

OUR DAUGHTERS

THEIR LIVES HERE AND HEREAFTER.



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A handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly 'SL', written in black ink. A vertical line is drawn through the center of the characters, extending from above the top of the 'S' to below the bottom of the 'L'.

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OUR DAUGHTERS.

“Then we begin to live indeed,
When, from our sin and bondage freed,
By Christ our Lord and Friend,
We follow Him from day to day,
Assured of grace through all the way
And glory at the end.”

“O! child of God—thy Father’s name and Care and
gifts divine,
The promise of the heritage of joy in heaven are thine.
Take heed, waste not thy new found hopes, make
not thy calling vain,
Live as one born of Heaven, and to noble ends
attain!”

OUR DAUGHTERS:

Their Lives Here and Hereafter.

BY

MRS. G. S. REANEY,

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH GIRLS," ETC.

"Earnestness alone makes life eternity."

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P R E F A C E .



MY DEAR READER,—

Lest you might dream that these pages were penned by an aged woman with bent form, grey hair, and wrinkled brow, let me assure you that such is not the case. Pray do not expect from this book the weighty teaching which such age and experience alone could give. But think of the writer as of one still young enough to sympathize with the longings and desires of early and unfolding womanhood ; neither learned nor “straight-laced,” but with a heart bubbling over with thoughts she yearns to communicate, and with pleasures she is eager to share.

You may like to know, and as I have this opportunity I may as well explain, that the cases and illustrations made use of in this book are genuine portraits,—sketches from life. It

would not be quite fair to give the names of my heroes and heroines, but if necessary I could do so.

May I give you a word of advice; do not skim my book, but *read it*, and please (if you will allow me to suggest it) do not begin at the last chapter! It is a little peculiarity of my own to like to be read straight through, not backwards but forwards! If this Preface came at the close of this little volume instead of at its commencement, I feel sure you would have no difficulty in believing me to be

Your sincere Friend,

ISABEL REANEY.

P.S.—If, after reading my book, *you* feel to be “bubbling over” with thoughts you wish to communicate, I shall be very pleased to receive a letter from you. Address—

MRS. G. S. REANEY,

Reading,

Christmas, 1880.

Berks.

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THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

“The Rights of woman—What are they?—
The Right to labour, love, and pray ;
The Right to weep with those that weep ;
The Right to wake when others sleep.

The Right to dry the falling tear ;
The Right to quell the rising fear ;
The Right to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort in despair.

The Right to watch the parting breath ;
To soothe and cheer the bed of death ;
The Right when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the veil.

The Right the wanderer to reclaim,
And lure the lost from paths of shame ;
The Right to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless.

The right the little ones to guide,
In simple faith, to Him who died ;
With earnest love and gentle praise,
To bless and cheer their youthful days.

The Right the intellect to train,
And guide the soul to noble aim ;
Teach it to rise above earth's toys,
And wing its flight to heavenly joys.

The Right to live for those we love ;
The Right to die that love to prove ;
The Right to brighten earthly *homes*
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

Are these thy rights?—Then use them well ;
The holy influence none can tell.
If these are thine, Why ask for more?—
Thou hast *enough* to answer for !

Are these thy rights?—Then murmur not
That woman's mission is thy lot.
Improve the talents God has given :
Life's duties done—thy rest in heaven !”

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

“SOMETHING THAT MAY HELP.”

“Time passes onward with returnless wing ;
And action too like time may seem to pass,—
To pass and be no more. But 'tis not so ;
For influence never dies ! And every act,
Emotion, look and word, makes influence tell
For good or evil, happiness or woe,
Through the long future of eternity !”

“HAVE you a book suitable for a young girl just starting out in life—something that may help her?” and the loving mother, the kind friend, or the thoughtful teacher, as the case may be, pauses and anxiously scans the titles of the books lying upon the bookseller's counter.

My dear young friends, it is my prayerful

aim to make this book just such an one as is so often asked for; one that may "help." Our positions in life may be strangely different, our callings of varied character and kind, but we are all one in our great heart needs.

Do not let me in any sense be thought or felt to take the place of lecturer, or speaker, in the following pages. Think of me rather as one who, from the experience of her own life, has a full, deep sympathy with all who tread the path of girlhood and womanhood.

Let us fairly understand each other at the onset, and you and I will—it may be—soon unconsciously grow to be true friends, and it will be as such that you will make possible the fulfilment of my great desire, in gathering to your own heart such teaching and comfort from my book as shall prove it indeed to be to you, in the sorrows, difficulties, and perplexities, the restless longings and higher yearnings of your lives—something that may help.

And now to start right away. My title speaks of life here and hereafter. What is

your hereafter life to be? Have you not, deep down in your heart, somewhere concealed, the hope that the life hereafter belongs to Heaven? Has it ever struck you that the life *here* must be heaven bound if this is to be realized, and that before it can be Heaven bound it must be Heaven born?

When I was quite a little girl, a young earnest minded woman, seizing the opportunity of a moment alone with me, put to me the startling question, "What do you think your heart is like in God's sight?"

I had not a word to say for myself. I stood speechless while she continued warmly: "Ah! my poor child, you are not converted or you would know directly that in God's sight your heart is full of evil imaginations and desperately wicked!"

"Well," I thought to myself, "perhaps it is all quite true, but have I not longed to be made good, have I not prayed for a clean heart and for a right spirit, and has not God blessed me in giving me sweet thoughts of Himself

and of His love—and does He not know and see all this ?”

Tears choked my utterance when I would have spoken. My earnest friend continued somewhat sternly: “Ah! I am afraid you are very hard and impenitent. Pray that God will soften your heart and take away your stubbornness and pride.”

She meant it all kindly, doubtless, but oh! how it steeled my heart against her! For many years I could not “bring my mind” to talk with her about that which I felt to be the first thought and concern of my life. Yet all the while she was praying for me, longing to know me happy in the possession of that peace which passeth all understanding.

Dear reader, what if I should frighten you away? What if, in my very earnestness to help you, I should say something which should repel you, lead you to close the book with a feeling of anger or disgust?

Will you bear with me a moment if I gently press the question “Have *you* ever realized that

before you can be Heaven bound *you must be Heaven born?*”

Do you know what it is on the eve of a journey, which, with all its preparations has greatly occupied your attention for days past,—do you know what it is, the night before you start, to *dream* that the journey has at length been commenced? You have taken leave of all the dear ones at home; you have driven to the station; there has been difficulty and perplexity about your luggage, but you know it to be safe at last; there has been confusion in getting your ticket; the most unlikely person—a friend—a relative from whom you parted just now at home, is the booking-clerk; you have taken your seat, you have heard the guard’s whistle; the engine has let off steam, and now you are fairly started! You watch from the carriage window the country you pass; you think it strange to see your father’s meadow (and the cattle grazing) miles and miles away from home where you know it had used to be, you suddenly remember, when thus reminded

of home, that you left some of your luggage in your room just where you packed it, unstrapped. How shall you get it? What can you do without it? The train passes a church and you hear the bells ringing; the people in the next carriage are moving about a great deal; surely there is some one knocking! Another knock and you answer feebly "Come in," and awake to find it is after all only a dream. The luggage yet waits to be strapped up, the farewell at home has still to be spoken.

And this is a true portraiture of what takes place in the spiritual life of some. They dream they have started on the heavenly journey. There have been certain facts and experiences in their lives which have made them take for granted that they are fairly off. They think they watch the scenes through which they pass with the eye of one who presses forward on life's way to Heaven.

But dreamers, idle dreamers some of these! There has in reality been no true start made,

no journey begun. There has been no birth from above; how then can there be the walk towards Heaven?

Perhaps some of you will say "Without being conscious of any great inward change, we know we are not careless or indifferent to God's Peace. Indeed, we have it. So long as we can attend church regularly, so long as we find time to read the Bible at stated intervals in the day, so long as things go smoothly, we are quite happy, very *very* happy!

Oh! but *can* that be the "fulness of joy" promised to all true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, when it is made so dependent upon the "so long" of surrounding circumstances? Does this not look a little—just a little—like the thirst which came again and again to the woman of Samaria, necessitating the drawing of water, which satisfied for a while, but which left behind the possibility of needing more?

There is great difference between getting water by drawing from a well, and having a living well within you springing up. Put the

test to yourselves. If you are in the enjoyment of heart peace, is it yours through the outward means you use, and therefore subject to be broken and interrupted when the means are lacking, or is it yours because you have consciously claimed for yourself God's promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee?"

The subject is altogether too solemn and important to be put on one side in a few brief sentences. We will look a little more fully into the matter in succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A HAPPY CHRISTIAN?

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord ; that walketh in His ways . . . happy shalt thou be, and all shall be well with thee.”—*Ps.* cxxviii. 1, 2.

“My heart for gladness springs ; it cannot more be sad,
For very joy it laughs and sings, sees nought but sun-
shine glad ;
The Sun that glads my eye is Christ the Lord I love !”

THE hour was late. The household had retired for the night, but a visitor and the daughter of the house sat side by side having a most solemn conversation.

“Linda, dear, are you really and truly a happy Christian?” the visitor asked gently, placing her hand upon her young friend’s arm, and looking earnestly into her face.

“Of course I am, dear Mrs. R.,” Linda replied warmly; “have I not been brought up in a Christian home? Do not my parents occupy positions of importance as Christian workers? How could I be other than a happy Christian?”

“Linda, dear, this will not do,” said her friend; “you cannot deceive either yourself or me. *You know* in your heart something more than this is wanting to make you a true Christian!”

Linda was silent and somewhat tearful. Mrs. R. continued—

“Honestly answer my question. Are you a happy Christian?”

“Honestly then, no!” said Linda with energy; “but oh! how greatly I desire to be one. Every one takes it for granted that I *am* one, because of all the advantages I have had with a father and mother so eminently good, until I have tried to believe all was well with me, but deep down in my heart is an aching want which cannot be silenced.”

“Until,” said Mrs. R. tenderly, “you bring

your heart to Him who has said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Come to Him and you shall indeed find what you are so longing for, 'rest unto your soul.'"

"Oh! tell me how I am to come?" said Linda earnestly. "I never talk to any one about these things; no one talks to me; they take for granted that I know it all so well! But I am so ignorant and I do so long for help."

"Let us see what God tells us in His word," said Mrs. R. opening her Bible. "Here in the first chapter of Isaiah we have the Lord's medical report of our condition: 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.' Linda, do you know that this is the condition of an unsaved soul in God's sight—the sight of the *holy* God?"

Linda hid her face in her hands. Then she said in a voice but little above a whisper, "It

this be true, how is there any possibility of our being healed? What *can* heal the soul which sin has so destroyed?"

Mrs. R. turned to 1 Peter ii. 24, and read softly the words, "'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.' In whom," she added, "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

"But can it mean me?" said Linda in a whisper.

"Yes, if you accept what has been done as for yourself," said her friend, "for we read in John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' If you believe, then you must be one of the 'whosoever.'"

"Do you mean that I have *nothing* at all to do to get myself saved," asked Linda; "nothing to do but to *believe* as you call it?"

“It is God’s word, not man’s word, Linda,” said her friend. “God tells us that ‘He hath laid on Him,’ the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘the iniquity of us all.’ ‘He became sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ ‘As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name.’ He has done everything for us; He has completely finished the work of our redemption; He has put away sin, justified us in the sight of the holy God, and purchased for us a spotless righteousness. ‘In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him.’”

“It seems too wonderful,” said Linda, drawing a deep breath.

“It is nevertheless quite true,” said her friend, “and the aching want which you know in your heart, is just what the Holy Spirit is causing you to feel. He is drawing you to the Son whom the Father in His love has given to be your Saviour. You have only to accept this

glorious gift already prepared for you and all will be well!"

Linda wept silently, while her friend prayed for her, that she might accept that gift without further waiting or delay.

* * * * *

To-day Linda is a joyous praise giving and praise living Christian. She has stayed her mind upon the Lord. She trusts in Him and has peace.

Reader have you this peace?

You know the world, with all its pleasures and enjoyments, cannot *satisfy* your heart's cravings. You are conscious that the most exact fulfilment of any known duty does not feed all the longings of your soul; there is still a something untouched, unreachd. Have you ever realized that this soul-longing is only capable of being satisfied by God Himself? And further, that your consciousness of this longing is the Holy Spirit drawing you to Him, who, knowing how often you have drawn from the well of life's pleasure and thirsted

again, says to you: "If thou knewest the gift of God . . . thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It is when we have known the gift of God, and have asked of Him for this living water, that we are Heaven born. And it is with the memory of His love within our hearts, when yearning to live unto Him in all things, remembering daily that we are not our own, but are bought with a price—it is then that we are Heaven bound.

A fact and its consequence. Dear reader, is it *reality* to you?

"Jesus, not on works I rest,
Nor baptismal water trust;
Through Thy sufferings I am blest,
Through Thy merit owned as just.

'Tis not sacramental bread;
'Tis not wine my life can be;

But the Blood which Thou hast shed,
And Thy Body pierced for me.

Thou my Mediator art,
Saviour, Shepherd, Prince, and Friend,
Grave Thy Name upon my heart,
Make me love Thee to the end.

Thou art Peace unto the mind ;
Thou art to the hungry, Bread ;
Thou art Light unto the blind ;
Thou art Life unto the dead.

Jesus, moved by love divine,
Thou Thy wandering sheep hast sought ;
Henceforth I am wholly Thine,
By Thy Cross and Passion bought."

CHAPTER III.

WORLDLY HINDRANCES IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN.

THE LOVE OF DRESS.

“ Oh ! for a heart magnanimous to know
Thy worth poor world, and let thee go.”

“ OH ! pray do not suggest *my* becoming a Christian ! Serge dresses, poked bonnets, and colours of the darkest hue. No ! I really could *not* do it. I would rather remain wicked a little longer than make myself look ugly ! ” and the speaker raised one of the fairest of fair faces to be kissed by the lady relative who had called forth the remark, and then, with an impulse peculiar to one of her bright nature, she threw her arms round her aged cousin’s neck and gave her a long hug, adding in the sweetest and most coaxing of tones : “ Now,

dearie, don't ask such a sacrifice! Of course *you* cannot understand quite what it is to be young and pretty, a little bewitching even, upon an occasion *some* people have said! You must have forgotten it since you were young (when, by the way, I am sure you were very pretty, for your face is now so sweet). Wait until I am old and wrinkled and nobody admires me, and then——”

“Well, what, little woman?” asked her aunt (for such she called her), as Minnie paused.

“Why, then,” said Minnie, a little more shyly; “when I am worn out and fit for nothing else, then I will settle down to be serious, and spend my whole life in visiting the poor, and reading to old bed-ridden women!”

“Indeed!” said Aunt Nancy, with a merry twinkle in her eyes. “Now sit still, little sprite, for a few moments, while I tell you a story.”

Minnie folded her hands demurely, and drew down the corners of her mouth in mock solemnity.

“A lady some friends of mine knew and loved,” continued Aunt Nancy, “was once doing some shopping in a town where she was only a visitor. She had purchased a new dress, and after paying for it, and giving full directions about where it was to be sent, she said to the young lady who had served her—

“‘You will not keep my dress and wear it out before sending home to me.’

“‘Madam!’ exclaimed the young lady indignantly, ‘you are in one of the leading houses of business in N., do you suppose it possible that any such thing could happen?’

“‘It is quite true,’ said Mrs. D. ‘that the dress is mine because I have chosen it, and purchased it, and you have acknowledged that it is mine, but how sure am I that you will treat me any better than you have treated the Lord Jesus Christ, who has bought you—body and soul—not with silver and gold, but with His own most precious Blood? And are you not wearing yourself (*which rightly belongs to Him*) out, giving to the world and self

your youth and early womanhood, waiting it may be to give yourself to Him who has bought you, when you are worn out and faded?' The young shop-woman burst into tears and said—

“‘Oh! no one has ever talked to me like this before.’”

“But, Auntie dearie,” Minnie began in hesitating tones.

“Well, little woman,” said her aunt, with a smile, “has my story a lesson for you, I wonder?”

“But really, Auntie,” continued Minnie, “do you not think it is just a little *inconsistent*, to say the least of it, for a young light-hearted girl to worry her head about religion? So long as she has lively spirits, good health, plenty of admirers, and a dear old liberal father to dress her well; what does she want the comfort of religion for? *That* will be needed to make up for the loss of other things when they fail.”

“Do all the things of which you speak

Minnie; lively spirits, good health, admirers, dressing well—do all these things,” said Aunt Nancy, “*quite* satisfy my little Minnie? Has her heart never *one* restless longing, *one* secret desire for something more lasting and real for its happiness?”

Minnie pouted. Then throwing her arms again round Aunt Nancy, she said sweetly—

“You are a dear old thing, and I could not deceive you if I tried. There are days when I long *dreadfully* for something better than I ever had yet, even when I wore a perfect gem of a dress for the first time!”

We will not follow the conversation further. How many of you, my dear readers, would, if pressed, make the same admission Minnie made,—that all the pleasures of a bright and happy life still leave you with a longing unsatisfied? How many would make Minnie’s confession, that the love of dress came between you and the very thought of being a Christian?

It is not difficult to imagine how repulsive

to the mind of a girl in the first bloom of her womanly beauty must be the thought of laying on one side all that is pretty and unique in dress, and wearing instead an ill-fitting robe of dark serge, and a bonnet more suitable for old age and failing eyesight than for a face bright with the flush of health and sweet with the beauty of youthfulness! But where do we find the rule laid down in God's Word for associating the wearing of "ugly garments" with Christian faith and life?

In Proverbs xxxi. we find that the virtuous woman, whose price is above rubies, "Maketh herself coverings of tapestry: her clothing is silk and purple." Surely *this* is suggestive of prettiness and good taste, and not of extreme heaviness and dulness! Nor does St. Paul contradict the thought when he urges upon women professing godliness, that they "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but,

which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." There is nothing here of extremes which are ugly or of studied effort to distort and make plain a form which God Himself has clothed with beauty!

But while all this may be perfectly true, let it not be imagined that these remarks sanction or uphold styles or fashions which by the most charitable could not be included in the "*modest apparel*" in which St. Paul urges Christian women to clothe themselves.

Let it be noticed that the woman whose price was above rubies, *made her own dresses*. Did all young English girls to-day make their own garments, there would be fewer surely to appear in public with persons so *tightly* covered that the outline of the form can be visible to those who often blush—because the wearers of the dresses do not blush! The thought called forth of necessity in the cutting out of a robe in which to drape the body, the thought would guide the scissors in their clippings, and leave ample folds to gracefully gather round the figure. Artistic

beauty and womanly modesty would settle that question. It is because English girls do *not* think, as they would be obliged to do if they made their own dresses, that they allow themselves to be so disfigured, and give to milliner and dressmaker the terrible responsibility of lowering the tone of their own womanhood by the styles and fashions *they* will them to support.

“Modest apparel” cannot include the low-necked dresses which leave uncovered so much of the person, and which can never be suggestive of pure or elevating thoughts; nor can it admit the tightened in waist, which, while it displaces the internal parts of the body, can never, by those sufficiently gifted to know the anatomy of the human frame, be considered pretty, telling to all who at all understand the laws of health, that the little waist belongs to one who is profoundly ignorant of the most elementary physiological truths.

Yes! dear reader, it is true, that, instead of admiring your nipped in waist, those whose

admiration is alone worth having, are in their hearts pitying your gross ignorance, and perhaps wondering what your mothers or governesses have been about to leave you in darkness upon the subject!

If "modest apparel" does *not* mean the particular points alluded to above, it may mean well-fitting dresses and soft and pleasing colours. The King greatly desires thy beauty (Psalm xlv. 2). Do not imagine, fair reader, that you have to make yourself ugly in order to be accepted by Him. He wants you *now* in all the freshness of your girlhood, in all the buoyancy of your youthful spirits, in all the vigour of your intellectual power, in all the gentleness of your sweet womanly culture—*now* He wants you, not to despoil you of power and rob your heart of pleasures, but to give to you the true riches which shall make you great, to clothe you with a beauty which shall not fade or waste away, to fill your life with joys untold, joys which in making you blest shall give to you the sweet power of blessing others.

A young girl stood on the threshold of the ball room, dressed in resplendent garments, magnificent with jewels, the only grief in this moment of ecstatic bliss being the knowledge that her diamonds which necklaced her throat and braceleted her wrists were *paste*, the real ones—a family heirloom—being mortgaged on a family debt. Say, had some hand held out to her that night the *true* jewels, bidding her replace the imitation by the real, would she have hesitated, asked time to consider, pleaded to be allowed to wait until she was older? No, surely no! Dear reader, you are decking yourself in diamonds that are paste, however brilliant in hue and colouring. What will you say when asked to relinquish them and have instead for your very own the *real*?

Oh! listen to the voice of your King, who greatly desires your beauty—listen, “for He is thy Lord,” and no longer give your love, your admiration, your time, your thought, your youthful energy to things “which satisfieth not,” but “*worship thou Him.*”

Say, shall the love of dress step between you and your desire to be a Christian ?

It was a noble saying of one of the Puritan writers, "keep thine eye on the end of life," and very true it is that if the end of life were always held in view, the beginning of life would be more worthily lived.

How few of you, my dear sisters, who live for fashion and admiration and the pleasures of the passing hour, how few of you beholding your face in the glass and smiling at its prettiness, think what the end of all this will be ?

"Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised."

Have you ever read (from a little book called "The Mirage of Life") that touching story of Lady Hester Stanhope, the niece of Mr. Pitt the favourite minister of George III. ? Flattered by royalty and made a theme for the illustration of poetry, painting and sculpture, she became so elated with her worldly greatness, that she retired to the solitudes of the

East, and there attempted to establish her reputation as Queen of the Desert. Her lofty visions soon faded, and in the evening of life, forsaken by her friends, and burdened with pecuniary difficulties, the once youthful beauty thus confessed how she had proved the vanity of life:—“She began,” says her biographer, “to cry and wring her hands, presenting a most melancholy picture of despair. She then spoke thus: ‘Look on me; what a lesson I am against vanity! Look at this arm, all skin and bone—so thin that you may see through it. It was once, without exaggeration, so rounded that you could not pinch the skin up. My neck was once so fair that a pearl necklace scarcely showed on it; and men—men who were no fools but sensible men—would say to me: “You have a neck of which you may really be proud. You are one of nature’s favourites, and may be excused for admiring that beautiful skin.” What would they say if they could behold me now? My teeth are all gone, and long lines in my face!’ . . . In this mournful strain,” adds her

biographer," she went on. Everything around her presented so affecting a picture that, unable to restrain my emotions, I burst into tears!"

