemed. Put dere ish mein fear, he will pring me te monish. He vill makes his governor ant te olt lady vish tey hat never ein son."

"Well," said Naomi, "I should think it would pay to bring up children right. That

boy makes his parents more trouble now than it would have been to make him mind when he was little."

Here a woman came in, and asked for Mr. Simpson. Handing him a ticket, she said hurriedly, "I have come to redeem it. Ten dollars it is, you know."

"It vash a cross set mit garnets, I believe," said Solomon slowly.

"Yes; very yellow old gold, and quite large garnets, a carbuncle in the centre. Let me have it."

"It ish too late; dein ticket hash pin run out ein week."

"But here is the money, and I want the cross."

"But te tings ist forfeit ven dree month hash pass. It vash dree month von week ago."

"But I hadn't the money then."

"It ish none of mein pisness."

"But here is the money now, and you *must*

let me have it. Oh, sir, give it to me! It is not mine; I must give it back: next week will be too late. Here, take two dollars more, and let me have it."

"Now, how you tinks ve can do pisness all ways ash that. Ven te pawn ist forfeit, it *ish* forfeit: ve gives it vere ve canst get monish. Full value ish twenty tollars. I will go to te auctioneer, and gets it pack vor twenty tollar, ant you pays me so much monish. I am will-ing to helps ein lady."

"But I have not twenty dollars: I cannot get so much. The time went by so quickly. Oh, I know you are keeping it from me! Give it to me for twelve dollars" —

"Maype hat petter call a police," said Solomon, getting wrathful: "see if te law, ash ist hart on te pawnprokers, vill shay ven te ticket ist up, ant te pawn ish forfeit, it must pe restore."

The woman here began to cry hysterically.

"That vill do," said Solomon. "*I* must calls te police to keeps mein shop quiet. Can do ast does like ; I vill find te pawn from te auction vor twenty tollar, ant not charge for mein trouples, ast it ish ein lady, or I lets te pawn alone."

The woman sat for a while, her face hidden in her handkerchief, then slowly left the store. All this time the pawned cross was in Solomon's safe ; but when he could get twenty dollars for it, and had a hold on it from the ticket being a week overdue, no motives of humanity, nor the fact that he had received from the offered surplus a full compensation for the use of his money, would induce him to give it up.

Naomi was at the desk, busy with her uncle's books, but had become so much interested in the affair of the cross, that she was looking off her work.

"Does not vaste dein heart on her, Naomi.

Did she not say te cross vash not hers? She is ein false voman; she have stole somebody's cross, I am afraid."

"But then, uncle, you had the cross: a stolen cross!"

"How can I tell? Maype it ish hers, ant she does only try to get me to give it pack. She did schwear it vash hers ven she prought it. Vimin, Naomi, ist so false; dein uncle is no match for te vimin. Von minute they saysh von ting, te next they saysh someting else. Pawnproking ist ein hart pisness."

"But, uncle, if you had the cross you would give it back, even if the ticket *is* run out a week?"

"Ach, who can tell?" said our uncle, with a wink. "Visdom is petter nor rubies, Naomi; but garnets ish more petter nor her ten tollars; great deal."

Naomi turned again to her accounts, and her uncle stood near her, sorting little bundles

of papers ; but his mind was not entirely on his business, for he said presently, " Naomi, I vash named vor von simple man. Solomon, Naomi, chose visdom pefore monish ; it vash von pad pargain, mein girl. If te monish hat not pin given to te poor man mit his visdom, he had pin mighty pad off. He should have hat dein uncle to tell him te vorth of piles monish, eh, Naomi ? "

Naomi went on writing without replying. Soon her uncle demanded, " Vy ist tere more hope of ein fool, than of dein uncle ? "

" I do not know," replied Naomi absently, summing up a column of figures.

" Pecause he ish vise in his own conceit : he ish viser nor Solomon te King, ish Solomon te pawnbroker ; eh, Naomi ? "

Upon these genial remarks of our uncle broke the voice of Daniel.

" There's two of your customers gone."

" Vat now ? " asked the modern Solomon.

" Jerry and his wife."

“Vat ish te matter: ist tere no more pots and pans left to tem?”

“Why, you see,” said Daniel, balancing himself on the edge of the nearest counter, “Saturday they both put in pawns. *She* put in his coat, and *he* got tight on a tea-kettle and frying-pan. When he was pretty drunk he concluded to spout the coat himself, and found she had been before him. They set in for a fight; and he hit her head with a poker, so she’s going to die: they’ve got her to the hospital, and he’s in jail waiting to see if she *will* really die. The children were carried off to that Home up the Bowery.”

Solomon shrugged his shoulders. “Vell, tem two Gentiles vash not mooch use, ant ish small loss. They vash shust like pigs; ant tere pots ant pans, ant te coat, vill bring all I lent on them; eh, Naomi?”

The indignant blood mounted to Naomi’s cheeks; her usually mild eyes shot out a new

ray of anger; but just then her aunt looked in at the shop-door, crying "Naomi, Naomi, come here to me quick!" and, recollecting that the shop was but a poor place to make the strong protest that had been upon her tongue, Naomi turned slowly away.

Consulting with her aunt over a dress for Judith to wear to a grand Jewish ball did not distract Naomi's mind from the terrible news Daniel had so lightly unfolded. While fastening blonde and flowers into a head-dress, and basting trimming on Judith's frock, Naomi thought only of the miserable man in his cell, the dying wretch in the hospital, and the flock of worse than orphans over whose childhood such heavy shadow lay. Therefore, when our uncle without a conscience came up to his dinner, and, tweaking her ear as she sat at the sewing-machine, demanded, "Vy ish so sour, Naomi?" all the fire of her indignation burst forth.

"I am thinking of those wretched people Daniel told of. How can you bear it, uncle? How can you go on letting them have money for such horrible use. You have put a knife in your neighbor's hand that he may cut his throat."

"Vy shoul't I care for te Gentile togs?" shouted our uncle wrathfully: "ant am I ash pad ash te Gentile viskey-seller ash give them te poison?" Tells me that, Naomi. I gives them monish ash may py pread, or their vile pork: *your* Christian gives them viskey out and out; and ish down on dein uncle, Naomi, ash if he vash te von to plame."

Naomi felt as if she had made a hasty attack, yet still could not exonerate her uncle from all censure. She knew his part of the proceeding was unrighteous; and she said, "I'd go into some other business, uncle, that had nothing to do with such ways."

"I coult not make piles monish," said our

uncle, soon appeased by his little ebullition of rage.

“ I’d rather have a smaller pile, and have it all clean,” said Naomi.

Our friend Judith did not care a fig for her step-father, but neither did she care for Naomi ; and she could not forget that Naomi had Gentile blood, and was a Christian : moreover, just now Judith was cross. She had torn her white gloves, and found an ominous rip in her best slippers ; while, worse than all, Rose had reported a remark of one of the Jewish friends, that Judith was getting old, and was too fat. All these grievances made a very favorable occasion for a quarrel ; so, after dinner, while Naomi was basting more work for sewing, Judith began, “ How dare you talk to father so about the shop. We are as good as you are, and have been in the business all our lives. What do you suppose your grandfather did in Germany ; and as to your

English grandfather, I've no doubt that he was a butcher, and killed hogs. All that saves you at all is a morsel of Jew blood. Don't the rabbi tell us that when the holy city is restored, seven Gentiles shall run for protection to one Jew's gaberdine? Don't tell me that our money is dirty: if it is, why do you share it? You eat it, and drink it, and sleep it, as well as we do. Dirty is it? Would it be cleaner if it was made by pork? Ah! you Christians will read your Nazarene-books, and say your prayers by lard-oil lamps!"

All this was sufficiently ridiculous if Naomi had been in a mood to see it so; but she was hurt and offended, so retorted, "Pawnbroking is a mean business, if all my relations follow it; and I can make cleaner money by my own hands, and go and live with Aunt Anna to do it; and I will. Don't talk to me about Jews and Gentiles. You all worship money; and it makes you hard as iron. I'd be

ashamed, Judith,—a woman, and such a hard heart. You are not sorry for that poor murdered creature, your sister from Adam.”

“Bah!” said Judith: “don’t tell me. Sister? She is a Gentile. Don’t say in Adam: he lost himself. We Jews are of Abraham: where is a Gentile like him?”

Here Hagar broke out crying, saying they made her head ache, and hurt her feelings by their talk; that Naomi should never go away, and Judith need not quarrel; and Jews were good, and Naomi must not say they were not.

“No,” said Naomi: of course, I will never say any thing against Jews, Hagar; I am half a Jew myself. Come here by me, and I will tell you a story. I am sorry if I hurt your feelings.” But she made no apologies to Judith. All the afternoon Naomi felt sad and uncomfortable: she thought it was because she was living with her uncle, and because it hurt her conscience to share his gains.

Just before dark, she told Hagar she was going for a little walk, to get rested, and then set out for Timothy's, to have a talk with her old counsellor.

"I think I must go away from uncle's," said Naomi. "Even Judith sees it is inconsistent for me to stay there.

"Perhaps you had better tell me the whole story," said Timothy, bending closely over his work. So Naomi gave a very faithful account of the whole matter, and, to her surprise, found it looked very differently, even to her, than it had while she brooded over it during the afternoon. Timothy was silent while he adjusted a delicate wheel in a watch. At last he looked up quickly. Naomi's eyes were fixed on the floor. Said Timothy, —

"That was a very beautiful way to set forth His religion, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again."

"Yes," said Naomi with a sigh: "I don't see how I ever did it."

“I see how,” said Timothy. “Poor child, you have lost your shoes : the way is rough ; no wonder you cut your feet.”

“What shoes ?” asked Naomi.

“Patience,” replied Timothy. “Don’t the good book tell you to run with patience ?”

“Yes ; but it doesn’t call it shoes.”

“We’ll take it to mean so to-day,” said this old mentor. “Put on the shoes of Patience, and you won’t hurt your own feet, nor tread on your neighbor’s toes.”

“Well, but about staying at uncle’s ?”

“Do as conscience, not as temper, tells you. Ought your uncle to ask the use every customer means to put his money to ? Would they be likely to tell the truth ? Do half who go there use their money well ? Do not some go from absolute necessity, and apply what is lent for good purposes ? How can your uncle stop to decide between such folks as Waters and Mrs. Roberts, and Jerry and his wife ?”

“Do you justify him, then?”

“No: I think he lacks both heart and conscience; but I want you to look at all sides of the matter, and not to be too hard on anybody.”

“Good night,” said Naomi: “I’m glad you live so near, Timothy.”

Going home, Naomi found Judith at the work-table, growling over her soiled and torn gloves; for Judith was both fond of show, and avaricious.

“Give me the gloves, cousin Judith,” said Naomi. “I can clean them, and mend them, and make them look as good as new: a ribbon quilled about the wrist will hide that seam. I am sorry I quarrelled with you to-day.”

Judith handed over the gloves gladly, and at once became quite pleasant. Naomi got ribbon, sewing-silk, and a plate of bread-crumbs, and sat down near Hagar to work upon the gloves.

"Mother's ever so pleased," whispered Hagar. "Abraham has been here to ask Judith to go to the ball with him. Would you go with that old thing? Why, his beard is white!"

"I wouldn't say so to anybody," observed Naomi: "they would not like it, you know."

"Rose fetched me the nicest book from up stairs," said Hagar: "it is 'The Fairy Queen,' all such queer poetry. I hope it won't be whisked off before I read it through."

When the family came to supper, Naomi put at her uncle's elbow his favorite dish of toasted cheese.

"Is that what you've been down stairs baking up your face over the fire for?" asked Judith.

"Ist von gut girl," said our uncle cordially. "Keep up dein courage, Naomi; ven mein piles monish ist made, dein uncle vill pe ash gut ash von rabbi!"

The next day occurred one of the periodical hurricanes at our uncle's which were Hagar's aversion. Drays, loaded with every imaginable variety of pawns, rolled away from the sign of the "Three Golden Balls." Rose, Judith, our uncle's wife, and the three young Shylocks of the store, rushed about frantically. Simon of the cellar went up and down the ladder at the trap-door in a manner that put his lantern in evident jeopardy; down the spout rattled an avalanche of bundles. The house jarred as heavy articles came down the stairs. Before night every thing had suffered change. Hagar's brocatel-covered chair had given place to a leather-dressed successor; the favorite lounge made way for a stiff hair-cloth sofa; the dining-room matting was supplied by a hemp-carpet; the faded Brussels of the parlor had resigned in favor of a striped Venetian. These were some of our uncle's unrighteous proceedings. Besides getting

interest, and that at a higher rate than the law allowed, for the money lent, he made use of the articles in his family. Again: the statute directs that all goods shall be kept one year, but our uncle made way with his when he pleased: sometimes as in the case of the garnet cross, limiting the ticket, and pronouncing to his ignorant and often guilty customer the article forfeit. As to the advertising of pawns to be sold, arranged for by civic law, our uncle had a traditional sort of list, which he occasionally inserted in "The Herald," of which list neither himself nor any one else could make head or tail.

Our uncle being gone off to the auction with one of his clerks, and business being ever lively, he had stipulated that Naomi should stay in the shop all day. Daniel was for the time being injustice-in-chief in this establishment, and swelled with new importance.

Three little street-sweepers came in, and pawned a gold ring which they had found. Daniel gave them three dollars on it.

“What will you do with your money?” asked Naomi, compassionately regarding these small, ragged, old-faced girls.

“Buy isters, and go to the Hip’drome to-night,” said one; and they all ran off elated. Daniel, too, was elated; for he was sure they would never come after the ring, which, being set with a pearl, was worth some ten dollars.

The day was a long one to Naomi. At night, while yet in the shop, as her uncle delayed his return, Naomi noticed a man wrapped in a cloak, who came in; and taking to the counter several large parcels which he had carried concealed, he asked for Mr. Simpson. Since that worthy was away, the stranger condescended to negotiate with Daniel; and they promptly retired behind

our uncle's side-screen, out of sight of most in the shop, but in full view of Naomi, who, to her astonishment, saw him take from his parcels several dozens of handkerchiefs of all sizes and styles, a fine assortment of gloves, several snuff-boxes, spectacle-cases of different patterns from silver to morocco, not less than twenty purses and pocket-books, and a jumble of articles of less value. These things Daniel indubitably bought, for he gave no tickets for them. The stranger stroked a dyed mustache, adjusted his cloak, said good-evening to Daniel, and, with an approving nod at Naomi, left the shop.

"I'll never stay here another evening for anybody!" cried Naomi.

The next evening was that of the ball. Mrs. Simpson was as fond of balls as her daughter, and took herself to the scene of amusement, escorting, or escorted by, Daniel. Judith having departed with the veteran

pawnbroker Abraham, and Rose taking the liberty of going to the theatre, Naomi and Hagar were left to the luxury of an evening by themselves. Naomi established Hagar comfortably in a large chair, and then, taking the work she was doing for Ewings, sat down near the light.

“I haven’t got acquainted with this new furniture yet,” said Hagar; “but part of it is going to be very interesting. Just look at the feet of that sideboard, Naomi.”

“Yes: those two griffin’s heads,” said Naomi.

“Those two are real griffins, from — well, from the big desert of Africa. They are enchanted. King Solomon enchanted them like he did the Afites that he put in bottles. But, Naomi, they talk to me, and have promised to tell me all about Egypt. They lived there when Joseph did, and saw Moses in his basket that time when he was a baby,

and know all about those kings that have been mummied up ever so long."

"That, certainly, will be a very interesting piece of furniture," said Naomi.

"Say, Naomi, who all do you suppose have ever sat in that chair you are in, and by that table?" continued Hagar.

"Why," said Naomi, willing to humor her little cousin, "it has been in a grandmother's parlor, with queer things from India and China on it; and it has been a mother's work-table where she mended all the little children's clothes; and it has been in the school-room where the children learnt their lessons. And two young people, who lived in two dear little rooms, ate their breakfast from it."

"And how came it here?" asked Hagar delighted.

"Oh, why? well," said Naomi, forgetting her romance in an intricate matter of knitting, "very likely they all died."

“And went to Jerusalem above?”

“Yes. It must be so nice to meet there, you know,—the kind old grandmother, the faithful mother, the children got safe out of this world, the young people together still”—

“Your thought is nicer than the Jews’ thought,” said Hagar. “You look for the holy city in its glory, just as soon as you are dead. Your good folks have got there all before you ; but the Jews look on, they don’t know how long, for Jerusalem to be restored, and it has been so many years; and some think the Lord has forgotten them; and some, like father, don’t believe any thing; and some, the rabbi says, are buried with their feet to the holy city; and others sell all they have, and go there to die. And, Naomi, the rabbi says the poor Jews that are there now can only kiss the stones of the old Temple, and go outside of the wall to pray and cry.”

“Yes,” said Naomi, “it is very sad: it is the judgment for rejecting the Messiah.”

“Well, Naomi, I have been reading your part of the Bible, and I don’t see how they could act so. For of course he was the Messiah, and I shall always believe it; only I don’t like to tell them so just yet.”

Naomi did not urge her little cousin to make any assertion of her belief to her family; for she remembered that she was a child, and her opinions might easily be changed by an attack upon them. And she felt, that if the New Testament were placed in her hands, and she were taught to pray, that God would strengthen her new-born faith, and teach her young heart its duty. So now she only said, —

“If you really take Jesus for your Saviour, Hagar, you will be a true daughter of Israel.”

From the shop below came the constant sounds of trampling feet, loud tones; doors opening and shutting with a bang, — the sounds that for at least sixteen hours out of the twenty-four made the shop a Babel. Just

without all this tumult, and the jostling of cares and sorrows upon each other, sat Naomi and Hagar, children of the King of Peace, sheltered under the covert of his wings.

“Naomi,” said Hagar, “we hear the noise of the shop just a little, and how nice and quiet and comfortable we are up here! When I look out at night, Naomi, I think how all the noise and worry of this world stops below the stars; and up on the other side of that quiet sky, the angels walk up and down the golden streets you read to me about.”

“Yes,” said Naomi, quoting from some fragment of verse :—

“But on the golden streets, the holy people
Are walking to and fro.”

“We must get there some day, Naomi,” said Hagar.

But while Naomi meditated on sweet themes that Hagar’s words had called into her mind,

she was brought back by the same voice that had set the current of her thoughts heavenward, discoursing now of sublunary things.

“O Naomi! suppose everybody who had pawned all these things should come in right now, and carry them away: why, we would be left here all by ourselves, with not even a chair to sit on!”





CHAPTER VI.

THE GARNET CROSS.



WHEN Sunday came, Naomi went to Aunt Anna, thinking much of going to see Mrs. Waters, to whom she was carrying a paper of little frosted cakes.

At Aunt Anna's she found the old lady not quite dressed for the Sabbath, and the curtains were let down before the bed in the recess to her largest room.

"I've got an invalid here," said Aunt Anna.

"Why, who is it; not Mrs. Waters?"

"No: a poor stranger whom the Lord cast upon my charity. Timothy brought her in here Friday night. She has taken some morphine, and is in a heavy sleep."

Naomi went softly across the room, and peeped in between the curtains. She started a little, and, coming back, said, "Aunt Anna, wherever did you find *that* woman?"

"Why, have you ever seen her?" asked Aunt Anna.

"Yes: she made quite a scene in our shop about a cross, set with garnets, which she had pawned; and uncle said the ticket was run out, and she could not have it: indeed, he said it was already gone out of his hands. And it seemed as if she must have stolen or borrowed the cross, from what she said."

"Poor thing, I'm afraid there's some sad story about it. Timothy left here Friday evening about nine, and he met this woman passing the door. She looked so wild, he followed

her ; and, as she went on muttering and walking fast until they got past Greenwich Street, he took her by the arm, and asked her where she was going.

“ She said she was going to drown herself : but Timothy just said quietly, ‘ No, not this time ; turn about ; ’ and turned her around, and began leading her back. He saw she was in a high fever, and out of her right mind ; so he brought her in here to me. It appears as if trouble of mind had brought on her illness ; and, though I did think of sending her to the hospital, I changed my mind, and concluded to keep her if I could. At the hospital they might cure her body for a while, but would not be likely to touch whatever trouble lies on her heart.”

