THE LAST WORD.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

He kissed her lips, and sailed away,
And, as his bark went down the bay,
He turned with one last look to say,
"Good-by, sweetheart, for many a day."

His ship sailed east to isles of balm,
His ship sailed west o'er waters calm,
And north and south in far-off seas,
Her white sails flut ered in the breeze.

One night the paced the deck alone.
How strangely still the air had grown!
The sea seemed listening. Not a breath
Broke silence deep as that of death.

Low, like the sound of winds that play
On pipes of summer, far away,
A voice across the silence came—
His sweetheart's voice—and called his name.

From far beyond the blue sea's rim,
Across the world she called to him;
And yet, so still the great world lay,
She s emed tut a hand's breadth away.

He listened, awe-struck, half in fear.
The world of God seemed strangely near.
But once, and only once, it came;
His sweetheart called no more his name.

At anchor in the land-locked bay
At last the good ship Wanderer lay,
And eagerly he sought the shore,
To see his sweetheart's eyes once more.

He reached the gate. He crossed the sill,
Overgrown with grass. Alas, how still!
He passed the door. "Sweetheart," cried he,
"Is this your welcome home to me?"

Here lay a book that she had read—
Her sewing, with a broken thread.
The dust lay thick upon the floor;
He turned away and shut the door.

* * * * * *

They told him his sweetheart was dead.
"She called you at the last," they said;
And then he knew that he had heard
Across the world his love's last word.

SHOCTON, Wis.

MARK AND MARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD CARRIER.

Hurrah for the men that work,
And the labor that suits them best!
Hurrah for the sin-days labor,
And the one of blessed rest!
Hurrah for the open heart!
Hurrah for the nob'e aim!
Hurrah for a quiet home!
Hurrah for an honest name!

The carriers of the olden time have almost all left the road and given place to advancing railroads. The large, awkward, lumbering wagons, with their teams of four heavy horses, which, fifty years ago, could be seen any day on either of the many highways converging in the metropolis, died a peaceful death immediately on the appearance of the iron horse, and since then the local carrier's carts have become few and far between, as, by degrees, the metal track has grasped district after district in its greedy claws.

Still, to-day there are to be found villages, farm houses, and even towns, ten and fifteen miles from a railway station; and so situated was the little village of Wellbury-on-the-Wolds, in Yorkshire. The consequence was that Wellbury-on-the-Wolds supported a real old-style carrier in the person of Hezekiah Bogg. Old Hez, as he was familiarly called by his acquaintances, was a hale and wiry little man, and, although at the time our story commences he was past man's allotted three score years and ten, he strutted about with a back as stiff and upright as an ash plant.

Hez, with the help of his son Johnny, ran two conveyances. One, the veritable old wagon with which he had started in business (except that it had, at various times, had new wheels, new shafts, new body, and, I was going to say, new springs, but springs never formed a part of it), and which he meant to drive as long as he could hold a team. The other vehicle was built when Johnny had became man enough to help his father in the business, and was an investment made purely with the purpose of putting Johnny on a level with his father. It was a cross between a light wagon, a coach, and an omnibus. It had springs, however, and cushioned seats, and was covered, and had a door behind, and was painted a bright yellow, picked out with crimson, and a strolling writer had painted along each side in magnificent blue letters, shaded with green, the word "Wellbury," and so served as an intimation to the public that, whatever direction the coach (as it was termed by courtesy) might, for the time being, be pursuing, its ultimate destination was Wellbury-on-the-Wolds.

These two important vehicles performed every week two journeys, with an additional one each alternate week. Every Saturday to St. Olaves; Thursday to Spaborough-super-Mare, and every alternate Tuesday to Milton, the nearest market town.

Johnny Bogg did not much resemble his father. He was "fat and forty," with a great red face which reminded one of the sun in a fog. Johnny was a widower, and, on the death of his wife, went, with his one child—a girl—to live with his old father and mother. The Bogg family had been Methodists from the time that John Wesley founded that society, and ever since he had felt the Sunday walk to Milton and back beyond the strength of himself and wife, now some twenty years since, he had thrown open the doors of his cottage for Sabbath worship, and there now appeared on the plan of the Milton circuit the name of Wellbury as a preaching station. On two or three important occasions of each year, such as Missionary Sunday, Milton Anniversary, etc., Hez still managed to do the long trudge to Milton; but for the rest of the year he contented himself with the homely service in his spacious kitchen. Hez could never be induced to harness his horses on the Sabbath on any account whatever, though most of the Wellbury Methodist farmers drove with their families to Milton Chapel every Sunday morning. Yet these could not manage the journey twice, and so it came to pass that the old kitchen was usually pretty well crowded with Wellbury folk on Sunday evenings to hear Hez (he was a local preacher), or once in a while a minister, expound the scriptures.

CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY.

Dear is the hallowed morn to me,
When village bells awake the day;
And, by their sacred minstrelsy,
Call me from earthly cares away.

