

THE COURTSHIP OF REV. HENRY BLAKESFORD.

As Mr. Blakesford stood rooted to the spot from which he had first seen the light, Dr. Hansome passed him in his buggy.

One o'clock! The bell from his steeple boomed out the hour slowly, solemnly, as he had often heard it strike the first funeral note.

As this long, long night drew to its close; the gray daylight began to steal up over the clear heavens above the little street where this tragedy was enacting.

Nature is kinder to us than Mother Earth. When Mr. Blakesford threw himself upon his bed, well spent both in body and mind, sleep came at once to his relief.

He was dead, it seemed to him, as he dimly wondered over himself, with scarcely an emotion. He apologized to the good Deaconess by saying that he slept little on the previous night, and mortified himself by eating his dinner with the appetite of a hungry man who had fasted from his breakfast.

Halstead's brother has just died, and I want to take you to her.

"Miss Halstead's brother?"—and, as he echoed the words, the blood leaped up from his heart to his face, and Mr. Blakesford staggered back to his seat.

"Yes, it was a sudden death, and there is something very mysterious about the whole affair. He was boarding at Mr. Towne's, just out of the village; you know the house. He has only been there a couple of weeks, and he was very sick when he came, but he was not willing to allow it. He was stricken down last night with a sort of fainting fit.

"Faith, dear Faith!" he said, "sing to me, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' as mother used to sing it to us when we were children; perhaps God will forgive me, and Jesus save me and hide me, for her sake."

Faith was sitting on the wooden seat of an old-fashioned parlor, and, as the carriage stopped, came down the little path to meet them. She was perfectly calm, and held out her hand to her friend as quietly as if she had only parted from him an hour before.

Many times during his pastorate in Darlington, Mr. Blakesford had been called upon to act as comforter, and very sympathetic and soothing he had proved himself; but it is so different when the blow falls home, under any circumstances, and it is not to be wondered at that, under these peculiar ones, Faith soon felt and wondered over the something which was separating them, or that she, with the keen sensitiveness of a delicate nature, attributed it to the shame which her brother's death might be supposed to have brought upon a connection that should be above reproach.

"I can work for God, then, still," he thought, with a solemnity almost amounting to an awe, "at least not all of it; and if not in this parish, why, then, somewhere else; the vineyard is a wide one and very white. He will take care of me if I put my trust in Him—of me; yes,—but, with a throb at the heart, 'what of Faith? Who will take care of her?'"

relessly, until Faith said, with more of a smile than her face had worn before since her brother's death:

"What is it, Miss Kipp? Are you sent to a committee for anything?"

"There now," said Miss Kipp, stopping short in her walk and drawing her chair close up to Faith, "it's got to come out, or Sophronia Kipp shall go to her grave. I'm worried every jist to death, Miss Halstead."

"What is the trouble? Are you a committee?"

"There's no committee about it," went on Miss Kipp; "it's jist 'cause I must always be putting my fingers into what don't belong to me; the Lord knows that if he will only forgive me this time, and help me out, never—never, so long as I am above ground, will I be caught in the like again. Darlington, and the parish, and the minister, may go to Ballyhack for all I'll interfere; at least, he might know, for I've told him times enough: I've prayed, if I never prayed before in my life,—I've prayed now for forgiveness; but, after all, it's borne in on me that it ain't God, as much as it's you," looking, with eyes running over with tears, into Faith's wondering face.

"If you will tell me what you are talking about, I can answer you better," said Faith.

And then Sophronia Kipp told the whole story, keeping back not a jot nor tittle. She knew it all,—how Mr. Blakesford had spent so much of the night in watching her window; how Dr. Hansome had passed him in his gig, and looked from him to the light in the window; how Dr. Hansome was a good Christian man, and how neither he nor she had ever opened their lips about what had seen to any person in the whole parish; how struck dumb and penitent she had been ever since; and how dreadful it was to have to see her minister go round, looking like a ghost more and more; and how people had begun to ask her what had gone wrong, and if that engagement wasn't a-going to be broken, after all; and how she had allers told them: "No, not in this world; and for the other, the parish of Darlington had better leave it for him to take care of, who did pretty much there as he thought best."

An Irish gentleman, hearing of a friend having a stone coffin made for himself exclaimed: "By me sowl, an' that's a good idee! Shure, an' a stone coffin 'ud ast a man his lifetim'."

A man attempted to defraud the Chinamen of Virginia City, Nevada, recently, by informing them that the Legislature was about to pass a bill to cut off their pigtail, and that unless they raised him eight hundred dollars to pay a lawyer and put a stop to it, the bill would surely become a law.

When Peter of Croton was engaged on a picture for the royal palace of Petti, Ferdinand II. particularly admired the representation of a weeping child.—"Has your Majesty," said the painter, "a mind to see this child laugh?" And suiting the action to the word, the artist merely depressed the corner of the lips, and the inner extremity of the eyebrow, when the little urchin seemed in danger of bursting his sides with laughter.

Chief Justice Marshall was in the habit of going to market himself, and carrying home his purchases. Frequently he would be seen returning at sunrise, with poultry in one hand, vegetables in the other. On one of these occasions, a fashionable young man who had removed to Richmond, was swearing violently because he could find no one to carry home his turkey.

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