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CHAPTER VII.

MR. LORRAINE was now long past the great climacteric, and breaking fast; indeed, so infirm had he become that he had more than once thought of retiring from the ministry altogether. Though his body was frail,

however, his intellect was as bright as ever, and when Marjorie entered the study he was busily engaged in reading one of his favorite books.

He looked up with his kindly smile as his foster-daughter appeared.

"Is it you, my bairn?" he said, as he came over and kissed her. "Welcome home again! Though you have been scarcely a week away, I have missed you sorely, and have been counting the days till your return."

For some months past, I should now explain, Marjorie had been accustomed to stay at a ladies' school in the neighboring town from Monday till Friday of every week, returning each Friday afternoon, and remaining till the following Monday. This arrangement had been found necessary, as it was impossible for the girl to complete her simple education at home, and as the distance was too great for her to go to and fro daily without inconvenience.

"And what news have you got from the town?" continued the minister, as Marjorie, holding his hand in hers, sank into a chair at his side. "How is Mrs Carruthers? and how do you get along with your studies?"

"Miss Carruthers sends her compliments, and as she is called away to Edinburgh to see her sick sister I am to bid at home for a week. A whole week, Mr. Lorraine, and in May-time! Oh, I am so glad!"

"So am I, my bairn," said the minister, "A week's rest will do me good, too, I hope, for I have been far from well since you went away. I had one of my old attacks on Tuesday, and have been obliged to keep in the house."

"You will be better now," said Marjorie. "I will nurse you!"

"Ay, ay; and the sight of your face and the sound of your voice will do me more good than the doctor. By the way, my bairn, I had one here today inquiring after you, and she will be here again this evening."

"I know! Miss Hetherington, of the Castle?"

"Yes, Miss Hetherington. It is strange, my bairn, how much interest the good lady takes in you—she who cares so little for any other living thing; and yet, after all, it is not strange, for my Marjorie is a favorite with high and low."

The girl's face grew troubled as she answered:

"I hope, Mr. Lorraine, she won't be asking me up to the Castle; I feel so lonely there, and she—she frightens me sometimes! She has such strange ways, and the house is an awful place."

"Well, well, you must be careful not to offend her, for she is a true friend."

"I know she is very rich and good, too, but for all that I cannot bear to be alone in her company. I wonder why she likes to have me! She sits in her arm-chair looking at me for hours together, till sometimes I feel as if I could scream out and run away!"

"She is a strange woman," said the minister, thoughtfully; "but you have no reason to fear her. She takes a great interest in you, and in all that concerns you."

"I know that, but—" Her eccentricities are only put on, I think, to conceal a heart that is truly kindly. You must try to humor her, my bairn. Not that I would have you shape your conduct toward her by any sordid hope of future gain; no, no, that would be unworthy; but it is well, after all to have so powerful a friend, should anything happen to me."

"Oh, don't speak like that!" exclaimed Marjorie, her eyes filling with tears. "I cannot bear it."

Solomon here interrupted the conversation by bringing in the tea.

Marjorie took off her hat and shawl, and, sitting at the table, began to pour out the tea, while Mr. Lorraine, forgetting his recent train of thought, questioned her anew about her doings in the town. Thus far they chatted cheerfully together and shared the simple meal.

"And how about the French, Marjorie?" asked Mr. Lorraine presently. "Are you coming on?"

"Very slowly," was her reply. "I find it hard to pronounce, and the verbs are a dreadful trouble—and the genders. It's so hard to tell whether a thing is masculine or feminine, and I wonder how the French folks themselves can tell. I'm afraid I'll never learn the French rightly."

"I could never master it myself, though, after all, maybe, I never fairly tried; it's a queer kind of tongue, like the chipping of birds, I'm thinking. What like is your teacher?"

think he has, for he is an exile and cannot return to his native land."

"Has he not other scholars?" he asked quietly.

"Only myself out of our school. I go to his house for my lesson every afternoon. And he is very, very kind! He would scarcely take the fees. He said—"

But here Marjorie paused and blushed, for she suddenly remembered Causidiere's words and ardent looks of admiration.

"Well, what did he say?"

"He said he was ashamed to take money for teaching, and then—then talked about France, and how he longed to return, and how sad it was to be an exile. That was all!"

Mr. Lorraine did not question any further, but seemed plunged in thought.

"By the way, Marjorie," he said, after a pause, "you know that your school fees are paid by Miss Hetherington?"

