

APPLICATION

Alabaster box, v. 7. Every heart carries its alabaster box of precious ointment. In it are shut up sympathy, helpfulness and joy.

But too often the box remains closed and the ointment within is wasted because it is not used.

**Heart
Fragrance** Let our hearts be like those spicy islands, whose fragrance is wafted far out to sea on the summer breeze and announces to the mariner even before he can see them, his approach to a sunny shore. Let the gladness in our eyes and the friendship in our handshake intimate even to strangers that we are their brothers and ready to help them. Sometimes these alabaster boxes are hard to break. They are clasped with the bands of selfishness; and suffering and disappointment are needful to force them open. If so, the world is the gainer by our apparent misfortune:

"No shattered box of ointment
We ever need regret,
For out of disappointment
Flow sweetest odors yet."

To what purpose is this waste, v. 8. To some, the sun is an object of never-ending wonderment, when they consider how its

**The Deeds
that Live** light fills the whole heaven and illuminates the distant planet; to others, it is a matter of consideration only for the light it gives their dwelling and the fertility with which it blesses their field. We must be ever on our guard against this narrow, self-centred standard of judgment. The deeds that have lived in history are those that forgot selfish interest, refused to count the cost, but sacrificed all things for some noble purpose or some great principle. Mackenzie went to Korea, and in a very brief time he was in his grave; Ion Keith-Falconer went to Aden, and in a few months fell a victim to its fever-stricken climate. But who shall ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" seeing that the inspiration of their heroism has kindled like ardor in a hundred other breasts; and the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died, has become a harvest.

Why trouble ye the woman? v. 10. There are about 20,000 deaths annually in India from snake bites. From 1870 to 1882 nearly

200,000 died from this cause. Often the bite of a cobra is fatal in half an hour.

**Destroy
the Serpents!** We can therefore understand the vigilance of the Government in their endeavor to destroy this terrible scourge. In one year, 220,000 serpents have been killed, and nearly 12,000 rupees paid as a reward for their destruction. But there are serpents not so easy to overcome, and whose invisible bite is just as great a menace to the world's happiness. These are the criticisms, misconstructions, and unkind remarks that are continually being made on the actions of good people. There are those who see in every good deed some selfish purpose; others have faults to find in the method of its performance, or are ready to point out how something better could have been done. These uncalled for reproaches are unkind and hurtful. They trouble good people. How bitterly David complains of them! They are the snakes and serpents of the spiritual world. Let us endeavor to destroy them.

A good work, v. 10. On the borders of the sandy African desert lived a kind-hearted man, who, every morning, took a pitcher of

**For the
Thirsty** cold water from a spring and carried it to the dusty thoroughfare, and left it for any thirsty traveler who might pass that way. Every such action that is prompted by sympathy for another's need or gratitude for benefits received, is a good work. We live on the borders of a spiritual Sahara. Around us are passing every day souls thirsting for the water of life. Shall we not each morning carry with us into the throng of men some sweet refreshing thought or purpose that we have found in the hour of our early devotions?

Ye have the poor, v. 11. St. Lawrence was arrested by a satellite of a Roman emperor on a rumor that the treasures of the Christian church were in his keeping.

**The Treasures
of the Church** At the tribunal he was required to say where these treasures were. "In three days," he replied, "I will bring them." On the third day he collected the sick and the poor to whom he dispersed alms, and, placing them before the prefect, said, "Behold, here are the treasures of the church."