Dear reader, can you look upon this sorrowful picture and still prize your beauty as your greatest treasure—still desire only to win the admiration of the frivolous, who think more of a girl's dress than they do of the condition of her soul?

Nay, surely, you have not thought of it before, or you could never have willingly lived in a "fool's paradise," when a glorious home eternal in the Heavens might be yours, even here, by your seeking those joys which fade not away.

Resist not the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. The day *may* come when, having deliberately closed the door of your heart to Him who knocks with patient, nail-pierced hand, you will no longer hear His voice in loving, gentle tones, urging you to come unto Him that you may find *rest*—Oh! how you need it!—to your soul! Read the verses following, and take to your own heart, my dear sister, the lesson they teach:—

“The spirit came in childhood
And pleaded ‘Let me in!’
But ah! the door was bolted
By heedlessness and sin.
‘Oh! I’m too young,’ the child cried,
‘My heart is closed to-day!’
Sadly the Spirit listened,
Then turned and went His way.

Again He came and pleaded,
In youth’s bright happy hour,
He called, but found no answer,
For, fettered by sin’s power,
The youth lay idly dreaming:
‘Go Spirit, not to-day;
Wait till I’ve tried life’s pleasures,”
—Again He went away.

Once more He came in mercy,
In manhood’s vigorous prime,
He knocked, but found no entrance;
‘The merchant had no time;’
‘No time for true repentance,’
‘No time to think or pray,’
—And so, repulsed and saddened,
—Again He turned away.

Yet once again He pleaded—
The man was old and ill—
He hardly heard the whisper,
His heart was seared and chill;

‘Go, leave me ! When I want Thee
I’ll send for Thee,’ he cried ;
Then, turning on his pillow,
Without a hope *he died!*”

Shall this be *your* experience my sister ?

Listen to the words of one who pleads with you to give ear to the voice of the Spirit who can alone make you wise unto salvation.

“Have you ever thought of this,—that all Satan’s energies, all his efforts, all his more immediate workings are concentrated in the human heart of every man living who has never yet been truly converted to God ? Yes, there is his kingdom, for there, under whatever religious or moral aspect, is a ‘*disobedient*’ one, in whom is the ‘spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ What an awful thought, that every unconverted man has the spirit of evil *dwelling* in him, *working* in him, and concentrating all his energies on him, to work out his mighty plans in frustrating everything God-like ! Think of this you unsaved ones—the worker within you—the devil—the father of lies !

“That much of what you do think and do is excellent and praiseworthy only shows the more his deceitful working to accomplish his ends. He is the *serpent*, and uses all this. Yes, charity, religion, the form of godliness, the church and chapel—anything and everything, if he can only shut out Christ ; anything if he can only keep you from feeling you are a sinner, and from flying to Jesus as your Refuge. Yes, he is all this and a thousand times more. Such, my dear friend, if not converted is the one you have dwelling within you, and with whom, every moment of your existence, you are having to do. Oh that God would open your eyes ! You have no conception of the state you are in. Only God by His Holy Spirit can teach you.”

Reader, will you make this prayer yours ?

“ O Lord, teach me to know myself *as a sinner*, teach me to know the Lord Jesus Christ *as my Saviour* ; for His Name’s sake. Amen.”

CHAPTER IV.

WORLDLY HINDRANCES IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN.

FLIRTING.

“To love that which is great is almost to be great ourselves, they say ; if this be true, then surely to love what is foolish and silly and worthless, is to become all these, and more.”

“I SHOULD love to be a Christian if it were not for one thing!” said a bright, sunny-faced girl one day.

“And what is that one thing?” inquired her friend.

“Oh!” replied Henrietta, blushing scarlet, “I—am—afraid—I—should—have—to—give—up—flirting—and it is so *delicious* I really cannot!”

Henrietta’s estimate of a true woman’s life was evidently a low one. Surely she could

never have looked upon the picture Solomon has drawn (Proverbs xxxi.) of a virtuous woman whose price is above rubies. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Could this have been written of a woman who in earlier days had thought flirting to be "delicious?" "Doth *safely* trust in her." It is no blind devotion to the wife of his choice which gives to the husband a calm trust and confidence. He has a right to trust her. Her character is such as to guarantee this. There can be no hesitation, no doubt. The life is but the outgrowth of the heart-thought; and there all is pure and beautifully chaste.

Are there not many who think with Henrietta that flirting is "delicious," although they might not be quite so honest in acknowledging it? There is the gay coquette, brilliant in beauty, who simpers at an evening party, behind her fan, claiming the attentions of all around her, but bestowing upon some chosen one or two her sweetest glances. She rejoices in the interest she awakens, smiles to detect the anxiety

of those whom she enthralls, as they seek to say something which may win her pleasure or approval ; smiles, poises her chin upon her little jewelled hand, and pretends not to understand the flattering words so warmly spoken ; smiles, and goes home to boast of her conquests, and to make merriment about “those *foolish* fellows who, do what she could to prevent it, *would* fall in love with her.”

Is it possible that the day will come when she of whom we write shall take her place by the side of Solomon’s virtuous woman, when the heart of her husband can *safely trust in her?*

Nay, surely not. To play with sacred feelings to-day, to have so low a standard of what is pure and true and good, all this is as the brushing off of the bloom from the peach, and when once removed no human hand can place it there again. The heart of a husband cannot *safely* trust in a giddy, thoughtless flirt.

But not only to such is flirting “delicious.” The plain can trifle with affections and court attentions as surely as can the fascinating and

pretty. And it can be done without coquetting behind a fan. A woman who loves "flirting" will find her opportunities, even though she gets them in a walk home from the Sunday school, a visit to the poor of the parish, or a saunter by the river-side upon a summer's evening some Sunday after church.

And what is done in higher life is done behind the counter, in larger or smaller "establishments," where the "young ladies" of the house unconsciously lower the standard of true womanhood to the young men associated with them in business matters; lower the standard, inasmuch as they themselves are willing to be known as fast and frivolous and flippant. How many young men, *because of this*, have been dragged downwards; how many have been led to think less nobly of womanhood, and thus have become more easily drawn into actions an honourable man would blush to be responsible for.

Alas! that you my sisters, in your busy life behind the counter, should forget the sweet

mission of your womanhood,—*so* to live and act that those around you may be won in their reverence and respect for you, to treat with greatest courtesy and kindness all others of your sex. You indulge to-day in flirting and frivolity, and the one most under your influence, most susceptible of impression, in his very admiration for *you* loses his purest thoughts of a good woman, and by and by, when your mood has changed, and *he* is turned adrift to find his pleasure in some one else's meaningless smiles, you will have succeeded in filling his heart with cruel and bitter memories, which memories cannot fail to make more difficult a belief in womanhood—a belief which, in an evil hour, might have shielded him from temptation and wrong doing!

And there are others to whom some passing allusion must here be made, those more especially who occupy positions in University towns, and who, as they serve their customers with the article inquired for, lower themselves by idle and flippant speeches, which gain passing

attentions, but which cannot *help* the one who hears them. A freedom in manner neither womanly nor modest, a readiness to receive avours from those far removed from them in station, the acceptance of flowers, of photographs and even jewellery—alas! for the bitter sorrow which *may* follow to her who has thus blindly yielded up the safeguards of her womanly modesty, the gentle dignity which wins respect, the reticence in speech which makes impossible the presuming to take liberties,

But supposing the line is never crossed which separates innocence from guilt; still how great the wrong done to both, but more especially to him who is learning in his intercourse with a giddy, thoughtless woman, to think less of all womanhood, and *because of that* to be less brave and courteous and noble in his dealings with the gentler sex.

My dear sisters everywhere, think of His words who said, "Blessed are the *pure* in heart for they shall see God." We cannot over estimate the value of *purity* in our most secret

thoughts and words and works. Well for us to pray earnestly, constantly, the prayer, "Cleanse the thoughts of our heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name through Christ our Lord."

A woman's truest safety in life is her purity. Once to admit laxity of thought, once to tamper with the dignity of her pure womanhood by allowing advances which are unseemly, whether of word or action, and the doors which should be fast closed between evil passion without and her own chaste character within, are broken-locked and valueless for protection.

If this be true, flirtation in whatever form ceases to be innocent, for it leads to a freedom in manner and speech which undermines and destroys what is most beautiful in woman's character, her modesty and her dignity; and, because expressive of thoughts within which are not wholly pure and true, it tampers with the conscience and injures or makes difficult a clear perception between right and wrong. A

woman cannot be too much upon her guard in watching against any unbending of manner which would encourage or allow attentions not altogether suggestive of purity of thought. We know that many start in life at a disadvantage. The mother, to whom belongs by right the privileged responsibility of enlightening her children (as their tender years unfold) in some of the sad mysteries which surround the most sheltered and the purest, has, through timidity or loving anxiety to keep them as long as possible in total ignorance of the sorrows which lie about their path, withheld such information as would at least put her daughters upon their guard ; and many a bright innocent girl earns to her cost that ignorance is not *bliss* but *ruin*. Giving up her heart's best and purest affections to the one who asks her love, unwarned of dangers near, how is the bright girl fresh from the schoolroom to know how to deal with a man of unprincipled character, or of a passion so selfish that to serve his own purposes he can afford to rob a true-hearted, trustful

woman of that which once lost makes life itself a burden to her?

How, when no means of judging have been suggested to her thoughts, how can such an one gauge all at once the power of the cruel tempter who comes before her as her lover? Let one sorrowful story suffice to tell what woeful pitfalls the pure and innocent may stumble into, when, unprotected by the wise teaching of a mother, they enter life unwarned of its surrounding evils.

Marian was the only daughter of a clergyman's home, her father's darling and her mother's joy. To let her young bright life unfold in the sunshine of love at home, to keep from it all that might pain or grieve, this had been the parents' aim. So Marian grew up uninformed of many of life's darkest mysteries, and altogether in ignorance of life's sins. A man of gentlemanly bearing, with courteous manners, and speech that was full of poetry and thought, appeared upon the scenes. To him Marian's affections soon were given. She

had no thought, poor child, by which to test the purity of her hero's principles. He loved her and that was enough. How could she help returning love so devoted? The opposition of her parents only made her more determined than before to choose for her husband the man they thought "not good enough." "Not good enough! Ah! they did not know him as *she* did. Was he not all that was pure and noble, all that was true and manly? What novel—and she had read many—ever depicted a more perfect character?" And so the poor girl argued to herself, and went on secretly loving him whom her parents had refused to accept as a suitor for their daughter's hand.

There were secret letters sent, and stolen interviews held, and one morning early, Marian's room was vacant, and a little pencilled note told of her flight.

"You would not let us have each other, and so there was nothing left for us to do but to elope," the letter said.

Oh! the agony of those parents' hearts when

they realized that their pure darling was in the keeping of a man whose impure life had unfitted him for her suitor! Would it, after all, have been better to have told her all the truth about him? but then it would have enlightened her too much. Surely, oh! surely it were wiser to keep her in the dark as to life's sins and sorrows, than to sadden her tender heart by telling her about them! Thus they argued in their bitter agony and grief.

And Marian?

Found herself in an hotel in London, heard the false lips of the man she trusted tell her that there was some delay about the marriage licence. It would be all right to-morrow. The delay could be of no importance. Could she not *trust* the man who loved her better than life itself?

And with cruel and crafty subtlety the unprincipled man of the world led Marian, the innocent and unenlightened, on to her ruin.

The promised "to-morrow" never came. After three long weary weeks of misery most

appalling, Marian was forsaken by the man who had betrayed her. Telling her that he had paid up to that day only the account at the hotel, and reminding her that she was not the first "whom he had had the honour of ruining," and that "she must do as they had done to gain a livelihood," he left her.

Marian, heart-broken and friendless, maddened in her grief and shame to desperate deeds, *did* as the others spoken of had done, to keep herself from positive starvation, until the God whose ears are open to the cry of the needy heard the wail of anguish from that poor lost one's heart, and sent deliverance.

* * * *

We have drawn down the curtain to hide the hideous details of poor Marian's fallen life. We lift it to show her once more at home, within two months from the day she left it. . . . She is lying on the bosom of her father, whose hair has turned white with sorrow, and beside her sits her weeping mother, fondling the hand of her darling, as she whispers words of

love, saying again and again, "May God forgive us the wrong we did you, in never telling you of life's awful sins!"

Dear reader, have we given to you for the first time an idea of the terrible evils which surround the pathway of life? Or can you bless the gentle mother who in her tender teachings thought well to warn you early of woeful temptations around you? If this little volume is to be helpful to you in every respect, we must not, we dare not pass this subject over. There are some of us who shudder as we think of the poor lost girls whose lives are as so many dark blots upon the history of our towns; we shudder and fail to realize that the sin which has brought sorrow and desolation to them, may creep at any moment into our own sheltered homes and rob our fairest of their purity.

Dear sisters, *be upon your guard*. Never lose sight of the possibility that evil might assail you, personally, individually. The spirit of evil can creep through the fast closed doors of the cultured and refined. It can find a resting-place

in homes of wealth and prosperity as well as in the abodes of poverty and want. It can come to the hearts of the purest, and to the lives of the most noble. And where it comes and finds a victim it brings with it desolation and woe, bitter agony and misery worse than death!

Can this spirit of evil come totally without warning?

Nay, there are sentinels which guard with faithful service the purity of every woman. There is her maidenly modesty, which will not listen to an impure word, which will not tolerate an unchaste act. This sentinel has to be removed or drugged to sleep before the spirit of evil (of which we speak) can gain access to the one whom he seeks to ruin. There is the true woman's instinct, which takes instant fright at conduct strange or unseemly. This has to be quieted and won over before the spirit of evil can advance. Alas! how many in not being warned against temptation think that ruin and temptation are one, unconscious of the fact that—

“It is one thing to be tempted,
Another thing to fall.”

A little more carefulness to avoid circumstances which might lead to temptation, a little more prayerfulness in a moment of sudden and unexpected trial, and there would be fewer fallings into this terrible sin.

But we have wandered somewhat from the direct subject of this chapter, and yet not altogether strayed from it; for does not the flirting of which we write lead on to fast and unbecoming conduct, which in its turn makes temptation more difficult to be overcome, and leaves an open door to sin?

The servant who respects herself so little that she can stop at the area-gate long after dusk gossiping with her “young man,” is less likely to remonstrate when invited to take a long and lonely walk, than the servant who demands of her lover the same courteous wooing that her young mistress would expect from hers! And the young girl who has already lost so much of her womanly modesty as to be noisy in con-

versation, flippant in jest, and loose in manner, will find it less difficult to sin than the self-possessed and retiring, who, with gentle dignity repulses too great a freedom, and silences with indignation the first utterance of an impure thought!

But before leaving the subject of flirting, let us discriminate between the positively thoughtless and giddy and those who err through ignorance. Woman's love of appreciation may often mislead her. She longs so ardently to be "something to some one," and if at home she fails to find responses to her affectionate nature, she is sure to value the attentions, and unconsciously to court them of those outside her home. She thirsts for knowledge, too; and having proved how vapid are her school-girl friends, how prone to gossip and talk foolishly, she very gratefully accepts the homage of one of her brother's friends, or one whom she has met at the house of a relative. She has no desire to play with his feelings, she has no thought of encouraging him in attentions she

has no wish to receive, but she simply enjoys his conversation, profits by his sage remarks, gains enlightenment from his wisdom, and, until he reveals to her, by look or word, that all this time he has had other thoughts, other hopes, she has been quite unconscious of the feelings she has awakened, and therefore cannot be charged with flirting, although others looking on may be severe in their judgment of her conduct, and the one most concerned may in his heart feel himself to have been wronged.

Even in this case there might be a moment when a light should dawn upon the fair seeker after knowledge. She would discover that the one, from whom she gained so much, was regarding herself with more than friendly thoughts, and, if she were anxious to discourage his hopes, she would at once withdraw from his society, not linger in it as some have done until an open declaration has led to a positive refusal, and the one to make the avowal has had, for the time at least, his thoughts of noble womanhood darkened by a doubt.

To withdraw from society so pleasant, to make patent the fact that it was knowledge she was seeking, not admiration and personal attention, this will at once give to the true-hearted thoughtful woman her right position in the mind of the man who admires her. He will, if worthy of her, at once conclude that, whether successful or not, this is a woman worth the wooing and the winning.

Ah! if girls could only know what worthy and noble-minded men—whose admiration is alone of any value—thought of *flirts*, they would be less anxious to be recognised as such. Good men abhor flirting, and regard it as both unseemly and unmaidenly. The only men to tolerate flirts are those whose moral tone is not of the highest. Only, my dear young friends, look upon yourselves as representatives of womanhood, and life will be too sacred and solemn to be frittered away, and thoughtless and giddy conduct will be to you impossible!

One word more. If sisters only knew what their lives meant to their brothers, they would

surely be more jealously watchful over actions which could lower the standard of true womanhood in the hearts of those so dear to them.

“It was Hetty’s flirting ways which led me wrong,” pleaded a young fellow whose wild career was breaking his mother’s heart; “she made me expect to find all women flirts, this led me among the more thoughtless and gay of them; and I only followed in the footsteps of others who started as I did with a low standard of womanhood. If a fellow only had the right sort of sister, he would be safe enough from many evils, *for his sister is his guardian angel when she represents all that is pure and true and good.*”

Is the “flirting,” then, which we have sought to discuss somewhat freely in these pages, so infatuating in its pleasantness—in spite of the harm it does and the sorrow to which it may lead—that a noble-minded girl can confess with truthfulness, “the love of this comes between me and my desire to be a Christian?”

Nay, surely she has deceived herself. Oh!

to awake ere too late! It is *now*, in her girlhood's prime and youthful beauty, that the Lord Himself speaks to her in tender accents, "Give me thine heart." Why wait until your beauty has faded, your freshness passed away, before letting go the false joys that you may take the true? In your "afar off" condition you cannot rightly estimate the value of those pleasures found only in the presence of the Lord. "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

Will you refuse the invitation and make *this* the burden of your heart's deepest thought:—

"I am too young—the shining voice of morning
Calls me to wander gaily while I may ;
My heart leaps up, restraint and task-work scorning,
Not now the hard won steep, the narrow way.
When it is night, and in the world's wide meadow
The pleasant path I can no longer see,
I will sit down and rest in the safe shadow
Of Him who died for me.
I am too full of life and life's ambition,
Strong resolution glows in every vein ;
And I must conquer fame and proud position,
If human effort can the good attain ;

When I have won the prize, and my feet falter,
And heart and hand sink down all wearily,
Life's failing sands may flow before the altar
Of Him who died for me.

I am too happy—love and hope have bound me

A willing captive with a chain of flowers :

Music and mirth are flowing all around me ;

I cannot give to God the sunny hours.

When time shall bring my treasures desolation,

When no more sweetness in life's cup shall be,

The bitter dregs will be for a libation

To Him who died for me."

Nay, surely, my dear sister, *this* cannot be. You only need to be aroused to *thought*, and you will hasten to the feet of Him "who *loved* you and gave *Himself* for you," and there you will plead as you hear His loving voice begging you to come to Him for rest :

"Saviour, I am willing,

At Thy feet I bow :

Body, soul, and spirit :

Take, oh, take me *now!*

Gentle reader, you may have other hindrances than those which have been alluded to in these pages, which prevent your coming to Christ. Suffer us to ask :—

Is it because you are afraid of ridicule and what others may say of you ?

“Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed.”—*St. Luke ix. 26.*

Is it because you are not willing to give up all for Christ ?

“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.”—*St. Mark viii. 36.*

Is it because you are thinking that you will do as well as you can, and that God will be satisfied with that ?

“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”—*St. James ii. 10.*

Is it because you are postponing the matter without any definite reason ?

“Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”—*Prov. xxvii. 1.*

“Why am I not a Christian ?”

Will you answer this question *upon your knees.*

CHAPTER V.

SPIRITUAL HINDRANCES IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN.

DOUBTS.

“They their Master’s love who share
Ask not how His Spirit moveth ;
This their only, constant care,
To rest in faith on Him who loveth.”

THERE was a time when the fathers and sons of the households were the only ones who “dared to doubt,” and they often kept their unbelief to themselves, fearing to grieve the gentle wives and mothers of the home, or to shock the tender-hearted sisters.

But, alas! to-day the tender-hearted have grown hard, and the gentle ones have become critical, until, in homes of culture and refinement as well as amongst the less educated and thoughtful, we have *women doubters*. Hear the

experience of one—a daughter of a bright Christian home.

“I heard others questioning the truths of the Bible, and I began to question them too. Books clever and captivating were put into my hand; I read them with eager thirst. One by one of the truths I learnt at my mother’s knee was utterly destroyed. I ceased to pray. I only read God’s Word to criticise, and to discover new weaknesses and faults.

“My life at this time was miserable, hopelessly wretched. When my belief in the God of love went, I lost all faith in human goodness . . . and from that day I walked on in a horrible darkness. . . . What did I care that I could study the deepest writers, could master, in a way few women can, science and philosophy? My life was without God and without hope in the world.”

* * * *

And over this dark chaos of doubt and wretchedness in a human soul the Spirit of God moved. And God said, “Let there be light,

and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good and divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

Man’s thought and voice and argument brought darkness to the soul. When God spake there was light.

Dear reader, do you know anything of doubt and of wretchedness which cloud your soul with darkness as horrible as it is intense? Have you listened to the sceptical arguments of friends until you have questioned the soundness of your childhood’s faith, and wondered whether the teachings of your godly parents belonged to an age gone by, with which the thoughts of to-day could have no sympathy?

In a word, has *doubt* of the reality of things Divine come between you and your desire to be a Christian?

Because *others* doubt can it be, my dear young sisters, that you have been shaken in your belief concerning holy things?

“I don't hold with your Bible: I regard it as a tissue of fabrications and lies,” said a young forgerman with a cruel laugh, to the gentle district visitor who had ventured to put a tract into his hand, asking him to read it.

