

The Family.

LIFE'S FOREST TREES.

Time grows brief; the afternoon is slanting
toward the west; there is no time to waste.
If you have any seed of good for planting
You must, you must make haste.

Not as of old, do you enjoy earth's pleasures
(The only joys that last are those we give)
Across the grave you cannot take gains, treasures,
But good and kind deeds live.

I would not wait for any great achievement,
You may not live to reach that far-off goal.
Speak soothing words to some heart in bereavement,
Aid some up struggling soul.

Teach some weak life to strive for independence,
Reach out a hand to some one in sore need.
Thou' it seem idle, yet in their descendants
May blossom this chance seed.

On each life path, like costly flowers faded
And cast away, are pleasures that are dead.
Good deeds, like trees, whereunder, fed and shaded,
Souls yet unborn may tread.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

EIGHT HOURS A DAY.

It is very desirable that the Church of Christ should feel and exhibit a constant, helpful and sympathetic interest in the questions included in the labour problem. Christians should seek information that they may talk on this matter with workingmen intelligently, and propose reasonable solutions of the points now in dispute. Christians should be ready to do something toward accomplishing the reasonable desires of 'labouring men, and ready also to make reductions in their own incomes, if needful, that employees may have their pay and reduced hours of work. If it is possible, it is desirable that the Christian Church should engage in this matter of growing importance with the intention of leading and guiding our workingmen's organizations. And it would be well if Christians would take a part in the arguments of labour, with the determination to befriend reasonable and worthy workingmen, to protect them from the despotism of arrogant leaders, from the tyranny of godless and infidel and Papistical organizations, to give them work or obtain it for them, to secure for them legal advice and protection, to encourage and maintain them in the most sensible and just methods. There is a field vacant for a thousand Earls of Shaftesbury.

The workingmen now aim to secure a reduction in the hours of labour. They ask that eight hours may constitute a day's work. For many this is a reasonable request. For workmen who must keep up vigilantly and promptly with a machine driven by a steam or electric engine, eight hours a day is all that should be required. Their work demands close and constant mental attention, uninterrupted physical activity. A man or woman attending such a machine must be ever alert and never lag. Eight hours of that each working day ought to be enough. Conductors on surface roads ride in jolting cars on their feet, in such cities as this, five miles an hour, or fifty miles in a day of ten hours. The drivers do the same, with the added exertion of constantly checking the speed of the vehicle to take on or let off passengers, and to avoid other vehicles, and the additional exertion of driving two horses. Eight hours of such work ought to be enough. To ride forty miles on one's feet is a hard day's work. It is worth two dollars.

Other examples could be given. But such a point should be settled with discrimination. There are occupations in which it is no hardship, no injustice to make the day consist of ten hours, and others in which seven hours of application is more exhausting than eight hours or even ten in other pursuits. Many a bank clerk in seven hours exhausts his strength, his nervous force, his vitality, more than many engaged in mechanical occupations do in ten hours. Professional and literary work is a greater tax on the powers of a man than mechanical or mainly physical work. A demand for eight hours without discrimination is unwise, and unjust because unequal. This should be urged upon the attention of workmen. They constantly injure their cause by a neglect of discrimination. They advocate a levelling arrangement which puts all labour on the same plane. The co-operative stores in Great Britain lived for some years on the edge of failure, because they insisted on paying the manager very little more than the average wages of skilful workmen. It was a slow process which brought them to an acknowledgment of the value of that fact in buying and in meeting competition, without which success is well nigh impossible. So a demand for a day of eight hours will fail to win public approbation unless it discriminately selects certain occupations to be included in the rule and excepts others.

The advocates of eight hours base their claim upon the fact that there are about two millions of workmen out of employment in this country during about one-third of the year, and that limiting a day's work to eight hours will require the employment of a larger force of workmen, and decidedly reduce the number of the unemployed. On the other side, the opponents of an eight hour law argue that such a law will reduce the amount of work done by each employee, and increase the cost of production.

