

Dorian eBook

Dorian

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Salt Lake City, Utah

1921

Other books by Nephi Anderson.

“Added upon”—A story of the past, the present, and the future stages of existence.

“The Castle builder”—The scenes and incidents are from the “Land of the Midnight Sun.”

“Piney ridge Cottage”—A love story of a Mormon country girl. Illustrated.

“Story of Chester Lawrence”—Being the completed account of one who played an important part in “Piney Ridge Cottage.”

“A daughter of the North”—A story of a Norwegian girl’s trials and triumphs. Illustrated.

“John st. John”—The story of a young man who went through the soul-trying scenes of Missouri and Illinois.

“Romance of A missionary”—A story of English life and missionary experiences. Illustrated.

“Marcus King Mormon”—A story of early days in Utah.

“The boys of Springtown”—A story about boys for boys and all interested in boys. Illustrated.

CHAPTER ONE.

Dorian Trent was going to town to buy himself a pair of shoes. He had some other errands to perform for himself and his mother, but the reason for his going to town was the imperative need of shoes. It was Friday afternoon. The coming Sunday he must appear decently shod, so his mother had told him, at the same time hinting at some other than the Sunday reason. He now had the money, three big, jingling silver dollars in his pocket.

Dorian whistled cheerfully as he trudged along the road. It was a scant three miles to town, and he would rather walk that short distance than to be bothered with a horse. When he took Old Nig, he had to keep to the main-traveled road straight into town, then tie him to a post—and worry about him all the time; but afoot and alone, he could move



along as easily as he pleased, linger on the canal bank or cut cross-lots through the fields to the river, cross it on the footbridge, then go on to town by the lower meadows.

The road was dusty that afternoon, and the sun was hot. It would be cooler under the willows by the river. At Cottonwood Corners, Dorian left the road and took the cut-off path. The river sparkled cool and clear under the overhanging willows. He saw a good-sized trout playing in the pool, but as he had no fishing tackle with him, the boy could only watch the fish in its graceful gliding in and out of sunshine and shadow. A robin overhead was making a noisy demonstration as if in alarm about a nest. Dorian sat on the bank to look and listen for a few moments, then he got up again.

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Crossing the river, he took the cool foot-path under the willows. He cut down one of the smoothest, sappiest branches with which to make whistles. Dorian was a great maker of whistles, which he freely gave away to the smaller boys and girls whom he met. Just as it is more fun to catch fish than to eat them, so Dorian found more pleasure in giving away his whistles than to stuff them in his own pockets. However, that afternoon, he had to hurry on to town, so he caught no fish, and made only one whistle which he found no opportunity to give away. In the city, he attended to his mother's errands first. He purchased the few notions which the store in his home town of Greenstreet did not have, checking each item off on a slip of paper with a stub of a pencil. Then, there were his shoes.

Should he get lace or button, black or tan? Were there any bargains in shoes that afternoon? He would look about to see. He found nothing in the way of footwear on Main street which appealed to him. He lingered at the window of the book store, looking with envious eyes at the display of new books. He was well known by the bookseller, for he was a frequent visitor, and, once in a while, he made a purchase; however, to day he must not spend too much time "browsing" among books. He would, however, just slip around to Twenty-fifth street and take a look at the secondhand store there. Not to buy shoes, of course, but sometimes there were other interesting things there, especially books.

Ah, look here! Spread out on a table on the sidewalk in front of this second-hand store was a lot of books, a hundred or more—books of all kind—school books, history, fiction, all of them in good condition, some only a little shopworn, others just like new. Dorian Trent eagerly looked them over. Here were books he had read about, but had not read—and the prices! Dickens' "David Copperfield", "Tale of Two Cities", "Dombey and Son", large well-printed books, only a little shopworn, for thirty-five cents; Thackeray's "Vanity Fair", twenty-five cents; books by Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Margaret Deland; "Robinson Crusoe", a big book with fine pictures. Dorian had, of course, read "Robinson Crusoe" but he had always wanted to own a copy. Ah, what's this? Prescott's "Conquest of Peru", two volumes, new, fifty cents each! Dorian turned the leaves. A man stepped up and also began handling the books. Yes, here were bargains, surely. He stacked a number together as if he desired to secure them. Dorian becoming fearful, slipped the other volume of the Conquest under his arm and made as if to gather a number of other books under his protection. He must have some of these before they were all taken by others. The salesman now came up to him and asked:

"Find something you want?"

"O, yes, a lot of things I like" replied Dorian.

"They're bargains."

Dorian needed not to be told that.

“They’re going fast, too.”

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“Yes, I suppose so.”

His heart fell as he said it, for he realized that he had no money to buy books. He had come to town to buy shoes, which he badly needed. He glanced down at his old shoes. They were nearly falling to pieces, but they might last a little longer. If he bought the “Conquest of Peru” he would still have two dollars left. Could he buy a pair of shoes for that amount? Very likely but not the kind his mother had told him to get, the kind that were not too heavy or “stogy” looking, but would be “nice” for Sundays. He held tightly on to the two books, while Dickens and Thackeray were still protectingly within his reach. What could he do?

Down there in Peru there had been a wonderful people whom Pizarro, the bad, bold Spaniard had conquered and abused. Dorian knew about it all vaguely as a dim fairy tale; and here was the whole story, beautifully and minutely told. He must have these books. This bargain might never come again to him. But what would his mother say? She herself had added the last half dollar to his amount to make sure that he could get the nicer kind.

“Well, sir, how many of these will you have?” asked the salesman.

“I’ll—I’ll take these two, anyway”—meaning Prescott’s Conquest—“and let me see”, he looked hungrily over the titles—“And this one ‘David Copperfield’.” It was hard to select from so many tempting ones. Here was one he had missed: “Ben Hur”—, a fine new copy in blue and gold. He had read the Chariot Race, and if the whole story was as interesting as that, he must have it. He handed the volume to the salesman. Then his hand touched lovingly a number of other books, but he resisted the temptation, and said: “That’s all—this time.”

The clerk wrapped the purchase in a newspaper and handed the package to Dorian who paid for them with his two silver dollars, receiving some small silver in change. Then, with his package under his arm, the boy walked on down the street.

Well, what now? He was a little afraid of what he had done. How could he face his mother? How could he go home without shoes? Books might be useful for the head, but they would not clothe the feet. He jingled the coins in his pocket as he walked on down to the end of the business section of the city. He could not buy any kind of shoes to fit his big feet for a dollar and twenty cents. There was nothing more to do but to go home, and “face the music”, so he walked on in a sort of fearsome elation. At a corner he discovered a new candy store. Next to books, Dorian liked candy. He might as well buy some candy for the twenty cents. He went into the store and took his time looking at the tempting display, finally buying ten cents worth of chocolates for himself and ten cents worth of peppermint lozenges for his mother.



You see, Dorian Trent, though sixteen years old, was very much a child; he did many childish things, and yet in some ways, he was quite a man; the child in him and the man in him did not seem to merge into the boy, but were somewhat "separate and apart," as the people of Greenstreet would say.

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Dorian again took the less frequented road home. The sun was still high when he reached the river. He was not expected home for some time yet, so there was no need for hurry. He crossed the footbridge, noticing neither birds nor fish. Instead of following the main path, he struck off into a by-trail which led him to a tiny grass plat in the shade of a tree by the river. He sat down here, took off his hat, and pushed back from a freckled, sweating forehead a mop of wavy, rusty-colored hair. Then he untied his package of books and spread his treasures before him as a miser would his gold. He opened "David Copperfield", looked at the frontispiece which depicted a fat man making a very emphatic speech against someone by the name of Heep. It must all be very interesting, but it was altogether too big a book for him to begin to read now. "Ben Hur" looked solid and substantial; it would keep until next winter when he would have more time to read. Then he picked up the "Conquest", volume one. He backed up against the tree, settled himself into a comfortable position, took from his paper bag a chocolate at which he nibbled contentedly, and then away he went with Prescott to the land of the Inca and the glories of a vanished race!

For an hour he read. Then, reluctantly, he closed his book, wrapped up his package again, and went on his homeward way.

The new canal for which the farmers of Greenstreet had worked and waited so long had just been completed. The big ditch, now full of running water, was a source of delight to the children as well as to the more practical adults. The boys and girls played on its banks, and waded and sported in the cool stream. Near the village of Greenstreet was a big headgate, from which the canal branched into two divisions. As Dorian walked along the canal bank that afternoon, he saw a group of children at play near the headgate. They were making a lot of robust noise, and Dorian stopped to watch them. He was always interested in the children, being more of a favorite among them than among the boys of his own age.

"There's Dorian," shouted one of the boys. "Who are you going to marry?"

What in the world were the youngsters talking about, thought the young man, as the chattering children surrounded him.

"What's all this?" asked Dorian, "a party?"

"Yes; it's Carlia's birthday; we're just taking a walk by the canal to see the water; my, but it's nice!"

"What, the party or the water?"

"Why, the water."

"Both" added another.



“We’ve all told who we’re going to marry,” remarked a little rosy-faced miss, “all but Carlia, an’ she won’t tell.”

“Well, but perhaps Carlia don’t know. You wouldn’t have her tell a fib, would you?”

“Oh, shucks, she knows as well as us.”

“She’s just stubborn.”



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She who was receiving these criticisms seemed to be somewhat older and larger than her companions. Just now, not deigning to notice the accusation of her friends, she was throwing sticks into the running water and watching them go over the falls at the headgate and dance on the rapids below. Her white party dress was as yet spotless. She swung her straw hat by the string. Her brown-black hair was crowned by an unusually large bow of red ribbon. She was not the least discomposd by the teasing of the other children, neither by Dorian's presence. This was her party, and why should not she do and say what she pleased.

Carlia now led the way along the canal bank until she came to where a pole spanned the stream. She stopped, looked at the somewhat insecure footbridge, then turning to her companions, said:

"I can back you out."

"How? Doin' what?" they asked.

"Crossing the canal on the pole."

"Shucks, you can't back me out," declared one of the boys, at which he darted across the swaying pole, and with a jump, landed safely across. Another boy went at it gingerly, and with the antics of a tight-rope walker, he managed to get to the other side. The other boys held back; none of the girls ventured.

"All right, Carlia," shouted the boys on the other bank.

The girl stood looking at the frail pole.

"Come on, it's easy," they encouraged.

Carlia placed her foot on the pole as if testing it. The other girls protested. She would fall in and drown.

"You dared us; now who's the coward," cried the boys.

Carlia took a step forward, balanced herself, and took another. The children stood in spell-bound silence. The girl advanced slowly along the frail bridge until she reached the middle where the pole swayed dangerously.

"Balance yourself," suggested the second boy.

"Run," said the first.



But Carlia could neither balance nor run. She stood for a moment on the oscillating span, then threw up her hands, and with a scream she plunged into the waters of the canal.

No thought of danger had entered Dorian's mind as he stood watching the capers of the children. If any of them fell in, he thought, they would only get a good wetting. But as Carlia fell, he sprang forward. The water at this point was quite deep and running swiftly. He saw that Carlia fell on her side and went completely under. The children screamed. Dorian, startled out of his apathy, suddenly ran to the canal and jumped in. It was done so impulsively that he still held on to his package of books. With one hand he lifted the girl out of the water, but in her struggles, she knocked the bundle from his hand, and the precious books splashed into the canal and floated down the stream. Dorian made an effort to rescue them, but Carlia clung so to his arms that he could do nothing but stand and see the package glide over the falls at the headgate

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and then go dancing over the rapids, even as Carlia's sticks had done. For a moment the young man's thoughts were with his books, and it seemed that he stood there in the canal for quite a while in a sort of daze, with the water rushing by his legs. Then mechanically he carried the girl to the bank and would have set her down again with her companions, but she clung to him so closely and with such terror in her eyes that he lifted her into his arms and talked reassuringly to her:

"There, now," he said, "you're only a bit wet. Don't cry."

"Take me home. I—I want to go home," sobbed the girl.

"Sure," said Dorian. "Come on everybody."

He led the way, and the rest of the children followed.

"I suppose the party's about over, anyway," suggested he.

"I—I guess so."

They walked on in silence for a time; then Carlia said:

"I guess I'm heavy."

"Not at all", lied the young man bravely, for she was heavier than he had supposed; but she made no offer to walk. By the time they reached the gate, Carlia was herself again, and inclined to look upon her wetting and escape as quite an adventure.

"There," said Dorian as he seated the girl on the broad top of the gate post; "I'll leave you there to dry. It won't take long."

He looked at his own wet clothes, and then at his ragged, mud-laden shoes. He might as well carry the girl up the path to her home, but then, that was not necessary. The day was warm, there was no danger of colds, and she could run up the path in a few minutes.

"Well, I'll go now. Goodby," he said.

"Wait a minute—Say, I'm glad you saved me, but I'm sorry you lost your package. What was in it?"

"Only books."



“I’ll get you some more, when I get the money, yes I will. Come here and lift me down before you go.”

He obeyed. She put a wet arm about his neck and cuddled her dark, damp curls against his russet mop. He lifted her lightly down, and then he slipped a chocolate secretly into her hand.

“Oh girls,” exclaimed one of the party, “I know now.”

“Know what?” asked Carlia.

“I know who you are going to marry.”

“Who?”

“You’re going to marry Dorian.”

CHAPTER TWO.

The disposition to lie or evade never remained long with Dorian Trent; but that evening as he turned into the lane which led up to the house, he was sorely-tempted. Once or twice only, as nearly as he could remember, had he told an untruth to his mother with results which he would never forget. He must tell her the truth now.

But he would put off the ordeal as long as possible. There could be no harm in that. Everything was quiet about the house, as his mother was away. He hurriedly divested himself of his best clothes and put on his overalls. He took the milk pail and hung it on the fence until he brought the cows from the pasture. After milking, he did his other chores. There were no signs of mother. The dusk turned to darkness, yet no light appeared in the house. Dorian went in and lighted the lamp and proceeded to get supper.



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The mother came presently, carrying a bag of wool. "A big herd of sheep went by this afternoon," she explained, "and they left a lot of fine wool on the barbed-wire fences. See, I have gathered enough for a pair of stockings." She seated herself.

"You're tired," said Dorian.

"Yes."

"Well, you sit and rest; I'll soon have the supper on the table." This was no difficult task, as the evening meal was usually a very simple one, and Dorian had frequently prepared it. This evening as the mother sat there quietly she looked at her son with admiring eyes. What a big boy he was getting to be! He had always been big, it seemed to her. He had been a big baby and a big little boy, and now he was a big young man. He had a big head and big feet, big hands. His nose and mouth were big, and big freckles dotted his face—yes, and a big heart, as his mother very well knew. Along with his bigness of limb and body there was a certain awkwardness. He never could run as fast as the other boys, and he always fumbled the ball in their games though he could beat them swimming. So far in his youthful career he had not learned to dance. The one time he had tried, his girl partner had made fun of his awkwardness, so that ended his dancing. But Dorian was not clumsy about his mother's home and table. He handled the dishes as daintily as a girl, and the table was set and the food served in a very proper manner.

"Did you get your shoes, Dorian?"

Dorian burned his fingers on a dish which was not at all hot.

"Mother, sit up; supper is ready."

They both drew up their chairs. Dorian asked the blessing, then became unusually solicitous in helping his mother, continually talking as he did so.

"That little Duke girl was nearly drowned in the canal, this afternoon," he told her, going on with the details. "She's a plucky little thing. Ten minutes after I had her out of the canal, she was as lively as ever."

The mother liked to hear him talk, so she did not interrupt him. After they had eaten, he forced her to take her rocking-chair while he cleared the table and washed the few dishes. She asked no more questions about shoes, but leaned back in her chair with half-closed eyes. Dorian thought to give her the mint lozenges, but fearing that it might lead to more questions, he did not.

Mrs. Trent was not old in years, but hard work had bent her back and roughened her hands. Her face was pleasant to look upon, even if there were some wrinkles now, and the hair was white at the temples. She closed her eyes as if she were going to sleep.



“Now, mother, you’re going to bed”, said Dorian. “You have tired yourself out with this wool picking. I thought I told you before that I would gather what wool there was.”

“But you weren’t here, and I could not stand to see the wind blowing it away. See, what a fine lot I got.” She opened her bundle and displayed her fleece.

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“Well, put it away. You can’t card and spin and knit it tonight.”

“It will have to be washed first, you foolish boy.”

Dorian got his mother to bed without further reference to shoes. He went to his own room with a conscience not altogether easy. He lighted his lamp, which was a good one, for he did a lot of reading by it. The electric wires had not yet reached Greenstreet. Dorian stood looking about his room. It was not a very large one, and somewhat sparsely furnished. The bed seemed selfishly to take up most of the space. Against one wall was set some home-made shelving containing books. He had quite a library. There were books of various kinds, gathered with no particular plan or purpose, but as means and opportunity afforded. In one corner stood a scroll saw, now not very often used. Pictures of a full-rigged sailing vessel and a big modern steamer hung on the wall above his books. On another wall were three small prints, landscapes where there were great distances with much light and warmth. Over his bed hung an artist’s conception of “Lorna Doone,” a beautiful face, framed in a mass of auburn hair, with smiling lips, and a dreamy look in her eyes.

“That’s my girl,” Dorian sometimes said, pointing to this picture. “No one can take her from me; we never quarrel; and she never scolds or frowns.”

On another wall hung a portrait of his father, who had been dead nine years. His father had been a teacher with a longing to be a farmer. Eventually, this longing had been realized in the purchase of the twenty acres in Greenstreet, at that time a village with not one street which could be called green, and without a sure water supply for irrigation, at least on the land which would grow corn and potatoes and wheat. To be sure, there was water enough of its kind down on the lower slopes, besides saleratus and salt grass and cattails and the tang of marshlands in the air. Schoolmaster Trent’s operations in farming had not been very successful, and when he died, the result of his failure was a part of the legacy which descended to his wife and son.

Dorian took a book from the shelf as if to read; but visions intruded of some beautiful volumes, now somewhere down the canal, a mass of water-soaked paper. He could not read. He finished his last chocolate, said his prayers, and went to bed.

Saturday was always a busy day with Dorian and his mother; but that morning Mrs. Trent was up earlier than usual. The white muslin curtains were already in the wash when Dorian looked at his mother in the summer kitchen.

“What, washing today!” he asked in surprise. Monday was washday.

“The curtains were black; they must be clean for tomorrow.”

“You can see dirt where I can’t see it.”



“I’ve been looking for it longer, my boy. And, say, fix up the line you broke the other day.”

“Sure, mother.”

The morning was clear and cool. He did his chores, then went out to his ten-acre field of wheat and lucerne. The grain was heading beautifully; and there were prospects of three cuttings of hay; the potatoes were doing fine, also the corn and the squash and the melons. The young farmer’s heart was made glad to see the coming harvest, all the work of his own hands.



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For this was the first real crop they had raised. For years they had struggled and pinched. Sometimes Dorian was for giving up and moving to the city; but the mother saw brighter prospects when the new canal should be finished. And then her boy would be better off working for himself on the farm than drudging for others in the town; besides, she had a desire to remain on the spot made dear by her husband's work; and so they struggled along, making their payments on the land and later on the canal stock. The summit of their difficulties seemed now to have passed, and better times were ahead. Dorian looked down at his ragged shoes and laughed to himself good-naturedly. Shucks, in a few months he would have plenty of money to buy shoes, perhaps also a Sunday suit for himself, and everything his mother needed. And if there should happen to be more book bargains, he might venture in that direction again.

Breakfast passed without the mention of shoes. What was his mother thinking about! She seemed uncommonly busy with cleaning an uncommonly clean house. When Dorian came home from irrigating at noon, he kicked off his muddy shoes by the shanty door, so as not to soil her cleanly scrubbed floor or to stain the neat home-made rug. There seemed to be even more than the extra cooking in preparation for Sunday.

The mother looked at Dorian coming so noiselessly in his stocking feet.

"You didn't show me your new shoes last night," she said.

"Say, mother, what's all this extra cleaning and cooking about?"

"We're going to have company tomorrow."

"Company? Who?"

"I'll tell you about it at the table."

"Do you remember," began the mother when they were seated, "a lady and her little girl who visited us some two years ago?"

Yes, he had some recollection of them. He remembered the girl, specially, spindle-legged, with round eyes, pale cheeks, and an uncommonly long braid of yellow hair hanging down her back.

"Well, they're coming to see us tomorrow. Mrs. Brown is an old-time friend of mine, and Mildred is an only child. The girl is not strong, and so I invited them to come here and get some good country air."

"To stay with us, mother?" asked the boy in alarm.

"Just to visit. It's terribly hot in the city. We have plenty of fresh eggs and good milk, which, I am sure is just what the child needs. Mrs. Brown cannot stay more than the



day, so she says, but I am going to ask that Mildred visits with us for a week anyway. I think I can bring some color into her cheeks.”

“Oh, gee, mother!” he remonstrated.

“Now, Dorian, be reasonable. She’s such a simple, quiet girl. She will not be in the way in the least. I want you to treat her nicely.”

Dorian had finished his dinner and was gazing out of the window. There was an odd look on his face. The idea of a girl living right here with them in the same house startled and troubled him. His mother had called her a little girl, but he remembered her as being only a year or two younger than he. Gee!



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“That’s why I wanted you to get a pair of decent shoes for tomorrow,” said the mother, “and I told you to get a nice pair. I have brushed and pressed your clothes, but you must get a new suit as soon as possible. Where are your shoes! I couldn’t find them.”

“I—didn’t get any shoes, mother.”

“Didn’t get any! Why not?”

“Well, you see—I didn’t know about these visitors coming, mother, and so I—bought some books for most of my money, and so; but mother, don’t get mad—I—”

“Books? What books? Where are they?”

And then Dorian told her plainly the whole miserable story. At first the mother was angry, but when she saw the troubled face of her boy, she relented, not wishing to add to his misery. She even smiled at the calamitous ending of those books.

“My boy, I see that you have been sorely tempted, and I am sorry that you lost your books. The wetting that Carlia gave you did no harm ... but you must have some shoes by tomorrow. Wait.”

The mother went to the bureau drawer, opened the lid of a little box, drew from the box a purse, and took from the purse two silver dollars. She handed them to Dorian.

“Go to town again this afternoon and get some shoes.”

“But, mother, I hate to take your money. I think I can black my old ones so that they will not look so bad.”

“Blackening will not fill the holes. Now, you do as I say. Jump on Nig and go right away.”

Dorian put the money in his pocket, then went out to the yard and slipped a bridle on his horse, mounted, and was back to the house.

“Now, Dorian, remember what I say. Get you a nice pair, a nice Sunday pair.”

“All right, mother, I will.”

He rode off at a gallop. He lingered not by creeks or byways, but went directly to the best shoe store in the city, where he made his purchase. He stopped neither at book store or candy shops. His horse was sweating when he rode in at the home yard. His mother hearing him, came out.

“You made quick time,” she said.



“Yes; just to buy a pair of shoes doesn’t take long.”

“You got the right kind?”

“Sure. Here, look at ’em.” He handed her the package.

“I can’t look at them now. Say, Dorian—” she came out nearer to him—“They are here.”

“Who, mother?”

“Mrs. Brown and her daughter. They got a chance to ride out this afternoon, so they did not wait until tomorrow. Lucky I cleaned up this morning. Mildred is not a bit well, and she is lying down now. Don’t make any more noise than you can help.”

“Gee—but, mother, gosh!” He was very much disturbed.

“They are dear, good people. They know we are simple farmers. Just you wash yourself and take off those dirty overalls before you come in. And then you just behave yourself. We’re going to have something nice for supper. Now, don’t be too long with your hoeing or with your chores, for supper will be early this evening.”



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Dorian hoed only ten rows that afternoon for the reason that he sat down to rest and to think at the end of each row. Then he dallied so with his chores that his mother had to call him twice. At last he could find no more excuses between him and the strange company. He went in with much fear and some invisible trembling.

CHAPTER THREE.

About six o'clock in the afternoon, Mildred Brown went down through the fields to the lower pasture. She wore a gingham apron which covered her from neck to high-topped boots. She carried in one hand an easel and stool and in the other hand a box of colors. Mildred came each day to a particular spot in this lower pasture and set up her easel and stool in the shade of a black willow bush to paint a particular scene. She did her work as nearly as possible at the same time each afternoon to get the same effect of light and shade and the same stretch of reflected sunlight on the open water spaces in the marshland.

And the scene before her was worthy of a master hand, which, of course, Mildred Brown was not as yet. From her position in the shade of the willow, she looked out over the flat marshlands toward the west. Nearby, at the edge of the firmer pasture lands, the rushes grew luxuriously, now crowned with large, glossy-brown "cat-tails." The flats to the left were spotted by beds of white and black saleratus and bunches of course salt grass. Openings of sluggish water lay hot in the sun, winding in and out among reeds, and at this hour every clear afternoon, shining with the undimmed reflection of the burning sun. The air was laden with salty odors of the marshes. A light afternoon haze hung over the distance. Frogs were lazily croaking, and the killdeer's shrill cry came plaintively to the ear. A number of cows stood knee-deep in mud and water, round as barrels, and breathing hard, with tails unceasingly switching away the flies.

Dorian was in the field turning the water on his lucerne patch when he saw Mildred coming as usual down the path. He had not expected her that afternoon as he thought the picture which she had been working on was finished; but after adjusting the flow of water, he joined her, relieving her of stool and easel. They then walked on together, the big farm boy in overalls and the tall graceful girl in the enveloping gingham.

Mildred's visit had now extended to ten days, by which time Dorian had about gotten over his timidity in her presence. In fact, that had not been difficult. The girl was not a bit "stuck up," and she entered easily and naturally into the home life on the farm. She had changed considerably since Dorian had last seen her, some two years ago. Her face was still pale, although it seemed that a little pink was now creeping into her cheeks; her eyes were still big and round and blue; her hair was now done up in thick shining braids. She talked freely to Dorian and his mother, and at last Dorian had to some extent been able to find his tongue in the presence of a girl nearly his own age.

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The two stopped in the shade of the willow. He set up the easel and opened the stool, while she got out her colors and brushes.

“Thank you,” she said to him. “Did you get through with your work in the field?”

“I was just turning the water on the lucerne. I got through shocking the wheat some time ago.”

“Is there a good crop! I don’t know much about such things, but I want to learn.” She smiled up into his ruddy face.

“The wheat is fine. The heads are well developed. I wouldn’t be surprised if it went fifty bushels to the acre.”

“Fifty bushels?” She began to squeeze the tubes of colors on to the palette.

Dorian explained; and as he talked, she seated herself, placed the canvas on the easel, and began mixing the colors.

“I thought you finished that picture yesterday,” he said.

“I was not satisfied with it, and so I thought I would put in another hour on it. The setting sun promises to be unusually fine today, and I want to put a little more of its beauty into my picture, if I can.”

