



THE PURITAN CHILD.

PROMISES.

IT is a common practice for parents and teachers to bind children down to good behavior by exacting a promise from them, and almost all reforms involve a pledge. As I have before said, from my earliest years I had a dread of making a promise. It seemed to me, in my exaggerated consciousness, that some perilous catastrophe might supervene if I should break my word; and so it would, for the sacred world of pure truth would have been destroyed. I never knew what it was to tell a lie, or violate the truth in any way. Some writer has said all children are liars. I do not believe it; they are made such by fear or by example; if honestly and kindly, and judiciously treated, they will return candid developments.

I remember there was a collection of old books on a high shelf in a closet at my grandfather's, which I stumbled upon in my quest for something to read. I was perched in mid-air devouring "Tom Jones," when my grandmother found me. I was nine years old.

"Elizabeth, those books are not good reading for a little girl," and she took the volume from my hand. "Promise, child; you will not touch them again."

"Grandma, grandma, it is beautiful reading; I can't promise, never," and I ran off to escape the promise.

It was not long before I was reading again, but not slyly; I said openly, "I am reading the book again." Addison was given me, but the book of story and dialogue and poetry failed to interest me. I read Fielding, Smollet, Le Sage, Richardson, and "Don Quixote"; the latter cost me many a tear. I loved the Don and

hated Sancho, so true are the intuitions of a child. I wept over the "Death of Abel," read Werter, and thought Charlotte stupid. Many of these works I did not read again for twenty years, but at the time of which I speak, I had no conception of the amount or intimation of the indecency lurking about some of them. A pure-minded child lacks the key to evil.

I read Doddridge, Allan's "Alarm," Baxter, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and "Robinson Crusoe," all in the same breath.

As this subject is associated with that of veracity, I will relate an incident as illustrative, and indicating the quality of our household. I was six years old, and we children in the nursery were turning somersaults from one bed to the other. In the course of these evolutions I stuck my foot through the window, cutting it not a little. Seeing how it was, my step-sister, in the goodness of her heart, ran down-stairs to inform my mother.

"What did she say about the window?" I eagerly inquired. "What did you tell her?"

"I told her I had broken a pane of glass, and cut *your* foot, and all that."

"You broken it, Eleanor! What did ma say?"

Eleanor looked comical. "Of course she said she was sorry, and all that, but as I had been such a good girl, to come and tell the truth, that was enough about it."

It was now my turn to run down and give the right version of the affair, which was settled with the usual homily denouncing all deceit and falsehood, even

for a good motive, as in itself evil. It has been said that children are natural liars, as I before remarked. I do not think so. Few are heroic, and they lie from fear, interest, or vanity.

SECOND MARRIAGE.

I think I have not before mentioned that after the death of my father my mother, in due course of time, married again, when I was little more than two years and a half old. I remember even at that early age the pain I felt at some unkind manifestations on the side of my father's family against my mother at this time. I had new dresses, my mourning taken off, and was the object of great pettings and indulgence, but the under-current of disaffection troubled me. Children suffer thousands of times by the indiscreet discontent of those about them, and thus a needless shadow is cast upon their sunshine. The new experiences superinduced by the changes of their elders, are things to which they do not easily adjust themselves.

My sister and I went eagerly to work to make the new sister and little brother (for the step-father was a widower), perfectly happy, but I had to study them to see how they conformed to my preconceived ideas of grace and prettiness, and I was some time in getting used to them. I felt also many misgivings about myself, and consulted the looking-glass in a sort of dread that they might dislike my looks; but as they never thought anything about it, matters turned out comfortably.

The step-father was a kindly-hearted, hospitable, generous man, who used to say playfully, "I am king of the ship, and Sophy is queen of the house"; so all things moved in harmony in the little household kingdom. We children were taught to run and open the door at his approach; to place a chair for him, and meet him with kisses. He was fond of me from the first, and instinctively penetrated my extreme sensitiveness and my habit of trying to find out the meaning of everything, which seemed greatly to amuse him.

When his vessels came into port they

brought us something from foreign ports, so that our store-room was not only filled with the common necessities of a family, but with the fruits and luxuries of every climate. I was a dainty child from the first, and lived in a great degree upon milk and fruits; and having oranges, pine-apples, and bananas added to our home apples and vegetables, afforded me a keen sense of enjoyment.

Notwithstanding this abundance, we children were never pampered; never allowed any idle lavishment. We had each of us beautiful manilla bags and baskets, and I remember the delight we felt when these were filled with oranges, lemons, etc., and we were deputed to carry them to the sick or disabled; to some lonely widow, some dejected spinster, who would else be totally neglected. Trifles of this kind were not wanting to wealthy friends, but their gifts were mostly for the diseased, the poor, and distressed. I was supposed to do my "spiriting" in a more acceptable way than the other children, hence I was more frequently sent on these errands of mercy; but at one time I fell into hopeless disgrace in this very connection.

A DISASTER.

Among the beneficiaries of my mother was an excellent widow lady who had been ruined by the war of 1812, the embargo having made the vessels of her husband to be laid up high and dry. She was also a beneficiary of the church to which my mother belonged. She had been ailing many years, but was lovely in her patience and piety.

I was eight or nine years old at this time, and had imbibed a horror of sickness and disease. I had no physical pains myself, and thought there should be none; they seemed unnecessary and unnatural. This did not preclude pity for the sufferers, though I felt internally that they ought to die. I could see no reason why persons should be stretched out year by year, in white caps and clean linen, and people to go round their bed in perpetual care for them, and they not in the least to mind it, when I thought it would be

so easy to die. This was the under-current of my crude thoughts, and will explain what followed.

