

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL AND HER PUBLISHER.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON A SAINTLY LIFE.

BY J. P. LANGHAM.



SAINTLINESS is difficult to define; but when we see it we recognize it and do it reverence. No Holy Conclave can make saints or secure reverence for unsaintly men. The qualities which distinguish a saint from a man of clay are self-evidencing, and, like the smile of God, transcend description or definition. Every age and land have had their uncanonized saints, whose lives have compelled belief in the reality of "divine indwelling." Saints have a way of appearing in the most unlikely places and living their lives of blessing under the most unlikely conditions. Churches and religious houses have no monopoly of them; but in farmstead and factory they diffuse the aroma of holiness.

With wonderful unanimity people think of Frances Ridley Havergal as a saintly woman. Hers indeed was a life of "sweetness and light." Though more than twenty years have passed away since she joined the great majority, her influence is still potent for good.

From the Welsh coast I have seen the sun setting behind the western seas. Long after he sank beneath the distant horizon the golden glow remained—a glorious witness to his genial sway. So the afterglow of saintly lives lingers like a benediction long after the day of death. Goodness, like God, is imperishable, and therefore the good never die. The good never pose as saints, but, as plants diffuse



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their perfume unconsciously, radiate the sweetness of the heavens without effort or intention.

The real character of a man or woman is more certainly revealed in spontaneous acts and speech than in acts which result from premeditation and deliberation. The fierce light of publicity conceals rather than reveals character. When men think that many eyes are looking upon them, they instinctively act the part expected from them; but when the restraint of public scrutiny is withdrawn they are true to their inmost selves. Carlyle said, "No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*," because he knew that men are apt to reveal their littlenesses in private. But is it not equally true that the heroism and saintliness which disappear in private life, are delusive and unreal?

Thank God, some persons pass the ordeal of the "private view" unscathed. Those most familiar with them are the firmest believers in their goodness.