And dear to me the loud *amen*,
Which echoes through the blest abode,
Which swells and sinks, and swells again,
Di son the walls, but lives to God.

Hez used to have his very best times on Sunday morning, along with the children and old folk.

At 9 o'clock there was Sunday school—in the summer time held in a loft fitted up for the purpose, and, in the winter, in the warmer kitchen. For an hour each Sabbath, the old man and his granddaughter, Mary, would instruct the juvenile rustics from the Good Old Book, and, though no doubt carried on in a manner which would horrify certain precise Superintendents and Secretaries, a vast amount of good was done among the little ones in Hezekiah Bogg's Sunday school.

One day when Hez came home with his wagon from St. Olaves, he proceeded to deposit at his own house a cumbersome piece of goods, labeled for Miss Mary Bogg. When brought into the light, it proved to be a harmonium, which the old man had purchased with a double purpose in view—to amuse his granddaughter and to assist in teaching the Sunday-school children some new songs. So now they had merry times at school, and, although Hez had some difficulty in picking up the new airs, he sat there in his arm-chair, his eyes glistening and his feet beating time, as he watched the children and listened to their singing, led by Mary's voice and the harmonium. But, if the old man could not join in very well with the sprightly and cheerful songs of the children, he could pray for them and talk to the Lord about and for them, and it was in beautiful, though simple, language that he every Sunday pleaded for the little ones.

After school, Hez held a prayer meeting, which was usually attended by the aged cottagers of the villages, and it was at this meeting hat he was seen to advantage. It was always a most informal gathering, and usually comprised less than a dozen worshipers. Hez had to do nearly all the singing himself, and to give more scope to his voice and feelings, and that he might indulge in his idea of a "good song," he would not have the harmonium introduced into the prayer meeting. He invariably commenced the proceedings by singing lustily, marking time the while with his feet, the verse—

Press onward, press onward,
The prize is in view!
A crown of bright glory
Is waiting for you.

And taking up the refrain—

Is waiting for *you*,
Is waiting for *you*—

would give an extra-loud stamp, pointing with his forefinger to one or the other of the old folks assembled every time he came to the word *you*. After that he would break forth something after this style: "Well, old fri'nds, we's gotten another week on t'road. I's med my journies yance agen to Sent Olives, an' Spab'co, an' Milton, and, bless t'Lord, He's ta'en care on me, an' here I is to meet ye all yance mair. An' noo I trust we's gaen to get a good lift on t'journey oopwards. Bless t'good Lord! we's gotten a better place to travel to nor Sent Olives, an' when we's landed there we s'an't have to coom back. That's oor yam! Bless His name!" And his rising feelings would find vent in shouting:

I believe I shall be there,
I believe I shall be there,
In yon bright world of light!

And, leaving his chair, he would grasp the hand of each in turn, saying as he did so, "Thou'll be there, mither? and thou, old brither?" while to his wife he would say, "I know thou'll be there, old 'ooman!" And then they would altogether finish the fine old revival hymn, Hezekiah's voice sounding above them all:

"Thousands are already there,
Ranging through those regions fair,
Robes of righteousness they wear
In yon bright world of light!

"*Sure!*" Hez would cry, as a hint how to word the chorus, and they would sing:

I am *sure* I shall be there,
I am *sure* I shall be there,
And walk with Him in white!

"Oh, praise t'Lord! what a time we'e havin'!" Hez could never refrain from remarking: "Now, brothers and sisters, we's all gaen to pray; tell t'dear Lord all your wants; dean't leave ought unsaid." And, then, for half an hour, an outlooker might have seen a sight to do him good. Just a few simple cottagers pouring forth their prayers and praises in the quaint but interesting Yorkshire dialect.

Surely there would be joy among the angels at such a sight! And scholarly critics, who would scorn to call this Christian worship, think you that God is like yourselves to despise such homely but genuine devotion? The time may come when you shall discover that not always in grand cathedrals or richly-furnished chapels and churches, with their cushioned seats and pulpits lined with crimson velvet; and not in athems set to classic music and sung to the rolling notes of the organ—but more often in cottage gatherings similar to those at Hezekiah Bogg's, and in rough melodies, sung from the heart, is God worshiped in spirit and in truth.

After all those who wished to do so had opened their hearts in prayer, Hez usually read a chapter from the Scriptures, interspersing the verses with his quaint explanations and comments, and then, in accordance with the custom of many years, before parting, these aged pilgrims, with tremulous voices, but happy and confident withal, sang together, the sisters first:

Say, you brothers, will you meet us
On Canaan's peaceful shore?

To which the brothers would reply:

By the grace of God we'll meet you
Where partings are no more!

And then the same verse, slightly altered, would be repeated by the brothers, the sisters singing the reply; and, for the finale, all together sang:

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Forever—evermore!

Hez bringing down his fist with tremendous force on the "glories."