The young man seated himself on the grass well toward the rear where he could see her at work. He thought it wonderful to be able thus to make a beautiful picture out of such a commonplace thing as a saleratus swamp. But then, he was beginning to think that this girl was capable of endless wonders. He had met no other girl just like her, so young and so beautiful, and yet so talented and so well-informed; so rich, and yet so simple in manner of her life; so high born and bred, and yet so companionable with those of humbler station.

The painter squeezed a daub of brilliant red on to her palette. She gazed for a moment at the western sky, then turning to Dorian, she asked:

“Do you think I dare put a little more red in my picture?”

“Dare?” he repeated.

The young man followed the pointing finger of the girl into the flaming depths of the sky, then came and leaned carefully over the painting.

“Tell me which is redder, the real or the picture?” she asked.



Dorian looked critically back and forth. “The sky is redder,” he decided.

“And yet if I make my picture as red as the sky naturally is, many people would say that it is too red to be true. I’ll risk it anyway.” Then she carefully laid on a little more color.

“Nature itself, our teacher told us, is always more intense than any representation of nature.”

She worked on in silence for a few moments, then without looking from her canvas, she asked: “Do you like being a farmer?”

“Oh, I guess so,” he replied somewhat indefinitely. “I’ve lived on a farm all my life, and I don’t know anything else. I used to think I would like to get away, but mother always wanted to stay. There’s been a lot of hard work for both of us, but now things are coming more our way, and I like it better. Anyway, I couldn’t live in the city now.”



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“Why?”

“Well, I don’t seem able to breathe in the city, with its smoke and its noise and its crowding together of houses and people.”

“You ought to go to Chicago or New York or Boston,” she replied. “Then you would see some crowds and hear some noises.”

“Have you been there?”

“I studied drawing and painting in Boston. Next to farming, what would you like to do?”

He thought for a moment—“When I was a little fellow—”

“Which you are not,” she interrupted as she changed brushes.

“I thought that if I ever could attain to the position of standing behind a counter in a store where I could take a piece of candy whenever I wanted it, I should have attained to the heights of happiness. But, now, of course—”

“Well, and now?”

“I believe I’d like to be a school teacher.”

“Why a teacher?”

“Because I’d then have the chance to read a lot of books.”

“You like to read, don’t you? and you like candy, and you like pictures.”

“Especially, when someone else paints them.”

Mildred arose, stepped back to get the distance for examination. “I don’t think I had better use more color,” she commented, “but those cat-tails in the corner need touching up a bit.”

“I suppose you have been to school a lot?” he asked.

“No; just completed the high school; then, not being very strong, mother thought it best not to send me to the University; but she lets me dabble a little in painting and in music.”

Dorian could not keep his eyes off this girl who had already completed the high school course which he had not yet begun; besides, she had learned a lot of other things which would be beyond him to ever reach. Even though he were an ignoramus, he could bask in the light of her greater learning. She did not resent that.



“What do you study in High School!” he asked.

“Oh, a lot of things—don’t you know?” She again looked up at him.

“Not exactly.”

“We studied algebra and mathematics and English and English literature, and French, and a lot of other things.”

“What’s algebra like?”

“Oh dear, do you want me to draw it?”

“Can you draw it?”

“About as well as I can tell it in words. Algebra is higher mathematics; yes, that’s it.”

“And what’s the difference between English and English literature?”

“English is grammar and how sentences are or should be made. English literature is made up mostly of the reading of the great authors, such as Milton and Shakespeare,”

“Gee!” exclaimed Dorian, “that would be great fun.”

“Fun? just you try it. Nobody reads these writers now only in school, where they have to. But say, Dorian”—she arose to inspect her work again. “Have I too much purple in that bunch of salt-grass on the left? What do you think?”

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“I don’t see any purple at all in the real grass,” he said.

“There is purple there, however; but of course, you, not being an artist, cannot see it.” She laughed a little for fear he might think her pronouncement harsh.

“What—what is an artist?”

“An artist is one who has learned to see more than other people can in the common things about them.”

The definition was not quite clear to him. He had proved that he could see farther and clearer than she could when looking at trees or chipmunks. He looked critically again at the picture.

“I mean, of course,” she added, as she noted his puzzled look, “that an artist is one who sees in nature the beauty in form, in light and shade, and in color.”

“You haven’t put that tree in the right place,” he objected! “and you have left out that house altogether.”

“This is not a photograph,” she answered. “I put in my picture only that which I want there. The tree isn’t in the right place, so I moved it. The house has no business in the picture because I want it to represent a scene of wild, open lonesomeness. I want to make the people who look at it feel so lonesome that they want to cry!”

She was an odd girl!

“Oh, don’t you understand. I want them only to feel like it. When you saw that charcoal drawing I made the other day, you laughed.”

“Well, it was funny.”

“That’s just it. An artist wants to be able to make people feel like laughing or crying, for then he knows he has reached their soul.”

“I’ve got to look after the water for a few minutes, then I’ll come back and help you carry your things,” he said. “You’re about through, aren’t you?”

“Thank you; I’ll be ready now in a few minutes. Go see to your water. I’ll wait for you. How beautiful the west is now!”

They stood silently for a few moments side by side, looking at the glory of the setting sun through banks of clouds and then down behind the purple mountain. Then Dorian, with shovel on shoulder, hastened to his irrigating. The blossoming field of lucerne was



usually a common enough sight, but now it was a stretch of sweet-scented waves of green and purple.

Mildred looked at the farmer boy until he disappeared behind the willow fence, then she began to pack up her things. Presently, she heard some low bellowing, and, looking up, she saw a number of cows, with tails erect, galloping across the fields. They had broken the fence, and were now having a gay frolic on forbidden grounds. Mildred saw that they were making directly for the corner of the pasture where she was. She was afraid of cows, even when they were within the quiet enclosure of the yard, and here was a wild lot apparently coming upon her to destroy her. She crouched, terror stricken, as if to take shelter behind the frail bulwark of her easel.

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Then she saw a horse leap through the gap in the fence and come galloping after the cows. On the horse was a girl, not a large girl, but she was riding fearlessly, bare-back, and urging the horse to greater strides. Her black hair was trailing in the wind as she waved a willow switch and shouted lustily at the cows. She managed to head the cows off before they had reached Mildred, rounding them up sharply and driving them back through the breach into the road which they followed quietly homeward. The rider then galloped back to the frightened girl.

“Did the cows scare you?” she asked.

“Yes,” panted Mildred. “I’m so frightened of cows, and these were so wild.”

“They were just playing. They wouldn’t hurt you; but they did look fierce.”

“Whose cows were they?”

“They’re ours. I have to get them up every day. Sometimes when the flies are bad they get a little mad, but I’m not afraid of them. They know me, you bet. I can milk the kickiest one of the lot.”

“Do you milk the cows?”

“Sure—but what is that?” The rider had caught sight of the picture. “Did you make that?”

“Yes; I painted it.”

“My!” She dismounted, and with arm through bridle, she and the horse came up for a closer view of the picture. The girl looked at it mutely for a moment. “It’s pretty” she said; “I wish I could make a picture like that.”

Mildred smiled at her. She was such a round, rosy girl, so full of health and life and color. Not such a little girl either, now a nearer view was obtained. She was only a year or two younger than Mildred herself.

“I wish I could do what you can,” said the painter of pictures.

“I—what? I can’t do anything like that.”

“No; but you can ride a horse, and stop runaway cows. You can do a lot of things that I cannot do because you are stronger than I am. I wish I had some of that rosy red in your cheeks.”

“You can have some of mine,” laughed the other, “for I have more than enough; but you wouldn’t like the freckles.”



“I wouldn’t mind them, I’m sure; but let me thank you for what you did, and let’s get acquainted.” Mildred held out her hand, which the other took somewhat shyly. “Don’t you have to go home with your cows?”

“Yes, I guess so.”

“Then we’ll go back together.” She gathered her material and they walked on up the path, Mildred ahead, for she was timid of the horse which the other led by the bridle rein. At the bars in the corner of the upper pasture the horse was turned loose into his own feeding ground, and the girls went on together.

“You live near here, don’t you?” inquired Mildred.

“Yes, just over there.”

“Oh, are you Carlia Duke?”

“Yes; how did you know?”

“Dorian has told me about you.”

“Has he? We’re neighbors; an’ you’re the girl that’s visiting with the Trent’s?”



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“Yes.”

“Well, I’m glad to meet you. Dorian has told me about you, too.”

Thus these two, meeting for the first time, went on chatting together; and thus Dorian saw them. He had missed Mildred at the lower pasture, and so, with shovel again on shoulder, he had followed up the homeward path. The girls were some distance ahead, so he did not try to overtake them. In fact, he slackened his pace a little, so as not to get too close to them to disturb them; but he saw them plainly walk close together up the road in the twilight of the summer evening, the tall, light-haired Mildred, and the shorter, dark-haired Carlia; and the child in Dorian seemed to vanish, and the man in him asserted himself in thought and feelings which it would have been hard for him to describe in words.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Indian summer lay drowsily over the land. It had come late that season, but its rare beauty compensated for its tardiness. Its golden mellowness permeating the hazy air, had also, it seems, crept into the heart of Dorian Trent. The light coating of frost which each morning lay on the grass, had by noon vanished, and now the earth was warm and dry.

Dorian was plowing, and he was in no great haste with his work. He did not urge his horses, for they also seemed imbued with the languidness of the season. He let them rest frequently, especially at the end of the furrow where there was a grassy bank on which the plowman could lie prone on his back and look into the dreamy distances of the hills or up into the veiling clouds.

Dorian could afford to take it a little easy that afternoon, so he thought. The summer’s work was practically over: the wheat had been thrashed; the hay was in the stacks; the potatoes were in the pit; the corn stood in Indian wigwam bunches in the yard; the fruit and vegetables, mostly of the mother’s raising, had been sufficient for their simple needs. They were well provided for the winter; and so Dorian was happy and contented as everyone in like condition should be on such an Indian summer afternoon.

Mildred Brown’s visit to the farm had ended some weeks ago; but only yesterday his mother had received a note from Mrs. Brown, asking if her daughter might not come again. Her former visit had done her so much good, and now the beautiful weather was calling her out into the country. It was a shame, Mildred had said, that Indian summer should “waste its sweetness on the desert air of the city.”

“What do you say?” Mrs. Trent had asked Dorian.

“Why—why—of course, mother, if she doesn’t make too much work for you.”

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And so Mildred had received the invitation that she was very welcome to come to Greenstreet and stay as long as she desired. Very likely, she would be with them in a day or two, thought Dorian. She would draw and paint, and then in the soft evening dusk she would play some of those exquisite melodies on her violin. Mildred did not like people to speak of her beloved instrument as a fiddle, and he remembered how she had chastised him on one occasion for so doing. Yes, she would again enter into their daily life. Her ladylike ways, her sweet smile, her golden beauty would again glorify their humble home. Why, if she came often enough and remained long enough, she might yet learn how to milk a cow, as she had threatened to do. At the thought, the boy on the grass by the nodding horses, laughed up into the sky. Dorian was happy; but whether he preferred the somewhat nervous happiness of Mildred's presence or the quiet longing happiness of her absence, he could not tell.

The plain truth of the matter was, that Dorian had fallen deeply in love with Mildred. This statement may be scoffed at by some people whose eyes have been dimmed by age so that they cannot see back into that time of youth when they also were "trailing clouds of glory" from their heavenly home. There is nothing more wholesomely sweet than this first boy and girl affection. It is clean and pure and undefiled by the many worldly elements which often enter into the more mature lovemaking.

Perhaps Mildred Brown's entrance into Dorian's life did not differ from like incidents in many lives, but to him it was something holy. Dorian at this time never admitted to himself that he was in love with the girl. He sensed very well that she was far above him in every way. The thought that she might ever become his wife never obtained foothold in him more than for a fleeting moment: that was impossible, then why think of it. But there could be no harm in loving her as he loved his mother, or as he loved the flowers, the clear-flowing water, the warm sun and the blue sky. He could at least cast adoring eyes up to her as he did to the stars at night. He could also strive to rise to her level, if that were possible. He was going to the High school the coming winter, then perhaps to the University. He could get to know as much of school learning as she, anyway. He never would become a painter of pictures or a musician, but surely there were other things which he could learn which would be worth while.

There came to Dorian that afternoon as he still lay on the grass, his one-time effort to ask a girl to a dance. He recalled what care he had taken in washing and combing and dressing, how he had finally cut cross-lots to the girl's home for fear of being seen, for surely he had thought, everybody must know what he was up to!—how he had lingered about the back door, and had at last, when the door opened, scudded back home as fast as his legs could carry him! And now, the finest girl he had ever seen was chumming with him, and he was not afraid, that is, not very much afraid.



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When Mildred had packed up to go home on the occasion of her former visit she had invited Mrs. Trent to take her pick of her drawings for her own.

“All but this,” Mildred had said. “This which I call ‘Sunset in the Marshland’ I am going to give to Dorian.”

The mother had looked over the pile of sketches. There was a panel in crayon which the artist said was the big cottonwood down by the Corners. Mrs. Trent remarked that she never would have known it, but then, she added apologetically, she never had an eye for art. There was a winter scene where the houses were so sunk into the earth that only the roofs were visible. (Mrs. Trent had often wondered why the big slanting roofs were the only artistic thing about a house). Another picture showed a high, camel-backed bridge, impossible to cross by anything more real than the artist’s fancy. Mrs. Trent had chosen the bridge because of its pretty colors.

“Where shall we hang Dorian’s picture?” Mildred had asked.

They had gone into his room. Mildred had looked about.

“The only good light is on that wall.” She had pointed to the space occupied by Dorian’s “best girl.”

And so Lorna Doone had come down and Mildred’s study of the marshlands glowed with its warmer colors in its place.

The plowboy arose from the grass. “Get up there,” he said to his horses. “We must be going, or there’ll be very little plowing today.”

Carlia Duke was the first person to greet Mildred as she alighted at the Trent gate. Carlia knew of her coming and was waiting. Mildred put her arm about her friend and kissed her, somewhat to the younger girl’s confused pleasure. The two girls went up the path to the house where Mrs. Trent met them.

“Where’s your baggage?” asked the mother of the arrival, seeing she carried only a small bag and her violin case.

“This is all. I’m not going to paint this time—just going to rest, mother said, so I do not need a lot of baggage.”

“Well, come in Honey; and you too, Carlia. Dinner is about ready, an’ you’ll stay.”

By a little urging Carlia remained, and pretty soon, Dorian came stamping in to be surprised.



“Yes; we’re all here,” announced Carlia, as she tossed her black curls and laughed at his confusion.

“I see you are,” he replied, as he shook hands with Mildred. After which ceremony, it did not just look right to slight the other girl, so he shook hands with her also, much to her amusement.

“How do you do, Mr. Trent” she said.

“Carlia is such a tease,” explained the mother.

“For which I like her,” added Mildred.

“We all do. Even Dorian here, who is usually afraid of girls, makes quite a chum of her.”

“Well, we’re neighbors,” justified the girl.



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After dinner Carlia took Mildred home with her. It was not far, just around the low ridge which hid the house from view. There Mildred met Pa Duke, Ma Duke and Will Duke, Carlia's older brother. Pa Duke was a hard-working farmer, Ma Duke was likewise a hard-working farmer's wife, and Will Duke should have been a hard-working farmer's boy, but he was somewhat a failure, especially regarding the hard work part. Carlia, though so young, was already a hardworking farmer girl, with no chance of escape, as far as she could see, from the hard-working part. The Duke house, though clean and roomy, lacked the dainty home touches which mean so much. There were no porch, no lawn, no trees. The home was bare inside and out.

In deference to the "company" Carlia was permitted to "visit" with her friend that afternoon. Apparently, these two girls had very little in common, but when left to themselves they found many mutual interests.

Toward the close of the afternoon, Dorian appeared. He found the girls out in the yard, Carlia seated on the topmost pole of the corral fence, and Mildred standing beside her.

"Hello girls," Dorian greeted. "I've come to give you an invitation."

"What, a party!" exclaimed Carlia, jumping down from her perch.

"Not a dancing party, you little goose—just a surprise party."

"On who?"

"On Uncle Zed."

"Uncle Zed. O, shucks!"

"Well, of course, you do not have to go," said Dorian.

"I think you're mean. I do want to go if Mildred is going."

"I don't know Uncle Zed," said Mildred, "but if Mrs. Trent and Dorian wish me to go, I shall be pleased; and of course, you will go with us."

"She's invited," repeated Dorian. "It's Uncle Zed's seventy-fifth birthday. Mother keeps track of them, the only one who does, I guess, for he doesn't do it himself. We're just going down to visit with him this evening. He's a very fine old man, is Uncle Zed," this last to Mildred.

"Is he your uncle?"

"Oh, no; he's just uncle to everybody and no one in particular. He's all by himself, and has no folks?"



Just before the dusk of the evening, the little party set out for the home of Zedekiah Manning, generally and lovingly known as Uncle Zed. He lived about half a mile down the road in a two-roomed log house which had a big adobe chimney on one side. His front yard was abloom with the autumn flowers. The path leading to his door was neatly edged by small cobble stones. Autumn tinted ivy embowered his front door and climbed over the wall nearly to the low roof.

Uncle Zed met the visitors at the door. "Well, well," he exclaimed, "come right in. I'll light the lamp." Then he assisted them to find seats.

Mildred looked keenly at Uncle Zed, whom she found to be a little frail old man with clean white hair and beard, and kindly, smiling face. He sat down with his company and rubbed his hands in a way which implied: "And what does all this mean?" Mildred noted that the wall, back of his own chair, was nearly covered with books, and a number of volumes lay on the table. The room was furnished for the simple needs of the lone occupant. A fire smouldered in the open grate.



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“Now, Uncle Zed, have you forgotten again?” inquired Mrs. Trent.

“Forgotten what? I suppose I have, for my memory is not so good as it used to be.”

“Your memory never was good regarding the day of the year you were born.”

“Day when I was born? What, has my birthday come around again? Well, sure; but I had quite forgotten. How these birthdays do pile up on one.”

“How old are you today?” asked Dorian.

“How old? Let me see. I declare, I must be seventy-five.”

“Isn’t he a funny man,” whispered Carlia to Mildred, who appeared not to hear the comment, so interested was she in the old man.

“And so you’ve come to celebrate,” went on Uncle Zed, “come to congratulate me that I am one year nearer the grave.”

“Now, Uncle Zed, you know—”

“Yes; I know; forgive me for teasing; I know why you come to wish me well. It is that I have kept the faith one year more, and that I am twelve months nearer my heavenly reward. That’s it, isn’t it?”

Uncle Zed pushed his glasses up on his forehead to better see his company, especially Mildred. Mrs. Trent made the proper introduction, then lifted the picnic basket from the table to a corner.

“We’re just going to spend an hour or so with you,” explained Mrs. Trent. “We want you to talk, Mildred to play, and then we’ll have a bite to eat. We’ll just sit about your grate, and look into the glow of the fire while you talk.” However, Dorian and Mildred were scanning the books.

“What’s this set?” the young girl asked.

Dorian bent down to read the dim titles. “The Millennial Star” he said.

“And here’s another set.”

“The Journal of Discourses” he replied.

“My, all sermons? they must be dry reading.”

Uncle Zed heard their conversation, and stepped over to them. “Are you also interested in books?” he asked. “Dorian and I are regular book-worms, you know.”



Oh, yes, she was interested in books.

“But there are books and books, you know,” went on Uncle Zed. “You like story books, no doubt. So do I. There’s nothing better than a rattling good love story, eh, young lady?”

Mildred hardly knew just how to take this remark, so she did not reply.

“Here’s the most wonderful love story ever written.” He took from the shelf a very ordinary looking volume, called the “Doctrine and Covenants.” Carlia and Mrs. Trent now joined the other three. They also were interested.

“You wouldn’t be looking in the ‘Doctrine and Covenants’ for love stories, would you; but here in the revelation on the eternity of the marriage covenant we find that men and women, under the proper conditions and by the proper authority, may be united as husbands and wives, not only for time, but for eternity. Most love stories end when the lovers are married; but think of the endlessness of life and love under this new and everlasting covenant of marriage—but I mustn’t preach so early in the evening.”

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“But we like to hear it, Uncle Zed,” said Dorian.

“Indeed, we do,” added Mildred. “Tell us more about your books.”

“Here is one of my precious volumes—Orson Pratt’s works. When I get hungry for the solid, soul-satisfying doctrines of the kingdom, I read Orson Pratt. Parley Pratt also is good. Here is a book which is nearly forgotten, but which contains beautiful presentations of the gospel, ‘Spencer’s Letters’. Dorian, look here.” He handed the young man a small, ancient-looking, leather bound book. “I found it in a second-hand store and paid fifteen cents for it. Yes, it’s a second edition of the ‘Doctrine and Covenants,’ printed by John Taylor in Nauvoo in 1844. The rest of my collection is familiar to you, I am sure. Here is a complete set of the ‘Contributor’ and this is my ‘Era’ shelf, and here are most of the more modern church works. Let us now go back to the fire.”

After they were again seated, Mildred asked him if he had known Brigham Young. She always liked to hear the pioneers talk of their experiences.

“No” replied Uncle Zed, “I never met President Young, but I believe I know him as well as many who had that pleasure. I have read everything that I could get in print which Brigham Young ever said. I have read all his discourses in those volumes. He was not a polished speaker, I understand, and he did not often follow a theme; but mixed with the more commonplace subjects of irrigation, Indian troubles, *etc.*, which, in his particular day had to be spoken of, are some of the most profound gospel truths in any language. Gems of thought shine from every page of his discourses.”

Carlia was nodding in a warm corner. Uncle Zed rambled on reminiscently until Mrs. Trent suddenly arose, spoke sharply to Carlia, and lifted the basket of picnic on to the table.

“We’ll have our refreshments now,” she said, “and then we must be going. Uncle Zed goes early to bed, and so should we.”

The table was spread: roast chicken, brought by Carlia; dainty sandwiches, made by Mildred; apple pie from Mrs. Trent’s cupboard; a jar of apricot preserves, suggested by Dorian. Uncle Zed asked a blessing not only on the food, but on the kind hands which had provided it. Then they ate heartily, and yet leaving a generous part to be left in Uncle Zed’s own cupboard.

Then Dorian had a presentation to make. He took from the basket a small package, unwrapped it, and handed a book to the man who was seventy-five years old.

“I couldn’t do much by way of the eats,” said Dorian, “so my present is this.”



“Drummond’s Natural Law in the Spiritual World” read Uncle Zed. “Why, Dorian, this is fine of you. How could you guess my wishes so nicely. For a long time, this is just the book I have wanted.”

“I’m glad. I thought you’d like it.”

“Fine, fine,” said the old man, fondling the volume as he would some dear object, as indeed, every good book was to him.



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Then Mildred got out her violin, and after the proper tuning of the strings, she placed it under her shapely chin. She played without music some of the simple heart melodies, and then some of the Sunday School songs which the company softly accompanied by words.

Carlia poked the log in the grate into a blaze, then slyly turned the lamp wick down. When detected and asked why she did that she replied:

“I wanted to make it appear more like a picnic party around a camp fire in the hills.”

CHAPTER FIVE.

Dorian's high school days in the city began that fall, a little late because he had so many things to set right at home; but he soon made up the lost time, for he was a student not afraid of hard work. He walked back and forth the three miles. Mrs. Brown offered him a room at her large city residence, but he could not accept it because of his daily home chores. However, he occasionally called on the Brown's who tried to make him feel as much at home as they did at Greenstreet.

Never before were days so perfect to Dorian, never before had he so enjoyed the fleeting hours. For the first week or two, he was a little shy, but the meeting each morning with boys and girls of his own age and mingling with them in their studies and their recreations, soon taught him that they were all very much alike, just happy, carefree young people, most of them trying to get an education. He soon learned, also, that he could easily hold his own in the class work with the brightest of them. The teachers, and students also, soon learned to know this. Boys came to him for help in problems, and the younger girls chattered about him with laughing eyes and tossing curls. What a wonder it was! He the simple, plainly-dressed country boy, big and awkward and ugly as he thought himself to be, becoming a person of some importance. And so the days went all too swiftly by. Contrary to his younger boyhood's experience, the closing hour came too soon, when it was time to go home to mother and chores and lessons.

And the mother shared the boy's happiness, for she could see the added joy of living and working which had come into his life by the added opportunities and new environment. He frequently discussed with his mother his lessons. She was not well posted in the knowledge derived from books, and sometimes she mildly resented this newer learning which he brought into the home and seemed to intrude on her old-established ideas. For instance, when the cold winter nights came, and Dorian kept open his bedroom window, the mother protested that he would “catch his death of cold.” Night air and drafts are very dangerous, especially if let into one's bedroom, she held.



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“But, mother, I must have air to breathe,” said Dorian, “and what other kind of air can I have at night? I might store a little day-air in my room, but I would soon exhaust its life-giving qualities at night. You know, mother,” he went on in the assurance of his newly acquired knowledge, “I guess the Lord knew what He was about when He enveloped the earth with air which presses down nearly fifteen pounds to the square inch so that it might permeate every possible nook and corner of the globe.” Then he went on to explain the wonderful process of blood purification in the lungs, and demonstrated to her that the breath is continually throwing off foul matter. He did this by breathing into a fruit jar, screwing on the lid for a little while, and then having the nose make the test.

“Some bed rooms I’ve gone into smell just like that,” he said.

“Here, mother is a clipping from a magazine. Listen:

“Of all the marvels of God’s workmanship, none is more wondrous than the air. Think of our all being bathed in a substance so delicate as to be itself unperceived, yet so dense as to be the carriage to our senses of messages from the world about us! It is never in our way; it does not ask notice; we only know it is there by the good it does us. And this exquisitely soft, pure, yielding, unseen being, like a beautiful and beneficent fairy, brings us blessings from all around. It has the skill to wash our blood clean from all foulness. Its weight keeps us from tumbling to pieces. It is a reservoir where the waters lie stored, until they fall and gladden the earth. It is a great-coat that softens to us the heat of the day, and the cold of the night. It carries sounds to our ears and smells to our nostrils. Its movements fill Nature with ceaseless change; and without their aid in wafting ships over the sea, commerce and civilization would have been scarce possible. It is of all wonders the most wonderful.”

At another time when Dorian had a cold, and consequently, a loss of appetite, his mother urged him to eat more, saying that he must have strength to throw off his cold.

“What is a cold?” he smilingly asked.

“Why, a cold is—a cold, of course, you silly boy.”

“What does it do to the activities of the body?”

“I’m not a doctor; how can I tell.”

“All mothers are doctors and nurses; they do a lot of good, and some things that are not so good. For instance, why should I eat more when I have a cold?” She did not reply, and so he went on: “The body is very much like a stove or a furnace; it is burning material all the time. Sometimes the clinkers accumulate and stop the draft, both in the human as well as the iron stove. When that happens, the sensible thing to do is not to throw in more fuel but to clean out the clinkers first.”



“Where did you get all that wisdom, Dorian?”

“I got it from my text book on hygiene, and I think it’s true because it seems so reasonable.”



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“Well, last night’s talk led me to believe that you would become a philosopher; now, the trend is more toward the doctor; tomorrow I’ll think you are studying law.”

