

LOSS AND GAIN.

BY MRS. A. R. FERRIN.

"It's of no use talking about it any more, Percy. The necessity is laid upon us, and all that is left for us to do is to take up our separate duties and do them bravely for the Master's sake. If I had remained here from out of tie, He would know, but I can't help it."

"I have a little comforter,

And climb upon my knee:

You make the world seem possible

With you, and you are with me

For you're the wisdom far beyond!

The reach of any sage,

The strength of any sturdy trust

That be it can strengthen aye.

Now, you're ever true;

Before to-morrow night

The world is full of care,

Will all be well,

And everything be right."

—Harper's Weekly.

consciousness of duty faithfully performed.

The time came, however, when she knew when she could realize, with an intense thankfulness, that it was "all for the best."

For two years she heard nothing at all from Percy Harrington. Then there came vague rumors of the fast life he was living, of his often going to his home in the small hours of the night, grossly intemperate; then of the seizure of his goods and chattels by the executors of his late master. Then, again, he was a gentle, patient, heart-broken young wife. Then his name ceased to be mentioned, and he dropped, as if it were entirely out of her world.

Another year dragged its slow length along the stream of time, bringing into Mercie's life but little of its sunshine and sweetens. By dint of uneasing industry and patient economy, she had managed to keep the wolf from her door. Nay, more, she had kept her little family comfortably clothed, and Millie at school most of the time. Millie was now 12 years old, Jack 9, and little Herbert 6.

Another year brought with it a new life, a new world, into Mercie's life. She brought to her books and papers and magazines, and read to her, or marked for her reading the choice chapters of the best books. She talked to her boy, and he listened. She thanked Heaven for this man's friendship. Perhaps she contrasted his broad culture and intelligence and noble generosity with the narrow views and selfish motives of her farmer lover. Who shall dare to blame her if she did?

At last Mercie had so far recovered herself that she began to talk about resuming her place at the office. It had been supplied for the time being with the understanding that she was to go back again.

And still Herbert Hazleton tarried. With no ostensible purpose, he yet stayed, and he yet made his daily visits to the little house where Mercie lived with her sister's children.

"Mercie," he said one day, looking up from the book he had been reading, "do you know that I intend to take Susan's children home with me when I go?"

"I had feared that was your intention," she replied, in a low voice, with out lifting her eyes from the sewing she had in her hand.

"You know, I have a large, comfortable house, and plenty of money that is doing nobody any particular good, and I feel it to be my present duty to take care of them; to give them a good education, and a chance in the world."

"Mercie," he said again, looking up from the book he had been reading, "you know that I intend to take Susan's children home with me when I go?"

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THE LITTLE COMFORTER.

This clings upon my knee,

And makes the world seem possible

To me, and makes me feel safe,

She is never the one to say,

If you had only been,

This was the only sensible

That this had been foreseen.

She blessed me,

And whispers, "Never mind:

To-morrow night

All will be well,

And we'll be bright,

And then we shall be glad!"

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And Mercie. Who shall say how often she looked forward with sad forebodings to the time when Herbert would go away to his own home, and carry all the light and beauty and warmth of the world with him? Who shall say how often during those long, happy days of convalescence, when he brought to her books and papers and magazines, and read to her, or marked for her reading the choice chapters of the best books. She talked to her boy, and he listened. She thanked Heaven for this man's friendship. Perhaps she contrasted his broad culture and intelligence and noble generosity with the narrow views and selfish motives of her farmer lover. Who shall dare to blame her if she did?

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