"Hey, mon!" the old fellow would say when speaking of the prayer meetings, "but they be glorious times—I wadn't miss 'em on no account. I'd as soon think to miss taking t'wagon to Sent Olives! Why, I s'ould lose my reck'nin' o' t'week after, and s'oudn't remember what to be singing when I's all alone driving my team over t'wolds. Glory! they's lartle heavens brought doon t'Wellb'ry, they is!"

On Sunday afternoons Hez regularly attended the parish church, for, notwithstanding that he was a staunch Methodist, and could hold his own in an argument with the church parson, he loved the little whitewashed church, and he respected the venerable gray-haired rector, whom he remembered coming to the parish, fifty years since, a smart young fellow, fresh from college. Hez had strong affections and memories twined around the tiny old church. He was married there long years ago—his boys and girls, when they grew up, had been wedded there; one of them lay slumbering in the quiet graveyard, and in the same "God's acre" lay his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters—indeed, there was hardly a name engraved on a headstone but Hez had known its owner. And so what wonder that he loved the church of his fathers, and considered himself still one of the rector's flock? The aged pastor himself would have been surprised, and would have felt grieved, had he seen Hezekiah Bogg's seat vacant, though he knew him to be an out-and-out Methodist, and, according to the literal laws of the church, a heretic.

So Hez always put in a good Sunday—always made the most of it; for as soon as his supper was ended he had to prepare for the cottage service.

And surely such a house, so thoroughly dedicated to the service of the Lord, was worthy the divine blessing, and little wonder that, with each week so well begun, Hezekiah Bogg went through his daily tasks with cheerfulness and vigor. Hez was not the man to put on religion with his Sunday clothes. His was a religion that accompanied him the week through, and, had him when you would, he was ever in the same happy frame of mind, humming snatches of his favorite tunes when alone (as he was daily for hours together), and never at a loss for a smile and pleasant word or kind action for all with whom he came in contact. Hez was not exactly a poor man. All his life he had done a good carrying business, and, being simple and frugal in his style of living, he was enabled to be liberal in directions where men with larger incomes were compelled to withhold their hands. He always had a spare sovereign for every cause that needed assistance, and, although he seldom participated in the service at Milton, he was a regular contributor to every fund in connection with the society there.

CHAPTER III.

MARY AND MARK.

At last the final hym was sung,
And all the prayers were ended,
When one from the doorway crowd among
Her homeward steps attended.
They left at last the village street,
And sprung the low wall over,
To pass through Capt. Pensloe's wheat
And Deacon Bascombe's clover.
The moon seemed shining overhead
To flood their path with glory;
They whispere low, but what they said
Was—only the same old story!

Hez was extremely fond of his son Johnny's daughter Mary, and he had spared no expense to put her to a good school, for, the old man said, "I don't believe in t' lads wasting their time at schools and colleges and sich like places; but gels is different, and I s'ould like our Mary to grow up a better scholard nor her feyther or grandfeyther."

So, at the time our story commences, Mary was a bright and well-educated girl of 17, and the delight and hope of her grandfather and father.

Johnny Bogg, as we have before remarked, was unlike his father, being stout and awkward and slow of speech. There were only three objects which could excite in him the least degree of enthusiasm, and they were his father, his "little girl" (as he called Mary) and his coach.

The household at Wellbury was a happy one, and a pleasant sight it was to see the members thereof, after the horses were groomed and bedded, all sitting at the kitchen fireside—Hez and Johnny facing each other in large arm chairs, each puffing away at a long clay pipe—Hez chatting in his lively style to one and another of them, and Johnny silently puffing and nodding—the old lady busy with her knitting, and Mary plying her needle or playing or singing for her grandfather.

When 10 o'clock came pipes and sewing were laid aside, and the old Bible would be set before Hez, the old man selecting a chapter for Mary to read; after which they would all kneel down, while the aged father offered up the evening sacrifice of prayer. Such was the Bogg family, and so from day to day, and from year to year, the even tenor of their way was pursued, until events transpired to disturb this quiet household.

Among the Wellbury farmers was one Andrew Lovel, a Methodist, and particular friend of Hezekiah Bogg. He was full ten years our old friend's junior, but Hez was so lithe and active that a casual observer might almost have thought quite the reverse. They were staunch friends—had been so for forty years—and when Mary had been home from school little more than a year it was pretty well understood that the ties of friendship were to be strengthened by the formation of a family connection. Andrew Lovel had an only son, Mark—a steady, industrious young fellow of about 28 years. He was a very ordinary young man, but sound in head and heart—a man who thoroughly understood his business, and who promised to make as good a husband as he was a farmer. He had courted Mary ever since he first saw her, after her three years' absence at school in the West Riding. He knew her when she was a baby and himself a little school-lad; he had played with her, when all the boys and girls of the village mixed together; but it was when she came home from school, a polished and interesting young woman, that he first became aware that in Mary was to be gained a wife worthy of any man. Mark had spent all his time at Wellbury, the only changes he knew from his monotonous round of agricultural pursuits being an occasional visit to Walton, or a still more rare trip to St. Olaves, and his knowledge of pretty girls was very limited; so that when Mary, who though not handsome was possessed of pretty features and winsome manners, came back to her old home, he thought she was a very angel. At first he was rather shy to her, but as time wore on his shyness passed away, and in less than a year he found himself telling her, in his blunt style, of his great love. And Mary, who had been possessed of little of the common school-girl sentimentality when at school, and who, now that she was at home, saw no more of the world than did Mark, grew to be fond of this plain, honest yeoman; and when the time came that he took her hand in his and asked if he might secure Burydale Farm for next Michaelmas, and get the house ready for her, she at once said "Yes."

