

COMING HOME

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Coming Home by Mrs. Henry S. Mackarness

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MRS. HENRY S. MACKARNESS

COMING HOME

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A TRAP TO CATCH A SUNBEAM," "ONLY," "OLD JOLLIFFE" AND "SEQUEL,"
"THE DREAM CHILD," "THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK," ETC.

[*By Mrs. M. A. P. Mackerness.*]]

Across the threshold led,
And every tear kissed off as soon as shed,
His house she enters, there to be a light
Shining within, when all without is night;
A guardian angel o'er his life presiding,
Doubling his pleasure and his cares dividing.

BOOKS.

BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

To have written well a book, to have developed a story, or drawn a character true to nature, and to the full acceptance of the reader, almost necessarily implies previous experiment, and oftentimes fruitless toil, before the effort becomes an achievement, or the achievement a victory.

But, happily, the writer of the present little volume can hardly be said to have appeared in any mere initiatory page, or experimental work, however small; for each one of her numerous tales, whether in her well-read and much-admired "*Sunbeam Stories*," or later "*Sibert's World*," and others, as they fell rapidly from her pen, has been a success. A simple announcement, therefore, of another work, fresh from her hand, without prefatory word or introductory remark from her American editor, as elsewhere observed, would seem to be sufficient.

It, therefore, but becomes my most agreeable part in these opening pages, simply to suggest to her many admirers the exceeding truthfulness and naturalness of the following tale, and to assure them that they will find in "*Coming Home*," that the author has come more effectually and affectionately into the wide and tender heart of humanity, than in any of her previous works.

Without having been, as we believe, experimentally taught the painful lesson herein inculcated, that "nobody can do what God has not fitted them for," be the demand forced upon them as it may, through toll or through sorrow, and that the sensitive plant cannot bear with unwithering leaf the rude touch of man, she has shown a carefulness of observation, and a delicacy of portrayal in relation to the common trifles of matrimonial life, on which so much of its joy or grief depends, quite equal to herself, and surpassed by none.

Those of her readers who have already "Come Home," in the proper sense of the narrative, may find in it a key to their own often waywardness or folly, and draw from it the teachings of forbearance and forgiveness so important in all circumstances in life, and especially in married life. To those who have not yet assumed the orange blooms of time, it may suggest thoughts of heart discipline, and resolutions of self-denial, which shall result in that nice regard for the feelings of others, so rare and yet so important, and which is not only the foundation and nourishment of all friendship, but also of all love.

JANE ERMINA LOCKE.

Boston, July, 1858.

COMING HOME.

“AND this is home, sweet wife; can you be happy here?”

“Dear Ralph!” was the softly-murmured reply—it might seem scarcely an answer to the question; but it satisfied the interrogator evidently, for he fondly kissed the face which was lifted up to his, and said,—

“Yes, darling; I am persuaded that you are kind enough to feel that where I am there is happiness, or I would not have ventured to bring you to my humble home. It is a dull time of year, unfortunately, and the place does not look so cheerful as it does in its summer dress; but good fires and bright faces will set all that to rights—will it not?”

“O, yes, dear; we shall be very comfortable, I hope.”

“To be sure, to be sure. Now I will ring for Maria, as the maiden is called, to show you up stairs, and help you undo your traps, while I go to the cellar, and see if I can find a glass of wine to drink our healths in.”

He rang the bell, and before it could possibly be answered, he opened the door, and called loudly, which had the effect of causing a neat, clean, but awkward-looking girl to answer his summons.

“There’s your mistress,” he said; “just see to her.”

The girl made way for him to pass out, and dropping a courtesy, inquired of her mistress if she could do any thing for her.

“Show me the way to my room, if you please; and carry up some of these things.”

“Yes, ma’am; they ain’t very heavy — are they?” she answered, seizing three or four parcels in her brawny arms.

Mrs. Maynard did not appear to think a

reply necessary, and the girl did not appear to expect one, for she hurried on up stairs, and throwing open a door, precipitated her load on the first chair, saying, "That's your room, ma'am ; it ain't very big — is it ?"

"Large enough, thank you — that will do. If I want you I'll ring."

"Yes, do, ma'am ; I shall be sure to hear you — shan't I ?" and closing the door with a sharp bang, she departed ; and her young mistress stood for a moment as she had left her, looking round her room. It appeared to her so much smaller than on the day when she had driven over to see it with Ralph ! but still it was very clean and comfortable. A few hardy roses, which still lingered in the garden, were peeping in at the window ; and as she passionately loved flowers, they looked to her like a sweet welcome. The furniture was all homely in its character, but so cheerful, so bright, and so clean, that only a very fastidious taste could have objected to it. A small, clear fire burned in the tiny grate, and added much to the air