

Unanswered Prayers.

(Friendly Greetings.)

'I don't believe in praying, and I don't want to hear anything more about it'; and the young man left his seat, and marching to the grate gave the fire a vigorous poke with the toe of his boot.

'Have you ever tried it?'

'Yes'; and he blushed as though confessing some weakness.

After that there was a silence for a few minutes, then — 'A sensible boy like you ought to be able to see it, Rex. We are often just as blind to what is really good for us as little children, only we are much more sure of perfect justice. What God does in regard to our requests must be perfectly right.'

'What use then of telling us to pray, if we are not to have what we ask for?'

'We must look to how we ask for it. We

to her mother, her little face pink with excitement.

For a moment the mother did not answer. The little thing had tried so hard, had brought her trial patch so many times, that it seemed almost cruel to disappoint her again; but would it not be even more cruel to allow her to take the handsome silk with the certainty of ruining it, thus spoiling her gift for the want of a little more patient practice? So she answered:

'It is better than the last, Edith, much better, dear, but not quite good enough for the new silk yet'; and her own eyes filled as the tears of disappointment ran down the little cheeks. She drew the child to her side, and kissing her tenderly, took the poor little bit of work, pointed out the mistakes, and showed her how to correct them. And the child listened, anxious to improve, and patient and gentle in spite of her disappointment.

them. Alice,—then he stopped, but an innate sense of honesty compelled him to go on—'it is only fair to tell you that I take back what I said; and I will try Edith's way of accepting disappointments, believing that God is as tender and loving as you are. Yes,' as she was about to speak. 'A thousand times more so!' And having expressed himself far more fully than was at all his wont on such subjects, he turned abruptly and left the room.—A. L. Hannah.

Keeping a Conscience.

(League Journal.)

It was a rough winter night. The wind, in long, heavy blasts, swept a wild moorland tract in the North of England, and rushed down upon a little town that lay just over the edge of the moor with a fury that soon cleared the steep, ill-paved streets of all passengers save those who were compelled to face its fury. The sign-boards of the various public-houses creaked, as they swung threateningly over the causeway, and here and there banging doors, and the loud barking of defiant dogs, filled the momentary lull of the wind, that seemed to sing and swell like billows around the houses. But from many a window came a gleam of light that told of bright fire-sides and cosy rooms, where the howling of the wind without only increased the sense of comfort within. A solitary horseman rode at a brisk trot over the moor—his surefooted steed evidently accustomed both to rough riding and rough roads. The traveller is expected, for at the bow-window of a lonely house on the outskirts of the town a lady is holding back the curtain, and looking over the paddock in front towards the wild path, that leads from the wilder moors. How lovely the slender form at the window looks, standing in the crimson gleam reflected from a bright fire and lamp shedding their rays on the red curtain which her white hand holds aside with such unconscious grace! No wonder that the horseman reins up a moment before he approaches the friendly gate, and, wild as the night is, feasts his eyes on the charming picture that stands, in all its nymph-like grace, clearly defined before him. But the curtain is hastily dropped, and in a moment after the outer door has opened, and a voice, distinct in its bell-like clearness, even amid the roaring of the blast, calls, 'Walter! dear Walter! why do you not make haste? Here, Tom; here's your master—be quick! How it blows!'

'Yes, rebel!' said the horseman, as he leaped down: 'and why could you not stay patiently within, like a wise woman, you little feather-brain.'

'No such thing, Walter. If I were feather-brain, I should be blown away to-night, instead of which here I am.'

As this was said, there was a little leap forward, into arms that, sooth to say, seemed to expect the burden, and to bear it into the house gaily enough.

'Is this the way, Mistress Jessie, you receive your tired husband, and lighten his toils, saucy helpmate that you are—helpless, I think I must say.'

'Helpless! Say such a word, if you dare, in the presence of this bright fire. This kettle, sir, sings a loud denial from the hob, and the toast and tea are warm in their defence of your helpful wife. Your very slippers are ready to fly in your face at such an aspersion.'

As the little laughing wife uttered these words, her busy hands were arranging the tea-table; while Walter, as she called him,



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have directions given us, you know; we must pray in faith, which means, not that we are to believe that our prayers will surely be answered, but that if they are not answered as we wish them to be, it is for our best good that they should not be.

'Then, there is another thing: if they are not answered as soon as we expect, we need not be discouraged; as we may not be ready for what we long for; it may be that it is only in love that God is keeping back the answer.'

'Mamma!' called a little voice, and Rex gave a sigh of relief. He had heard all this before, he told himself. 'Oh, here you are!' and a little girl came into the room: 'May I begin on my cushion now? See, I have worked all the leaves you marked for me. May I, mamma?'

'Let me look at your work, Edith'; and she took the little piece of silk, and began to examine it, half-smiling at the drawn leaves and large stitches.

In the meantime Edith was explaining the matter of the cushion to her uncle.

'You see, Uncle Rex,' she said, 'I am going to make a cushion for Aunt Edith for Christmas, but I don't know how very well, and so I have been learning on little pieces, and I guess now I can begin on the big piece of silk. Will it do, mamma?' turning eagerly

Rex had been forgotten by them both, but had been quietly listening, intensely interested in the whole proceeding; and when the little one, taking her work, went away, he sat still, leaning on his elbow with a look of deep thought and gravity on his face.

'Poor little thing!' said his sister, with a little sigh, 'how my heart ached to disappoint her again. Shall we go back to our conversation, Rex?'

'Alice,' he said, lifting his head, and looking at her, you have done more to convince me during the last ten minutes than hours of conversation would have accomplished, and I wonder that you do not see it yourself.'

But she had been too much engrossed with her little child to notice the lesson she had given him.

'Do you suppose,' he continued, in answer to her look of surprise, 'that God feels half as sorry about delaying the answers we want to our prayers as you did about disappointing that child?' Then she understood.

'Oh, Rex, how can you ask? "As a father pitieth his children"—you know the rest.'

'And,' went on Rex, 'I suppose it was a pretty good example of what you meant by God not giving us the answers we look for to our prayers because we are not ready for