“ Perhaps you can do her good, Aunt Anna ; but I’m afraid she is a wicked woman,” said Naomi doubtfully.

“ The true way, my child, is to hate the sin,

and love the sinner. If Christ had let us alone because we were wicked, where would we be?"

"That is true enough," said Naomi. "I suppose you cannot go to church to-day, Aunt Anna?"

"No: I must stay with my invalid. Our minister's wife was in here yesterday a few minutes, and she sent down some gelatine and some crackers. I wish you would step over with a portion to Mrs. Waters."

"Are they getting on any better?" asked Naomi.

"I'm afraid not. That makes me think, that, as he is getting so discouraged, he may pawn his engraver's tools; and, if he does, I hope you will do any thing you can towards keeping them for him to get back. If he loses them, he may give up altogether."

"I think you are looking better," said Naomi to Mrs. Waters, whom she was glad to

find alone. "See, I have brought you something to make you better yet ;" and she put down the little basket she had filled at Aunt Anna's.

"Thank you: it is very kind," said Mrs. Waters with some hesitation ; "but I think — perhaps James will not like it: we are not used to charity."

"Oh !" said Naomi in a frank, matter-of-fact way. "This is not charity: this is only a little act of neighborly kindness, such as an invalid has a right to look for. If I get sick, I shall expect you to come and see me often, and bring just such things."

Mrs. Waters smiled a little, and allowed Naomi to put the dainties away in the closet. "What are you going to do all day ?" she asked.

"I shall be in church and Sunday school much of the time," replied Naomi.

"Dear, isn't that pretty dull for a young girl like you."

“ Oh ! I enjoy it very much,” said Naomi.

“ At home,” said Mrs. Waters, “ we always used to dress up, and have a nice dinner ; and sometimes our friends dropped in, or we took a walk, or a ride ; but now we can have no more such pleasant things.”

“ May I ask you a *very* plain question ? ” said Naomi.

“ Yes, of course,” replied Mrs. Waters.

“ If you did not sanctify the Lord’s day according to his commandment, is it strange that he has taken from you the means of breaking it ? ”

Mrs. Waters looked offended ; but Naomi was resolved to speak the truth with boldness. She had been interested to relieve this woman’s physical wants : ought she not much more to minister to the spiritual necessity ? “ God expressly says,” she continued, “ ‘ Them that honor me, I will honor.’ We honor by *obedience*. If you were not a loyal servant of

the King of kings, can you expect his continued protection ? ”

“ I’m sure,” said Mrs. Waters, both hurt and vexed, “ we have always been very respectable : we were well thought of, and as good as any of our neighbors, whatever we may seem now.”

“ That you were and are moral and respectable I see plainly,” said Naomi ; “ but God expects us to be *religious*. I hope you will not be angry at my plain talk, for I want you to be my friend. I think it is my duty to say what *may* be the reason God has let trouble come upon you, to bring you to love and serve him as his dear children. If I knew more, I might have spoken all this much better, and not have hurt your feelings. I’m sure I didn’t want to do that.”

Naomi was evidently so sincere, and looked so gentle and anxious, that Mrs. Waters could cherish no hard feeling towards her. She

took the hand Naomi held out, and accepted her offered kiss.

“You religious people are very queer,” she said; “but I believe you mean well. I dare say we would have been better off if everybody were religious; for then James would not have been disappointed in his work, nor cheated about our rooms.”

“Did you like the book Aunt Anna lent you?” asked Naomi.

“Yes: James finished it, and took it back this week. We had never thought it would be interesting, but it was. I hope I’ll be well enough to do something before long. Can’t you tell me some kind of work I can do. I don’t know much of such things. I always lived with my uncle, and have never had to work for myself.”

“Some other day,” said Naomi, “I will tell you all I know. I will try and come up some day this week.”

“Your aunt has lent us another book, and James is going to read it to me when he comes home. He hates this house so ; and then all the week he has to work with rough porters : it is so different from engraving.”

“You must keep your courage up,” said Naomi, “and perhaps he will get his own kind of work soon.”

“He ought to,” said the wife sadly ; “for James has talent, and can design as well as cut. He could get up first-rate pictures, I know ; only he never has half a chance.”

That Sunday was hardly as comforting to Naomi as some others. The quiet at Aunt Anna’s was broken by the presence of the invalid. Naomi thought she dwelt in much turmoil during six days of the week, and was almost ready to complain that the seventh day of calm had been thus invaded. But these thoughts she checked, and, going home early, spent a pleasant evening with Hagar in their

own room, — telling her, among other things, the story of the garnet cross as far as she knew it. Hagar was quite excited by this account. She thought it strange as a fairy tale, and was eager to hear the sequel, which Naomi promised to tell her if she ever became acquainted with it. It was several years, however, before Naomi could summon up courage to keep this promise.

Early in the week, while Naomi was busy in the shop, the lad who had pawned the watch came to redeem it. “The old lady put down,” he explained, as Naomi was attending to the matter of tickets. Speaking almost before she was aware, Naomi said, “‘A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.’”

“Whew-w!” said the lad: “here’s a saint in a pawnbroker’s establishment! I say, Solomon, here’s your clerk quoting your proverbs!”

Our uncle had one good trait, and that was

fondness for his niece ; and now, thinking her insulted in some shape, he came briskly up, crying, " Any poty as vill shay von vort mein Naomi dosh not likes, vill pe put vrom mein shops. Mint dein vorts, young man ! "

" I only said, here was a saint in a pawn-broker's shop," explained the lad ; " that was a compliment, you know."

" Shust ash it vas meant, mein lad ; and it vere vell to have von saint vere tere ish so many sinners ; eh, Naomi."

Our uncle appearing a little more malleable than usual, Naomi said, " Uncle, you remember that poor woman that wanted the cross : couldn't you get it for her for what money she had ? "

" Te voman ish gone," said our uncle.

" But if she should come in here again for it ? "

" Nein, nein, chilt : vat ish forfeit ish forfeit ; let us shay no more apout it. She vill

learn wisdom by that, and not let her tickets run out."

Naomi found an opportunity during the week to go up and see Aunt Anna. She was anxious to know how the old lady stood the cares of nursing, and how the patient was prospering. Besides, she wanted to go and see Mrs. Waters, and propose fancy-work to her as an agreeable means of lightening the pressure of poverty that rested upon them.

She was going swiftly along Spring Street, when having almost reached one of those liquor-stores, that — most horrible traps — are set at nearly every turning to catch souls and bodies, she glanced about, and saw James Waters near the door; a rough-looking man, evidently no congenial companion for him, apparently urging him to come in. The unwary James might have yielded; but looking up, he recognized Naomi. He felt ashamed of the place he was entering,

ashamed of his companion, ashamed of himself: he did not know whether to venture to bow; but Naomi, passing by, bowed, and said, 'Good-evening.' He turned suddenly from the fatal step, and joined her.

"They walked in silence for a few minutes, when Naomi said, "I wouldn't, Mr. Waters: *that* is worse than our shop."

He knew what she meant. "I never have gone to such places," he said deprecatingly; "yet one is driven to the wall sometimes, and doesn't know what to do."

"One will never get any help at a liquor-store: it is best to be brave, and wait until better days come." They were on the side of the street on which Mr. Waters lived; and now coming to a crossing, Naomi bowed again, and went over to the other side, and, passing along another square, came to Aunt Anna's. As she went in, she saw that James Waters was slowly nearing his own home.

Naomi found Aunt Anna's patient sitting up, looking very feeble and unhappy: as Naomi came in, the stranger dropped her head upon her arms folded in her lap, and sat there as one utterly crushed and despairing.

"This is Jane Craig, Naomi," said Aunt Anna; but the woman did not look up.

"Naomi will not gossip about you, Jane; and, as she lives at Mr. Simpson's, she may be able to tell you something about the cross. I hope you can get it yet."

"Tell her what you like," said Jane: "it will make no difference now; all the town will know it soon. Getting the cross won't do me much good, since Catharine's told of me."

"Perhaps she has not," said Mrs. Vail, trying to soothe her patient.

"Yes, she has; and she might as well. I couldn't live in dread of her tongue."

"As I told you, Jane, 'Whoso confesseth

and forsaketh sin shall find mercy.' You had better let me go, and tell your mistress where you are, and in what state; and you can either write a full acknowledgment to her, or ask her to come and see you. Do not put it off, for all in a few days you may be able to go out."

"I'll never tell you her name while I live," groaned Jane.

"As to the cross," said Naomi, "I spoke to uncle; and he said it was gone, and twelve dollars would not get it back. But very likely he would yet do as he said, and get it from wherever it is for full value."

"As the cross is such a precious keepsake to your mistress, Jane," said Mrs. Vail, "it is your duty at once to let her know where it is, and she will probably make up what is lacking of the twenty dollars to recover it."

"Jane did not reply, and Aunt Anna continued, "Naomi had better tell Timothy to

come up this evening, and you can send him to your friends."

"I haven't any friends," said Jane in a smothered voice; "but if this Naomi is young, and fond of dress, and thinks she's handsome, tell her to hate dress, to choose plain clothes, and believe herself a fright: if I had, perhaps now I would have had friends and a home."

Then, changing her tone for one of piteous entreaty, she said, "Only let me stay here until I can walk, and I'll do any thing you tell me."

When Naomi was going home, Aunt Anna had an errand to the grocery, and went a short distance with her. "This Jane," she said, "was humble companion to a rich maiden lady; but, led by love of dress and amusement, had, during a three-months' absence of her mistress, pawned part of the jewels, and worn some of the clothes left in her keeping. The loss of the garnet cross, and the discovery of

her dishonesty by a fellow-servant, are bringing her practices to light. She is sure her mistress will leave her to the penalties of the law, and that her own family, who are respectable people, will cast her off. These terrors have made her ill, and are now overwhelming her; but it is more terror than penitence."

"I shall talk to Timothy," said Naomi. "I don't feel as if it is safe to have her there with you."

"I am not afraid," said Aunt Anna: "she knows I have no money at all just now, and I am sure is in no mood to rob any one. I hope she will be led to humility and confession. If I could find out who her friends were, I should feel it my duty to send to them."

Saturday morning Mrs. Vail was enlightened about the relatives of Jane Craig, who yet seemed in sullen despair, hardly speaking, groaning much, and refusing to eat. Timothy

came up with a copy of "The Herald," containing an advertisement of the disappearance of Jane Craig, of a garnet cross and some other jewelry, and asking information.

"Jane Craig," said Aunt Anna firmly, "Timothy must certainly answer this advertisement."

Jane wrung her hands. "Give me only one more day!" she cried. "Let me have until to-morrow! I will surely go then. Wait until to-morrow," she added hurriedly. "People will be out to church then: all will be quiet, and I will go. One more day; only one!"

"To-morrow, then," said Aunt Anna, "you must go, or Timothy must."

"She'll run away," said Timothy privately to his half-sister.

"I think not," said Aunt Anna, whose charity hoped all things; "and, if she does, you can go yourself, and she will easily be found."

“But if she gets in a drowning humor again?”

“Oh! she will not: she was wild with fever that night,” replied Aunt Anna; but one can be too charitable.

Sunday morning came, and Naomi was at Aunt Anna’s ready to go to church. Jane Craig, with a face that seemed to Naomi very hard and defiant, had dressed to go out. The three went from the room; and good Aunt Anna, according to the custom of years, locked her door, and put the key under the mat. She knew all who lived in the house with her, and feared none.

After the quiet walk to church, the devotion of public worship, and the return occupied with conversation on what they had heard, Aunt Anna and Naomi reached home to find the door partly open, and Jane Craig sitting at the table within the room. This was an intrusion at which Aunt Anna looked sur-

prised, and Naomi rather displeased. As they entered, Jane started up, and tossed something into her mouth. Mrs. Vail stepped forward, and grasped her hand, which held a very small vial. "Jane!" she cried, "are you poisoning yourself?"

Jane tore herself away, flung the vial in the fire, and then cast herself upon the bed upon her face.

"Run for a doctor, Naomi!" said Aunt Anna. "What ever has this wretched woman been doing!"

Jane Craig had indeed taken poison; but guessing as she had at a fatal dose, and discovered and helped so promptly by Aunt Anna, the effect which she had so rashly desired was not at once obtained. She was conveyed to a hospital, where she died the second day after. Timothy, who had retained the advertisement of Jane's friends, went early on Monday to find them; and Naomi, while not daring to

distress Hagar with so sad a story in some measure connected with themselves, took it to her uncle.

“Uncle, that woman who pawned the cross has taken poison.”

“Vy ! how dosh know, Naomi ?”

“She was up on Spring Street,” replied Naomi, thinking it prudent not to mention Aunt Anna; “and she tried to poison herself, and is carried to the hospital.”

“Ach ! I vunter vash it her cross, Naomi ?”

“No ; it belonged to her mistress : and she pawned other things that were not hers, and wore the lady’s clothes ; and some one found it out, and told of her ; and she ran away, and took poison.”

“Ach ! Naomi. I vunders vill they cares vor te cross ?”

“I believe it was valued highly, uncle, as a keepsake.”

“Vy, mein girl!” cried our guileful uncle, “I velt shorry vor te voman, ant vosh going te morning to vine the cross vrom te auction. I vill loshe puy it; put I voult do it vor ein voman; eh, Naomi?”

“You had better have it ready, for they may come for it. Of course you thought it was her own, for she looked like a lady; and it was only worth twenty dollars.”

“Vor sure I tink it vash hers. Voult I take it ant I did not, mein girl? Saysh she, ‘It ish mein.’ Vell, I takes it; eh, Naomi?”

Our uncle privately went as far as his safe for the disputed cross, and within a week it was redeemed. Our uncle was very polite, and rather profuse in his remarks on the occasion; and no fault was found with him. Nobody but our uncle himself understood the matter entirely; and, as we have stated, he had merged both heart and conscience in a struggle for what he called “piles monish.”

Yet this very garnet cross was an important item among the many that had wrecked a life. An irreligious training, a careless mistress, the voices of flatterers who cared not for her soul, a fellow-servant rejoicing over her downfall, a Chatham-street uncle quick to take, and eager to keep the bauble, — all these had wrought the ruin ; and so another bitter life had met a bitter end. Too late had Aunt Anna been able to bring help. Jane Craig had sown the wind, and must reap the whirlwind forever.





CHAPTER VII.

TWO FESTIVALS.



INTER came on apace. The roofs were whitened with snow; the sleigh-bells rung merry chimes through the streets; poverty cut with a keener tooth, and ground down hearts with a heavier heel. But wealth grew buoyant and elate, as the days of good cheer, of gifts and salutations and festivities, drew nigh.

While Naomi had lived with Aunt Anna, she had kept the Christmas-tide with some heart-knowledge of its meaning. For the

four years she had been at her uncle's, she had still gone to Aunt Anna's to celebrate the natal day of Christianity, and given to the old lady and Timothy some token of her love.

She was now even more than usually interested in the holiday-time; for this was her first year as a Sabbath-school teacher, and the school was to have a Christmas-tree. Very swiftly flew Naomi's fingers through the meshes of parti-colored wools, that, forming sacques, hoods, capes, scarfs, bags, or mittens, would be among other people's Christmas remembrances; and with joy she saw her increasing store of earnings. Our Naomi wanted to take Mrs. Roberts the present that her daughter might have given, had she lived till now. She wished to brighten the day for Mrs. Waters with a gift. Timothy must have a warm scarf of her own manufacture, and Aunt Anna's beautiful old face should be set in a new and becoming cap. Then there was

the Sunday-school tree, which she must do her share to decorate. Naomi loved the Sunday school, but nevertheless had her own tribulations growing out of it.

"How did you get on in school to-day?" asked Timothy, as, according to custom, he was taking her home on sabbath evening.

"Not very well," replied Naomi, sighing.

"What was the matter? were the children restive? or did you not get interested in studying your lesson?"

"It was not that," said Naomi; "but I don't think the superintendent acts fairly. Of course I could not say or do any thing; but I felt very much hurt. Miss Willis's class had all run down; and he came and took the two best and largest scholars out of *my* class, and put them in hers. I think it was a real shame; don't you?"

"I cannot make up my mind to think *that*, unless I knew his reasons. I hope he did it

because he felt it would, in some way, be for the best interest of the whole school, and the good of souls."

"Miss Willis's father is one of the head men in the church ; but that is no reason why my class should be robbed to build up hers," said Naomi with some acrimony.

"Now, Naomi, you must once and for all make up your mind never to cherish hard thoughts about church or Sunday-school matters. Why, child alive, you can't expect the Spirit of Peace to come and dwell where there are strifes and heart-burnings. The child of God *must not* strive, and especially in the very gateways of the kingdom. I tell you, Naomi, this getting hurt, and picking up trifles, is a disgrace to the cause of Christ, a dishonoring of God, and brings many a soul short of heaven."

"Of course I couldn't say any thing to any one there ; but it does try me to think of the way the superintendent acted."

“Then don’t think of it at all.”

“But one is possessed of reason, and *must* think,” remonstrated Naomi.

“Then take counsel of reason, and not of wounded self-love,” replied Timothy. “Don’t the apostle tell us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and that means not to think highly at all. Mind this, Naomi: if your self-love grows up into a tree, Christianity shrinks in its shadow to the size of a bit of groundsel. There is many a man, Naomi, holding his selfish views and interests so close to his eyes that he can’t see Him whom he professes to call his Master. You can hide the sun by a dinner-plate, Naomi, if you hold the plate in the right place to do it.”

“I hope I shall remember that,” said Naomi: “I need it.”

“There are few but what do need it,” said our friend Timothy, “and miss a deal by not knowing it. Many besides Isaac have

found living water in a valley; and Bunyan says truly, that the Valley of Humiliation is a rare, pleasant place to live in, if one don't get too many slips going down there."

This was such goodly converse as Christian and his brother wayfarer held to keep themselves from falling asleep in the enemy's country. Timothy soon came to his little den where he slept, surrounded by his small stock of tools and valuables; with his Bible and a copy of the famous Dream for good company; and our Naomi, entering the door opened by Rose, was again under our uncle's shadow, within the spells of the "Golden Balls." We know some licensed lunatics, who, amid other vagaries, wear about their necks a tiny bag of saint's dust and ashes as an amulet to fend off the attacks of the evil one. Naomi, wiser and happier, carried her amulet in her heart,—even the love of God,—and so dwelt in peace and purity amid the strongholds of the

enemy. She found that evening Daniel and his fellow-clerks throwing dice ; our uncle getting up a bogus advertisement ; our uncle's wife absorbed in a novel ; and the apathetic Judith lolling in a big chair, lazily enchanting the venerable Abraham, whose "Three Golden Balls". hung conspicuous, not a stone's throw away. Out of this small vortex of worldliness and selfishness, Naomi and Hagar withdrew, and closed the day with praise and prayer.

Waking in the night, Naomi found Hagar sitting up in bed, her chin resting upon her knees, and her arms loosely clasped about them. The child's dark hair, unconfined by net or cap, fell about her shoulders, and her face was fixed in intent thought. Naomi had opened the stove-door before retiring ; and the red light from the fire mingled with the white moonbeams that found their way in at the window.

“Why, Hagar, lie down,” said Naomi: “you will get cold; what are you up there for?”

“I’m not cold a bit,” said Hagar: “I got tired of lying awake, and so I sat up. I’m just thinking.”

“You ought to be sleeping: what are you thinking about?”

“Oh, every thing! I’ve thought the house all over. I’ve been up in the garret, where there is’nt much of any thing but dust. It is a miserable place to hang the clothes in bad weather, and I don’t wonder they look grim. When you and I go to housekeeping, Naomi, we’ll have every thing tidy; won’t we?”

“Yes,” said Naomi sleepily.

“Then I went into the front rooms, all full of everybody’s things. I thought, suppose every thing went off to-night to their first owners, how funny it would be. In the morning, we wouldn’t have a thing for housekeep-

ing. And I said, what if the ghosts of all that ever owned the things could come here to look after their property. Then I heard them walking up and down whispering; their clothes rustling,—as many as two hundred, Naomi,—up and down stairs in every room, very softly. I think I should like to be a ghost, and go about so.”

