

THE HOME CIRCLE.

NOTHING TO DO.

'Nothing to do' in this world of ours,
Where weeds spring up with the fairest flowers,
Where smiles have only a fitful play,
Where hearts are breaking every day.

"Nothing to do!" thou Christian soul,
Wrapping thee round in thy selfish stole,
Off with the garments of sloth and sin!
Christ, thy Lord, hath a kingdom to win.

"Nothing to do!" There are prayers to lay
On the altar of incense, day by day;
There are foes to meet, within and without;
There is error to conquer, strong and stout.

"Nothing to do!" There are minds to teach
The simplest forms of Christian speech;
There are hearts to lure, with loving wile,
From the grimmost haunts of sin's defile.

"Nothing to do!" There are lambs to feed,
The precious hope of the Church's need;
Strength to be borne to the weak and faint;
Vigils to keep with the doubting saint.

"Nothing to do!" and the Saviour said,
"Follow thou Me in the path I tread."
Lend, lend thy help the journey through,
Lest, faint, we cry, "So much to do!"

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.

As with doubtful hands we push away the shades and take our first steps in the opening year, the thought cannot fail to come to us all of how little we know what is before us. Living, but living an uncertain life, let the season utter its warnings. One thing is certain, that if you desire improvement in anything, it will never come to you accidentally. It must begin in a distinct, resolved purpose to make a change for the better. I call on you to give this day to a serious review of your life of what you have been living for, and of what you purpose henceforth to live for. Give one day to this, and let it be this first day of the year: at least begin the year aright. Here you stand at the parting of the ways; some road you are to take; and as you stand here, consider and know how it is that you intend to live. Carry no bad habits, no corrupting associations, no enmities and strifes, into this new year. Leave these behind, and let the dead Past bury its dead; leave them behind, and thank God that you are able to leave them.

A GOOD MOTTO.

Near the entrance of a certain building in the city of London, occupied by lawyers, is a sundial on which is the motto, "Begone about your business."

By order of this association of lawyers one of their number was to select a motto for it. When the dial was completed the dial maker sent his foreman to the lawyer for the motto.

"What motto? I know nothing about a motto," he replied, on being asked for it.

"The motto for the sundial," said the foreman.

"I know nothing about it," cried the lawyer, angrily. "I am busy; why do you come to me for anything? Begone about your business."

The foreman returned and told his employer that all he could get out of the man was, "Begone about your business."

"The very best thing," said the dial maker. "He could not have hit on a better one if he had tried all the year."

The next day when the people passed by the sundial they read, in large letters, "Begone about your business."—Selected.

MARGARET WILSON AND THE XXVTH. PSALM.

"She was just a lassie, but she deed for the Covenant."
"Within the sea, tied to a stake, she perished for Christ Jesus' sake." She was faithful unto death, and when she was but eighteen, He gave her a crown of life.

Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God, in the dungeon of Philippi. So did this young martyr-maid while she was fastened to the stake in Blednoch bay, Wigtownshire, Scotland, waiting for the sea to come back and overwhelm her, May 11th, 1685. Sweet and clear were her notes. Death had no terrors for her. She was going to her heavenly Bridegroom. Many of the onlookers accompanied her, but often very imperfectly, on account of their subs.

It is interesting to know the very words which she then sang. I need not say that they were taken from what is,

pre-eminently, *The Book of Praise*—the heaven-inspired Psalter. Of course, the version was Rouse's. She sang a part of Psalm xxv. In some accounts of her martyrdom, it is said to have been taken from the 1st. version beginning at the 7th verse.—

"My sins and faults of youth
Do Thou, O Lord, forget;
After Thy mercy think on me,
And for Thy goodness great."

But we are told that the tune which she sang was *Martyrs*—"plative Martyrs, worthy of the name," as poor Robbie Burns says. She could not, therefore have sung a part of the 1st. version, for *Martyrs* is a common metre tune—8, 6, 8, 6—but the 1st. version of Psalm xxv. is short metre—6, 6, 8, 6. She must, therefore, have sung the corresponding part of the 2nd version, which is common metre.—

"Let not the errors of my youth,
Nor sins, remember'd be:
In mercy, for thy goodness' sake,
O Lord, remember me."

The fact which I have just stated, imparts a great solemnity to these words. T. FENWICK.

THREE LONG AND EXCELLENT WORDS.

There are three rather long words, which may be used as pegs on which to hang reflections of their own, or points round which ideas may cluster. One is development. If you cut an apple through the circumference, as you cut an orange, you will see in clear outline around the starlike centre made by the seeds the shape of the blossom. The fruit has grown from the flower, and the flower's shape is in the heart of the fruit. The fruit developed little by little through summer days and winter days, but the flower gave it the start. Take the little thought and use it, and if you have a gift or grace—a taste for housekeeping, cooking, sewing, painting or reading—develop it by use and study and taking pains.

My next long word is responsibility. It means, as we all know, the answering when we are called, answering to our names. The responsible person can be trusted. Not long ago, in New York city, a fire broke out in the upper stories of a great apartment-house. Two young women, one a young lady visiting the family in a certain home on the sixth floor of the house, the other a maid in the same home, were confronted suddenly with black volumes of smoke, red tongues of flame, and no way to escape but by the iron ladder that hung along the side of the house. There were two little children there, and some valuable papers, and though the young women could not save everything, they took the children and the papers down the fire-escape with calmness and courage. They were *responsible*.

My last word is consecration. It is a very sacred word, and I leave you to weave your own sweet fancies around it. We must be consecrated to the best possible ideal; we must fill every day with noble work.—*Harper's Round Table*.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him." Perhaps we acknowledge God in spiritual things, but shut Him out of the other parts of our life. We talk to Him about our souls, but not about our daily work, our week-day life. What did you pray for yesterday? Did you men talk to God about your business, your buying and selling, your farm work, your common taskwork? Did you women pray about your household affairs, asking God to help you keep tidy homes, to train your children well, to be sweet-tempered, gentle, patient, thoughtful? Did you young people talk with God about your studies, your amusements, your friendships, your books? We make a mistake when we take God into our counsel in any mere section of our life.—J. R. MILLER.

In the neighbourhood of Haddam Castle, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, there was once a tower called the "Tower of Repentance." What gave the tower its name we are not told, but it is said that an English gentleman, walking near the castle, saw a shepherd lad lying upon the ground, reading attentively. "What are you reading lad?" "The Bible Sir." "The Bible, indeed!" laughed the gentleman; then you must be wiser than the parson. Can you tell me the way to heaven?" "Yes, sir, I can," replied the boy, in no way embarrassed by the mocking tone of the other; "you must go by the yonder tower." The gentleman saw that the boy had learned right well the lesson of his book, and being rebuked, he walked away in silence.