

## Moore's Almanac.

### THE GOLDEN SIDE.

There is many a rest on the road of life,  
If we would only stop to take it;  
And many a tone from the better land  
If the querulous heart would wake it.  
To the sunny soul that is full of hope,  
And whose beautiful trust never faileth,  
The grass is green and the flowers are bright  
Though the wintry storm prevaileth.

Better to hope, though the clouds hang low,  
And to keep the eyes still lifted;  
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through,  
When the ominous clouds are rifted.  
There was never a night without a day,  
Nor an evening without a morning;  
And the darkest hour, the proverb goes,  
Is the hour before the dawning.

There is many a gem in the path of life,  
Which we pass in our idle pleasure,  
That is richer far than the jewelled crown  
Or the miser's hoarded treasure;  
It may be the love of a little child,  
Or a mother's prayer to Heaven,  
Or only a beggar's grateful thanks  
For a cup of water given.

Better to weave in the web of life  
A bright and golden filling,  
And to do God's will with a ready heart,  
And hands that are swift and willing,  
Than to snap the delicate silver threads  
Of our curious lives asunder;  
And then Heav'n lives for the tangled ends,  
And sit to grieve and wonder.

### FLORENCE O'NEILL;

### OR, THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK.

A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

#### CHAPTER III. MORVILLE GRANGE.

A WIND-LOOKING gloomy chamber was that into which St. John was at length ushered, together with the ex-tutor, after having passed up a spacious stone staircase, with heavy-oaken balustrades, and crossed several long corridors with apartments branching off both to right and left; but the cheerful blaze of a bright wood fire which burned in the ample stove gave an appearance of comfort, and the small inner apartment, communicating with that of the knight, had also been duly attended to. With a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction Sir Reginald threw himself into a chair beside the fire, and folding his arms, remained for some time lost in a gloomy reverie, not noticing the observant air of Benson, who, desirous of imparting to his companion the good advice he so much needed, now determined to abide by Sir Reginald as closely as in the days of his boyhood.

Do not suppose, however, that St. John put himself willingly under the surveillance of Benson, or patiently bore the infliction of his advice: the fact simply was, that he paid him that amount of respect and deference which one is wont to yield to those under whom we have been placed for a series of years, ranging from early youth to mature age. Moreover, Benson, introduced at first by the young knight to the notice of the Dutch king, had rapidly ingratiated himself in the service of the prince, so that the former friend and preceptor was converted, for the time being, into something very like a spy on the actions of Sir Reginald.

It was, indeed, to sound the opinions of the ease-seeking, comfort, timorous old baronet, that St. John had been deputed by the king with a gracious message, commanding his presence at Kensington, and likewise, was bade to express a hope that in the event of his aid being required, should there be real cause for apprehension of a rising in favour of James, that he would not fail to be ready both with men and money, according as circumstances might require.

William was cognizant of far more of his favourite Reginald's intentions than the latter was at all aware of, for Benson had apprised the king of his long-cherished attachment for Florence O'Neill; thus it was then, that the knight was closely watched, for the advancement of a certain purpose in view, had Benson been requested openly by the king to accompany him into Gloucestershire, and his proud spirit continually chafed under the infliction of the constant presence of one for whom he was fast ceasing to feel the slightest regard.

Long and patiently did Benson regard the man whose disposition he so well knew, and the feelings of whose heart at that moment, he could so clearly read; so deep, however, was the abstraction of the latter in his melancholy musings, that his attention was at last only roused by a movement purposely made by his companion.

"Are you grieving, man, because the Papist girl with the fair face will not have you; you, the favoured friend of our gracious king," said the fanatic, in harsh, low accents, "what can you be thinking of to seek a mate from such a nest as this? Did I not see to-night, with my own eyes, the Romish priest, Lawson, pass swiftly through the apartment by another door than that at which

we entered, and I know he recognised me too, for we were school-mates together before he had anything to do with Rome and her corruptions? That he was once my friend, matters not, for his superstitious creed makes him now my foe. And this fair-faced girl, with the mawkish blue eyes," he added, his voice sinking to a whisper, "it is a pity but that the gracious Mary knew not the treasonable things I have heard her say this night, I warrant me the Papist crew at St. Germain's would stand little chance of beholding her again; but as to you, the favourite of King William, and the beloved son of my adoption, you can surely think of her no more, for the Lord loves not to see his chosen ones wed with the daughters of Belial."