The old men talked the matter over, and willingly gave their consent, only making the stipulation that they should "wait a bit"—the "bit" being ultimately defined as a couple of years.

But the engagement gave Mark Lovel the right to consider Mary his own especial care and charge; and very happy it made him to be allowed to drive her out, or to walk with her; or, in the winter evenings, to join the family circle now and again at Hezekiah's cottage.

Alas, that clouds should arise to darken such bright scenes as these; that angry storms should sweep over quiet landscapes, changing calm beauty into wild tumult.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRONG STEP.

To what gulfs
A single deviation from the path
Of human duties leads.

It was very seldom indeed that the postman had letters to deliver in the village of Wellbury. The correspondence of the entire parish was small, the clergyman, who received perhaps an average of two letters per week, conducting half of it. One thing was certain, a letter bearing the Queen's head had only troubled Hezekiah Bogg three times in all his life, and they were from Mary at school. All his relations, friends and acquaintance resided within the bounds of his weekly trips, and he made and received all his own communications verbatim, delivering all Mary's letters with his own hand; for she knew hardly any one who did not reside somewhere between Wellbury and St. Olaves.

But one day in the spring, only a few months before Mark Lovel was to make Mary his wife, the postman lifted the latch of the garden gate and delivered at the cottage door a letter for Miss Mary Bogg. It proved to be from an old school friend of Mary's—a girl who had recovered from a long illness through Mary's gentle care and tender nursing. They had been great friends at school, and had promised each other that, whichever of the two was married first, the other was to be one of the bridesmaids; and, as Nellie Hazel's marriage was to take place in June, the fulfillment of Mary's promise was now claimed.

Nellie was a city girl, living in Manchester, and old Hez had serious misgivings as to whether he ought to let Mary go so far and to such a great, busy place, all alone. He and Johnny had some long consultations in the stable on the matter, but it was finally decided that she should go.

"Thass wants a change, Johnny, boy, and mebbe it'll do her a warld o' good. Soon she's te marry Mark, and then she'll ha' te settle doon te housekeepin' an' hard wark. Let her go, lad, let her go. It wean't cost sic a deal, an' I can spare t'brass."

So Mary wrote to Nellie, telling her that on such a Saturday she would be at the Portland Street station by such a train, and that she meant to be there three or four weeks previous to the wedding that she might help in the preparations. And one bright Saturday morning in May, Mary was a passenger to St. Olaves by her father's coach. At the railway station her grandfather and father saw her safely into the train; and, just as it was about to move, the old man took her hand to give it a parting squeeze, leaving in it a crisp ten-pound note. At the last moment he had been afraid that one such piece of paper might not be sufficient. He had an idea that money slipped away pretty fast in large cities, and he would never have it said that he stinted his "little girl"—hence this generosity at parting.

When the train was out of sight, the two men turned away to their everyday work, and when they went home they missed the girlish form at the supper-table. The next day Hez and the children missed her from the Sunday school, and she was missed all through the day; and, when the Sabbath evening came, and the two men smoked their pipes, with Mark Lovel sitting by for company, Hez said:

"It isn't like Wellb'ry, boys, w'ont her—hey, Mark, my lad—but thou'll gain somethin' and we'll lose everythin' when thou tak's oor lartle gel away!"

Mary was made welcome by Nellie and Mrs. Hazel, and the two friends were soon as deep in each other's confidence as ever.

Nellie was engaged to a Mr. James Rochester, who had quite lately inherited a considerable fortune on the death of his father. Nellie almost worshiped him, and the glowing descriptions which she gave from time to time of her future husband make Mary stand forth boldly on Mark's behalf, and the two men were the exclusive topics of conversation between them.

When Mary had been at Manchester a few days, Mr. Rochester himself joined them. He was very young—only 22—but he looked as though he lived a far from quiet life. He was reputed wealthy, and apparently a man with no fixed purposes; he was excessively handsome, having a good figure and finely-chiseled features, with penetrating eyes and dark curly hair and mustache. Mary could not help thinking for a moment that he was indeed better looking than Mark. "But then," she added, "he cannot be half so good."

Of course, Nellie took possession of Mr. Rochester, and planned how his time was to be spent while at Manchester.

Rochester took all this in good part, but to Mary it appeared as though he treated Nellie rather as a child fond of her doll of charity.