In discussing such assertions difficulty is encountered from the lack of statistics. The Bureau of Statistics of Massachusetts seems to be the only body doing thorough work. It reports that, out of 816,470 persons employed in gainful occupations in that State, 241,000 or 29.59 per cent are out of work over four and a half months of the year. This seems bad enough at first sight, but a second thought suggests that the four months about equal the period when some occupations are suspended, others very much limited by the cold of winter. Building trades, work on farms, house-painting, and many departments of labour cannot be conducted at all, or are decidedly limited in their activity by the forces of nature—a power which can be but partially overcome. This side of the argument, therefore, needs to be essentially modified. More accurate statistics are needed.

On the other hand it is by no means certain that an eight-hour law will compel the employment of a larger number, and so give relief to the unemployed; or that it will, by the same necessity of employing more hands, increase the cost of production. The argument was used with great positiveness against the reduction of the working day from twelve and fourteen to ten hours, the present limitation. Experiment has disproved it. In many occupations men turn off as much work, or very nearly as much, in the present day of ten hours as they or their predecessors did in twelve or fourteen, and the cost of production by this fact, and by the constant invention of machinery and the division of labour, has actually been reduced to an extent that would have been incredible to the men of a generation ago. It has become plain to all observers, that the man who works only ten hours, for pay exceeding that granted in the time of twelve and fourteen hour days, comes to his work so fresh and hopeful every morning, and is so cheered all the day by the knowledge that he is not to be overworked, that his day's end is not unduly deferred, that he actually, in a twelve-month, turns off more work than the tired and dispirited men of a former regime, and is really a cheaper man. This fact, however, is not true in all occupations, although it is a fact in a large number. Discrimination here again is required.

The American Federation of Labour invites all organizations of wage-earners to make a common effort to secure an eight-hour law to go into effect on May 1st, 1890. It appointed four days, February 22nd, July 4th, and September 2nd, 1889, and February 22nd, 1890, for the consideration of this law, and to perfect plans to secure it. Three of these days have been so devoted, the fourth no doubt will be. Should not the Christian Church manifest an intelligent sympathy with the movement, endeavour to exert an influence to correct its errors, and unite in attempts to obtain equitable laws from the legislatures? It is beyond question, that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the day of the English labourer was one of eight hours. Ought there to be a return to the old law? One consideration remains to be regarded. An eight-hour law may reduce the dividends of incorporated companies. But money is worth five per cent, and it is to be expected that the community will look with complacency on corporations paying from eight to ten per cent, on their stock? Will not the workingmen in an effort to reduce such earnings, secure the co-operation of a large part of the people?—*N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.*

DORA'S GIFT.

"You don't mean me to believe, Emily, that all these tall girls are yours? One, two, three, four,—my! what a lot!"

"We pass for Mrs. Brown's 'boys and girls,' Uncle Phil. You see, we have to attend to her business, and escort her around, and do what there are no boys here to do."

"And what sort of business can you attend to, I'd like to know?" asked Uncle Phil, with all of a man's scorn of a woman's business head.

"Em is my man of business," said the gentle, ladylike mother. "No, not the tallest; that is Julia. She is our member of society; she entertains our company, and is to the family what a drawing-room is to a house."

"She is our decorative art society, too," added Emily. "She paints and embroiders, and sings in the choir."

"They are just slandering me, Uncle Phil!" cried Julia. "Look at my forefinger, and you will see who is seamstress of the family!"

"What is the matter with Daisy's fingers?" asked the new relation, who, by the way, had been abroad while these girls were growing up, and had now come back to make a home for himself.

"Oh! I'm the housekeeper, and I've just been preserving strawberries; that's where my finger-tips get their rosy color. You'd better speak me fair, uncle, if you want your bread buttered on both sides while you are here."

Uncle Phil leaned back in his chair and surveyed the party with admiring eyes. Without being particularly handsome, they were delightful-looking girls. Erect, vigorous, graceful, blooming, and full of fun, they gave proof of being a well-raised, healthy, charming quartet of daughters.

"Well, Sister Emily," he said presently, "lump them now, and say what you will take for them. I'll give a fair price for the lot."

"Koh-l-noors as thick as hail-stones couldn't buy one of them," said the proud mother.