“Why, Hagar,” cried Naomi, “how you talk! there *are* no ghosts. Are you afraid, child?”

“Oh, no!” said Hagar simply: “I was only *thinking*, you know.”

“What a queer child you are,” said Naomi.

“I ought to be,” replied Hagar: “I’ve always lived among such queer things. We’re not at all like other people. Our house, Naomi, is just like a big book with about a thousand stories in it: all begin very interesting, but broken-off just as they’ve gone about a page. It mixes one up. I don’t know but

I'm a broken-off story myself. Sometimes I wonder if I am not that very same Hagar who dwelt in Paran, got into the world this time with a crippled knee."

"If you are," said Naomi, falling into the child's mood, "what has become of Ishmael?"

"I never could quite make up my mind about him," said Hagar laughing. "You know I *ought* to remember how I took him a wife out of the land of Egypt, and how he went to bury Abraham; but I don't: so I suppose I am not that Hagar after all." When Hagar had said this, she unclasped her hands, gave her pillow a conciliatory push or two, and settled herself in bed again. She had talked off her nervous excitement, and was ready to go to sleep: this was what Naomi had expected when she humored her by talking with her. There could hardly be a worse place for an imaginative, sensitive creature like Hagar, than this

shop where she lived : but for the healthful influence of Naomi she would have perished long ago of the atmosphere of her home ; and, as it was, she could not there grow in body, or increase in health and strength. Naomi thought her cousin was asleep, and was just getting drowsy herself, when Hagar spoke again, —

“ Naomi, do you suppose Judith is going to marry old Abraham ? ”

“ I’m sure I don’t know,” replied Naomi.

“ I think he’s a horrid old thing,” said Hagar : “ he only comes here when he can’t keep his shop open. It wouldn’t make much difference to us, would it, if she went away ; only you wouldn’t have so much sewing to do, Naomi ? ”

“ No : only to get her ready,” said Naomi sleepily.

“ Oh ! I didn’t think of *that* ; but I about wish she *would* marry him, so I could see a

wedding. That is the trouble of being lame, Naomi: I never can see any thing."

This ended Hagar's discussion for that night. Bright and early she was awake, and her tongue going again.

"Naomi, if I believe in Jesus of Nazareth I'm a Christian, ain't I?"

"If you believe him with your heart," said Naomi.

"Why, I think he must be Messiah, and the kindest that ever was," said Hagar; "and, if I am a Christian, I ought to keep Christmas, oughtn't I?"

"There is no *ought* about it, and of course the folks wouldn't like it," replied Naomi.

"They needn't know it: they never ask me any thing, and I never tell them any thing. I don't mean to make a fuss about it, but just to go on quiet, and make some presents like you do."

"I don't see any harm in that," said Naomi, who was putting the room in order.

"The truth is, Naomi," pursued Hagar confidentially, "I am most dreadful tired of having nothing to do. I hate sitting stuck up in that dingy old parlor day after day, fussing at things that I don't care for, and nobody else does. The new old furniture, Naomi, is pretty stupid after all. The griffins have told me about all they know of Egypt and the desert: they are sleepy old beasts, and never observed at all; I think Solomon did just right to enchant them."

"I'm sorry you read all that false stuff about Solomon," said Naomi. "He was a servant of God, and there is no such thing as enchantment."

"I don't suppose there is really," said Hagar; "but anyway the rabbinical books are full of it. And the rabbi had a deal rather I would read all sorts of queer things about Satan and witchcraft than *your* part of the Bible. *Our* part," she added, correcting herself.

“Yes: many of the Jews pay more attention to such foolish stories, and the traditions, than to the law; and they have gone far astray. Do they keep sabbath, or respect the synagogue, or obey the Ten Commandments?”

“No,” said Hagar: “when I read the Scriptures, I think how different the Jews are now from what they were in the old times.”

“It is no wonder,” said Naomi, “when they have cast away their Redeemer, and set the Talmud above the book God gave them. See what poor stuff the Mishna is beside the Bible; and I am sure the Gemara, instead of explaining it, confuses it more and more. And then what foolish and wicked things are put in it. It says, ‘The Bible is like water; the Mishna like wine.’ That is meant to despise the Bible; but it can be a compliment: for the Bible is pure and true as God gave it; and the Mishna is a decoction of man’s follies. The Bible, like water, will not injure, but re-

freshes ; but the Mishna, like wine, leads the brain astray. I can't get any good out of another sentence in the Mishna though ; for it says, "He that hath learned the Scripture, and not the Mishna, is a blockhead !"

"I wonder if the rabbi believes that. He is a good man," said Hagar ; "and that makes me think, Naomi, the rabbi came here yesterday to talk about *you*. He spoke to mother and Judith ; and they said they could not do any thing because they were not your relations, and it was all father's business. So he waited for father, and said he must make you come back to the faith of your fathers, and not go with Gentiles ; but you must keep Jews' sabbath, and go to synagogue, and all that. Father told him you were not like other women : you had your own mind, and would not change it for him. Then they fussed for a while ; and rabbi threatened like every thing, and said father must turn you out for a vile

Gentile ; and no good Jews should speak to you ; and the elders should curse you. That made father very angry ; and he said you should stay here as long as the roof stood. Then, Naomi, the rabbi said you would pervert the daughters of Israel : that meant Judith and me."

"What then ?" asked Naomi eagerly.

"Why, Judith laughed, and I began to cry. Not that I felt bad or afraid ; but I can always make the most by crying. So I cried, 'I must have my Naomi to take care of me, and sleep with me, or I would never eat another mouthful.' And then father said, to hush up everybody, his sister's child should stay with him, and I might have my Naomi ; and all the rest were good Jews, and went to synagogue ; and we all should have a lot of money after a while."

At this climax of her uncle, Naomi could not help laughing ; and, the bell ringing just

then, she helped Hagar down to breakfast, where, as usual, she had to make up for the absence of her late-sleeping aunt and Judith, by pouring coffee, and listening to all complaints.

During breakfast-time, Hagar succeeded in extorting two dollars from her father ; and, when they had left the table, she announced to Naomi her intention of "going shopping." Naomi was clearing up the parlor, which the day before had left very untidy. Pending her arrangements in that room, she had established Hagar on the sofa, and covered her with a big shawl. Her aunt and Judith were now eating their breakfast ; and the door being closed, Hagar occupied the time by telling what she meant to do for Christmas.

"I'm going to buy you a present ; and I shall never, never tell you what it is until I give it to you. And, as I don't know anybody but Jews, I mean to give presents to some of your

people. There's our old woman that meant to pawn the bonnet, Naomi: I mean to make her something. What would you give her?"

"She hasn't any hood," said Naomi: "perhaps you might get some yarn, and knit her one."

"What color?" asked Hagar cautiously.

"Why, black; and put a little purple worsted in the border."

"Red is much prettier," said Hagar.

"I don't think she would like red," said Naomi.

"And what can I give that old man who thinks he is a boy?"

"Couldn't you quilt some warm slippers, and put on felt soles. You could make the slippers of red flannel, and there is an old hat in the attic we can cut soles from."

"That will be splendid," said Hagar; "and I mean to embroider Aunt Anna a spectacle-case. I most know her, for she has sent me

so many things by you. I wish she could come here, or it wasn't too far for me to go up there."

"But so many long stairs," suggested Naomi.

"Of course I can't, I know. I never can go anywhere," said Hagar pettishly. However, she soon came back to the subject of presents, and said, "Do you suppose Timothy would mind if I gave him a pair of woollen things to wear on his wrists?"

"I'm sure he would like them very much," said Naomi.

"Then I mean to make them as pretty as I please," said Hagar: "they shall be red and green in stripes. I do wish you'd hurry up, Naomi, so I can go out. I don't go once in an age."

Here Judith came in, and dropped herself into a rocking-chair Naomi had just dusted. Her mother followed her.

"Naomi is going to take me out, mother," said Hagar. "Father gave me some money to spend."

"That was a great waste: what does such a child want of money?" said Judith: "you had better lend it to me."

"Yes: or I'll take care of it for you," suggested our uncle's wife, picking her teeth, and tucking a stray wisp of hair up under her gay cap.

No, no: I'm going shopping!" cried Hagar.

"Go long, then, and be quiet," said her mother, putting the child's feet aside, so she could herself occupy the end of the sofa.

"How much is it?" demanded Judith.

"I shan't tell you!" returned Hagar ungraciously.

"Mother, *I* wouldn't let her go off, and spend nobody knows how much," remonstrated Judith.

“Be still, you stingy thing!” screamed Hagar: “won’t I be glad when you are married to Abraham, and gone to live over the street!”

At this sally, our uncle’s wife laughed, and Judith was somewhat mollified. Naomi started to get Hagar’s wrappings; but, being directed to “clear up” Judith’s room, and bring two dresses for her aunt to rip up, was detained sometime. However, at last she had put on Hagar her best blue dress, a long thick cloak, a red hood bound with fur, a tippet and muff to match; and, with her two dollars in the purse that had been pawned, Hagar was ready to go out. Rose and Daniel were summoned to carry her down stairs, and through the shop, as she chose to go out that way. Naomi had ready a child’s three-wheeled carriage, which was Hagar’s own undeniable property; and a hot brick being put for her feet, and an Afghan of Naomi’s knitting

drawn over her knees, with Naomi behind to push her coach, Hagar was ready to start.

“Where will you go?” asked Naomi.

“Let’s go in Grand Street: we see the Bowery so much, you know. Oh! be so careful, Naomi, and get a policeman to take us over all the crossings: don’t go fast.” Hagar very seldom got out. She needed to be carried down and up the long first flight of stairs in the house, was terribly nervous about being upset, and afraid at all the street-crossings, and, besides, was too heavy for Naomi to push very far; and to no one else would she trust herself.

Into Grand Street they went. The crowds of people; the windows full of all kinds of wares; the boxes laden with samples on the walk; the doorways hung with kerchiefs, scarfs, and trifles of all kinds; the street-stalls; the sight of stray organ-grinders or tambourine girls,—all formed a cheerful episode in Hagar’s quiet life.



INTO GRAND STREET THEY WENT." — Page 192.

Then how delightful it was to buy red, green, and purple worsted ; a whole bunch of black yarn ; scarlet flannel ; silk to embroider the spectacle-case ; a bit of black velvet for the same ! Then how perfectly enchanting to call out a black-eyed, curly-headed little Jew-clerk, bid Naomi “ look the other way, and not hear,” and then send said clerk in to do up a tiny album, filled with small fancy pictures, “ nice, every one of them,” she ordered ! And then Naomi must still look into a window, where there was nothing more attractive than any amount of hosiery. While Hagar examined her little purchase, rejected two or three pictures as being what “ Naomi would not like,” and at last the album was duly tucked in her muff, and Naomi was released from durance vile at the window, and suffered to wheel the carriage again. “ I’ve got twenty cents left,” said Hagar ; “ and I’m going to treat you, Naomi. We’ll stop at one stand and try roast chestnuts,

and then at another and get rock-candy." So Hagar had her own way about "treating," and went home rejoicing ; being so tired, however, that she lay on the sofa all the afternoon, while Naomi sewed on her aunt's dresses.

The approach of Christmas brought many more customers to the shop. Mr. Waters came, looking rather desperate, and wanted to pawn his tools.

"We've always had our Christmas dinner," he said doggedly, "and we shall yet. What use are engravers' tools to a porter?" He had ceased to adopt subterfuges before the clear-eyed Naomi.

"You may want them yet," said Naomi. "The less you take on them, the easier to get them out;" and she ventured to ask, "Does your wife know it?"

"No," said James: "what's the use of telling her? She would get discouraged, and be sick again: it all comes from 'my uncle,' you know." He laughed a bitter laugh.

Naomi felt that this was a poor policy, and wished that Mrs. Waters had been able to display a little more strength of mind, that she might have been a helper to her husband in his day of need ; but she went with the tool-case to her uncle, and returned, offering four dollars on it, which James took despondingly.

The pawnier of flat-irons also appeared with a parcel, — a dress of thin material, a child's hat, a small looking-glass, and a travelling-bag ; the last, though Naomi did not guess it, being the property of a person whom she served, and in it she brought and carried back the clothes. She put it in pawn, expecting to redeem it before it came time to take back the wash.

“The childer must have their Christmas meat and pudding,” she said to Naomi.

“This dollar will get but a small dinner, I think,” said Naomi.

“Oh ! poor folks can't pick and choose.

I'll get a boiling-bit out of the neck for a quarter; and sugar and plums and milk and molasses will take the rest up; and somehow I'll redeem the bundle before spring. She went off with a *débonair* look and gait that expressed, more than her words, that she was taking this world easy as far as she could.

"She dosh not care," said our uncle, catching Naomi's eye: "she never vash vorth ten tollar, and she dosh never expects to be. Gentiles ish not thrifty like Jews, Naomi. I am glad te rabbi ish going to keeps tem out of te holy city: put vere vill Naomi be? Te rabbi vill not let mein girl in, because she dosh not go to synagogue."

To Naomi's distress, many street-sweepers, boot-blacks, news-boys, gutter-snipes, and others of that gentry whom the genial holiday-time had impelled somebody to furnish with good coats, hats, shawls, or shoes, came flocking in, and pawned the newly-gained gar-

ments, that they might have wherewithal to go to the theatre, to get chicken and oysters, or, worse yet, "to have a jolly lark, and buy whiskey and tobacco."

And so the days passed: standing in the shop, speaking a good word or giving occasionally acted-upon advice, or a little carefully-bestowed aid to the comers thither; up stairs quietly fulfilling the behests of her aunt and Judith, and entertaining Hagar; and at evening doing the work she had taken from Ewings's grand store, or making up her own little gifts. And so Christmas morning came; and Naomi found on her pillow the album from Hagar, and exchanged good wishes with the child, and gave her a transparent slate, and a magnetic duck and fish from Aunt Anna and Timothy. And breakfast passed over quietly, as nobody remembered what day it was but these two girls; and then Naomi was off for her holiday. She

went to Timothy's shop, and gave him the scarf and wristlets, and then they both went to see Mrs. Roberts; Timothy carrying a basket, containing a little shawl from Naomi, and the hood and slippers made by Hagar, and meat and rice for a dinner given by himself.

"Well, bless the Lord! how he brings good out of evil!" cried Mrs. Roberts: "such a dear child as you coming smiling in on one, and all these nice presents, just from failing of my wages, and going to pawn my bonnet. Won't I be chipper in this hood and shawl, my dear! and bless you, how warm the old man's feet will keep in these slippers!"

"And how is your husband to-day?" asked Naomi.

"Oh! he's lively, my dear: ever since the snow began to fall, and he could see it on the roofs, he's been a boy again, going coasting. Dear, dear! when this wandering first came on

him, it made me heart-sick. But now I take it as one of the Lord's kind ways to give him comfort out of his life ; for he never comes to himself to fret like : only you can call him up by talking religion, and of sermons, and the dear Lord ; and then he slips away again."

So saying, Mrs. Roberts stooped, and put the quilted shoes on her husband's feet.

" Oh, I see you !" he said, looking knowingly at Naomi : " I see you taking out them slippers from your basket. There ain't much but what I see ; and the Lord he sees you too, and he'll pay you. I see the meat and the little paper : them's things to eat, and they come good to us. Old lady she works for us both ; but she can't earn like as I earnt when I worked for her."

" Hear that, now !" said Mrs. Roberts : " sometimes he wakes up amazing over some of the Lord's goodness ; but it is never to be dull and sad, — the old man's as brisk as a bee."

“Good-by, Timothy,” said Naomi, as the old man left her on the corner of Spring Street. “Come up early to dinner, and see how Aunt Anna looks in her new cap.”

In effect, Aunt Anna was soon arrayed in Naomi’s; and Naomi, having received a pair of fur cuffs which she knew it had cost Aunt Anna much careful economy to buy, took time to run over to see Mrs. Waters.

“James is in the store this morning,” said Mrs. Waters: “they are so close there, they will only give half a day; but I am getting dinner ready. And do you know, Naomi, I have knit three pairs of socks and two sacques; and this afternoon I am going to slip out, and take them to Ewings’s, and get paid. But don’t say a word, Naomi; for James don’t know any thing about it.”

“Why do you not tell him, and have him go there with you?” said Naomi anxiously.

“Oh! it would make him feel badly, I know.

I want to get some money ahead first ; then I'll tell him. If I tell him now, he will worry for fear I'll make myself sick, or something like that."

Naomi felt that she had no right to say any thing more ; though she realized how misguided these two young people were, who did not fully confide in each other, and bravely face their position. She returned to Aunt Anna, while Mrs. Waters baked a chicken and made a pudding, bought with money James had vaguely said he had gotten from his "uncle."

The day had ended at last, as all bright days must end. Timothy, according to custom, saw Naomi home. Between Aunt Anna and her old half-brother, Naomi had never known the lack of father and mother ; and that night, as her sturdy old companion plodded along by her side, and she thought how carefully Aunt Anna had tied her hood

and pinned on her shawl, bidding her warm her feet when she got home, Naomi inwardly thanked God, who had so shielded her orphaned infancy and girlhood. Her thoughts, by force of contrast, wandered off to Jane Craig's lonely grave.

"I can't help thinking of Jane to-night," she said. "How easily I might have been left to be as desperate as she was, with no father nor mother to take care of me! But what friends God has raised up for me!"

"The love of dress and flattery, and what folks call places of amusement, are shoals that wreck many a girl. There was poor Jane,—no young girl, to be sure, but quite as foolish as one, seeing her mind wasn't ballasted with religion,—to gratify *her* tastes she turned thief,—for it was nothing better,—and then, in despair at being found out, killed herself. She was as reckless as a Chinese. I hear they are wondrous ready to kill themselves.

But it is no wonder folks set no higher value on life, when they can't see it is for any higher end than serving themselves. And I think again, Naomi, what a guilt is to be laid at the door of many a mistress, who never heeds what temptations she puts in a girl's way; never gives her any advice; never takes any interest in her more than to see that she does the work she's paid for doing! The girl may run about at night, and have any kind of company, and the mistress gives no heed. Dear, dear! pity they don't know they are their brothers' keepers, or their girls' keepers all the same."

"Timothy," said Naomi, drawing closer to him, "do you know that man looking in that window?"

"No, and don't want to," said Timothy sharply.

"He came to the shop one evening. He doesn't look poor, does he? but he pawned a whole bundle of things behind the screen. He didn't come near my counter."

"Humph!" grunted Timothy.

"It was the only evening I ever staid in the shop; and I will not stay there another," continued Naomi."

"Nö, I wouldn't," said Timothy; but, after Rose had let Naomi in at her uncle's, Timothy shook his head at the "Three Golden Balls," and at the legend "SOLOMON MOSES SIMPSON" on the sign-board, and said, —

"Oh, you old sinner! you buy of men who train bits of children to pick pockets, do you? I believe in my heart you do. If I was sure of it, your sign would come down presently. I couldn't go *that*."

Up stairs ran Naomi, her pale cheeks pink from the frosty air; her eyes yet dancing from her happy day, as if they reflected all the lights that had gleamed on the Christmas-tree.

"Did you get presents?" cried Hagar.

Naomi held out her cuffs and a pair of gloves for Hagar's approval.

“Bah!” said Judith: “been keeping the Christian’s day.”

“Why not?” said Naomi firmly. “I am a Christian too.”

“I’d be ashamed to own it, then,” said Judith. “See how the Christians deny the seventh day, which God made holy! Is not creating the world a thing worth our remembering?”

“Yes: but redeeming it was greater still,” said Naomi.

“And then what creatures your Christians are. There are the Catholics, who say they are the best of all; and look how they burned thousands of Jews in Spain, just because we would not bow down and serve their images like they do! and break the second commandment like you all do the fourth,” went on Judith. But lest any one should suspect Judith of being a good scholar, or conversant with history, it may be well to

state that she was repeating what she had heard the rabbi say only a day or two before. She had now said all she could recall; and, besides, her attention was distracted by noticing Naomi's gloves; and the embroidery upon the back especially pleased her fancy.

"O Naomi!" she said, "how I like your gloves! Change with me, won't you? You will like mine just as well."

"But these were a present," said Naomi.

