

watched him as he formed all the lower part successfully when, just as he was proceeding to build it up to a goodly height, a morsel of grit, so small that the eye could hardly detect it, came under his thumb and, acting exactly like a chisel, in a moment cut off the whole neck of the jug as cleanly as possible. "The vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter." But he did not, as is often the case, throw it on the ground as useless. It could never be a jug, but by some care and fashioning a fairly creditable basin was produced,—“he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it.”

As I watched it seemed to me a striking illustration of that other marring which often happens in spiritual matters. Just as the first purpose of the potter was defeated by the presence of that tiny speck of grit, so, speaking after the manner of men, that which it was in the Lord's mind to do with one or another of His servants has been set aside by something evil analogous to it, a morsel of self-will, pride, no matter what, not wholly subdued to His hand. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. iii) and bade him go to the deliverance of his people how reluctant he was,—the grit of lack of faith, or whatever else, was there, resolved not to yield, and in the end Aaron had to share the honor and glory intended alone for his brother. Again we see it when (Numbers xx) just a little arrogance and self-assertion once more marred the vessel, curtailing its goodly capacities, and the glorious privilege of leading the people into the promised land was poured into another more prepared to hold it. How small the grit seems to us, but how solemn a reminder we have in it of what sin is in God's sight,—what man calls a trifle is never such with Him!

But though the marred vessel fell short the Heavenly Potter did not cast it aside. Moses might not, as the triumphant leader of his people, enter

Canaan, but the long and faithful toil of the wilderness journey was not forgotten, and from the top of the mount (Numbers xxxiv) Jehovah gave him to behold the land, north, south, east and west, perhaps more completely than if his feet had trodden its actual soil.

Have not we too known what sorrow and loss this little particle of evil is capable of working? We have been glad and willing to labor for the Lord, and it may be have done so for a long time happily, and then the tiny grit has come in,—we have been ready to work still, but it must be in our own way, not just in His, and the marring has surely followed. Or perhaps a sphere of service has at some time opened before us for which we believed that God had fitted us, when, just as we thought to step in, everything has changed and we have seen the work taken out of our hands and given into those of another. But the grit in this case has not been sin on our part,—possibly a breakdown in health or some such matter, but none the less as regards our cherished plans a final marring. Is all service forever shut from us? Ah, what comfort there is in those words, “So he made it again another vessel.” Thanks be to the Lord, if we are truly His and His blessed finger has touched us, whatever the marring may be, or however caused, even by our fault, if we will but submit to His hand He will make each one a precious vessel to hold precious things, though it may not be so shapely in form or so capacious as was once promised

—Selected by M. F.

The liquor traffic exists in this country to-day only by the sufferance of the membership of the Christian churches. They are the masters of the situation so far as the abolition of the traffic is concerned. When they say “Go,” it will go.

“The sandal tree perfumes, when riven, the axe that laid it low;
Let man who hopes to be forgiven, forgive,
and bless his foe.”