"Foolish woman!" he cried in pretended amazement. "Don't you know some trifling fellows will come along presently, and steal one after the other away from you?"

"We haven't come to that bridge yet," answered the sister, lightly dismissing the subject.

And then the girls seized the gentleman and carried him off to see their flower-garden and chickens and pigeons.

"But you haven't told me what this little one is good for," said Uncle Phil, pinching the pink tip of Dora's ear.

"Good for nothing," answered the small woman herself, rescuing the persecuted ear.

"Dora? What is Dora's forte? Why, I don't know; but we couldn't do anything without Dora!"

And the girls looked at their uncle as if they feared he might be weak-minded, to ask such a question.

"There!" said merry Dora. "I told you I didn't have any gifts. I can't sing, nor paint, nor embroider, nor even entertain company."

"But she can always be the dearest dear of a Dora that ever was," said the sister on the other side of Dora, giving her a troublesome squeeze as they walked along. And Dora seemed highly satisfied with this explanation.

But of course the weather in this family was not all summer weather. Uncle Phil found, after he had been living with them awhile, that they had their ups and downs like other people; they disagreed with one another and felt cross about it; they tried to do things and sometimes failed; jellies wouldn't always jell; dresses wouldn't always fit. In short, the "briars besetting every path" pricked the feet of these sweet lassies in their turn, as they do the feet of all earth-travellers.

And then Uncle Phil found out what was Dora's gift. It had been dawning on him for some time, but one rainy day he startled the family by saying, "Sister Emily, Dora is the most gifted child you've got."

It was, as I said, a rainy day. "Of course it had to rain," Julia had said grimly, as they gathered into the breakfast room. "As I wanted to go to ride on horseback with uncle, I might have known it would rain."

"It is well you have got a beau that will wait till a clear day," said Dora who was busy pulling up the blinds to the top pane, that they might get all the light there was to be had.

"Ah, what a nice little blaze!" said Uncle Phil, limping around to the grate. "Which of you knew that I had rheumatism this morning?"

"Dora always keeps a little pile of wood and shavings hid away for a morning like this," Julia said, leaving the window and coming to warm her cold nose at the cheerful glow.

The mother entered with a cloud on her usually placid brow.

"Bridget is sick girls—not able to get out of bed."

"How lucky that it rains!" cried Dora. "No visitors, no going out; we can be busy bees to-day without molestation. Sit down and keep Uncle Phil from being cross, mother, while we go and scratch up a little breakfast."

In a very short time a comfortable breakfast was on the table, everybody chatting pleasantly, and not a frown to be seen. It was at this moment that Uncle Phil announced his discovery that Dora was the most gifted child in the family.

"Proof positive; I have made a bit of toast without scorching the edge," said Dora, with a mocking little bow.

"No," said Uncle Phil gravely, in answer to the questioning eyes fixed upon him all around the table, "but Dora has that rare treasure, the gift of pleasantness, of being pleasant herself, and making other people feel so, no matter what is going on. I am sure that was the kind of woman the Apostle Peter was thinking of when he said it didn't matter about plating the hair and putting on gold ornaments, if a woman had that sweet, bright, quiet, unselfish spirit that the Lord thought so much of."

And then all the eyes fixed upon the speaker filled up suddenly with loving tears, and everybody seemed trying to kiss blushing Dora first.

"Yes," said the mother softly—"pleasantness—that is just my Dora's gift."—*S. S. Times.*

AN UPLIFT FROM DEPRESSION.

THERE is a physical depression of disease departing only with the return of health, or from indolence dissipated only by exercise, or of fatigue remedied only by rest.

There is a depression of spirit which may exist, for a time at least, with perfect health of body and soundness of mind; its source is Sin, which poisons love, sharpens a thousand stings within the breast, drugs hope, shatters confidence, and scatters faith; its only cure is the bitter water of repentance, the medicine for guilt, and afterward the water of life.