On my way to school I was almost daily deputed by my mother to carry some tempting morsel for the weakened appetite of the invalid, and with instructions to inquire as to her health; accordingly, I one morning wended my way thither, in company with a little school-mate, who was pouring into my willing ear some breathless piece of confidential gossip. We knocked at the door, which was so suddenly opened that my polite message was not forthcoming, and I blundered out: "Ma's compliments, and these oranges and pie to Mrs. Fenton; and she wants to know if she's dead yet."

The daughter of the widow eyed me savagely, as I well merited; and I, always so sensitive to any blameworthiness, was ready to sink into the earth. My companion giggled. At length the daughter found tongue:

"I shall go this very day, Miss, and tell your mother"; and she jerked away at the pretty basket with violence, but I soon recovered my self-possession and replied:

"I am very sorry, indeed, ma'am, and ashamed; I shall tell my mother myself, as soon as school is done," whereat she slammed the door in my face.

She was as good as her word, and made a special errand to the house to inform against me. I was ill at ease through the long school hours, and at the earliest moment hurried home to make confession, which was half atonement with my mother, who forgave me, but did not for several weeks send me on these pleasant missions.

Alluding to the luxuries of our store-room, I well remember the disgust I used to feel at witnessing the avidity with which school children crunched apples and raisins and nuts, biting after each other, and even taking *spruce gum* from a companion's mouth. These animal demonstrations were repugnant to my taste, and not at all *nice*, which was a favorite word at this time.

MY DEMENTED FRIEND.

The life of an observing child is full of incident. In the neighborhood was an insane woman, who inherited this sorrowful malady from a long list of ancestry. She was very nice in her person, and delicate in her tastes, and went about with a short scarlet cloak and hood. The children were all afraid of her, for she abhorred dirty hands and nails; if she caught one in that condition alone, she would scour the offending member till the blood came. One day the family were all away, and several little girls of the neighborhood were passing the holiday with us, when a loud knock came to the door, and upon reconnoitering it was found that "crazy Mrs. Stevens" was there, and we knew she would break the windows if not admitted, and if admitted there was no knowing what cruel mischief she might do us.

Now I never was afraid of this poor demented woman, who from some reason or other was fond of me, and would throw her cloak and hood over me and call me Little Red Riding Hood. I opened the door after stipulating that she would be good and kind, but the other children all hid themselves. This enraged her, and she began to call and threaten them, at which I told her I would walk part of the way home with her if she would be good. This she promised, and throwing her cloak and hood over my seven years' head we went out. She was very gentle for about half a mile, when we reached an eminence a long distance from any house, and she seized me by the wrist to drag me down the hill. I stood my ground and looked her in the eye, at which she let go her hold, and I said firmly: "Now, Mrs. Stevens, I shall go no further"; and I took off the cloak, at which she sat down on a rock and began to cry. I waited till she moved onward, and remember the pity I felt as she went over the lonely road in the dusky light, weeping. I was sorely perplexed about her, for I had imbibed the idea that she was possessed by a devil, and I felt no

scruple in commanding her, and tried to impress upon my mates that the poor woman being thus possessed ought to be *resisted*, for the devil and his works occupied a large space in the teachings of a Puritan child.

MY SNAKE.

About the same time I had an experience that was connected with this belief. We children and those of the neighborhood met together in fine weather to play games incident to our age, a favorite one of which was hide-and-seek, abbreviated to "coop," that being the cry when we hid. One evening I was *coop*, and had hidden myself down behind a large tank placed under a spout from the *porch* for the sake of rain-water. Hardly had I cried coop, when lifting my eyes I beheld an immense black snake towering from the opposite side of the tank. Did I run and scream? By no means. That was not the way of a Puritan child of hereditary stamp, and full of Bible reading. I sprang to my feet and confronted the enemy manfully, his head above mine. I uttered in perfect faith and in low, firm tones, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," at which he slunk aside and I saw him no more.

I related the circumstance, and was as usual met with the response: "It was your imagination, Elizabeth. It was most likely a pole standing against the tank."

A few evenings afterward, however, we were playing the same game, when we were alarmed at the loud shrieks of one of the children, who ran frantically to the house, saying, "There is a great snake drinking out of the tub." Search was made, but nothing found; and my little "I told you so," did not avail. However, the next day the underpinning rocks of the porch were removed, and there, in his black coils, was found a huge snake, which might have made the little dark cellar his den for years. Thus was I vindicated from the imputation of being misled by my imagination, which was always a trial to me.

MENTAL PHENOMENA.

The renowned metaphysician, John Locke, in his conduct of the understanding, speaks of a mental phenomenon, which I am inclined to believe is by no means uncommon to children, and which is the cause of many mental states and much of vague uncontrollable terror. Locke seems to imply that these experiences are confined to adults and are consequent upon the use of tea. Now I, as a child, never took stimulants of any kind; never tea, coffee, cider, wine, or brandy; nothing stronger than milk or water, yet I was haunted by a succession of images floating before my mental vision, pleasant or otherwise; a procession that never stayed; never looked their eyes into mine, but passing, passing in endless variety.

For a long while these images were "beautiful exceedingly," surpassing all the loveliness of my poetic fancies; and I, trained in the spiritual, solemnly believed I saw the angels of God; saw those beings of whom Milton says:

"Myriads of spiritual beings walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

I used to say to my sister when we went to bed, "Now keep still, sister, so that I may see my angels," and she would lie motionless for a while, and then ask in a whisper: "Have they come, sister? How do they look?" which I could describe rather negatively. "They never have a turned-up nose, sister, nor big lips; they are nice, with blue, dark eyes, and golden hair."

