

CONTENTS.

SUNDAY FRACTURES:

CHAP. I. —SOME PEOPLE WHO WENT UP TO THE TEMPLE.

CHAP. II. —SOME PEOPLE WHO FORGOT THE FOURTH
COMMANDMENT.

CHAP. III. —SOME PEOPLE WHO FORGOT THE EVER-
LISTENING EAR.

CHAP. IV. —SOME PEOPLE WHO WERE FALSE FRIENDS.

NEW NERVES.

"HULDY."

WHERE HE SPENT CHRISTMAS.

VIDA.

HOW A WOMAN WAS CONVERTED TO MISSIONS.

MRS. LEWIS' BOOK: PART I. — THE BOOK PART II. — THE BOOK
OPEN

BUCKWHEAT CAKES

FAITH AND GASOLINE

BENJAMIN'S WIFE

SUNDAY FRACTURES.

CHAPTER I.

SOME PEOPLE WHO WENT UP TO THE TEMPLE.

An elegant temple it was, this modern one of which I write—modern in all its appointments. Carpets, cushions, gas fixtures, organ, pulpit furnishings, everything everywhere betokened the presence of wealth and taste. Even the vases that adorned the marble-topped flower-stands on either side of the pulpit wore a foreign air, and in design and workmanship were unique. The subdued light that stole softly in through the stained-glass windows produced the requisite number of tints and shades on the hair and whiskers and noses of the worshippers. The choir was perched high above common humanity, and praised God for the congregation in wonderful voices, four in number, the soprano of which cost more than a preacher's salary, and soared half an octave higher than any other voice in the city. To be sure she was often fatigued, for she frequently danced late of a Saturday night. And occasionally the grand tenor was disabled from appearing at all for morning service by reason of the remarkably late hour and unusual dissipation of the night before. But then he was all right by evening, and, while these little episodes were unfortunate, they had to be borne with meekness and patience; for was he not the envy of three rival churches, any one of which would have increased his salary if they could have gotten him?

The soft, pure tones of the organ were filling this beautiful church on a certain beautiful morning, and the worshippers were treading the aisles, keeping step to its melody as they made their way to their respective pews, the heavy carpeting giving back no sound of foot-fall, and the carefully prepared inner doors pushing softly back into

place, making no jar on the solemnities of the occasion—everything was being done "decently and in order"—not only decently, but exquisitely.

A strange breaking in upon all this propriety and dignity was the sermon that morning. Even the text had a harsh sound, almost startling to ears which had been lifted to the third heaven of rapture by the wonderful music that floated down to them.

"Take heed what ye do; let the fear of the Lord be upon you." What a harsh text!—Wasn't it almost rough? Why speak of fear in the midst of such melody of sight and sound? Why not hear of the beauties of heaven, the glories of the upper temple, the music of the heavenly choir—something that should lift the thoughts away from earth and *doing* and fear? This was the unspoken greeting that the text received. And the sermon that followed! What had gotten possession of the preacher! He did not observe the proprieties in the least! He dragged stores, and warehouses, and common workshops, even the meat markets and vegetable stalls, into that sermon! Nay, he penetrated to the very inner sanctuary of home—the dressing-room and the kitchen—startling the ear with that strange-sounding sentence: "Take heed what ye do." According to him religion was not a thing of music, and flowers, and soft carpets, and stained lights, and sentiment. It had to do with other days than Sunday, with other hours than those spent in softly cushioned pews. It meant *doing*, and it meant taking heed to each little turn and word and even thought, remembering always that the fear of the Lord was the thing to be dreaded. What a solemn matter that made of life! Who wanted to be so trammelled! It would be fearful. As for the minister, he presented every word of his sermon as though he felt it thrilling to his very soul. And so he did. If you had chanced to pass the parsonage on that Saturday evening which preceded its delivery—passed it as late as midnight—you would have seen a gleam of light from his study window. Not that he was so late with his Sabbath preparation—at least the *written* preparation. It was that he was on his knees, pleading with an unutterable longing for the souls committed to his charge—pleading that the sermon just laid aside might be used to the quickening and converting of some soul—pleading that the Lord would come into his vineyard and see

if there were not growing some shoots of love and faith and trust that would bring harvest.

