

constitute a cardinal principle of the Christian religion, I am at a loss to know what does.

Picture to yourself in imagination the frightful wrecks daily caused by this rock of scandal, and the number of families that are cast adrift on the ocean of life. Great stress is justly laid by moralists on the observance of Sunday. But what a mockery is the external repose of the Christian Sabbath to the homes from which domestic peace is banished, where the mother's heart is broken, the father's spirit crushed, and where the children cannot cling to one of their parents without exciting the jealousy or hatred of the other. And these melancholy scenes are followed by the final act in the drama, when the family ties are dissolved, and hearts that have vowed eternal love and union are separated to meet no more.

This social plague calls for a radical cure, and the remedy can be found only in the abolition of our mischievous legislation regarding divorce, and in an honest application of the teachings of the Gospel. If persons contemplating marriage were persuaded that once united they were legally debarred from

entering into second wedlock, they would be more circumspect before marriage in the choice of a life partner, and would be more patient afterward in bearing the yoke and in tolerating each other's infirmities.

The world is governed more by ideals than by ideas; it is influenced more by living, concrete models, than by abstract principles of virtue. And it is to women ennobled and elevated by the Gospel that we must look for the regeneration of the existing evils of the world; it is their influence and example that must build up, sustain, and strengthen the moral fabric of the social world to-day; their virtue that must serve as a breakwater against the onrush of the deep waters of vice. Woman merits the eternal gratitude of the Christian world for the influence she has zealously exerted and is still exerting in behalf of religion and society. It is fearful to contemplate what would have become of our Christian civilization without the aid of the female sex. To restrict a woman's field of action to the gentler vocations of life is not to fetter her aspirations after the higher and the better. It is, on the contrary, to secure to her, not equal rights

so called, but those supereminent rights that cannot fail to endow her with a sacred influence in her own proper sphere; for as soon as woman trenches on the domain of man, she must not be surprised to find that the reverence once accorded her has been in part or wholly withdrawn.

The noblest work given to woman is the care of her children. Let Christian mothers recognize their sublime mission. On them devolves the duty of directing the susceptible and pliant minds of their children, and of instilling into their youthful hearts the principles of virtue. We would exhort mothers in the name of the faith in God which they profess; in the name of their country, which expects them to rear, not scourges of society, but honorable and law-abiding members; in the name of their Maker, who will require of them an account of their stewardship; in the name of their own and their children's souls, to provide for those children at home a healthy, moral, and religious education.

"If any one have not the care of his own, and especially those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

## A STRANGE TRUE STORY

By REBECCA HARDING DAVIS



Paid Her the Homage a Chinaman Does to His Joss.

**M**ANY years ago I knew of a woman whose life was as improbable as the plot of a dime romance. Her story was whispered about until it came to the ears of Mrs. Oliphant, who promptly made a novel—one of her best—out of it.

The village where she lived was a community of scholarly folk who had gathered around a small sectarian college. There was little wealth and no display among these kindly lazy folk. Their dingy old houses had stood apart for nearly a century, each meditating among its trees and gardens of vegetables and roses. The work of the town was done by a few slow going Negroes. When, therefore, an old Scotchman rented one of Colonel Weems's houses and hung outside of the kitchen a sign stating that "Alexander McGinn, Hauler and Jobber, Would Repair Houses, Set Out Gardens, Dig Wells, and Train Dogs at the Lowest Rates," and that "Hannah McGinn Would Go Out to Sew by the Day, Dye Old Clothes, and Weave Rag Carpets on Reasonable Terms," the village stared, laughed, and promptly gave the newcomers work enough to fill their days and their pockets.

It was soon discovered that the McGinns had a mystery in their house. The two old people lived in the kitchen and the room above it. The rest of the dwelling was occupied by a young girl, a quiet, delicate little body, who, the village decided, gave in looks, manner, and voice incontestable proof of high breeding. She was treated by the McGinns as a much loved mistress would be by faithful servants. She lived wholly apart from them. Her chamber and little drawing room were simply furnished but kept in dainty order by the old woman, who waited on her, and no matter how tired she might be never sat down in the girl's presence.

### His Peculiar Actions

**M**CGINN treated her with profound respect; but he never spoke of her, and was angry and swore hotly when the trades people showed their curiosity. His wife, on the contrary, was anxious to talk of her, and told her story whenever she could find a listener. She said that she and McGinn, before emigrating to the States, had lived in a lonely coast village in the north of Scotland. There a young Englishman named Saltere and his wife had appeared, twenty years before, and had taken boarding with them, intending to stay for a few days. But days stretched into weeks, and weeks into months. Captain Saltere, who stated that he was an officer in the English navy on leave, came and went.

After some months their child was born. The mother lingered for a few weeks, and then died. Captain Saltere was broken down by grief. He buried her in the little graveyard by the kirk, and erected a costly monument over her; but, to the wonder of the village, had only a single word carved on it—"Ellen."