“And I,” replied the visitor, in calm sweet tones, “I believe in it more fully than ever, since in yourself I find an additional proof of its truthfulness; for we read, ‘There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts;’” and with a gentle bow the district visitor withdrew, while the one to whom she had spoken bit his lip and muttered something about “a woman would of course have the last word.”

And why not, if the last word be a true one?

A lady, during a summer visit away from home, heard of a man who avowed himself to be an infidel. She went to his shop to visit him, although warned that he would seek to annoy her, if not to say what was actually rude and insulting. But the lady was a woman

of prayer, and where there is prayer there is fearlessness.

“I have come to invite you to a meeting next Sunday,” was her opening remark.

“Much obliged,” said he sullenly; “but I’m not of your religion.”

“So I perceive,” was her reply, “for my religion makes me very happy, and yours evidently makes you very cross!”

“I am not cross,” said he, turning round fiercely.

“You are taking great pains to conceal the fact,” said the lady smilingly.

“I tell you I don’t believe in a God,” continued the man, pacing his shop, while the lady, undaunted, walked to and fro with him.

“I am not at all surprised to hear it,” said she; “you could not live the life you do if you believed in a God.”

A smile, almost savage in its fierceness, played upon the man’s lips.

“I tell you what it is, my friend,” continued the lady, “it is all very well to hold the views

you do, so long as you live carelessly and profanely. You may deceive yourself into thinking you are happy; *but wait until the hour of death comes*, and then you will prove the worth or otherwise of your principles!

“A few days ago I visited an infidel who was thought to be dying.

“‘Let me alone; do not disturb me,’ he cried. ‘I want to die as I have lived, declaring there is no God!’

“I put some fragrant flowers upon his breast, roses fresh gathered from my garden, and said, ‘The God who made these has sent them to you to tell the message of His love.’

“‘I tell you,’ cried he, with panting breath, ‘I do not believe in a God.’

“‘That makes no difference, friend, to the *fact* of His existence, nor to the fact that He loves you and yearns to save you now!’ His eyes moistened. Then I asked, ‘Say, are you happy without Him? are you content, now you are face to face with death, to *pretend* that you believe there is no God?’

“He said in softened tones, ‘No; it did very well while I was well and able to shake thoughts off, *but it does not satisfy me now!*’

“That man became a believer, and did not die, but lived to praise the God whom he had denied, and to tell to others the story of his conversion through the beautiful message of God’s love, those innocent, fragrant roses!”

The lady paused, then added, as she saw her listener interested, “And now, my friend, as you do not pray for yourself, I am going to pray for you.”

“I tell you,” he interrupted, “I don’t believe in prayer.”

“That does not alter the fact that *I* do,” answered the lady calmly. “And when you feel a tug of conscience you can say, ‘She is praying for me.’ I am going to pray you to the meeting on Sunday.”

The lady withdrew, and at that Sunday meeting the infidel sat, listened and acknowledged later that everything that was spoken (and the gospel of love was proclaimed in

simplest language) came to his heart with the force of truth!

Reader, have you been frightened by the *talk* of an infidel? Have you learnt to doubt Christianity because of the fearless life of an unbeliever? It is *death* which tests principles, not life with its busy thoughts and engrossing occupations. The man who, because of his godless life, denies the existence of a God, may be brave and daring while in health and strength; but visit him upon his death-bed if you would see the true value of his so-called beliefs.

The good and great Hannah More desired to see an atheist die, and being summoned to his death chamber, she watched him in the closing hours of his life. His friends had withdrawn from the scene, unable to stand the bitter, agonizing cries of the dying man. Hannah More kept her seat behind the curtains of his bed. She heard amid the restless tossing an utterance which caused her to spring round to the pillow. It was this, "Oh! my God."

“But,” she said, eagerly bending over the atheist, “but *you* say there is no God!”

“Supposing” (it was the cry of a despairing man), “supposing that after all there *is* a God.”

These were his last words.

Perhaps, dear reader, your doubts have come to you, not because of the lives of unbelievers, but because of the *inconsistent lives* of professing Christians. And shall you, because there was a Judas amid Christ's disciples, shall you doubt Christ Himself?

Alas! for the *true* Christians who so little understand the privileges of their position—a light set on a hill to guide other lives to heavenly truths—that they can thoughtlessly tamper with the responsibilities entrusted to them. To them all things may be lawful, but not *expedient*; not “expedient” because the world's eyes are upon them, to measure the worth of Christianity by its effect upon their lives; if the pleasures to be found at God's right hand are *satisfying*, why still so intent upon worldly pleasures and amuse-

ments? "Not expedient" because the hearts of young believers are gathering from their Christian walk rules and principles whereby to regulate their own.

It may be, dear young friend, that the inconsistencies which bring you doubt, in regard to the lives of the Christians whom you know most intimately, may be failures in temper, more than shortcomings in duties or their friendship with the world. Now upon this point many are too critical and err in judgment. God seeth not as man seeth. What may appear as woeful inconsistencies to you, He may regard as earnest struggles to do right; and in what offends your sight, He may see the bitter sorrow and repentance which give even to seeming failure lofty purpose and a holy endeavour. Or, it may be, that the one whose life you watch, in finding a Crucified Saviour has not yet learnt to believe in Him who rose from the dead, and who because of that not only saves men from sin's punishment, but delivers them from sin's power.

The Christian whose practical everyday life

lags so many steps behind the truth he professes to believe, may not yet have grasped the thought of his position as a child of God. Fully sincere in his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he may not yet have seen that in the call to walk "in newness of life," there is secret power held out to him according to his need. Not to see is not to take. Not to take is to fall again and again into the sins besetting his nature. But, my dear young friend, beware how you measure Christ by disciples such as these!

But, you say, it is not the open scoffing of the infidel, nor is it the inconsistent conduct of the professing Christian, which brings doubt to your heart. It is the mystery of pain, of sin and sorrow. How *can* a God of mercy *allow* all this?

Ah! now you have come to a doubt which the prophet Habakkuk sought to solve between two and three thousand years ago. "O Lord, how long," said he "shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence and Thou wilt not save? Why dost Thou show me

iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. . . . The wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. . . . I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch and see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me . . . The just shall live by his faith."

Yes, dear reader, the just shall live by his faith! We cannot *understand* these mysteries but we must take them on trust. If we could compass and penetrate these mysteries, of what need have we of "faith?" That sin, with its consequences, pain and sorrow and death, fills our beautiful world, sending from every clime and land a wail of bitter anguish, is, alas! too true; but equally true is it that the Master Himself waits as He did of old at the sunset of the Sabbath to touch with healing power the sin-sick souls, brought into His presence by those who believe in His Name.

Reader, will you, acknowledging your own need of His healing touch, come to Him with the cry, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean?" Will you, putting on one side your doubts and unbeliefs, enter the sweet Presence where alone you can find rest, and go forth from thence a messenger of good tidings to a suffering world, one privileged to bring to the Master the toilworn and sad, who long for His comfort, but who know not where to seek it?

"At even ere the sun was set

The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay,

Oh, in what divers pains they met!

Oh, with what joy they went away!

Once more 'tis eventide, and we

Oppressed with various ills draw near;

What if Thy form we cannot see?

We know and feel that Thou art here.

O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel;

For some are sick, and some are sad,

And some have never loved Thee well,

And some have lost the love they had.

And some have found the world is vain,

Yet from the world they break not free;

And some have friends who give them pain,

Yet have not sought a Friend in Thee.

And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin ;
And they who fain would serve Thee best,
Are conscious most of wrong within.

O Saviour Christ, Thou too art man ;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried ;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide.

Thy touch has still its ancient power ;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall ;
Hear, in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

CHAPTER VI.

SALVATION—WHAT IS IT?

“My God! my God! and can it be
That I should sin so lightly now,
And think no more of evil thoughts
Than of the wind that waves the bough?

I sin,—and heaven and earth go round,
As if no dreadful deed were done;
As if Christ's blood had never flowed
To hinder sin, or to atone.

I walk the earth with lightsome step,
Smile at the sunshine, breathe the air,
Do my own will, nor ever heed
Gethsemane and Thy long prayer.

Shall it be always thus, O Lord?
Wilt Thou not work this hour in me,
The grace Thy passion merited,
Hatred of self and love of Thee?”

“The recognition of sin is the beginning of salvation.”
—*Luther.*

AND now we come to the most important

chapter in this book. God help me to write it and you to read it!

“Do you mean to tell *me*,” said a haughty beauty, drawing herself up to her full height, “do you mean to tell *me* that I, with my cultured thought and sheltered life have to be saved exactly in the same way as the cottagers on my father’s estate, whose debased lives are known to all? No, you make foolery of religion when you throw out theories such as these!”

“Or rather,” was the quiet reply, “some one else turns *sin* into foolery, speaking of it as a matter of sufficiently small importance to be played with. Fools make a mock at sin!”

“It depends what you call sin,” was the proud beauty’s next remark, spoken in a tone most scornfully severe.

Again a gentle voice answered, “God has Himself settled that question. Man has nothing to do but to take his Maker’s judgment upon the matter, and that is that *the thought of foolishness is sin.*”

Reader, what is your thought about this?

Are you feeling to be so different from others that the way they are to be saved cannot be *your* way? Have you made up your mind as to what is sinful, and what is not, ignoring altogether what *God* says about sin, and so placing yourself in an imaginary position of superiority, when you compare yourself with others?

How terrible for you if such a position were possible to be taken: for you are put altogether beyond the reach of salvation. Jesus Christ "came to seek and to save that which was *lost*." If *you* are not among that number He clearly did not come to save *you*. "The Son of God came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." If you are not a sinner then clearly He did not come to call you: and as "He is the Way" to everlasting happiness and peace, "and no man cometh to the Father but by Him;" you, by the position you seek to take, once and for ever (so long as you retain your position) shut yourself out from any hope of Heaven.

But let us be *quite* sure that you are not a sin-

ner before we leave you thus altogether removed from the hope of mercy. What does the word "sinner" mean? *Missed the mark.* A certain standard of righteousness has been set up—the keeping of God's law perfectly—and whoever does not reach this (and to break the law in one point is to offend in all), misses the mark, and is therefore a sinner.

Do you wonder, then, that *God* says "There is no difference; all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God?" Can *you* say, "It does not apply to me: I am an exception?" Nay, surely, my dear sister, you have but to look back over a few hours of your life (to say nothing of months or years) to be convinced in your own mind that you have "missed the mark."

Then, if this be true, what follows? The God of truth cannot lie, and He has said, "The *soul* that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is *death.*" Then, my dear sister, because you are one to have missed the mark—to have sinned, the judgment of death is upon you. You may try to forget it, lose yourself in the excitement

of a life of gaiety and pleasure, but it is there written over you in letters of fire, "Condemned."

Is there no way of escaping from this awful condemnation? Is there no possibility of getting away from this death? Turn to the Book of Exodus, the twelfth chapter, and see there what saved the children of Israel from the death which on that given night was to visit every home in Egypt. They were to take a lamb without blemish and to kill it. They were to "take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts" of their houses, God promising that "the blood should be to them for a token," and that when He saw the blood "He would pass over them."

Now just so God promises a door of escape to sinners. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God became man, and gave Himself for our sins. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid *on Him* the

iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 5). "He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Christ Jesus is the Lamb slain for sinners, and it is His blood sprinkled upon our souls which gains us safety and security from death.

Supposing one of the children of Israel, instead of doing what God had enjoined upon them all to do, namely, sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon their door-posts, supposing one had nailed instead a piece of parchment on the door upon which was written words similar to these: "I am a better man than most men are." "I have never done any one an injury." "I am moral and good, and do the best I can." "I am sure a merciful God will not punish me." What would have been the fate of that household? Would the angel of death have *passed over* when beholding that confession nailed upon the door in the place where *the blood* should have been?

No, surely not. Therefore, dear reader, do

you think that you can escape from the condemnation of death as a sinner, by putting instead of the blood of Christ upon your soul a long list of your own merits :—

“Always have lived in a Christian home.”

“Have never sinned like others have.”

“Attended a Sunday school when a child.”

“Baptized.”

“Confirmed.”

“Member of a Church.”

“A communicant.”

“Doing my best.”

“Read my Bible regularly.”

“Pray night and morning.”

Reader, what think you? *Can* this save your soul from death?

Alas! some are vainly hoping for salvation on account of “Baptismal Regeneration;” some because they make confession to a priest, not heeding what God’s word teaches us, “There is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (Alas! for the woeful, misguiding, and profane teaching of to-day, which

leads young girls in some of our Protestant churches into the confessional, which, with its false misleadings and its often gross impurities, becomes to the guileless and innocent as the very gate of death!); some are trusting to their "good works," some to a "changed life;" but whatever it may be, it is utterly, *hopelessly* USELESS. Unless sheltered by the blood of Christ, the sinner is under condemnation of death.

Notice, dear sister, all that is asked of you is to *accept* the salvation God has prepared for you. You are not asked to *feel* you are saved. Your *assurance* or otherwise has nothing to do with your salvation. You are saved simply by taking God at His word. "When *I* see the blood, I will pass over you" was God's promise to the children of Israel; not when *you* see the blood. The blood was to be *outside* the door of the house, and when God saw it, there the dwellers in that house were safe.

An aged man once sought to grasp the promises of the Gospel for his own soul, but failed to do so. At length he saw clearly that he had

only to accept the righteousness offered to him in his Saviour's finished work to be accepted by God. And he sought to explain his position thus:

“Once God looked down upon me, and saw me covered with sin, and He turned away, for He could not look upon my sin; but now when He looks upon me He sees me holy and righteous, because *I have crept into the wounded side of Jesus on the Cross*, and instead of seeing *me*, He sees the Lord Jesus.”

Yes, dear reader, the sinner can alone be *pardoned* thus, by accepting the work of Christ as wrought for him.

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Only those who have lost their sins could be happy in heaven. To enter heaven as sinners would be to know neither joy nor peace. As the fish could not live upon the meadow lands, nor the cattle find nourishment if driven into the deep waters of the sea, because, in either case, it would not be in accordance with their natural instincts, just so the sinner could not rest or find enjoyment in heaven.

Before the sinner can enjoy heaven, his nature must undergo a change. He must hate sin, and love holiness and purity. It must be the first thought of his life to do the will of God from the heart. Our Saviour told Nicodemus that he was not to marvel at what He had said, namely, that before a man could see the kingdom of God he *must* be born again. And Nicodemus was a man of position, a teacher of the Jews, and respected for his learning doubtless, and known by all to be religious. To him, as to the drunken, the profligate and openly sinful, came the same need of new birth.

No amount of religiousness, or of reformation, or of cultivation, or moral living, can bring a soul into the kingdom of God. That soul must be born from above that is capable of enjoying heaven or of doing heaven's work.

To die the death of the righteous is the ambition of all thoughtful people. To make this possible, the life of the righteous must be lived, and before this can be there must be "a new birth unto righteousness."

Reader, is this new birth yours?

Have you ever thanked God for the salvation of your soul? Or are you still thoughtless and indifferent about these matters, unmindful of His word? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that *forget* God."

Have you ever heard the touching story of the lady who, learning that a boy was dying in a gipsy camp, sought permission to visit him?

"If you are going to speak religion to him I'll set the dogs on ye," was the discourteous answer from the head of the gang.

"I do not want to talk religion," was the lady's gentle reply, "but only to speak to him of Jesus."

"Oh! then you may go if you like!" said the man, curtly.

The lady entered the gipsy tent and stooped down beside the rough pile of sacks which formed the bed of the unconscious sufferer.

In gentle tones she repeated the words—

"God so loved the world that He gave His

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

But no movement from the lad told that the words were heard. Again she repeated them—

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Still no sign of hearing. A pause, and then once more she spoke the words—

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This time they were heard—in feeble tones the answer came—

“Why did no one tell me this before, that I might have thanked Him? . . . Thank Him kindly. . . .”

And as he spoke the words the poor lad died.

Dear reader, *you* have heard this sweet mes-

sage of God's love and mercy, have *you* ever thanked Him for the gift of Christ?

When God pardons sin He also *justifies* the sinner. You do not come before Him as a beggar petitioning His mercy and partaking of His grace, but as a son, a joint-heir with Christ. "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." And it is because this is true that when heaven born you *must* be heaven bound.

"In the world but not of it." Your life is hid with Christ in God. Sin cannot have dominion over you. You may be tempted, tried, but *so long as you remember your position as a child of God*, and lay claim to the grace provided for you, whereby you may live as His child in all things, you are the conqueror, not the victim.

And as you have believed in Christ for your salvation, so you will feed on Him, the Bread of Life, for your soul's hourly nourishment and support. And because you so feed, not only

will you have power given you whereby to live the life of righteousness, but you will unconsciously be sheltered from the attacks of that enemy who comes to hearts *not* occupied with Christ, and to minds which seek *Religion* rather than *Himself*.

There is an old legend which tells of Satan bent on sowing seeds within the hearts of some, which when they grew should make them wholly his. And the first one whom he sought to tempt was a young girl as she walked in her garden at sunset, plucking here and there a flower: "I will," said Satan, "whisper in her ears words of impurity, and she shall receive them, dwell upon them, and robbed by them of virtuous thought, she shall be an easy prey to sin." But as he bent to whisper in her ear, he heard the maiden's voice repeating as she culled her flowers, "Did He did not say, consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." And Satan fled.

“There is,” said he, “no room for me in her heart, because her life is safely hidden in the Life of God.”

Next he thought to lure to evil a young farm labourer as he rode his horse at eventide to the blacksmith's to be shod. “I will whisper to him,” said Satan, “of the pleasures of sin: I will tell him how sweet that little drop of drink which shall one day make him drunkard; how manly the words which blaspheme the name of God; how independent the life of broken Sabbaths.” But as he drew near to speak, the gay whistling of the young man ceased, and instead came words, “My God, be Thou the Guide of my youth,” and Satan fled: “no room for me there,” he said, “since that life too is hidden in the Life of God.”

Again Satan paused, bent on cruel wrong, but this time before an aged man whom failure in business had brought to poverty. “Ah! he knows,” said Satan, “the misery of life, the failure of hopes, and the falseness of friends: I will whisper to him, ‘Curse God and die.’

But as he drew near, he heard the old man say in calm but feeble tones, "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." And Satan fled from the presence of the holy man. "No room within his heart for me," he said, with a bitter wail, "since his life, too, is sheltered from all evil, because hidden in the Life of God."

Reader, if sheltering beneath the Blood brings safety from death and security in life, think what must be the condition of the soul which rejects Christ—of the life which refuses belief in *such* a Saviour! Hear what God's Word says about it.

"He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Has this book fallen into the hands of one who *is* rejecting Christ? Of one who, for love of the world, refuses to accept the Word of God as truth? My dear sister, resist not, I beseech you, the pleading of the Holy Spirit, as now He urges you to listen to the voice of Him who invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him for rest. Upon your knees, in the solitude of your own chamber, with the Bible open before you, settle this matter. With your finger upon that wondrous verse, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," ask God for His Holy Spirit's teaching, that you may know yourself to be in that "*whosoever*."

Less than this will not satisfy that hungry longing of your soul. God has made you for Himself, and your heart is restless until it rests on Him. Oh! ere it be too late, close with the offer of salvation. In all its simplicity accept it, not attempting to understand by the natural

heart what can only be revealed to you by the Spirit of God.

The A, B, C, of Religion is before you.

A ll have sinned.

B ehold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

C ome unto Me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your soul.

Accept to-day what God offers—a full, free pardon through the merits of a crucified Saviour. Accept this, and a new heart and life shall be yours—a life which begins at the Cross and which ends in Heaven. Reject this and what awaits you? “A certain fearful looking for of judgment” in that day when the Hand which beckons the believers into the glorious presence of the King of kings, to share His glory and partake of His joy, shall wave you to depart, cursed and discomforted, into the outer darkness of an existence without God.

CHAPTER VII.

CONSTRAINING LOVE.

“He lives who lives to God alone,
And all are dead beside.”

THE motive power of the true Christian's life is the love of Christ. Once to have accepted Him as the Saviour, is to desire only and ever to live to His glory ; and this desire, while it makes us jealously watchful over ourselves, lest for one moment we forget “ whose we are and whom we serve,” will give to each detail of our life definite purpose and aim.

But even more powerful than the desire to live unto Him in all things will be the glorious influence upon our hearts and lives of His love. “ The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me,” this was the motive power of St. Paul's life of faith, and this will be ours. Not our love to Christ, but Christ's love to us. Our

love may wane, grow feeble and be fitful, it will depend upon our moods, or upon surrounding circumstances; but His love can never change. It lives, a glorious and accomplished *fact*. It constraineth us, shuts us in. It is our protection when the accuser comes to charge us with sin. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" It is our great and mighty stronghold in the day of attack, when temptations assail us. He who hath so loved us as to die for us "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." It—the Love of Christ,—will "close us in" from the world, and show to us clearly and definitely what we may do and what we may not do while bearing that Holy Name.

It is when the love of Christ constraineth us that we get very distinct views as to our position in regard to worldly amusements. We cannot,

however innocent the recreation when measured by a worldly standard, we cannot sanction or take part in so-called pleasures, which could bring a doubt or question upon the Name which is ours.

Alexander the Great had a soldier bearing his own name. "Either behave as one worthy of the name of Alexander," he said to him one day, "or take upon yourself another name." How many Christians to-day would deserve this reproof?

Very beautiful in its teaching is the story of an American lawyer. While hurrying to his office one morning he felt a hand stealing its way into the pocket of his coat. To seize the owner of the hand by the collar, and ask for an explanation of his conduct was but the work of a moment.

"It was a case of starvation or theft, and I chose the latter," was the concise answer, given in sullen tones, by one whose crouching form and darkened brow spoke of a heart within which had no peace.

“Come with me,” said the lawyer, relinquishing his hold of the offender, and leading the way, not to the police court, but to an eating house.

“Coffee and mutton chops for two,” he said, as he took his seat with his companion, showing by that courteous act alone that he was one of nature’s truest gentlemen.

“I cannot talk with you while you are hungry, my man,” he said in gentlest tones. “Eat, and then tell me your story.”

The meal was over, partaken of by one at least with hungry relish, and the lawyer said,—

“Now my friend, for your story.”

“It is quickly told,” was the dejected answer. “I am a returned convict. *I have no name.* I get work and lose it as soon as it is found from whence I have come. I have no chance of being honest. Nothing lies before me but a return to my old life!”

