

strangers to their hearts. Their consciences had been dulled, and what had once seemed impossible to them was now second nature. They used to think they could never allow the Sunday paper in their home, but they read it themselves and allowed their children to read it now without the least qualm of conscience.

To stay away from church once was a few years ago an act of backsliding, but they had not long been in New York before whole months passed without their crossing the sacred threshold, and yet it gave them no compunction whatever. Time was, and not long since, when they were most punctilious about sending their children to Sunday-school. The wildest wind and the foulest weather would not pass with them as an excuse for allowing the boys and girls to stay at home. There was no such strictness these last years, but weeks of Sabbaths went by and failed to record a single present mark for any of the children on the rolls of the Sunday-school.

Therefore, sentiment gone, association and memory having loosened their grasp, their religious life having become a thing of the past, and their consciences having grown sluggish, they had no more use for the Old Book. It was too bulky to move; they would keep the family record, but the sacred pages and covers which had given it its enclosure and setting, they would throw away.

Were there ever a sadder story? It makes me weep to think of it. And yet it is the story of a thousand homes in this community, of a hundred thousand homes in this city. It is what some of you are coming to, dear friends, unless you take warning. Let this bible give you such a warning to-night. May it ever be a warning to every family of this church.

As often as the eyes of those worshipping here shall rest upon it, may it speak to them its solemn message with a voice that cannot be drowned; let not the fire burn low on your hearthstone, but keep up the fire-side glow. See that your home is in touch with the Church. Suffer not your family altar to become a ruin. Have a family bible and use it. Take care that mildew spots like those which I find here that are always signs of disuse, are not allowed to mar it. Read the Old Book to your children. Read it to your own soul. Without it your home life will grow hollow and unholy, your children will deteriorate, your own soul shrivel up and dis.—Presbyterian Banner.

For The Best.

I know it is all for the best ;
I know that the Father is good;
He loved, and has taken to rest;
I would not recall if I could;
I feel when I scarcely can pray—
I read in my sorrowing this:
That life was a wearisome way,
And death was the portal of bliss.

But hearts that are human are weak,
And hearts that remember will thrill
A hand that has vanished I seek,
I long for a voice that is still.
I yearn for—I scarcely know what;
I grieve that I cannot discern
A something that was and is not,
A something that will not return.

O thou who hast gone from thy place,
I know thou art safe—thou art His!
I faint for one sight of thy face,
And yet it is well as it is.
The life that was blessing to me
I cannot, I dare not forget;
The death that was blessing to thee,
I cannot, I dare not regret!

—Jessie H. Brown in 'The Lookout.'

Freddie's Punishment.

'I'll never do it again, Mamma.'

Freddie Steel's eyes were full of tears, and his bright face was clouded all over as he spoke. He had often said the same thing before, and I dare say a good many of my readers have made the same promise at one time or another, and meant to keep it, too, Freddie meant to, anyhow, and his mother's kind, sad face, made him feel very repentant. He loved his mother with all his heart, although I am afraid he would have been ashamed to own it to any of his boon companions, in case they might call him 'baby,' or 'muff.'

He and George Aitken, the minister's son, were great friends, and I must confess they were not considered the best boys in school, for they had got into mischief before now. To-day they had slipped school altogether,

going too far for a baby like you to come. Why can't you play by yourself in the garden, without bothering?'

Ella's face fell, and Freddie saw signs of a coming storm upon it. She began to press her little fists into her blue eyes.

'Come along then,' Freddie said, 'You can come out to the road with me, and then go back by yourself.'

They started off together, and had not gone far when they met Georgie, who was waiting for Freddie in the lane. Ella was sent back by herself, with directions from the boys to go straight home. Freddie did not feel quite comfortable in his mind as he and Georgie went off on their nesting expedition, but he soon forgot everything in the excitement of the search.

It was long past dinner-hour when Freddie walked towards home again. He was



to go in search of birds' nests, and, unfortunately for them, they had been found out.

'I'll never do it again,' Freddie repeated.

'I would rather you did not make such a friend of Georgie, dear,' Mamma said. 'He is a wild boy, I am afraid, and he takes you from your lessons. But I am sure I can trust my boy,' she added, as she kissed him fondly.

Freddie's face flushed, as he thought of the promise he had made Georgie to spend the next day with him in the lanes looking for nests. But he tried to still his conscience by telling himself that it was Saturday and a holiday, which made all the difference in the world.

The next day dawned warm and sunny, and after breakfast Freddie, feeling rather guilty, prepared to slip out of the garden and out of sight of the house, to where Georgie was to meet him. As he went down the garden-path his baby sister Ella came toddling after him. She thrust her chubby little fist into Freddie's hand saying:

'I'se coming with 'oo, Freddie. Ma said 'oo was to take me.'

'I can't, Ella,' said Freddie, crossly; 'I'm

wondering what excuse to make for his absence, and whether he was 'in for a row,' as Georgie would have put it, when he saw the village doctor come out of the house and walk away. Freddie's heart stood still with a sudden fear, and he ran in quickly by the open door. Mary, the housemaid, met him in the hall.

'Oh, Master Freddie,' she said, 'where have you been? Miss Ella has been run over in the lane by a cart, and was brought in shortly after you left the house. We thought she had gone with you.'

Mary stopped when she saw the look on Freddie's face as he ran quickly upstairs.

He pushed open the door of the nursery and went in. He felt afraid to look at the little cot in the corner. What if Ella was dead! Freddie felt as if he had killed her.

But his mother's face, tear-stained but happy, was the first thing he saw, and she drew him over to the little figure in the cot.

'Thank God, she will live, Freddie,' she said.

And she knew that she did not need to utter any words of reproach, for Freddie had had a lesson he would never forget.—'The Adviser.'