Marjorie nodded.

"It was her wish that you should be taught French. For my own part, I never thought much of either the language or the people, but that may be my prejudice. Miss Hetherington thinks that every young lady should learn French. Curious, the interest she takes in you!"

There was a noise at the front door, a sound of feet in the lobby. Solomon entered abruptly.

"She's outside," he said. "Will I bring her in?"

"Who is outside, Solomon, my man?"

"Who but Mistress Hetherington, frae the Castle. The carriage is at the door, and she's wrangling w' the driver."

Mr. Lorraine rose feebly from his chair, while Marjorie nervously put down her cup and saucer and prepared to receive the visitor.

"This way, mem!" said Solomon; and immediately there entered the room a woman of middle height, with snow-white hair, leaning upon a staff or hand-crutch.

She had black piercing eyes, a complexion like alabaster, and her front teeth projected slightly over her under lip. Though she had the air of an old woman and walked with a stoop, her face had scarcely a wrinkle, and her voice was deep and powerful.

Marjorie sprang up and stood trembling. Without a word, Miss Hetherington crossed the room and looked fixedly in the young girl's face.

"Weel, Marjorie Annan?" she said in a strong Scotch accent.

"How—how do you do, Miss Hetherington?"

"As you see—well enough not to complain. Stand still and let me look at ye! There, you may kiss me if you like!"

Marjorie did not like, but she bent forward and touched the lady's frosty cheek.

"Did ye come doon in the wagonette? Nae need to answer, for I ken, and I ken who came along w' ye! What's this between you and Johnnie Sutherland?"

Had a bomb exploded under her feet, Marjorie could not have shown more consternation. She stammered, and blushed, and cast an appealing glance at Mr. Lorraine.

"How's this, Marjorie?" he said, gently. "You did not tell me that Johnnie had come back?"

"I'll swear she didna," exclaimed Miss Hetherington, with a low, harsh laugh. "See hoo she blushes! The lad and she had a tryste in Dumfries, and came doon together."

Here Solomon, who stood at the room door looking on, thought it his duty to interfere.

"And what then? What if Johnnie Sutherland did convey our Marjorie home? There's nae harm in that, I'm thinking."

"Hold your tongue, Solomon Mucklebackit," said Miss Hetherington, with a sharp rap of her crutch upon the ground. "Mind your own business!"

"It is my business," retorted Solomon, doggedly. "Marjorie, dinna heed her!"

"Solomon!" cried Mr. Lorraine, with a certain authority.

"Weel!"

"Be good enough to leave the room." The old man uttered a low snort of defiance, but immediately obeyed. Miss Hetherington took a chair close to the fireplace, and sat in it, leaning heavily on her crutch.

"Nae fool like an old fool!" she muttered, looking at Mr. Lorraine, but referring to the refractory sexton. "Between the twa o' ye, you're spoiling Marjorie Annan altogether."

"I hope not," returned the minister mildly, resuming his own seat. "After all, too, Solomon is quite right. Johnnie and Marjorie are old friends."

"All the parish kens that," said the lady of the Castle. "Come here, Marjorie, and dinna be feared—I'll no eat you! Look me in the face! Are you and Johnnie courting?"

Marjorie's face was scarlet, and she trembled violently.

"Oh, Miss Hetherington," she cried, "what do you mean?"

And she held out her hand to Mr. Lorraine, as if beseeching him to take her part.

"Really, Miss Hetherington," he said, "Marjorie is a child, and I am sure such nonsense as you speak of has never entered her head."

"Nonsense, is it?" retorted the lady.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"CORN HUSKING TIME." SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

From the Following Text: Job, Chapter V. Verse 26: "As a Shock of Corn Cometh In His Season."—The Harvest Waiting for the Lord.

G OING at the rate of forty miles the hour a few days ago I caught this sermon. If you have recently been in the fields of Pennsylvania, or New Jersey, or New York, or New England, or any of the country districts, you know that corn is nearly all cut.

The sharp knife struck through the stalks and left them all along the fields until a man came with a bundle of straw and twisted a few of these wisps of straw into a band, and then gathering up as much of the corn as he could compass with his arms, he bound it with this wisp of straw, and then stood it in the field in what is called a shock.

It is estimated that there are now several billion bushels of corn standing in the shock, waiting to be husked. Sometime during the latter part of next month, the farmers will gather, one day on one farm, another day on another farm, and they will put on their rough husking apron, and they will take the husking peg, which is a piece of iron with a leather loop fastened to the hand, and with it unsheathe the corn from the husk and toss it into the golden heap. Then the wagons will come along and take it to the corn crib.