It was not that minister's custom to so infringe on the sleeping hours of Saturday night—time which had been given to his body, in order that it might be vigorous, instead of clogging the soul with the dullness of its weight. But there are *special* hours in the life of most men, and this Saturday evening was a special time to him. He felt like wrestling for the blessing—felt in a faint degree some of the persistency of the servant of old who said: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Hence the special unction of the morning. Somewhat of the same spirit had possessed him during the week, hence the special fervour of the sermon. With his soul glowing then in every sentence, he presented his thoughts to the people. How did they receive them? Some listened with the thoughtful look on their faces that betokened hearts and consciences stirred. There were those who yawned, and thought the sermon unusually long and prosy. Now and then a gentleman more thoughtless or less cultured than the rest snapped his watch-case in the very face of the speaker, by accident, let us hope. A party of young men, who sat under the gallery, exchanged notes about the doings of the week, and even passed a few slips of paper to the young ladies from the seminary, who sat in front of them. The paper contained nothing more formidable than a few refreshments in the shape of caramels with which to beguile the tedious-ness of the hour. There was a less cultured party of young men and women who unceremoniously whispered at intervals through the entire service, and some of the whispers were so funny that occasionally a head went down and the seat shook, as the amused party endeavoured, or *professed* to endeavour, to subdue untimely laughter. I presume we have all seen those persons who deem it a mark of vivacity, or special brilliancy, to be unable to control their risibles in certain places. It is curious how often the seeming attempt is, in a glaring way, nothing but *seeming*. These parties perhaps did not break the Sabbath any more directly than the note-writers behind them, but they certainly did it more noisily and with more marked evidence of lack of ordinary culture. The leader of the choir found an absorbing volume in a book of anthems that had been recently introduced. He turned the leaves without regard to their rustle, and surveyed piece after piece with a

critical eye, while the occasionally peculiar pucker of his lips showed that he was trying special ones, and that just enough sense of decorum remained with him to prevent the whistle from being audible. Then there were, dotted all over the great church, heads that nodded assent to the minister at regular intervals; but the owners of the heads had closed eyes and open mouths, and the occasional breathing that suggested a coming snore was marked enough to cause nervous nudges from convenient elbows, and make small boys who were looking on chuckle with delight.

And thus, surrounded by all these different specimens of humanity, the pastor strove to declare the whole counsel of God, mindful of the rest of the charge, "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear." He could not help a half-drawn breath of thanksgiving that *that* part was not for him to manage. If he had had their duty as well as his own to answer for what *would* have become of him!

Despite the looking at watches, the cases of which would make an explosive noise, and the audible yawning that occasionally sounded near him, the minister was enabled to carry his sermon through to the close, helped immeasurably by those aforesaid earnest eyes that never turned their gaze from his face, nor let their owners' attention flag for an instant. Then followed the solemn hymn, than which there is surely no more solemn one in the English language. Imagine that congregation after listening, or professing to listen, to such a sermon as I have suggested, from such a text as I have named, standing and hearing rolled forth from magnificent voices such words as these:—

"In all my vast concerns with thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of thine eye.

"My thoughts lie open to the Lord
Before they're formed within;
And ere my lips pronounce the word
He knows the sense I mean.

"Oh, wondrous knowledge, deep and high!
Where can a creature hide!
Within thy circling arm I lie,
Inclosed on every side."

Follow that with the wonderful benediction. By the way, did you ever think of that benediction—of its fulness? "The *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *love* of God, the *communion* of the Holy Ghost, be with you *all*. Amen." Following that earnest amen—nay, *did* it follow, or was it blended with the last syllable of that word, so nearly that word seemed swallowed in it—came the roll of that twenty-thousand-dollar organ. What did the organist select to follow that sermon, that hymn, that benediction? Well, what was it? Is it possible that that familiar strain was the old song, "Comin' Through the Rye"? No, it changes; that is the ring of "Money Musk." Anon there is a touch—just a dash, rather—of "Home, Sweet Home," and then a bewilderment of sounds, wonderfully reminding one of "Dixie" and of "Way down upon the Suwanee River," and then suddenly it loses all connection with memory, and rolls, and swells, and thunders, and goes off again into an exquisite tinkle of melody that makes an old farmer—for there was here and there an old farmer even in that modern church—murmur as he shook hands with a friend, "Kind of a dancing jig that is, ain't it?"