Much more was spoken in the same dejected tones. The heart of the lawyer was touched. Constrained by the love of Christ, he yearned

to help his outcast brother. Believing in a God of hope he could hope that even this fallen and sorrowful man might be rescued. And he acted forthwith upon the grand principle of trust.

Drawing himself up to his full height, he said,—

“Look at me! My name is James Henderson. By the mercy of God, I have been permitted to keep that name unsullied. *I give it to you!* Say no longer you have no name. My name is yours. Go and live in my name. I will give you a chance. I have a friend some miles from here who has a factory. I will get him to take you on. Now mark, it is not your thanks I want, but *your life*. Live in daily, hourly consciousness of whose name you bear, and I am not afraid that you will do wrong or dishonour it.”

* * * *

The years passed. Some news had come from time to time to that noble-hearted lawyer regarding his namesake, during the first few

months; but not afterwards. Five, ten, fifteen years had passed, when one morning upon returning home from church, the lawyer was met by his servant in the hall, with a card: "A gentleman was waiting in his library." The card bore the inscription "James Henderson."

In a moment the lawyer had entered the room, and there before him stood—not one with crouching form and sullen face, but a man of noble bearing, who looked the gentleman he was!

With a hearty grasp he caught the lawyer's hand in his own.

"Sir, what you see me to-day, I owe to you. *The name you gave me has saved me.*

"When tempted in those early days to go wrong, the thought of the name I bore kept me. I would do nothing to dishonour *it*. . . . Then as years passed on, the knowledge of your Christian life brought me to believe in your God. . . . But yesterday, having risen step by step, I was made a junior partner in the firm. I went home to tell my wife, when we together

praised God for his goodness, 'and then I started off at once to see you, my benefactor. You asked for my life when you gave me your name, and I come to prove to you that you have had it!"

* * * *

Dear reader, are you as conscious of your great responsibility in bearing Christ's Name, as was that poor man in bearing the name of James Henderson? Does the thought of that Name keep you when tempted to do wrong, does it give you strength to resist evil, fearing to bring dishonour upon Him, your loving Saviour? Does it make you jealously watchful over your conduct, lest you should, by something you may be led to do, cause *Him* to be lightly spoken of?

The way you spend your leisure hours. Do you remember His Name, then? Can you waste the precious moments of the life which belongs all to Him in listless inactivity, in aimless occupations, or in reading books which, while they interest and amuse, do not build

up and invigorate your spiritual life? Is there "no harm," "no sin" in the utter selfishness of your life? Self-seeking, self-pleasing, *and you bear His Name!* The time you spend before your looking-glass during the day, how will that time compare with that which you spend in studying God's word and in prayer? The time you give to vain and foolish talking, the hours spent with friends whose conversation is *not* helpful to your Christian life—My dear sister, have you ever thought of this? You are bearing His Name, is it your constant prayer and aim to *be* nothing and to *do* nothing which will bring dishonour to your Master?

Have you ever thought of all the possibilities of your personal influence as daughter, as sister, as friend? You have often longed to do some great work for the Master, have thought perchance that had you been some one else you might have served Him so much better than in the position which He has called you to occupy in this life. My dear young friend, *be yourself*. That is what He asks of you. Do

not desire to imitate another, but be satisfied to be what He has made you: the better self which He has blessed and sanctified. While you are dreaming of some great work, life with its magnificent possibilities is passing. Awake, dear sister, and live out to the fullest the life He gives you.

“Lose this day loitering, ’twill be the same story,
To-morrow, and the next more dilatory ;
The indecision brings its own delays,
And days are lost lamenting o’er lost days.
Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute !
What you can do, or think you can, begin it !
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it !
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated :
Begin it, and the work will be completed.”

Your heart will tell you even while your eye is resting on this page, what more you may do with your personal influence. You are conscious that too much thought is given to dress, and that when you take your seat in your Sunday-school class, or visit your district, your very fashionable attire calls forth observations and remarks which are not helpful to those whom

you long to influence all for good. *For the Master's sake* could you not bear to dress a little more simply, saving many pounds or shillings as the case might be, in the course of the year, to give to the Master's work at home or in foreign mission fields? Would you not even now reap the rich reward of hearing His loving words ring in the secret chamber of your soul, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto Me"?

You are conscious that while you seek to influence others by kindly counsel and well-meant advice in regard to the use of "strong drink," of which they are evidently growing too fond, you have not given the best help possible, even your own personal example! You have heard of the hundred and twenty thousand lives annually sacrificed to this inhuman craving—the love of stimulants—have heard and shuddered, but have gone on taking your "little," too uninformed upon the subject to know that health does not require it, too indifferent in the matter

to inquire what sanction am I, a Christian, giving to habits and customs which bring woe and desolation to so many hearts and homes!

O, my dear sister, for the sake of the sorrowing and suffering, for the sake of the sin bound and lost, for the sake of that possibility within your own heart of being deceived and led astray, but more than all for the sake of the loving Master whose Name you bear and whose life you long to live, *have nothing to do with the so-called strong drink.* There can be no doubt as to a Christian's duty in this matter to-day. The Apostle Paul says, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Can you, while standing amid the one hundred and twenty thousand ruined lives of brothers and sisters, who have fallen victims to the curse of drink in one short year,—can you as you hear the cries of broken-hearted wives and mothers, and watch the mute appeal for help from thousands of little children, children who

are being trained to-day to love that which in the future shall prove to be their ruin,—can you, with all this before you, raise the cup of intoxicating drink to your lips and say with a calm heart and a clear conscience, “I am drinking this in the Name of the Lord Jesus?”

It may be, my dear young friend, that although heaven born and therefore heaven bound, before you can live so fully in your Saviour’s Name, there must be a more perfect surrender of heart and life. You have long believed in Him for salvation, and in a certain way for power to live, but He is not the all of your existence; the heart is divided, and your life is constrained not by the *love of Christ*, but by the *sense of duty*. There must be full and complete consecration of self before our lives in their every detail can be touched with the bright shining of His Light.

Will you, my sister, make this prayer your own, and learn as others have done, that in this complete surrender of self lies the secret of heart-joy and of life-power—inasmuch as in

giving up self we more fully receive Christ into our souls, and as of old so to-day, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name"—

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee :

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and "beautiful" for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou dost choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine !
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own ;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.

TAKE MYSELF, AND I WILL BE
EVER, ONLY, ALL, FOR THEE !”

CHAPTER VIII.

HELPS AND HINTS TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

“Two or three plain rules I find of wonderful service in deciding all difficult cases :—

“1. To do nothing of which I *doubt*, in *any* degree, the lawfulness.

“2. To consider everything as *unlawful* which indisposes one for *prayer*, and interrupts communion with God.

“3. Never to go into *any* company, business, or situation in which I cannot conscientiously *ask* and expect the Divine presence.

“By these rules I settle all my doubts, and find that many things I have hitherto indulged in are, if not utterly unlawful, at least inexpedient, and I renounce them all without a sigh.”—*Parsons*.

THERE is no comfort in being an undecided Christian. Let this be borne in mind by all who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. As one has well expressed it, “You are to be, and to appear, as truly, fully and manifestly, Christ’s people, God’s children, heirs of heaven, in the workshop, the place of business, the

servants' hall, the dining or drawing room, as in the church or in the privacy of your own chamber. You must be *the* Christian, whatever your position or rank in life, wherever you are, and whatever you do."

Dear young Christian, do you find it difficult to follow conscience in matters relating to "where you go" and "what you do," fearing to be mistaken in your motives by those at home who have not yet accepted the Lord for their Saviour? Are you afraid of being thought to set yourself up as better than others if you abstain from things in which they see no harm?

A young girl, the only one in her family a decided Christian, continued to go to the opera from motives of this kind. She never felt quite happy there; while she was enraptured with the music, she could never forget the cost of the enjoyment, associated as it was with "ballet dancers" and influences not helpful to the lives of some; but how could she stop away and be thought by her friends to

throw some slight or stigma upon them and upon their tastes? So she reasoned, until one day no longer able to bear the misery of her false position, for a conscience unheeded means peace impaired, she gently explained to her friends that from that time she meant to "give up" the opera, as it was not helpful to her Christian life.

How strangely surprised was she to hear one and another say: "We have always wondered how you could go there if what you said was true—that religion gave you perfect happiness. *These* pleasures are for people who do not possess *that!* We shall believe more in your Christianity now."

Reader, it is not setting *yourself* up to be better than others, but it is exalting the Name of your Master, in whose service there is joy so full that you have no need to seek the pleasures of the world to satisfy your heart's longings. Remember this, and be courageous enough to act up to your convictions at all times.

Some young Christians try to square any

doubts they may have about the expediency of going to this place and that, by assuring themselves that they go simply to do good to others, forgetful or ignorant of the fact that where others judge us to be inconsistent, there we lose for them our highest influence.

A young lady, who became a Christian, felt reluctance in giving up the gay scenes which had been the all to her of her past life. She could not, however, reconcile them with her new profession. What right had those, whose time and influence belonged to the Master, to be seen in the ball-room? Unless—and this was how she sought to calm her troubled conscience—unless she took her Christianity with her to the dance and made converts of her partners! Happy thought! At length, then, she found a motive which would sanction actions otherwise inconsistent with the highest thoughts of Christian life.

In the midst of a gay scene, almost breathless with the giddy whirl of a waltz, she paused for rest, leaning upon her partner's

arm. "Now," she thought, "is the time to speak for Christ. Ah! surely I have opportunities of witnessing for Him which none could have but under circumstances such as these!"

She spoke earnestly, solemnly,—and her speaking provoked a laugh.

"How well you do it!" was her partner's merry answer. "No, but 'pon my honour, this is too good a joke. A splendid take off—eh? of some pious hypocrite. Bravo! It is the best piece of acting I have witnessed for many a day!"

In vain she tried to assure him she was in earnest—she had indeed only sought the ball-room to speak to those whom she met there, of her Lord and Saviour. At first her partner would not heed her solemn protestations. At length, convinced that she at least *thought* she spoke truth in what she said, he answered sternly,—

"Do not delude yourself. You have come here because you love the dancing, and cannot afford to give it up! You think to quiet your conscience by finding an excuse; but know

this, that to be *consistent* is the first proof of your Christianity, and lacking consistency you will lack power to convince any one of the worth or beauty of religion."

A severe lesson to learn, surely ; but better that than for the influence of a life-time to be lost, or for the heart of a believer to be tossed about with doubts and fears because *the life* was wrong.

We have spoken of *courage*, and of *consistency* in regard to a young Christian's life. Next we would speak of *cheerfulness*.

A cheerful, sunny Christian is the best sermon preached to others of the love of God. Religion and melancholy have too long been associated together. What we need to-day is brightness in the Christian life. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice," is, or would seem to be, read by some Christians—as one has well said—"Mourn in the Lord alway: and again I say, mourn." Oh! happy the influence, and powerful for good, the life of the one whose restful heart, made joyful

by the constant dwelling in the presence of the Lord, beams forth upon the face its gladness and its sunshine. "Whoso *winneth* souls is wise." Brightness *winneth*, but sadness repels; therefore, dear Christian, seek to be bright.

"A loving, cheerful temper,
A gentle, smiling face,
Will cast a ray of brightness
Within the darkest place.
Words, looks, and deeds of kindness
Are sunbeams bright and fair;
God help you, dear young Christians,
To shed them everywhere."

And next to the grace of cheerfulness we would put that of *courtesy*.

"Be pitiful, be courteous," said the apostle. Do we *quite* feel the claim of this injunction upon our own heart's thought? How often words of censure close the hearts of others, when words of pity would have opened them.

"Of course you are angry and give way to temper; I expected it," has often separated a not unkind-hearted elder sister, and a bright, high-spirited younger one, when words of pity

for a weakness, known and struggled against, would have bound them together in the sweet sympathy of sisterly affection.

How often the mere forgetfulness of little courteous acts makes difficult the use of influence which, but for this, would be so powerful. The lips that lack the "please" and "thank you;" the heart too self-absorbed to anticipate the needs of others with a gentle "allow me;" the will too bent upon its settled purpose to yield—at no cost but that of pleasing self—to one which has a purpose too—the life from which all this is lost gives up a power it might possess.

We remember reading once of a little shoe-black, against whom a young lady accidentally pushed in turning hastily a corner. Her gentle "I beg your pardon," took the little fellow so by surprise that for a moment he stood awed and silent, the next he burst forth into an exclamation of delight. A small companion by his side the recipient of his thoughts—

"My! how beautiful she said it! Just as if

I was a born gentleman! Now *wasn't* it touching? Why if she had knocked me down and I'd been hurt ever so, I think I shouldn't have minded, to get that smile and hear them words!"

Poor little shoeblack! What a hungry little heart he must have had for kindly smiles and gentle words, if the simple utterance of the common-place phrase, "I beg your pardon," could so have moved him. Ah! and there are hungry hearts everywhere, upon whom a courteous act will come as the cooling draught of water upon a throat parched with thirst.

The door opened for a servant heavily laden; the place in prayer or hymn-book found in church for one with failing sight; the movement off the pathway on to the road to spare the steps of aged feet; the anxiety to save unnecessary trouble when shopping, and the gratitude expressed on all occasions for kindness received—this is as the oil in the wheels of life's machinery, which prevents the grating and the rasping of constant worry, fretfulness, and care.

The sweet joy of the ministry of *little things*

—of which more by and by—is known only to the few, while many spend their days in longing for greater power to live to Him their Lord and Master, in “large deeds of grateful service.”

Familiar to some will be Faber’s beautiful lines—

“I met a child, and kissed it ; who shall say
I stole a joy in which I had no part ?
The happy creature from that very day
Hath felt the more his little human heart.
Now when I pass he runs away and smiles,
And tries to seem afraid with pretty wiles.
I am a happier and a richer man
Since I have sown this new joy in the earth :
’Tis no small thing for us to reap stray mirth
In every sunny wayside where we can.
It is a joy to me to be a joy,
Which may in the most lowly heart take root ;
And it is gladness to that little boy
To look out for me at the mountain foot.”

“Turn to the right and keep straight on,” was the oft-given advice of a worthy Bishop. Dear young Christians, you have taken that turn to the right when you gave your hearts to Christ. To keep “straight on” will be less difficult, if, instead of following, as did Peter,

“afar off,” you walk step by step at your Master’s side, living by prayer in unbroken communion with Him, studying with patient earnestness His word, and accepting *all* your life from Him, so to be lived out that in *it* you “show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

Have settled time and settled purpose in studying your Bible. Remember your soul’s nourishment will depend upon this, and what your soul is in healthy vigour, such will your life be. It is well to read continuously from the first chapter of Genesis to the last in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, but at the same time it is helpful in addition to this to have daily reading in the Gospels or Epistles.

The Book of Proverbs gives us a chapter for each day in the month, and to read the chapter according to the date, has been of lasting service to some. It is a good plan to commit a portion of Scripture daily to memory, thus to enrich our hearts and lives and to lay by in store against the day of adversity (of mind or of

body) some of the sweet promises of the Lord.

Gentle reader, do you know that if a child of God, you come into the rich possession of *thirty-one thousand promises* in God's Word? And do you also know that it is your privilege to try and prove each promise for yourself? The Lord loves His people to "put Him in remembrance," and when you make yours the hidden treasures of His Word, you are bringing to your life a force of character which, consciously or otherwise, shall touch with lasting good the lives around you.

And with the study of the Bible combine much prayer and meditation. The life of prayer is the life of power. "Ask, that ye may receive, that your joy may be full."

"And evermore beside thee on thy way,
The unseen Christ shall move ;
That thou mayest lean upon His arm, and say,
'Dost Thou, dear Lord, approve?'
Oh, holy trust ; oh, endless sense of rest !
Like the beloved John,
To lay thy head upon the Saviour's breast,
And thus to journey on."

CHAPTER IX.

ON THOROUGHNESS IN CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“ If you're told to do a thing,
And mean to do it really,
Never let it be by halves ;
Do it fully, freely.

Do not make a poor excuse,
Waiting, weak, unsteady :
All obedience worth the name
Must be prompt and ready.

Waste not moments nor your words
In telling what you could do
Some other time : the present is
For doing what you should do.

Don't do right unwillingly,
And stop to plan and measure ;
'Tis working with the heart and soul
That makes our duty pleasure.

“ **WHATSOEVER** thy hand findeth to do, do it
with thy might.”

Such was the teaching of the wise man of

old. But is this spiritual *thoroughness* realized in the lives of Christians generally?

“Whatever you do, my dear, now you are beginning housekeeping, do not get a *Christian cook* was the advice given by an elderly lady to a young one who was about to be married.

“And pray why not?” was the astonished query from the one who had been brought up to believe that a Christian servant was the household’s surest stay.

“Because my dear,” was the confidential answer, “they are so lacking in *thoroughness*. They get their heads so full of church going and religious literature that they have no thought left for anything else.”

Did this lady malign Christian servants generally? We believe her remarks, true as they might be of some, would not touch thousands of Christian women who are to-day fulfilling their mission of faithful service, doing their work “not with eye-service as men pleasers but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. vi. 6). And we

believe further that of those to whom they might apply, it would be true to say that they have "erred through lack of knowledge," believing the service of Christ to consist in various outward actions and duties instead of being what it really is, *the life*.

The maid who proved her conversion by stating the fact that she now always swept under the door mats, *because whatever work she did she did for Christ* and His eyes saw under the mats although her mistress's did not—the maid who said this had caught the true inspiration of holy living.

"As servants of Christ," this will nerve us on to thoroughness in our work and life when nothing else will. But more than the desire for whole-hearted living is necessary; we need *the power*. And here we fail, not rightly "learning Christ." The death of Christ redeems us from the punishment of sin, and frees us from its power; but here some Christians stop, and having no larger conceptions of the work of Christ for sinners, they are content to

go on in great feebleness, desiring but not accomplishing the wish to *walk in newness of life*, giving to each action of the daily life a thought of the Saviour.

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” That we might “live unto righteousness.” This is part of the life purchased for us. We are not, as some one has well put it, “to imagine that the great sacrifice of redeeming love was accomplished in order that heaven might be filled with pardoned felons, but that earth might be filled with children of God, led by the Holy Spirit towards their Father’s home.”

The Psalmist said, “Trust in the Lord and do good.” Crowds to-day are content to trust in the Lord while they do evil, or spend their lives in listless dreaming. They seem to think it matters not what they believe, or how they live, or what they are, so that they are only saved at last. . . . It is as if Christ lived

and died to make sin safe, not to save from sin ; to relieve man from the need of holiness, not to make him holy.

Dear reader, do *you* realize that by the Saviour's death upon the cross, you are not only made dead unto sins, but are enabled to "live unto righteousness"? To know this, will be to make possible in your life the *thoroughness* of which we speak in regard to Christian service.

And how the *little* duties of the daily life will brighten ! How eager we shall be to perform them well, because *for Him*—as much and as fully as work in the Sunday-school or visits to the district.

"Yes, now," said a bright girl of fourteen, "now I can make hymns go most beautifully to the click of my darning needle, as I help mother with the boys' socks. Once I never *could* sing over the stocking basket ; but since I belong to the Lord Jesus and live for Him all day long, of *course* the darning belongs to the life, and somehow I have grown quite to love

it." And the sweet voice of the happy-hearted girl would break forth into joyous singing. Had she known the hymn might she not have sung :—

“ I belong to Jesus ;
’Twas a happy day
When His blood most precious
Washed my sins away :
When His Holy Spirit
Changed my heart of stone,
Set His mark upon me,
Sealed me for His own.

I belong to Jesus ;
So I’ll try to spend
All my life in pleasing
My Almighty Friend.
Since He is so holy,
I must watch and pray,
That I may grow like Him,
More and more each day.

I belong to Jesus,
Therefore I can sing,
For I’m safe and happy
Underneath His wing ;
But so many round me
Are all dark and cold,
I must try to bring them
Into Jesu’s fold.”

O Christian sister, depend upon it the bright and happy life is the *best* means of bringing into the fold those who wander in darkness and sin.

And this *thoroughness* never misplaces a life, lifting it out of its natural sphere in order to complete its usefulness; but it develops and intensifies the Christian life wherever it exists. True religion—and *thoroughness* is only another name for personal grasp of religion, reducing the sublimest thought to practical everyday life—true religion “is not for the end of life or for stray hours in life; it is for the whole of life and for every hour of life.” It influences daughter and sister, school girl and teacher, the young lady of position and the hard working servant, it influences all alike, in making each live out to the best and fullest the life God has given her. And less than this is true piety misunderstood.

“Nettie was a *jolly* girl until she turned pious,” exclaimed a bright, good-humoured brother of eighteen. “Since she became re-

ligious there is no getting her to do anything. If a fellow brings home a new song she is too busy knitting stockings or making flannel petticoats for all the old women in her district, to find time to accompany him on the piano. If a fellow asks her to go for a row, or take a turn in the public gardens, she really cannot spare the time. Instead of a smile when a fellow brings his gloves up to be mended, and a joking word about hoping no one will ever be found to deprive her of *that* pleasure, she looks awfully bothered until—well, I will tell you a secret—I went round to ‘The George’ to watch the fellows play billiards ; I did it really only to tease her and bring her to her senses ; but do you know it looked so easy that I thought I would try my hand, and I soon got to be a capital stroke ! Then all the other fellows smoked, so, not to be singular, I lighted up, and—well, only fancy, Nettie’s religion is responsible for my learning to play billiards and to smoke a cigar !”

Not, we fear, an altogether singular experience. But, my dear sisters, what a huge

blunder! How woefully mistaken you have been, in passing over and ignoring the work the Master has given you to do, while you have chosen to do not *His* but your own will and pleasure. What a terrible misconception of your privileged work.

“Does she make her home happy?” was the censorious question asked by an old man of a mother, who was dilating upon her daughter’s religious excellences. This may well be taken as the test of all true piety.

“Let them first learn to show piety *at home*,” was the Apostle Paul’s injunction in regard to young widows; and surely he would reiterate the thought, were he amongst us to-day, in reference to the sisters and the daughters of the home.