"Silence, Master Benson," said Reginald, rising as he spoke, his handsome countenance full of indignation, "remember, I am no longer the boy whom you lecture as your fancy pleases, but a man who does not please to regard or listen to offensive speeches; I tell you there lives not in the Court of Mary and William, a more pure or noble woman than she of whom you dare speak so lightly. Do not presume to mention her name again, and please to keep your fanaticism to yourself, do not trouble me with it, nor meddle about affairs with which you have nothing to do."

"Verily," replied Benson, rising and taking a lamp from the table in order to withdraw to the inner apartment destined for his use, "I tell you St. John, you do not know what is for your own good, and in your mad fondness for this girl, treat very ill one who loves you as well as I do; I fancy you must be aware King William will not long show you his favour if you aim no higher than to win the hand of this girl of a Papist brood, who is devoted soul and body to the miserable and besotted James."

"How dare you presume to taunt me with the interference of the king," exclaimed St. John, his temper now gaining complete mastery over him, "now understand once for all, Joshua Benson, our long friendship ends from this moment if you continue by word or action to presume to interfere with my affairs."

"Well, then, dear St. John, pardon me if the love I bear you has made me too zealous, I promise you I will not give you offence again, but at the same time, I shall strive with the Lord earnestly before I seek my rest this night, I will wrestle with Him in prayer, that you may escape the perils which I am certain will fall on you if you dally a moment longer than is requisite in this abode of Satan."

Benson spoke thus as he withdrew from the room, then entering the inner chamber he closed the door, stood for a moment warming his withered hands over the fire, and said, in a low voice, "I cannot help loving the man as I loved the boy; the evil which I feared years since has come to pass, and out of the very affection I bear him, I will place a barrier in his way which he will not be able to remove. He would not let me force him when a youth, surely not now; but never fear, I know how to gain my point by other means; once in London I can easily gain speech of the king, and if I do not mistake, all his fine plans will soon end in nothing."

Thus trying to gloss over his villainy under the specious pretence of affection for his benefactor and former pupil, Benson fell asleep, whilst cogitating over the means he should adopt to carry out his schemes.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### TRUE TO PRINCIPLE.

EARLY next morning Sir Reginald met his host at the breakfast table, but Florence was not visible, and he easily accounted for her absence, conscious that she must be aware that his visit to the Grange had been made to answer some political purpose or end of the Dutch monarch. A long and anxious conference it was, which the baronet held with his guest later in the morning in the privacy of his own apartment.

He was a timid, quiet county gentleman, caring not one jot about state affairs, scarcely heeding whether James the Second, or the usurping William sat upon the throne, so that he could but be quiet, and yet he was about to be dragged from his own home to have the questionable honour of an audience with the king, who could not get rid of the idea that the baronet, leading the life of a country gentleman, had it in his power to be of great service, if he would but conquer that absurd timidity, which he had been told had grown up with him from his youth. The time was come then when it appeared he must abandon his seclusion, and though until now, when he was turned sixty years of age, he never adopted any definite line of action; he was required to do so *instantly*, for his sovereign required the aid of all well-wishers to the present government.

"An honour, i'faith," he muttered to himself, "it is an honour then I would be very glad to decline accepting; his Majesty will make me pay dearly for it one way or another."

Sir Charles was, however, of a very hesitating disposition, and so in the end, Sir Reginald gained his point, and it was agreed that the baronet should in a very few days leave the Grange for London, where he would have the audience which the king wished to give him. In the evening, St. John was to take his leave, and as the day wore on he began to entertain some apprehensions lest he should not see Florence before his departure.

In this idea, however, he was mistaken, for chance brought that about which solicitation would not have procured. He had missed his way through the interminable galleries of the old house, and instead of returning to the room in which he had at last succeeded in exhorting the unwilling consent of the baronet to appear on the scene of public life, he entered the library, the door of which stood ajar. Florence was seated at a table unmindful of his presence, till he stood beside her, and extending his hand, he exclaimed:

"Dearest Florence, have I offended you beyond forgiveness? Is loyalty a virtue in you, and a sin in me? Grant me, at least, a hearing before we part, and allow me to feel some attachment for the king whose very name displeases you, even as you feel love for James Stuart and Mary of Modena? Do not shrink from me,