

WHAT ANSWER?

BY MRS. J. V. H. KOONS.

Adown thro' the ages comes sounding the cry, The question unanswered that "If a man die, shall he live again?" Who can tell? Who can tell? We know not, hope only that all will be true. If back to its elements passes the clay, That shelters the spirit for only a day, Why may not the soul, as the body, return To its elements too? But what do we learn, By questioning over and looking thro' tears To a past full of idols and blood-embalmed years? Though sweet lines of poetry run here and there, Like sunbeams of gold, thro' a cold, leaden air; Though sweet, mournful music from days that have passed, Still fall on the ear, healing hearts that have been dead; Though 'tis sweet to believe in the legends of old, To see the life bend with apples of gold, To bask in the tropics 'neath olive and palm, Where the kind words of Jesus, to the world, 'fell like beam; Though sweet to the heart are the dreams of our youth, The present is with us, full of stern, arctic truth, Full of new revelations for each new-born day, And teacher and learner must both work and pray. For new light and more light—once candles would do— And truths then discovered will ever be true. But the error must perish, thus saith the Lord: Though keen pangs are suffered in severing the cord, "The ethics of Jesus, broad, soon narrowed down To village theologian," Christian and clown, Through sad years of miscegenation and night, Have loosened their hold on the anchor of right, Have huddled a babel from whose crumbling tower Shall be to humanity given new power, And men shall go forth and sin alone, And build shall be given instead of a stone. God's truth in the heart made alive then shall be, From doctrines and dogmas the world shall be free To do right and live right the soul's highest good. "By their fruits shall ye know them," this grand brotherhood, Who work in God's vineyard with hope fixed above, To Him alone looking for life thro' His love, MURKIN, Ind.

DOROTHEA INGRAM.

A Story of Early Colonial Days.

BY CHARLES C. HAHN.

CHAPTER XII. A WILD, WET NIGHT.

HE harsh sentence was carried out at once, and the poor young woman was a compelled to suffer an indignity that has left a lasting stain upon the character of our Puritan ancestors. The cruel treatment which his wife received decided Egbert to remove from Sagnauck—either to some other place in the colony or to his home in old England. The latter place was chosen for him within a few days by an unexpected letter from his father. Egbert's elder brother had been killed while hunting, and the father wrote to recall the younger son, who would now be the next Lord of Oswald. But before Egbert Ingram could arrange to leave Sagnauck other events were shaping themselves to keep him longer in the place of his wife's persecution. The inhuman sentence of the Puritan judges had brought on a low fever, and before a week had passed Dorothea Ingram was insane. Her insanity was of a mild form, and the vagaries which filled her mind were of the most elusive kind. Some days dark ghostly clouds swept over her and in the wall of darkness around queer forms intermingled with each other, fantastic shapes, distorted faces of men and women. These would appear and fade and others come. At times some woodland scene would appear as plain as if she were looking out of her cabin window at the forests which surrounded her home; the waves of the sea beat in her imagination and tall flowering castles built themselves and disappeared before her eyes. But at all times a light cloud seemed to float before her eyes, a cloud which she was ever trying to penetrate and which was so thin that she was ever in hopes of finding what was behind it. Sometimes the cloud passed away and then some other object appeared. Now it was Egbert, now the minister, and sometimes Mark Hillary. At length the clouded intellect was able to understand what the object of its desire was. Hidden by cloud or by the perplexing appearance of other forms was the figure of her mother, whom she could not remember but whose portrait she had worn on her breast all her life. Once did she see the vision, through darkness and darkness, and the gentle influence of her spirit mother brought a soothing peace, and Dorothea sank into an untroubled, childish sleep. After that, although the filmy mist hung over her still, the vision never entirely faded. She felt that the fair form was hovering over her and the consciousness brought her rest. During Dorothea's illness, her husband never left the cabin, and yet the two were never in nearness. Every morning, when he arose, Egbert found by his cabin door some article of game, a fish from the river, or a piece of venison. This soon became known to the busy gossips of the village, and every effort was made to learn from what source he received them. Failing in this they fell back upon the old theory that Dorothea was being protected by that unknown person to whom the minister had referred on the day of the trial. Mr. Granville was not slow to hear these tales. In fact he took pains to inquire daily concerning the young couple, and stored away every possible story or theory as more evidence against the poor woman. Every incident in Dorothea's life was now a theme for suspicion with him. He remembered when she had given way to anger and knew now that she had been under the influence of the devil; her friends had been won by evil charms; her insanity was the working of devils in her mind, and the food with which she was fed came from her Master. About this time Mr. Granville received medical advice concerning his children, and was bidden to take them for long