Nettie had mistaken her mission, when she thought less of those at home than of the poor. Surely her brother’s need was greater and had larger claim upon her time and energies than all the wants of a destitute poor whom God had *not* placed within the precincts of her home! To go to her district with her Bible in her hand

might *seem* to be more in accordance with the thoughts of true piety, than to be in her place at home without the Bible in her hand, ready to accompany her brother's songs, to mend his gloves, to share his leisure hours ; but in the sight of Him who tries the thoughts of our hearts, and weighs the motives of our lives, which, think you, would win from Him the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ;" the work He gave, or the work she chose?

My dear young sisters, make up your mind to the fact that religion is intended to make you shine at home. It need not and will not prevent your frequent work for others in the spare hours you can justly call your own ; but unless it makes you, as a *daughter, more thoughtful and considerate, more eager to obey and hold the smallest wish of either parent in sacred trust ;* unless it gives you, as a sister, a keener sense of your responsibilities, and a more earnest desire and effort to win to a higher, purer life the brothers of the home ; unless your Christian life means this to you, you have yet to learn

that your highest service to God is to live the life *He* gives you and to do *His will*.

Alas! for the mistaken ones who fail to recognise in gentle and obedient conduct as a daughter one of the highest duties of the Christian life. Alas! for those who rob their mothers of the confidence due to them.

“Oh! do not say a word to mother about what I told you,” said a young girl eagerly, having confided to a friend her desire to be a Christian.

“And why not?” was the answer. “Is your mother, who gave you birth, who watched your infant life unfold, who tended your early childhood’s years with love unwearied, is she who has prayed daily for you as mothers only pray, she who has denied herself to give you comforts, she who has a claim upon the highest consideration and deepest thought possible to your life as a daughter,—is *she* to be slighted, to be passed over, to be treated as you would scarcely treat the most distant friend? No, Amy, darling, you wrong yourself and her!”

And how many girls do what Amy did, shut the dear mother out of their confidence! My dear young friends, you cannot prize enough the parents who gave you birth. Do not wait until death gathers them away, to realize how much belongs to them by right of your thought, and time, and care, and love. Esteem it your highest privilege to live for them as they have lived for you. Be open with them. Have no secrets from them. Bear patiently and cheerfully with the weakness of their declining years. Treat them in all things *as you would wish your own child to treat you*, when you yourself are getting aged and infirm. And in every act of unselfish thought, in every sacrifice of pleasure for their sakes, know that you are by these glorifying your Saviour, who "was subject to *His* parents," and who left to you a clear command when He said, "Honour thy father and thy mother: this is the first commandment with promise."

Dear elder sisters, will you for a moment consider how important your position in the

home. You are, unconscious though it be to yourself, giving life impressions to the characters of your younger sisters and brothers *for good or for evil*. Oh! shall it not be for good?

A darling little girl, of some few summers only, was heard one day to pray, "Dear Lord Jesus, please make us all very *stylish*." From whose life had her young heart gathered the teaching which could inspire such a prayer? Ah! need we ask? The constant talk of the elder sisters of the home had led that little one into the error of believing that to be *stylish* was to be happy. What a low conception of life!

Think, dear elder sisters, how your every action helps to form the taste and tone the thought of all the younger members of the family. You, with your warm hearts and loving natures, have but to *think* and your life will be framed accordingly. In earnest, constant prayer, you will seek for help and guidance, so to lead the way to the footsteps following yours, that they may not wander to the brink of a precipice, nor sink deep down into the

mire, but in following you may follow your Master, Christ.

Would not this realized responsibility make you very careful in your choice of friends, make you very zealous to fill life with earnest work, the work which is ours, not as a means *to* salvation, but as the result *of* salvation.

“ I would not work my soul to save,
For that my Lord hath done ;
But I would work like any slave
For love of God's dear Son.”

Would it not influence you in your choice of books, making you jealously watchful over the introduction into the home of any literature likely to do harm ; and this without alluding to the sensational or profane novel, which, like some foul miasma in its influence upon the body, has power to bring pestilence and fever to the minds of the most healthful. Against these we cannot raise too loud a cry of warning, for while some have been kept back in their desire to become Christians by the love of dress and the love of flirting, as many, if not more,

have been deterred from seeking Christ by their passionate love of novel reading. They sleep with a novel under their pillow, restless even in their slumbers through the longing they have for morning light. It lies open before them as they work, accompanies them in the daily walk, rests upon their knees at dinner time, until the excessive indulgence in this most highly wrought and exciting literature produces an intoxication as baneful almost in results as that produced by the too free use of alcohol.

Do we speak too strongly? Go to the lives of the once happy wives and mothers of some of England's homes of refinement and luxury, and in their pitiful downfall and destruction hear the answer, uttered in no doubting tones, "Too strongly? No! Novels can ruin hearts and lives as surely as can the unholy love of drink."

But it is not of these we speak. Noble-minded girls, with earnest Christian principle, would instinctively shrink from books of the type and character alluded to. But there is another kind in which they would indulge un-

thinkingly unless held in check by the longing to be careful for the sake of others.

An American journal has taken up this subject, and writes with daring truthfulness as follows :—

“Next to intoxicating liquors this debauchery in reading is the most prolific source of crime ; and it is the pernicious fountain from which flow all social evils, great and small. The habitual reading of trashy, sensational serials creates an abnormal taste for the unreal ; this incites a love for gossip and slander. Wicked and mysterious tales must be kept afloat, no matter at what cost. We are not speaking now of licentious literature ; but of the kind of reading openly indulged in by hundreds of families in the few small towns with which we are acquainted,—of such journals as one may see any day in the hands of our young men and women, our boys and girls. They are taken openly into schoolrooms, and read in parlours, on cars, and in ferry boats ; and it is heart-sickening to witness the eagerness with which

they are claimed at post-office, news-stand, or book-store on the day of their anticipated appearance. We do not say that any one of these unnatural weekly tales is hurtful; taking each one separately, they are probably no more than foolish; but when even 'the thought of foolishness is sin' (Prov. xxiv. 9), can we too seriously warn against this written folly? We do not assert that any of these tales are impure; but we do *know* that the constant perusal of such literature is decidedly injurious to body, mind, and spirit, and that it is eminently fitted to unfit its lovers for usefulness in this life, and for the chances of happiness in the life to come."

The elder sister's responsible position in the home will make her weigh well words and actions which, but for this, might demand no special care. The thought bestowed on dress, so natural to a woman, will have greater limits to its *rightness* when eyes are watching with intent to copy, and hearts are gathering lessons for a future day.

"I have been thinking," said a young Chris-

tian shyly, "thinking what my taste for artificial flowers and finery might lead my sisters into. So, to be practical, I am going to try to dress neatly and becomingly without these very needless adornments. The little I can save in that way shall go to the Zenana Mission." She had her reward, dear girl, in hearing from the lips of a little man of five one of the sweetest compliments brother ever paid to sister :—

"It is only people that want to *pretend* they're pretty that have to wear pink roses in their bonnets. Ella *is* pretty, so she goes without."

Dear Christian sisters, do you care too much for dress, following too eagerly the fashions of the world, although professing to live in the world, but not of it?

One has written very touchingly—

"I have wandered the earth for many a day,
And one cry of the heart I hear alway,—
'How shall I dress, and what shall I wear?
And how to the world do I appear?'
With matron and maid and childhood fair,
The same distress and the same hid care,

Till this love of dress is a glaring crime,
A blot and a shame on the page of time.

And God's Sabbath day—our day of rest
From worldly care, is a day to be drest,
To sport our best to the world's keen eye,
To fashion our children in vanity !
And ' How shall we dress and what shall we wear ?'
Not ' How do we in God's sight appear ?'
But ' Let us make fair the outer man,
Till no fault be there for our friends to scan.'

Oh ! sister matron and sister maid,
I would not your doings or tastes upbraid ;
But, oh ! I do think the world's happiness
Would be more if we all thought less of dress.
If with half the zeal that at Fashion's shrine
We worship a changing thing of time,
We, leaving the outer, looked more within,
And fought with like zeal 'gainst self and sin,
Teaching our little ones to know
Less of the world and of all things below.

Are there no hungry and ragged poor,
Perhaps not so very far from our door,
No fatherless ones, no widow sad,
Whom the price of one garment might make glad ?
No brother afflicted with sore disease,
Whom one denial of ours might ease ?
Not openly done, but done in love,
Done for the sake of our Brother above.

And little we'll care when, with falling breath,
We pass to life through the portal death,
What robes were ours ! But, oh ! glorious dress,
If we have on the robe of Christ's righteousness."*

And if, dear elder sisters, your *moral* influence at home means so much to others, what must be the power of your *spiritual* influence ? Oh ! do not, through false timidity, withhold this. Do not let the thought of being yourself a young Christian make you shy to give what help you can to your younger brothers and sisters. Study the Bible with them, kneel with them in prayer. Do not hold back because of personal shortcomings and inconsistencies. Let them but realize the fact of your earnestness to do better than you do, and they will excuse rather than condemn you, and may even find some help for their own broken efforts in the knowledge of your failures.

"It is so difficult," pleaded a gentle girl, after

* These verses can be obtained in leaflet form. Address, G. T., Dr. Cranage, Old Hall, Wellington, Salop. Sold in aid of aged and suffering Christians known to the writer.

a year of Christian life, "it is so difficult to talk to those *at home*. My lips are sealed to my sisters, while I can speak to my friends; and I fear to say a word to the servants lest, knowing me as they must do, they should reproach me for my own inconsistent life."

"And Andrew first findeth his own brother Peter, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias. . . . And he brought him to Jesus."

It was not difficult to explain to Clara her duty and her privilege in the matter, in spite of her doubts and fears, and she began that night.

With blushing cheeks and hesitating voice, she said to the sister next in age to herself, as they stood together by the dressing-room fire, 'Will you stay and read a chapter with me to-night? I think it might be helpful to us.'

And the impulsive Maud threw her arms round her sister's neck, and answered,—

"You dear old thing, of course I will; have I not longed to do it for months and months past?"

And that was the beginning of a great work in that home. First to be gathered in were the younger sisters; then the servants had their share of thought—a Bible reading on the most convenient evening in the week; and then the friends, chiefly young light-hearted girls, were invited to feast upon the word of God, and out of this grew a fortnightly drawing-room meeting held for one bright, happy hour on Tuesday afternoons.

And who can say when this work shall stop—and where it shall lead?

In all these things it is the *thoroughness* which tells.

And dear *younger* sisters in the home, one word to you. Do not think that because you happen to be the younger you are therefore without influence. Your power of helping others is in no sense less than that of your elder sisters, though a less responsibility may be yours, because your years lead you to follow rather than to lead. But younger sisters *do* lead the way sometimes.

A little girl was playing in the room while her sister was dressing for a ball. Very eagerly she noted all the details of her dress. Nothing escaped her. The lady's maid had withdrawn perfectly satisfied with her young mistress' appearance.

Little Nelly ran up to her sister, no longer awed into keeping a respectful distance from the *tulle* and *train*.

"How lovely your diamonds look, Annie," she said, glancing up into her sister's face, upon the brow of which there rested a brilliant tiara. "Shall you have any jewels in your crown in heaven, Annie?" she continued in hushed tones.

"What *do* you mean Nelly?" enquired her sister laughingly; and Nelly replied:

"Oh! Auntie was telling me one day that people who helped to make other people good should have jewels in their crown when they went home to be with the Lord Jesus in heaven."

"Go to bed you silly little thing," said

Annie hastily, and kissing the fair face of her little sister she glided from the room.

But the words which she had heard did not so glide from her memory. In vain she tried to forget them; they were with her in her drive to the ball-room,—they haunted her as she sped with fairy footsteps through the dance,—they rang out clear and distinct each time there was a pause in the vapid conversation of her partners, until at length, utterly overcome by their persistent, earnest questioning to heart and mind, Annie sought an excuse to leave the ball-room, and fled home.

Once there she hastened to the room of her little sister, and kneeling down by her sleeping form she broke into violent weeping, then between her sobs she whispered—

“You at least, my darling, shall have a jewel in your crown; for here, beside your bed, *I* give myself to your Lord Jesus!”

CHAPTER X.

THE MINISTRY OF SUFFERING.

A FEW WORDS TO INVALIDS.

“I know not how this languid life
May life’s vast ends fulfil,
He knows, and that life is not lost
That answers well His will.”

A YOUNG lady of fifteen, a bright laughter-loving girl, was suddenly cast upon a bed of suffering; completely paralyzed on one side, and nearly blind, she heard the family doctor say to the friends who surrounded her, “She has seen her best days, poor child!”

“Oh! no doctor,” she exclaimed eagerly, “my best days are yet to come, when I see the King in His beauty.”

That dear girl lived on, an invalid all her life, passing early womanhood, with all its yearnings

and awakenings, patient and resigned to be a sufferer, since it was her Father's will; on to maturer years with larger hopes and fuller faith, and greater longings to win souls to Christ; on to the golden sunset of old age, calm in the perfect peace of a heart stayed upon its God, radiant with the brightness of a light caught from constant dwelling in the Master's presence.

Yes! though an invalid, her life was one of greatest blessing. The secret of it *this*—she had early given her heart to God. Realizing that to be a child of God meant to have work to do for Him who loved her and gave Himself for her, she accepted *her life of suffering* as that work; and hence her patience, her resignation, her cheerful readiness to "count up her many mercies" and to go on her way, though that way were a suffering one, "rejoicing."

Dear reader, have *you* accepted your life of suffering as your work for God? Can you, while watching the unwearied activities of busy Christian lives, be content to turn softly round upon your pillow and thank your Heavenly

Father that you are permitted to serve Him in the way *He* has planned for you?

Miss Ellice Hopkins, in her very beautiful little book, "Occupation for the Sick," speaking of the "work of suffering," says—

"To be a witness that none can gainsay to the reality of religion, when all else crumbles away like churchyard dust before the strong forces of pain and decay; to offer to God a sacrifice which even angels cannot give—of a heart that can trust Him in the dark; to witness by the broken arc of your life to something beyond, which will complete the interrupted curve into the grand sweep of an appointed and harmonious orbit, the perfect circle of eternity that seems 'but a crooked line of time'; to prove the hidden possibilities of our nature when laying hold of a hidden strength, unsuspected like the great silent forces of nature that lie about us, till revealed in you by silent pain, as more pervasive than weakness, as deeper than weariness, as more constant than decay—is not this, I say, the noblest work of all? Nay,

more than this. I always say that we comfort more by our sorrows than by our words or by our actions, Christ would be known by His wounds. He is known now more by His wounded members. Often when the burden is too great, the only thing that will uphold is the thought of some other who is bearing a still heavier one, that wondrous fellowship of suffering; the sense that, after all, the intolerable pain, the unsupportable depression, is not a desert island on which you are cast away, but others are passing that way to glory; and what others are bearing bravely all round us, it were 'shamed life' not to knit oneself to bear bravely too."

The greatest temptation of the suffering life perhaps is in becoming self-absorbed. To think of Him, "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," will be to remember others and to seek to lighten their sorrows. This will suggest to some the "ministry of letters," writing loving letter messages which tell of God's goodness to hearts not yet trusting in Him who

promises *perfect peace* to the mind which is stayed upon Him. Others with nimble fingers free to move, will find work to do of light and varied kind, work that shall fill a pedlar's basket and give to some chronic invalid a means of livelihood. Or little garments will be made for the poor, and sold it may be to some kindly visitors, who in their turn shall have the joy of giving, while the profits gained shall be devoted to some special charity.

It is in *occupation* that you, my suffering sisters, will best learn the difficult lesson of forgetting self; and it is in thinking of Him "who hath borne our sorrows and carried our griefs" that you will gather to your heart and life the sweet power of "patient endurance."

"Thou who didst suffer all for me,
My peace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for Thee
Help me with patience to endure.

Let me not angrily declare
That never grief was sharp like mine,
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, remembering Thine."

We have heard of one, a lady, who, from injuries received in a railway accident, had to keep her bed in much pain and suffering for long weary months. Upon the anniversary of the accident she gathered some of her most intimate friends into her room, and there, still a prisoner to her bed, *she held a meeting of praise*, counting up all the "mercies of her year of sickness."

Surely it is often a sign of favour, a testimony of love for a child of the Heavenly Father, to be *trusted* with large measure of suffering! Could that afflicted one but realize how *her* pain, *her* weariness, *her* fretfulness, *her* temptation to murmur and repine, were the subject of her Saviour's intercession for her, as He besought the Father "not to take her out of the world, but to keep her from the evil," surely she would rejoice where now she weeps, and feel greatest comfort where now she may be tempted to despair.

Listen, my sisters, to a dream, which in its repetition has brought blessing to many a soul.

“She dreamt she was in Heaven. There was nothing new or strange about it. She seemed to have been there a long, long time, and yet had fullest recollection of her former life on earth—a life of telling forth to old and young the message of God’s Love. She was near Mrs. Denning (whose life, ‘She spake of Him,’ she had but recently read, greatly impressed by its beauty and its power). They had been gently talking of their work on earth, how some had listened to their message, and some refused to hear: and they both exclaimed, ‘Ah! if only our people could know what *we* know of Heaven’s joy, how eager would it make them all to come!’

“And ever as they spoke, the Saviour’s voice was heard, speaking in clear yet gentle tones as He stood with outstretched hands pleading before a Throne of glorious shining, the light of which extended upwards far beyond the range of sight. They paused in their converse together, to mark His words, repeated unceasingly through all the hours and days and time

untold of their sitting side by side. His words were these: 'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil;' and though uttered over and over and over again their ears never grew weary, but each time the prayer came with fresh power and meaning. . . .

"She thought if only those on earth *knew* what the Lord Jesus was doing for them! How it would comfort the sad! What strength it would give to the feeble, and what courage to the fearful and afraid! And then she seemed to remember her own weary struggles while on earth, and she thought how different her life would have been had she been conscious of the Saviour's intercession for her. She felt it would have made her brave to endure trial and have given her just the power she needed in her work. . . .

"The thought of her work reminded her of her people to whom Sunday by Sunday she had told the love of God. And oh! what longing filled her soul for their sakes just to return to

earth to tell what she had learnt in heaven of the Saviour's unceasing prayer for them. To tell it but to one would be to pass it on to all on earth, for surely the joyful news would quickly spread! In her yearning over the people she thought to look downwards right away to the distant earth, where she could more distinctly see her own especial Sunday gathering, and turning to Mrs. Denning, she said, 'Oh! how I long to go to them.—Yes, even to leave heaven for awhile—think what it will mean to *them* to know *He never for one moment ceases to pray on their behalf!*'

"Then as she turned again towards earth she felt to give a spring downwards, and awoke,—never to lose the memory of the joy and calm which came to her soul when first she realized that the Saviour prayed unceasingly for His own."

Reader, though but a dream, may you not get some help, some comfort from it? The words of Christ, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou

shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 15), are no fancied utterances of a vision, but are His own true words and prayer for all who love Him. Will not the thought of this help you to bear your pain, as it will help others to labour for Him?

And will not the thought of the Saviour's sympathy with you in your life, while it gives you comfort in solitude and power to endure, make you very eager to tell of Him to others? Perhaps without too much fatigue a few might be gathered round your couch on the Sunday—children from well-to-do homes which lie about your own, whose tender hearts, touched by your brightness in affliction, would be so ready to receive impressions for a lifetime.

To sing with such—

“Jesus loves the little children,
Once He took them on His knee ;
Gently put His arms around them,
And said ‘ Let them come to Me ;’”

to lead their hushed voices in prayer ; to tell in softest tones the “old, old story”—Oh ! what

a joyful ministry, a work made more beautiful and tender to the hearts of the little ones because done for them by one of God's suffering children.

Or will you find the visit of one within the sacred room of suffering as much as physical strength can bear? Then choose that one from some neighbouring shop where many a young apprentice has a hungry heart, aching for the sweet comfort of a mother's care, and for the home sympathy and life denied her in her lot of "working for her living." Think what a work may be yours to win the soul of such! To give to the life, so in the shadow, a thought of brightness as it gets into its possession the comforting assurance, "somebody cares for me."

Or suppose the suffering life be too wearied with its pain to expend strength upon others in what will mean some physical exertion, you will yet have left to you the power to *think* and *plan* and *suggest*.

"I have done with my paper, let it go to the cottage where that poor girl lies so ill."

“I am rich in flowers to-day. Let some one leave a bunch with the crippled boy in the village.”

“That text has given me so much comfort as it hangs there on the wall. Let it be taken *as a loan* to comfort that dear invalid who has a drunken father. Tell her it is hers to keep for one long week, perhaps it will help to shorten the long week as it tells of One who is with her always even unto the end!”

Oh! the endless little sunbeams of thought, which, flitting here and there amid the lives of the sorrowful and sad, tell of Him the Inspirer of heart sympathy for others' cares, and bring, by their beguiling charms, eyes that are drooping with tears to look upward to the Sun of Righteousness.

Dear invalids, if you lack the blessing of health, you have the blessing of sweet fellowship with Him who was “made perfect through suffering.” If you cannot haste with quick footstep to minister to the needs of His poor, you can *think* and *plan* and *care* for them as

you lie quietly on your couch of pain, and because the thought comes to you in suffering and weakness it may the more surely meet the great longing of their heart need.

Oh! do not, dear sisters, lightly esteem the privileged work to which you are called in the ministry of suffering, and do not forget to count up the mercies of your life, so helped and brightened by the love and sympathy of those about you, and above all do not fail to gather into your heart the comfort of the sweet words of consolation from God's own book, always remembering that there it reads—

“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.”

“As the harp strings only render
All their treasures of sweet sound,
All their music, glad or tender,
Firmly struck and tightly bound ;

So the hearts of Christians owe
Each its deepest, sweetest strain,
To the pressure firm of woe
And the tension tight of pain.

Spices crushed their pungence yield,
Trodden scents their sweets respire !
Would you have its strength revealed ?
Cast the incense in the fire.

Thus the crushed and broken flame
Oft doth sweetest graces yield ;
And through suffering, toil and shame,
From the martyr's keenest flame,
Heavenly incense is distilled.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MINISTRY OF LITTLE THINGS.

“All worldly joys go lesse
To the one joy of doing kindnesse.”—*Herbert.*

TO the ministry of little things every woman is called. Old or young, rich or poor, each has her sweet mission of bringing blessing to the lives of others by her own gentle thought and kindly deed in things seemingly small and of little moment.