But "a change came o'er the spirit of my dream," consequent, I suppose, to an approaching period of exhaustion. Images that hitherto had been only beautiful were all of a sudden transformed into hideous, distorted shapes, with lolling tongues and wide, ugly mouths, red eyes and elfin black locks. These did not frighten me, but they gave me a sense of mortification, for I firmly believed these were devils. Of course they were devils. I was educated in full faith as to these

evil spirits, that wandered up and down the earth like a roaring lion, seeking whom they might devour. To my mind it was no more anomalous for me to see spirits of darkness than spirits of light. The only difference was, that the latter indorsed my spiritual state and rather flattered my vanity, while the former seriously wounded my self-love, the more as I conceived them to be poor, miserable, impish creatures, devils of the meaner sort. I read the first chapter of Job, and even then felt that the satan there spoken of must be a better sort of devil than mine were.

My sister nightly inquired about my spirits and grew uneasy about this change, *but I held to my integrity*, and explained to her that the devils did not come to me because of my badness, but to tempt me and frighten me because I was a weak, good little girl—an opinion in which she coincided, and gave me all possible aid and comfort. As I recall this period, and remember us two children, my sister under eight years, and I less than six, lying at night in our little bed, discussing grave theological questions, penetrating moral and religious states, simple and tender, and sleeping with a sense of a father gone onward to the beyond, it strikes me as something very weird, for we two lived our best life together, devoid of other companionship in matters of this kind; but I am of opinion that most children have experiences akin, though perhaps less understandingly encountered.

At length came another aspect of my visions, and the image was a unit, not a succession of forms; one vast resplendent creature, majestic and darkly beautiful. No sooner did I close my eyes than he stood before me. His finger pointed onward, peering into the distance, which I intently strove to penetrate.

"Sister, satan has come," I would whisper, and we would lie in silence, till a placid sleep dispelled the image, and then I was up with the early morning, at my books, my "stint," my dolls, my swing, content and happy.

All this period I was doubtless over-

using my brain, but unconsciously doing so. I did not mope; had no ailments, and played as vigorously as my mates, and, except to my sister, rarely spoke of my good or evil visitants. I passed the spring and winter with my mother, and early in the summer went into the country to pass that period and the autumn at the old homestead with my grandmother.

My aunt describes me at this time, not yet six years old, as of slender make, with skin of transparent whiteness; no color in the cheek, but plump in flesh, eyes of a dark gray-blue, golden-brown hair, very abundant, and wavy. I was a general favorite, at home and abroad; petted by every one, yet children did not envy me, but seemed as if this were a matter of course that everything pretty and nice should come to me. My mother would say, "Everybody is bent upon spoiling that child." Before I go further, I ought to tell what came upon me when less than six years old.

A SAD EXPERIENCE.

I have an old "Reward of Merit" in the shape of a little volume presented to me at school by my teacher. It bears the date of June, and I would not be six years old till the next August. This meager child's book, "The History of the Holy Jesus," with its paper yellowed by time, its poor blurred type, and crabbed illustrations (what a contrast to a modern child's book!) brings back the whole sad period of which I am about to speak, all my unchildish grief, and unconscious precocity. I see the face of my kind teacher, Mr. Butler, with his stiff hair erect from his forehead, his pale face and pale blue eyes. I see the scholars with their eyes fixed upon me as I stood beside him and read in Scott's Lessons, and spelt from Morse's Dictionary, a child less than six years ranking with those three times my age. I see children twice my age, to my infinite pity and disgust, blundering through Webster's Spelling Book, and reading b-a-k-e-r. I am sure I felt no conceit nor vanity at my position,

for in my simple piety, I thanked God for helping me to learn, and giving me a love for it. I recall my little fervent prayers and thanksgivings, and my efforts to inspire my mates with a like spirit. Ah! children are naturally so religious and so desirous to be helpful!

There was a servant in the family named Philip, or "the man," as he was called, for Pilgrim people never called the "help" by the name of servant. In the experience I am about to describe this poor ignorant negro from the island of Guadaloupe, was a great help and comfort to me. When in any doubt or perplexity I used to follow Philip where he was at work on the grounds and expound my theories to him, and put hypothetical cases to him, and somehow he assured me, though he was apt to take my own version of things and say: "Oh! Miss Elizabeth, you must be right, for the dear God helps you."

I had a fair-complexioned step-sister, a cheerful, engaging child of robust health, equable temper, and quite as forward as a little one of six years need be. While I was perched up in a high chair to make my head visible above the desk in the "first class," she was patiently struggling with words of two syllables. I used to offer to help her between school hours, but she would stick her tongue in her cheek, laugh, and point-blank reject my proffered aid, winding up with, "Don't bother." She was very sensible in all this, but it did not comport with my ideas of things, accordingly Eleanor became the subject of my most persistent prayers, even proposing that God should resume some of my knowledge and bestow it upon her. I grew very intent in this matter, for nothing was done by halves by me.

I presume my habits of thought and reflection had seriously undermined my nervous system, for about this time I became conscious of a hesitancy in my reading and recitations; I seemed to be "going back," the teacher said. Suddenly it flashed over me that God had granted my prayer, and Eleanor was to be helped

thereby. I watched her narrowly, and to my astonishment perceived that though I was fast losing, she had not gained. I think I soon ceased to think of her in this relation, for my own state was becoming most mortifying; I blundered till I was ashamed, and sank from class to class till I stood at the teacher's knee trying to learn the alphabet. I was completely humbled and forlorn. Mr. Butler, who regarded me as a show pupil, grew quite angry and threatened the ferule. He took my hand; I had never been subjected to blows. The blow never came, for I sank upon the floor in a dead swoon.