walks in the open air. He followed the physician's advice conscientiously, but he had become such a monomaniac that each walk always led him and his two daughters by Dorothea's home. One day, as they were passing, they heard a faint cry within the cabin, a cry so faint and yet so peculiar that the three stopped, and Achsah said: "Papa, did you hear the kitty?" The father looked at his daughter, and seeing in her face the signs of her peculiar nervous fits, turned and hastened home with her. All day long she lay prostrate upon her couch, the minister kneeling by her side and praying. When it became known that a child had been born to Egbert and Dorothea, the minister lost no time in relating the circumstances of Achsah's illness, and before evening all the gossips in the village had made excuses to call upon the young mother and see the baby that cried like a cat. Children came to the window, looked in and then ran away as from a haunted place. After a few days Dorothea's insanity returned, and it was thought best to remove the child from her. A month passed, during which she lay upon her bed, uttering the vagaries which came to her beclouded mind. At last her memory and her reason returned, and she asked for her babe as if it had been absent but an hour. This was toward evening, and, after receiving the child into her arms, she lay for an hour in deep silence, as if absorbed in thought; but not a motion was made she did not see, and at times, when the babe gave utterance to a low cry, the mother would raise herself upon her elbow and gaze upon it with painful intensity. She refused all offers of food, and now and then, as the twilight deepened, hummed a drowsy tune in the babe's ears or whispered to it in sweet and soothing words. After a time the babe fell asleep and Egbert sat down by the open door. The twilight passed into evening. The wind began to moan dimly through the forest, and the rain began to patter on the cabin roof. The moaning changed to wailing and then to roaring, and the wind swept the increasing rain against the window. The day was done and a wet, wild night had set in. Egbert sat for a while and listened to the dreary music, then barred the door, and leaning back in his chair, fell asleep. The brief period of Dorothea's sanity had passed away and the cloud upon her mind began to settle with the falling of the night. The roaring wind, the sweeping rain, the beating upon the roof and the child at her side, became, all alike, creatures of her imagination. Looking upward, through the mist, she saw her mother and was a child again herself. The sound of the wind and the rain passed away; but, as she gazed, the vision faded and, instead of the peaceful brooding form of her mother, appeared the child, which to her distorted imagination, seemed to rise, as did those other phantoms months before, merely to hide from her the one face she wished to see. She changed her position on the bed, but the infant still appeared. She tried to brush away the face with her hand, but could not reach it. She could now hear the roaring of the wind again and see the warring branches of the trees outside the cabin window. The wind and the rain and the trees spoke to her. They were real. They would help her. Had not all her life been passed in intercourse with them, and had not her father taught her their secrets? All else were more phantoms. She was a child again, and this was her father's cabin! What was that strange man doing in the great chair by the table, and whose was this babe which was lying by her side? Her past life was almost wholly a blank, but a blank blotted by the faint recollection of a life-long persecution. What could the child be but some evil spirit left to terrify her? And the wind and the rain told her to kill it. Once more she looked upward, but could see nothing but a baby face above her in the mist. She turned her head upon the pillow and saw the little sleeper by her side. She watched it for a moment and then, as a serpent creeps through the bushes in search of its prey, she passed her hand slowly over the child. As she did so, the wind seemed to die away and the rain ceased to fall upon the roof. She paused, and a low moan came through the tree-tops in the forest. It came like a moan from that blot in her past life, a moan grief-burdened and growing faint with despair. It strengthened her purpose and she touched the baby hand. It clasped her fingers convulsively, which caused her to look intently upon the little face. It was the same which, a few moments before had appeared in the mist above her. Still, with a faint dawning of intelligence, and perhaps of maternal feeling, she paused to wonder if it might not be a real child. But at that moment the babe awakened and gave a faint cry which, even to the mother, seemed like the cry of a cat. There was no more doubt! The child belonged to the evil one who was still pursuing her. A fresh gust of wind came up with its long sough gathered from the depth of the woods, and her brain was influenced by it. Again her hand, which had been withdrawn when the baby's fingers clutched it, was stretched out and this time touched the infant's head. Her eyes were burning with excitement, but with nerves steady and hand firm as iron, she passed her fingers down the little sleeper's face to its throat and felt the warm beating from its heart. Ah! a fine wild night it was, and the wind came roaring and wailing through the dashing rain, and beneath the dark storm cloud. A roll of thunder and out in the forest a tree had been shivered with the lightning's stroke! A hush for an instant and then the storm broke forth afresh. The hand was resting on the infant's throat. The fingers closed. No gasp! No sound! But the little hands tugged at the great one which was taking its life away! The baby breathed with quick throes and the legs were drawn up convulsively. The struggle ceased, and the soft baby eyes slowly deepened into a senseless gaze. That instant another roll of thunder passed over head, the whole village was illuminated by the flash of lightning and a bolt from heaven struck the minister's house. Then the peal rumbled on among the clouds until it died away in the distance. As if satisfied with the work that had been done, the wind died away and the rain ceased falling. Dorothea Ingram took it as an intimation that she had conquered, and fell asleep. A lonely wanderer seeking the village, and approaching Hillary's cabin just at