How vividly to all those of us who were born in the country comes the remembrance of husking time. We waited for it as for a gala day in the year. It was called a frolic. The trees having for the most part shed their foliage, the farmers waded through the fallen leaves and came through the keen morning air to the gleeful company.

The frosts which had silvered everything during the night began to melt off of the top of the corn shocks. While the farmers were waiting for others, they stood blowing their breath through their fingers, or threshing their arms around their body to keep up warmth of circulation.

Roaring mirth greeted the late farmer as he crawled over the fence. Joke and repartee and rustic salutation abounded. All ready now! The men take hold the shock of corn and hurl it prostrate, while the moles and mice which have secreted themselves there for warmth attempt escape. The withe of straw is unwound from the corn shock, and the stalks, heavy with the wealth of grain, are rolled into two bundles, between which the husker sits down. The husking peg is thrust in until it strikes the corn, and then the fingers rip off the sheathing of the ear, and there is a crack as the root of the corn is snapped off from the husk, and the grain, disimprisoned, is hurried up into the sunlight.

The air is so tonic, the work is so very exhilarating, the company is so blithe, that some laugh, and some shout and some sing, and some banter, and some tease a neighbor for a romantic ride along the edge of the woods in an eventide, in a carriage that holds but two, and some prophesy as to the number of bushels to the field, and others go into competition as to which shall rifle the most corn shocks before sundown.

After a while, the dinner horn sounds from the farmhouse, and the table is surrounded by a group of jolly and hungry men. From all the pantries and the cellars and the perches of fowl on the place the richest dainties come, and there is carnival and neighborhood reunion, and a scene which fills our memory, part with smiles but more with tears as we remember that the farm belongs now to other owners, and other hands gather in the fields, and many of those who mingled in that merry husking scene have themselves been reaped "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Orientals knew anything about the corn as it stands in our fields; but recent discoveries have found out that the Hebrew knew all about Indian maize, for there have been grains of the corn picked up out of ancient crypts and exhumed from hiding places where they were put down many centuries ago, and they have been planted in our time and have come up just such Indian maize as we raise in New York and Ohio; so I am right when I say that my text may refer to a shock of corn just as you and I bound it, just as you and I threw it, just as you and I husked it. There may come some practical and useful and comforting lessons to all our souls, while we think of coming in at last "like a shock of corn cometh in his season."

It is high time that the King of Terrors were thrown out of the Christian vocabulary. A vast multitude of people talk of death as though it were the disaster of disasters instead of being to a good man the blessing of blessings. It is moving out of a cold vestibule into a warm temple. It is migrating into groves of redolence and perpetual fructage. It is a change from bleak March to rosy June. It is a change of manacle for garlands. It is the transition of the iron handcuffs of the prison to the diamonds of the banquet table.

Let us, therefore, to be to the suggestion of my text, it is only husking time. It is the tearing off of the rough sheath of the body that the bright and the beautiful soul may go free. Coming in "like a shock of corn cometh in his season." Christ broke up a funeral procession at the gate of Nain by making a resurrection

day for a young man and his mother. And I would that I could break up your sadness, and halt the long funeral procession of the world's grief by some cheering and cheerful view of the last transition.

We all know that husking time was a time of frost. Frost on the fence, frost on the stubble, frost on the ground, frost on the bare branches of the trees, frost in the air, frost on the hands of the huskers. You remember we used to hide behind the corn stacks so as to keep off the wind, but still you remember how shivering was the body and how painful was the cheek, and how benumbed were the hands. But after awhile the sun was high up, and all the frosts went out of the air, and hilarities awakened the echoes and joy from one corn shock went up, "Aha, aha!" and was answered by joy from another corn shock, "Aha, aha!"