The life that is guided by the motive to do all “to the glory of God” will look above to its Lord and Master for power to perform little duties, bear little cares and strive against little sins; and conscious that in the decoration of the person or of a room it is the little finishing touches which give elegance and grace, and in like manner it is in the adorning of our profession as Christians the

little things that make or mar the beauty of holiness, nothing will be treated as too small or trivial to be of importance when the heart and life discipline and training are concerned.

To acquire habits of method, order and punctuality will be part of the life discipline, nor will there be less thought bestowed upon the keeping all things in their proper places and the doing of all things at their proper time. Early rising, patient plodding and persevering determination to get through a task commenced, all will tend to the formation of a character capable of helping the lives of others in the ministry of little things. Nor would we for one moment forget that in this ministry, as in all else where the life is inspired by love to Christ, the *inasmuch* of Christ's teaching covers with its beautiful promise the little things done for Him as surely as it covers the great.

"The sacred duty of giving pleasure" is, perhaps, one of the little things to which we would first call the attention of our readers.

We have read somewhere of a lady newly brought to realize the love of Christ, who, in her great joy, was ever on the alert to make others happy. Driving two of the prettiest of little ponies, she had noticed how the bells upon the reins attracted the village children, and how they ran with laughter and shouts behind her little carriage, until, breathless and spent, after but a very short distance they would return with dragging footsteps to their play. Why should she not give these children pleasure? Bright thought! From that day ever and anon when passing through the villages about her home, this, the Lady Bountiful of the district, would pause and take up half a dozen little lads and lassies with sometimes a baby or two, and just as they were (without hats or clean faces), drive them from one end of their village to the other. Oh! the keen childish relish for pleasure so unexpected! Oh! the eager watching as they grew accustomed to these treats, for the kind lady, who if too busy to take them up, had

always time to give them a smile and a word of brightness! Surely these tender little hearts would, in the lady's thought for them, learn something of the lady's Saviour, of whom she would not fail to speak?

Side by side with this little story we remember a fact within our own experience. A man very poor, very crippled, was placed daily, when fine, in the arm-chair outside a public-house where some friends of his resided, within a few doors of his own home. He was thus placed to secure him some variety and amusement in watching the passers-by. A lady saw and pitied him, and wondered what she could do to give him pleasure if but for one passing moment.

Some roses in her hand suggested the gift of flowers.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," was the quick response to her offer, "but my poor fingers are too much crippled to hold them."

"Then let me pin them in your coat, just where you can in glancing down see them,

and be reminded of Him who bid us consider the lilies of the field."

A few words more and the lady had sped away, but the pleasure given was left for ever as a memory in the heart of a suffering and lonely man.

Often during those summer months, the same hand placed other flowers in the coat of the sufferer; then autumn and winter followed and the lady missed the poor man from his seat, asked about him and found he had left the neighbourhood. A few weeks later, and while bending beside a dying man in a workhouse bed, the lady heard a voice from a neighbouring bed say softly:—

"Bless you! The Lord reward you for your thought for such as we."

She turned round and met the bright face of the crippled man.

"Ah! those flowers!" he said, in talking to her afterwards, "if only you could know how they brightened my days all last summer. Why it took just half the pain away of having

always to sit still, to be waited on like that by a lady! And then how the flowers seemed to talk to me of the Saviour and to make one go back to the day when mother taught us to pray and to think about heaven!"

What a *little* thing to have been so large in blessing!

My dear young friend, have you always thought enough about these little pleasures, costing so small a thought but bringing so great a joy?

"I have not missed mamma *quite* so much since I came to school," said a tender-hearted little girl once, raising her soft brown eyes to the face of a friend who had called to see her. "I have a little friend who lets me read her mamma's letters to her, and I try to think they are meant for me, and it does help me so *beautifully!*" Thoughtful, loving "little friend," thus to minister pleasure to the motherless child! You have already your reward in knowing what joy you gave to her.

The ministry of little pleasures. How suggestive to—

“A thoughtful heart through
Constant watching wise.”

Will it not bring to an invalid some happy surprise, whether in the form of a gift made in “odd moments” when nimble fingers could be swift to work, or of flowers, fruit, or books? Will it not give to busy workers, whether hospital nurse, Bible woman, or city missionary, an hour or two’s rest in a drive in the country, a row on the river, or a quiet tea under the trees in a garden fragrant with summer flowers? Will it not capture the tired mother from the crowded court and bring her with her new born infant to spend a few hours in a home untouched by the weary care of want, her heart at rest the while in knowing that a neighbour has been engaged to look after the little ones at home?

And if the ministry of little pleasures be such, what will be that of little services rendered?

An old lady of upwards of fourscore years stood at her cottage door trying to thread a needle.

“Do you think *I* might do it for her?” shyly suggested a little girl of eight or nine who was passing with her governess.

“Yes, dear! certainly,” was the instant reply.

And very quickly the little girl's steady hand had done the work the enfeebled hand of age had failed to do.

“Please thread me some more, dearie,” pleaded the old lady, and the “more” were threaded and stuck upon the curtain of the window in place of pin-cushion or house-wife.

“I'll call and thread you others some day,” said the child, thrilling with joy to have “done something to help somebody,” and this was the beginning of a life of service for others. To-day, from a large sphere of labour, larger than that which is the privileged lot of many women, she looks back *to the threading of a needle* as her first conscious work for others.

“Allow me to lighten your load so far as

our journey lies together," and the young lady, returning from her morning walk with governess and sisters, relieves the trembling arms of an aged woman of a burden heavy for them but light enough for her own. Only a very *little* act, but what comfort it brought to the aching heart of a mother, bowed down with a secret care, for with the act of kindness came words of loving sympathy, and the reminder of God's promise to sustain all who "cast their burden upon the Lord." The walk together ended, but not the helpful influence and comfort. *That* lived on, to be spoken of in after years when the two who journeyed thus together that morning met again, the one an aged inmate of an almshouse, the other a weekly visitor there to take the glad tidings of a Saviour's love.

And if apart from home-life so many opportunities will be found for little acts of service what will it be *at home*?

"Oh, dear! I have lost my button-hook!" says a complaining little voice. "Then take

mine!" is the quick answer, while the elder sister waits patiently to finish the buttoning of her own boots until the little girl in trouble has finished hers.

"These *tiresome* lessons! When will they be done?" is the fretful cry of a child already wearied with the work of the day at school.

"Let me help you, Freddy, and we will soon master them," is the gentle sister's soothing reply, and a flushed cheek rests upon her shoulder while, with one arm round her brother, she seeks to explain and simplify a lesson easy enough but for the weariness of the little brain which tries to grasp it.

"Who has seen Granny's spectacles?" the words pass from one to the other round the table where all are busy in the evening hour after tea. No one has seen them, but the loving daughter, earnest in her life of service for Christ, feels instant call to give up her time in searching for the missing glasses, and she moreover does not consider her time *wasted* although moments may pass into quarters of

an hour before the spectacles have been discovered in their hiding-place. Nor does she give them into the hands of "Granny" with the look of a martyr, as if she had made some great self-sacrifice in spending her precious moments about them, but with bright look and gentle words she assures Grandmamma most truthfully, that to be able to help *her* is ample payment for the time devoted.

Little services of this kind mean *self-denial*, but the life in earnest counts self-denial as a part of its daily offering to the Master, and knowing that the Lord "loveth a cheerful giver," the giving is not done grudgingly or of necessity but with a glad spontaneous yielding up of one's own will and way.

We have known some whose lives with their frequent interruptions were always kept calm by the thought of the patience, gentleness and thought for others of the Saviour, whose life on earth they sought to imitate. To them the beautiful lines of the "Old, Old Story" came with deepest meaning.

“He always was at leisure
For every one who came,
However tired or weary
They found Him just the same.
He did kind things so kindly,
It was His heart’s delight
To make poor people happy
From morning until night.”

And this has helped to keep them cheerful and given to them that very happy power of always looking on the bright side of everything, a faculty which Dr. Johnson said was worth £1,000 a year to a man.

“What a *miserable* day! When will it give over raining?” exclaims the voice of a grumbler.

“What a grand day in which to get through plenty of work or reading!” exclaims the one who is always ready to find the silver lining in the cloud that is passing.

We cannot overestimate the blessing which comes to all in

“Little words of kindness,
Little deeds of love.”

Who has not realized the great good accomplished by the gentle softening down of rough angles and sharp corners in some one's words or deeds—a few loving sentences bright with the light of the charity which “thinketh no evil,” spoken by one who comes to troubled hearts as a peacemaker?

Who does not know the worth of a friend who, by her presence no less than her speech, has power to soothe the ruffled temper, and to comfort the heart which has been wounded?

Ah! my dear sisters, look well to this. All this *you* may be *at home*. Oh! do not through carelessness, indifference or selfishness, lose the glad work which is yours in virtue of your womanhood.

A gallant fireman had nobly been through the flames to rescue some children from an upper room in a burning house. Wearied with the effort, and nearly suffocated by the smoke, he hesitated on the top step of the ladder when all but the youngest child had been safely given up to the parents, as they stood in breath-

less anxiety in the crowds below. He hesitated, when a woman's voice from the crowd cried "cheer him," and as that cheer arose he took fresh courage, plunged once more into the smoke and flames, and returned with the half-unconscious baby in his arms.

How many in the midst of life's trials and dangers, tempted to give in in a struggle which exhausts both heart and mind, are helped, invigorated and made brave again by the cheering utterances of one, who in "a word fitly spoken" speaks the encouragement and hope the heart so sorely needs. How many earnest, struggling lives lose the battle over self and surrounding difficulties because lacking the help of a sympathetic cheer!

The pressure of a hand, the kindly glance towards one self-conscious and sensitive, the gentle word of praise. Oh! how little they all seem, and yet how great in blessing to hungry hearts and weary minds.

And the gentle suggestion that one with busy thoughts in the Master's service can give

to others yearning to do something but without any idea what that something should be, how helpful these may be to lives whose earnestness and brightness will depend largely upon the extent of their thought and work for others.

We know a lady whose Sunday scholars, chiefly servants, were aroused to long to do something for the Zenana Mission. Looking to their teacher for counsel and direction, they gladly caught the inspiration of her words, "let each make some little thing, pincushion or pen-wiper, bookmark or mat, and bring to me: we will have a little bazaar amongst our friends and see what we can realize." By and by the "little things" were brought, each a labour of love, and from their sale £2 were realized to be sent to the fund of the Zenana Mission.

What a grand idea for you, my gentle reader, to gather into your own heart. Supposing each teacher, if but one in every Sunday school, did likewise, how many of

those poor women in India, pining for the helpful sympathy and teaching of Christian women, would have their heart's desire, and by their glad acceptance of the gospel of Christ—the power of God unto salvation to all who believe—would bring to you the greatest joy possible to a human heart, the joy of knowing a soul once walking in darkness to be brought out into the “marvellous light” of Scripture truth.

Within the helpful work of the ministry of little things will be found the silent effort to do good by not spreading or increasing evil, to bring gladness by not communicating sorrow. One way of accomplishing this will be by holding back unkind or harsh criticism, and all unnecessary censure or rebuke. While on the other hand, the ministry of little things will be carried on by treasuring up words and comments that are pleasant and helpful as regards the doings of others, seeking to bring them before the notice of those most likely to be interested.

“Miss B. looked so pretty at our home gathering last night, and played so nicely, helping to make the evening bright for others.”

Only a remark made during a morning call by one who loved to say pleasant things.

“Oh! I must treasure that up,” is the reply of another equally gifted in good desires; “it will give her dear mother untold pleasure to hear this.”

And the invalid mother is made happy a few days later in having the treasured-up remark consigned to her own keeping.

Surely this is a gift worth cultivating; *remembering all pleasant things that are said about others, and forgetting those that are severe or unkind.*

Perhaps none about us in our home life are more helped in this ministry of little things than our servants.

Mary, the housemaid, has nearly lost heart by the overstrain upon body and mind which the Christmas holidays and a houseful of noisy high-spirited boys have brought to a frame

naturally delicate ; but her young mistress' tender enquiries after her health and quietly expressed fear that the extra work must be wearisome, with the timid offer of help in upstairs bed-making or dusting, this act of kindness is to Mary like a tonic to both heart and mind, and she does the extra work with a bright spirit and ready will, assured of sympathy, and conscious that her life, though that of a servant, has one at least in the house who takes a lively interest in it.

Away from home, at times depressed and lonely, how often the spiritual life of our servants wanes for lack of sympathy and help which a little daily word might give. And how often their over-work and busy fagging lives lead them to carelessness and indifference about religion, when a little thought and consideration would have spared them this, and would have kept them true to a belief in Christian life and work, which to many is a stepping-stone to a higher faith.

Were it possible, what lasting boon might

be secured to the servants of a household simply by the fact of a cold dinner upon Sunday! Only a little thought and small consideration required in many cases—we know there are exceptional ones—to bring this about, but how large the good achieved and how great the rest and comfort secured.

Perhaps if the daughter of the house were to think this subject over, and gently bring it before others, the suggestion might become fact, and other families would be added to the number of those who have already found that in providing Sabbath rest for their servants, they are bringing to their own hearts an unspeakable blessing. And if the young mistress of the house has so much power in helping the lives of the servants by her thought and consideration in little things, what may not the servants of a household do?

How dependent is a household for comfort and well-being upon its servants, and how this comfort and well-being is made up of little things. Little duties faithfully performed, little

attentions cheerfully rendered, little self-denials willingly made.

We think, as we write, of a home made happy by a certain faithful Mary who has been with the family so many years that all its concerns are hers and most naturally she talks of what *we* do or of what *we* do not do.

How often are the long journeys of the master—journeys made in the cause of philanthropy—lightened in their burden of thought by “Mary’s” loving care, which has anticipated its needs; how often are the comings home made doubly pleasant by Mary’s thoughtful kindness in placing dressing-gown and slippers before a bright fire and tidy hearth.

Oh! how much you, my dear sisters in service, may always do to lighten care and brighten life and make the home in which you serve a happy one. Not while you claim as yours, this right and that, ever fearing to be “put upon”; not while you “stand upon your dignity,” and bargain for your privileges, reminding those around you, by innumerable

little things, that your service is a matter of duty, you work for your wages and from no higher motive. Not while you live thus will your life have power to bless others, but when, forgetting self, you accept your life, whatever it may be, with all its difficulties, hardships and crosses as direct from the hand of God, and in all things live to Him, then will you find joy even in your trials, and in patient service and quiet thought for others you will find your call to a noble Christian work; and while living thus you will be earning the respect and esteem of all who know you.

How many a mistress, if the truth were spoken, might have placed upon her tombstone—

“Worried into her grave by her servants.”

How many on the other hand might have the record made—

“Life made brighter and death easier by the loving attention of faithful servants.”

Reader, which is it to be? Will you not

pray for faithfulness and patience, for gentle consideration and kindly thought, for power to forget self and live for others, that in your life you may have all that is possible to make you a blessing to those around you, winning the smile of your heavenly Master, and earning for yourself the "well done," as surely the reward of the faithful servant as of her mistress, in her work for Christ.

The subject is one which cannot easily be exhausted—The Ministry of Little Things. But we must leave it here, hoping in these pages to have given suggestive thought to some, who, in seeking to do great things, may have passed over and left undone the *little* ones.

“Scorn not the smallness of daily endeavour,
Let the great meaning ennoble it ever ;
Droop not o’er efforts expended in vain,
Work as believing that labour is gain.”

CHAPTER XII.

RECREATION.

“Sweet recreation barred, what doth ensue,
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair?
And at their heels a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life.”

—*Shakespeare.*

“ALL work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy!” Quite as true to-day as in days that are past, because human nature is human nature still. And because of this we feel that a book *for*, as well as *about*, “Our Daughters,” would be incomplete were we to pass over or ignore the fact. The life that has grown up and developed without laughter, and without the sunny brightness which youth lays claim to as a right, lacks buoyancy and elasticity. It becomes heavy, unsympathetic, if not harsh and morose.

By all means, my dear young friends, have fun in your life and plenty of it. All we would urge upon you to remember is this, recreation should be what its name implies, the re-creating, re-making or resuscitating of physical and mental powers, *not* as some would lead us to infer, the devotion of powers, physical and mental, to the *business* of unceasing pleasure.

We have heard of a young beauty who, when asked what was her highest idea of recreation, replied with a yawn, "To go to sleep."

"Well, and when you have been to sleep and awake, what after that?" was the next inquiry.

"Simply," said the beauty, with another yawn, "to go to sleep again!"

Surely she must have made pleasure the first thought and business of her life, if her only idea of recreation was "sleep."

Now we feel sure that to those whose life is in the right, the highest thought of real recreation is of pleasure that is wide awake

healthy, and vigorous. Something that *relaxes* the physical and mental strain, and that comes to the most earnest life as a brisk breeze, whether of thought or of action.

Very warmly do we commend the mothers who, in the early childhood of their daughters, encourage every exercise of limb and muscle, without seeking to curb the natural exercise of a healthy body, by the oft-repeated judgment, "You must not do this or that; it is not *ladylike*."

We know a lady who, in following later to join her daughters in a country walk, met an elderly gentleman whom she had not seen for years.

"I have had," said he, after shaking hands with her, "one of the greatest possible treats, and I fear I may shock you a little in telling you what it is. I have witnessed (unobserved) a bright ladylike girl of sixteen vault over a five-barred gate, with as much grace and elegance as if she were springing into the saddle."

"I am gratified rather than shocked," replied

the lady with a smile, "as you evidently describe an achievement of one of my own daughters. As we have so many country walks it has been part of my girls' physical training to be taught how to vault gates and jump ditches; and if all mothers realized what I do of the gain in health to the daughters thus educated, we should probably find more willing to adopt the same method!"

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his book, entitled "Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical," speaks most earnestly about the wrong done to girls in forbidding or limiting the bodily exercise which nature so strongly prompts. We feel we cannot do better than quote from this book:—

"To the importance of bodily exercise most people are in some degree awake. Perhaps less needs saying on this requisite of physical education than on most others; at any rate, in so far as boys are concerned. Public schools and private schools alike furnish tolerably adequate playgrounds; and there is

usually a fair share of time for out-door games, and a recognition of them as needful. . . . We have been obliged to qualify this admission by inserting the clause, 'In so far as boys are concerned.' Unfortunately the fact is quite otherwise with girls. . . ."

Then having drawn a comparison between the usual way in which boys spend their hours of recreation in bright, vigorous and healthy play, and girls in gentle saunterings round a garden, often with book in hand, he asks :—

"Why this astonishing difference? Is it that the constitution of a girl differs so entirely from that of a boy as not to need these active exercises? Is it that a girl has none of the promptings to vociferous play by which boys are impelled? Or is it that, while in boys these promptings are to be regarded as stimuli to a bodily activity, without which there cannot be adequate development, to their sisters, nature has given them for no purpose whatever—unless it be for the vexation of school-mistresses? . . .

“‘Then (still quoting from Mr. Spencer) girls should be allowed to run wild—to become as rude as boys, and grow up into romps and hoydens!’ exclaims some defender of the proprieties. This, we presume, is the ever present dread of governesses, with whom noisy play like that daily indulged in by boys is a punishable offence, and we infer that it is forbidden, lest unladylike habits should be formed. The fear is quite groundless, however. For if the sportive activity allowed in boys does not prevent them from growing up into gentlemen, why should a like sportive activity prevent girls from growing up into ladies? Rough as may have been their playground frolics, youths who have left school do not indulge in leap-frog in the streets, or marbles in the drawing-room. Abandoning their jackets, they abandon at the same time boyish games, and display an anxiety—often a ludicrous anxiety—to avoid whatever is not manly. If now, on arriving at the due age, this feeling of masculine dignity puts so efficient

a restraint on the sports of boyhood, will not the feeling of feminine modesty, gradually strengthening as maturity is approached, put an efficient restraint on the like sports of girlhood? Have not women even a greater regard for appearance than men? And will there not consequently arise in them even a stronger check to whatever is rough or boisterous?"

Having spoken of the gymnasium as an artificial remedy for the lack of natural spontaneous exercise, Mr. Spencer concludes by stating the fact, that "for girls, as well as boys, the sportive activities to which the instincts impel are essential to bodily welfare. Whoever forbids them, forbids the divinely-appointed means to physical development."

"But why tell to us these facts?" we think we hear some of our fair readers say, "when we have passed that stage of youthfulness—the early days of teens—when our natural instincts led to the vigorous play suggested to be so good for us? We have reached an age when such recreation has no possible attraction!"

Why? Because we would have you realize that as the religion of the body means to do anything and everything which will keep the body in health and further the development of its fullest power, so it will be for you to encourage rather than *snub* the physical activities of your younger sisters, who do still yearn with all the wild longings of early girlhood for a "grand romp," but who are deterred from the indulgence lest they should be committing some terribly unladylike crime.

Get, my dear young friends, a healthy view of the noble use of recreation, and, believing that *whatever conduces to the well-being of the body helps the soul, and thereby fits the disciple of Christ for true and faithful service*—get this, and you will have within your hearts a principle which shall help your spiritual growth, and by keeping you free from morbid views of practical Christian life, will tend to increase your personal usefulness with others, which usefulness, under different circumstances, might be limited or destroyed.

That recreation of some sort *is* necessary to the keeping in health of the body, and because of it to the health and well-being of the soul—will be readily admitted by all who have the very least conception of the need body and mind have constantly of rest. *But what should the recreation be?* This is the question which will at once suggest itself to our Christian readers, and this question can best be answered by reverting to the meaning of the word—to create anew, to re-make, or resuscitate the powers of the body or mind.

Keep this thought in view, and whatever tends to interfere with the whole good which should be sought in recreation, will be regarded with suspicion and doubt.

For instance, the country walk or mountain climb, so wonderfully recreative to active natures and to minds of much thought, would cease to be helpful, healthy, or right, if the one indulging in either went a greater distance than her strength warranted. We know of many who can date a long and chronic illness to the time

of overwalking themselves. Therefore when so-called recreation becomes toil, or when from any cause the surrounding circumstances or condition of things lowers or enfeebles the physical tone, recreation ceases to be recreation, and no argument could justify as *right* that which tends to promote *wrong*.

The game of archery, croquet, or lawn tennis, which may form a pleasant recreation when played for an hour or two, becomes a toil when continued for many hours, and harm to health rather than good will be the necessary result. And the same might be said of every *recreative* pursuit; right in itself it becomes wrong when indulged in to excess. And against this we would most lovingly warn our Christian readers.