But even he whose iniquity is purged may often be in heaviness, as when the soul staggers under responsibility; or the heart is overwhelmed by the return of tides of sorrow which had long since ebbed; or a father fears that poverty may yet force an entrance into his

home; or the mother sinks in dread lest her boy is taking the downward path; or as when the pastor trembles because the sheaves are few, or the harvest delays to ripen till the winter's blast uproots the seed sown in his tears. Anon it comes in the reaction of a good deed, or the protracted strain in the Master's work; it waits upon lonely hours; it darkens the spirit when "the snow that never melts" first falls upon the brow; the lines upon the face of a friend, the tears in his eyes, or his voice at parting or when he whispers his sorrow, may lower a leaden weight upon the heart.

There be many that say, Is there relief for such depression?

There is! Simple, sweet, sufficient. Turn from the outward to the inward, and thence look upward. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, * * * that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Let him look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. Seek silence and solitude for one hour; wait before the Lord; let thoughts come and go as they list; look and listen. Thou shalt hear the still small voice; thou shalt see the star of Bethlehem; the heart will lighten; the uplift may be swift or slow, but it will be sure, and thou shalt say:

"A Presence melted through my mood,
A warmth, a light, a sense of good,
Like sunshine through a winter's wood."

—N. Y. Christian Advocate.

BARGAINS.

AT certain seasons of the year it occurs that not only do the newspapers contain flaring advertisements of wonderful bargains to be found in different kinds of goods, but in the windows or against the doors of many of the largest retail stores are placed great placards promising wonderful bargains to all who will walk in and buy. There is great fascination to many persons in examining wares thus offered, purporting to cost but little in comparison with their real or original value. Hours and hours are spent in shopping and in securing these so-called bargains, and the times call for ceaseless efforts in this direction.

There has been such an increasing demand in the fashion as to dressing, style of living and furnishing within comparatively few years, that it has become one continual race to keep up with the exhausting round. Every thing in parlour, library and dressing-room must be ornamented with bows or sweetened with sachets—must be hand-painted, inlaid, embossed or "just imported." The table is likely to contain dishes which a country visitor will be embarrassed to know either the name or the use of; and meals are often served with a tiresome attempt at effect entirely out of keeping with the usual simple habits of the household. After a day spent in shopping, in planning, calculating and worrying—for expenditure involves worry for many toilers along the way when night comes on and brings a review of the day's transactions, its bartering and its bargains—how to the weary brain, like vanity and vexation of spirit, the whole thing appears! Only a chasing of bubbles, after all, and the tinted and gilded bubbles burst almost as soon as they are fairly in possession. What had seemed so desirable a bargain to read of, and so pleasant to examine as long as its possession was a questionable possibility, seems suddenly to have lost most of its attractiveness and desirability once it has been bought and paid for. The truth is, these earthly things seldom satisfy an immortal soul, and the fashion of this world not only passes away, but passes so quickly that scarcely is a bargain completed, but the discovery follows that one reason why it was a bargain was because of the pushing claim of some new style, or some better invention, which made the disposal of the coveted goods a necessity on the part of the shrewd dealer. And hardly is the garment comfortably adapted to the figure, or the eye accustomed to the surroundings which become pleasant from familiar association, but there is a demand for something newer and fresher. Never satisfied, always craving something better for to-morrow than has been realized to-day, what lesson more easy to learn than that the things of the world are vain and fleeting, powerless to yield any abiding satisfaction or content? The question which confronts the tired shopper at night: What, after all, do these few bargains amount to—what have I gained in comparison with the money and vital energy which has been expended in securing them? Is only a faint echo of that startling, pertinent query of old: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What a question of profit and loss! What profit, indeed, in gaining a satiety of even beautiful baubles and alluring, yet perishable joys, and giving in exchange a jewel of priceless value, an imperishable, undying soul? Verily the life is more than meat and the body than raiment. It seems as if in the heartless rush after the style and glitter of the world's poor bargains the noblest cravings were starved, the soul's greatest needs either hushed or overlooked. In ornamenting the senseless clay of the potter, the mind, with its deeps of yearning, is too often treated as an unworthy parent might treat a needy child, who, when it asks for bread, is given a stone. What then? Shall no thought be given to raiment or to make the home attractive with pretty things? Shall not the table be set with