So we realize that the death of our friends is the nipping of many expectations, the freezing, the chilling, the frosting of many of our hopes. It is far from being a south wind. It comes from the frigid north, and when they go away from us we stand benumbed in body and benumbed in mind and benumbed in soul. We stand among our dead neighbors, our dead families, and we say, "Will we ever get over it?" Yes, we will get over it amid the shoutings of heavenly reunion, and we will look back to all these distresses of bereavement only as the temporary distresses of husking time. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "Light, and but for a moment," said the apostle as he clasped his hands, "light, and but for a moment." The chill of the frosts followed by the gladness that cometh in "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." * * *

Perhaps now this may be an answer to a question which I asked one Sabbath morning, but did not answer: Why is it that so many really good people have so dreadfully to suffer? You often find a good man with enough pains and aches and distresses, you would think, to discipline a whole colony, while you find a man who is perfectly useless going about with easy digestion and steady nerves and shining health, and his exit from the world is comparatively painless. How do you explain that? Well, I noticed in the husking time that the husking peg was thrust into the corn and then there must be a stout pull before the swathing was taken off of the ear, and the full, round, healthy, luxuriant corn was developed; while on the other hand there was corn that hardly seemed worth husking. We threw that into a place all by itself and we called it "nubbins."

Some of it was mildewed, and some of it was mice nibbled, and some of it was great promise and no fulfillment. All cobs and no corn. Nubbins! After the good corn had been driven up to the barn we came around with the corn basket and we picked up these nubbins. They were worth saving, but not worth much. So all around us there are people who amount to nothing. They develop into no kind of usefulness. They are nibbled on one side by the world, and nibbled on the other side by the devil, and mildewed all over. Great promise and no fulfillment. All cobs and no corn. Nubbins.

They are worth saving. I suppose many of them will get to heaven, but they are not worthy to be mentioned in the same day with those who went through great tribulation into the kingdom of our God. Who would not rather have the pains of this life, the misfortunes of this life—who would not rather be torn, and wounded, and lacerated, and wrenched, and husked and at last go in amid the very best grain of the granary, than to be pronounced not worth husking at all? Nubbins!

In other words, I want to say to you people who have distress of body, and distress in business and distress of all sorts, the Lord has not any grudge against you. It is not derogatory, it is complimentary. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and it is proof positive that there is something valuable in you, or the Lord would not have husked you.

Now, in heaven all their offensiveness has been husked off. Each one is as happy as he can be. Every one he meets as happy as he can be. Heaven one great neighborhood reunion. All kings and queens, all songsters, all millionaires, all banqueters. God, the Father, with his children all around him. No "good by" in all the air. No grave cut in all the hills. River of crystal rolling over bed of pearl, under arch of chrysopeiras, into the sea of glass mingled with fire. Stand at the gate of the granary and see the grain come in; out of the frosts into the sunshine, out of the darkness into the light, out of the tearing and the ripping and the twisting and the wrenching and the lacerating and the husking time of earth into the wide open door of the king's granary, "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

Yes, heaven, a great sociable, with joy like the joy of the husking time. No one there feeling so big he declines to speak to some one who is not so large. Archangel willing to listen to smallest cherub. No bolting of the door of caste at one heavenly mansion to keep out the citizen of a smaller mansion. No clique in one corner, whispering about a clique in another corner. David talking none of the airs of a giant killer. Joshua making no one halt until he passes, because he made the sun and moon halt. Paul making no assumptions over the most ordinary preacher of righteousness. Naaman, captain of the Syrian host, no more honored than the captive maid who told him where he should get a good doctor. O my soul, what a country! The humblest man a king, the poorest woman a queen. The meanest house a palace. The shortest

life time eternity. And what is more strange about it all is, we may all get there. "Not I," says some one standing back under the galleries. Yes, you. "Not I," says some one who has not been in church in fifteen years before. Yes, you. "Not I," says some one who has been for fifty years filling up his life with all kinds of wickedness. Yes, you.

There are monopolies on earth, monopolistic railroads and monopolistic telegraph companies, and monopolistic grain dealers, but no monopoly in religion. All who want to be saved may be saved, "without money and without price." Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ for all the people. Of course, use common sense in this matter. You cannot expect to get to Charleston by taking ship for Portland, and you can not expect to get to heaven by going in an opposite direction. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Through that one gate of pardon and peace all the race may go in.

"But," says some one, "do you really think I would be at home in that supernal society if I should reach it?" I think you would. I know you would. I remember that in the husking time there was a great equality of feeling among the neighbors. There at one corn shock a farmer would be at work who owned two hundred acres of ground. The man whom he was talking with at the next corn shock owned but thirty acres of ground, and perhaps all covered by a mortgage. That evening, at the close of the husking day, one man drove home a roan span, so frisky, so full of life, they got their feet over the traces. The other man walked home. Great difference in education, great difference in worldly means; but I noticed at the husking time they all seemed to enjoy each other's society. They did not ask any man how much property he owned or what his education had been. They all seemed to be happy together in those good times.