To the sound of such music the congregation trip out. Half-way down the aisle Mrs. Denton catches the fringe of Mrs. Ellison's shawl.

"Excuse me," she says, "but I was afraid you would escape me, and I have so much to do this week. I want you to come in socially on Tuesday evening; just a few friends; an informal gathering; tea at eight, because the girls want a little dance after it. Now come early."

Just in front of these two ladies a group have halted to make inquiries.

"Where is Fanny to-day? Is she sick?"

"Oh, no. But the truth is her hat didn't suit, and she sent it back and didn't get it again. She waited till one o'clock, but it didn't come. Milliners are growing so independent and untrustworthy! I

told Fanny to wear her old hat and never mind, but she wouldn't. Estelle and Arthur have gone off to the Cathedral this morning. Absurd, isn't it? I don't like to have them go so often. It looks odd. But Arthur runs wild over the music there. I tell him our music is good enough, but he doesn't think so."

"I don't know what the trouble is, but the young people do not seem to be attracted to our church," the elder lady says, and she says it with a sigh. She belongs to that class of people who *always* say things with a sigh.

Further on Mrs. Hammond has paused to say that if the weather continues so lovely she thinks they would better have that excursion during the week. The gardens will be in all their glory. Tell the girls she thinks they better settle on Wednesday as the day least likely to have engagements. The lady knows that she is mentioning the day for the regular church prayer-meeting, and she is sending word to members of the church. But what of that?

"I'm tired almost to death," says Mrs. Edwards, "We have been house-cleaning all the week, and it is such a trial, with inefficient help. I wouldn't have come to church at all to-day but the weather was so lovely, and we have so few days in this climate when one can wear anything decent it seemed a pity to lose one. Have you finished house-cleaning?"

At the foot of the stairs Miss Lily Harrison meets the soprano singer.

"Oh, Lorena!" she exclaims, "your voice was just perfectly divine this morning. Let me tell you what Jim said, when you went up on the high notes of the anthem. He leaned over and whispered to me, 'The angels can't go ahead of that, I know; irreverent fellow!—Lorena, what a perfect match your silk is! Where did you succeed so well? I was *dying* to see that dress! I told mamma if it were not for the first sight of that dress, and of Laura's face when she saw it was so much more elegant than hers, I should have been tempted to take a nap this morning instead of coming to church. However, I got a delicious one as it was. Weren't you horribly sleepy?"

At this point Misses Lily and Lorena are joined by the said "Jim." And be it noticed that he makes the first remark on the sermon that has been heard as yet.

"We had a stunning sermon this morning, didn't we?"

"Oh, you shocking fellow!" murmurs Lorena "How *can* you use such rough words?"

"What words! Stunning? Why, dear me, that is a jolly word; so expressive. I say, you sheep in this fold took it pretty hard. A fellow might be almost glad of being a goat, I think."

"Jim, don't be wicked," puts in Miss Lily who has a cousinship in the said Jim, and therefore can afford to be brusque. Jim shrugs his shoulders.

"Wicked," he says. "If the preacher is to be credited, it is you folks who are wicked. I don't pretend, you know, to be anything else."

A change of subject seems to the fair Lorena to be desirable, so she says:

"Why were you not at the hop last night, Mr. Merchant?"

And Jim replies, "I didn't get home in time. I was at the races. I hear you had a *stunning*—I beg your pardon—a *perfectly splendid* time. Those are the right words, I believe."

And then the two ladies gathered their silken trains into an aristocratic grasp of the left hand, and sailed down town on either side of "Jim" to continue the conversation. And those coral lips had but just sung—

"My thoughts lie open to the Lord,
Before they're formed within;
And ere my lips pronounce the word
He knows the sense I mean."