“Oh, but we are, mother; you ought to hear us in our civil government class. We have organized into a Congress of the United States, and we are going to make laws.”

“You’ll be elected President, I suppose.”

“I’m one of the candidates.”

“Well, my boy” she smiled happily at him, “I hope you will be elected to every good thing, and that you will fill every post with honor; and now, I would like you to read to me from the ‘Lady of the Lake’ while I darn your stockings. Your father used to read the story to me a long, long time ago, and your voice is very much like his when you read.”

And thus with school and home and ward duties the winter passed. Spring called him again to the fields to which he went with new zeal, for life was opening to him in a way which life is in the habit of doing to the young of his age. Mildred Brown and her mother were in California. He heard from her occasionally by way of postcards, and once she sent him one of her sketches of the ocean. Carlia Duke also was not forgotten by Mildred. Dorian and Carlia met frequently as neighbors will do, and they often spoke of their mutual friend. The harvest was again good that fall, and Dorian once more took up his studies at the high school in the city. Carlia finished the grades as Dorian completed his second year, and the following year Carlia walked with Dorian to the high school. That was no great task for the girl, now nearly grown to young womanhood, and it was company for both of them. During these walks Carlia had many questions to ask about her lessons, and Dorian was always pleased to help her.

“I am such a dunce,” she would say, “I wish I was as smart as you.”

“You must say ‘were’ when you wish. I were as smart as you,” he corrected.

“O, yes: I forgot. My, but grammar is hard, especially to a girl which—”

“No—a girl who; which refers to objects and animals, who to persons.”

Carlia laughed and swung her books by the strap. Dorian was not carrying them that day. Sometimes he was absentminded regarding the little courtesies.

The snow lay hard packed in the road and it creaked under their feet. Carlia’s cheeks glowed redder than ever in contact with the keen winter air. They walked on in silence for a time.

“Say, Dorian, why do you not go and see Mildred?” asked Carlia, not looking at him, but rather at the eastern mountains.



“Why? Is she not well?”

“She is never well now. She looks bad to me.”

“When did you see her?”

“Last Saturday. I called at the house, and she asked about you—Poor girl!”

“What do you mean by that?”

“You are very smart in some things, but are a stupid dunce in other things. Mildred is like an angel both in looks and—everything. I wish I was—were half as good.”



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“But how am I such a dunce, Carlia?”

“In not seeing how much Mildred thinks of you.”

“Thinks of me? Mildred?”

“She just loves you.”

Carlia still looked straight ahead as though fearful to see the agitation she had brought to the young man; but he looked at her, with cheeks still aflame. He did not understand Carlia. Why had she said that? Was she just teasing him? But she did not look as if she were teasing. Silently they walked on to the school house door.

But Dorian could not forget what Carlia had said. All day it intruded into his lessons. “She said she loves me” he whispered to his heart only. Could it be possible? Even if she did, what final good would come of it? The distance between them was still too great, for he was only a poor farmer boy. Dear Mildred—his heart did not chide him for thinking that—so frail, so weak, so beautiful. What if she—should die! Dorian was in a strange state of mind for a number of days. He longed to visit the Brown home, yet he could not find excuse to go. He could not talk to anybody about what was in his mind and heart, not even to his mother with whom he always shared his most hidden thoughts.

One evening he visited Uncle Zed, ostensibly, to talk about a book. Uncle Zed was deep in the study of “Natural Law in the Spiritual World” and would have launched into a discussion of what he had found, but Dorian did not respond; he had other thoughts in mind.

“Uncle Zed,” he said, “how can I become something else than a farmer?”

The old man looked questioningly at his young friend. “What’s the matter with being a farmer?” he asked.

“Well, a farmer doesn’t usually amount to much, I mean in the eyes of the world. Farmers seem to be in a different class from merchants, for example, or from bankers or other more genteel workers.”

“Listen to me, Dorian Trent.” Uncle Zed laid down his book as if he had a serious task before him. “Let me tell you something. If you haven’t done so before, begin now and thank the Lord that you began life on this globe of ours as a farmer’s child and boy. Whatever you do or become in the future, you have made a good beginning. You have already laid away in the way of concepts, we may say, a generous store of nature’s riches, for you have been in close touch with the earth, and the life which teems in soil and air and the waters. Pity the man whose childish eyes looked out on nothing but paved streets and brick walls or whose young ears heard nothing but the harsh rumble



of the city, for his early conceptions from which to interpret his later life is artificial and therefore largely untrue.”

Uncle Zed smiled up into the boy’s face as if to ask, Do you get that? Dorian would have to have time to assimilate the idea; meanwhile, he had another question:

“Uncle Zed, why are there classes among members of our Church?”

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“Classes? What do you mean?”

“Well, the rich do not associate with the poor nor the learned with the unlearned. I know, of course, that this is the general rule in the world, but I think it should be different in the Church.”

“Yes; it ought to be and is different. There are no classes such as you have in mind in the Church, even though a few unthinking members seem to imply it by their actions; but there is no real class distinction in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, only such that are based on the doing of the right and the wrong. Character alone is the standard of classification.”

“Yes, I see that that should be true.”

“It is true. Let me illustrate: The presiding authority in the Church is not handed down from father to son, thus fostering an aristocratic tendency; also this authority is so widespread that anything like a “ruling family” would be impossible. In a town where I once lived, the owner of the bank and the town blacksmith were called on missions. They both were assigned to the same field, and the blacksmith was appointed to preside over the banker. The banker submitted willingly to be directed in his missionary labors by one who, judged by worldly standards, was far beneath him in the social scale. I know a shoemaker in the city who is a teacher in the theological class of his ward, whose membership consists of merchants, lawyers, doctors, and the like. Although he is poor and earns his living by mending shoes, he is greatly respected for his goodness and his knowledge of Scriptural subjects and doctrine.”

“So you think—that a young fellow might—that it would not be wrong—or foolish for a poor man to think a lot of—of a rich girl, for instance.”

Uncle Zed peered at Dorian over his glasses. The old man took him gently by the shoulders. Ah, that’s what’s back of all this, he thought; but what he said was:

“My boy, Emerson said, ‘Hitch your wagon to a star,’ and I will add, never let go, although the rocks in the road may bump you badly. Why, there’s nothing impossible for a young man like you. You may be rich, if you want to; I expect to see you learned; and the Priesthood which you have is your assurance, through your diligence and faithfulness, to any heights. Yes, my boy; go ahead—love Mildred Brown all you want to; she’s fine, but not a bit finer than you.”

“Oh, Uncle Zed,” Dorian somewhat protested; but, nevertheless, he went home that evening with his heart singing.



CHAPTER SIX.

Some days later word came to Mrs. Trent that Mildred was very ill. "Call on them after school," she said to Dorian, "to see just how she is, and ask Mrs. Brown if I can do anything for her."

Dorian did as he was directed. He went around to the back door for fear he might disturb the sick girl. Mrs. Brown herself, seeing him coming, met him and let him in.



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Yes, Mildred was very ill. Mrs. Brown was plainly worried. Could he or his mother do anything to help? No; only to lend their faith and prayers. Would he come into the sick room to see her for a few minutes? Yes, if she desired it.

Dorian followed the mother into the sick room. Mildred lay well propped up by pillows in a bed white as snow. She was thinner and paler than ever, eyes bigger, hair heavier and more golden. When she saw Dorian, she smiled and reached out her hand, letting it lie in the big strong one.

“How are you?” she said, very low.

“Well and fine, and how are you?”

She simply shook her head gently and closed her eyes, seeming content to touch the strong young manhood beside her. The mother went quietly from the room, and all became quite still. Speech was difficult for the sick girl, and equally hard for the young man. But he looked freely at the angel-like face on the pillow without rebuke from the closed eyes. He glanced about the room, beautifully clean and airy. All her books and her working material had been carried away as if she were through with them for good. In a corner on an easel stood an unfinished copy of “Sunset in Marshland.” Dorian’s eyes rested for a moment on the picture, and as he again looked at the girl, he saw a smile pass over the marble-like face.

That was all. Presently, he left the room, and without many words, the house.

Each day after that Dorian managed to learn of the girl’s condition, though he did not go into the sick chamber. On the sixth day word came to Dorian at school that Mildred was dying. He looked about for Carlia to tell her, but she was nowhere to be found. Dorian could not go home. Mildred was dying! The one girl—yes, the only one in all the world who had looked at him with her heart in the look, was leaving the world, and him. Why could she not live, if only for his sake? He sat in the school room until all had gone, and he was alone with the janitor. His open book was still before him, but he saw not the printed page. Then the short winter day closed. Dusk came on. The janitor had finished sweeping the room and was ready to leave. Dorian gathered up his books, put on his overcoat, and went out. Mildred was dying! Perhaps she was about to begin that great journey into the unknown. Would she be afraid? Would she not need a strong hand to help her? “Mildred,” he whispered.

He walked on slowly up the street toward the Brown’s. Darkness came on. The light gleamed softly through the closed blinds of the house. Everything was very still. He did not try to be admitted, but paced back and forth on the other side of the street. Back and forth he went for a long time, it seemed. Then the front door opened, and the doctor passed out. Mildred must either be better or beyond all help. He wanted to ask the doctor, but he could not bring himself to intercept him. The house remained quiet.



Some of the lights were extinguished. Dorian crossed the street. He must find out something. He stood by the gate, not knowing what to do. The door opened again, and a woman, evidently a neighbor, came out. She saw the young man and stopped.



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“Pardon me,” said Dorian, “but tell me how Mildred—Miss Brown is?”

“She just died.”

“Thank you.”

The woman went into a nearby house. Dorian moved away, benumbed with the despair which sank into his heart at the final setting of his sun. Dead! Mildred was dead! He felt the night wind blow cold down the street, and he saw the storm clouds scudding along the distant sky. In the deep blue directly above him a star shone brightly, but it only reminded him of what Uncle Zed had said about hitching to a star; yes, but what if the star had suddenly been taken from the sky!

A form of a girl darted across the street toward him. He stopped and saw that it was Carlia.

“Dorian” she cried, “how is she?”

“She has just died.”

“Dead! O, dear,” she wailed.

They stood there under the street light, the girl looking with great pity into the face of the young man. She was only a girl, and not a very wise girl, but she saw how he suffered, and her heart went out to his heart. She took his hand and held it firmly within her warmer grasp; and by that simple thing the young man seemed again to get within the reach of human sympathy. Then they walked on without speaking, and she led him along the streets and on to the road which led to Greenstreet.

“Come on, Dorian, let’s go home,” she said.

“Yes; let’s go home, Carlia.”

CHAPTER SEVEN.

The death of Mildred Brown affected Dorian Trent most profoundly. Not that he displayed any marked outward signs of his feelings, but his very soul was moved to its depths, sometimes as of despair, sometimes as of resentment. Why, he asked himself, should God send—he put it this way—send to him this beautiful creature who filled his heart so completely, why hold her out to him as if inviting him to take her, and then suddenly snatch her away out of his life—out of the life of the world!

For many days Dorian went about as if in a pained stupor. His mother, knowing her boy, tried in a wise way to comfort him; but it was not altogether a success. His studies were



neglected, and he had thoughts of quitting school altogether; but he did not do this. He dragged through the few remaining days until spring, when he eagerly went to work on the open reaches of the farm, where he was more away from human beings and nearer to that something in his heart. He worked long and hard and faithfully that spring.

On the upper bank of the canal, where the sagebrush stood untouched, Dorian that summer found the first sego blossoms. He had never observed them so closely before nor seen their real beauty. How like Mildred they were! He gathered a bouquet of them that Saturday afternoon as he went home, placed them in a glass of water, and then Sunday afternoon he wrapped them in a damp newspaper and took the bouquet with him to town. His Sunday trips to the city

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were usually for the purpose of visiting Mildred's grave. The sun shone warm that day from a blue sky as Dorian came slowly and reverently to the plot where lay all that was earthly of one whom he loved so well. The new headstone gleamed in white marble and the young grass stood tender and green. Against the stone lay a bunch of withered wild roses. Someone had been there before him that day. Whom could it be? Her mother was not in the city, and who else would remember the visit of the angel-being who had returned to her eternal home? A pang shot through his heart, and he was half tempted to turn without placing his own tribute on the grave, then immediately he knew the thought was foolish. He took off the wrapping and placed his fresher flowers near the more withered ones. Later that summer, he learned only incidentally that it had been Carlia who had been before him that afternoon.

During those days, Carlia kept out of Dorian's way as much as possible. She even avoided walking to and from school with him. He was so absentminded even with her that she in time came to resent it in her feelings. She could not understand that a big, very-much-alive boy should have his mind so fixed on a dead girl that he should altogether forget there were living ones about, especially one, Carlia Duke.

One evening Dorian met Uncle Zed driving his cow home from the pasture, and the old man invited the younger man to walk along with him. Dorian always found Uncle Zed's company acceptable.

"Why haven't you come to me with your trouble?" abruptly asked Uncle Zed.

Dorian started, then hung his head.

"We never have any unshared secrets, you know, and I may have been able to help you."

"I couldn't talk to anybody."

"No; I suppose not."

The cow was placed in the corral, and then Uncle Zed and Dorian sat down on a grassy bank. The sun was painting just such a picture of the marshlands as Dorian knew so well.

"But I can talk to you" continued the old man as if there had been no break in his sentences. "Death, I know, is a strange and terrible thing, for youth; when you get as old as I, I hope you will look on death as nothing more than a release from mortality, a moving from one sphere to another, a step along the eternal line of progress. I suppose that it is just as necessary that we pass out of the world by death as that we enter it by



birth; and I further suppose that the terror with which death is vested is for the purpose of helping us to cling to this earth-life until our mission here is completed.”

Dorian did not speak; his eyes were on the marshlands.

“Imagine, Dorian, this world, just as it is, with all its sin and misery and without any death. What would happen? We would all, I fear, become so self-centered, so hardened in selfishness that it would be difficult for the gentle power of love to reach us; but now there is hardly a family that has not one or more of its members on the other side. And these absent loved ones are anchors to our souls, tied to us by the never-ending cords of love and affection. You, yourself, my boy, never have had until now many interests other than those of this life; now your interests are broadened to another world, and that’s something worth while.... Now, come and see me often.” They arose, each to go to his home.



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"I will, Uncle Zed. Thank you for what you have said."

Dorian completed his four years high school. Going to the University might come later, but now he was moved by a spirit of activity to do bigger things with his farm, and to enlarge it, if possible.

About this time, dry-farming had taken the attention of the farmers in his locality, and many of them had procured lands on the sloping foothills. Dorian, with a number of other young men had gone up the nearby canyon to the low hills of the valley beyond and had taken up lands. That first summer Dorian spent much of his time in breaking up the land. As timber was not far away, he built himself a one-roomed log house and some corrals and outhouses. A mountain stream rushed by the lower corner of his farm, and its wild music sang him to sleep when he spent the night in the hills. He furnished his "summer residence" with a few simple necessities so that he could live there a number of days at a time. He minded not the solitude. The wild odorous verdure of the hills, the cool breezes, the song of the distant streams, the call of the birds, all seemed to harmonize with his own feelings at that time. He had a good kerosene lamp, and at nights when he was not too tired, he read. On his visits to the city he usually had an eye for book bargains, and thus his board shelving came to be quite a little library. He had no method in his collecting, no course of connected study. At one time he would leisurely read one of Howell's easy-going novels, at another time he would be kept wide-eyed until midnight with "Lorna Doone" or with "Ben Hur."

Dorian had heard of Darwin, of Huxley, of Ingersol and of Tom Payne, but he had never read anything but selections from these writers. Now he obtained a copy of the "Origin of Species" and a book by Ingersol. These he read carefully. Darwin's book was rather heavy, but by close application, the young student thought he learned what the scientist was "driving at." This book disturbed him somewhat. There seemed to be much truth in it, but also some things which did not agree with what he had been taught to be true. In this he realized his lack of knowledge. More knowledge must clear up any seeming contradiction, he reasoned. Ingersol was more readable, snappy, witty, hitting the Bible in a fearless way. Dorian had no doubt that all of Ingersol's points could be answered, as he himself could refute many of them.

One day as Dorian was browsing as usual in a book store he came across a cheap copy of Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," the book which he had given Uncle Zed. As he wanted a copy himself, he purchased this one and took it with him to his cabin in the hills. Immediately he was interested in the book, and he filled its pages with copious notes and marks of emphasis.

It was Sunday afternoon in mid-summer at Greenstreet. The wheat again stood in the shock. The alfalfa waved in scented purple. Dorian and the old philosopher of Greenstreet sat in the shade of the cottonwood and looked out on the farm scene as they talked.

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"I've also been reading 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World'" said Dorian.

"Good," replied Uncle Zed. "I was going to lend you my copy, so we could talk about it intelligently. What message have you found in it for you?"

"Message?"

"Yes; every book should have a message and should deliver it to the reader. Drummond's book thundered a message to me, but it came too late. I am old, and past the time when I could heed any such call. If I were young, if I—if I were like you, Dorian, you who have life before you, what might not I do, with the help of the Lord!"

"What, Uncle Zed?"

"Drummond was a clergyman and a professor of natural history and science. As such, he was a student of the laws of God as revealed both through the written word of inspiration and in nature about him. In his book he aims to prove that the spiritual world is controlled by the same laws which operate in the natural world; and as you perhaps discovered in your reading, he comes very nearly proving his claim. He presents some wonderfully interesting analogies. Of course, much of his theology is of the perverted sectarian kind, and therein lies the weakness of his argument. If he had had the clear truth of the restored gospel, how much brighter would his facts have been illumed, how much stronger would have been his deductions. Why, even I with my limited scientific knowledge can set him right in many places. So I say, if I were but a young man like you, do you know what I'd do?"

"What?" again questioned Dorian.

"I would devote all my mind, might and strength to the learning of truth, of scientific truth. I would cover every branch of science possible in the limits of one life, especially the natural sciences. Then with my knowledge of the gospel and the lamp of inspiration which the priesthood entitles me to, I could harmonize the great body of truth coming from any and every source. Dorian, what a life work that would be!"

The old man looked smilingly at his companion with a strange, knowing intimation. He spoke of himself, but he meant that Dorian should take the suggestion. Dorian could pick up his beautiful dream and make it come true. Dorian, with life and strength, and a desire for study and truth could accomplish this very desirable end. The old man placed his hand lovingly on the young man's shoulder, as he continued:

"You are the man to do this, Dorian—you, not I."

"I—Uncle Zed, do you believe that?"



“I do. Listen, my boy. I see you looking over the harvested field. It is a fine work you are doing; thousands can plant and harvest year after year; but few there are who can and will devote their lives to the planting of faith and the nourishing and the establishing of faith in the hearts of men; and that’s what we need now to properly answer the Lord’s cry that when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?... Let the call come to you—but there, in the Lord’s own good time. Come into the house. I have a new book to show you, also I have a very delicious cherry pie.”



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They went into the house together, where they inspected both book and pie. Dorian weakly objected to the generous portion which was cut for him, but Uncle Zed explained that the process of division not only increased the number of pieces of pie, but also added to its tastiness. Dorian led his companion to talk about himself.

“Yes,” he said in reply to a question, “I was born in England and brought up in the Wesleyan Methodist church. I was a great reader ever since I can remember. I read not only history and some fiction, but even the dry-as-dust sermons were interesting to me. But I never seemed satisfied. The more I read, the deeper grew the mysteries of life. Nowhere did I find a clear, comprehensible statement of what I, an entity with countless other entities, was doing here. Where had I come from, where was I going? I visited the churches within my reach. I heard the preachers and read the philosophers to obtain, if possible, a clue to the mystery of life. I studied, and prayed, and went about seeking, but never finding.”

“But you did find the truth at last?”

“Yes; thank the Lord. I found the opening in the darkness, and it came through the simple, humble, and not very learned elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

“What is the principle trouble with all this learning of the world that it does not lead to the truth?”

“The world’s ignorance of God. Eternal life consists in knowing the only true God, and the world does not know Him; therefore, all their systems of religion are founded on a false basis. That is the reason there is so much uncertainty and floundering when philosophers and religionists try to make a known truth agree with their conceptions of God.”

“Explain that a little more to me, Uncle Zed.”

“Some claim that Nature is God, others that God only manifests Himself through nature. I read this latter idea many places. For instance, Pope says:

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole
Whose body nature is, and God the soul.’

“Also Tennyson:

‘The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and plains
Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
Speak to Him there, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.’



“This, no doubt, is beautiful poetry, but it tells only a part of the truth. God, by His Spirit is, and can be all the poet here describes. ‘Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?’ exclaims the Psalmist. ‘In him we live and move and have our being’ declares Paul; but these statements alone are not enough for our proper understanding of the subject. We try to see God behind the veil of nature, in sun and wind and flower and fruit; but there is something lacking. Try now to formulate some distinct idea of what this universal and almighty force back of nature is. We are told that this force is God, whom we must love and worship and serve. We want the feeling of nearness to satisfy the craving for love and protection, but our intellect and our reason must also be somewhat satisfied. We must have some object on which to rest—we cannot always be floating about unsuspected in time and space.



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“Then there is some further confusion: Christian philosophers have tried to personify this ‘soul of the universe,’ for God, they say, thinks and feels and knows. They try to get a personality without form or bounds or dimensions, but it all ends in vagueness and confusion. As for me, and I think I am not so different from other men,—for me to be able to think of God, I must have some image of Him. I cannot think of love or good, or power or glory in the abstract. These must be expressed to me by symbols at least as emanating from, or inherent in, or exercised by some person. Love cannot exist alone: there must be one who loves and one who is being loved. God is love. That means to me that a person, a beautiful, glorified, allwise, benevolent being exercises that divine principle which is shed forth on you and me.

“Now, if the world would only leave all this metaphysical meandering and come back to the simple truth, what a clearing of mists there would be! All their philosophies would have a solid basis if they would only accept the truth revealed anew to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith that God is one of a race, the foremost and first, if you wish it, but still one of a race of beings who inhabit the universe; that we humans are His children, begotten of Him in the pre-mortal world in His image; that we are on the upward path through eternity, following Him who has gone before and has marked out the way; that if we follow, we shall eventually arrive at the point where He now is. Ignorance of these things is what I understand to be ignorance of God.”

“In England I lost my wife and two children. The gospel came to me shortly after, I am sure, to comfort me in the depths of my despair. Not one church on earth that I knew of, Catholic or Protestant, would hold out any hope of my ever being reunited with wife and children as such. There is no family life in heaven, they teach. At that time I went about listening to the preachers, and I delved into books. I made extensive copyings in my note books. I have them yet, and some day when you are interested I will show them to you.”

“I am interested now,” said Dorian.

“But I’m not going to talk to you longer on this theme, even though it is Sunday and time for sermonizing. I’m going to meeting, where you also ought to go. You are not attending as regularly as you should.”

“No, but I’ve been very busy.”

“No excuse that. There is danger in remaining away too long from the established sources of spiritual inspiration and uplift, especially when one is reading Ingersol and Tom Paine. I have no fault to find with your ambition to get ahead in the world, but with it ‘remember thy creator in the days of thy youth.’ Are you neglecting your mother?”

“No; I think not, Uncle Zed; but what do you mean about mother?”

“You are all she has. Are you making her days happy by your personal care and presence. Are you giving of yourself to her?”



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“Well, perhaps I am not so considerate as I might be; I am away quite a lot; thank you for calling my attention to it.”

“Are you neglecting anybody else?”

“Not that I know.”

“Good. Now I must clear away my table and get ready for meeting. You’ll go with me.”

“I can’t. I haven’t my Sunday clothes.”

“The Lord will not look at your clothes.”

“No; but a lot of people will.”

“We go to meeting to worship the Lord, not to be looked at by others. Go home and put on your Sunday best; there is time.” The old man was busy between table and cupboard as he talked. “Have you seen Carlia lately?”

“No,” replied Dorian.

“The last time she was here I thought she was a little peaked in the face, for you know she has such a rosy, roly-poly one.”

“Is that so? She comes to see you, then?”

“Yes; oftener than you do.”

“I never meet her here.”

“No; she manages that, I surmise.”

“What do you mean?”

“I tell you Carlia is a lovely girl,” continued Uncle Zed, ignoring his direct question. “Have you ever eaten butter she has churned?”

“Not that I know.”

“She used to bring me a nice pat when my cow was dry; and bread of her own baking too, about as good as I myself make.” He chuckled as he wiped the last dish and placed it neatly in the rack.

Dorian arose to go. “Remember what I have told you this evening” said Uncle Zed. The old man from behind his window watched his young friend walk leisurely along the road until he reached the cross-lots path which led to the Duke home. Here he saw him



pause, go on again, pause once more, then jump lightly over the fence and strike out across the field. Uncle Zed then went on finishing his preparations for meeting.

As Dorian walked across the field, he did think of what Uncle Zed had said to him. Dorian had built his castles, had dreamed his dreams; but never before had the ideas presented to him by Uncle Zed that afternoon ever entered in them. The good old man had seemed so eager to pass on to the young man an unfulfilled work, yes, a high, noble work. Dorian caught a glimpse of the greatness of it and the glory of it that afternoon, and his soul was thrilled. Was he equal to such a task?... He had wanted to become a successful farmer, then his vision had gone on to the teaching profession; but beyond that he had not ventured. He was already well on the way to make a success of his farms. He liked the work. He could with pleasure be a farmer all his life. But should a man's business be all of life? Dorian realized, not of course in its fuller meaning, that the accumulating of worldly riches was only a means to the accomplishing of other and greater ends of life; and here was before him something worthy of any man's best endeavors. Here was a life's work which at its close would mean something to him and to the world. With these thoughts in his mind he stepped up to the rear of the Duke place where he saw someone in the corral with the cows, busy with her milking.



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CHAPTER EIGHT.

“Hello, Carlia”, greeted Dorian as he stopped at the yard and stood leaning against the fence.

Carlia was just finishing milking a cow. As she straightened, with a three-legged stool in one hand and a foaming milk pail in the other, she looked toward Dorian. “O, is that you? You scared me.”

“Why?”

“A stranger coming so suddenly.”

The young man laughed. “Nearly through?” he asked.

“Just one more—Brindle, the kickey one.”

“Aren’t you afraid of her?”

Carlia laughed scornfully. The girl had beautiful white teeth. Her red cheeks were redder than ever. Her dark hair coiled closely about her shapely head. And she had grown tall, too, the young man noticed, though she was still plump and round-limbed.

“My buckets are full, and I’ll have to take them to the house before I can finish,” she said. “You stay here until I come back—if you want to.”

“I don’t want to—here, let me carry them.” He took the pails from her hand, and they went to the house together.

The milk was carried into the kitchen where Mrs. Duke was busy with pots and pans. Mr. Duke was before the mirror, giving the finishing touches to his hair. He was dressed for meeting. As he heard rather than saw his daughter enter, he asked:

“Carlia, have you swilled the pigs?”

“Not yet,” she replied.

