

# MISS RHODA'S MEASURE.

Miss Rhoda sat in the west doorway. Her face was turned toward the sweet sky, radiant with its rays of red and golden light; it was nature's "with-drawing season." At Miss Rhoda's right was a field of stubble from which the wheat had been harvested. At her left the corn still stood, like Indian wigwams, all over the field, waiting for the husking time. At her feet the maple leaves, so gorgeous in their autumnal plaids, were falling. Here and there the note of a stray bird which had tarried later than its fellows fell upon her ear. There was a chill in the air; the wind was rising, and it stirred the locks of silvery hair which usually lay with such calm precision about Miss Rhoda's face. She folded her black shawl closer about her shoulders, but still she lingered.

There was no kindly voice to warn yet." her of the dangers that might come from longer exposure. No loved form to come to the door and say, "Come in, now; the air is chill and the fire is burning brightly. It is lonely in the room without you." Miss Rhoda was those nearest and dearest to her.

In the afterglow of the lives of those who had belonged to her in the old home sweet memories lighted up the closing day, and as she looked intently at the western sky she seemed to see



HE'S TOO CLOSE-FISTED.

a vision of the pearly gates, behind whose portals those loved ones were dwelling. Watching the red and gold light fade away, and the darkness gather, she, like Christian, "fell sick" at the glimpse of the glories and wished she could be among them.

As she turned and went into the which, if an artist had caught it at that moment, might have inspired him to paint a picture and call it Renunciation. The most notable thing after one has grown old is the fact of renunciation. But in some lives, like that of Miss Rhoda, it is a more deeply felt fact than in others.

"I was passing Miss Rhoda's house just at sunset to-night, and I saw her sitting at her west door," said Mr. Bater, as he sat down at the supper table. "I know she was trying to work out the kinks and knots about that mortgage on her place. But old Tom Carpenter will foreclose when the time comes. She can't expect any mercy from him; he is too close-fisted for that."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Martha Bates; "what will become of her,"

"She will have to go to the townhouse, I suppose. It will be very hard for her; Miss Rhoda was always a high-strung woman," her brother re-

"And after all that woman has done to help other folks when they were in trouble!" exclaimed Mrs. Bates. "Think how she took in those Butler children and kept them after their mother died; and how she kept that young man who was too sick to work all winter. An own mother couldn't have done more for him. I declare if Miss Rhoda has to give up her place and go on the town at her age, it will be a shame."

"Doesn't the Bible say, 'With what measure ye meet it shall be measured boy at his mother's right. "How do you reconcile that passage of scripture with Miss Rho.'a's prospects of going to the town-house? All my long life I bave looked upon Miss Rhoda as one to her visitor. of the fireside saints of the earth; she

has always been in some good work, and has had a kind word for every-

Aunt Martha did not like the spirit of criticism which her nephew had shown of late about reconciling statements of the Holy Scripture. She spoke up in a quick way and said, "Miss Rheda hasn't gone to the town-house

"No; but the finger on the signboard points that way," replied Arthur.

"It is dreadful for old people to be obliged to give up their home and old associations and go 'where they would | not," said Mrs. Bates, "Young folks alone in the world; she had outlived can bear changes-many really enjoy them-but it is different with the aged."

Aunt Martha had not married-her acquaintances called her "a maiden lady." It was not because she never had opportunities to marry, she told her nephews and nieces, but because she loved them too well to break her home ties with them. It had long ago | Your wandering boy, that you though, been settled that the Bates family could not do without Aunt Martha, and Aunt Martha could not get along without them, "How dreadful it must be," was her thought that night. "to have no lovelight in one's life."