that time, said next morning that it was surrounded by a halo of fire and that he saw strange-looking devils in the light. CHAPTER XIII. THE HOUSE STRUCK BY LIGHTNING. In the last chapter mention was made of a belated traveler who, approaching the village through the woods, saw the Hillary cabin surrounded by unholy light, and also saw in the light a wall of demons dancing around it. They were of fantastic shape, and yet here and there were voluptuous limbs which would have been a temptation for St. Anthony. Appearing here and there like an off-recurring thread in a loom, appeared a rounded arm or a delicately curved leg, the shadow of the outline of a woman's breast and above it the darkness of a woman's face. These would pass in a circle around the cabin, and in their place would appear the shriveled forms of hags, and the fiendish faces of demons. All were themselves into a supple dance in which voluptuous forms and devilish shapes were curiously intermingled. It was a veritable dance of the evil one and his victims. The sight struck the traveler with awe, and he stopped beneath an elm tree which grew by the brook to watch it. For a full minute the light lasted and then the stranger continued his journey. Just as he approached the cabin he heard a roll of thunder and saw a flash of lightning. As he emerged from the forest and wended his way down the village street he saw that a house at the other end was ablaze with fire. With a cry of "fire!" he sprang forward and ran with all speed to the burning house. The villagers, awakened by the cry, left their comfortable beds and followed. The house to which their steps were directed was the parsonage, and it had been struck by lightning. When the stranger arrived he found that the minister and his family had rushed from their burning home, and that the former was already busy saving the most valuable of his possessions. The wife with her two children stood shivering beneath a tree, from which great drops of water fell now and then, gazing with agonizing looks upon their home, but seemingly unable to lend a helping hand. Even in his haste to reach and assist the minister, who was making quick visits to the house, the stranger noticed that the mother pressed one child more closely to her side than the other. It was Achsah, who had been torn from her bed where she had been suffering from her nervousness, but now not a trace of her disorder appeared. She looked like one just brought back to life. There were traces of ill-health in her face, but her countenance had undergone a change. The old querulous look had disappeared and in its place a look of returning health had come. Her recent illness had been cured in an instant, and she stood beneath the dripping tree stronger than she had been for years. Either by the flash of lightning or by the tragedy in the cabin in the woods, she had been cured, and strange as it was, her attacks never occurred again. For an hour the pioneers worked dragging out the minister's furniture, and then stood around while the last beams of the unhappy home fell into the sea. The new beams were consumed. Day had not yet begun to break when the homeless family was taken to neighboring houses and the village returned to their beds. In the