When I recovered consciousness I was lying in "the guest-room," filled with my schoolmates and my mother weeping over me, and all the neighbors waiting, doubting if "I would ever come to." Medical advice followed, and I remember only a delicious sense of ease, of rest. I had no desire to move; had no pain, no appetite for anything but bits of cracker and milk and fruit. I nearly lived upon oranges. I was treated most tenderly, and what was strange to me, remember I had no self-consciousness; no desire, no care for others; no prayers. Thoughts of these things floated indistinctly about me, but I was content to rest.

Gradually I must have grown strong, for I recall the image of good Philip as he went about the garden with me upon his shoulder; he was a wise, patient helper, always in search of something "to make Miss Elizabeth smile." My first sense of pain was in overhearing the children at school stumbling over their lessons, and I recalled the exclamation of my aunt: "Elizabeth, are you a fool!" What was I? I opened a book, and it was as unintelligible to me as the Chinese characters upon the tea-chest in the store-room.

My teacher told me I should "come round all right," and the Rev. Mr. Wines, our pastor, who visited the family frequently, related to me a similar incident that befell a classmate of his in college, "who went back and forgot all his learning, and had to learn his A B C again, but it all came back to him, and he be-

came a very great preacher, and a most holy man."

Such comfort, if comfort it could be called, would only be administered to a Puritan child with her deep spiritualism and incipient ambition. Even she was not comforted. A deadness, a kind of chaos came over her.

All this time my memory of what I had learned was unimpaired. I had forgotten only the symbols of learning. I remembered everything I had ever read with a painful distinctness, and was glad to sleep, that I might not think, and I did sleep, I am told, much and often, and without dreams. I shrank from my young playmates, and dreaded grown people, who wounded my little pride by their pitying looks. Good, ignorant Philip alone ministered gratefully, and his simple talk about flowers and birds, and my being just like them, was an inlet to something better than books. At length I was sent to my grandmother, where my mental state was never alluded to, and where I was allowed to be "as wild as a young Indian," as they phrased it. In this eager, extreme, idle existence I seem to

have forgotten it myself under new and beautiful experiences.

The summer months and autumn passed away, and as winter approached, my mother directed me to return home. My health was good; I had become plump, but there seemed little change in my mental condition. The children all went to school, but I was condemned to inaction. At length one winter evening Mr. Butler being at the house said to me "Elizabeth, I think you can read now." I had not looked at a book for months, and had no desire to do so. He produced a book from his pocket, and opened at the tender tribute of Mason to his dead wife. I at once recited:

"Speak, dead Maria! breathe a strain divine;

Even from the grave thou shalt have power to charm.

Bid them be chaste, be innocent like thee;

Bid them in duty's sphere as mockly move;

And if as fair, from vanity as free,

As firm in friendship, and as fond in love," etc.

Mr. Butler stopped me at this, and held the book to my eyes. I looked at the page, an intense glow passed over me, and I could read. It seemed like an electrical shock passing over me.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

THE SUNBEAM.

ONLY a little glimmering, dancing ray of light, but on its golden wings what blessings did it not bear. It came to the window of the room where all through the long dreary night the weary sufferer had restlessly tossed to and fro. The hired nurse had carefully closed the shutters, to exclude the light of the early morn, and availing herself of a few moments' rest, had fallen asleep in her chair. But notwithstanding all her precaution, the little sunbeam found one crack where it could peep through, and throw all its soft shimmering brightness full upon the face of the invalid. The sick woman gave a start of glad surprise, for it had been many weary days since even one ray of the glorious sunlight had fallen upon her vision. She spread out her thin, almost transparent hands to catch the genial

glow, and a faint smile passed over her emaciated face. Silently she feasted upon the golden brightness, as it whispered to her of the great blue arch above, and the earth with its carpet of green, awaking to new life and beauty at its touch; forgetting her pain, she sank into a quiet slumber. And when the physician came, a smile of satisfaction wreathed his lips, as he saw the improved state of his patient. Ah! Doctor, what all your drugs failed to do, that little golden messenger from heaven accomplished, for it wooed sweet sleep to the eyes that before had refused to close. It came to the cell of an innocent man condemned to death. As it glided through the heavy grates at the window, it found him in despair; his face buried in his hands, and his form writhing in agony at his fate; it struggled

the Clarks, and cost \$40,000. So, too, the great telescope bequeathed by Mr. Lick, the wealthy Californian, for an observatory in the Golden State, was committed to the careful hands of Clark & Sons, who claim to be able to produce an object-glass forty inches in diameter which in perfection of workmanship and performance will be satisfactory to the most exacting of astronomers.

WOMEN IN CIVILIZATION.—Social science affirms that woman's place in society marks the level of civilization. From its twilight in Greece, through the Italian worship of the Virgin, the dreams of chivalry, the justice of the civil law, and the equality of French society, we trace her gradual recognition; while our common law, as Lord Brougham confessed, was, with relation to women, the opprobrium of the age and of Christianity. For forty years, plain men and women, working noiselessly, have washed away that opprobrium; the statute-books of thirty States have been remodeled, and woman stands to-day almost face to face with her last claim—the ballot. It has been a weary and thankless, though successful, struggle. But if there be any refuge from that ghastly curse, the vice of great cities—

before which social science stands palsied and dumb—it is in this more equal recognition of woman. If, in this critical battle for universal suffrage—our father's noblest legacy to us, and the greatest trust God leaves in our hands—there be any weapon, which, once taken from the armory, will make victory certain, it will be, as it has been in art, literature, and society, summoning woman into the political arena.

But, at any rate, up to this point, putting suffrage aside, there can be no difference of opinion; everything born of Christianity, or allied to Grecian culture or Saxon law, must rejoice in the gain. The literary class, until half a dozen years has taken note of this great uprising only to fling every obstacle in its way. The first glimpse we get of Saxon blood in history is that line of Tacitus in his "Germany," which reads: "In all grave matters they consult their women." Years hence, when robust Saxon sense has flung away Jewish superstition and Eastern prejudice, and put under its foot fastidious scholarship and squeamish fashion, some second Tacitus, from the valley of the Mississippi, will answer to him of the Seven Hills, "In all grave questions we consult our women."

