

The Last Message.

BY SARAH K. DOLTON.

I SAID to a mother of noble birth,
"What would you tell to your darling
son,

If time were measured for you on earth,
And the sands in the hour-glass nearly
run?"

A shadow darkened the sunny face,
As she mused on the parting sure to come:
The smile, with its witching and tender
grace,
Died out, and the soft, sweet voice grew
dumb.

And then, as she thought on the thousand
things
That wrestle for speech in the dying hour,
When we long to bear, as on angel's wings,
The life of our life—the richest dower

God gives to woman—she slowly said,
"My words would be simple and plain and
few:

"Remember, my boy, when I am dead,
To keep your faith that the world is true."

"I would have him believe in his fellow-
men,

For trust is the sweetest of human needs:
And hope, like the Star of Bethlehem;
"And 'Love one another,' the best of creeds.

"I would have him honest, and brave, and
pure;

Living a life that he would not rue;
But whether in sorrow or joy, be sure
To keep his faith that the world is true."

A Story for Mothers.

THE Fullers—we do not give the real name—were an influential family. They were wealthy, cultured people, and amongst the most prominent members of the principal church in the Western town in which they lived. Every Sunday they filled their pew, gave liberally to church and other charities, and the minister was always welcomed to their table.

Mrs. Fuller was a sincere Christian woman. No one acquainted with her daily life could question her sincerity. But she was peculiarly reserved and sensitive, with an extreme dislike of obtruding on the reserve of other people. Her son was her constant companion as he grew to early manhood—a clever, spirited boy, keen of apprehension, and eager for knowledge.

His mother discussed every subject, but that of religion, freely with him. He had been sent constantly to Sunday-school, and had been taught the chief facts in Jewish history, and all that relate to the life and mission of Christ. But she had never asked him to consider the relation in which he himself stood to God, or urged him to take Christ as the guide and model of his life—his Friend and Master.

There had been times when she felt almost driven to do this; but when the lad was at her side, and they were surrounded by the atmosphere of everyday life, her courage had failed her, and the subject had been deferred. He was a handsome, perfectly healthy young man, a noted athlete, with a life full of plans and hopes before him; there was plenty of time, she felt, for such counsel and entreaties.

Last October the boy was struck

down by diphtheria. On the second day the physician told him he had not an hour to live. While he lay stunned and silent, some one spoke to him of Christ as a Saviour.

"Saviour? Why, I never thought about him!" he cried. "He is no Saviour of mine. Mother, why didn't you talk to me of him?"

These were his last words. In a few moments his senses were clouded, and before the hour was over he was dead.

Every mother will understand the intolerable legacy of remorse that was left by these words. Yet how many mothers, although religious women in their profession and habits of life, never break the silence between themselves and their sons on this subject! They defer it to a more convenient season, and soon the tender boy is a hardened man, and has left home and passed from under their influence.

If a man's mother has not cared for his soul, who will?—*Youth's Companion*.

Punishment of Children.

SOMETIME ago, as I was coming up the street, I met a young married friend, holding her little boy by the hand. The child had evidently had a fall, for the pretty suit he wore was covered with splashes of mud.

"Just look at Willie's new coat," she said, in aggrieved voice. "It is perfectly ruined, and I have had such trouble to get it made. Is it not too bad?"

While I was expressing my sympathy, the little fellow looked up into my face with a woeful expression on his own. "And mamma is going to whip me just as soon as we get home," he cried.

"I certainly am," she said in the same indignant tone. "I have told him at least fifty times to take hold of my hand and he never will do it, and this is the consequence."

"It seems to me," I answered somewhat dryly, "that if you have condoned the sin of disobedience for forty-nine times, it is for the sin of falling down that the child is to be punished; for if the accident had not happened, I imagine that the fiftieth act of disobedience would also have passed without comment."

Her cheek flushed for a moment, then her honest hazel eyes met mine steadily. "Your reproof is a just one," she said; "and I shall not soon forget it."

I would like all our young mothers to carefully consider this question of punishment, for it is a most important one. While grave moral faults are often passed over carelessly, a child is frequently very severely dealt with for the tearing of a dress or the breaking of an ornament, or any other fault that involves trouble or expense, even though the mischief may have been unintentionally done.