What *could* He have thought of her? Is it not strange that she did not ask this of herself.

"How are you to-day?" Mr. Jackson asked, shaking his old acquaintance, Mr. Dunlap, heartily by the hand. "Beautiful day, isn't it?"

Now, what will be the next sentence from the lips of those gray-headed men, standing in the sanctuary, with the echo of solemn service still in their ears? Listen:

"Splendid weather for crops. A man with such a farm as mine on his hands, and so backward with his work, rather grudges such Sundays as these this time of year."

And the other?

"Yes," he says, laughing, "you could spare the time better if it rained, I dare say. By the way, Dunlap, have you sold that horse yet? If not, you better make up your mind to let me have it at the price I named. You won't do better than that this fell."

Whereupon ensued a discussion on the respective merits and demerits, and the prospective rise and fall in horse-flesh.

"Take heed what ye do; let the fear of the Lord be upon you." *Had* those two gentlemen heard that text?

CHAPTER II.

SOME PEOPLE WHO FORGOT THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Let me introduce to you the Harrison dinner-table, and the people gathered there on the afternoon of that Sabbath day. Miss Lily had brought home with her her cousin Jim; he was privileged on the score of relationship. Miss Helen, another daughter of the house, had invited Mr. Harvey Latimer; he was second cousin to Kate's husband, and Kate was a niece of Mrs. Harrison; relationship again. Also, Miss Fannie and Miss Cecilia Lawrence were there, because they were schoolgirls, and so lonely in boarding-school on Sunday, and their mother was an old friend of Mrs. Harrison; there are always reasons for things.

The dinner-table was a marvel of culinary skill. Clearly Mrs. Harrison's cook was *not* a church-goer. Roast turkey, and chicken-pie, and all the side dishes attendant upon both, to say nothing of the rich and carefully prepared dessert, of the nature that indicated that its flankiness was *not* developed on Saturday, and left to wait for Sunday. Also, there was wine on Mrs. Harrison's table; just a little home-made wine, the rare juice of the grape prepared by Mrs. Harrison's own cook—not at all the sort of wine that others indulged in—the Harrisons were temperance people.

"I invited Dr. Selmsler down to dinner," remarked Mrs. Harrison, as she sipped her coffee. "I thought since his wife was gone, it would be only common courtesy to invite him in to get a warm dinner, but he declined; he said his Sunday dinners were always very simple."

Be it known to you that Dr. Selmsler was Mrs. Harrison's pastor, and the preacher of the morning sermon.

Miss Lily arched her handsome eyebrows.

"Oh, mamma!" she said, "how could you be guilty of such a sin! The *idea* of Dr. Selmsler going out to dinner on Sunday! I wonder he did not drop down in a faint! Papa, did you ever hear such a sermon?"

"It slashed right and left, that is a fact," said Mr. Harrison, between the mouthfuls of chicken salad and oyster pickle.

"A little too sweeping in its scope to be wise for one in his position. Have another piece of the turkey, James? He is running into that style a little too much. Some person whose opinion has weight ought to warn him. A minister loses influence pretty rapidly who meddles with everything."

"Well, there was *everything* in that sermon," said Miss Cecilia. "I just trembled in my shoes at one time. I expected our last escapade in the school hall would be produced to point one of his morals."

"You admit that it would have pointed it?" said the cousin Jim, with a meaning laugh.

"Oh, yes; it was *awfully* wicked; I'll admit that. But one didn't care to hear it rehearsed in a church."

"That is the trouble," mamma Harrison said. "Little nonsenses that do very well among schoolgirls, or in the way of a frolic, are not suited to illustrate a sermon with. I think Dr. Selmser is rather apt to forget the dignity of the pulpit in his illustrations."

"Lorena says he utterly spoiled the closing anthem by that doleful hymn he gave out," said Miss Lily. "They were going to give that exquisite bit from the last sacred opera, but the organist positively refused to play it after such woe-begone music. I wish we had a new hymn-book, without any of those horrid, old-fashioned hymns in it, anyhow."