And so it will be in heaven. Our Father will gather his children around him, and the neighbors will come in, and the past will be rehearsed. And some one will tell of victory, and we will all celebrate it. And some one will tell of great struggle, and we will all praise the grace that fetched him out of it. And some one will say, "Here is my old father, that I put away with heartbreak. Just look at him, he is as young as any of us." And some one will say, "Here is my darling child, that I buried in Greenwood, and all the after years of my life were shadowed with desolation. Just look at her! She doesn't seem as if she had been sick a minute." Great sociality. Great neighborhood kindness.

What though John Milton sit down on one side, and John Howard sit down on the other side. No embarrassment. What though Charlotte Elizabeth sit down on one side, and Hannah More sit down on the other side? No embarrassment. A monarch yourself, why be embarrassed among monarchs? A songster yourself, why be embarrassed amid glorified songsters? Go in and dine.

RAISES MINT.

This is the Queer Business of a Woman in Michigan.

Buffalo Express: A little woman up in Michigan carries on a very remunerative business raising mint. She is Mrs. Mary Weber, and she inherited the business from her father. Some of the mint is raised in hot beds, and these are the objects of constant care by the family, which consists of the widow and a grown-up son and daughter of 16 years. The profitable season is between the months of May and October, and June, the best month of all. The mint roots are set out in May, and the proprietress time is given to them from that date until late in the autumn. She clips and bunches the mint in the afternoon and evening, and the morning is given to sales. She drives to the leading hotels and makes the sales herself. It is not necessary to solicit custom. Most of it has been inherited with the mint bed. The men who patronized her father give their patronage to the daughter. She is not without competitors, but they are all of the male sex and are not as gallant as might be expected. Mrs. Weber, like the wise business woman she is, refuses to say how much the prolific bed yields, but it is safe to say that she keeps the big house "going," and puts aside the desired sum in provision for a "rainy day." She has supplanted her income by dealing in lemons and lemons. Every summer she drives in to the country for a radius of twenty miles in search of rye straw that will serve that purpose. If she finds the kind she desires she buys it in the field. But she is very hard to please in the matter of the quality of the straw, and has finally settled to the patronage of a farmer named Black Jack, who has a yearly contract with her. Womanlike, she cannot tell what is most desirable in the straw, but she "knows when she sees it," and after all that is quite sufficient.

Gibbon in Parliament.

Edward Gibbon, the great historian, sat in parliament for many years, but achieved no success in the house. One morning, he tells us, "as he was destroying an army of barbarians," a knock came to the door, and the tempter appeared in the shape of a friend offering to secure him a seat in parliament for the borough of Liskeard. Gibbon represented the borough for ten years (1771-1783) without ever opening his mouth; and once when moved to do so he lacked the confidence to carry him through. The great speaker filled him with despair, and the bad ones with terror. He grew heart tired of "this parliamentary prattle" and of "the noise and nonsense of the Pandemonium," as he terms parliament in his letters.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Napoleon's Journey to Elba.

That the wrath of his subjects compelled the great Napoleon to play a very undignified part when he traveled from Fontainebleau to Elba in 1814 is known to all readers of history. The full details, however, of that wretched journey have only just been revealed by the publication of Count Paul Schouvaloff's original reports to Count Nesselrode. From Lyons onward the temper of the population grew more and more violent. At Orgon a gibbet had been prepared and the little escort had much difficulty in robbing it of so illustrious a victim. A few miles further Napoleon, becoming alarmed, donned the blue uniform and white cockade of one of the outriders, whom he induced to fill his place in the carriage. Thus attired he reached Aix at full gallop. Then the innkeeper's wife, ignorant of his identity, cried, "So Napoleon is coming! They had much better get him at once. As soon as they get him on the sea they will certainly drown him." After hearing these words the emperor assumed the name of Lord Burghersh, but next morning borrowed the uniform of an Austrian general, and instead of occupying his own carriage drove behind it in a humble caliche as a member of the foreign suite.

Those Unnecessary Questions.

He had lost control of his wheel and the wheel left him to his fate. He rose in the air and then pitched upon the dusty road, gathering great quantities of dirt and accumulating aches and bruises. A few moments afterwards a sympathetic countryman came along. "Had a fall, eh?" "No," "Ye didn't? Then what's happened?" "I climbed a tree to look at the scenery. How are crops and what are you charging a dozen for Franco-German potatoes?"—Judge.