Any one who chose to take the trouble might have observed, after a while, that, when Mary and he were together, Rochester constantly kept those fascinating eyes of his upon Mary.

James Rochester was one of those men to whom girls unwittingly, and sometimes unwillingly, seem irresistably drawn. He could talk well on any and every subject; he had read much and traveled considerably; he could draw, play and sing well, and was, when he chose, the beau ideal of a "ladies' man."

Before they had been together two weeks, Mary was completely enslaved in her admiration of this young fellow. He, too, found in Mary a bright, fresh, pure girl—such a one as he was not accustomed to meet in city society—and he felt that, if he consulted his own future happiness, Mary should be his wife instead of Nellie. He knew that, in less than a fortnight, the day fixed for his wedding would be around. He knew that Nellie loved him dearly, and that it would almost break her heart to lose him. He knew of Mary's engagement, but, in his selfish love, he thought not of others. And Mary knew all this, too; yet, when James Rochester one evening sat beside her in the conservatory, and poured into her ear, in passionate language, his love for her, and asked her to become his wife and make him happy, because it was her he loved, and not Nellie, she forgot the manly, loving form of Mark Lovel, and she never thought of her old school friend, who would be heart-broken, but accepted this man's advances and consented to become his wife.

Rochester told her that he would make arrangements for them to proceed to Scotland, where they would get married, and then break the news to all their friends. He advised her that it was the best way—that it would save a lot of "scenes," and so she consented. They eloped to Glasgow the next evening, and the day after were made man and wife. Then Rochester left her for two days to go to London, and when he came back he brought bad news. It was hard for him to tell Mary, but he had to; so he took her hands in his (a habit he had), and said: "Mary, dear, I foolishly invested my all (not so much as people though) in a mad speculation, which would have trebled my money if successful. But it has turned out a complete failure—a bubble—a fraud, and I am almost penniless. My darling, I could kill myself for bringing you to this!"

Alas! he should have counted all the cost before he took so rash a step; it was too late to go back now. The poor fellow knew not what to do. He hadn't more than £50 now; he had never been brought up to help himself or earn his living, and he was too proud, and too thoroughly ashamed of his behavior to Nellie, to ask for assistance from his friends. Mary could not help him. She began to realize how foolish she had been—she did not really love this man with that combined feeling of esteem and true affection which she had felt toward Mark. They were alone and adrift on the wide world; away from friends whom they had wronged, and to whom, they both felt, they had behaved, to say the least, shabbily. So when Rochester proposed that they should cross the Atlantic and try to settle down in the New World, Mary at once agreed, and the next vessel of the Anchor Line that left Glasgow took this foolish young couple away from the Old Country—away from Manchester, and away from dear old Wellbury-on-the-Wolds.

CHAPTER V.

MISERY AND DEATH.

Judge not too harshly, oh, my friend,
Of him your fellow-man;
But draw the veil of charity
Around him if you can.
Perhaps he was once a noble man
Before temptation vexed—
He stepped from out the narrow way—
It may be your turn next!

When James Rochester and his wife landed at New York, they proceeded to a quiet boarding-house, and in the strange and bustling city Mary ceased for a time to think so much of those whom, she knew, were sorrowing for her. But, after a while, when Rochester had to set to work seriously to find employment, and left her during the greater part of each day while he went forth on his search for work, she had time for reflection, and little by little the truth dawned upon her that her love for Rochester was a mere fancy and a delusion—that she still loved the man whom she had wronged. And her heart yearned to be back at the old cottage, and to be once again the object of Mark Lovel's tender, almost womanly, care. She thought of the old home at all times; in the morning she remembered how the old man would be starting off with his team singing one of his favorite hymns, and then she thought that maybe he couldn't perform his daily task as cheerily now; and at night her recollection pictured the family party—her father, grandfather and the old grandmother seated in the low-roofed kitchen. And then she must needs think of Mark—dear, kind, thoughtful Mark—who often made one in that circle. Perhaps she should never again see her grandfather in this world; he was an old man now. And, perchance, if she should ever again behold her father, he would be an old white-haired man, and he would have to go through his life without wife or daughter to comfort him. And Mark? She could hardly bear the thought. He would miss her, sure enough; but his sorrow would die with time, and then some other woman would win his love and become his wife. And, if she should ever again see Mark, he would perhaps be on the shady side of life, with boys and girls of his own growing up around him.

But, as weeks and days passed away, sentiment had to give place to stern reality. James Rochester found every door of employment closed against him; and, although he made a thorough canvass of every mercantile house in New York and the surrounding towns, his efforts proved unsuccessful. He could give no business references, and without them no one would engage him.