“A good romp in the nursery is rest of body and of mind to me,” said an elder sister glowing with heat as she paused (with her baby brother on her back, and two little ones at her skirts), to address a visitor who just peeped in. “I always protest that a romp with the little ones is as healthy as horse exercise, and I am sure it is

better because of the pleasure it gives to others," and urged by three little voices to "*doe* on," whipped into action by baby hands, Ella cantered off, the nursery ringing the while with the happy laughter of children.

All sisters are not so enlightened as was Ella. Perhaps were they to try the experiment they would be astonished to find how much healthful pleasure might be secured by this daily romp with the younger ones in garden, nursery, or schoolroom.

We know that much that might be said about finding recreation in the charge of domestic pets, in gardening, in the study of botany, horse exercise, boating, etc., relates so exclusively to a country life, that a large majority of our readers, because living in towns, will in our allusion to these employments find no suggestive thought for themselves. But we are also conscious of the fact that the natural and everyday variety of a life in town brings recreation in change of thought and occupation quite unknown to those who live in the country ; while the many

opportunities afforded of social intercourse and of intellectual pursuits in the way of attending lectures, visiting art galleries, etc., will always give to dwellers in towns greater facilities for varying the life, than can be possible to those whose settled home is in the midst of green fields. We hope the day is not far distant when the swimming bath will afford to either dwellers in town or country a recreation as healthful as it is enjoyable, and when our daughters shall by personal experience verify the statement of many thoughtful Christian women, that an early morning swim is as bracing to the soul as it is to the body.

But after all that can be said upon the subject, each life must choose its own recreation, just as it must choose its own work.

Many will get all they need in an hour's read of a book full of bright humour and helpful thought; while others would find in this but an additional strain to a mind already wearied.

We think far more might be done than is accomplished at present in *hand-recreation*, in

the way of painting, illuminating, or etching, even supposing the absence of any special gift.

It is the experience of many that much may be done, even mechanically, which may prove a comfort and help to others, and to be thus aiming at other's good will give zest to recreation with those who seek ever and in all things to live for their fellow creatures.

An illuminated text for cottage walls, which should lead upwards thoughts so prone to be earth bound ; a verse from the Bible traced in clear free letters on a card with flower or leaf painted in the corner, destined to go with some "lilies of the field " to hospital bed or to the room of a depressed invalid ; if in recreation of this kind some labour creeps in, surely that labour will be one of love and will bring with it the blessing promised to those who "water " others.

We should like to call attention to a work so interesting and helpful, that to one busily employed during the day it might well be considered as an evening hour recreation, we allude

to the making of Bible albums. The idea was suggested by a lady for many years an invalid, to whom in her enforced inactivity of Christian service came many beautiful thoughts of what the willing hands of an enfeebled body might accomplish for the Master.

The plan is simply this—to secure a scrap book, of larger or smaller dimensions, in pretty and attractive binding. Upon each page either paste a picture, or place by means of gum a natural flower, a fern, or feather, and underneath each thing write or illuminate a suggestive text; for instance, the verse suggested by an oak leaf would be, “For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water” (Isa. i. 30); while under a pretty group of wild flowers, either real or painted, will be the words, “Consider the lilies of the field.”

Until it has been put to the test few could imagine how many texts of Scripture might be thus practically dealt with, giving to the eye of an invalid, into whose hand the album would eventually find its way, a variety most

charming, and leading on to serious thought a heart perhaps unwilling to study the Bible. These albums will also be found most helpful in interesting quite young children in passages of Scripture, which, by bearing practically upon what concerns everyday life will lead to the association of the Bible with daily thought and hourly pursuits.

And now a word about the recreation of music both to those who "play" and to those who listen.

"What *is* the use of my learning music?" exclaims the schoolgirl of twelve, a little petulantly. "I can never play as well as others do. I am sure it is a pity to waste time about it."

But the girl of sixteen or eighteen is glad that she has wasted time (if such it were?) when she finds how comforting to "father" the little homely airs she plays in the quiet evening hour, between the lights, when, home from his business or professional duties, he leans back in the old arm-chair, and thinks thoughts which

often lead to dreams ; or, when the merry-hearted brother calls her a "regular darling" for so patiently playing over and over again to him his favourite operas, assuring her the while that "*he* cannot understand why fellows need to be always hanging about billiard tables, and wasting their money and their health in smoking, when they have sisters who make home such a *jolly* place to come to."

And for herself, will there not be hours when in the soft flowing music of a hymn, or the gentle "musing on the keys," suggested by thoughts too deep for words, she shall gather calm to her own soul and energy to her own life? And if this be true to those who have no special gift for music, what must it be to those to whom God has given a decided musical talent?

And what music may be to some, poetry may be to others; and to all, with but few exceptions, there shall exist a wondrous recreating power in books.

We have warned elsewhere the need of care

in regard to the choice of literature; here we would urge the cultivation of the habit of reading, and plead earnestly that the books chosen shall always be of a kind to help, enlighten and strengthen the lives which will, consciously or otherwise, gather so much from their teaching.

Dear young Christians, next to a good friend value the companionship of a good book. Some one has said that "the best books are those which most resemble good actions. They are purifying, elevating and sustaining; they enlarge and liberalize the mind; they preserve it against vulgar worldliness; they tend to produce high-mindedness, cheerfulness and equanimity of character; they fashion and shape and humanize the mind."

But there is recreation of an entirely different kind to which allusion must be made. We have heard of one who said that some of the happiest hours of the week were spent in seeking to spare her mother's slender purse, by washing, starching and ironing with her own

hands the collars, cuffs and neckties worn by the various members of the family. We think we see some (to whom the bare suggestion of labour so homely sounds drudgery) smile at the thought of finding recreation in the performance of a task so uncongenial.

But stay, dear friends, you may not know the secret of making a homely duty of this kind bright with the genial glow of success. It may suggest to you cuffs which *will* get black and *smudgy*, collars which will *not* stiffen, and neckties from which all the beauty of clearness has been taken by the constant irritation of an iron which *will* stick!

Will you bear with us while we give you a lesson so homely and simple that you may wonder why it should find space in these pages, until you learn the joyful secret, that *whatever helps us in our lives as womenkind will help our influence as Christians*. Understanding this, you will admit that, in spite of its simplicity, it is worth the learning, and that although so seemingly trivial it is worthy of a place in your

memory, if only to empower you to pass useful knowledge on to others.

How then shall we set about our work which some condemn as being so tedious and uninteresting? If time permits we will put the articles needing our attention in soak, then wash them through two waters, rinse and boil, placing them in a bag kept for the purpose. Then rinse again, first in cold water and next in blued water, then hang to dry. And now to prepare our starch. We put, in proportion to the number of articles to be done, some cold filtered water in a bowl, and in this filtered water we waive backwards and forwards some *white* starch, tied up in muslin. About a pound of starch will be enough for one gallon of water, and this quantity would be enough for the collars, wristbands and fronts of one hundred shirts!

By a fair calculation two ounces of starch will be enough for a pint of water; but the best test is to make the liquid in the bowl as much like skimmed milk as possible. When this has

been done, put in a tiny saucepan and boil over fire or gas a little borax in a small quantity of water, then pour this (through a muslin) into the starch. And now for a professional secret! Drop carefully into this a few drops of spirits of turpentine. Your cuffs and collars being dry, rinse gently through this starch and roll up immediately in a towel. They are ready for the ironing as soon as you are. Oh, how beautifully the iron slips over each article! And what stiffness and gloss! Not *one* smudge! (No, because the water was filtered.) Not one uncomfortable sticking! (No, because your borax has prevented this). And the gloss is like that given by a professional laundress to the things she sends home. (Yes, because you have learnt *her* secret in using spirits of turpentine!)

A lady was staying with some friends when her husband, out upon his summer holiday, arrived unexpectedly on his way to the South.

“I must be off in a few hours,” said he, after the first greetings were over; “I wonder whether *any* laundress near would be so kind

as to help me in getting me some collars and cuffs done !”

“Yes, I know one,” said the wife quietly ; “and while you take a stroll in the garden I will just run off and see about it.”

In an hour’s time the wife met her husband as he came in from the garden where he had been chatting with the host and hostess. She was carrying a tray upon which lay twelve collars, six pairs of cuffs and half-a-dozen clerical neckties.

“Done already ?” exclaimed the astonished husband. “What will we get to next I wonder !”

“Ah, *what?*” said the wife merrily, “when laundresses are so expeditious, and when they work all for love and not for money.” The blushing cheeks told their story.

“I am *so* sorry to have troubled you,” pleaded the husband apologetically.

“Trouble ?” was the quick reply ; “it was too pleasant and successful an undertaking to be troublesome. If only all wives had had the good fortune to learn the secret I have been

lately taught, I do not think there would be a home where a laundress did not reside, who was able to meet difficulties by speedy work, and who moreover always laboured for love!"

In speaking about recreation as a needs-be of healthy Christian life, we feel that we may be expected to catalogue pleasures and pastimes which are strictly consistent with the lives of those who are seeking in all things to glorify their God and Saviour. But, my dear young friends, to do this would be to give to you an artificial conscience. This is a matter which must be *personally* met and personally settled. What we would beg of you to do is this: *do not tamper with conscience*. Do not engage in any pursuit which brings to your mind a doubt, if not of its lawfulness, at least of its expediency. Do not accept as right anything which interferes with your calm and earnest study of the Bible, which tampers with prayer, or upon which you do not conscientiously feel you could ask and *expect* God's blessing.

Let the language of your heart be, "Lord,

what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" Beautifully clear and defined will the life be which is ever asking this question of its Lord and Master. "To dwell in the secret presence of the Most High" will be to draw instinctively the line between pleasures healthful to a Christian life and pleasures which would wound or damage that life, either as regards itself or others likely to be influenced by it.

But some will ask, "Has recreation no dangers? Are we not more likely to keep straight on, turning neither to right hand nor to left in the narrow path which leadeth to life eternal, if we eschew all relaxations and pleasures, (however innocent), and simply go forward doing our duty as Christians?"

My dear young friends, it is to help you to "do your duty as a Christian" that we urge you to keep body and mind and heart in health, by giving each the recreation which experience proves to be necessary. How often the *sadness* of Christian life repels the young from Him whose desire was that the joy of His disciples

might be "full." And how often this sadness is but the natural consequence and result of over-wrought brain, unstrung nerves, and body wearied and exhausted by long hours of toil ; a condition of things which right and judicious *recreation* would have made unlikely if not impossible.

Recreation when rightly understood means power, physical, moral and spiritual, to every earnest life. It raises the tone, prevents the accumulation of *cobwebs* in heart or brain, and adds sunshine to the decided character of the one who has heard the voice of her Lord and Master Jesus Christ proclaim, "Ye are my witnesses." And it is true of recreation as of all else—

"No fear of crooked walking while the eye is fixed on Jesus."

CHAPTER XIII.

A GOOD WIFE.

“Who can find a virtuous woman, her price is above rubies: the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.”—*Prov.* xxxi.

A CHRISTIAN girl has very solemn views of marriage. To her it is no trifling matter, no subject for a joke, but a sacred reality, full of deepest thought and earnest meaning. Without imagining for a moment that every young man to whom she speaks must of necessity “fall in love” with her, she yet is ever watchful in her intercourse with others, lest she might be drawn into intimacies which were undesirable, or led to form friendships with which her loftier thoughts and aspirations could have no common sympathy.

The one of whom we write has made up her

mind what she will require in a husband. She does not leave that to be settled until after her engagement, when, by telling him to whom she has given her affections her thoughts and wishes, she *expects* him at once to develop into the character she has depicted. This may do for the careless and worldly, but it is not enough for the Christian girl.

She cannot give her heart's purest love to any man whom she does not most thoroughly respect ; and if he is to command this, he must be a true-hearted practical Christian—a *walking* one rather than a talking one. With womanly instinct she will gather from those who know him what the man who seeks her affections is thought of *at home*, and she will measure his worth by the estimation in which he is held by mother and sisters. While some might tax her with a love most cool and calculating which could thus question before resigning itself, she knows that there is too much dependent upon this, the great decision of her life, to warrant haste or lack of calm consideration.

And as she will bring to him who seeks her or his wife a character pure and chaste, she expects the same on his part. She has a high standard of manly as of womanly morality and virtue, and she will not, she cannot, in her very truthfulness of character, be made to believe a lie, and allow that for a woman to lose her chastity places her at once among the outcast and fallen, but for a man to fall from purity allowance must be made, as society has ruled that what is sin for a woman, to a man is but the "sowing of wild oats," which sowing, alas! has its reaping in the impaired health and more or less suffering bodies of his offspring.

The Christian woman will not "hasten to be rich" in her possession of husband and home.

Others whom she has known have been blindly infatuated, and they have had to suffer. It behoves her to take her time, and prayerfully to wait upon Him for guidance in whom her soul trusteth.

But all this may be done, and yet the marriage may not be of the happiest. The Chris-

tian girl with the loftiest aims and highest aspirations may not make the most helpful wife. We fear we may be misunderstood when we venture to suggest that more than true piety is needed in a wife to give to her the power of making the home a happy one. We are reminded of an old ditty which will explain somewhat of our meaning.

“Some people choose wives who can sing,
While others choose those who can smile,
Or because they love books, or are nice in their looks
Or by converse a dull hour beguile :
I don't care who 'tis, but he'll have to pay damage,
If, in learning all else, she's not learnt *how to manage.*”

In this, then, lies the secret of home comfort and happiness—a wife who knows how to manage ; one who ably rules her house ; one who looketh well to the ways of her household ; who, always busy and industrious herself, knows how to set others to work. She may have many servants to obey her bidding, but she herself “worketh willingly with her hands.” In short, she is one who is capable of fulfilling her wifely

mission, inasmuch as she is what God intended she should be—a *help-meet* to her husband.

My dear sisters, are you preparing yourselves for this exalted position in the home by learning all the practical little usefulnesses connected with a household which are so necessary to the comfort and well-being of "those dearest spots on earth?" Even supposing you are never to become a wife, there is yet every reason, simply because you are a woman, that you should learn how to make healthy, happy, and prosperous homes.

We all know that the greatest blessing in life is good health. No happiness and prosperity can be insured without this. We scarcely, perhaps, need to be reminded that the essentials to health are food, air, warmth and cleanliness, and these come all within the province of women to be looked after. A better thing than knowing how to nurse disease is how to prevent it, and this, too, should come within a woman's range of power. It is a glorious work to lessen the sickness and suffering, the want and impro-

vidence, the vice and misery from which the world groans ; and to this work every woman, be she wife or otherwise, is called.

Do you ask, "How is this to be done?" We answer, By influence and example to lessen the evil and increase the good around you ; to wage war with everything which injures the health (tight lacing, over feeding, etc.), the happiness (the use of stimulants as a beverage in our homes), or the prosperity of the body or soul.

In "looking well to the ways of her household," the good wife *must* understand something of cooking. If an ill-digested meal is capable of causing the body considerable inconvenience,—if the body inconvenienced means a mind perturbed, and a mind perturbed means inability to perform life's duties, or engage in work of a most sacred nature,—then we must allow it is no small matter to suffer the first cause of offence to break upon the peace of the home life ; and if a little womanly knowledge of cooking could have put off the catastrophe, it must be admitted that the wife who was in possession of

this knowledge would be more of a help-meet to her husband than the one who could manage to order but not to cook a dinner.

We remember talking with a lady (a gentle pleader of woman's rights) upon combining with the higher education of women some practical teaching in regard to home life, urging that classical lore and mathematical problems needed a little art of cooking, washing, and ironing, to give them balance in a woman's mind.

"You do not understand what you are talking about," said the high-spirited maiden lady, bristling up with an indignation she felt herself called upon to display (as a representative woman, doubtless)—"You do not understand what you are talking about. I tell you the time of an educated woman is too precious to be wasted in a kitchen! If circumstances arise which necessitate her attending to the cooking once in a way, she will be able to manage it by inspiration!"

Perhaps we do not wrong or misjudge our enthusiastic "friend of higher education," when

we venture to say that we feel, however willing to cook by inspiration, she herself would be the last one to partake of a meal into the cooking of which both knowledge and practical experience had not been brought.

“ If I were fanciful or nice,
What she prepared must tempt me ;
Only to watch her at her work
An appetite would give me.
There was not found in high-born dame
More delicate refinement,
More healthful looks (she sought no fame),
Or more complete contentment.
Yes, all among bright pots and pans,
A-cooking in the kitchen,
I found my queen of all the queens,
My fairy so bewitching.”

Although a somewhat startling thing to say, it is nevertheless true, “that it is always *somebody's* fault when any person is not healthy.” To quote from a most useful little book entitled, “Our Home Work” (by Mrs. Wigley), “God has given to us a body wonderfully fashioned and endowed. For the preservation of each part of this body He has ordered certain laws

and He has made those laws known to us ; if we wilfully break or neglect them, if we follow our own fashions and fancies rather than their guidance, dare we say that Infinite Wisdom is at fault because we suffer ? A man may deliberately and obstinately keep his eyes firmly closed ; is he to blame his Maker because he sees nothing ? Another may persist in intemperate habits because of his passions, his eating or his drinking ; when he finds his intellect clouded or sluggish, or his usually keen perceptions dull and heavy, and his body a prey to various diseases, is he then justified in moaning out, " God's hand is heavy on me : my afflictions are a sore burden " ? Surely, no. We repeat, it is generally somebody's fault if we suffer in health. Every disease has a beginning somewhere. Somebody has neglected cleanliness or ventilation or drainage. Somebody has allowed their blood to become impure by eating improper food or drinking impure water."

Dr. Lancaster says :—

" That disease and death can be prevented

is a well-known fact ; and certain diseases are called preventible by sanitary writers because their causes are well known and can be removed. It is not, however, possible by mere authority to prevent these diseases. The law can do much to remove those causes of diseases which individuals are incapable of removing. It can compel a town to have a supply of water ; but no law can compel the people to use the water. Unless individuals are instructed in the necessity of using water for the benefit of their health, the law is useless. And this is really the case of the whole of the sanitary laws of England. They are comparatively useless because they have a population growing up around them entirely ignorant of the nature of the laws which produce death and disease !”

Dr. Mann says :—

“If intemperance, want of cleanliness and free ventilation, laziness, immoderate and unregulated exertion, and vicious pursuits were banished from the world, nine-tenths of the

diseases that afflict the human race and abridge the lives of numbers would be avoided."

Why do we give these lengthy extracts here? Because, my sisters, some eminent men have said that "they consider one of the great causes of disease and death, all over the land, is the ignorance of *women* of the laws which govern a healthy life." And we would therefore urge upon you this study of the laws of health, that wherever you may be you may bring to bear upon the home-life with which you are associated the knowledge you have acquired.

We believe in this as *practical piety*, and because of this we lay great stress upon it. The Religion of the Body is altogether a new thought to some, but it needs no argument to justify its claims, since in the word of God we read—"What, know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

What higher claim than this upon the careful regulation of diet, the thoughtful attention to habits upon which the keeping in good health depends, the stated hours for sleep, for rest and recreation? To bring all this within the thought of our religious life is to realize as sanctified that which we might otherwise denounce "common or unclean."

And it is to the daughter and sister of the home, as well as to the wife and mother, that we must look for the practical teaching to others of the Religion of the Body. Lucy, the cook, may suffer from a temper which, when ruffled, tends to disturb the peace of the whole household. She may not know that her temper in large measure owes its ruffling to the fact of sleeping in a room from which she has most dexterously excluded all fresh air! The headache and the languor—the incipient cause, of which the ruffled temper is the effect—are but the natural consequences of a night spent in a room with fast-closed window and chimney well stopped up with paper. And this might

continue until Lucy's constant outbreaks would end most likely in dismissal, but for the daughter of the house, who, with gentle speech and courteous manner, intent upon winning and fearing to wound, explains how much healthier is a room well ventilated, and urges Cook to try the experiment. And with results which might be anticipated. Lucy has more refreshing slumbers, fewer headaches, and happier temper and the Religion of the Body has done its work.

We are quite sure that if more attention were paid to health in regard to food and clothing, pure air and exercise, and the daily immersion in water in the morning or evening bath, there would be fewer idlers and listless dreamers amongst men and women professedly Christian, and more than this, the Christian type of character would be of a more robust and vigorous nature.

"No man liveth unto himself." For good or for evil each life tells, not only as a whole but in detail.

"The strongest moral influence is the out-

come of personal life." And nowhere is this personal life so capable of making itself felt as in the home. Mr. Smiles, in his noble book on "Character," says, "It is not saying too much to aver that the happiness or misery, the enlightenment or ignorance, the civilization or barbarism of the world, depends in a very high degree upon the exercise of woman's power within her special kingdom of home. The greater part of the influence exercised by women on the formation of character necessarily remains unknown. They accomplish their best work in the quiet seclusion of the home and the family, by sustained effort and patient perseverance in the path of duty. Their greatest triumphs, because private and domestic, are rarely recorded; and it is not often, even in the biographies of distinguished men, that we hear of the share which their mothers have had in the formation of their character and in giving them a bias towards goodness. Yet they are not on that account without their reward. The influence they have exercised,

though unrecorded, lives after them, and goes on propagating itself in consequence for ever. We do not often hear of great women as we do of great men. It is of good women that we mostly hear, and it is probable that by determining the character of men and women for good they are doing even greater work than if they were to paint great pictures, write great books, or compose great operas."

Mr. Smiles continues to say, "We have spoken of the mother of Washington as an excellent woman of business; and to possess such a quality as capacity for business is not only compatible with true womanliness, but is in a measure essential to the comfort and well-being of every properly governed family. Habits of business do not relate to trade merely but apply to all the practical affairs of life—to everything that has to be arranged, to be organized, to be provided for, to be done. And in all these respects the management of a family, and of a household, is as much a matter of business as the management of a

shop or of a counting-house. It requires method, accuracy, organization, industry, economy, discipline, tact, knowledge and capacity for adapting means to ends. All this is of the essence of business; and hence business habits are as necessary to be cultivated by women who would succeed in the affairs of home—in other words, who would make home happy—as by men in the affairs of trade, of commerce or of manufacture.”