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

THE PURITAN CHILD.

THERE was one feature connected with the state of mind into which I had fallen, as described in the last chapter, that is not devoid of psychological significance. I was in perfect accord, in perfect

HARMONY WITH NATURE.

There was a lovely brook flowing through the farm, overhung with tall forest trees, and spanned by a rustic bridge. Here I would sit for hours, watching the speckled trout darting from the shadow of fantastic roots, and poising their fins in the amber-tinted water. The birds were not afraid of me, but picked up the

crumbs I scattered at my feet, the squirrel dropped his nuts in easy companionship, while the fox came to the verge of the wood with his little bark, at which I was pleased, not afraid. Even the snake, gliding amid the last year's leaves, became a theme for speculation, and I theorized much upon it, doubting if God was altogether good to make him without legs and arms, and I came to the conclusion that both must exist, but were hidden by the skin. Accordingly, having found a dead one on the ledge near the house, I made a little grave enclosed with shingles, and buried it, for I had

learned that the beetles and ants would soon pick its bones. Not many days elapsed before I examined the spot and found a beautifully prepared vertebræ, but no sign of limbs. I was shocked, and all afloat in my theories.

This sympathy with nature has been a marked feature of my life, and this, with my tendency at this early age to solitary speculations, was a natural sequence to the grave, earnest, secluded habits of my Pilgrim ancestors. Later in life this experience was in a measure renewed. In 1866, as noted in my journal, I was walking in our village, when I observed many birds flying about me. The old feeling of childhood came over me, and I held out my finger and said, *come*. Instantly one alighted upon it. A stranger seeing this said to me:

"You have recovered your pet, haven't you?"

I replied, "No, this is a wild bird."

He observed me with astonishment, ejaculating, "It looks like a miracle." Doubtless in the days of witchcraft I should have been denounced as a sorceress.

We had for several years in the garden a pair of king-birds which built their nest and reared their young upon a cherry-tree. My husband planted beneath it, and it was comical to see the parent birds by turns come down from the nest and light upon his hat or back, striking him with their wings. If I took the hoe or rake and worked there, they would quietly nurse their young, oblivious of my presence.

AIM AT PERFECTION.

Though with true Puritanic training and instincts, I early learned that people, even my ideals, were roughly handled, and I had even heard my idol mother criticised by persons who, seeing that I listened, would stop suddenly, saying, "Little pitchers have great ears," I early resolved that I would be an exception. I would be so utterly blameless that nobody would talk ill about me. I read over and over, "Be ye therefore perfect,

even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and so intent did I resolve to be this, that I with my pencil wrote down on the palm of my hand, some particular virtue to be cultivated for the time being. These were daily renewed, and I was quite surprised to see how easily my virtues fell into train. It seemed easy to be good, and I told people so, and they only laughed; but my mother checked me, and showed me that my virtues were small matters. This did not daunt me, and I used to think, "Well, I suppose we must begin small."

My greatest trial was an impetuosity, an impatience at impediment, a hearty indignation that often offended my taste, surprised those about me, and not a little awed my young companions. I was not capricious or violent—how could a Puritan child, born in the purple, be either?—but what looked wrong to me, unjust or mean, provoked an outburst not to be mistaken. I early felt ashamed of this, and one day when a child older than myself turned upon me and bit me, and told me if she was bad, it was none of my business (I was six years old then), it was like a revelation to me. I grew hateful to myself, and rather confused in my morals. I suppose when I was learning to read with my sister we used to read the alphabet, what was called "backwards and forwards," for I now began whenever I got angry to say the letters backwards, z-y-x-w, etc., which soon allayed my irritation.

Grown people often expend their anger mercilessly upon young children, but the Puritan household, most especially ours, was exempt from these outrages. *A stern, inflexible dignity*, that prevented collisions, was a trait of that period. This will account for a certain surprise and shame I experienced when perhaps ten or eleven years old, and my mother helped, with other ladies of the Rev. Mr. Payson's church, to organize

THE FIRST MATERNAL ASSOCIATION.

We children were carried at stated intervals, and became sometimes inter-

ested and sometimes indignant at the revelations there given of ill-tempered children, many of them my companions.

I remember well the staid, solemn aspect of these Puritan mothers, all of them fine representatives of the good old stock, strong, unflinching, reverential, but not sympathetic, and also the group of well-dressed, decorous little girls (for boys were not included), who sat so demurely on benches placed in the parlor of Mrs. Bartol. There were Mesdames Payson, Coe, Blanchard, and others of wealth and character, conspicuous among whom sat my handsome mother, eyeing her little brood with unwonted severity.

Knowing she disliked that abstract look native to me I tried to rouse myself, and soon became interested in the proceedings without making effort, most especially as L. P. sobbed and pouted while her mother detailed a long case of obstinacy on her part, and sound whippings which had been inflicted. I felt indignant, and inwardly resolved upon rebellion should my mother talk in that way. Fortunately I had no need, though others followed in a similar vein, she was becomingly reticent.

Mrs. Payson made a most eloquent, earnest prayer, which was followed by a hesitating, trembling one, rambling and incoherent, and though my mother was peculiarly gifted in this respect, I hoped she would be silent, which she was. Some of the children tittered at the little prayer, but I felt only sorrow and shame that anybody should be afraid to tell just what they wanted to the infinite Father.