"Never mind that: mine are a prettier color, and I daresay they are finer. Give me those, and I will get you mine to-morrow."

"Pooh!" cried Hagar: "Naomi's gloves won't begin to fit you Judith; and your's would look like bags on her: keep your own."

"I dare say," said Naomi, "that you can easily find a pair just like these, Judith."

"Very likely, and twenty times better; but I ain't to spend any more money on gloves this winter."

“If it is only the embroidery you want them for, I will work those you have just like them. Maybe you would choose some other color.”

“Yes,” said Judith: “orange color in these would match my hat-strings better; and, if you think you can work mine just as nice as that, you can do it to-morrow, and you need not give me yours, Naomi.”

The Jews celebrate their New Year in the autumn; the date varying from the early part of September, to the second week in October, as they calculate by lunar months. The more devout Jews hold in remembrance the purification of the Temple, once called the “Feast of Lights.” Our uncle submitted to the celebration of all these feasts. He had some feeble clinging to the faith and habits of childhood and fatherland; he was a very little influenced by what other Jews might say; he liked to do things differently from

the Gentiles. Besides, these festal occasions did not incommode him. The shop went on all the same. Our uncle would have deemed it sacrilege—the only sacrilege he was capable of appreciating—to check the current of business that flowed through the doorway under the “Three Golden Balls.”

“Te vimin can light te house up,” he said. “Ve vill let te Gentiles know ve ish alive. Vat dosh te vimin care vor but to spend te monish ash I piles it up. Let te vimin keep te feasts; and ven te holy city ish restore, ve vill know all te vays of te place, ant pe good Heprews; ant here ish ein son of Abraham ash vill go in mit von goot piles monish; eh, Naomi!”

As to the fasts he was not so clear. “Vy shall I fast?” he cried: “can I do mein pissen on von empty stomach? Can I pile up mein monish ven I am hungry! Tere ish enough of hungry folks in mein shops,

mitout dese Heprew peing starved; eh, Naomi?"

When, therefore, an unusual fit of vigilance on the part of the sorely exercised rabbi had brought about the due observance of the appointed fast, and Judith and her mother consoled themselves for the absence of their usual meals by dressing gorgeously and going to synagogue, our reprobate uncle would call for his chops and coffee, and cry, "Naomi ist ein gut girl: ish on te fence of safety mein chilt; ish ein Jew, ant keep te feasts and te fasts; ant ist ein Christian, and keeps te fasts ant te feasts. Vast vor dein uncle, mein girl: hast few sins of dein own, ant can vast vor mein. Vast gut, Naomi, ant touches nothing; mint girl ist vasting vor two, ant ein ist dein vicket olt uncle."

Chuckling much over all this wit, he would dispose of three hearty meals, and at night, pinching his niece's ear, would say,—

"I feels petter, Naomi. Dein fast hast done me gut: mein sins are light ast ein feather, mein chilt; and te piles monish dosh grow; eh, Naomi."

"You know very well, uncle," replied Naomi, "that I can do neither your fasting nor praying."

"I don't see why," said Judith, with whose temperament fast-days did not agree, "you keep our feasts or fasts at all; you have your own, as you claim to be a Christian. You're a renegade Jew, that's what you are."

"I'm sure," replied Naomi calmly, "that I have mercies enough to keep feasts of thankfulness for, and I have also sins enough over which I can fast and pray."

"It won't do you any good," snapped Judith: "you'll never get to the holy city. For one thing, you don't know a word of Hebrew, and that's what they'll all speak."

"How much Hebrew do you know, Judith?" asked Hagar.

“Why, as much as I ever did : don’t we all learn it in our schools? Here, give me that book : I can read you any page.”

Hagar handed her sister a little book in Hebrew; and Judith read a few sentences, then threw the book back again, saying, “There, now !”

“Pooh !” said Hagar : “I can read that much too.”

“You ought to : didn’t you go to Hebrew school ?” said Judith.

“Naomi,” said Hagar, when they went up stairs, “do you believe that Hebrew was what God talked to Adam and Eve in Eden ? The rabbi says so.”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied Naomi : “it is a very old language, and the one the Bible was written in.”

“And,” persisted Hagar, “do you suppose it is the language they will all speak in Heaven, or Jerusalem restored ?” said Hagar,

whose confession of faith held articles gathered from both the rabbi and Naomi.

Of course Naomi replied that she did not know.

“Some of the Jews are keeping the ‘Feast of Lights,’” said Hagar. “Mother isn’t going to: she says it takes too many candles to illuminate; and Judith says it’s only very pious ones that keep it any more.”

“Yes,” said Naomi: “they observe it by prayer, though they used to illuminate their houses and synagogues, and have a feast, celebrating it for eight days.”

“I don’t know as I understand what it is all about,” said Hagar.

“It is to celebrate the time when the Temple at Jerusalem was purified, after Antiochus Epiphanes polluted it by setting up the Roman standards in it, and offering swine upon the altar of sacrifice,” replied Naomi.

The Feast of Purim comes with the last days

of February or the first of March ; all the Jewish Feasts being movable. This is generally celebrated by the Jews, and our Chatham-street uncle kept it as well as the rest.

When, on the first day of the celebration, Mrs. Simpson and her daughter had gone to the synagogue, Naomi and Hagar being left at home, Naomi said, "Come, Hagar, we will read all about this feast."

"Yes," said Hagar : "it means lots, because they cast lots before that horrible old Persian Haman, to find a day to kill all the Jews. Arn't you glad they didn't?"

"Yes," said Naomi : "it was a wonderful salvation for the Jews, and shows us how God hears and answers prayer, and is greater than the most powerful man, and holds the hearts of kings in his hands."

"And some of the Jews call this Mordecai's day, on account of Esther's uncle. Don't you think Mordecai was ever such a nice old man,

Naomi ? I wonder if we shall see him up in the sky ! ”

“ I hope so,” said Naomi ; “ and now, if you are ready, Hagar, I’ll read the Book of Esther to you.”

Hagar drew her feet up comfortably on the sofa, and prepared to listen to her cousin, who sat in a low rocker near her, the Bible on her knee. It was a pleasant scene. Naomi had made the room tidy : herself and Hagar were very types of neatness. The fire glowed in the open stove ; Hagar’s bird dozed in his cage. Naomi read well, — a rare accomplishment, — and Hagar entered into the story with all her soul.

“ Dear, how glad I am old Haman got hung ! ” she cried. “ I *do* feel a little sorry about his ten sons ; but I suppose they were grown up men, and as bad as their father. Don’t you suppose his wife felt pretty bad ? ”

“ Then, when Naomi had read a little further, Hagar said, —

“Yes, the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar ; that’s now, you know : we keep it yet. How many years have we been keeping it, Naomi ? ”

“About two thousand three hundred and seventy, — a little more than that.”

“My, what a very old nation we are !” said Hagar, with a little pride. Our Purim didn’t come just this time last year, did it, Naomi : you remember how it rained ? That’s on account of taking time by the moon ; and the moon, Naomi, is so very unreliable. It seems funny to think of those Jews in Shushan and Babylon and Jerusalem, all keeping this feast just as we do. Having company, and sending presents, and all that. You know to-night we are going to have company to a big supper, and to-morrow night Abraham will have one. He is coming here, and our folks are going there, — all but us two, Naomi : we always have to stay home.”

"We have nice times by ourselves, I am sure," said Naomi.

Here Daniel came rushing up-stairs two steps at time, and, flinging in a parcel, cried, "Judith! from Abraham!" and dashed back again to the shop. Naomi picked up the parcel, and laid it on the table.

"I wonder what it is!" said Hagar curiously.

"She will be home before long, and let us see," replied Naomi.

"I wish we could see now," said Hagar impatiently.

"Of course we have no right to meddle with her presents," said Naomi calmly, sitting down to her sewing. But here our uncle came in, and, being a man devoid of scruples, said, with two or three prodigious winks, "We will see vat Abraham hash sent to Judith."

"I wouldn't!" exclaimed Naomi; but our uncle cut the string, and out of the parcel

fell a handsome crape shawl, heavily embroidered and with a rich fringe.

"It ish von fine shawl," said our uncle, winking again: "it vill do for ein bride; eh, Naomi?"

"I wonder if it was pawned at his shop!" cried Hagar.

"Maype," said our nonchalant uncle, not seeing any thing out of the way in that view of the case.

"Nobody sends *us* any thing!" cried Hagar fretfully, looking at Naomi.

"Vell," said our uncle, "vell, it is feast-time. I must pe ein gut old man, eh? Ach, vell!" and his hand sought his carefully-buttoned pocket. "Heir ist some monish: shall go out and shops, and let me see something fine on mein children in te evening."

"Oh, good!" cried Hagar: "let's go out this afternoon, Naomi, and have fun."

Our uncle went down to his shop, and

Naomi was trying to fold the shawl when her aunt and cousin came in.

“What is all this!” cried Judith.

“It is a present to you from Abraham. I was trying to fold it,” said Naomi.

“I wish you’d let my things alone: how dare you touch it!” cried Judith, pulling off cloak and gloves to try on the new shawl.

“Father opened it: Naomi told him not,” said Hagar. “Oh!” said Judith, already mollified by the elegance of her buff shawl, and drawing it up about her ample shoulders, while her mother, hat in hand, stood by admiring its effect.

“From Abraham, oh!” said Mrs. Simpson; and Hagar was just about to cry out, “I dare-say the old horror got it out of his shop,” when a warning glance from Naomi kept her silent.

Hagar was very happy that afternoon going shopping. She bought a blue net with blue

and gilt tassels, and a collar with tiny blue velvet knots, and a handkerchief with embroidered corners, for the evening's party. She also persuaded Naomi to buy a white net berthe, trimmed with white ruches, to wear with her black silk dress; for Naomi was to be present at the entertainment, and, like other girls, anticipated some pleasure from being dressed up, and seeing plenty of people. The joy of Hagar's excursion was augmented by stopping at Timothy's shop-door, and by meeting Mrs. Roberts on the street; and Naomi's Purim gift was not too far exhausted for her to send some apples and a sheet of gingerbread for the old man who in his easy-chair revelled in a supposititious boyhood. The girls got home just in time to drink a cup of tea, and dress for the party.

We did not know until now that our uncle had a particle of taste; but when he saw his niece come down to the parlor before any

guests arrived, dressed in her plain black silk, with her fair face and snowy throat rising from the soft white lace of her cape, he rushed away, and in a minute returned with a round pin delicately cut of ivory, with four pearls clustered in the centre. "Shalt have ein vite pin, mein girl: hast notting at dein pretty neck," he said.

Naomi drew back a little, as he essayed to clasp the berthe with the pin. Her uncle laughed. "It vash never pawnd!" he cried. "It vash pought mit mein monish, ant it vas cheap I gets it!" So Naomi wore the pin.

We are not going to make our uncle out any worse than he was; so we narrate, that he was that evening visited by the same individual whose large store of diverse articles had one night excited Naomi's astonishment. The man heard the sounds of mirth from above.

"Ah, you're having a party, my uncle!" he cried: "suppose I step up a while!"

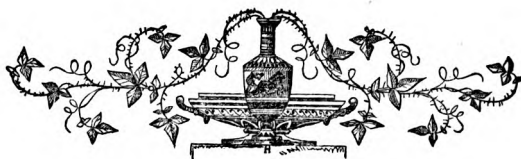
Our uncle, with his customary carelessness about all matters outside of the shop, was about to assent, when he bethought himself, and replied, —

“Nein, nein : ish not gut company vor mein girls : vill do vor dein vicket old uncle ; but te uncle ant hish chiltren are not von ant te same ; vill go dein vay : shalt never gets varther ant mein shops.”

Very likely our uncle added, “Eh, Naomi ? ” under his breath.

So there was a party at our uncle’s ; and the next night one where Abraham’s gilt balls hung out ; and, after the first party, Judith and her mother went to a ball ; and, after the second party, they went with Abraham to a masquerade ; and, from overmuch excitement, Judith was tired and cross for a week thereafter.

And this is how our uncle’s family kept the Feast of Purim.



CHAPTER VIII.

A JEWISH WEDDING.



RS. WATERS was yet working on worsted goods for the store of Messrs. Ewings, and laying up a little money for a rainy day, or to surprise her husband when she should make up her mind to tell him what she was doing. Naomi urged her to make known her plans at once. "I shouldn't think it was a good plan to have any kind of a secret," she said.

"It will only make him fret more than ever," said Mrs. Waters. "He hates portering,

and frets for engraving so he can hardly live now ; and, if he knew I had felt I must work for our bread, he would fret worse yet. It is not like you : you only work to have something to give away, your aunt told me ; that is different from working for one's bread."

"No necessity that the Lord lays upon us is disgraceful," said Naomi firmly. The two were going together to take home their work : they usually went to and from the store together.

"He's got some uncle who has done a little for him since we came here," said Mrs. Waters. "I think it is queer that James had never mentioned him to me before ; and I wish he would do something more worth while, than to send a little money now and then."

"Oh !" thought Naomi to herself, "what a pity that you two, joined together for better

or worse, don't trust each other a little more ! What a pity that you do not know who that uncle really *is*, and how the money came ! Still she dared not say any thing, and they walked on in silence. She reflected how she had one day seen Mr. Waters lingering at the door of temptation. What would this weak, fond, almost helpless young woman do, if her husband became a drunkard ? A sudden thought opened Naomi's lips. " Mrs. Waters, as your husband has no one where he works with whom he cares to associate, why don't you walk with him to and from his work. It would do you good, and cheer him up."

" It would take so much time," said Ellen Waters.

" Your time could not be better spent."

" And make me so tired " —

" You would get used to the walk, and not mind it."

" There is no need of it," said Mrs. Waters.

“There may be more than you think. If your husband is brooding and unhappy, you ought to keep with him and cheer him. Suppose he got a brain-fever, and died in a few days” —

“Oh, mercy ! do you think there is danger of that ?” cried Mrs. Waters aghast.

“There is no knowing what there is danger of. I’d go with him in the morning, and meet him at night ; and I’d put him up a nice little dinner to eat at noon, whether he wants it or not.”

“Yes: but every thing nice costs more than we can pay.”

“You have no idea,” said Naomi, “how many ways of making *nice* and *cheap* things Aunt Anna has : if I were you, I’d go and talk it all over with her ; see if she cannot show you how to save money, and be comfortable too. You don’t know what a wise Aunt Anna she is.”

“And what a wise girl you are!” cried Mrs. Waters. “I’ll take your advice: I think it was you that first gave me courage to get well.”

Naomi went up to see Aunt Anna one pleasant afternoon. The spring seemed fairly inaugurated: all things spoke of new life and cheer.

“Naomi,” said Aunt Anna, “our minister was here the other day, and wants you to come and see him. He cannot very well go to your uncle’s: he thinks it would be pleasanter if you went to see him instead. It is not far from here, and you must go sometime. He and his wife are both your-good friends.”

“I know they are, and I ought to go. I want to talk to him about my Sunday-school class, and about Hagar, and lots of other things. I meant to stay here with you this afternoon; but I believe I’ll go up there.”

“Perhaps you had better,” said Aunt Anna.

Naomi was soon at her pastor's door, and ushered into his study. She had been there but a few moments, when a lady came in with several thick little blocks in her hands, and, throwing them impatiently on the table, cried out to the worthy divine, "Just look there! Did you ever see such stiff, hideous things in your life? after all I said about it! That man will drive me to a lunatic asylum, unless he does better. See that girl's ear and mouth as big as her whole face!" and she put a little white finger contemptuously on one of the blocks.

"They are ugly, sure enough," said the gentleman, bending over the blocks.

"I want some grace and freedom," said the lady, putting another block under the fire of her indignation.

"See that! If I could find a new hand entirely, whom nobody had ever heard of, I'd have the pictures got up under my own super-

vision. I'll fling these in the fire;" and she swept the blocks into a jaunty little apron she wore, and went out of the study, apparently having never seen Naomi at all.

"That is my sister!" said the pastor laughing. "She has been getting up a book, and is in a great strait because the pictures do not suit her."

Naomi thought of James Waters, but knew not how to mention him, as art and engravers were subjects on which she could have no opinion. However, she resolved not to let her own backwardness stand in anybody's light; so, before leaving, she related what she knew of Mr. Waters and his wife, telling the whole story, the matter of the pawns and all, as she knew the confidence would not be betrayed. The good pastor was much interested. He left the room, and conferred with his sister. Returning, he said, "Naomi, give that young man my card, and ask him to come up here."

You may mention the matter of our wanting pictures."

Naomi, therefore, went to Mrs. Waters on her way home.

James had come in from his work, and was sitting by the window with a book Aunt Anna had got for him. In these dreary times, we may feel pretty sure that James Waters would have made woful shipwreck had it not been for Aunt Anna.

Aunt Anna had cheered him in his darkest hours, had nursed his wife, had taught them how to make their narrow means supply their necessities, had persuaded them to go with her to church, to prayer-meeting, and to a few free lectures on general subjects, attending which, had turned their attention from themselves, and brought to them the feeling of the old-time respectability. She had also found ways of getting for James the books he craved, and thus making his evenings endurable.

Naomi briefly informed James of the pictures that a lady wished designed and engraved, and that, by going to the address she gave him, he might secure familiar and well-paid work.

Ellen clapped her hands at the suggestion. "O James, go to-night!" she cried: "you will get engraving to do, and need not be a porter any more!"

James seemed quite indifferent; but, offering to see Naomi to the street, his indignation burst forth on the lowest landing, and he cried, "What did you mention it for, and before Ellen, too. I never can be anybody again! How can I work without my tools? and you know they are at the shop; and I have not a cent to take them out with, let alone four dollars. Then, in a softer tone, he added, "There's no use in trying to save a scuttled ship. Never try to help me more. I'm doomed ever since I came to this city.

I've been deceived by everybody, and found no end of enemies."

"None so bad an enemy as yourself," said Naomi. "The best way for you to do is to go up stairs, and tell the whole story of your pawns to your wife. Maybe she can help you out of your trouble."

"I can't tell her," said James, "just as she's got well, and you've set her to hoping: she'll cry herself sick again."

"No: she will give you money to help you. I have a mind to go up and tell her myself."

"No, no: don't. She hasn't a penny: there's no use of 'putting on' to you: we're poor as poverty."

"She has money: will you go ask her?"

"Yes: but I know she hasn't any," said James desperately.

Naomi went home, and James returned moodily up stairs.

"Have you any money?" he asked his wife.

Ellen hesitated: she wanted to get ten dollars before she made her ways known.

"I know you haven't of course," said James sighing.

Ellen thought he might want to buy pencils, or something else for the new work; so she said presently, throwing a little wallet at him, "Yes, James: I've got five dollars. I earned it crocheting. You can have it. Now get out your tools, and see that they're all right; and, after supper, go and see if you can get those pictures to make: just think, James, — design and engrave too!"

Instead of getting the tools, James poured forth his story of the pawnbroker's shop, and promised to redeem the tools at once, and "never do so again;" while his wife related her knitting and crocheting exploits, and both took courage to work together for better times.

In short, James went to the minister's, and succeeded in convincing the lady that there was a possibility he might get up a set of pictures that would suit her: at any rate, he was to make the trial.

It was during these lovely spring days, that Timothy proposed to Naomi to go and see Mrs. Roberts.

"The old man is failing," he said: "I sat up with him last night; and I would not wonder if he did not live till morning. Very likely it will comfort the old lady to have you go there."

"Why, how do they get on if he is sick: she cannot work," said Naomi.

"It has only been a few days," said Timothy. "I dropped in a few minutes ago to see how they came on; and he had not sat up that day. He just lies quiet and sleepy all the time. She sits by him, and knits and watches him; feeds him beef-tea, and keeps his

feet warm. It is all that can be done; and most likely he'll go off easy as a sleeping baby."

"I know you've been helping them," said Naomi.

"Well, a bit, to be sure," admitted Timothy: "why not? I have neither chick nor child looking to me. Sister Anna sent them something too; and, if you want a hand in it, my girl, you may get something for the old lady, and a mouthful of calves'-foot jelly for the old man."

Naomi found the old man lying as Timothy had described; while his wife, with busy fingers and a sorrowful face, sat watching his every breath.