The child Jane was given into the care of the McGinns, and a large sum reached them quarterly

direct from a London bank. The Captain came once or twice each year to see her, always saying that he was just at home from a voyage. As the child grew she was sent to a private school in Edinburgh and later to a convent in France.

When Jane, then aged sixteen, came back from France, having finished the school course, the payments suddenly stopped. Captain Saltere did not return that fall. He wrote to Jane once or twice during the next year. But he never came back, and for three years no word had come from him.

After a time the McGinns made inquiry, and found that there was not now and never had been a Captain in the English navy named Reginald Saltere. But it came to light that Hannah McGinn's sharp eyes had seen a crest stamped on some of the Saltere books. They at once decided that the Captain was the heir of a noble house and had been under a cloud while living. He was dead now, without doubt, and his rank and fortune were waiting for his daughter.

The McGinns then advertised, they consulted lawyers, they poured out their little hoard like water. Four years crept by in this doubt. The poor couple tried to support Jane in the old luxury, but they steadily grew poorer. At last they were convinced that there was no chance for them but in emigration.

So here they were with their mystery, working steadily for her, jealously keeping her idle, paying her the homage that a Chinaman does to his joss. The village received them and their idol with enthusiasm. They saw in Jane the high bred, wronged heroine of the old romances long so dear to them, and the fidelity of her guardians was only a reproduction of the story of Scott's ideal clansmen.

### She Was Infuriated

**O**NCE it is true, Doctor Weems did venture to hint to Mrs. McGinn that Jane could get a fair price for her pretty little sketches of the old mill and the river, if she would sell them. But she flamed to sudden fury.

"Do you know who Miss Saltere is? We expect to hear from her kin any day. They'll come claiming her. We left the case in the hands of an agent in Edinburgh. And there's a standing advertisement in 'The London Times.' Her kin might be here to-morrow, or to-day. Every time the stage comes down that street I'm lookin' for them. They may be barrowknights or dukes. And are they to find her working to earn her living?"

So Jane's white palms never were stained by money which she had earned.

She was welcomed with enthusiasm into the little social world of the county. It never had known such a heroine. She was a grave, slow moving girl, with no sense of humor whatever. She had absolute faith in her own high birth; but having also warm, kindly blood, she met the rest of us, black and white,—less lucky folk than herself,—with friendly tolerance.

Two or three of the students in the academy, sons of good families, promptly fell madly in love with her, but were dismissed with pitying surprise. "What would my family think if I should make such a mesalliance?" she said gravely.

After a year or two, however, Walter Gardette (one of the Louisianian Gardettes, not the Canadian) was taken into partnership by Dr. Weems. There was little sickness in the county that year; so the young man had plenty of time to assist Miss Saltere in her search for orchids. She was really almost a fanatic in her devotion to botany that summer.

Jane was not a zealous scholar. Hitherto her studies had been limited to two or three volumes of poems and some large books which lay on her parlor table and which had been bought by the McGinns years ago. They were "The Baronetage of England," "Burke's Peerage," and "The County Families of Great Britain." She never opened these books now, so absorbing was her botanic zeal.

Young Gardette was frankly madly in love. The whole village took a keen interest in the affair, and rejoiced when, late in the fall, the engagement was announced. Curiously enough, from that day the interest of the doctor and Jane in botany was absolutely dead.

A little incident which happened on the day of her betrothal made the people of the village feel that they never had known Jane before. Many of her friends, old people as well as young, gathered in her parlor in the evening, "that the child might not feel lonely, as if she stood alone in the world."

Doctor Gardette, flushed with his triumph and joy, said, "I have telegraphed for my father and mother. They will soon be here to welcome Jane, with her noble kinsfolk."

### Her "Real" Father and Mother

**S**HE laughed with the others, and then looked at him thoughtfully for a moment. Then she opened the door into the kitchen where old Sandy McGinn was sitting by the fire, and Hannah was busy with her knitting. "Walter," she said, "it is all very well for me to look for my family among the peerage. It's like a pretty fairy story. But there are my real father and mother. They have given their lives to me. And I never will go into a family which does not receive and honor them. I—I never will marry a man," here she began to sob, "who will not love them as I do!"

On which there was much crying among the women, and many promises and protestations from Walter. Old Sandy McGinn was annoyed by "the fuss." But it seems to me through the years to come the old woman's face must have been happier because of those words of Jane's.

I am sorry—but that is the end of my story. There was no dramatic denouement. No peer nor prince ever appeared to place a coronet on Jane's brows. She became the mother and grandmother of a large family of capable, energetic men and women, who now are scattered through many States. In each family there is a legend, more or less definite, of noble ancestry. Some of the younger people have a crest and coat of arms, and are ready to claim their progenitors among the great heroes in English or French history. But Jane died with her riddle unsolved.



They Were Fanatical in Their Devotion to Botany.