As I look back and recall the images of those stern, conscientious women, keenly alive to the well-being of their children; anxious to lay the foundation of a national purity, no less than wholesome households, my heart warms tenderly and reverently toward them, and I see in their movement the germ of noble import, signifying more important results than have as yet been realized. I am sure that we must begin in the nursery if we would inaugurate reform.

I think about this period my mother fell

into a more formal method with her children, by reading books upon education—a mistake that I at one time made with my children in the same way.

MARTYRDOM.

The spring before I was ten years old, I renewed my study of Fox's "Book of the Martyrs," partly from lack of other reading and partly because of a certain mental misgiving that grew upon me, that I was a very weak sort of a girl, and most likely a coward. I tested myself in a variety of ways, such as holding my fingers in the flame of a lamp, and as I generally grew faint from the pain, I saw in this sensitiveness proof that I was a poor sort of a child, hardly entitled to the tenderness lavished upon me, and might on some great occasion abjure my faith, and renounce my convictions.

It will be remembered that I was not in religious accord with my Puritan mates from very early in life, and though not able to comprehend at this early age the progress of historic events, I had reached the idea that these saints and martyrs of which I read did not believe as the people about them, who were *powerful*, believed, and hence their suffering and terrible death.

We children were every week, either at home or in the church, called upon to say the Assembly's Catechism, which even at six years of age caused me a great deal of suffering. I there learned about the "Elect," and was much exercised to know if I were one. I had persisted in affirming that I was good. I said, "I never told a lie—I never stole anything—I was never disobedient—never unkind, and this is to be good, and if God does not love me, He is not good Himself." This shocked all my friends, and greatly annoyed my mother. At length in church it came to me to answer in the most objectionable, to my mind, part of the catechism, which implied that God would be justified in condemning the unelect to everlasting misery to all eternity. This awakened a terrible necessity for protest in my

mind, otherwise I should be false in uttering what I did not assent to.

It was a grievous moment—my usually white face grew pale; at length I articulated, "That is what is said in the book, but I do not think so," lisping the s's, which added to my discomfort.

"What did you say?" asked the pastor, leaning over the pew with its high balustrade, just higher than my head.

"That it what it thaid in the book, but I don't think tho."

I remember he drew his hand over his mouth, but said nothing. After church, or *meeting*, he took tea at our house, and I was somewhat startled when I was called upon "to talk with the minister." The good man took me trembling upon his knee and questioned me upon these theological points. He did not refer to my speech in meeting, but I saw by the penetrating look of my mother that he had told her. She had a half smile upon her face, which grew more grave as she heard my answers and dissents, so solemnly and courageously uttered. I said plainly that "a good God ought not to be pleased to see unhappy people," and then I burst into a torrent of unchildish tears.

I now recall this period—my convictions and my tears—and how I lost all confidence in any steadfastness on my part. With the old pain I ventured some little utterance of my state of mind to my sister, but she blamed me, and thought I ought not say "*one word against what was in the book*," and an ignorant neighbor, who undertook to set me right, told me I "was tempted of the devil." My little mates smirked and plumed themselves as being in better odor at Sunday-school than I was. I had read enough of history to see that there had been tyrants in the world, but I saw that the great struggles of nations were different from the persecution of individuals, and then I felt that I was just in the condition to do as those martyrs did. I must hold on to what I believed, or die as they did, or, what was worse, give up my truth. I was no philosopher, and had not learned the

progress of the ages, but I knew that my grandfather had been set aside from the church for rejecting some of the Calvinistic doctrines. I dared not ask questions, for everybody about had become tired of answering me. I knew there was deadly hostility to the Pope of Rome, and the wars of Napoleon and our wars with England, not clearly understood by a child of eight and nine years made all possibilities possible; accordingly I set myself resolutely to prepare for martyrdom. Weak as I felt myself to be, I could not renounce my convictions. Were not my ancestors steadfast? I had no fear in regard to my mental steadfastness, but I feared my poor little cowardly body would give up, and perhaps take my mind with it.

I am able to remember exactly my age in many incidents I relate, by the advent of half brothers and sisters, and by dates in books presented me by my teachers.

In view of the terrible contingencies to which I thought I should most certainly be subjected, I began, as I have said, to practice many little penances most painful to my sensitive nerves. I ran needles into my flesh; when by any accident I was injured, I forbore to mind the pain, but preserved a cheerful demeanor. Indeed I was marvelously happy, even exultant. Never more engaging and loving at home and with my mates, I was a true Puritan heroine, but in no way conscious of it.

One experience at this time was the source of so much ridicule and occasioned so much wonderment in the family, that I should have greatly suffered had I not schooled myself to endure.

My mother had been ill from pleurisy and a blister was applied. I made critical inquiries about this blister, and learned that the pain of drawing it was like fire burning into the flesh. This was just what my case required. I watched my opportunity and prepared a plaster of considerable size, which I applied just below the knee, and went to my pillow with exultant expectations of heroism. In the night I was awakened by the pain-

which I bore without moving a limb, lest I should waken my sister. I was very happy despite of pain, for I had learned that I could bear it.

At length came the hour of rising. I was conscious of lassitude, but did not anticipate anything serious. I jumped out of bed and began to draw on my stockings. I knew no more. I had fainted and was carried into my mother's room. The blister was found, amidst shouts of laughter from the doctor, and questions and wonderment on all sides. I was mortified and disappointed, but kept my secret in spite of a hundred conjectures and surmises. I wept convulsively and whispered to my mother: "I never can tell as long as I live what I did it for," at which she had me laid beside her in the bed and forbade further questioning. She never afterward importuned me in the matter, and treated me with great tenderness, having, as she told me long, long years after, partially divined the truth. This last experience finished my system of self-inflicted torture. Upon the whole I think this discipline was not lost upon me. We all have our martyrdoms in some way through life.

SENSITIVENESS.