Shocking as the statement may

sound, is it not true that when the angry mother relieves her annoyance by punishing the object of it, she is really revenging herself upon it for the trouble it has occasioned?

Certainly it is very provoking to have beautiful things broken, and work that has been the result of much patient labour destroyed through heedlessness and carelessness, yet some time ago, when I heard a child who had torn a handsome dress, answer sagely to another who had told her that "her mother would whip her for tearing it," "No; my mother never whips for clothes," I felt sure she was in wise as well as loving hands.

In Our Father's House.

OUR Lord allayed the heart-trouble of his disciples by assuring them that in his Father's house were many mansions, and that the parting which caused them sorrow was for their good; that though he was going from them, it was to prepare a place for them, and that he would surely return to receive them to himself, that they might abide with him forever.

Our Lord speaks of heaven as home: "Our Father's house." What a contrast to the gorgeous imagery employed by servants is this sublimely simple familiarity of the child. Inspired men are overawed by the distant vision of the Paradise of God, the Celestial City, Jerusalem, with its pearly gates and streets of gold. It is as if a poor cottager, after visiting a royal palace, tried to describe the unimagined splendours of a place which members of the royal family simply knew as home. How in harmony with the high claims of deity asserted by and for him! The disciples were not to be troubled on his account. Although betrayed, condemned, crucified, he was going home. "Let not your heart be troubled." And because of their intimate union, they were not to be troubled for themselves.

If heaven is Christ's home, it is ours also. He is our Elder Brother. "He is not ashamed to call us brethren." He said, "I ascend to my Father and your Father." We are "joint heirs with Jesus Christ." His Father's home is ours.

Home promises rest. There the wearied limbs or wearied brain repose after the day's toil. So amid the multiplied cares and labours of the present life, we look forward to "the rest that remaineth for the children of God." There will be occupation, but no painful toil. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours."

Oh, the rapture of meeting again and being forever at home with the dear ones we have loved on earth, all made perfect in the presence of the Elder Brother, whose likeness all will bear! Oh, the bliss of holiest, deepest, constant sympathy with Christ himself, and so being in the fullest sense of "at home" in heaven! There

by grace alone and yet by covenant right; not strangers, nor visitors, nor mere residents, but children at their Father's, having "a right to the tree of life;" penetrating every recess of that paradise, entering every chamber of that palace, and feeling, "It is all mine, because it is all his!"

O believer, your hope is no idle dream! That city does glow with splendour. That paradise is radiant with beauty. That home of perfect love is preparing for you. Earthly hopes perish, human promises fail; but expectations of believers shall be more than realized, for they are based on the truth and love of him whose silence should have sufficed. "If it were not so I would have told you."—*Rev. Newman Hall*.

Stage Coach.

"ALL wanting the same place makes a great deal of trouble in this world," said mamma, thoughtfully. "Shall I tell you a little story about it—something I know is true?"

"O yes, do!" chimed the children.

"It is a very sad story, but I will tell it to you," she went on, "and the next time that you are tempted to be selfish, stop and think of it." Once, long ago, there were four children playing stage coach, just as you have been doing now, and, just like you, they all wanted the first place. Instead of playing on a log, however, they were in the spreading branches of a willow tree.

"I want to drive," said Lucy, settling herself in the driver's seat.

"No, let me drive," and Harry climbed up beside her. "Let me sit up there."

"But Lucy did not move.

"Let me sit there," repeated Harry, giving her a slight push, and crowding his way on the same branch where she sat. "You must let me drive."

"A moment more, a sudden crash, and they were on the ground. The branch had broken.

"Harry was on his feet instantly, trying to raise his sister, but there was a sharp cry of pain, then she lay very still. Mother and father came running out of the house and gently lifted the little fainting form, from which the arm hung limp and broken. There was sorrow and crying, but it was all too late; nothing could turn aside the weeks of suffering and pain that must be borne before the little girl could take her place again among the other children. I think they all learned a great lesson of loving unselfishness in those weary days, each trying who could bring the most brightness and happiness into the dreary hours. I was that little girl, and I learned to appreciate little kindnesses as I had never done before. It was then that I learned something else, too—something I want you all to remember, and mamma looked long at the little group. "It is, 'Even Jesus pleased not himself.'"—*Exchange*.