

## A Quaker Sermon.

It was the First-day Meeting  
And the group of gathered folk  
Sat touched by the hush of a voiceless spell;  
No sound the silence broke.

Until, in her place on the woman's side,  
With a sweet and tender face  
That bore the pure and peaceful sign  
Of the inward Spirit's grace,

A white-haired woman rose with the word  
That was laid on her heart to say—  
The word that the gathered people  
Were awaiting that sunny day.

"Sister Tabitha all to pieces  
My best china teapot broke,  
But I kept my soul in patience,  
Nor a word of anger spoke."

That was all; and down with the sunshine  
The silence again fell sweet,  
Till the elder people gave the sign  
That the service was complete.

Do you say that the hour was wasted?  
That the sermon was trivial, vain,  
Textless, devoid of logic,  
Unthrilled by one eloquent strain?

Not so; for that gospel is sweetest  
That is won through life's fret and its pain,  
That softens the jar of its friction,  
And lightens the stress of its strain?

And the love that is over the erring,  
The peace untouched by surprise,  
The quiet that keeps its sweet patience,  
Are dear in the Master's eyes.

While many a rhetorician  
Might learn from this homely brief  
A truth that the wearied people  
Would hail as a glad relief—

That the lesson is most enduring,  
Close to life's practical lines,  
And not the length but the fitness  
The heart of the hearer inclines.

And we all in our plain home duties  
Find the thought in this First-day word,  
That the least of our trials and triumphs  
Has a worth in the sight of our Lord.  
—*Christian at Work.*

## The Dinner-Party.

BY SUSIE V. ANDERSON.

"I wonder what we are to do all day?  
Even at a picnic a fellow gets tired of  
cigars and pretty girls, and wants some  
sort of entertainment. O! Miss Ellis,  
did you hear? I beg your pardon.  
I thought I was talking only to Bates.  
I did not hear your fairy footfall."

The speaker was a tall, handsome  
young man of some twenty years. He  
had that jaunty, vigorous look that  
betokened good health, and a restless,  
discontented look that might betoken  
that there was something, either in  
himself or in his surroundings, or per-  
haps in both, that caused him dissatis-  
faction. In reality, few had better  
cause to be thoroughly happy. The  
day was perfect so far as the weather  
was concerned, just hot enough to  
make the shade of the trees agreeable,  
and yet cool enough to allow people to  
enjoy a pleasant ramble.

A lady who loved to gather young  
people around her had given a picnic.  
The place chosen was a lovely spot  
called Hazel-nut Dell. Just now, with  
its groups of merry young people, it  
looked very attractive; the gay dresses  
of the ladies, to say nothing of the

bright faces, all helped to make a  
picture it would do one good to look  
at. Lunch was just over, and Sydney  
Wallace and his friend Bates had  
stretched themselves on the grass be-  
neath a wide-spreading tree to enjoy  
cigars and a little conversation. It  
was then that Miss Ellis had come  
unexpectedly upon them, overhearing  
the very ungallant speech made by  
Wallace.

And now a word about Fanny Ellis.  
How shall we describe her? She was  
not beautiful, or very young. In the  
eyes of some of the youthful belles she  
was decidedly old, perhaps twenty-six!  
Every one loved her, certainly, and  
many had good cause to. There was a  
peculiar charm in her manner that won  
every heart, and the soft, sweet voice  
seemed made for saying pleasant  
things, though the dark eyes could flash  
ominously if anything unkind or unjust  
was said or done in her presence. Many  
wondered why she retained her maiden  
name; but her widowed and invalid  
mother could tell a tale of unwearied  
devotion and constant attention that  
would explain away any mystery  
attached to the subject. With young  
Wallace she was a great favourite; and  
now as she came up to him, he  
scrambled on to his feet, and stretching  
his tall form to the utmost, looked  
down upon her admiringly, saying:

"It is downright refreshing to look  
at you even. Do take pity on a fellow  
and bestow a little of your sunshine on  
him. I don't need any entertainment,  
if you will only take a stroll with me  
through that little wood, where they  
say there is a pretty waterfall, and  
assure me that you forgive the rude  
speech you heard just now."

"Really I have nothing to forgive,  
Sydney. I am not a pretty girl, so I  
don't feel offended; and, as you have  
thrown away your cigar, I shall be  
glad to go with you. I want to see  
the waterfall, and several of our party  
are on their way there."

They were soon in the midst of a  
gay conversation, and both seemed  
bent on enjoying their little excursion.  
Presently the expression of their  
faces changed, and deep and earnest  
thought took the place of laughter  
and gay repartee. The fallen trunk of  
a tree forming a nice seat stood tempt-  
ingly before them. They availed them-  
selves of it, and sat down to rest just as  
Wallace said:

"I don't know how it is, but I never  
talk with you for half-an-hour, but you  
get the conversation round to serious  
things. I believe you are a very good  
woman, and you look so happy and  
contented, that I always leave you  
wishing I was a better man. Father  
and mother and Aunt Mary are all  
good, I am sure, but when they talk  
to me I feel savage; while I never  
leave you without thinking: 'There is  
something real in her religion. I wish  
I had it; she looks every word of it.'  
I would give anything to get it, if I  
only knew how, and could be as happy  
as you are."