“Well, don’t forget—and say, you’d better give a little new milk to the calf. It’s not getting along as well as it should—and, if you have time before meetin’, throw a little hay to the horses.”

“All right, father, I’ll see to all of it. As I’m not going to meeting, I’ll have plenty of time.”



“Not goin’?” He turned, hair brush in hand, and saw Dorian. “Hello, Dorian,” he greeted, “you’re quite a stranger. You’ll come along to meetin’ with Carlia, I suppose. We will be late if we don’t hurry.”

“Father, I told you I’m not going. I—” she hesitated as if not quite certain of her words —“I had to chase all over the hills for the cows, and I’m not through milking yet. Then there are the pigs and the calves and the horses to feed. But I’ll not keep Dorian. You had better go with father”—this to the young man who still stood by the kitchen door.

“Leave the rest of the chores until after meetin’,” suggested the father, somewhat reluctantly, to be sure, but in concession to Dorian’s presence.

“I can’t go to meeting either,” said Dorian. “I’m not dressed for it, so I’ll keep Carlia company, if you or she have no objections.”

“Well, I’ve no objections, but I don’t like you to miss your meetin’s.”

“We’ll be good,” laughed Dorian.

“But—”

“Come, father,” the mother prompted, “you know I can’t walk fast in this hot weather.”

Carlia got another pail, and she and Dorian went back to the corral.



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“Let me milk,” offered Dorian.

“No; you’re strange, and she’d kick you over the fence.”

“O, I guess not,” he remarked; but he let the girl finish her milking. He again carried the milk back; he also took the “slop” to the pigs and threw the hay to the horses, while the girl gave the new milk to the butting calf; then back to the house where they strained the milk. Then the young man was sent into the front room while the girl changed from work to Sunday attire.

The front room was very hot and uncomfortable. The young man looked about on the familiar scene. There were the same straight-backed chairs, the same homemade carpet, more faded and threadbare than ever, the same ugly enlarged photographs within their massive frames which the enterprising agent had sold to Mrs. Duke. There was the same lack of books or music or anything pretty or refined; and as Dorian stood and looked about, there came to him more forcibly than ever the barrenness of the room and of the house in general. True, his own home was very humble, and yet there was an air of comfort and refinement about it. The Duke home had always impressed him as being cold and cheerless and ugly. There were no protecting porches, no lawn, no flowers, and the barn yard had crept close up to the house. It was a place to work. The eating and the sleeping were provided, so that work could be done, farm and kitchen work with their dirt and litter. The father and the mother and the daughter were slaves to work. Only in work did the parents companion with the daughter. The visitors to the house were mostly those who came to talk about cattle and crops and irrigation.

As a child, Carlia was naturally cheerful and loving; but her sordid environment seemed to be crushing her. At times she struggled to get out from under; but there seemed no way, so she gradually gave in to the inevitable. She became resentful and sarcastic. Her black eyes frequently flashed in scorn and anger. As she grew in physical strength and beauty, these unfortunate traits of character became more pronounced. The budding womanhood which should have been carefully nurtured by the right kind of home and neighborhood was often left to develop in wild and undirected ways. Dorian Trent as he stood in that front room awaiting her had only a dim conception of all this.

Carlia came in while he was yet standing. She had on a white dress and had placed a red rose in her hair.

“O, say, Carlia!” exclaimed Dorian at sight of her.

“What’s the matter?” she asked.

“Here you go dolling up, and look at me.”

“You’re all right. Open the door, it’s terribly stuffy in here.”



Dorian opened the tightly stuck door. Then he turned and stood looking at the girl before him. It seemed to him that he had never seen her so grown-up and so beautiful.

“Say, Carlia, when did you grow up?” he asked.

“While you have been away growing up too.”



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"It's the long dress, isn't it?"

"And milking cows and feeding pigs and pitching hay." She gave a toss to her head and held out her roughened red hands as proof of her assertion. He stepped closer to her as if to examine them more carefully, but she swiftly hid them behind her back. The rose, loosened from the tossing head, fell to the floor, and Dorian picked it up. He sniffed at it then handed it to her.

"Where did you get it?" he asked.

She reddened. "None of your—Say, sit down, can't you."

Dorian seated himself on the sofa and invited her to sit by him, but she took a chair by the table.

"You're not very neighborly," he said.

"As neighborly as you are," she retorted.

"What's the matter with you, Carlia?"

"Nothing the matter with me. I'm the same; only I must have grown up, as you say."

A sound as of someone driving up the road came to them through the open door. Carlia nervously arose and listened. She appeared to be frightened, as she looked out to the road without wanting to be seen. A light wagon rattled by, and the girl, somewhat relieved, went back to her chair.

"Isn't it warm in here?" she asked.

"It's warm everywhere."

"I can't stay here. Let's go out—for a walk."

"All right—come on."

They closed the door, and went out at the rear. He led the way around to the front, but Carlia objected.

"Let's go down by the field," she said. "The road is dusty."

The day was closing with a clear sky. A Sunday calm rested over meadow and field, as the two strolled down by the ripening wheat. The girl seemed uneasy until the house was well out of sight. Then she seated herself on a grassy bank by the willows.

"I'm tired," she said with a sigh of relief.



Dorian looked at her with curious eyes. Carlia, grown up, was more of a puzzle than ever.

“You are working too hard,” he ventured.

“Hard work won’t kill anybody—but it’s the other things.”

“What other things?”

“The grind, the eternal grind—the dreary sameness of every day.”

“You did not finish the high school. Why did you quit?”

“I had to, to save mother. Mother was not only doing her usual house work, but nearly all the outside choring besides. Father was away most of the time on his dry farm too, and he’s blind to the work at home. He seems to think that the only real work is the plowing and the watering and the harvesting, and he would have let mother go on killing herself. Gee, these men!” The girl viciously dug the heel of her shoe into the sod.

“I’m sorry you had to quit school, Carlia.”

“Sorry? I wanted to keep on more than I ever wanted anything in my life; but—”

“But I admire you for coming to the rescue of your mother. That was fine of you.”



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"I'm glad I can do some fine thing."

Dorian had been standing. He now seated himself on the bank beside her. The world about them was very still as they sat for a few moments without speaking.

"Listen," said he, "I believe Uncle Zed is preaching. The meeting house windows are wide open, for a wonder.

"He can preach," she remarked.

"He told me you visit him frequently."

"I do. He's the grandest man, and I like to talk to him."

"So do I. I had quite a visit with him this afternoon. I rather fooled him, I guess."

"How?"

"He told me to go home and change my clothes, and then go to meeting; but I came here instead."

"Why did you do that?"

"To see you, of course."

"Pooh, as if I was anything to look at."

"Well, you are, Carlia," and his eyes rested steadily on her to prove his contention.

"Why didn't you want to go to meeting this evening?"

"You heard me tell father."

"That wasn't the whole truth. I was not the reason because you had decided not to go before I came."

"Well—how do you know that? but, anyway, it's none of your business, where I go, is it?" She made an effort to stare him out of countenance, but it ended in lowered head and eyes.

"Carlia! No, of course, it isn't. Excuse me for asking."

There was another period of silence wherein Dorian again wondered at the girl's strange behavior. Was he annoying her? Perhaps she did not care to have him paying his crude attentions to her; and yet—

"Tell me about your dry farm," she said.



"I've already plowed eighty acres," he informed her. "The land is rich, and I expect to raise a big crop next year. I've quite a cosy house, up there, not far from the creek. The summer evenings are lovely and cool. I can't get mother to stay over night. I wish you would come and go with her, and stay a few days."

"How could I stay away from home that long? The heavens would fall."

"Well, that might help some. But, honestly, Carlia, you ought to get away from this grind a little. It's telling on you. Don't you ever get into the city?"

"Sometimes Saturday afternoons to deliver butter and eggs."

"Well, some Saturday we'll go to see that moving picture show that's recently started in town. They say it's wonderful. I've never been. We'll go together. What do you say?"

"I would like to."

"Let's move on. Meeting is out, and the folks are coming home."

They walked slowly back to the house. Mr. and Mrs. Duke soon arrived and told of the splendid meeting they had had.

"Uncle Zed spoke," said Mr. Duke, "and he did well, as usual. He's a regular Orson Pratt."

"The people do not know it," added Dorian; "perhaps their children or their children's children will."

"Well, what have you two been doing?" enquired the father of Carlia.



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"We've just been taking a walk," answered Dorian. "Will it be alright if Carla and I go to the new moving picture theatre in town some Saturday?"

Neither parent made any objection. They were, in fact, glad to have this neighbor boy show some interest in their daughter.

"Your mother was at meeting," said Mrs. Duke; "and she was asking about you."

"Yes; I've neglected her all afternoon; so I must be off. Good night folks."

Carla went with him to the gate, slipping her arm into his and snuggling closely as if to get the protection of good comradeship. The movement was not lost on Dorian, but he lingered only for a moment.

"Goodnight, Carla; remember, some Saturday."

"I'll not forget. Goodnight" she looked furtively up and down the road, then sped back into the house.

Dorian walked on in the darkening evening. A block or so down the road he came on to an automobile. No one in Greenstreet owned one of these machines as yet, and there were but few in the city. As Dorian approached, he saw a young man working with the machinery under the lifted hood.

"Hello," greeted Dorian, "what's the trouble?"

"Damned if I know. Been stalled here for an hour." The speaker straightened from his work. His hands were grimy, and the sweat was running down his red and angry face. He held tightly the stump of a cigarette between his lips.

"I'm sorry I can't help you," said Dorian, "but I don't know the first thing about an automobile."

"Well, I thought I knew a lot, but this gets me." He swore again, as if to impress Dorian with the true condition of his feelings. Then he went at the machinery again with pliers and wrenches, after which he vigorously turned the crank. The engine started with a wheeze and then a roar. The driver leaped into the car and brought the racing engine to a smoother running. "The cursed thing" he remarked, "why couldn't it have done that an hour ago. O, say, excuse me, have you just been at the house up the road?"

"The Duke house? yes."

"Is the old man—is Mr. Duke at home?"

"Yes; he's at home."



“Thank you.” The car moved slowly up the road until it reached the Duke gate where it stopped; but only for a moment, for it turned and sped with increasing hurry along the road leading to the city.

Dorian stood and watched it until its red light disappeared. He wondered why the stranger wanted to know why Mr. Duke was at home, then on learning that he was, why he turned about as if he had no business with him.

Later, Dorian learned the reason.

CHAPTER NINE.

Dorian was twenty-one years old, and his mother had planned a little party in honor of the event. The invited guests were Uncle Zed, Bishop Johnson and wife, the teacher of the district school, and Carlia Duke. These arrived during the dusk of the evening, all but Carlia. They lingered on the cool lawn under the colored glow of the Chinese lanterns.



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Mrs. Trent realized that it would be useless to make the party a surprise, for she had to have Dorian's help in hanging out the lanterns, and he would necessarily see the unusual activity in front room and kitchen. Moreover, Dorian, unlike Uncle Zed, had not lost track of his birthdays, and especially this one which would make him a full-fledged citizen of these United States.

The little party chatted on general topics for some time until Mrs. Trent, in big white apron, announced that supper was ready, and would they all come right in. Mrs. Trent always served her refreshments at the regular supper time and not near midnight, for she claimed that people of regular habits, which her guests were, are much better off by not having those habits broken into.

"Are we all here?" she asked, scanning them as they passed in. "All but Carlia," she announced. "Where's Carlia?"

No one knew. Someone proffered the explanation that she was usually late as she had so many chores to do, at which the Bishop's wife shook her head knowingly, but said nothing.

"Well, she'll be along presently," said Mrs. Trent. "Sit down all of you. Bishop, will you ask the blessing?"

The hostess, waitress, and cook all combined in the capable person of Mrs. Trent, sat at the table with her party. Everything which was to be served was on the table in plain sight, so that all could nicely gauge their eating to various dishes. When all were well served and the eating was well under way, Mrs. Trent said:

"Brothers and sisters, this is Dorian's birthday party. He has been a mighty good boy, and so—"

"Mother," interrupted the young man.

"Now, you never mind—you be still. Dorian is a good boy, and I want all of you to know it."

"We all do, Sister Trent," said the Bishop; "and it is a good thing to sometimes tell a person of his worthiness to his face."

"But if we say more, he'll be uncomfortable," remarked the mother, "so we had better change the subject. The crops are growing, the weather is fine, and the neighbors are all right. That disposes of the chief topics of conversation, and will give Uncle Zed a chance. He always has something worth listening to, if not up his sleeve, then in his white old head. But do not hurry, Uncle Zed; get through with your supper."



The old man was a light eater, so he finished before the others. He looked smilingly about him, noting that those present were eager to listen. He took from his pocket a number of slips of paper and placed them on the table beside his plate. Then he began to talk, the others leisurely finishing their dessert.

“The other evening,” he said, “Dorian and I had a conversation which interested us very much, and I think it would interest all of us here. I was telling him my experience in my search for God and the plan of salvation, and I promised him I would read to him some of the things I found. Here is a definition of God which did not help me very much.” He picked up one of the slips of paper and read: “God is the integrated harmony of all potentialities of good in every actual and possible rational agent.’ What do you think of that?”



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The listeners knitted their brows, but no one spoke. Uncle Zed continued: "Well, here is a little more. Perhaps this will clear it up: 'The greatest of selves, the ultimate Self of the universe, is God.... My God is my deeper self and yours too. He is the self of the universe, and knows all about it... By Deity we mean the all-controlling consciousness of the universe, as well as the unfathomable, all unknowable, and unknowable abyss of being beyond'."

Uncle Zed carefully folded his papers and placed them back in his pocket. He looked about him, but his friends appeared as if they had had a volley of Greek fired at them. "Well" he said, "why don't some of you say something?"

"Please pass the pickles," responded Mrs. Trent.

When the merriment had ceased, uncle Zed continued: "There is some truth in these definitions. God is all that which they try to express, and vastly more. The trouble is these men talk about the attributes of God, and confound these with the being and personality of the Great Parent. I may describe the scent of the rose, but that does not define the rose itself. I cannot separate the rose from its color or form or odor, any more than I can divorce music from the instrument. These vague and incomplete definitions have had much to do with the unbelief in the world. Tom Paine wrote a book which he called the 'Age of Reason' on the premise that reason does away with God. Isn't that it, Dorian?"

"All agnostic writers seem to think that there is no reason in religion, and at times they come pretty near proving it too," replied Dorian.

"That is because they base their arguments on the religions of the world; but the restored gospel of Jesus Christ rests largely on reason. Why, I can prove, contrary to the generally accepted opinion, by reason alone that there must be a God."

"We shall be glad to hear it," said the school teacher. The eating was about over, and so they all sat and listened attentively.

"We do not need to quote a word of scripture," continued Uncle Zed. "All we need to know is a little of the world about us, a little of the race and its history, and a little of the other worlds out in space, all of which is open to anybody who will seek it. The rest is simply a little connected thought. Reason tells me that there can be no limits to time or space or intelligence. Time always has been, there can be no end to space, and intelligence cannot create itself. Now, with limitless time and space and intelligence to work with, what have we? The human mind, being limited, cannot grasp the limitless; therefore, we must make arbitrary points of beginning and ending. Now, let us project our thought as far back into duration as we can—count the periods by any thinkable measurements, years, centuries, ages, aeons, anything you please that will help. Have we arrived at a point when there is no world, no life, no intelligence? Certainly not.

Somewhere in space, all that we see here and now will be seen to exist. Go back from this point to a previous period, and then count back as far as you wish; there is yet time and space and intelligence.



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“There is an eternal law of progress which holds good always and everywhere. It has been operating all through the ages of the past. Now, let us take one of these Intelligences away back in the far distance past and place him in the path of progress so that the eternal law of growth and advancement will operate on him. I care not whether you apply the result to Intelligences as individuals or as the race. Given time enough, this endless and eternal advancement must result in a state of perfection that those who attain to it may with truth and propriety be called Gods. Therefore, there must be a God, yes, many Gods living and reigning throughout the limitless regions of glorified space.

“Here is corroborative evidence: I read in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88: ‘All kingdoms have a law given; and there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.’

“There is a hymn in our hymn book in which W.W. Phelps expresses this idea beautifully. Let me read it:

’If you could hie to Kolob,
In the twinkling of an eye,
And then continue onward,
With that same speed to fly.

’Do you think that you could ever,
Through all eternity,
Find out the generation
Where Gods began to be?

’Or see the grand beginning
Where space did not extend?
Or view the last creation,
Where Gods and matter end?

’Methinks the Spirit whispers:
No man has found “pure space,”
Nor seen the outside curtains,
Where nothing has a place.

’The works of God continue,
And worlds and lives abound;
Improvement and progression
Have one eternal round.



'There is no end to matter,
There is no end to space,
There is no end to spirit,
There is no end to race.

'There is no end to virtue,
There is no end to might,
There is no end to wisdom,
There is no end to light.

'There is no end to union,
There is no end to youth,
There is no end to priesthood,
There is no end to truth.

'There is no end to glory,
There is no end to love,
There is no end to being,
Grim death reigns not above.'

"The Latter-day Saints have been adversely criticized for holding out such astounding hopes for the future of the human race; but let us reason a little more, beginning nearer home. What has the race accomplished, even within the short span of our own recollection? Man is fast conquering the forces of nature about him, and making these forces to serve him. Now, we must remember that duration extends ahead of us in the same limitless way in which it reaches back. Give, then, the race today all the time necessary, what cannot it accomplish? Apply it again either to an individual or to the race, in time, some would attain to what we conceive of as perfection, and the term by which such beings are known to us is God. I can see no other logical conclusion."



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The chairs were now pushed back, and Mrs. Trent threw a cloth over the table just as it stood, explaining that she would not take the time from her company to devote to the dishes. She invited them into Dorian's little room, much to that young man's uneasiness.

His mother had tidied the room, so it was presentable. His picture, "Sunset in Marshland" had been lowered a little on the wall, and directly over it hung a photograph of Mildred Brown. To Dorian's questioning look, Mrs. Trent explained, that Mrs. Brown had sent it just the other day. Dorian looked closely at the beautiful picture, and a strange feeling came over him. Had Mildred gone on in this eternal course of progress of which Uncle Zed had been speaking? Was she still away ahead of him? Would he ever reach her?

On his study table were a number of books, birthday presents. One was from Uncle Zed's precious store, and one—What? He picked it up—"David Copperfield." He opened the beautiful volume and read on the fly leaf: "From Carlia, to make up a little for your loss." He remembered now that Carlia, some time before, had asked him what books were in the package which had gone down the canal at the time when he had pulled her out of the water. Carlia had not forgotten; and she was not here; the supper was over, and it was getting late. Why had she not come?

The party broke up early, as it was a busy season with them all. Dorian walked home with Uncle Zed, then he had a mind to run over to Carlia's. He could not forget about her absence nor about the present she had sent. He had never read the story, and he would like to read it to Carlia. She had very little time, he realized, which was all the more reason for his making time to read it to her.

As every country boy will, at every opportunity, so Dorian cut crosslots to his objective. He now leaped the fence, and struck off through the meadow up into the corn field. Mr. Duke had a big, fine field that season, the growing corn already reaching to his shoulder. The night was dark, save for the twinkling stars in the clear sky; it was still, save for the soft rustling of the corn in the breeze.

Dorian caught sight of a light as of a lantern up by the ditch from which the water for irrigating was turned into the rows of corn and potatoes. He stopped and listened. A tool grated in the gravelly soil. Mr. Duke was no doubt using his night turn at the water on his corn instead of turning it on the hay-land as was the custom. He would inquire of him about Carlia.

As he approached the light, the scraping ceased, and he saw a dark figure dart into the shelter of the tall corn. When he reached the lantern, he found a hoe lying in the furrow where the water should have been running. No man irrigates with a hoe; that's a woman's tool. Ah, the secret was out! Carlia was 'tending' the water. That's why she was not at the party.



He stood looking down into the shadows of the corn rows, but for the moment he could see or hear nothing. He had frightened her, and yet Carlia was not usually afraid. He began to whistle softly and to walk down into the corn. Then he called, not loudly, "Carlia".

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There was no response. He quickened his steps. The figure ran to another shelter. He could see her now, and he called again, louder than before. She stopped, and then darted through the corn into the more open potatoe patch. Dorian followed.

“Hello, Carlia,” he said, “what are you doing?”

The girl stood before him, bareheaded, with rough dress and heavy boots. She was panting as if with fright. When she caught a full sight of Dorian she gave a little cry, and when he came within reach, she grasped him by the arm.

“Oh, is it you, Dorian?”

“Sure. Who else did you think it was? Why, you’re all of a tremble. What are you afraid of?”

“I—I thought it was—was someone else. Oh, Dorian, I’m so glad it is you!”

She stood close to him as if wishing to claim his protection. He instinctively placed his arm about her shoulders. “Why, you silly girl, the dark won’t hurt you.”

“I’m not afraid of the dark. I’m afraid of—Oh, Dorian, don’t let him hurt me!” There was a sob in her voice.

“What are you talking about? I believe you’re not well. Are your feet wet? Have you a fever?” He put his hand on her forehead, brushing back the dark, trowsled hair. He took her plump, work-roughened hand in his bigger and equally rough one. “And this is why you were not to my party,” he said.

“Yes; I hated to miss it, but father’s rheumatism was so bad that he could not come out. So it was up to me. We haven’t any too much water this summer. I’d better turn the water down another row; it’s flooding the corn.”

They went to the lantern on the ditch bank. Dorian picked up the hoe and made the proper adjustment of the water flow. “How long will it take for the water to reach the bottom of the row?” he asked.

“About fifteen minutes.”

“And how many rows remain?”

Carlia counted. “Twelve,” she said.

“All right. This is a small stream and will only allow for three rows at a time. Three into twelve is four, and four times fifteen is sixty. It is now half past ten. We’ll get through by twelve o’clock easy.”



“You’d better go home. I’m all right now. I’m not afraid.”

“I said we will get home. Sit down here on the bank. Are you cold?” He took off his coat and placed it about her shoulders. She made no objections, though in truth she was not cold.

“Tell me about the party,” she said.

He told her who were there, and how they had missed her.

“And did Uncle Zed preach?”

“Preach? O, yes, he talked mighty fine. I wish I could tell you what he said.”

“What was it about?”

“About God,” he answered reverently.

“Try to tell me, Dorian. I need to know. I’m such a dunce.”

Dorian repeated in his way Uncle Zed’s argument, and he succeeded fairly well in his presentation of the subject. The still night under the shining stars added an impressive setting to the telling, and the girl close by his side drank in hungrily every word. When the water reached the end of the rows, it was turned into others, until all were irrigated. When that was accomplished, Dorian’s watch showed half past eleven. He picked up the lantern and the hoe, and they walked back to the house.



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"The party was quite complete, after all," he said at the door. "I've enjoyed this little after-affair as much as I did the party."

"I'm glad," she whispered.

"And it was wonderfully good of you to give me that present."

"I'm glad," she repeated.

"Do you know what I was thinking about when I opened the book and saw it was from you?"

"No; what?"

"Why, I thought, we'll read this book together, you and I."

"Wouldn't that be fine!"

"We can't do that now, of course; but after a while when we get more time. I'll not read it until then.... Well, you're tired. Go to bed. Good night, Carlia."

"Goodnight, Dorian, and thank you for helping me."

They stood close together, she on the step above him. The lamp, placed on the kitchen table for her use, threw its light against the glass door which formed a background for the girl's roughened hair, soiled and sweat-stained face, and red, smiling lips.

"Goodnight," he said again; and then he leaned forward and kissed her.

CHAPTER TEN.

That goodnight's kiss should have brought Dorian back to Carlia sooner than it did; but it was nearly a month before he saw her again. The fact that it was the busiest time of the year was surely no adequate excuse for this neglect. Harvest was on again, and the dry-farm called for much of his attention. Dorian prospered, and he had no time to devote to the girls, so he thought, and so he said, when occasion demanded expression.

One evening while driving through the city and seeing the lights of the moving picture theatre, he was reminded of his promise to Carlia. His conscience pricked him just a little, so the very next evening he drove up to Farmer Duke's. Seeing no one choring about, he went into the house and inquired after Carlia. Mrs. Duke told him that Carlia had gone to the city that afternoon. She was expected back any minute, but one could



never tell, lately, when she would get home. Since this Mr. Lamont had taken her to the city a number of times, she had been late in getting home.

“Mr. Lamont?” he inquired.

“Yes; haven’t you met him? Don’t you know him?”

“No; who is he?”

“Dorian, I don’t know. Father seems to think he’s all right, but I don’t like him. Oh, Dorian, why don’t you come around oftener?”

Mrs. Duke sank into a chair and wiped away the tears from her eyes with the corner of her apron. Dorian experienced a strange sinking of the heart. Again he asked who this Mr. Lamont was.

“He’s a salesman of some kind, so he says. He drives about in one of those automobiles. Surely, you have seen him—a fine-looking fellow with nice manners and all that, but—”

“And does Carlia go out with him?”

“He has taken her out riding a number of times. He meets her in the city sometimes. I don’t know what to make of it, Dorian. I’m afraid.”

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Dorian seemed unable to say anything which would calm the mother's fears. That Carlia should be keeping company with someone other than himself, had never occurred to him. And yet, why not? she was old enough to accept attention from young men. He had certainly neglected her, as the mother had implied. The girl had such few opportunities for going out, why should she not accept such as came to her. But this stranger, this outsider! Dorian soon took his departure.

He went home, unhitched, and put up his horse; but instead of going into the house, he walked down to the post office. He found nothing in his box. He felt better in the open, so he continued to walk. He had told his mother he was going to the city, so he might as well walk that way. Soon the lights gleamed through the coming darkness. He went on with his confused thoughts, on into the city and to the moving picture show. He bought a ticket and an attendant led him stumbling in the dark room to a seat.

It was the first time he had been there. He and Carlia were going together. It was quite wonderful to the young man to see the actors moving about lifelike on the white screen. The story contained a number of love-making scenes, which, had they been enacted in real life, in public as this was, they would certainly have been stopped by the police. Then there was a comic picture wherein a young fellow was playing pranks on an old man. The presentation could hardly be said to teach respect for old age, but the audience laughed uproariously at it.

When the picture closed and the lights went on, Dorian turned about to leave, and there stood Carlia. A young man was assisting her into her light wraps. She saw him, so there was no escape, and they spoke to each other. Carlia introduced her escort, Mr. Lamont.

"Glad to know you," said Mr. Lamont, in a hearty way. "I've known of you through Miss Duke. Going home now?"

"Yes," said Dorian.

"Drive?"

"No; I'm walking."

"Then you'll ride with us. Plenty of room. Glad to have you."

"Thank you, I—"

"Yes, come," urged Carlia.

Dorian hesitated. He tried to carry an independent manner, but Mr. Lamont linked his arm sociably with Dorian's as he said:



“Of course you’ll ride home with us; but first we’ll have a little ice cream.”

“No thanks,” Dorian managed to say. What more did this fellow want of him?

