

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."