From the first I was a most sensitive child. Pungent odors, whether agreeable or otherwise, caused me to faint. Lilac, hyacinth, honeysuckle, were too much for me, but the rose and lily gave me exquisite delight. I think had my taste allowed me to be more demonstrative I should have suffered less; but a Puritan child was expected to practice self-control in all things, and hence the reaction upon my overtaxed nervous system.

In reading of heroic, generous, or beautiful deeds, my cheek glowed and my pulse quickened, but this was repressed lest I should incur the ridicule of my companions. Cruelty, oppression, whatever was monstrous, in like manner produced pallor and cold chills; hence my early aversion to negro-slavery.

I was reading a description of tropical scenery, in which my imagination filled the picture with all the glow of scarlet blossoms, twining vines, and towering palms; in fact, was ascending an African river replete with all this affluence of beauty, when an immense boa-constrictor suddenly dropped from a lofty tree, crushing the men in its folds. The horror of the event, contrasting with the beauty of the scenery, caused me to drop the paper in a dead faint.

My mother had been much annoyed by this tendency of mine, and she brought me out of my swoon by a smart slap upon my shoulders, saying:

"Now, Elizabeth, you must learn to govern your feelings, or I shall slap you every time you faint away."

This method proved effectual, and I can never enough commend her wisdom and resolution in applying the remedy. Besides this action of the imagination, the harsh voices and discordant spheres of individuals caused me undefined and unexplained distress. In after years when I read Shakespeare, the passage where one of the witches cries out,

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes,"

recalled vividly my early consciousness, and my early self-reproach at the repugnance thus engendered with no apparent cause to justify it. I dreaded to be in the neighborhood of certain persons, and these apparently very good people, while old, simple-hearted, wicked Uncle Zeke, a miserable drunkard, filled me with a strange pity.

As a Puritan child will, I tried to reason this out, and had a misgiving that I disliked good people and loved wicked ones, because I was more like the latter class.

I could not bear to have people stroke down my head and kiss me. The first caused me pain, and the last seemed an impertinence, which, indeed, it not only is, but accustoms the child to familiarity. And here I began, in this connection, to adopt as a part of perfection for which I so longed, the much taught doctrine of

"taking up the cross." In view of this, what was repugnant to me I tried to accept. I ceased to shun disagreeable children and people, and if I could not do them good in any other way I made them the subject of my prayers, and tried to love them.

Children doubtless suffer from the *ill-conditioned spheres* of those about them, and are blamed and punished for irritability which is caused by this idiosyncrasy alone.

All the horrors of witchcraft, it is most likely, took their rise from this source, and the unhappy children of the Rev. Mr. Paris were of this sensitive kind, and did feel as if punctured by pins and needles when touched by certain persons, and finding themselves the object of unwonted sympathy, they with childish weakness magnified their sensations till the whole miserable record of persecution followed, and thus this tragic point of our history was the result of a perverted truth.

I think I perverted a Puritan dogma by my desire very early to save others the trouble of atoning for their shortcomings. When my little mates fell into difficulty I was distressed to see their trouble, and would intercede for them, and most especially pray that God would forgive them. I would comfort them by telling them that they need not cry or be unhappy about their ill-desert, for I would make it all right by my prayers. I took some persons under my wing in this way, most especially a poor reprobate of whom I have spoken,

OLD ZEKE.

He was not good, nor attractive in any sense, but he was fond of children, having always a pleasant word or some little trinket in his huge pockets to please those of them that he liked, for he was fastidious in his likings. He told brief stories of sea-life, and my father and step-father being both of them sea-captains, invested Old Zeke with a peculiar interest to my mind. He was terribly profane, using strong expletives to give force to his off-

hand narratives. He treated me with more respect than other children; never attempted to kiss me, never ran after me or attempted to touch me, and yet I learned early to see that he was not quite content if he did not see me every day. In this way, seeing him daily looking for me, when going to and from school, Old Zeke became a feature in my little life, and the subject of my Puritanic missionary efforts. My haughty mother knew nothing of this incongruous interest till she was told of a feat of mine to please my poor old ogre.

On my way to school I passed what is called a ship-yard, where were vessels owned by the family on the stocks, and where I watched the progress of the ship with childish curiosity, being hardly six years old, slender and light of foot, and fearless as a child need be. Here in the midst of tools, chips, and lumber, pervaded by a delicious odor of forest wood, sat Old Zeke ready to give me a cheery "good-day, Lady-bird," and challenge me to a race over the skeleton ship, a hundred feet from the ground.

Instantly I sprang into the mighty frame, up and aloft, from timber to timber, over long beams and rafters, never once dreaming of danger. "God bless the ship," I used to say as I went from stem to stern, then jumped down and away to school, amid shouts of admiration from the workmen, but most of all from Old Zeke. These hazardous races came to the ears of my mother, and of course were interdicted; had she said no more than, "I forbid you to do it," I should not have failed in obedience; but she spoke with contempt for the poor old mariner, and that aggrieved me.

I studied the matter over and became convinced that Old Zeke was not a bad, but an ignorant man. I grew to pity him in the painfulest degree, and as I was forbidden to stop on my way to school, I used the never-failing remedy for all griefs to a Puritan child, prayer. One whole summer I persisted in my efforts, morning, noon, and night, with ejaculations by the wayside, and yet I could per-

ceive no change, rather Old Zeke seemed to grow worse.

One morning on my way to school I walked directly up to my wicked friend and laid the case before him: how badly I felt about him; how earnestly I prayed that he might become a good man. He listened a while in utter silence. I observed his lips quivered, and his eyes were fixed upon my face. He at last threw up his two hands and burst into tears, and cried out:

"Now, hear her! Nobody cares for poor Old Zeke—nobody thinks about him—yet he will steer right into heaven, *conveyed* by this here angel."