Then Miss Martha sat down and wrote a letter to her brother John, who lived in the city. She told him of Miss Rhoda; what a patient, faithful life hers had been, and now, just as nearing the end of the journey. she must be forced to give up her home and go to the town-house. Then she added, "John, you and I must pay off that mortgage, and give Miss Rhoda the home for her life. We are able; let us be willing to do it. What a joyous Christmas we shall have if we do this! Miss Rhoda must have the measure meted out to her that she has

meted out to others." The result was that Brother John who was quite apt to act on sister house, there was a look on her face Martha's suggestions, joined her in the labor of love for her neighbor. When Miss Martha went over to see Miss Rhoda, a short time before the foreclosure of the mortgage, she found her looking over her things-she could not carry many with her; for the room was small she expected to occupy. But there was this little memento and that gift with sweet memories associated



THE LORD STAYED HIS HAND.

about them which made it a hard matter to decide what to take and what to give up. There was the mother's old workbasket, once so full of the making and mending for the loved ones, and her copy of "Daily Food" lying in it, and father's well-thumbed Bible. with here and there words of comfort to you again?" asked Arthur, the tall and explanation written on the margins-those of course must go with

> Tear-marks were on Miss Rhoda's face as she offered the mother's rocker

"Yes, Miss Martha, I'm getting ready

to move. It's something I never did before, and it's sort of trying. But Girls that and former the learn progra-I'm thankful I don't feet so unreconcited and unhappy about it as I thought I should when I first made up my mind that there was no ling else I could do.

My eyes are so poor I can't sew any Thir hard wear i so and so.

Thir weath or the loosehold away The weath or the loosehold away. more. I say with John Bunyan, 'Perhaps thy way to beaven lies through this very valley. It is just as near W the town-house, heaven is, as it is to ray old home here, but then well, I won't say one word against the Lord's who could again the Lord's who are stope and the same that we have the same that feet of his children. If this is his way for me to walk, I hope he will give me strength to follow without fal-

"But, my dear Miss Rhoda, it is not noing to be the Lord's will for you to eave your old home; you are to stay in it as long as you live."

When Miss Martha told her how her home had been secured to her, she exclaimed, "I never thought before now Abraham must have felt when he was ready to sacrifice Isaac and the Lord stayed his hand!"

It was Arthur who planned a houseshed with wood and coal, and her cupboard-shelves with things needful for the necessities of the body. The fathers and mothers joined in the work of love, and there was never such a thorough house-warming done in that locality before. A new light came into Miss Rhoda's face that Christmastide. It was lovelight-she was not alone in the world any longer; she belonged to her good neighbors, and they belonged to her.

When the Christmas bells rang in the church belfry on Christmas morning the people heard them with gladness, and thanked the Lord that they had been enabled to help return Miss Rhoda's measure running over full.

#### CHRISTMAS RAPPINGS.



old home door On the Christmas morning fair-

was lost-Say, wouldn't you open, Claire?

If a babe should rap at your old heart door On the Christmas morning fair,

To give you a kiss or a hug or two. Say, wouldn't you open, Claire? If a God should rap at your old heart

door

On the Christmas morning fair, To give you a Son with a heavenly

home. Say, wouldn't you open, Claire?

### Christmas Kindnesses.

At this season of the year, remember that it is your duty as children, and also your privilege, to glorify God. to promote peace, and to extend good will to those around you. You may promote the blessing of peace on earth by frankly forgiving those who may grieve or annoy you, by persuading enemies to be reconciled to each other, and by daily prayer to God to preserve the nations of the earth from the deadly horrors of war. And you may in a great many ways show good will to men. Are there not poor people within a short walk of your own door who will receive no Christmas cards, no nice presents of food or good clothing. whose children have no nice toys or picture books, of which some of you scarcely know where to find room for" Christian Herald.

### What Makes a Happy Christmas.

It does not require much money, nor indeed any money, to make a happy home circle on Christmas. The chief thing is a warm and merry heart. It will devise ways and means for filling the home with cheer, joy and gladness. A little invention, a little effort, and much love will give the day a halo brighter than tinsel and gold. God did not require extra material to paint every tree and bush in all this region a crystal whiteness the other night. He used only a little moisture and a little cold, and in the morning the key turn in the door, and I knew men exclaimed in wonder, "What beau- that the murderer intended to let ty!" So the simple things beautify Lola mand silence her. and glorify the home, and make holfdays bright with joys beyond the purchase of money,-Michigan Christian

Christmas gifts for thee, Fair and free! Precious things from the heavenly

store Filling thy casket more and more; Gelden love in divinest chain. That never can be untwined again; Silvery carols of joy that swell Sweetest of all in the heart's lone ceil. LOVABLE GIRLS.