However, as Dorian could give no good reason why he should not ride home with them, he found no way of refusing to accompany them to a nearby ice-cream parlor. Mr. Lamont gave the order, and was very attentive to Carlia and Dorian. It was he who kept the flow of conversation going. The other two, plainly, were not adept at this.

“What did you think of the show, Mr. Trent?”

“The moving pictures are wonderful, but I did not like the story very much.”



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"It was rotten," exclaimed the other in seeming disgust. I did not know what was on, or I should not have gone. Last week they had a fine picture, a regular classic. Did you see it?

"No; in fact, this is my first visit."

"Oh, indeed. This is Miss Duke's second visit only."

Under the bright lights Carlia showed rouge on her cheeks, something Dorian had never seen on her before. Her lips seemed redder than ever, and her eyes shone with a bright luster. Mr. Lamont led them to his automobile, and then Dorian remembered the night when this same young man with the same automobile had stopped near Carlia's home. Carlia seated herself with the driver, while Dorian took the back seat. They were soon speeding along the road which led to Greenstreet. The cool night air fanned Dorian's hot face. Conversation ceased. Even Carlia and the driver were silent. The moon peeped over the eastern hills. The country-side was silent. Dorian thought of the strange events of the evening. This Mr. Lamont had not only captured Carlia but Dorian also. "If I were out with a girl," reasoned Dorian, "I certainly wouldn't want a third person along if I could help it." Why should this man be so eager to have his company? Dorian did not understand, not then.

In a short time they drove up to Carlia's gate, and she and Dorian alighted. The driver did not get out. The machine purred as if impatient to be off again and the lamps threw their streams of light along the road.

"Well, I shall have to be getting back," said Mr. Lamont. "Goodnight, Miss Duke. Thanks for your company. Goodnight, Mr. Trent; sure glad to have met you."

The machine glided into the well-worn road and was off. The two stood looking at it for a moment. Then Carlia moved toward the house.

"Come in" she said.

He mechanically followed. He might as well act the fool to the end of the chapter, he thought. It was eleven by the parlor clock, but the mother seemed greatly relieved when she saw Dorian with her daughter. Carlia threw off her wraps. She appeared ill at ease. Her gaiety was forced. She seemed to be acting a part, but she was doing it poorly. Dorian was not only ill at ease himself, but he was bewildered. He seated himself on the sofa. Carlia took a chair on the other side of the room and gazed out of the window into the night.

"Carlia, why did you—why do you," he stammered.

"Why shouldn't I?" she replied, somewhat defiantly as if she understood his unfinished question.



“You know you should not. It’s wrong. Who is he anyway?”

“He at least thinks of me and wants to show me a good time, and that’s more than anybody else does.”

“Carlia!”

“Well, that’s the truth.” She arose, walked to the table in the middle of the room and stood challengingly before him. “Who are you to find fault? What have you done to—”



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"I'll admit I've done very little; but you, yourself."

"Never mind me. What do you care for me? What does anybody care?"

"Your mother, at least."

"Yes, mother; poor, dear mother.... Oh, my God, I can't stand it, I can't stand it!" With a sob she broke and sank down by the table, hiding her face in her arms. Dorian arose to go to her. The door opened, and the mother appeared.

"What is it, Carlia," she asked in alarm.

The girl raised her head, swiftly dashed the tears from her eyes, then with a sad effort to smile, said:

"Nothing, mother, nothing at all. I'm going to bed. Where's father?"

"He was called out to Uncle Zed's who is sick. Dorian's mother is there with him too, I understand."

"Then I'd better go for her," said the young man. "I'll say goodnight. Poor Uncle Zed; he hasn't been well lately. Goodnight Sister Duke, goodnight Carlia."

Carlia stood in the doorway leading to the stairs. "Goodnight, Dorian," she said. "Forgive me for being so rude."

He stepped toward her, but she motioned him back, and then ran up the carpetless stairs to her room. Dorian went out in the night. With a heavy heart he hurried down the road in the direction of Uncle Zed's home.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

Uncle Zed's illness did not prove fatal, though it was serious enough. In a few days he was up and about again, slowly, quietly providing for his simple needs. However, it was plainly evident that he had nearly come to the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

After the most pressing fall work had been disposed of, Dorian spent as much of his spare time as possible with the old man, who seemed to like the company of the younger man better than anyone else in the village; and Dorian, for his part, took delight in visiting with him, in helping him with the heaviest of his not heavy chores. Especially, was it pleasant during the lengthening evening with a small fire and the lamp newly trimmed. Uncle Zed reclined in his easy chair, while Dorian sat by the table with books and papers. Their conversations ranged from flower gardens to dry-farms, and from agnosticism to the highest degrees of the celestial glory. And how they both reveled in



books and their contents on the occasions when they were alone and unhampered by the unsympathetic minds of others.

“As you see, Dorian,” said Uncle Zed on one such Sunday evening, “my collection of books is not large, but they are such that I can read and read again.”

“Where is your ‘Drummond’s Natural Law’?” asked Dorian.

Uncle Zed looked about. “I was reading it this morning. There it is on the window.” Dorian fetched him the volume.

“When I read Drummond’s work,” continued the old man, “I feel keener than ever my lack of scientific knowledge. I have always had a desire to delve into nature’s laws through the doors of botany, zoology, mineralogy, chemistry, and all the other sciences. I have obtained a smattering only through my reading. I realize that the great ocean of truth is yet before me who am now an old man and can never hope in this life to explore much further.”



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“But how is it, Uncle Zed,” enquired Dorian, “that so many scientists have such little faith?”

“‘The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life,’ The Spirit has taught us Dorian, that this world is God’s world, and that the laws which govern here and now are the same eternal laws which have always been in operation; that we have come to this world of element to get in touch with earthly forms of matter, and become acquainted with the laws which govern them. Drummond has attempted to prove that the laws which prevail in the temporal world about us also hold good in the spiritual world, and he has made out a very good case, I think; but neither Drummond nor anybody else not endowed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, can reach the simple ultimate truth. That’s why I have been looking for some young man in the Church who could and would make it his life’s mission and work to learn the truths of science and harmonize them where necessary with the revealed truth—in fact, to complete what Henry Drummond has so well begun.” The old man paused, then looking steadily at Dorian, said: “That’s what I expect you to do.”

“I? Oh, do you think I could?”

“Yes; it would not be easy, but with your aptness and your trend of mind, and your ability to study long and hard, you could, with the assistance of the Spirit of God, accomplish wonders by the time you are as old as I.”

The young man mildly protested, although the vision of what might be thrilled his being.

“Don’t forget what I am telling you, Dorian. Think and pray and dream about it for a time, and the Lord will open the way. Now then, we are to discuss some of Drummond’s problems, were we not?”

“Yes; I shall be glad to. Are you comfortable? Shall I move your pillow?”

“I’m resting very easily, thank you. Just hand me the book. Drummond’s chapter on Biogenesis interests me very much. I cannot talk very scientifically, Dorian, on these things, but I hope to talk intelligently and from the large viewpoint of the gospel. Here is a paragraph from my book which I have marked and called ‘The Wall Between.’ I’m sure you will remember it. Let us read it again:

“Let us first place,” he read from the book, ‘vividly in our imagination the picture of the two great Kingdoms of Nature, the inorganic and the organic, as these now stand in the light of the Law of Biogenesis. What essentially is involved in saying that there is no Spontaneous Generation of Life? It is meant that the passage from the mineral world is hermetically sealed on the mineral side. This inorganic world is staked off from the living world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of



energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted



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with the properties of vitality, without this preliminary contact with life they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere forever. It is a very mysterious Law which guards in this way the portals of the living world. And if there is one thing in Nature more worth pondering for its strangeness it is the spectacle of this vast helpless world of the dead cut off from the living by the law of Biogenesis and denied forever the possibility of resurrection within itself. So very strange a thing, indeed, is this broad line in Nature, that Science has long sought to obliterate it. Biogenesis stands in the way of some forms of Evolution with such stern persistency that the assaults upon this law for number and thoroughness have been unparalleled. But, as we have seen, it has stood the test. Nature, to the modern eye, stands broken in two. The physical laws may explain the inorganic world; the biological laws may account for inorganic. But of the point where they meet, of that living borderland between the dead and the living, Science is silent. It is as if God had placed everything in earth and in heaven in the hands of Nature, but reserved a point at the genesis of Life for His direct appearing.'

“Drummond goes on to prove by analogy that the same law which makes such a separation between the higher and the lower in the natural world holds good in the spiritual realm, and he quotes such passages as this to substantiate his argument: 'Except a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'. Man must be born from above. 'The passage from the natural world to the spiritual world is hermetically sealed on the natural side.' that is, man cannot by any means make his own unaided way from the lower world to the higher. 'No mental energy, no evolution, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilization' can alone lift life from the lower to the higher. Further, the lower can know very little about the higher, for 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'. All of which means, I take it, that the higher must reach down to the lower and lift it up. Advancement in any line of progress is made possible by some directing power either seen or unseen. A man cannot simply grow better and better until in his own right he enters the kingdom of God'.”

“But, Uncle Zed, are we not taught that we must work out our own salvation?” asked Dorian. “That is also scriptural.”

“Yes; but wait; I shall come to that later. Let us go on with our reasoning and see how this law which Drummond points out—how it fits into the larger scheme of things as revealed to us Latter-day Saints. You remember some time ago in our talk on the law of eternal progress we established the truth that there always have been intelligences evolving from lower to higher life, which in the eternity of the past would inevitably lead to the perfection of



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Gods. This is plainly taught in Joseph Smith's statement that God was once a man like us, perhaps on an earth like this, working out His glorious destiny. He, then, has gone on before into higher worlds, gaining wisdom, power, and glory. Now, there is another law of the universe that no advancing man can live to himself alone. No man can grow by taking selfish thought to the process. He grows by the exercise of his faculties and powers for the benefit of others. Dorian, hand me the 'Pearl of Great price'."

Dorian found the book and handed it to the old man, who, finding the passage he wanted, continued: "Listen to this remarkable statement by the Lord: 'For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.' Just think what that means."

"What does it mean?"

"It means, my boy, that the way of progress is the way of unselfish labor. 'This is my work,' says the Lord, to labor for those who are yet on the lower rungs of the ladder, to institute laws whereby those below may climb up higher; (note I used the word climb, not float); to use His greater experience, knowledge, and power for others; to pass down to those in lower or primary stages that which they cannot get by self-effort alone. Let me say this in all reverence, they who attain to All Things do not greedily and selfishly cling to it, but pass it on to others. 'As one lamp lights another nor grows less, So kindness enkindleth kindness.' Yes; through great stress and sacrifice, they may do this, as witnessed in what our Father has done by endowing His Beloved Son with eternal life, and then giving Him to us. That Son was the 'Prince of Life.' He was the Resurrection and the Life.' He brought Life from the higher kingdom to a lower, its natural course through the ages. That is the only way through which it can come. And herein, to my humble way of thinking is the great error into which the modern evolutionist has fallen. He reasons that higher forms evolve from the initial and unaided movements of the lower. That is as impossible as that a man can lift himself to the skies by his boot-straps."

Dorian smiled at the illustration.

"Now, my boy, I want to make an application of these divine truths to us here and now. I'm not going to live here much longer."

"Uncle Zed!"

"Now, wait; it's a good thing that you nor anybody else can prevent me from passing on. I've wanted to live long enough to get rid of the fear of death. I have reached that point now, and so I am ready at any time, thank the Lord."

Uncle Zed was beautiful to look upon in the clear whiteness of his person and the peaceful condition of his spirit. The young listener was deeply impressed by what he was hearing. (He never forgot that particular Sunday afternoon).



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“You asked me about working out our own salvation,” continued Uncle Zed. “Let me answer you on that. There are three principles in the law of progress, all of them important: First, there must be an exercise of the will by the candidate for progression. He must be willing to advance and have a desire to act for himself. That is the principle of free agency. Second, he must be willing to receive help from a higher source; that is, he must place himself in a condition to receive life and light from the source of life and light. Third, he must be unselfish, willing, eager to share all good with others. The lack of any of these will prove a serious hindrance. We see this everywhere in the world.

“Coming back now to the application I mentioned. If it is God’s work and glory to labor for those below Him, why should not we, His sons and daughters, follow His example as far as possible in our sphere of action? If we are ever to become like Him we must follow in His steps and do the things which He has done. Our work, also must be to help along the road to salvation those who are lower down, those who are more ignorant and are weaker than we.”

“Which, Uncle Zed, you have been doing all your life.”

“Just trying a little, just a little.”

“And this will be as it already has been, your glory. I see that plainly.”

“Why shouldn’t it be everybody’s work and glory! What a beautiful world this would be if this were the case!”

“Yes, truly.”

“And see, Dorian, how this principle ties together the race from the beginning to the end, comparatively speaking. Yes, in this way will men and families and races and worlds be linked together in chains of love, which cannot be broken, worlds without end.”

The old man’s voice became sweet and low. Then there was silence for a few minutes. The clock struck ten.

“I must be going,” said Dorian. “I am keeping you out of bed.”

“You’ll come again?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Come soon, my boy. I have so much to tell you. I can talk so freely to you, something I cannot do to all who come here, bless their hearts. But you, my boy—”

He reached out his hand, and Dorian took it lovingly. There were tears in the old man’s eyes.

“I’ll not forget you,” said Dorian, “I’ll come soon and often.”

“Then, good night.”

“Good night,” the other replied from the door as he stepped out into the night. The cool breeze swept over meadow and field. The world was open and big, and the young man’s heart expanded to it. What a comfort to feel that the Power which rules the world and all the affairs of men is unfailing in its operations! What a joy to realize that he had a loving Father to whom he could go for aid! And then also, what a tremendous responsibility was on him because of the knowledge he already had and because of his God-given agency to act for himself. Surely, he would need light from on High to help him to choose the right!



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Surely, he would.

CHAPTER TWELVE.

At the coming of winter, Uncle Zed was bedfast. He was failing rapidly. Neighbors helped him. Dorian remained with him as much as he could. The bond which had existed between these two grew stronger as the time of separation became nearer. The dying man was clear-minded, and he suffered very little pain. He seemed completely happy if he could have Dorian sitting by him and they could talk together. And these were wonderful days to the young man, days never to be forgotten.

Outside, the air was cold with gusts of wind and lowering clouds. Inside, the room was cosy and warm. A few of the old man's hardiest flowers were still in pots on the table where the failing eyes could see them. That evening Mrs. Trent had tidied up the room and had left Dorian to spend the night with the sick man. The tea-kettle hummed softly on the stove. The shaded lamp was turned down low.

"Dorian."

"Yes, Uncle Zed."

"Turn up the lamp a little. It's too dark in here."

"Doesn't the light hurt your eyes!"

"No; besides I want you to get me some papers out of that drawer in my desk."

Dorian fetched a large bundle of clippings and papers and asked if they were what he wanted.

"Not all of them just now; but take from the pile the few on top. I want you to read them to me. They are a few selections which I have culled and which have a bearing on the things we have lately been talking about."

The first note which Dorian read was as follows. "'The keys of the holy priesthood unlock the door of knowledge to let you look into the palace of truth'."

"That's by Brigham Young. You did not know that he was a poet as well as a prophet," commented the old man. "The next one is from him also."

"'There never was a time when there were not Gods and worlds, and when men were not passing through the same ordeals that we are now passing through. That course has been from all eternity and it is and will be to all eternity'."



“Now you know, Dorian, where I get my inspiration from. Read the next, also from President Young.”

“The idea that the religion of Christ is one thing, and science is another, is a mistaken idea, for there is no true science without religion. The fountain of knowledge dwells with God, and He dispenses it to His children as He pleases, and as they are prepared to receive it; consequently, it swallows up and circumscribes all’.”

“Take these, Dorian; have them with you as inspirational mottoes for your life’s work. Go on, there are a few more.”

Dorian read again: “The region of true religion and the region of a completer science are one.’—Oliver Lodge.”

“You see one of the foremost scientists of the day agrees with Brigham Young,” said Uncle Zed. “I think the next one corroborates some of our doctrine also.”



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Dorian read: “We do not indeed remember our past, we are not aware of our future, but in common with everything else we must have had a past and must be going to have a future.’—Oliver Lodge.”

Again he read: “We must dare to extend the thought of growth and progress and development even up to the height of all that we can realize of the Supreme Being—In some part of the universe perhaps already the ideal conception has been attained; and the region of such attainment—the full blaze of self-conscious Deity—is too bright for mortal eyes, is utterly beyond our highest thoughts.’—Oliver Lodge.”

Uncle Zed held out his hand and smiled. “There,” he said in a whisper, “is a hesitating suggestion of the truth which we boldly proclaim.”

“Now you are tired, Uncle Zed,” said Dorian. “I had best not read more.”

“Just one—the next one.”

Dorian complied:

“There are more lives yet, there are more worlds waiting,
For the way climbs up to the eldest sun,
Where the white ones go to their mystic mating,
And the holy will is done.
I’ll find you there where our love life heightens—
Where the door of the wonder again unbars,
Where the old love lures and the old fire whitens,
In the stars behind the stars’.”

Uncle Zed lay peacefully on his pillow, a wistful look on his face. The room became still again, and the clock ticked away the time. Dorian folded up the papers which he had been told to keep and put them in his pocket. The rest of the package he returned to the drawer. He lowered the lamp again. Then he sat down and watched. It seemed it would not be long for the end.

“Dorian.”

“Yes, Uncle Zed, can I do anything for you?”

“No”—barely above a whisper—“nothing else matters—you’re a good boy—God bless you.”

The dying man lay very still. As Dorian looked at the face of his friend it seemed that the mortal flesh had become waxen white so that the immortal spirit shone unhindered through it. The young man’s heart was deeply sorrowful, but it was a sanctified sorrow. Twice before had death come near to him. He had hardly realized that of his father’s



and he was not present when Mildred had passed away; but here he was again with death, and alone. It seemed strange that he was not terrified, but he was not—everything seemed so calm, peaceful, and even beautiful in its serene solemnity.

Dorian arose, went softly to the window and looked out. The wind had quieted, and the snow was falling slowly, steadily in big white flakes, When Dorian again went back to the bedside and looked on the stilled face of his friend, he gave a little start. He looked again closely, listening, and feeling of the cold hands. Uncle Zed was dead.

The Greenstreet meeting house was filled to overflowing at the funeral. Uncle Zed had gone about all his days in the village doing good. All could tell of some kind deed he had done, with the admonition that it should not be talked about. He always seemed humiliated when anyone spoke of these things in his hearing; but now, surely, there could be no objection to letting his good deeds shine before men.

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Uncle Zed had left with the Bishop a written statement, not in the form of a will, wherein he told what disposition was to be made of his simple belongings. The house, with its few well tilled acres, was to go to the ward for the use of any worthy poor whom the Bishop might designate. Everything in the house should be at the disposal of Dorian Trent. The books, especially, should belong to him “to have and to hold and to study.” Such books which Dorian did not wish to keep were to be given to the ward Mutual Improvement Library. This information the Bishop publicly imparted on the day of the funeral.

“These are the times,” said the Bishop, “when the truth comes forcibly to us all that nothing in this world matters much or counts for much in the end but good deeds, kind words, and unselfish service to others. All else is now dross.... The mantle of Brother Zed seems to have fallen on Dorian Trent. May he wear it faithfully and well.”

A few days after the funeral Dorian and his mother went to Uncle Zed’s vacant home. Mrs. Trent examined the furnishings, while Dorian looked over the books.

“Is there anything here you want, mother? he asked.

“No; I think not; better leave everything, which isn’t much, for those who are to live here. What about the books?”

“I’m going to take most of them home, for I am sure Uncle Zed would not want them to fall into unappreciating hands; but there’s no hurry about that. We’ll just leave everything as it is for a few days.”

The next evening Dorian returned to look over again his newly-acquired treasures. The ground was covered with snow and the night was cold. He thought he might as well spend the evening, and be comfortable, so he made a fire in the stove.

On the small home-made desk which stood in the best-lighted corner, near to the student’s hand were his well-worn Bible, his Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. He opened the drawers and found them filled with papers and clippings, covering, as Dorian learned, a long period of search and collecting. He opened again the package which he had out the evening of Uncle Zed’s death, and looked over some of the papers. These, evidently, had been selected for Dorian’s special benefit, and so he settled himself comfortably to read them. The very first paper was in the old man’s own hand, and was a dissertation on “Faith.” and read thus: “Some people say that they can believe only what they can perceive with the senses. Let us see: The sun rises, we say. Does it? The earth is still. Is it? We hear music, we see beauty. Does the ear hear or the eye see? We burn our fingers. Is the pain in our fingers? I cut the nerves leading from the brain to these various organs, and then I neither hear nor see nor feel.”



“How can God keep in touch with us?” was answered thus: “A ray of light coming through space from a star millions of miles away will act on a photographic plate, will eat into its sensitive surface and imprint the image of the star. This we know, and yet we doubt if God can keep in touch with us and answer our prayers.”



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Many people wondered why a man like Uncle Zed was content to live in the country. The answer seemed to be found in a number of slips:

“How peaceful comes the Sabbath, doubly blessed,
In giving hope to faith, to labor rest.
Most peaceful here:—no city’s noise obtains,
And God seems revered more where silence reigns.”

Once Dorian had been called a “Clod hopper.” As he read the following, he wondered whether or not Uncle Zed had not also been so designated, and had written this in reply:

“Mother Earth, why should not I love you? Why should not I get close to you? Why should I plan to live always in the clouds above you, gazing at other far-distant worlds, and neglecting you? Why did I, with others, shout with joy when I learned that I was coming here from the world of spirits? I answer, because I knew that ‘spirit and element inseparately connected receiveth a fullness of joy.’ I was then to get in touch with ‘element’ as I had been with ‘spirit.’ This world which I see with my natural eyes is the ‘natural’ part of Mother Earth, even as the flesh and bones and blood of my body is the element of myself, to be inseparately connected with my spirit and to the end that I might receive a fullness of joy. The earth and all things on it known by the term nature is what I came here to know. Nature, wild or tamed, is my schoolroom—the earth with its hills and valleys and plains, with its clouds and rain, with its rivers and lakes and oceans, with its trees and fruits and flowers, its life—about all these I must learn what I can at first hand. Especially, should I learn of the growing things which clothe the earth with beauty and furnish sustenance to life. Some day I hope the Lord will give me a small part of this earth, when it is glorified. Ah, then, what a garden shall I have!”

No one in Greenstreet had ever known Uncle Zed as a married man. His wife had died long ago, and he seldom spoke of her. Dorian had wondered whether he had ever been a young man, with a young man’s thoughts and feelings; but here was evidence which dispelled any doubt. On a slip of paper, somewhat yellow with age, were the following lines, written in Uncle Zed’s best hand:

“In the enchanted air of spring,
I hear all Nature’s voices sing,
‘I love you’.

By bursting buds, by sprouting grass,
I hear the bees hum as I pass,
‘I love you’.



The waking earth, the sunny sky
Are whispering the same as I,
 'I love you'.

The song of birds in sweetest notes
Comes from their bursting hearts and throats,
 'I love you'."

"Oh, Uncle Zed!" said Dorian, half aloud, "who would have thought it!"

Near the top of the pile of manuscript Dorian found an envelope with "To Dorian Trent," written on it. He opened it with keen interest and found that it was a somewhat newly written paper and dealt with a subject they had discussed in connection with the chapter on Death in Drummond's book. Uncle Zed had begun his epistle by addressing it, "Dear Dorian" and then continued as follows:



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“You remember that some time ago we talked on the subject of sin and death. Since then I have had some further thought on the subject which I will here jot down for you. You asked me, you remember, what sin is, and I tried to explain. Here is another definition: Man belongs to an order of beings whose goal is perfection. The way to that perfection is long and hard, narrow and straight. Any deviation from that path is sin. God, our Father, has reached the goal. He has told us how we may follow Him. He has pointed out the way by teaching us the law of progress which led Him to His exalted state. Sin lies in not heeding that law, but in following laws of our own making. The Lord says this in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88:

‘That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgement. Therefore, they must remain filthy still.’

“Now, keeping in mind that sin is the straying from the one straight, progressive path, let us consider this expression: ‘The wages of sin is death’. This leads us to the question: what is death? Do you remember what Drummond says? He first explains in a most interesting way what life is, using the scientist’s phrasing. A human being, for instance, is in direct contact with all about him—earth, air, sun, other human beings, *etc.* In biological language he is said to be ‘in correspondence with his environment,’ and by virtue of this correspondence is said to be alive. To live, a human being must continue to adjust himself to his environment. When he fails to do this, he dies. Thus we have also a definition of death. ‘Dying is that breakdown in an organization which throws it out of correspondence with some necessary part of the environment.’

“Of course, these reasonings and deductions pertain to what we term the physical death; but Drummond claims that the same law holds good in the spiritual world. Modern revelation seems to agree with him. We have an enlightening definition of death in the following quotation from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 29: ‘Wherefore I the Lord God caused that he (Adam) should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death, which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say Depart ye cursed’.

“It seems to me that there is a most interesting agreement here. Banishment from the place where God lives is death. By the operations of a natural law, a person who fails to correspond with a celestial environment dies to that environment and must go or be placed in some other, where he can function with that which is about him. God’s presence is exalted, holy, glorified. He who is not pure,

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holy, glorified cannot possibly live there, is dead to that higher world. A soul who cannot function in the celestial glory, may do so in the terrestrial glory; one who cannot function in the terrestrial, may in the telestial; and one who cannot 'abide the law' or function in the telestial must find a place of no glory. This is inevitable—it cannot be otherwise. Immutable law decrees it, and not simply the ruling of an all wise power. The soul who fails to attain to the celestial glory, fails to walk in the straight and narrow path which leads to it. Such a person wanders in the by-paths called sin, and no power in the universe can arbitrarily put him in an environment with which he cannot function. 'To be carnally minded is death', said Paul. 'The wages of sin is death', or in other words, he who persistently avoids the Celestial Highway will never arrive at the Celestial Gate. He who works evilly will obtain evil wages. Anyway, what would it profit a man with dim eyesight to be surrounded with ineffable glory? What would be the music of the spheres to one bereft of hearing? What gain would come to a man with a heart of stone to be in an environment of perfect and eternal love!"

Dorian finished the reading and laid the paper on the desk. For some time he sat very still, thinking of these beautiful words from his dear friend to him. Surely, Uncle Zed was very much alive in any environment which his beautiful life had placed him. Would that he, Dorian, could live so that he might always be alive to the good and be dead to sin.

The stillness of the night was about him. The lamplight grew dim, showing the oil to be gone, so he blew out the smoking wick. He opened the stove door, and by the light of the dying fire he gathered up some books to take home. He heard a noise as if someone were outside. He listened. The steps were muffled in the snow. They seemed to approach the house and then stop. There was silence for a few minutes, then plainly he heard sobbing close to the door.