It was Mr. Harvey Latimer's turn to speak:

"Oh, well now, say what you please, Selmser can *preach*. He may not suit one's taste always, Especially when you get hit; but he has a tremendous way of putting things. Old Professor Marker says he has more power over language than any preacher in the city."

"Yes," said Mr. Harrison, struggling with too large a mouthful of turkey, "he is a *preacher*, whatever else may be said about him; and yet of course it is unfortunate for a minister to be always pitching into people; they get tired of it after a while."

"Jim, did you know that Mrs. Jamison was going to give a reception to the bride next Wednesday evening?" This from Lily.

"No; *is* she? That will be a grand crush, I suppose."

"I heard her giving informal invitations in church to-day," Helen said, and one of the schoolgirls said:

"Oh, don't you think she said she was going to invite us? Celia told her to send the invitation to you, Mrs. Harrison. We felt sure you would ask us to your house to spend the evening; Madam Wilcox will always allow that. But there is no use trying to get her permission for a party. You *will* ask us, *won't* you?"

Whereupon Mrs. Harrison laughed, and shook her head at them, and told them she was afraid they were naughty girls, and she would have to think about it. All of which seemed to be entirely satisfactory to them. The conversation suddenly changed.

"Wasn't Mrs. Marsh dressed in horrid taste today?" said Helen Harrison. "Really I don't see the use in being worth a million in her

own right, if she has no better taste than *that* to display. Her camels'-hair shawl is positively the ugliest thing I ever saw, and she had it folded horribly. She is round-shouldered, anyhow — ought never to wear a shawl."

"I think her shawl was better than her hat," chimed in Miss Lily. "The *idea* of that hat costing fifty dollars! It isn't as becoming as her old one; and, to make it look worse than it would have done, she had her hair arranged in that frightful new twist!"

"Why, Lily Harrison! I heard you tell her you thought her hat was lovely!" This from Lily's youngest sister.

"Oh, yes, of course," said Miss Lily. "One must say something to people. It wouldn't do to tell her she looked horrid." And the mother *laughed*.

"It is a good thing for Mrs. Marsh that she holds her million in her own right," observed cousin Jim. "That husband of hers is getting a little too fast for comfort."

"Is that so?" Mr. Harrison asked, looking up from his turkey bone.

"Yes, sir; his loss at cards was tremendously heavy last week; would have broken a less solid man. He had been drinking when he played last, and made horridly flat moves."

"Disgraceful!" murmured Mr. Harrison; and then he took another sip of his home-made wine.

There were homes representing this same church that were not so stylish, or fashionable, or wealthy. Mrs. Brower and her daughter Jenny had to lay aside their best dresses, and all the array of Sunday toilet, which represented their very best, and repair to the kitchen to cook their own Sunday dinners. "Was it a thoughtful dwelling upon such verses of Scripture as had been presented that morning which made the Sunday dinner the most elaborate, the most carefully prepared, and more general in its variety, than any other dinner in the week? Their breakfast hour was late, and, by putting the dinner hour at half-past three, it gave them time to be elaborate, according to their definition of that word. Not being cumbered with hired help, mother and daughter could have confidential Sabbath conversations with each other as they worked. So while Mrs. Brower care-

fully washed and stuffed the two plump chickens, Jennie prepared squash, and turnip, and potatoes for cooking, planning meanwhile for the hot apple sauce, and a side dish or two for dessert, and the two talked.

"Well, did you get an invitation?" the mother asked, and the tone of suppressed motherly anxiety showed that the subject was one of importance. Did she mean an invitation to the great feast which is to be held when they sit down to celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb, and which this holy Sabbath day was given to help one prepare for? No, on second thought it could not have been that; for, after listening to the morning sermon no thought of anxiety could have mingled with that question. Assuredly Jennie was invited—*nay, urged, entreated*; the only point of Anxiety could have been—*would* she accept? But it was another place that filled the minds of both mother and daughter.