confusion the stranger was not noticed, and none missed him when he disappeared from the crowd. CHAPTER XIV. THE FINGER OF GOD. When the first rays of morning light broke through the forest, which circled around Sagnauck, the next morning, a sent dim lines of light between the trunks of trees along the water-soaked road. Little grass grew in the dark depths; only here and there a fringing about a tree or a cluster midway between, where the sun shone. But the dark earth was rich, and here and there a sky-tinted flower grew, with deeper colors and more delicate tints than those which bloomed beneath the sun. The rays of light which were gradually penetrating the forest from the eastward, and casting faint shadows on each side, were here and there obstructed by fallen trees which broke the light and cast shapeless shadows in its pathway. At first, and this was not long after Dorothea had strangled her babe, the rays of light which were going straight upward for the sun beneath the eastern horizon, merely made gray the darkness between and beneath the great trees. Gradually the light increased and gray paths grew between the trees, bordered by shadows on either side. The sun rose higher and the brook was enlivened by its rays, and danced in morning glee. How gaily the water dashed out an obtruding stone and how merrily it rushed around an obstructing bank. The birds, too, were waking and rendering distant chirps through the woods. For, was not the whole world merry again? The sun had risen, and the brook and the birds were free. The light shining through the woods was broad at the entrance, but gradually tapered to a point like a great white finger stretching along the water-soaked line between heaven and earth, through the woods to Sagnauck. In Hillary's cabin there was a finger of light, too. The baby fingers were still and stiff, and the cruel hand which had stilled them was at rest in sleep. Egbert, too, was still sleeping in his chair by the table when the rising sun sent its rays through the forest. Whose finger was it that was pointing? Through the cabin window came the first faint rays of the morning. A light the breadth of the window fell upon the sill and cast a faint gleam upon the floor. The sleepers slept on. Slowly the light grew stronger and crept across the floor, inch by inch it moved, until it had reached the floor beneath the bed upon which Dorothea and the dead babe lay. A pause. Then a faint light touched the bed. Good God! What does it mean? Gradually but surely the light grew stronger, and as it did so the finger rose inch by inch upon the bed and pointed across the coarse counterpane to where the dead babe lay. The sun was risen. The day had come, and the long white finger of God was pointing directly through the cabin window to the bed, and the tip of the finger rested on the throat of the murdered child. When Egbert awoke, the sun was shining brightly in at the cabin window and the finger had been snatched into the broad light of day. He arose and glanced around the room, sleepily. Dorothea was lying quietly upon the bed; but the child attracted her attention. Its neck was stretched out upon the pillow, long and lank. It required only a glance for Ingram to understand what had been done.