The tiple that he is the Land, have subject

The color the witter and or distinguish There are very few majorators! But O for the wise in the home tests. There is a constant and structly demonst.

## The Great Hesper.

BY PRANK BARRETT.

CHAPTER IN. end was near. Not content with taking, the diamond, the secondre! intended having my life to remove the possibility, if possibility existed, of being identified as the third by me-

He set about his work with deviltsh efreamspection I heard the metal rings clink as he took up the fallen curtain from the floor and upfolded it, and the bed creaked as he got upon it. As he approached from behind, he stradied himself by setting one band upon my shoulder, then he laid the fold d englain over my other shoulder, and his bony knuckles touched my chest as he ar warming for Mise Rhoda on Christmas ranged the stuff over my breast I manner, which was queerly at varieve. The young men and young women knew what that meant; it was to of the church and town filled her wood- prevent the betraying blood from into his clothes. "We will find him. spurting up his arm.

sleeve, as a batcher does who has a has happened, pardner. Reel it of beast to slaughter.

A thousand thoughts whirled in my mind in that brief space; but a great awe came noon me as I felt his for then I realized that I was on the very brink of eternity.

A feeling of regret for the ill use eyes I had made of many days-for the loss of Edith, and the world which she had tilled with joy and hope; a deep and tender wish for her happiness, and the welfare of the comeanthe Hesper, took the place of terror, and it was with something like resignation that I awaited death.

As he grasped my left shoulder, I fels him lean over my right, and the next moment he stabbed me.

He had not used sufficient force, for the knife point stuck in one of the ribs under my left breast and went no further.

He pulled the knife out and tried again, but this time the blade scarcely punctured my skin-

Then seeing that the thickness of impediment, he unfolded and rearagainst this barbarous refinement of flask in his hand. cruelty, I prayed like Samson for strength, and made one more to break my bonds.

The twisted sheets and firm knots withstood the strain, but the effort saved my life. The calculating villain knew that I must exhaust my strength in a few minutes, and would not risk breaking his knife or getting smeared with my blood as I writhed.

And presently my force gave out, and all hope leaving me I ceased to struggle, and was callous to his touch, when he once more touched my shoulder.

But in that moment of dread silence, when his knife must have at once in the direction indicated. been raised to strike the final blow. the door-handle turned, and I felt his grasp relax—nay, his fingers trembled as they lay on my shoulder.

There was an interval of a minute, and the door-handle turned again: then a voice that I recognized as Lola's spoke in a low tone outside. "Are you there-you?" A mo-

ment's pause, and she added, "You ain't sick, are you?"

She had come to my door and heard me writhing against the post What would the rascal do now? His hand still trembled. It gave me courage, for it showed that he feared discovery, and I knew that he would not risk his own neck for the mere pleasure of killing me. I put have such an abundance that you out my strength again making the said: bed-post snap under my strain.

"Shall I sing out?" Loia asked, a Hoeck." little louder and with an accent of alarm.

The hand slipped from my shoulder and down my arm as the villain stepped from the bed. His position was getting more perilous. If Lola "sung out" there would be little from me." chance of his making off with the diamond.

I had loosened the towel that bound my head and gagged me wriggled about furiously, worked the fold out of my mouth, and got my chin above it, breathing freely for the first time since I had been tied At the same moment I heard "Take care, take care!" I shouted.

as loudly as the towel that still covered my face would permit.

Another wriggle, and I felt that covered. Moreover, I distinguished a long gray patch before me. The when his passion was somewhat excurtain of the oriel had been drawn back the light hal sensibly increased during the time occupied by the events I have narrated.

I almost fancied I saw the sil-

that my eyes were not deceived; it medisappeared, and almost immediately acterward Cheard at fall upon the she has been with meterrace below. The man bal dropped dowers distance of fifteen man hand but from the lodge.