"People think he's a burden to me, and I won't miss him," she said; "but they don't know about it. If the old man goes, what is there for *me* to live for? This forty year we've been together; and to me there's no-

body in the world like the old man. We've had trouble with our children: we've lost 'em one by one. It was along of trying to get one of our boys cured, that we came to New York. Our girl, all the girl we ever had, was likely enough, and spry and well, till she dropped off so sudden. Who else but the old man remembers all our old friends, and the times when I was young, and cares for thoughts of the children? Yes, dear: they tell me he'll go soon. Well, it's hard on me; but, praise the Lord! he's going first, and not to be left helpless like he is, to go to the poorhouse and hospital, and be nursed by strangers. I'll go some day after him. Hope the Lord will keep me patient, dear, that I won't fret too much over losing the old man."

"Yes: you must make up your mind to let him go pretty soon now," said Timothy, letting fall the sleeper's nerveless hand. "His pulse is most gone. Give him a spoonful of wine."

The old lady administered the wine, and then sat at the head of the bed, stroking her husband's gray hair with her wrinkled hand. Naomi took the old lady's vacant chair and abandoned work, and mechanically went to knitting. Mrs. Roberts looked at her with tears in her faded eyes, "'Pears, dear, like as I could never take another stitch if I haven't the old man left to work for. These five years I've been working away, thinking I was keeping him a home, and making it comfortable for him, and he sitting there wandering off to old times: why, dear, it pretty nigh made me young sometimes, — brought up old pleasant things and people. Yes, yes, dear: the old man minded me of the past; he does now. I can see the old home, and my father and mother dying: ah, yes, dear!"

The old man slowly opened his eyes.

"Well, old friend," said Timothy, "you've most got home."

“Home!” the old man, who had lain speechless for three days, uttered the word loud and clear, — “Home, — the snow’s deep and the boys are all going sledding. Where’s mother?”

“Dear knows!” said the old lady, tears running over her withered cheeks: “she’s been in glory these thirty years.”

“Old friend!” cried Timothy, leaning over the bed: “you’re most home; but it’s the home where Jesus is; do you know that home?”

“Ay, ay!” said the old man clearly. “Jesus! why, he’s the Door: he died for the like of us. Yes, sir: I know him, because” — and his voice rose triumphantly — “he first knew me.”

That holy name had been the master-key to unlock his sealed senses: “Where’s the old lady?”

“Here I am,” sobbed the aged wife, leaning into view.

"That's right. I'm going now to Jesus: you heard what you said to me. Our old folks is there, and our boys, and our girl, — you mind? I'll wait for you, Mary."

He lay looking curiously about, as a last look on things he should never see again. To Timothy it seemed as if the soul so near glory was peering amazed at the barren and pitiful surroundings that had cherished it so long. His gaze fell on Naomi. "That ain't our girl," he said wistfully.

"No," said Timothy: "your girl's in heaven. This one comes to see you sometimes."

"Ay, ay! brings things in her basket. I mind: I see her do it." He held out his hand uncertainly. Naomi rose, and stood near him. "The old lady," he said, "she's got no girl now: she's all alone, you know." His voice sunk suddenly to a whisper, — "Old lady;" and, ere she could answer, he was gone,

in one swift moment far away beyond all earthly sight or speech.

They buried the old man next day ; Naomi and Timothy going with the widow to the grave. A day or two afterwards, Timothy hired for Mrs. Roberts a room just above Aunt Anna's, and moved her few possessions thither. It was a better place for her than miserable Pell Street, and Aunt Anna was good company for the mourner. She could see Naomi every Sunday ; and weak, kind little Mrs. Waters had learned that it is good to weep with those who weep, and, alas ! felt it good to have somebody whom *she* could patronize. So she went often to see our old lady, whom she liked to tell what "splendid" pictures James was making. James dared not give up his hated place at the store yet ; but his mind had gone back to his art with a vigorous bound, and he was astonishing himself by his picture-making, and securing firm

and able friends in the pastor and his sister. James spoke less of going to ruin now, and less of the deceitfulness and chicanery of all creation. A little encouragement was doing him a world of good ; but we think, if Aunt Anna had not stood firmly by him during his dark hours, he would have been swept down to destruction before the encouragement came. May the Lord help us to be mindful of the stranger within our gates !

Naomi had been absent from her uncle's one afternoon ; and when she got home,—it was one of the fairest of June days, and she had taken tea at Aunt Anna's,—Hagar was waiting impatiently to go to their seat in the front-room window.

This eyrie was daily dusted by Naomi ; and had, since warm weather arrived, been again the chosen resort of Hagar and Naomi.

Naomi threw up the window, and put Hagar in her place, then stood gazing on the bustling streets.

"What a steady stream goes into Abraham's!" she said; "and I suppose it is just so here."

"Oh, sit down!" cried Hagar: "I'm fairly dying to tell you something. Judith *is* going to be married to Abraham. Mother'll tell you to-morrow: and won't you have to fuss and sew this hot weather? It is too bad! but I know you'll be glad when Judith's gone: I will; and mother and Judith will be good-natured now right straight along until the wedding's over. How *can* Judith marry horrid old Abraham!"

"I wouldn't say that any more," said Naomi; "since she is going to marry him, she won't want to hear it."

This was very good advice; but Hagar was not ready to profit by it. Hagar was one of the weak things of this world; but she had her own little sting, which was teasing, and she was ready at times to use it.

Judith had always thought Hagar rather in her way, and, in common with her mother, had chosen to be mortified at the child's affliction ; while she had never in any way endeavored to gain Hagar's love. She was yet vexed at the preference shown for Naomi.

Judith despised Hagar's reading, rebuked her weird, fanciful talk, ridiculed her amusements, and, in fine, was not willing that the child should have any thing, or be anybody. Mrs. Simpson was never positively unkind to any one. She was, at worst, merely lazy and exacting ; and, considering her younger daughter as undeniably an incumbrance, was satisfied with neglecting her. As we have hinted before, Hagar might have been ignored out of existence, died simply from overmuch "letting alone," had it not been for Naomi.

The work of refurnishing and refurbishing Judith's wardrobe went briskly on. Naomi was up early to take her needle, and only left

it as the twilight drew on. Thanks to her taste, Judith's outfit, though over-gorgeous, would not quite set one's teeth on edge; and Judith was in fine spirits over her new acquisitions in the way of dress. With all this labor and responsibility of planning, cutting, fitting, trimming, and making up, Naomi might have been worn out, but for the Sunday relaxation in the quiet of church and Aunt Anna's room, and the obedience she paid to the good old lady's admonitions in taking some exercise about the house, and going out now and then with Hagar.

At last Naomi, and a young Jewess who had been called in to help her, reached the grand climax of the wedding-dress. This was a buff watered silk, beautifully ornamented with white bugles and blonde. The anxiety of getting this successfully completed was too much for Judith's temper. She found that Naomi was "slow and careless," that Hagar was "in

the way," "made them lose things," "mussed the work," "took Naomi's attention," was "silly" in some fanciful talk about the buff silk, from the low life of the cocoon to the glorification of the present; and, indeed, wished the child were out of the way, she was so disagreeable.

Hagar retreated upon her established line of defence, and rules of warfare not untried before. She asserted that the wedding-dress was a "hateful yellow;" that Judith was "too big" to wear yellow; that the trimming looked "ridiculous." Next she attacked the character and appearance of the bridegroom elect: he was old, he was ugly, he was greedy, he only wanted Judith to save the expense of a clerk. She imitated Abraham's voice, his manners, his decidedly foreign accents, and unpleasantly suggested his bald head and white beard. Thus all day, despite the peevish remonstrance of our uncle's wife, and the

warning glances Naomi directed at Hagar, a running fire was kept up between the rival forces of Judith and Hagar, until the smaller combatant asserted, as a grand *coup-de-grâce*, that the emerald in the ring Judith was to give was green stone, and that she knew very well that Abraham would give his bride "a stuffy paste thing, set in brass, and pawned to him for a sixpence, its time not being out for half a year to come."

After this venture, Hagar was banished from the room, and did not venture to return until early and cool evening had arrived. Mrs. Simpson and her daughter had gone to bring home the bridal-hat, the young dressmaker had departed, and Naomi was alone.

The lonely Hagar stole in, and, hanging upon Naomi's chair, began to pat her cheek.

Naomi, finishing one of the yellow-silk sleeves, quietly removed the caressing hand.

"Don't you love me?" said Hagar childishly.

"Not now: you have been so teasing," said Naomi.

"Yes you do," said Hagar, kissing Naomi's neck.

"Go away now: you have been very unkind to Judith, and you must not come to me until you are sorry."

"What have I done?" fretted Hagar: "Judy is cross."

"She is your older sister, and you ought to treat her with respect," said Naomi.

"But Abraham is old," began Hagar.

"What may seem so to a little girl like you may not to Judith, who is twenty years older than you are."

"But I would not marry such a horrid" —

"Nobody wants you to," interrupted Naomi; "and it is wrong to be calling folks horrid. You said what you know is not true about the

dress, for Judith does look well in it ; and you also said what was not true about the rings, for Abraham gives Judith handsome presents."

"But she *will* go into the shop: there, now."

"She very likely is better pleased with that way of life than any other. If it suits her, you have no right to meddle about it."

"So you think I told stories?" said Hagar, drawing away.

"Remember, that, when people are angry and quarrelling, they most always are untruthful," said Naomi ; and she continued, "You say you are a Christian : a Christian must be Christ-like. Messiah, when he was reviled, reviled not again. Did you follow his example when you were rude, unkind, and untruthful to Judith?"

Hagar stood looking into the stupid little back-yard, and at the dingy brick buildings closing about it.

"Can't I be a Christian any more?" she asked.

"Nobody but yourself hinders," said Naomi.

"Won't you like me any, ever again?" demanded the melancholy little voice.

"I *do* like you; and I'll make friends whenever you are good, and will not keep up such a turmoil with Judith."

Both were silent until Judith came back with the bonnet,—an affair of white lace and flowers, that seemed to have neither up nor down, back nor front, beginning, middle, nor end.

"Put it on, and let us see it," said Naomi.

"It looks splendid!" cried Hagar. "I never saw you look so nice: everybody in the synagogue will think so;" and Judith did certainly look very well.

Then, as Judith looked quite pleased at the general admiration of the new bonnet, Hagar limped slowly over to Naomi, and stole an approving kiss.

Hagar was to go to the marriage at the synagogue; and that, and her new white dress and pink ribbons, filled her with delight.

Judith, with her stiff silk dress, her new bonnet, and the famous crape shawl, took up a whole hack, except the corner occupied by a little black-haired Jewess, who, in flaming scarlet, acted as bridesmaid. Our uncle, his wife, Hagar, and Naomi occupied a second hack, and were presently at the synagogue, filled with the friends of all the parties.

Our short, thick uncle, begrudging every instant of absence from his shop, led Judith out from the women's side of the house, and placed her before the rabbi. Abraham, well decked with studs and gold buttons, chains and fancy pins, came from the other side of the synagogue, with his "friend," or groomsman, behind him, and took his place by Judith. Our rabbi was a very reverend, earnest, solemn rabbi. He made a long speech to the

couple before him about Isaac and Rebecca, and Abraham and Sara, who were models for all Jewish husbands and wives. The pair before the rabbi did not get weary of this ; for did not Judith know that all in the synagogue had a full view of her new dress and bonnet ? and had not Abraham stood in a pawnbroker's shop long enough to learn to stand still, and endure any amount of talking ?

After a long exhortation, and after a few direct questions which satisfied the rabbi that Judith and Abraham knew very well what they were about, and had not mistaken their own intentions, Abraham put on Judith's finger a very handsome ring, and Judith returned this compliment by putting on one of Abraham's fingers the emerald ring which our uncle admiringly declared " vash vorth monish."

And now everybody crowded about with good wishes and congratulations and compliments ; and Abraham found room for himself

to ride home in the hack with Judith, and the brilliant little bridesmaid went off with somebody else. And our uncle was very glad that "Te pisness vash over, ant he coult get to his shops." And all the Jewish friends and relations were to go to an elaborate banquet at our uncle's, which did great credit to our uncle's wife. That was a very fine dinner indeed: there was nothing Gentile about it but Naomi, and the unlucky furniture and utensils which had been gathered from the children of poverty or dishonesty into the shrine of the "Three Golden Balls." When the afternoon had gone by in feasting and jesting, and evening came, all the company but Naomi and Hagar — whom nobody thought worth inviting — adjourned with much glee to Abraham's, where there was a supper and dancing, and a great many more friends, who had not been to the dinner.

Daniel the prudent ventured in the shop

to hint to our uncle that "this thing had cost pretty well;" and our uncle responded, "Vell, ve must pe put out, ant te monish must fly, ven te vimmin takes it in tere heads. Ve must piles it up vonce more, Daniel!"

And this is the way in which our uncle and his family celebrated Judith's wedding.





CHAPTER IX.

OUT OF SODOM.



THE summer heats, the confinement to the house during the preparations for Judith's marriage, and perhaps, most of all, the dark, close, back rooms they lived in, had worn on both Naomi and Hagar. Both were thin, pale, and heavy-eyed; and our uncle missed their cheerfulness and lively ways, and said sourly, "Vimmin ant girls is great pests: vill gets marriest, or sick, or something, all te time."

Aunt Anna had an ancient friend, a market-

gardener, whom she had known in the days of her house-keeping experiences. This old man and his wife, being Aunt Anna's friends, were, of course, friends to Naomi, and now invited her to spend a few weeks at their farm. Naomi did not hesitate to request them to extend their invitation to Hagar. She knew that a change was necessary to the child's comfort, and let no false bashfulness stand in her way. She said to Aunt Anna, "Hagar can ride about there in her wagon, and sit under the trees, and enjoy herself: just to be there will be enough for me; and I will help Mrs. Dickson, so that she shall not feel that we are any trouble." So one bright afternoon early in August, Mr. Dickson's big market-wagon found its way to Chatham Street, and took the two girls and their bag of clothes, and Hagar's little cart, into the beautiful country. Those who find the largest size of Saratoga-trunks inadequate to contain their wardrobe

for a summer's trip may fairly hold their breath when told that one big bag contained all that these two took for the month ; but that is a plain statement of the case. Each wore a muslin dress, and each carried two new calicoes packed in the smallest compass. Naomi forgot neither aprons nor collars ; and, indeed, they took all that they needed for their sojourn. It is astonishing how much less we can be comfortable with than we are apt to deem absolutely requisite. It was moonlight when they reached the low red farm-house, quiet as if asleep in the midst of the large fragrant garden and broad fields ; and, after Mrs. Dickson had welcomed them heartily, the somnolent influence of the place stole over our two cousins, and they too fell asleep.

All the month of August, Hagar and Naomi lingered in the country, then came again, as they went, in the big market-wagon. Our uncle was glad enough to see them back,

looking well and happy. He shook Mr. Dickson's hand: "Ach, mein friend, hash take gut care vor mein girls! Ven I can do dein pisness, comes mein vay: I shall pe most happy to accommodate. Ven wants any pawnproking done, heir ist Solomon Simpson vill gives ein gut pargain!"

Mr. Dickson, with a hasty nod, jumped into his huge wagon, gathered up the reins, and drove away as if from contagion. He looked upon our uncle's friendly remarks very much as an invitation to immediate bankruptcy.

Perchance those weeks in the quiet simplicity of the market-gardener's humble home had been to Naomi what a few breaths of freedom have to some long-unresisting slave, or like letters from home to some wanderer careless of return, wakening a longing for familiar voices and faces. However that was, Naomi was back at the sign of the "Three Golden Balls," but growing rapidly wise, yet not be-

fore it was time. She had regarded our uncle as a part of a system where certain frauds were legalized, as entangled in meshes of hardness and duplicity, yet not as undertaking separate frauds on his own account, or weaving, like some subtle spider in a corner, new meshes to entangle smaller folk. We will not venture to assert that our uncle is a type of his class. We believe, and devoutly hope, that there are honester men than he. Our uncle is good-natured; but we have long seen plainly that he is given to various crooked ways and devices, and we wonder that Naomi has not seen it herself. In fact, we can hope for little good for our uncle. He is evidently going down to the ditch; and there are many more getting down the same declivity who started just as he. Thus of old there were Hebrews dwelling among idolators, who were afraid of the living God, yet loved idols; and, in a wretched attempt to make themselves safe

in any case, they swore by the Lord, and by Malcham too; for this came the swift curse upon their habitations, "I will cut them off." How many are there now, who vaguely acknowledge a dependence upon God's providential care and goodness, yet worship at the shrine of Mammon!. To them God is God, and so is Mammon God; and Mammon gets greater worship.

Our uncle was a Hebrew, — kept the feasts, sent his family to synagogue, lived on good terms with his rabbi, sometimes thought the holy city would be restored, yet worshipped "piles monish" with all his soul. How many others are there, who call themselves Christians and expect to reach heaven, yet cleave to mammon with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love it as themselves!

But leaving preachment, we get back to Naomi in Chatham Street, busy full often in the shop, where she had learned what value

to put upon pawns, how the tickets were managed, and could conduct a bargain of less than five dollars' value from beginning to end. She could send articles from and to cellar, shelves, and spout; she knew counterfeit coin, and could tell gold when she saw it. From all these acquirements, probably, our uncle judged that she was becoming a sharp little business woman, and became a little less secretive about his defections, thus increasing her wisdom. Naomi accidentally found a copy of the statutes limiting and defining the pawnbroker's trade: to these laws and ordinances her uncle had often referred, as bearing very heavily upon himself and others of his class. To Naomi they appeared just and wise, needful to defend the poor; and yet she knew that, by her relative at least, they were totally disregarded.

Did our uncle adhere to legal rates of interest? Nay: he charged on all sums two per cent a month.

Did our uncle retain all pawns for a year, and then advertise before they were sold?

Were the pawnbrokers' auctions public?

Were they not rather known and attended only by pawnbrokers, who skilfully played into each other's hands?

Naomi's heart grew heavy: the parapets of legality behind which our uncle had sheltered himself turned out to be mere shabby pretences. Not to be beguiled, she took the copy of laws to Solomon.

Our uncle laughed.

"Vy, Naomi, ish ein Heprew to be pount by te law of von Gentiles?"

"You would run to that law for redress if any one robbed or beat you," said Naomi stoutly.

"Ach, Naomi! Ist viser an vimmen shouldt pe! Vill not let dein uncle lay up piles monish ven vill pe dein own some tay? Ach, mein girl, ist in dein own light; eh, Naomi?"

“Oh!” cried Naomi, “I never want any of your money. I had rather labor for myself with my own hands!”

Our uncle chuckled, “Fret not deinself, mein chilt; dein olt uncle ish nicht dead yet. Ach, Naomi: he vill live to pe grown olter ant olter, vile te piles monish grows higher ant higher. Eh, Naomi?”

It was not long before Naomi came across an article in a religious paper which she found at Aunt Anna's, which opened her eyes yet wider. It was an indignant protest against persons — pawnbrokers were especially mentioned — who purchased the plunder of pickpockets. This article stated that there were men in the city who had under them organizations of pickpockets of all ages. These light-fingered gentry took what they stole to their chief: he purchased the articles of them for a certain rate, sold them to the pawnbroker for a rate a little higher, and through the

pawnbroker they made their way back to the public at a still farther advance. Silver articles were melted down, purses were altered, pocket-books were rejuvenated, handkerchiefs lost their distinctive marks, and, indeed, the cormorants of society found ways to fatten on all manner of robberies. This plain statement of facts brought to Naomi's mind the man who sold to her uncle such quantities of small wares, none too large to come out of a pocket. The more she considered the matter, the more was she convinced that this was the head of a band of thieves, — a man who trained children to felony.

She instituted her inquiries by asking Daniel if this person still traded at the shop.

“Yes,” said Daniel with a grin.

“He does not take tickets?” suggested Naomi.

“Oh, no! we *buy* of him.”

"How does he get so many small things to sell?"

"Maybe he's a peddler, got tired of his pack," said Daniel winking.

Naomi next attacked her uncle. Whence came this man's trade?

"It ish none of mein pisness: he prings, I buys," said Solomon.