"Indeed I did." There was glee in Miss Jennie's voice. "I thought I wasn't going to. She went right by me and asked people right and left, never once looking at me. But she came away back after she had gone into the hall, and came over to my seat and whispered that she had been looking for me all the way out, but had missed me. She said I must be sure to come, for she depended on us young people to help make the affair less ceremonious. Don't you think, Emma wasn't invited at all, and I don't believe she will be; almost everyone has been now. Emma was so sure of her invitation, because she was such a friend of Lu Jamison's. She thought she would get cards to the wedding, you know; and when they didn't come she felt sure of the reception. She has been holding her head wonderfully high all the week about it, and now she is left out and I am in. Mother, isn't that rich?"

Mrs. Brower plumped her chickens into the oven, and wiped the flour from her cheek and sighed.

"There will be no end of fuss in getting you ready, and expense too. What are you going to wear, anyway?"

"Mother," said Jennie, impressively, turning away from her squash to get a view of her mother's face, "I ought to have a new dress for this party. I haven't anything fit to be seen. It is months

since I have had a new one; and everybody is sick of my old blue dress; I'm sure I am."

"It is entirely out of the question," Mrs. Brower said, irritably, "and you know it is. I *wonder* at your even thinking of such a thing, and we so many bills to pay; and there's that pew-rent hasn't been paid in so long that I'm ashamed to go to church."

"I wish the pew-rent was in Jericho, and the pew, too!" was Miss Jennie's spirited answer. "I should think churches ought to be free, if nothing else is. It is a great religion, selling pews so high that poor people can't go to church. If I had thought I couldn't have a new dress I should have declined the invitation at once. I did think it was time for me to have something decent; and I make my own clothes, too, which is more than most any other girls do. I saw a way to make it this morning. I studied Miss Harvey's dress all the while we were standing. I could make trimming precisely like hers, and put it on and all. I could do every thing to it but cut and fit it."

"I tell you you haven't anything to cut and fit, and can't have. What's the use in talking?"

And in her annoyance and motherly bitterness at having to disappoint her daughter, Mrs. Brower let fall the glass jar she had been trying to open, and it opened suddenly, disgorging and mingling its contents with bits of glass on the kitchen floor. Does anyone, having overheard thus much of the conversation, and having a fair knowledge of human nature, need to be told that there were sharp words, bitterly spoken, in that kitchen after that, and that presently the speech settled down into silence and gloom, and preparations for the Sunday dinner went on, with much slamming and banging, and quick nervous movements, that but increased the ferment within and the outside difficulties. And yet this mother and daughter had been to church and heard that wonderful text, "Take heed what ye do; let the fear of the Lord be upon you." Had listened while it was explained and illustrated, going, you will remember, into the very kitchen for details. They had heard that wonderful hymn:

"In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee

The notice of thine eye."

Both mother and daughter had their names enrolled on the church record. They were at times earnest and anxious to feel sure that their names were written in the book kept before the throne. Yet the invitation to Mrs. Jamison's reception, informally whispered to the daughter as she moved down the church aisle, had enveloped the rest of their Sabbath in gloom. "Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?" It was a wedding reception to which Jennie had been invited. Did neither mother nor daughter think of that other wedding, and have a desire to be clothed in the right garment?

CHAPTER III.

SOME PEOPLE WHO FORGOT THE EVER-LISTENING EAR.

There were two other members of the Brower family who had attended church that Sabbath morning. One was Mr. Brower, sen. And at the season of dinner-getting he lay on the couch in the dining-room, with the weekly paper in his hand, himself engaged in running down the column of stock prices. He glanced up once, when the words in the kitchen jarred roughly on his æsthetic ear, and said:

"Seems to me, if I were you, I would remember that to-day is Sunday, and not be quite so sharp with my tongue."

Then his solemn duty done, he returned to his mental comparison of prices. Also, there was Dwight Brower, a young fellow of nineteen or so, who acted unaccountably. Instead of lounging around, according to his usual custom, hovering between piazza and dining-room, whistling softly, now and then turning over the pile of old magazines between whiles, in search of something with which to pass away the time, he passed through the hall on his return from