The feeling of cellef, combined | -- tool knows where - and left mewith exhaustion caused by my franthe efforts, was too much for mo. I was glody and sick, my eyes, close I the second storal cold upon my face, every m sole gave way and quivered. only the bonds upon my body kept me from failing:

"Saint hart are you, dear?" were come to my rescae at the time I the first words I heard. It was Lota's voice, very gentle and tre, ru-

No you have saved me," said L She gave a little mean of delight, and her hands, which had been basily togging at the knots, stopped in their work.

She threw her arm; aemind my vants. That sound warned me that the neck, and, presing her tace against my breast, sobbod

CHAPTER IX.

Brace's door was unlocked. He to all appearance was sound asleep with | in his present condition. his face to the wall I shook him, and as he turned over I said.

"Got up the Hesper is lost "Lost' as how?" he asked, sitting

"Sto en taken from me." · Where's brack?

under which he had left the house.

"We will find him, pardner," said. Where is he now?" the Judge, in his slow, sententions ance with his speed in hurrying and see if his presentiments will go In the pause that followed, I fan- so far as far to explain, what's becled he must be turning up his come of the diamond. Let up what here I am all awake.

I narrated briefly the events of the night while he completed dressing. hand firmly grasp my left shoulder. listened in silence. There was just enough light to reveal the mischievous exultation that sparkled in her

"Here' a vigilance committee job, if ever there was one," said the Judge, hastily lacing his boot. I ain't lighted on anything so much like Californy since the good old days ions who had toiled with me to win Now, sir, if you air ready, we'll hant up Israel, the prophet. He's got to of my arm. tell us sumthin' more about this than we know on "

It was striking 5 o'clock when we me to look about the garden and its vicinity for Van Hoeck, he himself struck out at once for the wood, taking Lola with him. The girl would mist still hung over the solden earth. have stayed with me, but her father had her hand in his, and there was no getting away from that grio.

After exploring the garden, I took the path that led to the lodge, as bethe doubled curtain was too great an ing the one that Van Hoeck froquently walked in when alone. The Forget what I said. Thorne. Have ranged it, passing his hand over my lodge-keeper was not up. but, pass- pity on me," he marmared. breast and pressing his fingers here ing through the open wicket into

It then was half-past five, or perhaps a little later. "Have you passed a blind gentle-

man on the road?" I asked. "I ain't passed 'im." he answered: see some 'un. a: looked gen'lemanlike, kind 'er fumbling his way along the road down by Harley bottom.

I knew the cross-roads; they were nearly two miles distant. It was incomprehensible to me how Van Hoeck had strayed so far from the Abbey; but the laborer's description oft little room for doubt that it was Van Hoeck he had seen, and I started

I could not see Van Hoeck from plied. the cross-roads, but on turning the angle of the lane at the foot of the hill, I perceived him feeling his way with painful slowness, and on the side of the hedge row, 100 yards in advance. Hearing my step, he turned, and recognizing it, he came to meet me. He seemed to forget the danger of making a false step, and advanced with eager quickness -his whole body partaking the expression of anxiety imprinted on his

"Is it you, Thorne?" he eried. "Yes," I replied.

"What has happened?" I waited until I got up to him, then

putting my hand on his shoulder, I "I have bad news for you Van

He trembled violently under my hand, and opened his lips to speak.

but no sound came: his condition was pitiable, and to keep him no longer in suspense, I said: "I have lost it. It has been taken

"Who has taken it?" he asked, in a thick, husky voice.

· 1 canuot say. I could not see the man who robbed me.

He was silent for a time, and then his feelings found expression, at dest in execuation then in incoherent sentences, broken up with works of Datch where the English tonglie failed to give su licient force to his anger and mortification. sailed me with every kind of invective, accused me of cowardice, of complicity in robbing him, of I know not what baseness and heartlessness - indeed, it seemed as the upper part of my face was un though the blow had deprived him of reason for a moment. At length,

hausted, he said: "And what is your defense?" I took his arm, and as I led him up the hill toward the cross-roads, I went ever the story once more. souette of a man's figure against the When I was telling him now Lola 'copt checks."

grayness. It moved, and I was sure lived come to my resone, he stopped

"That is a flo" he exclaimed: for

"linyossible!" Lexelalmed. "Impossible, according to your feet from the window-a drop of not story, but it is the truth for all that more than six feet for an ordinary. I got off the path and could not find my was back. She bell me to a road

> "When" "How can I toll? The night has been an age

> "Granting the lead you for an hour and you would scarcely suffer her to lead you longer that would allow her to return to the Abbey, and

"Have it as you will it makes no difference now. She got me out of the way, and that was her object in being there. for on."