I was relieved and comforted, and took my departure with a new word to be looked for in the dictionary, and to this day I never encounter the word *convoy* without remembering poor Old Zeke.

BIBLE.

I read this quite through in course twice before I was eleven years old, which was little more than other children did at that period. I conscientiously pronounced every word, and went on swimmingly with the Amorites, the Perizites, the Jebusites and Hittites. The beautiful choice of Solomon for neither riches nor honors, but only for wisdom, deeply affected me, and I at once placed the word, which I carefully studied out, among those written on the palms of my hands, and never did any anchorite pray more earnestly or constantly for the gift.

When about six years old, my dreams, always vivid, became haunted by images of death. One night I thought a vast, dark, shadowy figure stood over me, and said solemnly, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." I awoke, uncertain what it was. I looked eagerly about the nursery and everything was terribly distinct. All were hushed to sleep—my baby brother at my side—the lamp burning low upon the hearth—the faint embers of the fire—the porringer with its gleam of brightness—the door opening into my mother's room, where I could see her white frills and laces through an

opening in the curtains. A cold chill caused me to shake from head to foot, and I thought I was about to die. Contrary to my wont, I burst into a passion of sobs and tears, which brought my mother to me.

From this time I began to ask, "If I die, will I live again?" with unchildish misgivings. More than once I tried to put the point to some little girl older than I was, who stared at me with great, round eyes, and burst into cries, at which their friends severely reprimanded me, saying, "Elizabeth, don't you frighten her again with your strange talk."

How could I help feeling as I did, and talking as I did, with the blood of centuries of pious ancestors and Christian martyrs in my veins? Is it a wonder that the Puritan blood should utter itself through babes and sucklings?

My beautiful son, Edward, when about the same age, said to me, "Mamma, I believe just as you do about God, and Heaven, and that we don't all go to dust, but, oh mamma! what a terrible thing it would be if it is all a 'suck in.'" "Suck in" is a word with boys meaning a delusion or deceit.

THE SABBATH.

We were not allowed to call this day Sunday. The idea of rest was strictly observed. It was not an irksome day to me. On the contrary, I was free on that day to abandon myself to my deepest and most abstruse speculations. Saturday night all playthings were nicely housed, dolls and tea-cups and toys laid aside, no more to be looked at till Monday. Then followed the weekly bath, whatever the season, and Sunday morning the daily ablution was succeeded by the donning of the Sunday clothes, best hat and shoes, and every child over three years of age was on the way to church promptly at bell-ringing. It was a pretty Puritanic picture, wholesome, orderly, and reverential.

In those days people did not ride or walk for pleasure. They did not read the newspapers or novels; nothing but the Bible, and such works as Schougal's

"Life of God in the Soul of Man," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," Baxter's "Saint's Rest," and other works of the kind, which interested even me, partly from the thoughts, and partly from the rhythm of good prose.

My grandfather's house was something over two miles from the meeting-house, and there was on the Sabbath morning the general aroma of fresh linen through the rooms, and a staid aspect of preparation. The carriage was brought to the door, in which the fine representative Puritan pair went their way to meeting, preceded by the boy-of-all-work to open both gates through the wooded lawn to the public road. Maids and youths, and dependents of all ranks, took their way across the fields, through the woods and pastures, and over the rustic bridge in the same direction. The young girls carried a pair of white stockings and slippers in their hands, which left their white shapely feet to gleam through the green grass; arriving at the brook, the youth proceeded onward while the girls washed their feet and donned their slippers. All the way they sang in concert pious hymns, which were responded to by similar groups from other by-ways, all tending in the same direction.

Arriving at the meeting-house, decorous, subdued salutations were exchanged, and on the arrival of the slow, solemn-

moving pastor, each family, with much clatter of new shoes, and rustle of silk or starched garments, took their seats in their respective pews, which were a square enclosure with seats upon three sides, surmounted with an open balustrade. My grandmother had a chair and a cushion. All rose to prayers, and lifting the hinged seats leaned over the balustrade. The prayers were very long; the sermon the same, and such as would drive a modern congregation out of the house.

There was only an intermission of an hour, at which time the elders gathered under the eaves of the house—the men to discuss the sermon, and politics of the day, and the women interchanging neighborly civilities, all indulging in a delicious lunch. I was allowed to go with aunts and uncles a little distance to the pine grove around "The love home" of which I have spoken, where others were assembled; the youth of both sexes from miles around, and where were produced boxes and bags of home-made pies, doughnuts, cream biscuit, cheese, apples, and all the dainties of the season. Doubtless the usual coquetries, and rural rivalries, and love-makings prevailed even among these Puritans of the Puritans, but I was too young to understand them, and remember only the lovely voices singing holy psalms to the cadence of the whispering pines.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

"OLD AUNT DINAH AND HER BABIES."

THERE are some very queer people in this world, and "old Dinah," as she is called, is one of them. No wonder, poor soul! as she is not right in her mind. That is to say, she is crazy—not raving mad—oh! dear, no! but if any one should attempt to carry off one of her babies I would not like to answer for the consequences. What mother would like it? But to tell the truth she is not a mother at all, and her babies are nothing more than *six laurel sticks*, about the size of your wrist, and as long as your arm.

Aunt Dinah's skin is black, her nose broad and flat, with thick lips, and her hair so frizzy and gray that one would think she had just been ducking her head into a flour barrel. Of course her babies do not look one bit like her, and yet would you believe it? she thinks they are real flesh and blood, and the image of herself. Whereas, they are only wood, of a brown color, smooth and polished, where she has rubbed them with her hands for years, in tender caressing.

She has a name for each one, but that