Two months had passed since they arrived in America, and Rochester's small stock of cash was almost exhausted. Another week's board would require the last note. The poor fellow began bitterly to bewail his foolishness, and his burden was harder to bear in that he had made a pure and helpless woman the sharer of his misery. He really loved Mary; that is to say, he felt more genuine affection for her than he had ever experienced toward any other woman, and he was deeply sorry for his now apparent selfishness. One morning he started off as usual, and, while out, was overtaken by a heavy transform, which soaked completely through his cloth. Unfitted of returning home at once to change his clothes, he wandered on, wet, cold, and miserable, until evening. The next morning he was tossing restlessly on his bed, overcome by a violent fever. Mary fetched a doctor, who at once saw that Rochester was just at the commencement of a serious and long illness. He told Mary so, at which the poor girl burst into tears; and, by degrees, told the doctor how they were situated, and asked him if he could put her into the way of earning something. He promised to do his best, and in a few days introduced her to the notice of a wealthy lady who required a considerable quantity of fancy work done.

Mary was particularly clever with her needle, and at crocheting, etc., and, by dint of incessant labor she contrived to keep the wolf from the door. The poor girl had little rest, what with her work and nursing her sick husband. For the time she forgot everything but the man lying there so near to death; and when, after several weeks of weary watching, Rochester began to mend, she fell on her knees and thanked Heaven for sparing his life. At the same time she wondered at herself for so doing. At times she harbored dreadful thoughts, and it did seem as though the death of her husband would be the only means of freeing her from life bonds which she sorely regretted having ever made. But Mary was not quite so bad as to wish such a course to come about. She had taken one false step, but she resolved to do her best under the circumstances, and act well her part as a wife toward the man whose name she now bore.

And if James Rochester had not been sincere up to the present; if he had hastily married a girl for whom he merely entertained a passing fancy, he would have been less than human to watch the self-denying, noble devotion of his wife unmoved. He often took the little hand, which was working so industriously for him, in his own white and bony fingers, and pressed it gently to his lips, while Mary would bend down and kiss his forehead; and then turn away to breathe a prayer that God would help her to make her married life happy.

In the course of years she might have grown to love no other man than Rochester, and Mark would probably have gradually died away into a memory of the past. But the chance was never hers.

Rochester grew better of the fever, and in the lovely autumn weather would sit in the open doorway gazing out on the busy river, and inhaling the fresh air as it blew in from the sea or adown the hills. But his constitution, never strong, had been completely shattered by the fever, and when an unusually severe winter came on it proved too much for him, and he was obliged once more to take to his bed.

Mary nursed him with undying devotion, but on the last day of the month he breathed his end. He knew he was dying, and, taking both Mary's hands in his own, he bade her "good-by."

"I was selfish, Mary," he said, "in bringing you away to this country so far from your friends. Perhaps I did wrong to marry you at all. But I thought I loved you and believed you loved me. I love you dearly now; you have been a good and noble wife. I have never done you any good—never cared for you as a husband should, though I would have done had I been able. God bless you, Mary, and take care of you. If you ever see Nellie ask her to forgive the dead man. And now, if you forgive me, and love me ever so little, kiss me, and say 'good-by.'" And so, with his hands in Mary's, James Rochester breathed his last.

CHAPTER VI.

HOME AGAIN.

An exile from home pleasures dazzle in vain;
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again—
The birds singing gayly that came at my call—
Give me these, and the peace of mind dearer than all.

Home, sweet home!
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!

And how about the folk at Wellbury all this time? A letter from Mrs. Hazel first made the Boggs aware of what had occurred. The old man could not believe it at first, and could not tell Mark until he was perfectly certain of the truth. So he actually traveled to Manchester, and, having with some difficulty found the Hazels' house, he learned the whole story, and then, with a heavy heart, returned by the very next train to bear the bad news to the folks at home. He looked all his age now. He had loved Mary, as few old men love; he had thought so much of her, and had often thought how hard it would be even to let Mark Lovel have her and take her a couple of miles away. But for a stranger to take her—he knew not where—the idea was too dreadful, and the old fellow grieved sorely. They had grieved her terribly during the past few weeks, when they were reckoning on her speedy return; and now she had left them, perhaps, *forever!*

But Hez remembered that Mark had the heaviest disappointment to bear, and he set to work to break the news as kindly as possible. He arranged with Johnny and the "missis" to leave them together in the kitchen, if Mark came in, and, when the latter appeared, Hez tried to look cheerful, as though nothing had occurred. But Mark detected the old man's constraint; he knew that something was wrong before a word was spoken, and at once caught the infection, and sat there very solemn and sad.

"Mark, boy," said Hez, "does th' love Mary sic a great deal?"

Mark nodded his head silently.

"Could th' bear te lose her, lad?"

Mark, with a great lump rising in his throat, now spoke.

"Don't," he said, "talk like that. Tell me what you have to say, right away. I can bear it so better than this round-about talk."

"Well," replied the old man, "God help thee, lad; our Mary's married, and never told us a word on it afore, nor, mun I say, after."

Mark sat motionless for awhile, as though trying to comprehend it all, and Hez heard him choke back a great sob. Then he said in a low tone:

"It's hard, old friend, on me—on all of us; but—but—God bless her," and, taking up his hat, he left the cottage.