nicety, or the manner of serving be orderly and in good taste? Oh, yes; no great lovers of the attractiveness of becoming attire, of the real grace and beauty lurking in a tastefully-adorned home, of the good breeding and refinement evinced in a well-appointed and well-ordered table need exist, than those who condemn excess in these things. For the vital, all important matter is to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," knowing all needful things will be added. Pity is, that unconsciously so many souls are merged into the empty bargainings of earth, that heart and brain are so steeped in worldly cares, so engrossed with buying and selling and getting gain, that even professing Christians are unwillingly trying to serve God and Mammon; yet, remember! The Bible affirms that ye cannot do this. A good bargain is a desirable thing for all concerned, but it is the very epitome of everything sad and deplorable that many a man, aye, and many a woman, too, is in danger of bargaining away all the very best interests in life, while chasing the deceitful, glittering toys which soon fade, and can only be thrown away.

"All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away.
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye!"

"And the great globe itself—so the Holy Writings tell—
With the rolling firmament, where the starry armies dwell,
Shall melt with fervent heat, they shall all pass away.
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye!"

—Mrs. H. A. Cheever, in *Christian at Work.*

LITTLE HELEN KELLER, THE BLIND DEAF-MUTE.

HELEN KELLER has a wonderful memory, and seldom forgets what she has once learned; and she learns very quickly. She is a wonderfully bright child, and her teacher instead of urging her to study, is often obliged to coax Helen away from some example in arithmetic, or other task, lest the little girl should injure her health by working too hard at her lessons. But her marvellous progress is not due to her fine memory alone, but also to her great quickness of perception, and to her remarkable powers of thought. To speak a little more clearly, Helen understands with singular rapidity, not only what is said to her, but even the feelings and the state of mind of those about her, and she thinks more than most children of her age. The "Touch" school mistress has done such wonders for her little pupil that you would scarcely believe how many things Helen finds out as with electric quickness, through her fingers. She knows in a moment whether her companions are sad, or frightened, or impatient—in other words, she has learned so well what movements people make under the influence of different feelings that at times she seems to read our thoughts.

Thus, when she was walking one day with her mother, a boy exploded a torpedo which frightened Mrs. Keller. Helen asked at once, "What are you afraid of?" Some of you already know that sound (i.e., noise of all sorts) is produced by the vibration of the air striking against our organs of hearing—that is to say, the ears, and deaf people, though they can hear absolutely nothing are still conscious of these vibrations. Thus they can "feel" loud music, probably because it shakes the floor; and Helen's sense of feeling is so wonderfully acute, that she no doubt learns many things from these vibrations of the air which to us are imperceptible.

The following anecdote illustrates both her quickness of touch and her reasoning powers. The matron of the Perkins Institution for the Blind exhibited one day, to a number of friends, a glass lemon squeezer of a new pattern. It had never been used and no one present could guess for what purpose it was intended. Some one handed it to Helen, who spelled "lemonade" on her fingers, and asked for a drinking glass. When the glass was brought, she placed the squeezer in proper position for use.

The little maid was closely questioned as to how she found out a secret that had baffled all the seeing people present. She tapped her forehead twice, and spelled "I think."

I cannot forbear telling you one more anecdote about her, which seems to me a very pathetic one. She is a very good mimic, and loves to imitate the motions and gestures of those about her, and she can do so very cleverly. On a certain Sunday she went to church with a lady named Mrs. Hopkins, having been cautioned beforehand by her teacher that the most sit very quiet during the church service. It is very hard to sit perfectly still, however, when you can't hear one word of what the minister is saying, and little Helen presently began to talk to Mrs. Hopkins, and ask what was going on. Mrs. Hopkins told her, and reminded her of Miss Sullivan's injunction about keeping quiet. She immediately obeyed, and turning her head in a listening attitude, she said "I listen."—*St. Nicholas, for September.*

It is a common saying that it takes two to make a bargain. There are three at the making of every bargain. The two that are visible and the One that is invisible. Buy and sell as seeing that Third that is invisible and your business, instead of hindering, will help.