"O, Dorothea! O, God!" he cried, "what shall I do? O, Dorothea, Dorothea, what have you done?" While Egbert was still bending over the dead babe, a neighbor knocked at the door. He hesitated for a moment and then opened it. The visitor was a woman who lived next to them and who had come at break of day to tell them of the minister's misfortune and to offer her service to Dorothea. But no sooner had she looked in at the open door and seen the dead babe on the pillows than she turned and ran toward the village, crying: "Murder! Murder!" The sun was now shining bright and clear about the cabin. The storm was over, and a new day had arisen upon Sagnauck. The woman ran the whole length of the village street, and her cry was heard in every home. At the sound, men and women hastened from their brief sleep and ran toward Hillary's cabin, to which she pointed them. It needed no words for them to believe that there was some sad mystery there. On they went, down the woodland path, one by one, without ceremony and entered the room. Within half an hour it was filled with friends and foes. Prominent among the latter was the minister, who anxiously moved about and tried, with his authority, to quell the excitement. By his side was the constable and after it was evident to all that a murder had been committed, the two busied themselves opening drawers, prying into nooks and corners, lifting loose planks from the floor and making inquiries of others. It was a godsend to the minister. Heaven, in his belief, had sent relief. During all this tumult Dorothea sat upon the bed looking wildly about. Through the cabin door, now wide open, in the morning light, she could see others coming, men, women and children, walking, shouting, pointing toward the open door. Rude men gathered about her bed and asked harsh questions, while half-dressed women excitedly cried over the little body which, a day before, they had said looked like a cat. At length the minister drew near the bed and said: "I tell you the day of vengeance has come. The persecutor of my children has been pointed out to you. I have accused Dorothea Ingram of witchcraft, and to this sin alone has been added. She has murdered her babe. Last night my house was struck by lightning, and I believe it was at the same hour in which this crime was committed." The wanderer in the forest, who, unobserved, had entered the cabin, spoke up and said: "Reverend sir, it was at the same hour." CHAPTER XV. THE TRIAL OF A WITCH. The little body of the murdered babe was buried in a hollow near Dorothea's home, and within three days the unhappy woman was taken to Salem by armed guard, there to answer the double charge of murder and witchcraft. For the crime which she had committed was so terrible that not one person in Sagnauck, save her husband and her adored parents, now entertained a doubt of her guilt. When the little party arrived in Salem Dorothea was at once consigned to jail, and when once there, her condition became so precarious that it was feared she would never leave it even to answer to the double charge against her. Mr. Granville, unmindful of the fact that she might be summoned to a higher bar of justice, devoted his time to a careful arrangement of his evidence against her. The witch fever was just then at its height in New England, and the news that a notorious young witch was to be tried in Salem now spread through the country and multitudes flocked to the city. Besides Egbert and Dr. Lennox, there was a third friend who visited the jail daily. It was an old man dressed as an Indian and so thoroughly disguised that no one would have suspected that he was white. True he never gained admittance, but he was always observed loitering around the prison door whenever either Egbert or the Doctor were visiting the prisoner. The day set for the trial at length arrived, and Dorothea, still far from well, was led before the magistrate. A formal charge of witchcraft and of murder we read, and, by the advice of counsel, to both she pleaded not guilty. These preliminaries being over, the evidence of her league with the devil was begun. The Rev. Henry Granville was the first witness and minutely he traced the history of Dorothea and her father, and of the strange affliction of his daughter, Achsah. Other members of the settlement were sworn also and bore witness to many strange actions of the accused, but the chief evidence against her was given by two heads—her persecutor Achsah and her mysterious visitor who had provided for her at her marriage and during her illness. Both facts were supposed to be clearly proven by the testimony. But when the defense began and Dr. Lennox was put upon the stand, even Mr. Granville was able to see that the first part of his testimony would fall to the ground. The Doctor stated that he had made a careful study of Achsah's trouble and that he was confident that she was suffering from a nervous disease, not often met with in the new world, but which was not uncommon in the old. He pointed out that her most violent attacks had always occurred during thunder-storms, and drew the deduction that her physical nature was unusually sensitive to the electric currents. To this he added his belief that an inherited antipathy to Hillary had been fostered and exaggerated until his presence really did have an evil effect upon the child, but that this effect was due to anything which Hillary did, he stoutly denied. [TO BE CONTINUED.] THE FOREMOST PROFESSOR of hypnotism in Paris, Dr. Luys, claims for a new method of fascination that no person can resist it. Instead of losing force by the usual process, the operator places a stand in the middle of a group of patients, and sets upon it a revolving apparatus of bits of colored glass such as is used for snaring larks, the patients being instructed to fix their eyes upon it. The effect on men, Dr. Luys declares, is exactly the same as on birds. "On men the rotation of brilliant surfaces produces in predisposed subjects a peculiar state of retina, and subsequently of the whole nervous system, accompanied with anesthesia, immobility of the muscles, 'suggestionability'—in short, the ensemble of phenomena constituting 'fascination.' The operation takes from five to thirty minutes.

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