Oh, how lonely the place seemed now. How the good old carrier missed his "lartle gel." Sunday didn't seem now to be "lartle heavens i' Wellb'ry." The neighbors missed the cheery smile from Hez's face, and the joyous whistle from his lips, and, as he rode along day by day on his wagon, he into his head lost, forgetting altogether to hum the snatches of tunes, as was his wont in days gone by. As weeks and months fled by, and no word came from the wanderer, the old man fretted and fretted, until his form grew bent, and his locks turned white, and people wondered at the great change which had come over old Hez Bogg. Johnny never showed his grief except that he was, if possible, more silent than ever, and puffed harder at his pipe.

Mark Lovel was a restless man now, and, when the spring came round, he announced his intention of settling on the Western prairies of America. He would leave the old home, which now only served to keep alive within him sorrowful memories, and at hard work try to rid him of his grief. So he left Wellbury, and added another blank to the life of Hezekiah Bogg, who had grown to regard Mark as another son.

After her husband's death Mary continued her needle work, and easily earned sufficient to meet her small expenses. But oh, how she longed for some strong arm, like Mark's, to protect her, and how she yearned for a sight of those old faces at the cottage at Wellbury-on-the-Wolds. She had an object, on which to bestow care and affection, when poor Rochester was yet alive; but now she felt utterly alone, neither caring nor cared for. Yet she could not make up her mind to write home, and each day that she delayed made it harder to accomplish, and so when the winter passed away, and spring sunshine once again cheered and brightened God's earth, Mary was as far away in the cold as ever.

One beautiful May evening Mary was taking a quiet stroll along Broadway, after her day's work, when she felt her hand drawn through a lady's arm, and hastily turning round, she beheld Mark Lovel! Her first impulse was to run away and hide herself, but she found herself held a secure prisoner.

"Mary, honey," Mark said, "don't mind telling me—your old friend—Mark. Do you need any help or assistance at all? I have been following you all along this busy street, but did not intend speaking, or making myself known, until I noticed this," and he touched the crape trimmings on her jacket.

Poor Mary could not speak. The tears forced their way to her eyes, and Mark thoughtfully called a cab, that the rude stare of the passers by might not reach her. They drove to the park where they alighted, when, little by little, Mark learned all the sad story from this widowed girl (barely 20 yet!), and Mark loved her all the more for her devotion to Rochester in his fatal illness, and he then and there resolved to make Mary his wife yet; so, instead of pushing on to the West as he had intended, he prolonged his stay in New York, and every evening found him calling for Mary to take her for a walk or a drive. By-and-by Mary's shyness wore away and she felt the old love and trust returning stronger than ever.

On one of their evening excursions she said to Mark, "We should not be rambling around like this together every evening. What will folks think? And you ought to be going West if you mean to do any good this year."

To which Mark made answer, "Never mind what people say, deary; good folks again the right to care for you, and, instead of me going West all alone, let us together go East as soon as possible."

And so, in busy New York, thousands of miles from quiet Wellbury, Mary once more promised to be Mark's wife. But Mark did not trust her long this time, for in three days they were married at a little Methodist church, in a quiet quarter of the city; and the next Cunard steamer from New York included in its list of cabin passengers the names of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Lovel.

Hez Bogg had left St. Olaves with his wagon a couple of hours, when Johnny, who was just telling the hostler of the "White Horse" to hitch his team, was startled by the sound of a voice which he knew well enough, but which he believed at that moment to be some 5,000 miles away. "Say, coachman, can you wait a few minutes while I fetch my wife along? I want to get to Wellbury to-night."

"What, Mark!" cried the astonished Johnny, "an' married? an' back agen a'ready? Well, I never—Has th'seen my lartle gel, Mark, lad?"

"Yes, old friend, I'm back again already, and I've brought a wife from over the sea, and I've heard of Mary and seen her; but I'll tell you all about everything as we drive along."

Then Mark fetched Mary to him, and put her inside the coach. She was the only inside passenger, and as they were about to start Mark introduced her to Johnny, "My wife—Mr. Johnny Bogg," and, pushing the corpulent Johnny into the coach, slamming the door on him, he jumped onto the box, and, taking the reins from the astonished hostler, sent the horses at a rattling pace over the stony streets of St. Olaves. When they reached the end of the first stage, Johnny rolled out of the coach, and, seizing Mark, who was laughing heartily, by the hand, exclaimed: "Why, it's *her*, Mark—it's my lartle gel! God bless thee, whatever will t' old man say?"

We cannot describe the old man's joy, nor write down what he did say. He was wonderfully happy, and in his gladness forgot all the sorrow of the past year. How he did sing and pray at the next Sabbath meetings. How he stamped his feet, and shouted, "Glory!" until the rafters rang again with the echoes of the shouts of praise.

Andrew Lovel insisted on observing wedding festivities, as though the marriage had been celebrated at home, and the entire village participated in the rejoicings.