Fanny's eyes were dim with tears,  
though a bright smile played upon her  
lips as she answered:

"Yes, I am happy; God does indeed  
give to his children a peace which  
passes 'all understanding.' He wants  
you to have that peace, too. He is  
calling you even now; won't you listen  
to him?"

There was no further opportunity  
for quiet talk; friends came up, and  
soon pleasant games and other amuse-  
ments banished, for the time, at any  
rate, more serious thoughts.

Months passed. Sydney's duties  
took him back to London, and Fanny's  
life was busy and useful as ever. Once  
more Sydney had a brief holiday, and  
came to his home to spend it. This  
time it was Christmas, and parties and  
pleasures of all sorts were the order of  
the day.

Among other festivities, the lady  
who had given the picnic in the  
previous summer gave a dinner-party,  
to which Wallace and Miss Ellis were  
both invited. It was nearly time to  
go, and Fanny was busy getting ready:  
the last touches were being put on to  
her neat though pretty toilet, the  
dainty lace and delicate ribbon looked  
very pretty, and the braids of dark  
hair were very becomingly arranged.  
She was just turning away from the  
glass, when a servant entered, bearing  
a beautiful little bouquet of flowers,  
and saying, as she laid them down on  
the table: "With Mr. Wallace's com-  
pliments, please, Miss." Fanny uttered  
an exclamation of delight as she bent  
over her beautiful present, and then  
fastened a few in her hair and in her  
brooch; it was all she wanted to make  
her toilet complete.

"Dear Sydney," she thought, "how  
good of him; he knows how I love  
flowers. I wish I could do something  
for him. I am glad he is going to the  
party; it will be a gay affair. I  
wonder if I can do anything there that  
will be for God's glory?"

She looked at her watch; it still  
wanted a quarter of an hour to the  
time she need start. Taking up her  
Bible, she read a few verses, and then  
spent a few minutes in earnest prayer  
that she might have strength and  
grace given to her, so that even at a  
dinner-party she might be able to do  
something that would tend to God's  
glory, and especially that she might be  
made a blessing to her friend Sydney.  
She felt strengthened and helped, and  
went to the dinner-party with a sweet  
peace filling her heart.

Sydney was not the only one  
who noticed the quiet, contented ex-  
pression of her face, and felt it must  
be the index of a heart at rest. Wallace,  
handsome as ever, had the same look of unrest and discontent  
which his face wore in the summer.  
Fanny saw at a glance that there was  
no change for the better in him. The  
dinner went off well; the rooms were  
gay with lights and holly, with its  
bright red berries. After dinner,  
when the guests were assembled in the

drawing-room, intelligent conversation  
and good music made the time pass  
pleasantly, but all too quickly. Fanny  
was sitting looking over a book of  
engravings with another lady, when  
Mrs. Greaves, their hostess, crossed  
the room to where she was sitting, and  
putting her hand on hers affectionately,  
said gaily: "Fanny, dear, will you  
sing for us? I know you don't like  
singing in what you call *public*; but  
we should be so delighted to have just  
one of your pretty songs." Fanny  
looked up and seemed to hesitate:  
"What shall I sing, Mrs. Greaves? I  
know so few songs, and no new ones."  
"Will you sing the one I heard you  
sing to your mother the other evening?  
Even if it is old, it was new to me; and  
I liked it so much."

Fanny moved to the piano, while the  
line of a hymn flashed into her mind:  
"All my actions sanctify." In a voice  
which gathered strength and courage  
as she went on, she sang the now well-  
known hymn: "Go bury thy sorrow."

"Go bury thy sorrow,  
The world hath its share;  
Go bury it deeply,  
Go hide it with care.

"Go think of it calmly,  
When curtains by night;  
Go tell it to Jesus,  
And all will be right."

When the song was finished, nothing  
but a few quiet, heart-felt words of  
thanks were heard for some time, and to  
every one's astonishment Wallace, with  
a few incoherent words of apology to his  
hostess, left the room abruptly. At an  
early hour the guests separated, all  
agreeing that they had spent a very  
pleasant evening.

The next morning Fanny had a long  
letter from Wallace: we will peep over  
her shoulder and read it with her:

"I cannot tell you, dear friend, what  
an effect your song had upon me last  
evening. I had never forgotten our  
talk in the summer, but the more  
I thought of it, the more miserable I  
felt. I knew I was all wrong, and  
yet could not humble myself to go to  
the Cross for pardon. I have tried to  
get right in every way but that; and  
have found all to be utter failure.  
When you came into the room yester-  
day, the very sight of your happy,  
contented face made me feel wretched  
in the extreme, though I tried to shake  
it off. Then you sang so sweetly that  
beautiful hymn. I felt I had plenty  
of sorrow, that I was burdened and  
heavy laden, and the words:

"Go tell it to Jesus,  
He'll send the relief,"

seemed to be the answer of my hungry  
soul. I could not stay longer, but  
hurried home, locked myself in my  
room, and 'told it to Jesus.' I, Sydney  
Wallace, who had been trying to make  
out I was better than any one else, felt  
I was a miserable sinner. I went to  
the Cross for pardon, and after hours  
of pleading and agonizing, Jesus sent  
me relief, and I could say for myself  
what you told me in our summer."