What could it mean? who could it be? Doubtless, some poor soul to whom Uncle Zed had been a ministering angel, had been drawn to the vacant house, and could not now control her sorrow. Then the sobbing ceased, and Dorian realized he had best find out who was there and give what help he could. He opened the door, and a frightened scream rang out from the surprised Carlia Duke who stood in the faint light from the open doorway. She stood for a second, then as if terror stricken, she fled.

"Carlia," shouted Dorian. "Carlia!"

But the girl neither stopped nor looked back. Across the pathless, snow-covered fields she sped, and soon became only a dark-moving object on the white surface. When she had entirely disappeared, Dorian went back, gathered up his bundles, locked the door, and went wonderingly and meditatively home.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.



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It is no doubt a wise provision of nature that the cold of winter closes the activity in field and garden, thus allowing time for study by the home fire. Dorian Trent's library, having been greatly enlarged, now became to him a source of much pleasure and profit. Books which he never dreamed of possessing were now on his shelves. In some people's opinion, he was too well satisfied to remain in his cosy room and bury himself in his books; but his mother found no fault. She was always welcome to come and go; and in fact, much of the time he sat with her by the kitchen fire, reading aloud and discussing with her the contents of his book.

Dorian found, as Uncle Zed had, wonderful arguments for the truth of the gospel in Orson and Parley P. Pratt's works. In looking through the "Journal of Discourses," he found markings by many of the sermons, especially by those of Brigham Young. Dorian always read the passages thus indicated, for he liked to realize that he was following the former owner of the book even in his thinking. The early volumes of the "Millennial Star" contained some interesting reading. Very likely, the doctrinal articles of these first elders were no better than those of more recent writers, but their plain bluntness and their very age seemed to give them charm.

By his reading that winter Dorian obtained an enlarged view of his religion. It gave him vision to see and to comprehend better the whole and thus to more fully understand the details. Besides, he was laying a broad and firm foundation for his faith in God and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, a faith which would stand him well in need when he came to delve into a faithless and a Godless science.

Not that Dorian became a hermit. He took an active part in the Greenstreet ward organizations. He was secretary of the Mutual, always attended Sunday School, and usually went to the ward dances. As he became older he overcame some of his shyness with girls; and as prosperity came to him, he could dress better and have his mass of rusty-red hair more frequently trimmed by the city barber. More than one of the discerning Greenstreet girls laid their caps for the big, handsome young fellow.

And Dorian's thoughts, we must know, were not all the time occupied with the philosophy of Orson Pratt. He was a very natural young man, and there were some very charming girls in Greenstreet. When, arrayed in their Sunday best, they sat in the ward choir, he, not being a member of the choir, could look at them to his heart's content, first at one and then at another along the double row. Carlia Duke usually sat on the front row where he could see her clearly and compare her with the others—and she did not suffer by the comparison.



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Dorian now begin to realize that it was selfish, if not foolish, to think always of the dead Mildred to the exclusion of the very much alive Carlia. Mildred was safe in the world of spirits, where he would some day meet her again; but until that time, he had this life to live and those about him to think of. Carlia was a dear girl, beautiful, too, now in her maturing womanhood. None of the other girls touched his heart as Carlia. He had taken a number of them to dances, but he had always come back, in his thought, at least, to Carlia. But her actions lately had been much of a puzzle. Sometimes she seemed to welcome him eagerly when he called, at other times she tried to evade him. No doubt this Mr. Jack Lamont was the disturbing element. That winter he could be seen coming quite openly to the Duke home, and when the weather would permit, Carlia would be riding with him in his automobile. The neighbors talked, but the father could only shake his head and explain that Carlia was a willful girl.

Now when it seemed that Carlia was to be won by this very gallant stranger, Dorian began to realize what a loss she would be to him. He was sure he loved the girl, but what did that avail if she did not love him in return. He held to the opinion that such attractions should be mutual. He could see no sense in the old-time custom of the knight winning his lady love by force of arms or by the fleetness of horse's legs.

However, Dorian was not easy in his mind, and it came to the point when he suffered severe heartaches when he knew of Carlia's being with the stranger. The Christmas holidays that season were nearly spoiled for him. He had asked Carlia a number of times to go to the parties with him, but she had offered some excuse each time.

"Let her alone," someone had told him.

"No; do not let her alone," his mother had counseled; and he took his mother's advice.

Carlia had been absent from the Sunday meetings for a number of weeks, so when she appeared in her place in the choir on a Sunday late in January, Dorian noticed the unusual pallor of her face. He wondered if she had been ill. He resolved to make another effort, for in fact, his heart went out to her. At the close of the meeting he found his way to her side as she was walking home with her father and mother. Dorian never went through the formality of asking Carlia if he might accompany her home. He had always taken it for granted that he was welcome; and, at any rate, a man could always tell by the girl's actions whether or not he was wanted.

"I haven't seen you for a long time," began Dorian by way of greeting.

The girl did not reply.

"Been sick?" he asked.

"Yes—no, I'm all right."

The parents walked on ahead, leaving the two young people to follow. Evidently, Carlia was very much out of sorts, but the young man tried again.

“What’s the matter, Carlia?”



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“Nothing.”

“Well, I hope I’m not annoying you by my company.”

No answer. They walked on in silence, Carlia looking straight ahead, not so much at her parents, as at the distant snow-clad mountains. Dorian felt like turning about and going home, but he could not do that very well, so he went on to the gate, where he would have said goodnight had not Mrs. Duke urged him to come in. The father and mother went to bed early, leaving the two young people by the dining-room fire.

They managed to talk for some time on “wind and weather”. Despite the paleness of cheek, Carlia was looking her best. Dorian was jealous.

“Carlia,” he said, “why do you keep company with this Mr. Lamont?”

She was standing near the book-shelf with its meagre collection. She turned abruptly at his question.

“Why shouldn’t I go with him?” she asked.

“You know why you shouldn’t.”

“I don’t. Oh, I know the reasons usually given, but—what am I to do. He’s so nice, and a perfect gentleman. What harm is there?”

“Why do you say that to me, Carlia?”

“Why not to you?” She came and sat opposite him by the table. He was silent, and she repeated her question, slowly, carefully, and with emphasis. “Why not to you? Why should you care?”

“But I do care.”

“I don’t believe it. You have never shown that you do.”

“I am showing it now.”

“Tomorrow you will forget it—forget me for a month.”

“Carlia!”

“You’ve done it before—many times—you’ll do it again.”

The girl’s eyes flashed. She seemed keyed up to carry through something she had planned to do, something hard. She arose and stood by the table, facing him.



"I sometimes have thought that you cared for me—but I'm through with that now. Nobody really cares for me. I'm only a rough farm hand. I know how to milk and scrub and churn and clean the stable—an' that's what I do day in and day out. There's no change, no rest for me, save when he takes me away from it for a little while. He understands, he's the only one who does."

"But, Carlia!"

"You," she continued in the same hard voice, "you're altogether too good and too wise for such as I. You're so high up that I can't touch you. You live in the clouds, I among the clods. What have we two in common?"

"Much, Carlia—I—"

He arose and came to her, but she evaded him.

"Keep away, Dorian; don't touch me. You had better go home now."

"You're not yourself, Carlia. What is the matter? You have never acted like this before."

"It's not because I haven't felt like it, but it's because I haven't had the courage; but now it's come out, and I can't stop it. It's been pent up in me like a flood—now it's out. I hate this old farm—I hate everything and everybody—I—hate you!"

Dorian arose quickly as if he had been lifted to his feet. What was she saying? She was wild, crazy wild.



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“What have I done that you should hate me?” he asked as quietly as his trembling voice would allow.

“Done? nothing. It’s what you haven’t done. What have you done to repay—my—Oh, God, I can’t stand it—I can’t stand it!”

She walked to the wall and turned her face to it. She did not cry. The room was silently tense for a few moments.

“I guess I’d better go,” said Dorian.

She did not reply. He picked up his hat, lingered, then went to the door. She hated him. Then let him get out from her presence. She hated him. He had not thought that possible. Well, he would go. He would never annoy any girl who hated him, not if he knew it. How his heart ached, how his very soul seemed crushed! yet he could not appeal to her. She stood with her face to the wall, still as a statue, and as cold.

“Good night,” he said at the door.

She said nothing, nor moved. He could see her body quiver, but he could not see her face. He perceived nothing clearly. The familiar room, poorly furnished, seemed strange to him. The big, ugly enlarged photographs on the wall blurred to his vision. Carlia, with head bowed now, appeared to stand in the midst of utter confusion. Dorian groped his way to the door, and stepped out into the wintry night. When he had reached the gate, Carlia rushed to the door.

“Dorian!” she cried in a heart-breaking voice, “O, Dorian, come back—come back!”

But Dorian opened the gate, closed it, then walked on down the road into the darkness, nor did he once look back.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

Carlia’s ringing cry persisted with Dorian all the way home, but he hardened his heart and went steadily on. His mother had gone to bed, and he sat for a time by the dying fire, thinking of what he had just passed through.

After that, Dorian kept away from Carlia. Although the longing to see her surged strongly through his heart from time to time, and he could not get away from the thought that she was in some trouble, yet his pride forbade him to intrude. He busied himself with chores and his books, and he did not relax in his ward duties. Once in a while he saw Carlia at the meeting house, but she absented herself more and more from public gatherings, giving as an excuse to all who inquired, that her work bound her more closely than ever at home.



Dorian and his mother frequently talked about Uncle Zed and the hopes the departed one had of the young man. “Do you really think, mother, that he meant I should devote my life to the harmonizing of science and religion?” he asked.

“I think Uncle Zed was in earnest. He had great faith in you.”

“But what do you think of it, mother?”

After a moment’s thought, the mother replied.

“What do you think of it?”

“Well, it would be a task, though a wonderfully great one.”



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“The aim is high, the kind I would expect of you. Do you know, Dorian, your father had some such ambition. That’s one of the reasons we came to the country in hopes that some day he would have more time for studying.”

“I never knew that, mother.”

“And now, what if your father and Uncle Zed are talking about the matter up there in the spirit world.”

Dorian thought of that for a few moments. Then: “I’ll have to go to the University for four years, but that’s only a beginning. Ill have to go East to Yale or Harvard and get all they have. Then will come a lot of individual research, and—Oh, mother, I don’t know.”

“And all the time you’ll have to keep near to God and never lose your faith in the gospel, for what doth it profit if you gain the whole world of knowledge and lose your own soul.” The mother came to him and ran her fingers lovingly through his hair. “But you’re equal to it, my son; I believe you can do it.”

This was a sample of many such discussions, and the conclusion was reached that Dorian should work harder than ever, if that were possible, for two or perhaps three years, by which time the farms could be rented and the income derived from them be enough to provide for the mother’s simple needs and the son’s expenses while at school.

Spring came early that year, and Dorian was glad of it, for he was eager to be out in the growing world and turn that growth to productiveness. When the warm weather came for good, books were laid aside, though not forgotten. From daylight until dark, he was busy. The home farm was well planted, the dry-farm wheat was growing beautifully. Between the two, prospects were bright for the furthering of their plans.

“Mother, when and where in this great plan of ours, am I to get married?”

Dorian and his mother were enjoying the dusk and the cool of the evening within odorous reach of Mrs. Trent’s flowers, many of which had come from Uncle Zed’s garden. They had been talking over some details of their “plan.” Mrs. Trent laughed at the abruptness of the question.

“Oh, do you want to get married?” she asked, wondering what there might be to this query.

“Well—sometimes, of course, I’ll have to have a wife, won’t I?”

“Certainly, in good time; but you’re in no hurry, are you?”

“Oh, no; I’m just talking on general principles. There’s no one who would have me now.”

The mother did not dispute this. She knew somewhat of his feelings toward Carla. These lovers' misunderstandings were not serious, she thought to herself. All would end properly and well, in good time.



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But Carlia was in Dorian's thought very often, much to his bewilderment of heart and mind. He often debated with himself if he should not definitely give her up, cease thinking about her as being anything to him either now or hereafter; but it seemed impossible to do that. Carlia's image persisted even as Mildred's did. Mildred, away from the entanglements of the world, was safe to him; but Carlia had her life to live and the trials and difficulties of mortality to encounter and to overcome; and that would not be easy, with her beauty and her impulsive nature. She needed a man's clear head and steady hand to help her, and who was more fitting to do that than he himself, Dorian thought without conscious egotism.

If it were possible, Dorian always spent Sunday at home. If he was on his dry farm in the hills, he drove down on Saturday evenings. One Saturday in midsummer, he arrived home late and tired. He put up his team, came in, washed, and was ready for the good supper which his mother always had for him. The mother busied herself about the kitchen and the table.

"Come and sit down, mother," urged Dorian.

"What's the fussing about! Everything I need is here on the table. You're tired, I see. Come, sit down with me and tell me all the news."

"The news? what news!"

"Why, everything that's happened in Green street for the past week. I haven't had a visitor up on the farm for ten days."

"Everything is growing splendidly down here. The water in the canal is holding out fine and Brother Larsen is fast learning to be a farmer."

"Good," said Dorian. "Our dry wheat is in most places two feet high, and it will go from forty to fifty bushels, with good luck. If now, the price of wheat doesn't sag too much."

Dorian finished his supper, and was about to go to bed, being in need of a good rest. His mother told him not to get up in the morning until she called him.

"All right, mother," he laughed as he kissed her good night, "but don't let me be late to Sunday School, as I have a topic to treat in the Theological class. By heck, they really think I'm Uncle Zed's successor, by the subjects they give me."

He was about to go to his room when his mother called him by name.

"Yes, mother, what is it?"

"You'll know tomorrow, so I might as well tell you now."



“Tell me what?”

“Some bad news.”

“Bad news! What is it?”

The mother seemed lothe to go on. She hesitated.

“Well, mother?”

“Carlia is gone.”

“Gone? Gone where?”

“Nobody knows. She’s been missing for a week. She left home last Saturday to spend a few days with a friend in the city, so she said. Yesterday her father called at the place to bring her home and learned that she had never been there.”

“My gracious, mother!”

“Yes; it’s terrible. Her father has inquired for her and looked for her everywhere he could think of, but not a trace of her can he find. She’s gone.”



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Mother and son sat in silence for some time. He continued to ask questions, but she know no more than the simple facts which she had told. He could do nothing to help, at least, not then, so he reluctantly went to bed. He did not sleep until past midnight.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Dorian was not tardy to Sunday School, and, considering his mental condition, he gave a good account of himself in the class. He heard whispered comment on Carlia's disappearance.

After Sunday school Dorian went directly to Carlia's home. He found the mother tear-stained and haggard with care. The tears flowed again freely at the sight of Dorian, and she clung to him as if she had no other means of comfort.

"Do you know where Carlia is?" she wailed.

"No, Sister Duke, I haven't the last idea. I haven't seen her for some time."

"But what shall we do, Dorian, what shall we do! She may be dead, lying dead somewhere!"

"I hardly think that," he tried to comfort her. "She'll turn up again. Carlia's well able to take care of herself."

The father came in. He told what had been done to try to find the missing girl. Not a word had they heard, not a clue or a trace had been discovered. The father tried hard to control his emotions as he talked, but he could not keep the tears from slowly creeping down his face.

"And I suppose I'm greatly to blame" he said. "I have been told as much by some, who I suppose, are wiser than I am. The poor girl has been confined too much to the work here."

"Work doesn't hurt anybody," commented Dorian.

"No; but all work and no play, I was plainly reminded just the other day, doesn't always make Jack a dull boy: sometimes, it makes dissatisfaction and rebellion—and it seems it has done that here. Carlia, I'll admit had very little company, saw very little of society. I realize that now when it may be too late."

"Oh, I hope not," said Dorian.



“Carlia, naturally, was full of life. She wanted to go and see and learn. All these desires in her were suppressed so long that this is the way it has broken loose. Yes, I suppose that’s true.”

Dorian let the father give vent to his feelings in his talk. He could reply very little, for truth to say, he realized that the father was stating Carlia’s case quite accurately. He recalled the girl when he and she had walked back and forth to and from the high school how she had rapidly developed her sunny nature in the warm, somewhat care-free environment of the school life, and how lately with the continual drudgery of her work, she had changed to a pessimism unnatural to one of her years. Yes, one continual round of work at the farm house is apt either to crush to dullness or to arouse to rebellion. Carlia was of the kind not easily crushed.... But what could they now do? What could he do? For, it came to him with great force that he himself was not altogether free from blame in this matter. He could have done more, vastly more for Carlia Duke.



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“Well, Brother Duke,” said Dorian. “Is there anything that I can do?”

“I don’t think of anything,” said he.

“Not now,” added the mother in a tone which indicated that she did not wish the implied occasion to be too severe.

The father followed Dorian out in the yard. There Dorian asked:

“Brother Duke, has this Mr. Lamont been about lately?”

“He was here yesterday. He came, he said, as soon as he heard of Carlia’s disappearance. He seemed very much concerned about it.”

“And he knew nothing about it until yesterday?”

“He said not—do you suspect—he—might—?”

“I’m not accusing anybody, but I never was favorably impressed with the man.”

“He seemed so truly sorry, that I never thought he might have had something to do with it.”

“Well, I’m not so sure; but I’ll go and see him myself. I suppose I can find him in his office in the city?”

“I think so—Well, do what you can for us, my boy; and Dorian, don’t take to heart too much what her mother implied just now.”

“Not any more than I ought,” replied Dorian. “If there is any blame to be placed on me—and I think there is—I want to bear it, and do what I can to correct my mistakes. I think a lot of Carlia, I like her more than any other girl I know, and I should have shown that to her both by word and deed more than I have done. I’m going to help you find her, and when I find her I’ll not let her go so easily.”

“Thank you. I’m glad to hear you say that.”

Monday morning Dorian went to the city and readily found the man whom he was seeking. He was in his office.

“Good morning. Glad to see you,” greeted Mr. Lamont, as he swung around on his chair. “Take a seat. What can I do for you?”

As the question was asked abruptly, the answer came in like manner.

“I want to know what you know about Carlia Duke.”



Mr. Lamont reddened, but he soon regained his self-possession.

“What do you mean!” he asked.

“You have heard of her disappearance?”

“Yes; I was very sorry to hear of it.”

“It seems her father has exhausted every known means of finding her, and I thought you might, at least, give him a clew.”

“I should be most happy to do so, if I could; but I assure you I haven’t the least idea where she has gone. I am indeed sorry, as I expressed to her father the other day.”

“You were with her a good deal.”

“Well, not a good deal, Mr. Trent—just a little,” he smilingly corrected. “I will admit I’d liked to have seen more of her, but I soon learned that I had not the ghost of a chance with you in the field.”

“You are making fun, Mr. Lamont.”

“Not at all, my good fellow. You are the lucky dog when it comes to Miss Duke. A fine girl she is, a mighty fine girl—a diamond, just a little in the rough. As I’m apparently out of the race, go to it, Mr. Trent and win her. Good luck to you. I don’t think you’ll have much trouble.”

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Dorian was somewhat nonplused by this fulsome outburst. He could not for a moment find anything to say. The two men looked at each other for a moment as if each were measuring the other. Then Mr. Lamont said:

“If at any time I can help you, let me know—call on me. Now you’ll have to excuse me as I have some business matters to attend to.”

Dorian was dismissed.

The disappearance of Carlia Duke continued to be a profound mystery. The weeks went by, and then the months. The gossips found other and newer themes. Those directly affected began to think that all hopes of finding her were gone.

Dorian, however, did not give up. In the strenuous labors of closing summer and fall he had difficulty in keeping his mind on his work. His imagination ranged far and wide, and when it went into the evil places of the world, he suffered so that he had to throw off the suggestion by force. He talked freely with his mother and with Carlia’s parents on all possible phases of the matter, until, seemingly, there was nothing more to be said. To others, he said nothing.

Ever since Dorian had been taught to lisp his simple prayers at his mother’s knee, he had found strength and comfort in going to the Lord. With the growth of his knowledge of the gospel and his enlarged vision of God’s providences, his prayers became a source of power. Uncle Zed had taught him that this trustful reliance on a higher power was essential to his progress. The higher must come to the help of the lower, but the lower must seek for that help and sincerely accept it when offered. As a child, his prayers had been very largely a set form, but as he had come in contact with life and its experiences, he had learned to suit his prayers to his needs. Just now, Carlia and her welfare was the burden of his petitions.

The University course must wait another year, so Dorian and his mother decided. They could plainly see that one more year would be needed, besides Dorian was not in a condition to concentrate his mind on study. So, when the long evenings came on again, he found solace in his books, and read again many of dear Uncle Zed’s writings which had been addressed so purposely to him.

One evening in early December Dorian and his mother were cosily “at home” to any good visitors either of persons or ideas. Dorian was looking over some of his papers.

“Mother, listen to this,” he said. “Here is a gem from Uncle Zed which I have not seen before.” He read:

“The acquisition of wealth brings with it the obligation of helping the poor; the acquisition of knowledge brings with it the obligation of teaching others; the acquisition



of strength and power brings with it the obligation of helping the weak. This is what God does when He says that His work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man'."

"How true that is," said the mother.



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“Yes,” added Dorian after a thoughtful pause, “I am just wondering how and to what extent I am fulfilling any obligation which is resting on me by reason of blessings I am enjoying. Let’s see—we are not rich, but we meet every call made on us by way of tithing and donations; we are not very wise, but we impart of what we have by service; we are not very strong—I fear, mother, that’s where I lack. Am I giving of my strength as fully as I can to help the weak. I don’t know—I don’t know.”

“You mean Carlia?”

“Yes; what am I doing besides thinking and praying for her?”

“What more can we do?”

“Well, I can try doing something more.”

“What, for instance!”

“Trying to find her.”

“But her father has done that.”

“Yes; but he has given up too soon. I should continue the search. I’ve been thinking about that lately. I can’t stay cosily and safely at home any longer, mother, when Carlia may be in want of protection.”

“And what would you be liable to find if you found her?”

That question was not new to his own mind, although his mother had not asked it before. Perhaps, in this case, ignorance was more bliss than knowledge. Whatever had happened to her, would it not be best to have the pure image of her abide with him? But he knew when he thought of it further that such a conclusion was not worthy of a strong man. He should not be afraid even of suffering if it came in the performance of duty.

That very night Dorian had a strange dream, one unusual to him because he remembered it so distinctly the day after. He dreamed that he saw Mildred in what might well be called the heavenly land. She seemed busy in sketching a beautiful landscape and as he approached her, she looked up to him and smiled. Then, as she still gazed at him, her countenance changed and with concern in her voice, she asked, “Where’s Carlia?”

The scene vanished, and that was all of the dream. In the dim consciousness of waking he seemed to hear Carlia’s voice calling to him as it did that winter night when he had left her, not heeding. The call thrilled his very heart again:



“Dorian, Dorian, come back—come back!”

CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

The second week in December Dorian went into action in search of Carlia Duke. He acknowledged to himself that it was like searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack, but inaction was no longer possible.

Carlia very likely had no large amount of money with her, so she would have to seek employment. She could have hidden herself in the city, but Dorian reasoned that she would be fearful of being found, so would have gone to some nearby town; but which one, he had no way of knowing. He visited a number of adjacent towns and made diligent enquiries at hotels, stores, and some private houses. Nothing came of this first week's search.



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A number of mining towns could easily be reached by train from the city. In these towns many people came and went without notice or comment. Dorian spent nearly a week in one of them, but he found no clue. He went to another. The girl would necessarily have to go to a hotel at first, so the searcher examined a number of hotel registers. She had been gone now about six months, so the search had to be in some books long since discarded, much to the annoyance of the clerks.

Dorian left the second town for the third which was situated well up in the mountains. The weather was cold, and the snow lay two feet deep over the hills and valleys. He became disheartened at times, but always he reasoned that he must try a little longer; and then one day in a hotel register dated nearly five months back, he found this entry:

“Carlia Davis.”

Dorian’s heart gave a bound when he saw the name. Carlia was not a common name, and the handwriting was familiar. But why Davis? He examined the signature closely. The girl, unexperienced in the art of subterfuge, had started to write her name, and had gotten to the D in Duke, when the thought of disguise had come to her. Yes; there was an unusual break between that first letter and the rest of the name. Carlia had been here. He was on the right track, thank the Lord!

Dorian enquired of the hotel clerk if he remembered the lady. Did he know anything about her? No; that was so long ago. His people came and went. That was all. But Carlia had been here. That much was certain. Here was at least a fixed point in the sea of nothingness from which he could work. His wearied and confused mind could at least come back to that name in the hotel register.

He began a systematic search of the town. First he visited the small business section, but without results. Then he took up the residential district, systematically, so that he would not miss any. One afternoon he knocked on the door of what appeared to be one of the best residences. After a short wait, the door was opened by a girl, highly painted but lightly clad, who smiled at the handsome young fellow and bade him come in. He stepped into the hall and was shown into what seemed to be a parlor, though the parlors he had known had not smelled so of stale tobacco smoke. He made his usual inquiry. No; no such girl was here, she was sorry, but—the words which came from the carmine lips of the girl so startled Dorian that he stood, hat in hand, staring at her, and shocked beyond expression. He knew, of course, that evil houses existed especially in mining towns, inhabited by corrupt women, but this was the first time he had ever been in such a place. When he realized where he was, a real terror seized him, and with unceremonious haste he got out and away, the girl’s laughter of derision ringing in his ears.

Dorian was unnerved. He went back to his room, his thoughts in a whirl, his apprehensions sinking to gloomy depths. What if Carlia should be in such a place? A

cold sweat of suffering broke over him before he could drive away the thought. But at last he did get rid of it. His mind cleared again, and he set out determined to continued the search. However, he went no more into the houses by the invitation of inmates of doubtful character, but made his inquiries at the open door.



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Then it occurred to Dorian that Carlia, being a country bred girl and accustomed to work about farm houses, might apply to some of the adjacent farms down in the valley below the town for work. The whole country lay under deep snow, but the roads were well broken. Dorian walked out to a number of the farms and made enquiries. At the third house he was met by a pleasant faced, elderly woman who listened attentively to what he said, and then invited him in. When they were both seated, she asked him his name. Dorian told her.

“And why are you interested in this girl?” she continued.

“Has she been here?” he asked eagerly.

“Never mind. You answer my question.”

Dorian explained as much as he thought proper, but the woman still appeared suspicious.

“Are you her brother?”

“No.”

“Her young man?”

“Not exactly; only a dear friend.”

“Well, you look all right, but looks are deceivin’.” The woman tried to be very severe with him, but somehow she did not succeed very well. She looked quite motherly as she sat with her folded hands in her ample lap and a shrewd look in her face. Dorian gained courage to say:

“I believe you know something about the girl I am seeking. Tell me.”

“You haven’t told me the name of the girl you are looking for.”

“Her name is Carlia Duke.”

“That isn’t what she called herself.”

“Oh, then you do know.”

“This girl was Carlia Davis.”

“Yes—is she here!”

“No.”



“Do you know where she is?”

“No, I don’t.”

Dorian’s hopes fell. “But tell me what you know about her—you know something.”

“It was the latter part of August when she came to us. She had walked from town, an’ she said she was wanting a place to work. As she was used to farm life, she preferred to work at a country home, she said.”