"Suppose," said Naomi, "that he gets the things of pickpockets: what then?"

"Vell, suppose he do," said our uncle boldly: "it ish none of mein pisness still. I dosh not pick pockets, put somepody must: it hash always been von vay of doing, ant it always vill. Ach, Naomi, ven tere ish ein penny to pe turned, vy shalt not dein uncle turn it?"

"Oh!" thought Naomi to herself, "I cannot live here any longer. If it wasn't for poor little Hagar, I'd have gone long ago."

But love for Hagar, and the child's loneli-

ness and helplessness, held Naomi from any hasty decision. And then Hagar was sick for several weeks, and Naomi nursed her faithfully, and did not go into the shop. She, however, read her Bible a good deal, striving to learn her duty about staying longer at her uncle's. She was not afraid to go out into the world: she could have an honorable home with Aunt Anna, and earn enough to provide her board and clothing. She found that consenting to iniquity is in the same category with practising it ourselves. "When thou sawest a thief" said the Psalmist, "thou consentedst with him."

"Thy princes," cries Isaiah upbraidingly, "were rebellious, and companions of thieves."

"The companion of fools shall be destroyed," writes the wisest of men. And more strongly yet, "Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul." And still Naomi was not yet ready to abandon her uncle as a

thief: his kindness to herself had made her extremely charitable in her judgments of him.

While Naomi was attending upon Hagar, a Mr. Lynell, living in the upper part of the city, was robbed, and lost a goodly assortment of family teaspoons and napkin-rings. Little by little, from accidental remarks, and from stray newspapers, — for our uncle did not patronize the press, — Naomi learned of this robbery, little thinking that it could particularly concern herself. Hagar being considerably better, indeed called well once more, our uncle succeeded in getting Naomi to help him in the shop one busy Saturday.

Our laundress fond of pawning had again her irons in pledge, and came to Naomi to redeem them.

“Sure,” she said, “I just borrowed the money to get ’em out.”

As many times before, Naomi protested to

her that she would never thrive while she haunted a pawnbroker's shop, and advised her to adopt more thrifty ways. Meanwhile, Simon dived into the cellar, and came up with the irons in his hand. The cellar, the spout, the shelves, were grimy places; and Naomi, from mere force of tidy habits, kept a dusting-cloth on her counter to wipe off the returned pawns. She settled the matter of the tickets, received the laundress's fifty cents, wiped one iron, and restored it; but turning up the other to wipe it, lo! a fragment of silver sticking to the bottom. She pulled off the piece of precious metal, the woman went away with the irons, and Naomi examined her discovery. It was a portion of a spoon-handle. It had been broken: the edge had evidently been partly fused. She held it about to the light, and read "Lynell" plainly marked upon it. Her heart bounded, and then grew almost still. She served two or



“WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?” — Page 267

three customers to recover her self-possession, then went behind the screen where sat our uncle, and, laying the marked bit of silver before him, asked plainly, "Where did *you* get that?"

"Vy, girl! Vere did get it?" cried Solomon.

"Where did you get it?" persisted Naomi.

"It ist not dein pisness," said our uncle angrily; then changing his tone, "Tell dein uncle vere did get it, Naomi."

"It came up from the cellar sticking to a flatiron."

Our uncle muttered some very bad words; called Daniel, who became much excited; and, taking Simon's lantern, they descended to the cellar, and remained there some time. At last our uncle and his chief clerk came up into daylight, both looking angry, and Daniel much mortified. Naomi had made up her mind. She went to her uncle: "I must talk

to you at once," she said firmly. "Ach, ish no place, no dime, mein girl: go vay, Naomi."

"I will not go away: I must talk to you about this at once."

"Ach, knows too mooch, Naomi, knows too mooch vor ein voman," groaned our uncle: however, not daring to have Naomi speak in the shop, and knowing she would not be silent, he adjourned with her to the front room, where was the favorite seat of Naomi and Hagar. Naomi from habit sat down in the window. Our uncle thrust his hands in his coat-pocket, and, standing before his niece, said uneasily, "Vat vants, Naomi: speaks quick, girl; I canst not leave mein shops."

"I want to know where you got that bit of silver."

"Vat vor?" queried our uncle: "vould not petray dein old uncle, girl, dein mother's brother; eh, Naomi?"

"It is not to betray you," cried Naomi.

"I cannot do that; but, for my own peace of mind, I *must* know uncle, how you got that silver."

"Vell," said our uncle slowly: "I speak the truth: dein uncle ist no ropper; ish von honest olt pawnbroker, mein girl. I got it from von man ash hash often dealt mit mein shops."

"And," said Naomi, "it was not a separate bit, but was in spoons and such things!" How she longed for some reply that should carry conviction of its truth to her heart, and yet exonerate her uncle!

Our uncle, however, felt sure his Naomi would not betray him, and replied doggedly, "Vell so it vash: I asks no questions; I takes vat ish prought, ant I pays hish price."

"But you saw the name on it, and knew it was not his!" cried Naomi.

"Hish name might pe Lynell," said our uncle evasively.

“Uncle, you knew the silver was stolen.”

“Von may guess, but von ish not to guess themself to poverty. I asks no questions: it vash not mein pisness.”

“And then you saw the account in the paper, and did not restore it when you knew all about the owner.”

“Vy, girl, vere vould mein monish goes, and vy shoulst I pring te laws on mein het; eh, Naomi?”

“And then,” went on Naomi indignantly, “you broke it up to melt; and you are doing these things all the time, and Daniel melts it up for you: you get silver and gold that you know have been stolen, and melt it.”

“Ach, Naomi, ish too vise,—too vise vor ein voman, too vise for dein uncle’s gut!” groaned Chatham-street Solomon.

“And that was what Daniel was doing that night I found him in the cellar; and this is how I found it out, by his knocking a bit from

the smelting-pot." Here our uncle swore roundly about that "Heprew chilt," but under his breath; and then said to Naomi, "Vell, mein girl, holt dein tongue: knows how to keeps silent, Naomi.

Shall not go to mein shops again; shall have new dress, and do ash does please, vill not petray dein uncle, ant turn little Hagar out of von home."

"No," said Naomi: "I cannot inform about you. If you hold to the goods that have been stolen, the sin is equal to that of the thief, and must be on your own head. I can never live with you again. I shall go away. If you repent of this, and leave your bad business, I can see you and speak to you: now I shall only pray God to make you a better man. I cannot eat your bread, or live under your roof. I shall go away, and earn an honest living. I do not want the clothes you have bought me, and I shall never come here again."

“Vy, girl, vy, girl, leaves dein olt uncle? ist not dein fault,” gasped Solomon.

Naomi rose from her seat in the window. “Don’t stop me, don’t touch me,” she cried hastily: “don’t hold out your hand, for I can not touch it! I will go away. You need not tell why I went, nor will I: I cannot forget that you were good to my mother, and have been good to me; but let me go, and never come back unless you will act like an honest man.”

Her cheeks flushed, and her voice never faltered; yet tears dropped slowly from eyes that still flashed with indignation. Her uncle stood aside, as one abashed and overwhelmed; and Naomi darted past him, and went to her own room.

She took a carpet-bag, and began to put in it her little gifts from Aunt Anna and Timothy, and a few articles of clothing. Several of her choicest treasures she laid in Hagar’s

drawer. The bitterest part of her trial was yet to come : she must part with Hagar. And what should she say ? she could not tell the child of the father's sins. Mrs. Simpson had gone to see Judith, where she spent much of her time ; and Naomi knew she should find her little cousin alone in the parlor : thither she went.

“ Where are you going ? ” cried Hagar, seeing Naomi have her bonnet on.

“ To Aunt Anna's — to stay,” said Naomi.
“ Don't feel very bad, dear : I will come and see you now and then if I can. I don't want to leave you Hagar, but I must.”

“ Why, what for ? why do you go ? You shan't go ! ”

“ I must go : it is wrong for me to stay. I cannot tell you why, Hagar ; but I cannot live here any longer. I am going to live with Aunt Anna, and work for myself.”

“ Then I must go too,” said Hagar crying.

"I can't live here if you go. If it's wrong for you, it is for me."

"No," said Naomi: "this is your father's: you have no right to leave him. You could not take care of yourself, and this is your home. Be a good girl, Hagar: pray for your father. O Hagar! how I hate to leave you!"

"Don't leave me," sobbed Hagar, clinging to her cousin. "I shall die if you go away, Naomi: I can't let you go!"

"There, now, we must be brave," said Naomi more cheerfully: "keep your courage up, and next summer we'll go to the country again; or maybe you can come to Aunt Anna's for a week, or I will come and wheel you out in your little cart."

"No," mourned Hagar. "I can't cheer up: it's cruel for you to leave me. I cannot be good nor happy if you go, Naomi: nobody else cares for me; nobody else does any thing

for me. I wish I was dead. I'll get sick again, and then I'll die: I know I will."

All this cut Naomi to the heart. She felt that she must go: it was wrong to stay. The bread of dishonesty would choke her. She could not be the companion of thieves; yet then poor lonely, sickly Hagar, to leave her to her careless mother and dreary home seemed utter cruelty.

"Don't grieve so, Hagar," she urged. "Teach your bird new tunes, do pretty work, read all the books you can: they will be your company. I left my Bible in your drawer; read that most of all, dear."

But Hagar sobbed, and would not be comforted; so Naomi kissed her good-by, and left her weeping.

Our uncle's wife came home, and was loudly indignant. Daniel was sulky. Our uncle, cross indeed, scolded his wife for scolding, Rose for cooking, Simon for eating

slowly, and Hagar for crying. "Vat ish tere such a coil apout!" he cried: "von girl ist vorth notting; let her goes."

Still I am sure, for all this bravado, our uncle had rather have lost his best week's profits than his niece.

Naomi went out from her uncle's door, her small possessions in her hand. She was not strong enough to carry the bag very far; but then Timothy's shop was near, and she went in there, and put down her burden. The gray-haired jeweller looked up from a pair of coral ear-rings which he was mending, and whistled softly.

"Will you bring that up to Aunt Anna's some time, Timothy?" asked Naomi in a choked voice.

"Ay! I'll bring it along to-morrow."

Naomi looked out the door, bravely striving to keep back her tears. She was not going to cry over what she had done. But now Chat-

ham Street looked very dear as she was leaving it, "never, never, never to go back," as she said to herself.

"I'm not going to live at uncle's any more," said Naomi presently: "I'm going up to ask Aunt Anna if I may stay with her."

"Have you left there angry at any of them?" asked Timothy.

"No," said Naomi: "I'm only sorry. I can't stay there any more. I think it would be wicked. I can't tell you what has happened; but I think it is my duty to go where I can eat honestly-earned bread."

"I reckon you've found out no more than I guessed long ago," said Timothy; "but whatever it is, if it lies on your conscience as a sin to stay, then it's your part to go. Keep your garments white, Naomi: remember, they were purchased with a price."

Naomi stood apparently watching her old

friend work for a little while ; in truth, she was only trying to get calm enough to go into the street full of strangers. She could not think now of Hagar left alone to her heart-broken crying without a rush of tears to her eyes. At last, however, she had mastered the traitor tears and short, catching breaths ; so she said “ Good-by Timothy,” dropped her veil, and went her way ; and this was how Naomi fled out of Sodom ; because the men of Sodom were sinners exceedingly.

Once at Aunt Anna’s, Naomi sat down, and cried to her heart’s content. Somebody may think this strange, inasmuch as at her uncle’s she had been made rather a nurse-girl or seamstress ; and there was nothing in the establishment congenial to her, except poor Hagar. However, Naomi thought she had ample cause for grief : she was excited, distressed, by a revelation of her uncle’s hardness of heart ; had parted, it seemed forever, from

her only relatives, and was now thrown face to face with the world. She felt better for her crying, however, and began to dry her eyes.

“Ah, child!” said Aunt Anna, “these things look very great while they are present troubles; but they drift far off from us, and seem small to look back upon. I often think how light and small all our lives will seem when we get into another world. The one great event in time will be the choosing for eternity: if that has been right, every thing else will look right.”

These were very little sayings, but they helped Naomi to grow calm; and she proposed going up stairs to see Mrs. Roberts, and then over the street to make a call on Mrs. Waters. She expected some unpleasant questions from neighbors and acquaintances; for you know, for all the world has grown so old since Lamech was bothered about his Adah and Zillah, people are not yet so wise as to leave off meddling in other people's matters.

To all inquiries, Naomi quietly returned answer that she "found it better to live with Aunt Anna at present." And so, in due course of time, she was kindly permitted to do as she pleased, without being expected to proclaim the wherefore from the housetop, positively or metaphorically.

On Monday after leaving her uncle's, Naomi set out to find ways of earning her own living. She took an extra amount of tatting, knitting, and crotcheting from Ewings, and at her minister's obtained a roll of aprons to make; so she soon was established in a light corner of Aunt Anna's room, one of the brave bread-winners of the city.

James Waters's first pictures, albeit completed under many difficulties, gave abundant satisfaction: he had secured an energetic and capable, if a captious patroness. She did not avail herself of his services, and let him drop, careless whether he sunk or swam; but she

paid him well, praised his merits, found him friends and further patronage: and he marked that as a white day in the annals of his life, when he threw up the onerous duties of a porter, and came back to his art.

“I greatly feared,” said Aunt Anna to Naomi, “that James Waters would grow desperate, and utterly fall away. There is plenty here to tempt a man, especially one discouraged, to ruin: there are gamblers and counterfeits and dram-sellers, all lying wait to make souls their prey.”

To James, she praised that heavenly care that had delivered his feet from destruction, and been better to him than all his fears. James and his wife were yielding more and more to their old friend's good example and counsel; and Naomi hoped, that, in Ellen's heart at least, the good seed of the gospel had taken root.

We do not linger on this winter: we set out

to tell a story of our Chatham-street uncle ; and, now Naomi has got away from our uncle, pray what are we to do ? All this winter our uncle continued his business, legal and illegal. His peccadilloes were no whit diminished : he dealt with chiefs of pickpockets, plundered the poor, and melted up stolen silver. Perhaps Naomi *ought* to have made known that matter of the "Lynell" teaspoon : what shall we say about that ? It is a very nice point, and on nice points doctors differ : we are sorry to get into such a close corner as this. We wish our uncle hadn't melted the teaspoon ; we wish our heroine had not found it out ; but it is no use to wish. There are several old proverbs about wishing, which we might quote here admirably : however, we will be content with telling things just as they happened. Our uncle was not so good-tempered as common that winter. Naomi's absence was a continual protest against his chosen ways ; and,

worse than that, he had nobody to pour out his coffee, and too often nobody to pour out his tea; for his wife was more fond of staying with her daughter Judith than of staying at home. Then how doleful it was about poor little Hagar! how the child pined, and grew weazen-faced and dull-eyed, came tardily to her meals, had untidy hair as she could not do it nicely herself, wore no more tasty collars and knots of ribbons, and showed soiled or worn dresses! Our uncle would meditate on his own neglected condition, on Hagar's forlorn estate, and smite his fist on the table until the cups danced in the saucers, and the teaspoons jingled something about "Lynell."

Naomi did not forget nor neglect her promise of visiting Hagar: she presented herself many times at our uncle's door, but never gained admission. Our uncle's wife felt wrathful enough at being deprived of her handy young niece: she took Naomi's going

in high dudgeon, and instructed Rose not to let her in. Therefore, when Naomi humbly knocked for admission, — though, if the door were not kept locked, she would have boldly walked in, — Rose said at one time that Hagar and Mrs. Simpson were out ; again, that they were too busy to see her ; next that they did not want to see her ; and, finally, that she need not come any more.

It might have been a good plan for Naomi to go to the shop, and talk to her uncle ; but she would not go there : so she tried to mend matters by bribing a little Jew boy to carry Hagar some notes, a bouquet or two, a Christmas gift, and at Purim a gift again. These various tokens of Naomi's constant love reached the melancholy cripple, yet seemed only to augment her woe. Her mother comprehended nothing of the child's queer fancies, of her yearning after sympathy, of her weary longing for the cousin whom she

loved so well, and who understood her so completely. Mrs. Simpson was a portly, indolent gossip Jewess, intent on dress and her own style of pleasure. Hagar, so different from her, must, following some recondite law of psychology, be the renewal of some fantastic, clinging, tender spirit, embodied in our uncle's family generations gone.

Naomi thus absent, the winter passed. Purim was celebrated. March swept away with winter in her train, and spring came mild and enervating. Mr. Waters and his wife had moved to a pleasanter neighborhood, still holding fast friendship to Aunt Anna; and Mrs. Roberts was comforted by her new friends after the old man's loss, as was Isaac after the death of his mother.

We must now pass on to tell how Naomi's going back, which was to be "never, never, never," resolved itself into only a matter of a few short months; and she went back again

into that very Sodom from whence she fled :
for there had been 'no fire sent down on this
modern nest of corruption ; and if one angel
of duty took her by the hand and led her out,
another, armed with equal power, led her
back ; and again she walked the ways of life
along with our Chatham-street Uncle.





CHAPTER X.

UNDER THE THREE BALLS.

NOW many charming lace-like little hoods there are worn nowadays. Very delightful for evening strolls on the sea-beach, or along hotel balconies, or to gracefully cover the head during a moonlight evening spent in rustic garden-chairs, amid the fragrance of flowers and the low sweet music of summer evenings. This disquisition on hoods is to be deemed fitting because one of them, decorated with about seventy-five little balls, was the last work Naomi did for

Ewings & Co. Naomi was finishing up the last of the little balls by an open window one April morning when Aunt Anna admitted Mrs. Judith Abraham, — stout, warm, flushed, panting. Of course Naomi administered a chair and a palm-leaf-fan, also a glass of water; and presently Judith was able to speak. It may be that astonishment had held Judith silent, — astonishment at herself for coming way up stupid Spring Street, far enough from the Jews' quarter and from the effulgence of "Three Golden Balls:" indeed, such a step, or number of steps, for indolent Judith, was enough to astonish anybody.

"I hope you are all well, cousin Judith?" said Naomi.

. "Well, why no, of course not: what would I come here for? You'll have to put by that work, Naomi, and come and see Hagar: she's going to die, I think" —

Naomi dropped her work with a low cry.

“Oh! there’s no need of *that*,” said Judith: “dear, but it is a long way here! She isn’t going to die to-day or to-morrow: but she’s pined clear away, and has been in bed more than a week; and *you* are all her cry. The doctor can’t help her, so he says.”

Naomi felt as if she had cruelly neglected her little cousin, and was responsible for the whole situation. This was doubtless a false accusation brought against herself.

“How does the child appear?” asked Aunt Anna.

“Why — sick, of course. You can come see her yourself if you like: anybody can come who thinks they can do her any good. Naomi’s *got* to come to take care of her: she won’t have any one else; and mother hasn’t been used to sick folks, and don’t know a thing to do for her. Come, Naomi, put on your dry-goods. I told her I’d bring you back;

and she won't eat any breakfast till you get there. I felt I *must* come, for all it's a long way; for I did not want to see her die so moping."

Naomi tied the last tiny ball, and rolled up the dainty hood in a napkin. She then laid all her finished work in a box for Timothy to take to Ewings & Co. Next she filled her small satchel with such articles as she needed at once, put on a fresh white apron, her cloth sacque, and her drab hat, and was ready to depart.

"Gracious!" cried Judith, who had been jabbering unremittingly to Aunt Anna: "how soon you got ready! It takes me an age to get fixed to go out. Why, I'd have been here a week ago, Hagar's kept up such a fret about you, only it is such a plague to come so far, and we're so busy at the shop!"

Truly an affectionate sister was Judith.

Naomi bid her dear old guardian and Mrs.

Roberts good by, left several messages for her friend Ellen, and followed Judith's heavy steps into the street.

"*I mean to ride,*" said Judith: "*there's a car coming. You needn't if you don't like. I'm going home now. You can tell mother to come over to see me: there's no need of her being home any more when you get there.*"

"Very well," said Naomi. "*I'd rather walk. I want to stop, and get Hagar something nice.*"

Judith waited for the approaching car, and Naomi went on alone to her satisfaction. Judith walked so slow, and had such a loud voice, that she was not a very pleasant companion in the street.