—Rev. Wm. M. Taylor.

The Children's Corner.

PEPPER.

He came in a basket, one bright morning in May. He was black and white, with green eyes, and the first thing he did was to scratch the baby.

Then he got out of the basket and dashed wildly for the door and up the stairs. That was the last we saw of him for the forenoon. We hunted and called, but could not find him.

After lunch mother was dressing to make some calls, and taking her bonnet from the tipped-over box, found it very heavy for a bonnet, and looking again, there was a black and white kitty curled up among the feathers and ribbons, his green eyes shining and his claws unsheathed.

She had just time to draw her hand away, or he would have punished her for disturbing his nap.

We named him Pepper, for his claws and teeth were sharp and his temper was fiery.

Mother thought the worst thing Pepper did was to scratch the baby, but he was far more cruel to Edith's chickens. They were not pretty chickens. Their legs and necks were long, and they had hardly feathers enough to cover their poor lean bodies. Generally they kept close to their mother, but sometimes one would wander into the front garden and lose itself among the bushes and flowers.

Then Pepper, hearing the sad little "peep, peep," of the lost chicken, would creep up to it, cuff it until it fell down, pull it by its wing or leg, and unless one of the family came to the rescue that chicken would never "peep" again.

Every day he lay in wait behind a bush and seldom failed to catch a chicken. The more we scolded him the more he enjoyed his wicked play. He had already killed two, and papa was beginning to talk about a bag and a stone and the river, when something happened that frightened him out of his naughty ways.

Our next-door neighbour had a parrot, which part of the time swung in his cage and part of the time sat on the fence, looking into our garden. She watched Pepper's bad actions with great interest, and one morning as Pepper was blinking and waiting under his favourite rose-bush, Polly clambered down the fence, hid herself in the petunia-bed, flapped her wings and called "peep! peep! peep!" just like a chicken in distress. Pepper lifted his head, his green eyes glittered and his sleek body quivered with delight. A quick glide, a crouch, a pounce—and Pepper had his chicken!

O, no! no! it was the chicken that had Pepper! A big green and yellow chicken, with a sharp beak. With shrieks of laughter she tore his pretty fur. She followed him from one end of the garden to the other, for she could fly as fast as he could run, until at last Edith came to his rescue.

For a week Pepper lay in an empty salt-box behind the kitchen stove, eating nothing but warm milk. His eyes were closed, his nose was swollen, his fur was off in patches.

The whole family petted him, and when at last he was able to crawl out into the sunshine again, his whole nature seemed changed. He did not scratch, bite or fight, and the very sight of a chicken filled him with terror. Polly still sat on the fence and looked into our garden. When she saw Pepper she would remark, "peep! peep!" and Pepper would run and hide.

Pepper became so good finally that we changed his name to Pepper-pint, and as all you little folks love peppermints, you must know that he became a very good cat to deserve so sweet a name.

—*Little Men and Women.*

WHAT GRANDMA SAW.

GRANDMA had been out riding with papa late one afternoon.

"What did you see, grandma?" asked Lottie, after she came home.

"What do you s'pose she saw?" asked Carl, pettishly. "She only rode up to the farm; there's nothing there to see."

"But I'm sure she *did* see something worth while telling of," persisted Lottie, stoutly, "for she always does, wherever she goes."

"Well, I did see something very funny," said grandma. "I laughed all to myself over it."

"I sat in the carriage a long time, while your father went into the field to see Mr. Smith."

"There was a whole family of turkeys, young and old, going to bed for the night on the pasture fence, and in the pasture was a little colt, as full of fun as he could hold."

"When the turkeys were finally settled, after a great deal of fuss and flutter, he went up to the fence, and, rubbing his nose along it, sent every one of them off on the ground."

"Then he ran off, kicking up his heels as though he thought he had done something funny."

"Then the turkeys had another season of going to bed, and they acted so sleepy and stupid about it, while the colt nibbled grass and paid no attention."

"But after they were settled, he came up and wiped them all off again, then ran off kicking up his heels as before."

"I laughed aloud, and just then your father came, and we drove home."

—*Youths' Companion.*