

straight, and Mrs. Ash came downstairs the next morning looking bright and pleasant, and very little disposed to grumble. She was in a happy mood, and sang at her work, and all the family felt the benefit of the sunshine which had crept into the house.

John went to his work thinking that there was not such another woman as his wife to be found anywhere, and the children ran off to school with light hearts and smiling faces. But before the week was over another grumbling fit took possession of Mrs. Ash, and she had scarcely recovered from it when she went to the evening service on Sunday. Her husband had been out in the morning, but remained at home at night to take care of the younger children, who were suffering from colds. She felt rather lonely without him, but when the text was given out and the preacher began to unfold his subject, she was almost thankful that he was not sitting beside her.

'The Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him.'

That was the text, and when the minister, after speaking of murmuring as the great sin of the Israelites, went on to say that the modern name for the same thing was grumbling; that it was a very common sin, and one which people easily excused in themselves, though nevertheless a sin, she felt somewhat uncomfortable.

Not that she would admit it, even to herself, for although conscience would give an occasional prick, and tell her that she had done a good deal of murmuring during the week, she was only the more eager to justify herself, and quite unwilling to acknowledge herself in the wrong, or to own that her grumbling had done any harm.

In this mood she continued during the sermon and until the service was over, when she met Ellen Richards, a young friend who had lately become a Christian, and openly professed her love for the Saviour.

'What an interesting sermon we have had!' said the young girl, enthusiastically. 'I never saw before that there was so much sin in grumbling.'

'Well, for my part,' said Mrs. Ash, steadily, 'I don't see that it is such a terrible thing as the minister made out. We all grumble sometimes; it is quite natural, and I don't know how we should get on without it. Surely it is better to have one's grumble out than to bottle it up and brood over it?'

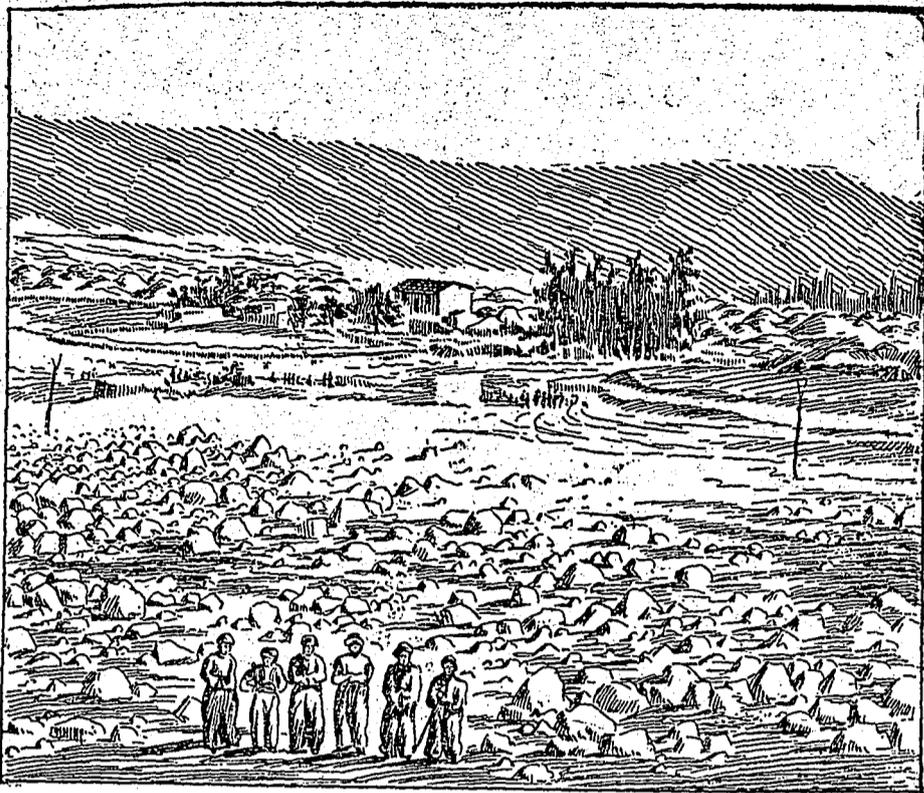
'But if it is sin, and displeases God, it can't be right, and we should rather try to kill the thoughts that give rise to it.'

'That's easier said than done,' replied Mrs. Ash; 'and I must say again that I don't think that a little grumble hurts any one. I don't believe that I've ever done any harm by grumbling.'