Mr. Smiles reminds us that Mr. Bright said, “Teach a boy arithmetic and he is a made man.” Why? Because it teaches him method, accuracy, value, proportions, relations. And Mr. Smiles says, very tritely, “How many girls are taught arithmetic well? Very few, and with what consequences? When the girl becomes a wife, if she knows nothing of figures and is innocent of addition and multiplication, she can keep no record of income and expenditure, and there will probably be a succession of mistakes committed which may be prolific in domestic contentions. The

woman not being up to her business, that is the management of her home, will through sheer ignorance be apt to commit extravagances which may be most injurious to the domestic peace and comfort."

Mr. Smiles' most valuable remarks in the chapter headed "Home Power," ("Character," Chapter II.) would bear fullest repetition, but we would refer our readers to the book, contenting ourselves with one or two further extracts.

"Method is of essential importance in the home . . . Method demands punctuality. The unpunctual woman, like the unpunctual man, occasions dislike, because she consumes and wastes time and provokes the reflection that we are not of sufficient importance to make her more prompt. To the business man, time is money; but to the business woman, method is more—it is peace, comfort, and domestic prosperity.

"All the arguments which have yet been advanced in favour of the higher education of men plead equally strongly in favour of

the higher education of women. In all the departments of home, intelligence will add to woman's usefulness and efficiency. It will give her thought and forethought, enable her to anticipate and provide for the contingencies of life, suggest improved methods of management and give her strength in every way. In disciplined mental power she will find a stronger and safer protection against deception and imposture than in mere innocent and unsuspecting ignorance; in moral and religious culture she will secure sources of influence more powerful and enduring than in physical attractions; and in due self-reliance and self-dependence she will discover the truest sources of domestic comfort and happiness."

In a word, dear reader, whatever helps to develop latent power within you, whatever tends to strengthen body and mind, will make you more capable of fulfilling the noble mission assigned you. Do not, we beseech you, be satisfied to vegetate when you are called upon to live. Do not be content to take

a low standard of life. Aim high. Be a living force for good in the world. Inspire by your own earnest, faithful life, the lives about you, and in your daily weakness and need remember Him who stands ever by your side to give you grace sufficient.

A good wife! Does it merely mean a name which each girl assumes when entering the holy estate of matrimony? Ah! no my sisters. It means instead the maturity of a character formed in girlhood and developed in growing womanhood.

Not all at once, or merely by the wishing it, does the woman in whom the heart of the husband can safely trust spring into existence. The formation of such a character will be the growth of a life-time. And to-day, my younger sisters, you are beautifying the character or defacing it, building it up or destroying it. Which is it to be?

Life has its difficulties and its discipline. How are you meeting the former and accepting the latter? It may be that you are often

in trouble because misunderstood, often wearied and perplexed because you fight your battles alone. But, my dear sister, look into the future. What is to grow out of all this, if you are indeed and in truth a child of God? You are being prepared by all that at times may seem hard to you, for a glorious future of your life. God is fitting you for a place you shall fill, for the work you shall have to do. Accept each tiny detail of your life from Him. Do not dwell upon your cares, but count up your mercies.

Learn in all things to live for the Lord Jesus if you would have your life bathed in a light which none shall mistake. To quote from one gifted in wisdom, and great in the knowledge of human nature :—

“When thou hast learnt to do all things for Jesus it will shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over all hard things, peace over all trial, woe, and suspense ; it will make contradiction sweet, to bear it meekly for Jesus ; poverty honourable to be poor with Jesus ; it

will but gladden toil to labour for Jesus; and sweet will be the repose which rests safely on the breast of Jesus; then will life be glad when thou livest to Jesus. And death sweet to die *in* Jesus; with Him, and to Him, and in Him to live for evermore!"

We close this chapter with words gathered from the heart-teachings of another—words weighty in wisdom and tender in loving sympathy.

"As it may be that you are to be an honoured wife and a blessed mother in the someday of the future, that somewhere there is preparing himself for you one whose life you are to share, so prepare yourself for him. *Save yourself* in all your graces, in all your virtues, in all your modest retirement. Do not fritter away affections. Do not give up your sweet modesty for boldness, do not part with your gentle retiring manners for fastness. Do not lay yourself out for admiration. At present you belong to your parents and your aim will be to make them happy.

By and bye, in your own home, God may call you to bless and to be blessed. *Strive to make yourself worth having.* Watch over every virtue and nourish it; guard against every fault and root it out. By God's help strive to become now all you hope to be then, that you may be a living proof of the wisdom of Solomon's words, when he said, 'A good wife is from the Lord.' 'Riches are the inheritance of fathers but a prudent wife is from the Lord.'"

Remember, the one to make a good wife is the one who is to-day a good daughter and a faithful sister.

" Daughters ! think what you may be
 To your father, mother ;
 Sisters—what your influence is
 O'er your darling brother.

Look from you, or pleasant smile,
 Gently spoken word,
 All are instruments in your hands,
 To be used for good.

Many a lad beset with snares
 Fights his battle bravely ;
 Says, years after, through his tears,
 ' 'Twas my sister saved me.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

CHRISTIAN WORK AND ITS REWARD.

“ Oh, fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow,
In kindly thought and glowing word,
My love to tell, Thy praise to show.
Oh, use me Lord, use even me,
Just *as* Thou wilt, and *when* and *where*,
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

“ Is there anything I can do for you ? ” enquired a nurse of a little boy lying in a hospital bed.

“ Only smile upon me, please, ” was the touching reply.

The ministry of sympathy. How few realize what this means in Christian service.

“ A heart to feel for other's needs
Because mindful of its own.”

Yet in this lies the rich possibility of doing the work of that Master who "went about doing good," and who "left us an example."

No child of the kingdom can be idle. If not called to the ministry of suffering, she will find her mission in active service. But she must wait upon God for direction.

"I feel as if I must go and preach to sinners of the love of God," said a young girl in the first flush of joy after accepting Christ as her Saviour.

"Yes," was the wise reply, "but let that preaching be the life of faithful service at home."

My dear sisters, do not go before God in your desire to do special and peculiar work for Him. Do not go *before* but *follow Him*, and know that the endless little opportunities which He gives you are, *because God given*, as large in purpose and as weighty in power for good, as work which may appear to you to be greater and more likely to bring Him glory.

To preach to thousands and to neglect those

entrusted to us in our lives at home, would be to *choose* our work, not to take what God has given to us, and, because self-chosen, whatever the seeming success, it would be but failure, lacking His blessing.

“The *great* work,” says one, “is that which is done on individual responsibility.” “My own work.” Find out what your work is and *do it*. True as it is that it must begin at home, it is equally true that it cannot end there. There will be time and opportunity, unless your case be very exceptional, for labour and toil for others who are outside the circle of home-life.

The first qualification for true service is to possess the spirit of work, is to realize that the Master calls you—not the voice of duty or the voice of a friend—but the Master Himself calls you to go this day into His vineyard and work for Him. To realize this will be to find work to do anywhere and everywhere ; in the morning call as you converse with your friend, seeking to interest her in people needing help, or in missions worthy of support ; in the gentle word to

the servant who opens the door for you in your friend's house; in the tramcar when a chatty neighbour gives you fullest opportunity of speech, and where weary hearts are always ready to feast upon a word fitly spoken.

The spirit of work will unconsciously, if possessing you fully, as it must do when you rightly realize the privilege of Christian service,—the spirit of work will lead you to carry about with you a heart watching for every opportunity of speaking for Him whom your soul loveth, speaking for Him by word or deed.

It has been said, "that there may be more real religion in making room for some one to take your place in an omnibus on a wet day than in reading through the 119th Psalm." The service of Christ is truly a service of action, and the life most perfect in this work is that which has learnt its lesson of self-abnegation.

But now, my dear young friends, for some practical thoughts on special work, which means even more than the general never-ending service of little things (which will be, which *must* be a

part of the daily *life* of every believer), special work implying the concentration of thought and energy upon one settled purpose.

What is *your* special work? Is it the Sunday-school class? Then you have a noble field for labour in winning to the Master whom you love, the impressionable hearts of the young. Remember the large measure of grace needed for your work, and make it the *daily* prayer of your life, "Lord fit me for the service: let me not *lose* the grand opportunities herein afforded me of enriching the lives of others, and bringing glory to Thy name."

The Sunday-school teacher to-day should be a total abstainer. She cannot implant principles in the lives of her scholars unless they have root in her own heart. She may *talk*, and in talk it will probably end. Years ago one wrote that of every ten Sunday-school scholars only one became a member of a Christian Church, and, in stating the fact, he asked most touchingly, "What became of the nine?"

In looking into the statistics of our prisons

we learn that fifty, sixty, and even seventy per cent. of all the criminals who enter those darkened walls have, for a longer or shorter period, been *Sunday-school scholars*. And when we enquire the cause of their coming to prison we find that, directly or indirectly, two-thirds come there through "drink." Is this not plea enough, dear sisters, to support the statement that Sunday-school teachers to-day should be total abstainers? In seeking to win your scholars to the Saviour, if true to your great mission, you will "warn" as well as "exhort" and "teach," and how can this be done with consistency while you yourself yield to influences you urge them to oppose? You have not to deal with drunkards, but with those who take the harmless (?) little, which little has such awful power to become so much.

To pass the subject over in silence, or to speak of it only in a general way, is to lose influence for good, which loss can never in after life be made up to your class.

The work of the Sunday-school does not end

in the Sunday lesson. You will visit your scholars in the week; correspond with them where you cannot call, and have a special Litany in which each name is put. And your children in the class, being sure of "Teacher's" sympathy and prayers, will be prepared in heart for every influence you may bring to bear upon them. What shall the reaping be of sowing such as this? We know what joyful ingathering some thus sowing have had, in life's evening hours of rest from toil, even in beholding the glorious witness for Christ in holy and useful lives of men and women, once boys and girls in their Sunday-school class.

But there is another sphere of labour open to-day to you, dear friends, which years ago was unheard of. We allude to the Drawing-room Sunday class, the gathering together for a Scripture lesson the children of the well-to-do and rich.

We remember well the first meeting of this kind which we attended. Visiting a town in the extreme North of England, we were invited

to spend a Sunday afternoon at the house of a friend. Upon entering the drawing-room—all unprepared for what awaited us—we saw some fifty little children clothed in their soft summer dresses, with faces literally bathed in the light of animated thought. They were in the middle of their lesson—the Barren Fig Tree—and quick and clever were the answers given to questions asked, while the gentle ripple of laughter which ever and anon broke forth from the youngest present as, not to weary them, a little story was given for their special benefit, gave to the scene a touch of child-life which made it most bewitching.

We remember thinking “surely *this* is *winning* souls to Christ!” No stiffness, no formality, no exhortation to “sit still.” The silence was perfect, and the attention never flagged, and when the question was asked, “Who will love and live for the dear and good Lord Jesus?” fifty little figures started to their feet and fifty baby voices shouted, “I will,” “I will,” “I will.”

And then the singing and the prayer! Never can we forget the scene! What a contrast to the gatherings in many drawing-rooms on Sunday afternoons! Listless, inactive forms, tired, fretful voices, drooping little bodies weary with the work of doing nothing! "Too hot to read," "they mustn't play." "Oh!" (with a yawn the confession comes) "What a weary day is Sunday!"

Can it be that the after lives of men and women of culture, in their craving for excitement, visits to public gardens, calls and dinner parties, which rob Sunday of its rest and sanctity, can it be that these lives are but the fruit of the dreary Sabbaths spent in youth?

Now, dear elder sisters, here is your work. Make Sunday a happy, helpful day to your younger brothers and sisters. Gather with them their young companions, and extend the invitation to others beyond the circle of your friends, and have an hour of bright and healthy Christian teaching.

"You feel too nervous?" Nonsense! Try it.

The work is Christ's, not yours. He will be "with your mouth and teach you what to say."

Before we leave the children let us suggest one other thought. The children of the rich will profit as much from the inculcation of temperance principles as will the children of the poor.

The Young Abstainers' Union (with its Office and Secretary at 9, Adam Street, Strand) meets a want long felt by some in providing for the little ones, and bigger ones too, of homes of culture and refinement, a society to which they may belong as juvenile teetotalers. The promise given can be withdrawn at any time—such is the rule laid down—honourably and consistently, if the child with growing years feels anxious to be free from a pledge which binds him not to touch, *as a beverage*, strong drink.

Oh! the sheltering to little lives of this wise movement. Sad indeed is the story of one who at his mother's table was taught to take

“his little” of the Sunday given wine. Strictly correct in measurement the fond mother never allowed Philip to exceed a given quantity ; but the little lad found stolen opportunities of helping himself to more, when no parent’s eye was on him, and the pre-occupied servant, intent on clearing the table, could not mark what his young master did.

To-day the love, developed if not implanted first by that fond mother’s teachings, has grown into a passion which has wrecked a home life of its peace and dashed to the ground the cup of gladness of a loving wife.

Say, if that mother could go back through those long years and sit again beside her baby’s cradle, would she let him gather from *her* breast his first taste for strong drink? Would *she* fill his baby wine glass with the richly coloured fluid? Would *she* put to his boyish lips the beverage poisoned with a possible curse?

Nay, surely nay. Now see your work before you. You long to gather about the young

lives around you, the protection from a cruel appetite which entire abstinence from intoxicating beverages will bring.

You take the names of one and another, who (with their parent's sanction) delight to join the Union of which we speak. And you become the local secretary, devoting an hour or two monthly to the posting or delivering of a little packet (consisting of a letter and a small book or leaflet) which each young member is entitled to. You collect the fees, which are merely nominal, averaging ninepence each, half-yearly. You communicate at stated times with the London secretary, give help twice a year in arranging a drawing-room meeting at which the children shall be encouraged and informed, and for a marvellously small amount of labour you secure to a number of young lives help and teaching, thought and purpose, for which they will thank you in the years to come.

And what shall we say of work for others who have left their sunny childhood far behind them, and whose lives are in the shadowed

walks of life? The poor and sorrowful are always within the reach as they are within the heart-thought of Christian life and service.

What best to do for them? This is the problem.

Cottage meetings are so general now that there is less need to call attention to this especial line of work than once there was. But many, through shyness and timidity, although the way is opened, do not like to undertake what appears to be a work in every way more difficult than teaching at home or in a Sunday-school class.

Again, let us remind you, my dear young friends, that the work is not yours but Christ's. If you feel led to start such a meeting, go in the Name and Spirit of the Master; do your best and leave the rest with Him. Success is not measured by numbers, but by power, the power which is given to each Christian worker in proportion to her faith. Can you sing? Accept this as your first call to this work. A hymn sung from the heart will often win those

to listen to God's loving message whom words, however kindly spoken, could never reach.

You are timid in praying before others? Then repeat a collect, until as you gather experience you will find it more difficult to utter set prayers than to pray out of the abundance of the heart.

What can you read to profit your hearers? God's Word: a scene from the Saviour's life, a parable, a psalm, remembering this, that whatever your subject, you must in explanation "preach Jesus" if you would gain the hearts, and by so doing the lives, of those who listen.

But how can you find words to speak of Jesus? If the love of Christ constraineth you it will not be difficult when once you have begun. Well for you if you feel led to take as your beginning "what He has done for your own soul."

These meetings to be powerful must be short. Short singing, short praying, short reading, and short speaking. They must be punctual, as punctual in leaving off as in commencement.

Will you, supposing your heart feels drawn towards the humble cottagers about your home, will you, dear reader, go in the strength of the Lord to do this work? It will cost you something,—time, effort, self-denial, patient study and earnest prayer,—but shall you give to the Lord that which costs you nothing?

In all Christian work suggested here remember we would ever have you keep in view the wishes of your parents. They are to be your first thought and consideration. No work can have a blessing which is done at the cost of breaking the fifth commandment.

It may be that you cannot, dear young friend, be spared from home to hold either Sunday-school class or cottage meeting. It may be that the children's drawing-room class would also present difficulties. Then meet the difficulties by finding something else. If you cannot have the drawing-room for your use, you may have, perhaps, the schoolroom, library, or kitchen, and there you may gather the young servants of the neighbourhood, and in telling

them out of your own heart's experience the "joy of believing" in a Saviour, the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord of Glory, you shall win them to be "seekers after God," and you shall awaken within their hearts the longing to be living for some nobler purpose than that of pleasing self.

And here we pause, only as yet upon the threshold of the life of noble work, possible wherever there is a heart so filled with love to Christ that its one question is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Yes, my dear young friend, we need not tell what your own heart will teach you, work of some sort you *must* do. We would simply urge—"Lose no time in finding out some work, and set yourself to do it with a vigorous will.

"Work is worship," and it is in service for others that the heart finds its truest joy, inasmuch as it is while obeying the Master's injunction—"If ye love Me keep My commandments"—that we abide in Him and make

possible in our own souls the fulfilment of His promise, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Our strength and fitness for *all* work will come alone from Him, and in proportion to our felt weakness and need *so* shall we be much in prayer waiting upon God. "Without Me," He said, "ye can do nothing;" "With Me ye can do all things." Realizing somewhat how great the possibilities of the life of Christian service for all who name the Name of Christ, what can we say of the listless and inactive lives of those who spend their days in visiting, who try to think they have no call to work because their frequent absence from home makes life unsettled?

My dear sisters, if beyond doubt or question you are not called to special work at home, remember yours is the responsibility of finding work elsewhere.

As a visitor, what do you do in the homes you stay at? Do you speak and live for Christ

wherever you go? Do you look for opportunities of "saying a word for Jesus" to the servants? Do you seize some favourable moment in which to give to coachman or gardener a little book or tract, which tells the Gospel news in simple language? The porters at the station, the engine drivers and guards, the cabmen who drive you from place to place, do these in their turn get from you a word about the Master?

If you are denied the privilege of special work of settled kind, then you must accept the work suggested by an unsettled life with its frequent changes.

One word more. Perhaps you are still at school, and it is there you are seeking "something to do" for your Saviour. Ah! what countless opportunities of living and speaking for the Lord Jesus are yours, my sister. The ministry of *little things* doubtless, but because so little, the more frequent in their claim.

"Yes, Rose must be a Christian," said a heavy-eyed school girl once; "she always

jumps up directly to close the door when some one leaves it open, and she does it so sweetly too!"

What a little thing to test the life of a Christian by, yet not so little when we see the countless self-sacrifices it may entail, of thoughts interrupted when lesson-learning, or of "being disturbed" when engrossed with work. And surely the very spirit of true Christly service is to do *unmasked* what others have left undone, inspired to labour thus, because walking in the footsteps of the Master.

But if you are in the busy scenes of school-day life, you have, my dear young friend, your *holidays*. What do you do at these times for your Master?

"I am quite ashamed to think of not having spoken one word for Christ during my holiday," wrote a young Christian under sudden conviction of error. Do *you* ever have to feel ashamed because of this? Spending three weeks, a month, six weeks, at the seaside, and so absorbed in the pleasures of your life that

you, although known by all to be a Christian, have no time to live for the Master?

Is there no one in the house where you are staying, no one who sits beside you on beach or parade, no one who joins you in your walks through roads or over mountains, to whom you might speak of your loving Saviour—giving to them it may be a thought of lasting memory—helping, perchance, to make itself discovered a secret longing of the soul for that something which *you* have, but *IT* has not?

The Christian's work and its reward! The work is life for the Master in loving service for others. The reward here is the constant unfailing presence of Him "in whom we live and move and have our being." The reward hereafter will be to hear *His* voice welcoming our home-coming with the words—

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

A DEDICATION.

“Lord God of Hosts, Thou didst enter into covenant with Abraham, as he waited beside the sacrifice which *he* had prepared (Gen. xv. 18), and thou art most graciously waiting beside Jesus, the sacrifice which Thou hast prepared, in order that sinners may come and enter into covenant with Thee (2 Cor. v. 19). Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and I am no more worthy to be called Thy child ; but Thou in Thy rich mercy art willing to receive me, and I, through Thy grace, am willing to be Thine. I lay all my sin (Isa. liii. 6), the sin of my nature (Ps. li. 5), the sin of my heart (Jer. xvii. 9), the sin of my life (Job xxxiv. 27), the sin of my lips (Isa. xxix. 13), my secret sins (Ps. cxxxix. 3) ; I lay all my sins and iniquities and unrighteousness and transgressions upon Jesus the Lamb of God ; and cleansed by His blood and made acceptable in His righteousness (Eph. i. 6, 7), I desire now to give myself to Thee (2 Cor. viii. 5) in an everlasting covenant never to be broken (Jer. xxxii. 40).

“I am not my own, I am Thine (1 Cor. vi. 19). My heart is not mine own, it is Thine : I will endeavour to keep it for Thee and to make it a Bethel, a temple for the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. vi. 16). My thoughts are not my own, they are Thine : I will cultivate Godly and Heavenly meditations (Ps. i. 2, and lxiii. 6). My words are not my own, they are Thine : I will avoid all idle, unprofitable, vainglorious, flattering, uncharitable discourse (Eph. iv. 29 ; Col. iii. 8, 9), and I will seek to have

my conversation always savouring of Christ and Heaven (Deut. vi. 7 ; Matt. xii. 34-37 ; Col. iii. 16). . . . My time is not my own, it is Thine : I will employ it for Thee, doing all I do as unto the Lord. . . . I will redeem it from too long or needless visits, idle imaginations, unnecessary sleep, and more than needful care about my worldly affairs (Eph. v. 16 ; Col. iv. 5). I desire to commit all I have to Thee. . . . I am willing to receive what Thou givest, to want what Thou withholdest, to relinquish what Thou takest, to suffer what Thou inflictest, to be what Thou requirest, and to do what Thou commandest.

“ Lord God of Hosts, I desire deliberately, cheerfully, and with full purpose of heart, thus to surrender myself wholly and for ever to Thee ; I feel that this is my duty, my interest, my privilege, and my glory. I believe that Thou wilt receive what I thus give (2 Cor. vi. 17). I believe that Thou wilt keep what I have thus committed unto Thee (2 Tim. i. 12). I will trust in Thee for temporal provision (Ps. xxiii. 1). I will trust Thee for support under daily cares and labours (Isa. xxvi. 3). I will trust in Thee for pardon of daily sins (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). I will trust in Thee for growth and fruitfulness (Hosea xiv. 5). I will trust to Thee for strength in the hour of death (Isa. xliii. 2). If I sin may I grieve without despair, if I walk uprightly may I rejoice without pride.

“ Lord Jesus, I take Thee for my Prophet, my Priest, my King, my Life, my Light, my Rest, my Joy, my Glory, my All in All.”

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