I came to the end of my narrative and then suggested that the theft might be traced to one of the say-

"Anything to shield Brace," he said bitterly; and then, stamping his foot, he added, "You know he took it"

It was uncloss ceasoning with him

"You stand convicted by your own statement." he continued; wwhat ordinary th of would be fool enough, having obtained the diamond, to walt there, risking discovery and jeopard tring his own life-for the rake of butchering year? If Brace was the I told him of Van Hoorie's terrible | thiof, such a tiring is possible for he presentiment, and the circumstances must kill both you and me to profit by the presession of the diamond,

"With Lola, in the woods looking for you."

"Are you three hunting together?" elle reasonable, Van Hoeck," I said

"I am," he replied; "leave me

I made no reply; and we stood there in the middle of the road, he quaking with fear and turning his head from s de to si le to catch the sound that might confirm his fears. ile looked like a hunted beast, that knows not which way to escape the hounds

"What's that" he asked under his breath quiexly. "There's some one on the road. It's his step. If you have any mercy save me from him."

While I was turning to look up the road, to see if his fours were justified he groped about until he caught hold

I had heard no sound, but his finer sense was not at fault. On the brow of the hill, which we were now quitted the house. The judge left descending, stood the gaunt figure of Brace. The light of the rising sun shone upon him, but we stood in the shadow of the wood, where the

"I do not hear him: where is he now?" Van Hoeck whis sered. · He is standing on the hill, a con-

ple of handred yards behind us. He does not see us. " I we could but get to the Abbey!

I saw no possible reason for reand there to ascertain whether he the road, I came upon a laborer. fusing compliance with this request. had got it right for his purpose. It trudging along to his work with a and, taking his arm, I led him along was then that, my nature revolting pick upon his shoulder, and a tin that side of the read where the hade was deeper.

But, before we had gone a dozen yards, a shrill whoop rang through the echoing woods to our right, and Van Hoeck again stopped. I looked in vain over the brake for Lola, "but as I come by the cross-roads I whose cry I recogn zed; but, glaneing up the read, I perceived that the Judge hal heard the signal, and was coming after us. At the same moment Van Hoeck, starting forward, cried:

"Quick, quick-he sees us-he is coming down upon us!" and then, after another dozen yards, "do you want him to overtake us that you stick to this cursed road?"

"I am looking for a path; we can not push through the brake," I re-

Columbia River an Uncertain Stream.

### [TO BE CONTINUED.]

The few steamboat men on the upper Columbian river in Eastern Washington, and others acquainted with the stream, express grave doubts of its ever becoming a safe and certain highway, although enthusiastic residents of that region count much on its utilization as a means of transportation for the development of the country. The principle trouble is in its erratic changes of course, its rise and fall and its shifting banks. The boats of the one company navigating the river between Wenatchee and the

He Knows His Pines.

laid up in one week last month

Okanogan river are constantly meet

ing with mishaps, owing to the diffi-

cuities of unvigation. Three were

"How does the old man book upon you as a prospective sousin-law?" "Don't know yet Haven't got far

enough along to sound him? "He can't be blind to the fact that you are an accepted beau?"

"Well, no. that's plain enough as far as the beau is concerned; but I seem to be playing second fiddle all the time."-Kansus City Journal.

Centilie or Bogus Diamends. Make a small dot on a paper, then look at it through a diamond. If you can see but one not, you can dopend upon it that the stone is genu-

ine but if the mark is scattered or

shows more than one, you will be perfectly safe in refusing to pay ten cents for a stone that may be offered to you fer \$500. Ludistions of Literature. Little Boy-What is your papa?

Little Girl He's a literary man. "What's that" "He write."

"What does he write?" "Oh. he writes most everything