“Was she a dark-haired, rosy-cheeked girl?”

“Her hair was dark, but there was no roses in her cheeks. There might have been once. I was glad to say yes to her for I needed help bad. Of course, it was strange, this girl comin’ from the city a’ wanting to work in the country. It’s usually the other way.”

“Yes; I suppose so.”

“So I was a little suspicious.”

“Of what?”

“That she hadn’t come to work at all; though I’ll say that she did her best. I tried to prevent her, but she worked right up to the last.”

“To the last? I don’t understand?”

“Don’t you know that she was to be sick? That she came here to be sick?”

“To be sick?” Dorian was genuinely at loss to understand.

“At first I called her a cheat, and threatened to send her away; but the poor child pleaded so to stay that I hadn’t the heart to turn her out. She had no where to go, she was a long way from home, an’ so I let her stay, an’ we did the best for her.”



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Dorian, in the simplicity of his mind, did not yet realize what the woman was talking about. He let her continue.

“We had one of the best doctors in the city ‘tend her, an’ I did the nursing myself which I consider was as good as any of the new-fangled trained nurses can do; but the poor girl had been under a strain so long that the baby died soon after it was born.”

“The baby?” gasped Dorian.

“Yes,” went on the woman, all unconsciously that the listener had not fully understood. “Yes, it didn’t live long, which, I suppose, in such cases, is a blessing.”

Dorian stared at the woman, then in a dazed way, he looked about the plain farm-house furnishings, some details of which strangely impressed him. The woman went on talking, which seemed easy for her, now she had fairly started; but Dorian did not hear all she said. One big fact was forcing itself into his brain, to the exclusion of all minor realities.

“She left a month ago,” Dorian heard the woman say when again he was in a condition to listen. “We did our best to get her to stay, for we had become fond of her. Somehow, she got the notion that the scoundrel who had betrayed her had found her hiding place, an’ she was afraid. So she left.”

“Where did she go? Did she tell you?”

“No; she wouldn’t say. The fact is, she didn’t know herself. I’m sure of that. She just seemed anxious to hide herself again. Poor girl.” The woman wiped a tear away with the corner of her apron.

Dorian arose, thanked her, and went out. He looked about the snow-covered earth and the clouds which threatened storm. He walked on up to the road back to the town. He was benumbed, but not with cold. He went into his room, and, although it was mid-afternoon, he did not go out any more that day. He sat supinely on his bed. He paced the floor. He looked without seeing out of the window at the passing crowds. He could not think at all clearly. His whole being was in an uproar of confusion. The hours passed. Night came on with its blaze of lights in the streets. What could he do now? What should he do now?

“Oh, God, help me,” he prayed, “help me to order my thoughts, tell me what to do.”

If ever in his life Dorian had need of help from higher power, it was now.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

Dorian had not found Carlia Duke; instead, he had found something which appeared to him to be the end of all things. Had he found her dead, in her virginal purity, he could have placed her, with Mildred, safely away in his heart and his hopes; but this!... What more could he now do? That he did not take the first train home was because he was benumbed into inactivity.

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The young man had never before experienced such suffering of spirit. The leaden weight on his heart seemed to be crushing, not only his physical being, but his spirit also into the depths of despair. As far back in his boyhood as he could remember, he had been taught the enormity of sexual sin, until it had become second nature for him to think of it as something very improbable, if not impossible, as pertaining to himself. And yet, here it was, right at the very door of his heart, casting its evil shadow into the most sacred precincts of his being. He had never imagined it coming to any of his near and dear ones, especially not to Carlia—Carlia, his neighbor, his chummy companion in fields and highways, his schoolmate. He pictured her in many of her wild adventures as a child, and in her softer moods as a grown-up girl. He saw again her dark eyes flash with anger, and then her pearly teeth gleam in laughter at him. He remembered how she used to run from him, and then at other times how she would cling to him as if she pleaded for a protection which he had not given. The weak had reached out to the strong, and the stronger one had failed. If 'remorse of conscience' is hell, Dorian tasted of its bitter depths, for it came to him now that perhaps because of his neglect, Carlia had been led to her fall.

But what could he now do? Find her. And then, what? Marry her? He refused to consider that for a moment. He drove the thought fiercely away. That would be impossible now. The horror of what had been would always stand as a repellent specter between them.... Yes, he had loved her—he knew that now more assuredly than ever; and he tried to place that love away from him by a play upon words in the past tense; but deep down in his heart he knew that he was merely trying to deceive himself. He loved her still; and the fact that he loved her but could not marry her added fuel to the flames of his torment.

That long night was mostly a hideous nightmare and even after he awoke from a fitful sleep next morning, he was in a stupor. After a while, he went out into the wintry air. It was Sunday, and the town was comparatively quiet. He found something to eat at a lunch counter, then he walked about briskly to try to get his blood into active circulation. Again he went to his room.

Presently, he heard the ringing of church bells. The folks would be going to Sunday school in Greenstreet. He saw in the vision of his mind Uncle Zed sitting with the boys about him in his class. He saw the teacher's lifted hand emphasize the warning against sin, and then he seemed to hear a voice read:

"For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost.

"How think ye if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?"

“And if so be that he find it, verily, I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.”



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Dorian seemed to awaken with a start. Donning coat and hat, he went out again, his steps being led down the country road toward the farmhouse. He wanted to visit again the house where Carlia had been. Her presence there and her suffering had hallowed it.

“Oh, how do you do?” greeted the woman, when she saw Dorian at the door. “Come in.”

Dorian entered, this time into the parlor which was warm, and where a man sat comfortably with his Sunday paper.

“Father,” said the woman, “this is the young man who was here yesterday.”

The man shook hands with Dorian and bade him draw up his chair to the stove.

“I hope you’ll excuse me for coming again,” said Dorian; “but the fact of the matter is I seemed unable to keep away. I left yesterday without properly thanking you for what you did for my friend, Miss Carlia. I also want to pay you a little for the expense you were put to. I haven’t much money with me, but I will send it to you after I get home, if you will give me your name and address.”

The farmer and his wife exchanged glances.

“Why, as to that,” replied the man, “nothing is owing us. We liked the girl. We think she was a good girl and had been sinned against.”

“I’m sure you are right,” said Dorian. “As I said, I went away rather abruptly yesterday. I was so completely unprepared for that which I learned about her. But I’m going to find her if I can, and take her home to her parents.”

“Where do you live!” asked the man.

Dorian told him.

“Are you a ‘Mormon’?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And not ashamed of it!”

“No; proud of it—grateful, rather.”

“Well, young man, you look like a clean, honest chap. Tell me why you are proud to be a ‘Mormon’.”



Dorian did his best. He had had very little experience in presenting the principles of the gospel to an unbeliever, but Uncle Zed's teachings, together with his own studies, now stood him well in hand.

"Well," commented the farmer, "that's fine. You can't be a very bad man if you believe in and practice all what you have been telling us."

"I hope I am not a bad man. I have some light on the truth, and woe is me if I sin against that light."

The farmer turned to his wife. "Mother," he said, "I think you may safely tell him."

Dorian looked enquiringly at the woman.

"It's this," she said. "My husband brought home a postcard from the office last evening after you had left—a card from Miss Davis, asking us to send her an article of dress which she had forgotten. Here is the card. The address may help you to find her. I am sure you mean no harm to the girl."

Dorian made note of the address, as also that of the farmer's with whom he was visiting. Then he arose to go.

"Now, don't be in such a hurry," admonished the man. "We'll have dinner presently."



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Dorian was glad to remain, as he felt quite at home with these people, Mr. and Mrs. Whitman. They had been good to Carlia. Perhaps he could learn a little more about her. The dinner was enjoyed very much. Afterward, Mrs. Whitman, encouraged by Dorian's attentiveness, poured into his willing ear all she had learned of the girl he was seeking; and before the woman ceased her freely-flowing talk, a most important item had been added to his knowledge of the case. Carlia, it seems, had gone literally helpless to her downfall. "Drugged" was the word Mrs. Whitman used. The villainy of the foul deed moved the young man's spirit to a fierce anger against the wretch who had planned it, and the same time his pity increased for the unfortunate victim. As Dorian sat there and listened to the story which the woman had with difficulty obtained from the girl, he again suffered the remorse of conscience which comes from a realization of neglected duty and disregarded opportunity. It was late in the afternoon before he got back to the town.

The next day Dorian made inquiries as to how he could reach the place indicated by the address, and he learned that it was a ranch house well up in the mountains. There was a daily mail in that direction, except when the roads and the weather hindered; and it seemed that these would now be hinderances. The threatened storm came, and with it high wind which piled the snow into deep, hard drifts, making the mountain road nearly impassible. Dorian found the mail-carrier who told him that it would be impossible to make a start until the storm had ceased. All day the snow fell, and all day Dorian fretted impatiently, and was tempted to once more go out to Mr. and Mrs. Whitman; but he did not. Christmas was only three days off. He could reach home and spend the day with his mother, but there would be considerable expense, and he felt as if he must be on the ground so that at the soonest possible moment he could continue on the trail which he had found. The pleasure of the home Christmas must this time be sacrificed, for was not he in very deed going into the mountains to seek that which was lost.

The storm ceased toward evening, but the postman would not make a start until next morning. Dorian joined him then, and mounted beside him. The sky was not clear, the clouds only breaking and drifting about as if in doubt whether to go or to stay. The road was heavy, and it was all the two horses could do to draw the light wagon with its small load. Dorian wondered how Carlia had ever come that way. Of course, it had been before the heavy snow, when traveling was not so bad.

"Who lives at this place?" asked Dorian of the driver, giving the box number Carlia had sent.

"That? Oh, that's John Hickson's place."

"A rancher?"

"No; not exactly. He's out here mostly for his health."

“Does he live here in the mountains the year around?”



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“Usually he moves into town for the winter. Last year the winter was so mild that he decided to try to stick one through; but surely, he’s got a dose this time. Pretty bad for a sick man, I reckon.”

“Anybody with him?”

“Wife and three children—three of the cutest kiddies you ever saw. Oh, he’s comfortable enough, for he’s got a fine house. You know, it’s great out here among the pine hills in the summer; but just now, excuse me.”

“Is it far?”

“No.” The driver looked with concern at the storm which was coming again down the mountain like a great white wave. “I think perhaps we’ll have to stop at the Hickson’s tonight,” he said.

The travelers were soon enwrapped in a swirling mantle of snow. Slowly and carefully the dug-ways had to be traversed. The sky was dense and black. The storm became a blizzard, and the cold became intense. The men wrapped themselves in additional blankets. The horses went patiently on, the driver peering anxiously ahead; but it must have been well after noon before the outlines of a large building near at hand bulked out of the leaden sky.

“I’m glad we’re here,” exclaimed the driver.

“Where?” asked Dorian.

“At Hickson’s.”

They drove into the yard and under a shed where the horses were unhitched and taken into a stable. A light as if from a wood fire in a grate danced upon the white curtain of the unshaded windows. With his mail-bag, the driver shuffled his way through the snow to the kitchen door and knocked. The door opened immediately and Mrs. Hickson, recognizing the mail-driver, bade him come in. Two children peered curiously from the doorway of another room. Dorian a little nervously awaited the possibility of Carlia’s appearing.

It was pleasant to get shelter and a warm welcome in such weather. After the travelers had warmed themselves by the kitchen stove, they were invited into another room to meet Mr. Hickson, who was reclining in a big arm chair before the grate. He welcomed them without rising, but pointed them to chairs by the fire. They talked of the weather, of course. Mr. Hickson reasoned that it was foolish to complain about something which they could not possibly control. Dorian was introduced as a traveler, no explanation being asked or given as to his business. He was welcome. In fact, it was a pleasure, said the host, to have company even for an evening, as very few people ever stopped



over night, especially in the winter. Dorian soon discovered that this man was not a rough mountaineer, but a man of culture, trying to prolong his earth-life by the aid of mountain air, laden with the aroma of the pines. The wife went freely in and out of the room, the children also; but somewhat to Dorian's surprise, no Carlia appeared. If she were there in the house, she surely would be helping with the meal which seemed to be in the way of preparation.

The storm continued all afternoon. There could be no thought of moving on that day. And indeed, it was pleasant sitting thus by the blazing log in the fireplace and listening, for the most part, to the intelligent talk of the host. The evening meal was served early, and the two guests ate with the family in the dining room. Still no Carlia.



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When the driver went out to feed his horses and to smoke his pipe, and Mr. Hickson had retired, the children, having overcome some of their timidity, turned their attention to Dorian. The girl, the oldest, with dark hair and rosy cheeks, reminded him of another girl just then in his thoughts. The two small boys were chubby and light haired, after the mother. When Dorian managed to get the children close to him, they reminded him that Christmas was only one day distant. Did he live near by? Was he going home for Christmas? What was Santa Claus going to bring him?

Dorian warmed to their sociability and their clatter. He learned from them that their Christmas this year would likely be somewhat of a failure. Daddy was sick. There was no Christmas tree, and they doubted Santa Claus' ability to find his way up in the mountains in the storm. This was the first winter they had been here. Always they had been in town during the holidays, where it was easy for Santa to reach them; but now—the little girl plainly choked back the tears of disappointment.

“Why, if it's a Christmas tree you want,” said Dorian, “that ought to be easy. There are plenty up on the nearby hills.”

“Yes; but neither papa nor mama nor we can get them.”

“But I can.”

“Oh, will you? Tomorrow?”

“Yes; tomorrow is Christmas Eve. We'll have to have it then.”

The children were dancing with glee as the mother came in and learned what had been going on. “You mustn't bother the gentleman,” she admonished, but Dorian pleaded for the pleasure of doing something for them. The mother explained that because of unforeseen difficulties the children were doomed to disappointment this holiday season, and they would have to be satisfied with what scanty preparation could be made.

“I think I can help,” suggested the young man, patting the littlest confiding fellow on the head. “We cannot go on until tomorrow, I understand, and I should very much like to be useful.”

The big pleading eyes of the children won the day. They moved into the kitchen. All the corners were ransacked for colored paper and cloth, and with scissors and flour paste, many fantastic decorations were made to hang on the tree. Corn was popped and strung into long white chains. But what was to be done for candles? Could Dorian make candles? He could do most everything, couldn't he? He would try. Had they some parafine, used to seal preserve jars. Oh, yes, large pieces were found. And this with some string was soon made into some very possible candles. The children were intensely interested, and even the mail-driver wondered at the young man's cleverness.



They had never seen anything like this before. The tree and its trimmings had always been bought ready for their use. Now they learned, which their parents should have known long ago, that there is greater joy in the making of a plaything than in the possession of it.



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The question of candy seemed to bother them all. Their last hopes went when there was not a box of candy in the postman's bag. What should they do for candy and nuts and oranges and—

"Can you make candy?" asked the girl of Dorian as if she was aware she was asking the miraculous.

"Now children," warned the happy mother. "You have your hands full" she said to Dorian. "There's no limit to their demands."

Dorian assured her that the greater pleasure was his.

"Tomorrow," he told the clammering children, "we'll see what we can do about the candy."

"Chocolates?" asked one.

"Caramels," chose another.

"Fudge," suggested the third.

"All these?" laughed Dorian. "Well, we'll see-tomorrow," and with that the children went to bed tremulously happy.

The next morning the sun arose on a most beautiful scene. The snow lay deep on mountain and in valley. It ridged the fences and trees. Paths and roads were obliterated.

The children were awake early. As Dorian dressed, he heard them scampering down the stairs. Evidently, they were ready for him. He looked out of the window. He would have to make good about that tree.

As yet, Dorian had found no traces of the object of his search. He had not asked direct questions about her, but he would have to before he left. There seemed some mystery always just before him. The mail-driver would not be ready to go before noon, so Dorian would have time to get the tree and help the children decorate it. Then he would have to find out all there was to know about Carlia. Surely, she was somewhere in the locality.

After breakfast, Dorian found the axe in the wood-shed, and began to make his way through the deep snow up the hill toward a small grove of pine. Behind the shoulder of a hill, he discovered another house, not so large as Mr. Hickson's, but neat and comfortably looking. The blue smoke of a wood fire was rising from the chimney. A girl was vigorously shoveling a path from the house to the wood-pile. She was dressed in big boots, a sweater, and a red hood. She did not see Dorian until he came near the



small clearing by the house. Straightening from her work, she stood for a moment looking intently at him. Then with a low, yet startled cry, she let the shovel fall, and sped swiftly back along the newly-made path and into the house.

It was Carlia.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

Dorian stood knee-deep in the snow and watched the girl run back into the house. In his surprise, he forgot his immediate errand. He had found Carlia, found her well and strong; but why had she run from him with a cry of alarm? She surely had recognized him; she would not have acted thus toward a stranger. Apparently, she was not glad to see him. He stood looking at the closed door, and a feeling of resentment came to him. Here he had been searching for her all this time, only to be treated as if he were an unwelcome intruder. Well, he would not force himself on her. If she did not want to see him, why annoy her? He could go back, tell her father where she was, and let him come for her. He stood, hesitating.



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The door opened again and a woman looked out inquiringly at the young man standing in the snow with an axe on his shoulder. Dorian would have to offer a word of explanation to the woman, at least, so he stepped into the path toward the house.

“Good morning,” he said, lifting his hat. “I’m out to get a Christmas tree for the children over there, and it seems I have startled the young lady who just ran in.”

“Yes,” said the woman.

“I’m sorry to have frightened her, but I’m glad to have found her. You see, I’ve been searching for her.”

The woman stood in the doorway, saying nothing, but looking with some suspicion at the young man.

“I should like to see her again,” continued Dorian. “Tell her it’s Dorian Trent.”

“I’ll tell her,” said the woman as she withdrew and closed the door.

The wait seemed long, but it was only a few minutes when the door opened and Dorian was invited to come in. They passed through the kitchen into the living room where a fire was burning in a grate. Dorian was given a chair. He could not fail to see that he was closely observed. The woman went into another room, but soon returned.

“She’ll be in shortly,” she announced.

“Thank you.”

The woman retired to the kitchen, and presently Carlia came in. She had taken off her wraps and now appeared in a neat house dress. As she stood hesitatingly by the door. Dorian came with outstretched hands to greet her; but she was not eager to meet him, so he went back to his chair. Both were silent. He saw it was the same Carlia, with something added, something which must have taken much experience if not much time to bring to her. The old-time roses, somewhat modified, were in her cheeks, the old-time red tinted the full lips; but she was more mature, less of a girl and more of a woman; and to Dorian she was more beautiful than ever.

“Carlia,” he again ventured, “I’m glad to see you; but you don’t seem very pleased with your neighbor. Why did you run from me out there?”

“You startled me.”

“Yes; I suppose I did. It was rather strange, this coming so suddenly on to you. I’ve been looking for you quite a while.”



“I don’t understand why you have been looking for me.”

“You know why, Carlia.”

“I don’t.”

“You’re just talking to be talking—but here, this sounds like quarreling, and we don’t want to do that so soon, do we?”

“No, I guess not.”

“Won’t you sit down.”

The girl reached for a chair, then seated herself.

“The folks are anxious about you. When can you go home?”

“I’m not going home.”

“Not going home? Why not? Who are these people, and what are you doing here?”

“These are good people, and they treat me fine. I’m going to stay—here.”

“But I don’t see why. Of course, it’s none of my business; but for the sake of your father and mother, you ought to go home.”



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“How—how are they!”

“They are as well as can be expected. You’ve never written them, have you, nor ever told where you were. They do not know whether you are dead or alive. That isn’t right.”

The girl turned her bowed head slightly, but did not speak, so he continued: “The whole town has been terribly aroused about you. You disappeared so suddenly and completely. Your father has done everything he could think of to find you. When he gave up, I took up the task, and here you are in the hills not so far from Greenstreet.”

Carlia’s eyes swam with tears. The kitchen door opened, and the woman looked at Carlia and then at Dorian.

“Breakfast is ready,” she announced. “Come, Miss Davis, and have your friend come too.”

Dorian explained that he had already eaten.

“Please excuse me just now,” pleaded Carlia, to the woman. “Go eat your breakfast without me. Mrs. Carlston, this is Mr. Trent, a neighbor of ours at my home. I was foolish to be so scared of him. He—he wouldn’t hurt anyone.” She tried bravely to smile.

Alone again, the two were ill at ease. A flood of memories, a confusion of thoughts and feelings swept over Dorian. The living Carlia in all her attractive beauty was before him, yet back of her stood the grim skeleton. Could he close his eyes to that? Could he let his love for her overcome the repulsion which would arise like a black cloud into his thoughts? Well, time alone would tell. Just now he must be kind to her, he must be strong and wise. Of what use is strength and wisdom if it is unfruitful at such times as these? Dorian arose to his feet and stood in the strength of his young manhood. He seemed to take Carlia with him, for she also stood looking at him with her shining eyes.

“Well, Carlia,” he said, “go get your breakfast, and I’ll finish my errand. You see, the storm stopped the mail carrier and me and we had to put up at your neighbour’s last night. There I found three children greatly disappointed in not having their usual Christmas tree. I promised I would get them one this morning, and that’s what I was out for when I saw you. You know, Carlia, it’s Christmas Eve this morning, if you’ll allow that contradiction.”

“Yes, I know.”

“I’ll come back for you. And mind, you do not try to escape. I’ll be watching the house closely. Anyway,” he laughed lightly, “the snow’s too deep for you to run very far.”

“O, Dorian—”



“Yes.”

He came toward her, but she with averted face, slipped toward the kitchen door.

“I can’t go home, I can’t go with you—really, I can’t,” she said. “You go back home and tell the folks I’m all right now, won’t you, please.”

“We’ll talk about that after a while. I must get that tree now, or those kiddies will think I am a rank impostor.” Dorian looked at his watch. “Why, it’s getting on toward noon. So long, for the present.”



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Dorian found and cut a fairly good tree. The children were at the window when he appeared, and great was their joy when they saw him carry it to the woodshed and make a stand for it, then bring it in to them. The mail carrier was about ready to continue his journey, and he asked Dorian if he was also ready. But Dorian had no reason for going on further; he had many reasons for desiring to remain. And here was the Christmas tree, not dressed, nor the candy made. How could he disappoint these children?

"I wonder," he said to the mother, "if it would be asking too much to let me stay here until tomorrow. I'm in no hurry, and I would like to help the children with the tree, as I promised. I've been hindered some this morning, and—"

"Stay," shouted the children who had heard this. "Stay, do stay."

"You are more than welcome," replied Mrs. Hickson; "but I fear that the children are imposing on you."

Dorian assured her that the pleasure was his, and after the mail carrier had departed, he thought it wise to explain further.

"A very strange thing has happened," said Dorian. "As I was going after the tree for the children, I met the young lady who is staying at Mrs. Carlston."

"Miss Davis."

"Yes; she's a neighbor of mine. We grew up together as boy and girl. Through some trouble, she left home, and—in fact, I have been searching for her. I am going to try to get her to go home to her parents. She—she could help us with our tree dressing this evening."

"We'd like to have both our neighbors visit with us," said Mrs. Hickson; "but the snow is rather deep for them."

By the middle of the afternoon Dorian cleared a path to the neighboring house, and then went stamping on to the porch. Carlia opened the door and gave him a smiling welcome. She had dressed up a bit, he could see, and he was pleased with the thought that it was for him. Dorian delivered the invitation to the two women. Carlia would go immediately to help, and Mrs. Carlston would come later. Carlia was greeted by the children as a real addition to their company.

"Did you bring an extra of stockings?" asked Mrs. Hickson of her. "An up-to-date Santa Claus is going to visit us tonight, I am sure." She glanced toward Dorian, who was busy with the children and the tree.



That was a Christmas Eve long to be remembered by all those present in that house amid solitude of snow, of mountain, and of pine forests. The tree, under the magic touches of Dorian and Carlia grew to be a thing of beauty, in the eyes of the children. The home-made candles and decorations were pronounced to be as good as the “boughten ones.” And the candy—what a miracle worker this sober-laughing, ruddy-haired young fellow was!



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Carlia could not resist the spirit of cheer. She smiled with the older people and laughed with the children. How good it was to laugh again, she thought. When the tree was fully ablaze, all, with the exception of Mr. Hickson joined hands and danced around it. Then they had to taste of the various and doubtful makings of candies, and ate a bread-pan of snow-white popcorn sprinkled with melted butter. Then Mr. Hickson told some stories, and his wife in a clear, sweet voice led the children in some Christmas songs. Oh, it was a real Christmas Eve, made doubly joyful by the simple helpfulness and kindness of all who took part.

At the close of the evening, Dorian escorted Mrs. Carlston and Carlia back to their house, and the older woman graciously retired, leaving the parlor and the glowing log to the young people.

They sat in the big armchairs facing the grate.

“We’ve had a real nice Christmas Eve, after all,” said he.

“Yes.”

“Our Christmas Eves at home are usually quiet. I’m the only kid there, and I don’t make much noise. Frequently, just mother and Uncle Zed and I made up the company; and then when we could get Uncle Zed to talking about Jesus, and explain who He was, and tell his story before He came to this earth as the Babe of Bethlehem, there was a real Christmas spirit present. Yes; I believe you were with us on one of these occasions.”

“Yes, I was.”

Dorian adjusted the log in the grate. “Carlia, when shall we go home?” he asked.

“How can I go home?”

“A very simple matter. We ride on the stage to the railroad, and then—”

“O! I do not mean that. How can I face my folks, and everybody?”

“Of course, people will be inquisitive, and there will be a lot of speculation; but never mind that. Your father and mother will be mighty glad to get you back home, and I am sure your father will see to it that you—that you’ll have no more cause to run away from home.”

“What—what?”

“Why, he’ll see that you do not have so much work—man’s work, to do. Yes, regular downright drudgery it was. Why, I hardly blame you for running away, that is, taking a



brief vacation.” He went on talking, she looking silently into the fire. “But now,” he said finally, “you have had a good rest, and you are ready to go home.”

She sat rigidly looking at the glow in the grate. He kept on talking cheerfully, optimistically, as if he wished to prevent the gloom of night to overwhelm them. Then, presently, the girl seemed to shake herself free from some benumbing influence, as she turned to him and said:

“Dorian, why, really why have you gone to all this trouble to find me?”

“Why, we all wanted to know what had become of you. Your father is a changed man because of your disappearance, and your mother is nearly broken hearted.”

“Yes, I suppose so; but is that all?”

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“Isn’t that enough?”

“No.”

“Well, I—I—”

“Dorian, you’re neither dull nor stupid, except in this. Why did not someone else do this hunting for a lost girl? Why should it be you?”

Dorian arose, walked to the window and looked out into the wintry night. He saw the shine of the everlasting stars in the deep blue. He sensed the girl’s pleading eyes sinking into his soul as if to search him out. He glimpsed the shadowy specter lurking in her background. And yet, as he fixed his eyes on the heavens, his mind cleared, his purpose strengthened. As he turned, there was a grim smile on his face. He walked back to the fire-place and seated himself on the arm of Carlia’s chair.