'Don't you?' cried the girl, in surprise. 'Oh, Mrs. Ash,' she continued, 'will you let me tell you something that happened to me once—something which makes me dread to hear grumbling?'

'What was it?'

'About two years ago,' said Ellen, 'I was in a great deal of distress and anxiety. I wanted to go to Christ for peace and pardon, but I didn't understand the way, which looks so plain and easy now. One Sunday evening I heard a sermon which seemed to explain a great deal, and I had almost made up my mind to go to Christ at once. As soon as the service was over, I went up to a friend who had been a Christian for years, intending to tell my difficulty and ask her advice. I began by making some casual remark about the sermon, but what was my surprise when she replied, "The sermon? Oh, yes, it was a long one! I thought the



RECENTLY MADE ARMENIAN GRAVES IN THE SUBURBS OF VAN.

minister would never finish. He kept on saying the same things over and over again till I was quite tired. I wish he would say something fresh. And what a horrid tune we had at the close of the service!'

'What could I say? I had not heeded the tune, and I had listened eagerly to those repeated invitations, longing to hear one more, that I might accept it. But my heart, which had felt so warm and yielding, grew cold at once, and froze beneath those few words. "If one of God's own children cares so little for these things, why should I trouble about them?" I thought; and I went home without opening my lips upon the subject which lay near to my heart, and a whole year passed before I seemed to find an opportunity of coming to Jesus.'

'What was your friend's name?' asked Mrs. Ash, in a low voice.

'Will you be very much offended if I tell you that it was yourself? I should never have mentioned it if you had not said that grumbling never did any harm. I did not wish to grieve you.'

'It is better for me to know the truth,' said Mrs. Ash, 'even though it may not be pleasant; but I never thought that my foolish words could have such a bad effect. To think that they may almost hinder God's work! I knew, though I wouldn't own to it, that my words sometimes made my husband and children unhappy, for I often say more than I really mean when I begin to grumble; but I never felt that it was a sin.'

Mrs. Ash went home that night fully determined to conquer her sin; but it had grown into a habit of such long standing that she fell into it again and again, and she soon found that it was of no use to try merely to check the complaining words which rose to her lips. It was necessary to go farther down, to the very root of the matter, to strive to quell the murmuring spirit, the feelings of discontent which had their place in her heart. And the only way to do this was by opening her heart more fully to the Saviour, by thinking upon His love and the mercies He had given instead of her own discomforts and little worries.

For when Christ comes right into the heart and abides there, discontent shrivels up beneath the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness, murmurs and grumbling are checked, and the song of praise rises instead of the sigh of sadness.—'Friendly Greetings'.

Sunny People.

There's a certain old lady who lives in a little old house with very little in it to make her comfortable. She is rather deaf and she cannot see very well, either. Her hands and feet are all out of shape and full of pain because of her rheumatism. But in spite of all this, you would find her full of sunshine, and as cheery as a robin in June, and it would do you good to see her. I found out one day what keeps her so cheerful:

'When I was a child,' she said, 'my mother taught me every morning, before I got out of bed, to thank God for every good thing that I could think of that He had given me—for a comfortable bed; for each article of clothing; for my breakfast; for a pleasant home; for my friends; and for all my blessings, calling each by name; and so I begin every day with a heart full of praise to God for all He has done and is doing for me.'

Here is the secret, then, of a happy life, this having one's heart full of praise; and when we do as this dear old lady does—that is, count our blessings every day, in a spirit of thanksgiving for them—we shall find many a reason why we should praise God.—Buffalo 'Christian Advocate.'

'God's Man Now.'

Mr. H. J. Clark, of the Poona and Indian Village Mission, writing from Shirwal, gives the following conversation with a high caste native:—'Sahib, I am a Christian, but I am only a "kutchra" (unripe) one.' 'Oh! how is this, Oomar?' said I. 'Well,' he said, 'I have not been baptized; therefore, though I am a Christian, I am not a "pucka" (ripe) one.' 'But who told you about baptism, Oomar?' 'Oh, sahib, it's in the "shastra" (Bible), and so I read it!' 'But, Oomar,' I said, as a little test, 'if you get baptized the Brahmins will become very angry!' 'What does that matter, sahib? I am God's man now, and must not be afraid of any one.' He wants to have about another month at his Bible and then be baptized.

'There are five hundred missionaries in Africa, and the professed converts number more than 25,000 a year.'