Mark and Mary went to live at Burydale Farm, but every Sabbath sees them at the old cottage at Wellbury-on-the-Wolds. Old Hez and Johnny still smoke their pipes every evening, and continue to make their weekly journeys with the wagon and coach, though the old man says he'll make the entire business over to Johnny shortly.

Johnny is grandfather now, and very proud he is of his little 2-year-old grandson, who is called John Andrew Rochester Lovel—the two first names in honor of his two grandfathers, and the third in memory of Mary's young and handsome first husband, who lies far away in a grassy grave on the other side of the rolling Atlantic.—*Chicago Ledger.*

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

SAUSAGES.—To every 100 pounds of chopped meat take two and a half pounds of salt, one ounce of sage to every ten pounds of meat, and one-half ounce of black pepper; mix well and fill.

LEMON CAKE.—Two and a half cupfuls of sugar, one cupful of butter, one cupful of sweet milk, one teaspoonful soda sifted in four cupfuls of flour, three eggs well beaten, the grated rind and juice of one lemon; two loaves.

NICE TEA CAKE.—One cupful of sugar, a cupful of butter, three eggs, a cupful and a half of flour, three tablespoonfuls of milk, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, a half-teaspoonful of salt, spice with lemon; bake in a sheet.

SALT MACKEREL.—Soak salt mackerel over night, after washing them carefully in plenty of cold water; lay them in a dripping-pan, cover with hot water, and bake till tender; drain from the water, and serve hot with butter gravy.

MRS. MORSE'S PANCAKES.—A half cupful each of sugar and molasses, two-thirds cupful of milk, a half teaspoonful of mixed cinnamon and cloves, two beaten eggs, flour to make a batter that will just drop from the spoon, a little salt; fry in hot lard.

BROWN BREAD.—One cupful of Indian meal, one cupful of flour, one cupful of molasses, two cupfuls of Graham meal, three cupfuls of water, one teaspoonful saleratus, also a little salt. Steam three hours. It is quite thin before steaming.

TO MAKE chocolate caramels take two cups of brown sugar, one cup of molasses, one table-spoonful (heaping) of butter. Boil twenty-five minutes; then stir in half a pound of grated chocolate, wet in one cup of sweet milk, and boil until it hardens on the spoon, with which you must stir it frequently. Flavor it with a teaspoonful of vanilla.

EARTHENWARE IN COOKING.—The flavor of food baked or boiled in earthenware is said by those who have made the experiment to be far superior to that of vegetable or animal food cooked in the same way in iron vessels, for the reason that iron is a conductor of heat, while earthenware is a non-conductor; consequently, food cooked in the latter is rarely ever burned, the degree of heat not varying perceptibly during the process of cooking, thus preserving the flavor of what is cooked; as well as uniformity throughout the substance of the meat, vegetables or grains, until the process of cooking is completed. The fire in stove or range that parches and burns in iron vessels, and either impairs or spoils the food, is powerless to injure the contents of earthenware. So earthenware takes the premium, as it deserves to.—*Dr. Foote's Health Monthly.*

Weatherwise and Otherwise.

Rather a cold snap, remarked the fox, as he put his foot into the steel trap.

We shall have an open spring, was all that the trapper vouchsafed, as he approached the animal.

Quite windy, said Jones, who had been listening to the Congressional debate.

Blustering, responded Smith, laying down the *Evening Truculence.*

A fine day, said the Judge, ominously.

A mile day, ventured the sportsman.

Bland, put in the young man, taking out a trust dollar.

Soft, added the young lady.

The young man subsided, with the remark, it is getting warm.

It looks like reign, suggested Robinson anent the third-term proposition.

We need change, muttered his impecunious relative.

It is scold, replied Billington, as he espied his better half.

Lowery, he added, as he caught her eye.

NEVER defer until to-morrow what should be attended to to-day. A slight cough ought never to be neglected when a 25-cent bottle of Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup will prevent it from becoming chronic.

THE MARKETS.

NEW YORK.		
BEEVES	$9 00	@11 75
HOGS	4 75	@ 5 10
COTTON	9 3¼	@ 9 1½
FLOUR—Superfine	4 80	@ 5 30
WHEAT—No. 2	1 41	@ 1 50
CORN—Western Mixed	59	@ 61
OATS—Mixed	47	@ 48
RYE—Western	97	@ 98
PORK—Mess	11 62½	@12 50
LARD	7⅛	@ 7¾
CHICAGO.		
BEEVES—Choice Graded Steers	5 00	@ 5 50
Cows and Heifers	2 60	@ 4 00
Medium to Fair	4 40	@ 4 65
HOGS	3 50	@ 4 75
FLOUR—Fancy White Winter Ex.	5 50	@ 7 00
Good to Choice Spring Ex.	5 00	@ 5 75
WHEAT—No. 2 Spring	1 22	@ 1 25
No. 3 Spring	1 07	@ 1 09
CORN—No