Naomi bought some large sweet oranges and clusters of luscious Syrian grapes for the little invalid, and was soon at her uncle's. Rose opened the door to her with a joyful face: she took her cue from her mistress;

and, knowing now that Naomi's coming was welcome, she laid aside the forbidding frown that she had last carried to the door to confront her.

Naomi hastened up stairs. She found Hagar in the bedroom they had formerly occupied together. Once so neat, it was now littered with clothing, bottles of medicine, cups and spoons, and looked as if it had not been visited by a duster for a full month.

Our uncle's wife was rocking near the window, with a discontented look that cleared off when she saw her niece. Hagar, lying on the tumbled bed, emaciated, eager, and wretched, was a sad sight. She held out her poor little claws of hands to Naomi, and burst into tears.

"That's a pretty way to do," said her mother. "I thought you'd be so glad to see Naomi."

"She is," said Naomi, caressing the sick child; "and I'll stay with her all the time."

"Then there's no need of my being here," said Mrs. Simpson. "I'll go out somewhere: I've been shut up so for three days, Naomi. Do you think that child can be done any thing for? The doctor don't know what ails her."

"I think she'll be better soon," said Naomi cheerfully, searching for a place in the closet to hang her clothes, and then turning to the bureau to empty a drawer, where she might lay the rest of her belongings. "Judith said for you to come over there," said Naomi to her aunt; and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the door close behind the good lady of the house.

Her first move was to throw open the windows; then, shaking Hagar's pillow, and smoothing the bedclothes closely up about her neck, she told her to lie still for a little while until she came back from the kitchen. She was not gone long; but, when she came back, Hagar had begun to revive a little under the

influence of hope and fresh air. Naomi closed the windows, bathed her patient in warm water, brushed her hair, and arrayed her in a clean wrapper. She then wheeled in a little lounge from the next room ; and, ringing for Rose, they laid Hagar upon it. With Rose came a tray of breakfast. There was the customary tea and toast, but nicely made, and set out on a white napkin : moreover, there was a small cluster of grapes, and half an orange.

“ I can eat that,” said Hagar, “ if you’ll sit just where I can see you are here, honest truly. I’ve *dreamed* you were here so many times.”

“ I’m no dream now,” said Naomi merrily.

“ Seemed like as if you was same as other things here, Naomi, — put in pawn, and hurried off again.”

“ Well, I’ll pawn myself to you now, Hagar ; and you must get well to pay for me.”

"If you mean to go off as soon as I get well, I won't do it," said Hagar faintly.

"Now you are done breakfast, shut your eyes, and play you were in a tent. I'll cover you all over with this sheet; and you must fancy my cleaning-up arrangements are the distant noise of battle."

Naomi hid Hagar from dust and too much air, as she swept and dusted the room, made the bed, and polished the windows. As she worked, she sang soft, low tones that Hagar loved to hear. We told you that the angel of duty led Naomi back to Chatham Street; and now she was happy and content. It was noon before she set the last chair in its place, and gently lifted up the covering from Hagar's head. The child was in a quiet sleep.

Naomi looked well pleased on her charge, and then surveyed the altered appearance of the room. She had made it as plain and tidy as when she had occupied it before. While

she was attending to her own toilet, Hagar woke up.

"How nice it all is, Naomi! you are my fairy god-mother, you know. Did you have ever so many little fairies in here working while I was asleep?"

"Yes, ten fingers and two feet," said Naomi, laughing.

"I bid them all work well and swiftly for Lady Hagar, who lay sleeping in a tent. Now I must put you back to bed."

"You can't lift me," said Hagar.

"Poor child, you are light as a feather: how you have wasted away!" So Naomi laid the patient comfortably in bed, but was grieved to see that just the exertion of being moved nearly overpowered her.

"He's coming," whispered Hagar faintly: "be nice to him, Naomi. He cares for me more than mother does." Her quick ear had caught the sound of her father's feet coming up the stairs.

Perhaps Naomi felt a little embarrassed, but her wicked old uncle did not: he was glad she had come back, and meant she should stay. "Vy, Naomi! hast come back to dein uncle, chilt! Vell, vell, ve vill not fight no more; eh, Naomi? Vy, girl, mein Hagar dit nearly die; vill kill te chilt, ant goes vay again. Dein mutter vould nicht have serve dein uncle so, an she dit run off mit von Englishman. Hast run off mit no Englishman, my Naomi?"

"No: I went because I must, and came back because I ought, uncle."

"Ach, must not goes no more, mein Naomi," said our uncle, patting her arm: "ist ein goot chilt, ant hast ein goot uncle now. Vy, mein girl, I am most ash goot ash ein rappi. Vy, Hagar, dein room ist so nice it does shine: shows Naomi ist here. Ant dein gown, ant dein little cap, are likes snow."

"Vill soon pe vell, put vill lets dein Naomi

comes down, ant help dein fater to dinner, eh ? ”

“ You may go, Naomi,” said Hagar feebly.

“ Hagar must have a chicken for broth,” said the self-constituted nurse-decisively.

“ Hagar shalt have all te chicken she vants, ant ein turkey too, ant she vill eats him,” said our uncle, rubbing his hands jocularly together. “ Tere ist te pell, Naomi : lie still, mein Hagar, till ve comes again. Mein vrow ist gone off : vell, it dosh not matter ; Naomi vill do vor dein uncle.”

Our uncle was too happy to contain himself : he chuckled all the way down stairs ; rung the bell furiously for Rose, and then, tossing fifty cents at her, bade her go for a fine fat chicken. Then at the table he turned the carving knife and fork upside down, and, hammering for attention, cried, “ Poys ! have got mein Naomi pack. Ve vill have somepody to pours tea and coffee.”

Then he loaded everybody's plate; hammered the table with his fists to get bread, butter, and the castor, sent down to him; and in every way so overflowed with rejoicing that Naomi felt almost sorry she had left him, old sinner as he was.

Before going back to his chair of state in the shop, our uncle must needs go to his niece's chair, and say, "Vill not go vay no more; eh, Naomi?"

"Not now, any way," said Naomi evasively.

"Vy Naomi, ist von goot Heprew maiden, ant I cannot let her go. Vat vas Jael, ast dit make vay mit Sisera; ant Deborah, ast dit fight Heprew pattles; ant Judith, ast dit cut off te heat of Holofernes; ant Miriam, ast dit sing py te Red Sea? Vy, Naomi, wast all Heprew vimen; ant here ist ein Heprew voman, ast ist ast goot ast all tem. Shall not goes in mein shops any more: it ist ein goot shops now, put

neet not goes tere; shalt do ash dosh please, mein Naomi, eh?"

That was a very enticing little "eh?" of our uncle's; but, even though it succeeded such a stream of commendation, Naomi was not to be beguiled by it into committing herself on the question of staying or going.

She carried up Hagar a dainty little dinner, which was hardly tasted, and then she sat down to read from the Bible.

"Read all about Ruth," said Hagar: "I think she was so nice. Don't you believe she had gold hair and soft eyes; and no wonder that Boaz fell in love with her."

Hagar grew drowsy after Naomi had read sometime: indeed, she dropped asleep; and, when she woke, found Naomi had laid aside the book, and was sewing. She had piled up on a chair all Hagar's long-unmended garments, and was beginning thorough repairs.

"Naomi," said Hagar's weak voice, "do

you think I will ever want those clothes any more ?”

“Certainly I do,” replied Naomi.

“They think I’m going to die,” said Hagar.

“Very likely you would die soon enough if you were left so untended and disorderly as I found you. I suppose one *can* die of discouragement and bad air,” replied Naomi impatiently ; “but I think now you will get better every day. You shall be tidy and cheerful, and have all the fresh air we can get in here ; and by and by you can go out to ride in your little carriage.”

“Do you think so ?” asked Hagar. “I haven’t been out of the house since you went away. I’m glad I ain’t going to die.”

“Are you afraid to die ?” said Naomi.

“Why, not exactly *afraid*,” answered Hagar ; “but, if you will stay with me, I’d rather get well : and we can read and talk, and sit in our seat by the window ; and we’ll

die some other time, Naomi. Let's grow old first."

"That is as God wills," replied Naomi. "If we live so long, we must try and do some good in the world."

When the bell rang, Naomi went down to tea.

"I don't want any light until you come back," said Hagar; "but just open the stove-door, and let me see the light from that." Naomi had made a fire as the evening came on cool.

"Ach, here ist mein Naomi: vell, how ist te little chilt; canst make her vell, Naomi?"

"I think she will get well if she is well taken care of. The doctor said she had less fever: I know she feels better already."

"Ach, yes, girl: it ish pecause du hast come, mien Naomi. Hagar vas fretting vor te. Come, now, give dein uncle ant te poys ein cup of tea: if Rose hast not mate it goot

ant strong, I vill go down ant tweak her ear. I dit tink I marriet te girl Judith to mein neighpor Apraham : I did not know he vash to marry mein vrow too. Dein aunt dosh not stay at home vell, Naomi : it ish ein pad plan vor vimin to runs apout so much. Learns not of her, Naomi ; learn of dein uncle. He ist ein goot man : he vill soon pe ash goot as te rabbi ; eh, Daniel ?”

Daniel laughed as if this were indeed a capital joke.

Timothy brought to Naomi all the clothing she had left at Aunt Anna's ; and she also found that every thing which she had abandoned at her uncle's was hanging untouched as when she abandoned it.

“ You might as well keep your things, and say no more about it, Naomi,” said Hagar : “ father said no one was to touch your things. Mother talked of selling some of them to Rose for wages, and father was awful angry.”

Naomi spoke to her Aunt Anna about the matter; and that worthy woman replied, You have always at your uncle's fully earned your clothes: you must have something to wear; and, as you spend all your time now waiting on Hagar and your uncle, you cannot earn any elsewhere. There is a proper, honest pride, Naomi; and there's an obstinacy we ought to beware of."

Accordingly, one warm afternoon Naomi put on a blue and white gingham which she had worn the previous summer. She fastened it at the neck with the ivory pin her uncle had given her. When Solomon saw her in this guise, he was highly delighted. "How pretty ist, Naomi! Vy, tere ist nein girl about ist so fair: looks like dein inutter, girl. Must pevare of Englishmen, or dein uncle vill preak dere heads."

"I want to run away with Hagar to-morrow," said Naomi gayly. "We must make

her carriage very easy, and get her carried to it, and let her take a little ride, she is getting better so fast."

"Ach, yes! ant pye ant pye ve vill have her down to te dining-room."

"I don't see how you are getting her well so nice," said our uncle's wife: "she got worse and worse all the time I tended her."

"Naomi knows how to do every ting," said our uncle. "Ven I gets sick, she shall cure me."

"I'm sure I don't want to take care of sick folks," said Mrs. Simpson. "I think it is a great trouble: but Naomi does not care for trouble; I think she likes it."

"Nopody dosh like trouble," said our uncle argumentatively; "put some dosh likes von ting, ant some dosh like another. Now, I likes piles monish; ant Naomi likes to does goot; and mein vrow dosh like to visit dein neighpors."

“To be sure : it is much nicer than staying at home,” replied Madam Simpson.

By the end of July, Hagar was able to go about the house ; and Naomi proposed that they should go to Mr. Dickson’s for a while. Our uncle made a wry face, but consented to a two-weeks’ absence. “If vill comes pack here ven gets home, Naomi ?”

“You knew what made me go away, uncle,” said Naomi.

“Vell, tere ish nothing to go vor now,” said our uncle.

Now, Naomi did not believe that Solomon had altered his ways of making money. She felt that only a vital and complete change would make him an honest man ; and she saw no evidence of such amendment. She hesitated a few minutes, and then replied, “If I were sure. You are very kind to me, uncle ; and I do not like to leave Hagar : if I were only sure.”

“Pe sure of vat I tell you, mein girl. I saysh tere ist no reason vy Naomi shoul't leave te olt uncle. Hish pisness ist an honest pisness now : it may have been a *leetle* croocket vonce ; but *now* it ish ash goot ash ein synagogue, ant dein uncle is te rabbi of it. It is te Chatham-street Synagogue, unter ‘Tree Golt Balls,’ mein Naomi !”

Aunt Anna had been to see Naomi and Hagar quite often during the child's illness ; and seeing how cosily the two girls lived in their little room or in the parlor, how shut out they were from the influences of the shop and all the evil-doers that came thither, she advised Naomi to stay at least until going would not consign Hagar to helpless and neglected misery. “The child has a great claim upon you, Naomi,” she said.

Now, Hagar heard this, and resolved to push her claim vigorously. She, moreover, confided to her father what old Mrs. Vail had said ;

and, in his delight, our uncle said, "Ach, it ish ein goot voman. If she dosh vant to do any pisness mit te pawnbroker, let her comes to me: I vill deal her ast is right mit ein lady."

"I hope she will never need to come," said Naomi.

"Maype not; put, if nopody come, vere vould pe mein piles monish; eh, Naomi?"

After all, Naomi went into the country with Hagar for a visit, and came back again to Chatham Street, and lived under the "Three Golden Balls."





CHAPTER XI.

DISSOLVING VIEWS.



GAIN Naomi and Hagar sat in their window overlooking the street. It seems very queer to think," said Hagar, "that, if I had died last spring, all these people, and every thing in the street, would be going on just the same. They are a great deal to me, Naomi, while I sit here ; but I am nothing to them. And after a while we, and all these people that are rushing about so, will be dead ; and the streets will look just the same, and all the folks in them will be new. Last winter

I was so lonesome ; and I had no company but the fire."

" And what sort of company was that ? " asked Naomi.

" Pretty good for a fire. I left the stove door open, and sat up in bed, and saw things in the shadows. I'd read our Bible all day, unless Rose found me something out of these boxes ; and you've no idea, Naomi, what a poor hand Rose is at finding things. Then at night I'd see in the light and shadow, and in the bright coals in the stove, all I'd been reading about. I saw the spies getting down out of Rahab's window ; and I saw Rahab herself going to the Hebrew camp ; and then I saw her getting married to Salmon, the prince of Judah. I saw them trying Achan for stealing : I made out not to see his family getting stoned. And I saw Micha stealing his mother's money : it served him right when his Levite run off with all his nice things."

So the two girls sat and talked during the summer evenings. Hagar, never weary of hearing about Naomi's kind pastor, about Mrs. Roberts and Ellen Waters, and about the six little girls in the Sunday-school class, which Naomi thought a very interesting group, for all she had once said the smartest of her pupils had been taken away. During the day, they were busy enough; for Naomi had resolved, if she were living at her uncle's on Hagar's account, she would turn the time to good purpose; so she taught her little cousin to write and cipher. "You must really learn to make and mend your clothes, Hagar," she said: "when I was away they got into a miserable condition."

"But you are never going away any more," said Hagar.

"That you do not know. Why, suppose I should die?"

"Then I'd go to work, and get sick, and die

too, before all my clothes were worn out," said Hagar, growing lachrymose.

"You certainly ought to be willing to do all for yourself that you can," said Naomi staidly.

"I'll do any thing that you want me to, if you won't die or go away. Give me my stockings, and I will darn them right away," said Hagar.

Mrs. Simpson found plenty of sewing for Naomi; and Judith did not scruple to bring over many a dress, collar, or bonnet, for Naomi to make decent. And time flew faster away than ever; and the hour came when Naomi saw clearly for what she had been kept in Chatham Street all this while. She had gone with Hagar to their seat in the window one evening. It was October again,—you see our story has been two years under way,—and they were chatting in their usual happy fashion, when all at once there was much noise

and excitement in the lower part of the house, — heavy steps, loud voices, banging of doors ; and her aunt's voice rose shrilly from the parlor, "Naomi! Where is Naomi? Come here, quick, quick!"

Naomi put her arm about Hagar. "I'll help you to our room. Stay there, and don't be frightened until I come," she said ; for this was no common call they had heard, — evidently no matter of bonnets or biscuits.

Naomi answered the call with a clear "Here I am, aunt ;" and then the next minute was in the parlor. Daniel and another clerk, with two strange men, had carried in the insensible form of our uncle, and laid him upon the floor. His face and throat were a living purple, and his loud breathing resounded through the room.

Naomi snatched a pillow from the sofa, and placed it under her uncle's head ; and, kneeling by him, began loosening his neck-tie and

collar. "A doctor!" she said, "and ice quickly! Rose, get some ice!"

"Ice! a doctor! O Daniel, the shop! oh, my! Judith, a doctor! some brandy!" So screamed his wife. To the shop went Daniel: the shop was the one important place to him. Rose brought ice, and Simon and another had gone for a doctor. Judith and Timothy came in together; and Timothy was so efficient that Naomi, never forgetful of Hagar, dared to run up stairs a minute; while presently the doctors came, and Mrs. Simpson managed to get a bed arranged in the parlor, and remedies were applied, and she and Rose were as useless as ever, while Timothy and Naomi were the doctor's helpers. Judith had learned to take an interest in business since she married; so she seconded Daniel in the shop: and that worthy clerk did as well as he knew how, and closed the shop an hour earlier than usual.

Timothy and Naomi were watchers by his.

bedside that night. Mrs. Simpson said she would sit up also, but soon fell asleep on the sofa. The doctor remained several hours, and then promised to return early. "He may get well of this," he said. "I always feared he would have appoplex," said Timothy, whose English was not, as you may perceive, accurate.

It was nearly noon before our uncle revived: then he opened his eyes, stared a little, and tried to speak. Naomi came near him: he made a second effort. "Te shops!" was all our uncle said.

"That is all right, uncle," said Naomi; but, perceiving that his hearing was dulled, she shouted her answer again in his ear as loud as she could. Our uncle smiled.

"I cannot nurse sick folks," said Mrs. Simpson: "you must tend your uncle, and I will go into the shop. That was my business once, and will be again if Solomon don't come

round. Take good care of him, Naomi. Think he will get well?"

"I hope so," said Naomi, thinking what a wife Mrs. Simpson was, to be sure.

It was at least four days before our uncle got beyond those two words, "te shops?" but those he anxiously repeated several times in the course of the twenty-four hours to Naomi, and, by pointing to the door, indicated his desire that she should go down, and be able to report accurately the state of that little kingdom. Naomi, the most accommodating of nurses, therefore made an observation, and reported "All right." It was the first time Naomi had entered those lower regions since the teaspoon excitement; and she looked about on the hungry, eager-eyed crowd, the crafty clerks, and the general confusion, feeling that she did not wish to go again: however, she was by no means done with that shop on Chatham Street.

Of course Naomi did not have the whole care of her uncle : she had plenty to help her day and night, but the responsibility of the nursing rested with her. To her the doctor gave his orders, and with the ministrations of no one else was our uncle so well pleased.

Hagar kept near her father much of the time. She would perch on the foot of the bed, and inquire into his symptoms and fancies, and draw parallels between his case and what her own had been.

“Don’t Naomi fix your pillows good, father ? she made mine *so* comfortable.

“Can you bear your tea when Naomi don’t make it ? I couldn’t.

“Don’t she cook chicken splendid ; and don’t you like to have her sing ? I used to.”

Our uncle’s hearing, and the power of speech, came back to him, but his strength seemed to have entirely departed : his limbs were feeble and tottering, and there was no

help for him but to lie in bed, and wait patiently for returning vigor. Of course he was a restless prisoner : he reviled his doctor, his nurses, — all but Naomi, — his room, his bed, his food.

“Shan’t I read to you, uncle?” asked Naomi.

“Vy, yes, chilt,” cried our uncle, catching at the notion ; “reads to dein uncle. Vat pook hast now, Naomi?”

“The Bible, your scriptures, uncle.”

“Vy, vat does I vont of dat, chilt? I knows all tem olt stories vell enough. Can tells all apout David, ant Samson, ant Jeremiah, ant Jonah. I does not pelieve the story of Jonah, Naomi.”

“You ought to, uncle. And then the Bible is not just a story-book : if you do remember all the stories, you should hear it now for something better, — for your soul’s good.”

“Ach, Naomi, I tells you I knows it all.

Vy, chilt, it is to me ein pretty song, put it ish olt: te rappis have sung it to me ven I vash ein leetle poy. Let te vimmin ant te rappis have te printed pooks: tere ish von. petter nook vor me; it ish mein ledger. Go, chilt, pring mein pooks vrom mein desks. Read tem to me, girl: hast ein goot heat; can tell dein uncle if te Heprew chiltren down in mein shops keeps mein pooks straight."