“Carlia,” he said, “I may be stupid—I am stupid—I’ve always been stupid with you. I know it. I confess it to you. I have not always acted toward you as one who loves you. I don’t know why—lay it to my stupidity. But, Carlia, I do love you. I have always loved you. Yes, ever since we were children playing in the fields and by the creek and the ditches. I know now what that feeling was. I loved you then, I love you now.”

The girl arose mechanically from her chair, reached out as if for support to the mantle. “Why, Oh, why did you not tell me before—before”—she cried, then swayed as if to a fall. Dorian caught her and placed her back in the seat. He took her cold hands, but in a moment, she pulled them away.

“Dorian, please sit down in this other chair, won’t you?”

Dorian did as she wanted him to do, but he turned the chair to face her.

“I want you to believe me, Carlia.”

“I am trying to believe you.”

“Is it so hard as all that?”

“What I fear is that you are doing all this for me out of the goodness of your heart. Listen, let me say what I want to say—I believe I can now.... You’re the best man I know. I have never met anyone as good as you, no, not even my father—nobody. You’re far above me. You always have been willing to sacrifice yourself for others; and now—what I fear is that you are just doing this, saying this, out of the goodness of your heart and not because you really—really love me.”

“Carlia, stop—don’t.”



“I know you, Dorian. I’ve heard you and Uncle Zed talk, sometimes when you thought I was not listening. I know your high ideals of service, how you believe it is necessary for the higher to reach down to help and save the lower. Oh, I know, Dorian; and it is this that I think of. You cannot love poor me for my sake, but you are doing this for fear of not doing your duty. Hush—Listen! Not that I don’t honor you for your high ideals—they are noble, and belong to just such as I believe you are. Yes, I have always, even as a child, looked up to you as someone big and strong and good—Yes, I have always worshiped you, loved you! There, you know it, but what’s the use!”



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Dorian moved his chair close to her, then said:

“You are mistaken, of course, in placing my goodness so high, though I’ve always tried to do the right by everybody. That I have failed with you is evidence that I am not so perfect as you say. But now, let’s forget everything else but the fact that we love each other. Can’t we be happy in that?”

The roses faded from Carlia’s cheeks, though coaxed to stay by the firelight.

“My dear,” he continued, “we’ll go home, and I’ll try to make up to you my failings. I think I can do that, Carlia, when you become my wife.”

“I can’t, Dorian, Oh, I can’t be that.”

“Why not Carlia?”

“I can’t marry you. I’m not—No, Dorian.”

“In time, Carlia. We will have to wait, of course; but some day”—he took her hands, and she did not seem to have power to resist—“some day” he said fervently, “you are going to be mine for time and for eternity.”

They looked into each others faces without fear. Then: “Go now, Dorian” she said. “I can’t stand any more tonight. Please go.”

“Yes; I’ll go. Tomorrow, the stage comes again this way, and we’ll go with it. That’s settled. Goodnight.”

They both arose. He still held her hands.

“Goodnight,” he repeated, and kissed her gently on the cheek.

CHAPTER NINETEEN.

The sudden return of Carlia Duke to her home created as much talk as her disappearance had done. Dorian was besieged with enquirers whom he smilingly told that he had just come across her taking a little vacation up in the hills. What, in the hills in the depths of winter? Why, yes; none but those who have tried it know the comfort and the real rest one may obtain shut out by the snow from the world, in the solitude of the hills. He told as little as possible of the details of his search, even to Carlia’s parents. Any unpleasant disclosures would have to come from her to them, he reasoned. Not being able to get Dorian talking about the case, the good people of Greenstreet soon exhausted their own knowledge of the matter, so in a short time, the gossip resumed its every-day trend.

Hardly a day passed without Dorian spending some time with Carlia. She would not go to Sunday School or to Mutual, and it was some time before he could convince her that it was a matter of wisdom as well as of right that she should attend some of the public ward meetings. Frequently, he took his book to the Duke home and read aloud to Carlia. This she enjoyed very much. Sometimes the book was a first class novel, but oftener it was a scientific text or a religious treatise. Carlia listened attentively to his discussion of deep problems, and he was agreeably surprised to learn that she could readily follow him in the discussion of these themes; so that the long winter evenings spent with her either at her home or at his own became a source of great inspiration to the young man who had not lost sight of the mission assigned to him by the beloved Uncle Zed. Dorian talked freely to Carlia on how he might best fulfill the high destiny which seemed to lay before him; and Carlia entered enthusiastically into his plans.



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“Fine, fine,” she would say. “Carry it out. You can do it.”

“With your help, Carlia.”

“I’ll gladly help you all I can; but that is so little; what can I do?”

“Trust me, have faith in me; and when the time comes, marry me.”

This was usually the end of the conversation for Carlia; she became silent unless he changed the subject.

Dorian, naturally undemonstrative, was now more careful than ever in his love making. The intimacy between them never quite returned to the earlier state. Complete forgetfulness of what had been, was, of course, impossible, either for Carlia or for Dorian; but he tried manfully not to let the “specter” come too often between him and the girl he loved. He frequently told her that he loved her, but it was done by simple word or act. Dorian’s greater knowledge gave him the advantage over her. He was bound by this greater knowledge to be the stronger, the wiser, the one who could keep all situations well in hand.

One evening, when Carlia was unusually sweet and tempting, he asked if he might kiss her goodnight. She set her face as if it were hard to deny him, but she finally said:

“No; you must not.”

“Why not, Carlia?”

“We’re not engaged yet.”

“Carlia!”

“We are not. I have never promised to marry you, have I?” She smiled.

“No; I guess not; but that’s understood.”

“Don’t be so sure.”

“There are some things definitely fixed without the spoken word.”

“Good night, Dorian.” She was smiling still.

“Good night, Carlia.” Their hands met and clasped, atoning the best they could for the forbidden kiss.

One evening when the feeling of spring was in the air, Dorian was going to call on Carlia, when he heard the approach of an automobile. As it turned into the bystreet,



leading to the Duke home, Dorian saw the driver to be Mr. Jack Lamont. Dorian kept in the road, and set his face hard. As the machine had to stop to prevent running over him, Dorian turned, walked deliberately to the side of the car, and looking steadily into Mr. Lamont's face, said:

"I'm going to Mr. Duke's also. If I find you there, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life. Drive on."

For a moment, the two glared at each other, then the automobile went on—on past the Duke house toward town. When Dorian arrived at his destination, Carlia greeted him with:

"Dorian, what's the matter?"

"Nothing," he laughed.

"You're as pale as a ghost."

"Am I? Well, I haven't seen any ghosts—Say, mother wants you to come to supper. She has something you specially like. Can you?"



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"Sure, she can," answered her mother, for she was glad to have Carlia out away from the work which she was determined to stick to closer than ever. Carlia was pleased to go, and kept up a merry chatter until she saw that Dorian was exceptionally sober-minded. She asked him what was the matter with him, but he evaded. His thoughts were on the man whom he had prevented from calling at her home that evening. What was his errand? What was in the scoundrel's mind? Dorian struggled to put away from him the dark thoughts which had arisen because of his recent encounter with Mr. Lamont. All the evening at home and during their walk back he was unusually silent, and Carlia could only look at him with questioning anxiety.

Spring, once started, came on with a rush. The melting snow filled the river with a muddy flood; the grass greened the slopes; the bursting willows perfumed the air; the swamp awakened to the warm touch of the sun. Dorian's busy season also began.

As soon as the roads were passible, Dorian drove up to his dry-farm. On one of these first trips he fell in with a company of his neighboring dry-farmers, and they traveled together. While they were stopping for noon at a small hotel in the canyon, a rain storm came up, which delayed them. They were not impatient, however, as the moisture was welcome; so the farmers rested easily, letting their horses eat a little longer than usual.

The conversation was such which should be expected of Bishop's counselors, president of Elders' quorums, and class leaders in the Mutual, which these men were. On this occasion some of the always-present moral problems were discussed. Dorian was so quiet that eventually some one called on him for an opinion.

"I don't think I can add anything to the discussion," replied Dorian. "Only this, however: One day in Sunday school Uncle Zed painted the terrors of sin to us boys in such colours that I shall never forget it. The result in my case is that I have a dreadful fear of moral wrong doing. I am literally scared, I—"

Dorian turned his eyes to the darkened doorway. Mr. Jack Lamont stood there with a cynical expression on his face. His hat was tilted back on his head, and a half-smoked cigarette sagged from his lips. The genial warmth of the room seemed chilled by the newcomer's presence.

"G'day, gentlemen," said Mr. Lamont. "Mr. Trent, here, is afraid, I understand."

The men arose. Outside the clouds were breaking. Dorian stepped forward, quite close to Jack Lamont.

"Yes, I am afraid," said Dorian, his face white with passion, "but not of what you think, not of what you would be afraid, you dirty, low, scoundrel!"



Lamont raised a riding whip he had in his hand, but the men interfered, and they all moved outside into the yard. Dorian, still tense with anger, permitted himself to be taken to the teams where they began hitching up. Dorian soon had himself under control, yet he was not satisfied with the matter ending thus. Quietly slipping back to where Mr. Lamont stood looking at the men preparing to drive on, he said, "I want a word with you."



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The other tried to evade.

“Don’t try to get away until I’m through with you. I want to tell you again what a contemptible cur you are. No one but a damned scoundrel would take advantage of a girl as you did, and then leave her to bear her shame alone.”

“Do you mean Carlia—”

“Don’t utter her name from your foul lips.”

“For if you do, I might say, what have I got to do with that? You were her lover, were you not? you were out with her in the fields many times until midnight, you—”

The accusing mouth closed there, closed by the mighty impact of Dorian’s fist. The blood spurted from a gashed lip, and Mr. Lamont tried to defend himself. Again Dorian’s stinging blow fell upon the other’s face. Lamont was lighter than Dorian, but he had some skill as a boxer which he tried to bring into service; but Dorian, mad in his desire to punish, with unskilled strength fought off all attacks. They grappled, struggled, and fell, to arise again and give blow for blow. It was all done so suddenly, and the fighting was so fierce, that Dorian’s fellow travelers did not get to the scene before Jack Lamont lay prone on the ground from Dorian’s finishing knockout blow.

“Damn him!” said Dorian, as he shook himself back into a somewhat normal condition and spat red on the ground. “He’s got just a little of what’s been coming to him for a long time. Let him alone. He’s not seriously hurt. Let’s go.”

CHAPTER TWENTY.

On a Saturday afternoon in early July Dorian and a neighbor were coming home from a week’s absence up in the hills. They were on horseback, and therefore they cut across by way of the new road in course of construction between Greenstreet and the city.

The river was high. The new bridge was not yet open for traffic, but horses could safely cross. As the two riders passed to the Greenstreet side, they saw near the bridge down on the rocks by the rushing river, an automobile, overturned and pretty well demolished. Evidently, someone had been trying to reach the bridge, had missed the road, and had gone over the bank, which at this point was quite steep.

The two men stopped, dismounted, and surveyed the wreck. Someone was under the car, dead or alive, they could not tell. Dorian unslung his rope from his saddle, and took off his coat. “I’ll go down and see,” he said.

“Be careful,” admonished the other, “if you slip into the river, you’ll be swept away.”

Dorian climbed down to where the broken machine lay. Pinned under it with his body half covered by the water was Mr. Jack Lamont. He was talking deliriously, calling in broken sentences for help. Dorian's hesitancy for an instant was only to determine what was the best thing to do.



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“Hold on a bit longer, Mr. Lamont,” said Dorian; but it was doubtful whether the injured man understood. He glared at his rescuer with unseeing eyes. Part of the automobile was already being moved by the force of the stream, and there was danger that the whole car, together with the injured man, would be swept down the stream. Dorian, while clinging to the slippery rocks, tried to pull the man away, but he was so firmly pinned under the wreck that he could not be moved. Dorian then shouted to his companion on the bank to bring the rope and come to his assistance; but even while it was being done, a great rush of water lifted the broken car out into the stream. Lamont was released, but he was helpless to prevent the current from sweeping him along.

Dorian reached for the man, but missed him and stepped into a deep place. He went in to his arms, but he soon scrambled on to a shallower point where he regained his balance. The unconscious Lamont was beginning to drift into the current and Dorian knew that if he was to be saved he must be prevented from getting into the grasp of the mid-stream. Dorian took desperate chances himself, but his mind was clear and his nerves were steady as he waded out into the water. His companion shouted a warning to him from the bank, but he heeded it not. Lamont’s body was moving more rapidly, so Dorian plunged after it, and by so doing got beyond wading depths. He did not mind that as he was a good swimmer, and apparently, Mr. Lamont was too far gone to give any dangerous death grip. Dorian got a good hold of the man’s long hair and with the free arm he managed to direct them both to a stiller pool lower down where by the aid of his companion, he pulled Lamont out of the water and laid him on the bank. He appeared to be dead, but the two worked over him for some time. No other help appeared, so once more they tried all the means at their command to resuscitate the drowned.

“I think he’s gone,” said Dorian’s companion.

“It seems so. He’s received some internal injury. He was not drowned.”

“Who is he, I wonder.”

“His name is Jack Lamont.”

“Do you know him?”

“I know him. Yes; let’s carry him up the bank. We’ll have to notify somebody.”

The man was dead when he was laid on the soft warm grass. Dorian covered the lifeless form with his own coat.

“I’ll stay here,” suggested Dorian’s companion, “while you go and telephone the police station in the city. Then you go right on home and get into some dry clothes.”



Dorian did as he was told. After reaching the nearest telephone, and delivering his message, he went on home and explained to his mother what had happened. Then he changed his clothes.

“What a terrible thing!” exclaimed his mother. “And you also might have been drowned.”

“Oh, no; I was all right. I knew just what I could do. But the poor fellow. I—I wish I could have saved him. It might have been a double salvation for him.”



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The mother did not press him for further explanations, for she also had news to tell. As soon as Dorian came from his room in his dry clothes, she asked him if he had seen Brother Duke on the way.

“No, mother; why?”

“Well, he was here not long ago, asking for you. Carlia, it seems, has had a nervous break down, and the father thinks you can help.”

“I’ll go immediately.”

“You’ll have some supper first. It will take me only a moment to place it on the table.”

“No, mother, thank you; after I come back; or perhaps I’ll eat over there. Don’t wait for me.” He was out of the house, and nearly running along the road.

Dorian found Carlia’s father and mother under great mental strain. “We’re so glad you came,” they said; “we’re sure you can help her.”

“What is the matter!”

“We hardly know. We don’t understand. This afternoon—that Mr. Jack Lamont—you remember him—he used to come here. Well, he hasn’t been around for over a year, for which we were very thankful, until this afternoon when he came in his automobile. Carlia was in the garden, and she saw him drive up to the gate. When he alighted and came toward her, she seemed frightened out of her wits, for she ran terror stricken into the house. She went up to her bedroom and would not come down.”

“He did not see her, then, to talk to her?”

“No; he waited a few moments only, then drove off again.”

“Where is Carlia now?”

“Still up in her room.”

“May I go up to her?”

“Yes; but won’t you have her come down?”

“No, I’d rather go up there, if you don’t mind.”

“Not at all. Dorian, you seem the only help we have.”

He went through the living room to the stairway. He noticed that the bare boards of the stairs had been covered with a carpet, which made his ascending steps quite



noiseless. Everything was still in Carlia's room. The door was slightly ajar, so he softly pushed it open. Carlia was lying on her bed asleep.

Dorian tiptoed in and stood looking about. The once bare, ugly room had been transformed into quite a pretty chamber, with carpet and curtains and wall-paper and some pretty furniture. The father had at last done a sensible thing for his daughter.

Carlia slept on peacefully. She had not even washed away the tear-stains from her cheeks, and her nut-brown hair lay in confusion about her head. Poor, dear girl! If there ever was a suffering penitent, here was one.

In a few moments, the girl stirred, then sensing that someone was in the room, she awoke with a start, and sprang to her feet.

"It's only Dorian," said he.

"Oh!" she put her hand to her head, brushing back her hair.

"Dorian, is it you?"

"Sure, in real flesh and blood and rusty-red hair." He tried to force cheerfulness into his words.



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"I'm so glad, so glad it's you."

"And I'm glad that you're glad to see me."

"Has he gone? I'm afraid of him."

"Afraid of whom, Carlia?"

"Don't you know? Of course you don't know. I—"

"Sit down here, Carlia." He brought a chair; but she took it nearer the open window, and he pushed up the blind that the cool air might the more freely enter. The sun was nearing the western hills, and the evening sounds from the yard came to them. He drew a chair close to hers, and sat down by her, looking silently into the troubled face.

"I'm a sight," she said, coming back to the common, everyday cares as she tried to get her hair into order.

"No, you're not. Never mind a few stray locks of hair. Never mind that tear-stained face. I have something to tell you."

"Yes?"

"You said you were afraid, afraid of Mr. Jack Lamont."

"Yes," she whispered.

"Well, you never need be afraid of him again."

"I—I don't understand."

"Jack Lamont is dead."

She gave a startled cry.

"Dorian—you—?"

"No; I have not killed him. He was and is in the hands of the Lord." Then he told her what had happened that afternoon.

Carlia listened with staring eyes and bated breath. And Dorian had actually risked his life in an attempt to save Jack Lamont! If Dorian only had known! But he would never know, never now. She had heard of the fight between Dorian and Lamont, as that had been common gossip for a time; but Carlia had no way of connecting that event with herself or her secret, as no one had heard what words passed between them that day, and Dorian had said nothing. And now he had tried to save the life of the man whom he



had so thoroughly trounced. “What a puzzle he was! And yet what a kind, open face was his, as he sat there in the reddening evening light telling her in his simple way what he had done. What did he know, anyway? For it would be just like him to do good to those who would harm him; and had she not proved in her own case that he had been more patient and kind to her after her return than before. What did he know?”

“Shall I close the window?” he asked. “Is there too much draught?”

“No; I must have air or I shall stifle. Dorian, tell me, what do you know about this Mr. Lamont?”

“Why, not much, Carlia; not much good, at any rate. You know I met him only a few times.” He tried to answer her questions and at the same time give her as little information as possible.

“But Dorian, why did you fight with him?”

“He insulted me. I’ve explained that to you before.”

“That’s not all the reason. Jack Lamont could not insult you. I mean, you would pay no attention to him if only yourself were involved.”

“Now, Carlia, don’t you begin to philosophize on my reasons for giving Jack Lamont a licking. He’s dead, and let’s let him rest in as much peace as the Lord will allow.”



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“All right.”

“Now, my dear, you feel able to go down and have some supper. Your father and mother should be told the news, and perhaps I can do that better than anybody else. I’ll go with you, and, if your mother has something good for supper, I’ll stay.”

But the girl did not respond to his light speech. She sat very still by the window. For a long, long time—ages it seemed to her, she had suffered in silent agony for her sin, feeling as if she were being smothered by her guilty secret. She could not bring herself to tell it even to her mother. How could she tell it to anyone else, certainly not Dorian. And yet, as she sat there with him she felt as if she might confide in him. He would listen without anger or reproach. He would forgive. He—her heart soared, but her brain came back with a jolt to her daily thinking again. No, no, he must not know, he must never know; for if he knew, then all would surely be over between them, and then, she might as well die and be done with it!

“Come, Carlia.”

She did not even hear him.

But Dorian must know, he must know the truth before he asked her again to marry him. But if he knew, he would never urge that again. That perhaps would be for the best, anyway. And yet she could not bear the thought of sending him away for good. If he deserted her, who else would she have? No; she must have him near her, at least. Clear thinking was not easy for her just then, but in time she managed to say:

“Dorian, sit down.... Do you remember that evening, not so long ago, when you let me ‘browse’, as you called it, among Uncle Zed’s books and manuscripts?”

“Yes; you have done that a number of times.”

“But there is one time which I shall remember. It was the time when I read what Uncle Zed had written about sin and death.”

“O, I had not intended you to see that.”

“But I did, and I read carefully every word of it. I understood most of it, too. ‘The wages of sin is death’—That applies to me. I am a sinner. I shall die. I have already died, according to Uncle Zed.”

“No, Carlia, you misapply that. We are all sinners, and we all die in proportion to our sinning. That’s true enough; but there is also the blessed privilege of repentance to consider. Let me finish the quotation: ‘The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord’; also let me add what the Lord said about those who truly repent; ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow;



though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool'. That is a great comfort to all of us, Carlia."

"Yes; thank you, Dorian.... but—but now I must tell you. The Lord may forgive me, but you cannot."

"Carlia, I have long since forgiven you."

"Oh, of my little foolish ways, of course; but, Dorian, you don't know—"

"But, Carlia, I do know. And I tell you that I have forgiven you."



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“The terrible thing about me?”

“The unfortunate thing and the great sorrow which has come to you, and the suffering—yes, Carlia, I know.”

“I can’t understand your saying that.”

“But I understand.”

“Who told you?”

“Mrs. Whitman.”

“Have you been there?”

“Yes.”

“Dorian!” She stared past him through the open window into the western sky. The upper disk of the sun sank slowly behind the purple mountain. The flaming underlining of a cloud reflected on the open water of the marshland and faintly into the room and on to the pale face of the girl. Presently, she arose, swayed and held out her arms as if she was falling. Dorian caught her. Tears, long pent up, save in her own lonely hours, now broke as a torrent from her eyes, and her body shook in sobs. Gone was her reserve now, her holding him away, her power of resistance. She lay supinely in his arms, and he held her close. O, how good it was to cry thus! O, what a haven of rest! Would the tears and sobs never cease?... The sun was down, the color faded from the sky, a big shadow enveloped the earth.

Then when she became quieter, she freed her arms, reached up and clasped her hands behind his neck, clinging to him as if she never wanted to leave him. Neither could speak. He stroked her hair, kissed her cheeks, her eyes, wiped away her tears, unaware of those which ran unhindered down his own face....

“Carlia, my darling, Carlia,” he breathed.

“Dorian, Oh, Dorian, *how—good—you—are!*”

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE.

It was a day in June—nearly a year from the time of the “understanding”—a day made more beautiful because of its being in the mountains and on a Sunday afternoon. Dorian and Carlia lived in the midst of its rarity, seated as they were on the grassy hillside overlooking the dry-land farms near at hand and the valley below, through which tumbled the brook. The wild odor of hill plants mingled with the pungent fragrance of

choke-cherry blossoms. The air was as clear as crystal. The mountains stood about them in silent, solemn watchfulness, strong and sure as the ages. The red glowed in Carlia's lips again, and the roses in her cheeks. The careworn look was gone from her face. Peace had come into her heart, peace with herself, with the man she loved, and with God.

Dorian pointed out to her where the wild strawberries grew down in the valley, and where the best service berries could be found on the hills. He told her how the singing creek had, when he was alone in the hills, echoed all his varied moods.

Then they were silent for a time, letting the contentment of their love suffice. For now all barriers between these two were down. There was no thought they could not share, no joy neither trouble they could not meet together. However, they were very careful of each other; their present peace and content had not easily been reached. They had come "up through great tribulation," even thus far in their young lives. The period of their purification seemed now to be drawing to a close, and they were entering upon a season of rest for the soul.

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“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” This promise is surely not limited to that hoped-for future time when we shall have laid aside mortality, but the pure in heart see much of God here and now—see Him in the beauty of hill and dale, in cloud and blue sky, in placid pool and running water, in flowers and insect, and in the wonderful workings of the human heart! And so Dorian Trent and Carlia Duke, being of the pure in heart, saw much of God and His glory that afternoon.

Then they talked again of the home folks, of Mildred Brown, and of Uncle Zed; and at length came to their own immediate affairs.

That fall Dorian was to enter the University. The farm at Greenstreet would have to be let to others, but he thought he could manage the dry-farm, as most of the work came in vacation season. Mrs. Trent did not want to leave her home in the country; but she would likely become lonesome living all by herself; so there would always be a room for her with Dorian and Carlia in the little house they would rent near the school. Then, after the University, there would be some Eastern College for a period of years, and after that, other work. The task Dorian had set before him was a big one, but it was a very important one, and no one seemed to be doing it as yet. He might fail in accomplishing what he and Uncle Zed and perhaps the Lord had in mind regarding him, but he would do his very best, anyway.

“You’ll not fail,” the girl at his side assured him.

“I hope not. But I know some men who have gone in for all the learning they could obtain, and in the process of getting the learning, they have lost their faith. With me, the very object of getting knowledge is to strengthen my faith. What would it profit if one gains the whole world of learning and loses his soul in the process. Knowledge is power, both for good and for ill. I have been thinking lately of the nature of faith, the forerunner of knowledge. I can realize somewhat the meaning of the scripture which says that the worlds were framed and all things in them made by the power of faith. As Uncle Zed used to say—”

“You always put it that way. Don’t you know anything of your own?”

“No; no one does. There is no such thing as knowledge of one’s own making. Knowledge has always existed from the time when there has been a mind to conceive it. The sum of truth is eternal. We can only discover truth, or be told it by someone who has already found it. God has done that. He comprehends all truth, and therefore all power and all glory is found in Him. It is the most natural thing in the world, then, that we should seek the truth from the fountain head or source to us, and that is God.”

Although it was after the usual time of the Sunday sermon, Dorian felt free to go on.



“When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?’ I hope to help a little to make the answer, Yes. I know of nothing which the world needs more than faith. Not many are specializing in that field. Edison is bringing forth some of the wonders of electricity; Burbank is doing marvelous things in the plant world; we have warriors and statesmen and philosophers and philanthropists and great financiers a-plenty; we have scientists too, and some of them are helping. Have you ever heard of Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin?”



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No; she never had.

“Well”—and Dorian laughed softly to himself at the apparent egotism of the proposition —“I must be greater than either of them. I must know all they know, and more; and that is possible, for I have the 'Key of Knowledge' which even the most learned scholar cannot get without obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.”

Carlia silently worshiped.

“Now,” he continued in a somewhat lighter vein, “do you realize what you are doing when you say you will be my wife and put up with all the eccentricities of such a man as I am planning to be? Are you willing to be a poor man’s wife, for I cannot get money and this knowledge I am after at the same time? Are you willing to go without the latest in dresses and shoes and hats—if necessary?”

“Haven’t I heard you say that the larger part of love is in giving and not in getting?” replied she.

“Yes, I believe that’s true.”

“Well, then, that’s my answer. Don’t deny me the joy I can get by the little I can give.”

The sun was nearing the western mountains, the sharpest peaks were already throwing shadows across the valley.

“Come,” said Dorian. “We had better go down. Mother has come out of the cabin, and I think she is looking for us. Supper must be ready.”

He took Carlia’s hand and helped her up. Then they ran like care-free children down the gentler slopes.

“Wait a minute,” cried Carlia, “I’m out of breath. I—I want to ask you another question.”

“Ask a hundred.”

“Well, in the midst of all this studying, kind of in between the great, serious subjects, we’ll find time, will we not, to read 'David Copperfield'—together?”

He looked into her laughing eyes, and then kissed her.

“Why, yes, of course,” he said.

Then they went on again, hand in hand, down into the valley of sunshine and shadow.

THE END.