"O uncle!" said Naomi gently, bending over him, "let the books go for a while. You say you are old: you are also sick. Uncle, there are other books. The Scripture tells us of God's books of record: are you ready to have them opened, uncle."

"Ach, chilt, vy vilt pother dein uncle! Azrael has knock at mein door, ant hash gone away. Tell me no nonsense, girl, apout te sands of mein life running down. If mein eyes are shut, te pooks of mein shops ant mein pisness vill run down: vat shall dein uncle

do if hish piles of monish dosh not grow. Lent dein ear, Naomi. Dein uncle ish olt : he vill tells te visdom he hash learnt in hish life. Ven piles monish stops growing large, they pegins to grows shmall. Mint it, girl, and pring mein pooks."

Naomi's heart sank as she sat by her uncle's bedside with his day-books and ledger, and noted how his whole soul was bent on his money, clinging closer and closer to his idol as the time drew near of losing it forever. .

Hagar, longing like Naomi to turn the dying man's mind to higher things, would sometimes ask Naomi to read to her while she was in her father's room. The last two chapters in Revelation were her favorites, and one day she asked for them. As Naomi read, her uncle commented on the passage, "Te holy city ? vy, Naomi, it ish vat te rappi tells apout, put I dosh not pelieve it. It ish ein shmall city, Naomi, — too small, chilt. Tere must pe

some mistake apout te measure. Gold streets, dit say, Naomi? Vy, girl, it ish von fine place: dein uncle voutl pe vell suited. Put, mein chilt, he voutl not: dosh see, Naomi, if te pavements vere of gold, ten mein piles monish vill pe pelow par."

Yes, truly: our uncle's piles of dross are very far below par in the New Jerusalem.

"I shall not die!" cried our uncle one day. "I vill not die yet: I hash too much to do. Put I vill make mein vill; tere ish no harm in tat. Prings me ein lawyer: I vill make mein vill. Take heart, Naomi: ein man can do vat he vill mit hish own, ant dein uncle vill get all mate straight now. I vill pegin mit mein soul, and vill pequeath it to mein father Apraham: I does not mean Judith's huspand; eh, Naomi?"

Our uncle made his will: a queer instrument it was in some respects. He was bent on having his own way as usual, and in effect

bequeathed his "body to te grount, his soul to father Apraham to takes goot care of it, ant the monish to the vimin." On this wise: his wife was to have one-third, Naomi one-third, and Hagar one-third; and Naomi was to have Hagar, and the child's property was carefully put out of her mother's reach.

The lawyer ventured a remonstrance about taking Hagar from her mother; but at this our uncle laughed. "Mein vrow dosh not vant te chilt," he cried: "te chilt ish lame ant trouplesome. Mein vrow vill get marriet again von day, put not yet; vor I vill not die, I tells you: I am too busy to dies. I must piles up mein monish!"

Very likely this testamentary curiosity had relieved our uncle's mind; for he began to amend, and could go about his room. His chief cry was to get to the shop. The doctor was much irritated by his headstrong patient. "I tell you he's a dying man," he said to

Naomi. "He isn't fit to stir about: he will have his own way about eating and drinking. He keeps his mind in a fret about his business; and he's like a man of straw, no power in him; and the least little thing will knock him over into his grave."

Spite of all this, our uncle would go into the dining-room, and eat like other people, and then would go to his chair in the shop. Down stairs he went between Daniel and Naomi; and, as the stairs were such a trial to his weakness, Rose was to carry his dinner to him in the shop. As to Naomi, she must stay by him constantly. Beside our uncle's chair, a chair was placed for his niece: she must help him with the books; she must make up what was lacking of his eyes, feet, hands, and tongue in the supervision of the shop. "Dein mutter woult have pin just such goot girl to me, Naomi," he would cry, "if she hat not run off mit oin Englishman. Shalt

run off mit ein Englishman deinself, girl, if dosh vant to, ven dein uncle's poty ish in te grount, ant Apraham hash hish soul: vill have monish then, mein girl!"

Or, taking a new argument to reconcile himself to all his exactions, he would say, "Mein girl, if dit get sick, dein uncle vould takes goot care of her. Dit not dein uncle pay vor goot care vor her ven she vash von leetle chilt. Did not he goes to see her mit candy in hish pockets every veek? Dit not dein uncle pury dein mutter like ein Heprew woman should pe? Vill not pegrudge dein uncle dein cares?"

"No," said Naomi: "I do not begrudge you any thing I can do for you. But I wish, uncle, that you would leave caring for your money, and care for your soul."

"Ach, girl, let mein soul pe! I have give it to mein father Apraham; and, if he dosh not takes care vor it, it vill pe his faults, not mein!"

Again Naomi watched the ebb and flow of the human current through the door of our uncle's establishment. Again she saw clothes pawned to buy rum, and bedding pawned for bread. Again our easy-going pledger of flatirons saluted her with a jaunty air, transacted her small pawnbroking affairs, and went her heedless way. Day by day Naomi saw little children with weazened faces and sharp old airs, coming in, in their poor way, to get the means of satisfying their hunger, or perchance attain to some miserable mockery of pleasure at eating-shop or theatre. Chiefs of pickpockets dealt at our uncle's yet; but Daniel was wary enough to receive them out of Naomi's sight. The "melting" business was not done away; but it was very secretly conducted: and, though Daniel accepted goods which he knew were stolen, he did it with a cheering simplicity and affection of confidence in the pawners' honesty

which went far to disarm Naomi's suspicions.

So matters went on until Purim was passed again. The feast was not kept at our uncle's : his wife went to Judith's ; Naomi was busy with that poor wreck, our uncle ; and the clerks were busy with the shop. If our uncle had been willing to believe it, life and all its cares and changing scenes were slipping from his view, dissolving, dying, one by one, into that scene for him so cheerless, the coffin, shroud, and pall.

An enemy entered our uncle's house at midnight : not Azrael, with pensive brow, and torch inverted, but a stealthy foe ; waking up first in one small bright secret spark ; widening, and lifting up a little darting angry tongue like a serpent enraged ; uncoiling still, and sending out more tongues like a whole nest of serpents ; raising high a twisting, glowing head, hissing for a troop of

brother-demons that follow at his will; flinging up a black pall of smoke: it was fire! gathering his legions to destruction, and making fierce onslaught in our uncle's house.

Naomi, with the care of two feeble ones resting upon her heart, was but a light sleeper. Often did she awake, believing her uncle or Hagar in some deadly peril. This night, bending her ear to catch what sounds might break the stillness, she heard the crack and snap of wood under the feet of the enemy who had taken possession. Rose and the clerks were in their attic rooms. Our uncle and his wife were heavy sleepers; but Naomi in a few seconds had aroused them, and from an opened window had called the dread name of fire to the watchmen in the street. Rushing from their several rooms, the family were gathered in the upper hall.

"Te shops!" roared our uncle, more tottering and infirm than ever.

"My clothes!" cried our uncle's wife.

"O my pocket-book and my bonnet!" shrieked Rose.

"The safe!" yelled Daniel.

"Fire! fire! fire!" chorused Simon and his peers, the managers of the spout.

"Te shops, te shops! mein girls! Hagar! mein Naomi! te shops, te shops!"

Our uncle was holding on by the wall, and exhausting himself by these cries. He might have been taken for an unusually fine actor, performing Shylock, and at the part, "My ducats and my daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!"

"Get your things, Rose: the stairs are safe yet," cried Naomi; even then remembering that Rose was a poor girl, and her pocket-book her all. "Save what you can, aunt: open the door for the people to help us, Simon," she called, as heavy blows resounded on the outer doors. "Now, Daniel, Joseph,

come : let us get uncle and Hagar away first, over to Judith's." She clasped her arm about Hagar, who, shivering in shawl and night-dress, clung to her. How Naomi had managed to get dressed was a mystery to everybody, even to herself.

"I cannot leave mein shops! Put te fires out! vater! Police, keeps out te folks; tey vill robs mein shops! Te safe! Daniel, leave me: get te safe. Comes pack, Daniel: I shall pe purnt up! Get out of mein vay, everybody: I must get to mein shops!" And thus vociferating and struggling, he was carried over to Judith's, and Hagar was soon brought thither also. Mrs. Simpson was wildly trying to save what she could from the house: Rose and the clerks were desperately dashing in and out among the crowd.

Naomi rightly concluded that her best part was to stay, and take care of her two invalids. They were in Judith's room, which overlooked

the scene of disaster: it was possible that the fire might spread, and drive them from their present refuge; but the wind was the other way, and Naomi hoped better things. She soothed Hagar, and covered her up warmly in Judith's bed, and tried to persuade our uncle to go to bed too. "Take care of yourself, uncle: you are sick; this exposure may kill you," she urged.

"Takes care vor meinself!" shouted our uncle fiercely. "Takes care vor meinself ven mein shops ish burning! Go helps tem, girl: lets me go too. Ach, I shall fall! Vell, girl, puts ein chair vor me py te vinter. Ach, mein shops! I see it! ach, te fire, te fire! I vish Rose vash purnt ups in it: it ish all her faults, I know. Naomi, how dit mein shops catch fires?"

"I'm sure, uncle, nobody knows," said Naomi, wrapping a large cloak about her uncle, seating him comfortably in a chair, and

putting a cushion under his feet: then she stood close beside him, expecting every moment to see him fall in a fit. The fire was making evident headway: the firemen turned out but slowly at first, and amid our uncle's other cries for a few moments might be heard, "Te engines! Ach, te engines! vy dosh tey not comes?" The engines rolled up at last, drawn by a hooting multitude. In the strong light of the burning building, the whole scene was plainly revealed to the watchers in the upper window.

An immense crowd had collected, greater even than is usual at fires, for in this building hundreds had something at stake. What wives and children who had made secret pawns, what laundresses who had pledged part of the property entrusted to them by their employers, what unfortunates who had set out of their keeping for a while treasures with which they could not permanently part, were

gathered around that blaze in Chatham Street!

The first impulse of these people was to save the house : they helped in every possible way to preserve the edifice and its contents. Hundreds of hands brought out the wares with which the place was crammed : hundreds of voices cheered on the firemen in their work.

From the open windows myriads of bundles were flung into the street ; the opposite sidewalks were piled with furniture ; the spout was choked with an avalanche of parcels. Out of the windows came flying bales that, inconveniently breaking open, coats, blankets, and bedquilts sailed slowly through the air, under the shower of falling sparks ; boots and shoes rattled upon the multitude ; now and then a tremendous crash told that some ponderous piece of property had come to grief. Our uncle was gazing on the scene with start-

ing eye-balls, and clutching at the window-frame with trembling fingers.

“Ach, they have the safe! Mein goot Daniel! nople Heprew! Mein pooks ant te jewelry ish safe! Ach, Naomi, tem peoples ist stealing! Shtop tem, shtop tem! Mein gudes, mein shops! I shall have nothing left! Police! police! Shtop thieves! shtop! Ach, ach, mein shops, mein shops!”

True enough, the crowd obeyed the second impulse of the occasion, which was to steal; they were plundering the plunderer: hardly a boy in the neighborhood but was making off with something. The man who had pawned one coat ran off with two or three. Here was an individual with a hat on his head, one under each arm, and a pair of boots in either hand. The women were getting chairs enough to seat all their families, and dishes enough to fill their shelves. The police were almost distracted: thieves walked boldly off in full

view, knowing that there were not enough officers to arrest them. While the agents of the law were capturing one villain, half a dozen more were near them in full swing. Naomi beheld the pawner of flatirons reaping a full harvest; securing tubs, pails, and clothing, in lieu of the irons that were not brought out from the cellar.

“Ach, te Gentiles, te thieving Christians! shtop te teives! Vy, mein monish vill all pe gone! Ach, see mein pawns! they hash all got legs, Naomi; ach, how tey runs up te Powery! Tere tey goes off Chatham Street! Sees, Naomi! runs catch em, girl! Ach, te pundles, how tey ist lugged away! Te fires! Te vindows ist all burnt, te roof vill fall, dein uncle ist von ruined man! Ach, dein old uncle ish ruined! te doors ish purnt, te valls dosh crack! tey hash not got out half mein tings!”

These were dissolving views indeed. The

triumphant fires rose higher and higher. They licked up with insatiate tongues trace after trace of wrong and oppression; they leaped and danced in impish glee over the ruins of robbery and extortion; they trampled under glowing feet the hot ashes of many a relic of sin and sorrow. Up into the skies rolled in black smoke a thousand tales of tears and heart-burnings and despair. Arched over the sidewalk, on their iron standards, riveted well into the brick walls of the house, the "Three Golden Balls" held out bravely, reflecting the fiery glare; the business they symbolized crumbling into ashes above and behind them, and running off on thieves' feet below them, like colors nailed to the mast of a sinking ship, or banners held up triumphantly over a lost battle, the "Three Golden Balls" held their own as the scenes of our uncle's life was changing.

"Ach, Naomi, dein uncle ist undone. Mein

shops ist gone ! I piles up no more monish. Vere ish mein pisness, mein good pawnproking pisness, ash brought me monish to spare ? Te pank vere mein monish ist vill purn down next, mein girl ! I hash monish, piles monish ; but I did vont more. Vat shall dein uncle do ? Mein gutes ist going ; mein house ist going. Ach, Daniel keeps mein pooks, mein safe ! Shtop te fires ! shtop te thieves ! Te Gentile police dosh not care ; te Christian fireman dosh not care vor te He-prew ! Ach, ach ! ”

There was a wild glare, a mighty crash, a shriek from the crowded street. The roof of our uncle's house came crushing down ; the “ Three Golden Balls ” went shivering to the pavement.

“ Mein monish, mein monish ! ” cried our uncle, and fell forward unconscious ; his “ Golden Balls ” descending, lost amid the general wreck, the last of the dissolving views

that met our uncle's eyes. Morning looked upon the charred ruins of our uncle's house. Faint wreaths of smoke rose over the half-dead embers. What of the goods had not been stolen were stored away. The safe was at Abraham's. At Abraham's, also, lay our uncle, breathing heavily. No hope for him now. Mrs. Simpson, awaking to the exigencies of the occasion, relied solely upon Daniel. Said this exemplary wife, "Tend to your uncle, Naomi. I cannot mind sick folks; and the business must be seen to." So she ran about busily all day. Her dormant energies seemed waking up. When the work of clearing away the ruins began, as soon as they were cool enough to venture among, Daniel the wise was busy where, among the débris in the cellar, he might hope to find something in the way of metal more precious than old iron. From the upper window where our uncle had watched the progress of the fire,

our uncle's wife watched the researches of Daniel the head clerk. She turned away at last, her mind relieved, and stood at the foot of the bed.

"Dear, dear! isn't he going to get over it, Naomi?"

Naomi shook her head.

"Dear, dear!" — speaking of her husband as already departed — "he was always a good-natured man; never interfered; let people go their own way; and such a hand at making money! Well, I've been left a widow before," — she was not a widow yet, though she spoke as in that melancholy state, — "I think I know how to take care of myself. Dear, dear! what does he want now, Naomi?"

"He is growing conscious," said Naomi, as with the doctor she bent over the patient. In a few moments she called, "Uncle!"

"He hears you," said the doctor.

Our uncle held out his hands feebly. Naomi clasped one, and Hagar the other.

“Uncle!” cried Naomi.

“Mein girl?” said our uncle thickly.

“He’s better,” exclaimed Mrs. Simpson, coming near.

“Only for a little: he will not live half an hour,” said the physician.

Speech and reason came back wonderfully to our uncle in the next few minutes. He looked about.

“Naomi!”

He felt her warm tears dropping on his forehead as she bowed over him. Hagar grasped his hand, and sobbed bitterly.

“Ist ein goot girl, Naomi. Waits on dein uncle; cry not,—ish notting te matter. Mein shops, girl: it ish gone, put tere ish money in te pank. I vill piles monish up more py ant py. Naomi, heed dein uncle: keep no maid-servants; tey vill set dein house on fire mit te ash-parrel. Naomi, runs not away mit ein Englishman, likes dein mutter. Mein girl, hold vast to dein monish.”

These were his parting counsels.

He dozed a little and awoke ; but his mind wandered. "Naomi, bring mein pooks : dein uncle ish ein honest man. Daniel, mind mein shops vell. Ach, chilt, vere ish — mein monish."

With the name of his idol, mammon, on his lips, our uncle ventured into eternity.

Come hither ye who would dare such a death-bed : whoso will live to mammon, to mammon he shall die. Whoso forgets God, whoso forgets the claims of his fellow-men, whoso despiseth his immortal soul, let him learn a lesson from the last hours of our Chatham-street uncle : by God rejected, by men plundered and deserted, traitor to others and himself, behind him clang "the iron gates of time ;" and where is he ?

The "Three Golden Balls" were but gilded toys, and could not stand the test of fire.

We have all one common heritage, — a grave and nothing further, unless it be some monument great or small for a few years to mark our resting-place.

Our uncle had a grave and a gravestone. He was carried out of Chatham Street, and knew its devious turns of life no more.

The widow Simpson, Naomi, Judith, and Hagar sat the afternoon after the funeral in Judith's room. Hagar was on a low stool, her pale face resting on her cousin's lap.

"Well," began Mrs. Simpson, "what are we all going to do?"

"You're going into business again, ain't you, mother?" asked Judith.

"Yes: I must do something to turn my money over. I shan't have more than seven or eight thousand. That fire was a hard thing on us, Judith."

"*You* might stay here until you set up again," said Judith pointedly.

"I'm going to Aunt Anna's," said Naomi. Hagar grasped her hand closer. "Timothy is coming to take me there after supper."

"There's Hagar," began Judith hesitatingly.

"She frets for you so," said Mrs. Simpson; "and I'm to be so busy looking for a shop, and helping settle up the business."

"You're of age," said Judith to Naomi: "you can have your money right away, as soon as the will is proved. He might have left me something: I lived in his house long enough to be remembered, I'm sure."

Hagar was sobbing forlornly on Naomi's lap. "I never want to be separated from Hagar," said Naomi to her aunt. "If you don't—well, if you had just as leave, she will go to Aunt Anna's with me: we can make room for her somehow."

"Well," said Mrs. Simpson cordially, "if she wants to, and you can make it do."

“I can’t be away from Naomi,” said Hagar.

“Of course I’ll come and see her,” said the model mother; “and she’ll have money enough to pay her way. If she wants to come back she can : but there is no one to wait on her here ; and she always cared most for you, Naomi.”

“And I care most for her,” said Naomi, gathering the grieved and rejected child in her arms.

Hagar went with Naomi to Aunt Anna’s. They grew contented and cheerful. The burden of the terrible night and day rolled off their hearts.

The summer grew hot. They went to Mr. Dickson’s.

Three months after the fire, and Mrs. Simpson had got into business again, and married Daniel. To be sure, he was only about half her age ; but he needed money, and she a business-man, so the match did very well.

Our uncle's business was settled in that time: all he left had been in bank-stock, and was easily divided agreeably to the will. Hagar had honest guardians; and she was left in Naomi's charge.

"I don't like the city," said Naomi.

"Let us go away to one of the nice places up the river. I hate being in New York," said Hagar: "it makes me have bad dreams."

Aunt Anna was homesick to be out of the city, as she had been when a child.

"Come, Mrs. Roberts, we'll all go. We have enough to take care of us all. You shall come to keep Aunt Anna company," said Naomi.

"Bless the Lord that sent you to be a child to my old age," said Mrs. Roberts; "but you must bring me back to bury me,—when that time comes,—beside the old man and our girl."

Timothy bought Naomi a house. You may

see it in the prettiest village on one side or the other of the Hudson.

Timothy went from the city too. He set up his small business near his half-sister and the girls, and thrived as before. Thus were in one family the two old ladies, and the two young girls; and they were happy in being and doing good.

Through these present calm, bright days of their life, they do what their hands find to do; and count all their time from that white day of their Hegira from New York; and now they go no more under the baneful influence of the "Three Golden Balls" that swing over any of our Chatham-street uncles.



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