

The Inglenook.

Bell's Story.

BY ANNA ROSS.

Precious Lessons About the Little Ones.

One Sabbath, Bell's husband was preaching on the text,—"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." He spoke of the boundlessly free invitation, "Take of the water of life freely," "Whosoever will, let him take"—

Then he paused, and asked the question, "But where are the wells out of which this water of life can be drawn?" An invitation to draw from an undiscoverable well, no matter how precious the water may be, is but an empty compliment. He asked again the question, "Where are these wells of salvation?"

Then he answered his own question in these words, "The wells of salvation are the books, and chapters, and verses of God's written word. Study your Bibles. When you find a promise in any part of the Bible, that contains anything you want, draw it. Take it as your own, continuously count it your own, lay claim to its fulfillment, rejoice in its fulfillment before that fulfillment comes. This is drawing water with joy out of the wells of salvation."

Bell listened with deep interest. She looked in heart down into those blessed wells, and thought which of the promises contained exactly what she wanted most. This was the one that seemed the very best. It is from Isa. 44, "Fear not,—Jeshurun,—for I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. "With joy she drew that blessed water out of the wells of salvation for her own little children, and felt strong for them.

Some days after this she went to see a dear old saint, whose "delight was in the law of God, and in His law did she meditate day and night." Coming home, she was walking under the shadows of the great forest trees which lined part of the country road. She was thinking anxious thoughts of her children, of the things that made it plain that these sweet little people were real sinners, and of the feebleness of her own training as a force to eradicate sin.

She in little children, it is a sad and serious subject. Paul's statement about him self came up in connection,—*"In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."* She knew Paul meant just what he had said, and the doctrine of *total* depravity looked out upon her. Were her own children in the same position as Paul? In them, that is, in themselves, was there *no* good thing? Then the little children began to look very beautiful in her eyes. She knew quite well that sweetness and responsiveness were the general experience, and that the ugly things that grieved her were very much the exception rather than the rule, and there seemed a discrepancy between Paul's statement and her own consciousness of fact. How could such sweetness and real moral loveliness as she was continually seeing in these children ever be reconcilable with the doctrine of *total* depravity?

Just at this point the promise drawn from the wells of salvation came to her mind. "I will pour water—I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine off-

spring." Now she understood it. Now she knew that the traits of moral loveliness that had so often made her heart glad, were the result of the actual vivifying work of the present Spirit of the living God. A new courage came into her heart. Now she knew how to regard the tokens of evils in her children—that is my child, that is me, for in me dwelleth no good thing. But when she saw evidence of real moral worth in her little child—that is the work of the present Spirit of God, giving moral life where without Him there would be nothing but moral death. It put the children down again into the low place of thorns and briars, but it put her into the strong place of one who already has Omnipotence as her present ally in seeking to work out God's ideals in her children. Her prayer from this time was not so much, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." But it was the pitiful but trustful cry "O my Father, take not thy Holy Spirit from us."

One morning, her eldest daughter, a child of twelve years, had been particularly headstrong. Bell walked the mile to church with a heavy heart. She felt as Balshazzar may have felt when Daniel pronounced the sentence, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Well she knew that word of wisdom, "If a child has not learned obedience at five, or diligence at fourteen, he is a ruined child." Her soul was cast down in her because of wilfulness that she knew should have been subdued long ago. She felt she had been weighed and found wanting just where she had expected to prove a brilliant success, and she cried unto God "out of the low dungeon."

She was early at church, and took her Bible to get some word of courage before the service should commence. Her book opened among the psalms, and her eye rested upon the verse, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (well she knew why she was cast down.) "and why art thou disquieted within me?" (she could look up in God's face and say, "Lord, thou knowest,—thou knowest why I am disquieted.") Then came the word of cheer, "hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

What ample comfort that was! It was a leaf from the tree of life, and it healed the wounded spirit instantaneously. It was a Divine assurance and pledge of the "help of His countenance" concerning this child, and that was enough. She could well afford to begin the praises at once, and she did.

Ab ut six months later, this same little daughter began to complain of a pain in her shoulder. As the days passed, the pain became worse instead of better, and her mother took her to the doctor. He examined carefully, and said that an abscess was forming under her shoulder-blade, that it would need to ripen for about a week, during which time it must be poulticed, and that he would then come and lance it.

O the heavy heart with which Bell went home! What agony must be in store for that tender, precious child! Festering through days and nights, and then the knife! She forgot to go to the old resting place, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" which was just as strong for this trouble as for the last.

With deep solicitude that night she dressed

the sore shoulder and watched the sufferer until sleep had wrapped her in forgetfulness. Then she sought sleep for herself. But sleep was far away. Care that was active, present pain was gnawing at her heart, and she tossed in feverish restlessness.

But another leaf from the tree of life was brought to her by the same hand that ministered to the wounded pilgrim after his battle with Apollyon. It was a divine command this time, not a promise; but a command is often just as good as a promise, and better, sometimes.

These were the words that were brought to her heart, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Then in the quiet night, in the light of Christ's own words, she saw the folly of her feverish tossing. She saw clearly that it was to-morrow's trouble that was troubling her, not to day's; and with to-morrow's trouble she had no right to deal. To night's experience was cause of thanksgiving instead, for had she not watched the dear young sufferer fall into a sweet sleep? So she "thanked God and took courage," and fell asleep herself.

God emphasized the lesson thus given by making each to-morrow much easier than it had threatened to be. Each step of the trouble impressed her with its tokens of tenderness mixed in, and so each to-morrow as it came was cause of glad gratefulness instead of sorrow.

Bell had greatly "feared as she entered into the cloud." But in that cloud she heard the voice of the Father, saying gently, "This is my Beloved Son, hear Him." Then she heard the voice of the Son, and He said, "Take no thought for the morrow." She listened, and it proved itself to be the same voice that long ago said, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm."

And best of all, out of that cloud a voice spoke to the dear child on whom the trouble had directly fallen; and the word was fulfilled in her, "They that hear shall live." That was the turning point in the spiritual history of the young sufferer.

God moves in a mysterious way.

His wonders to perform.

He plants His footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head.

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The Care of Sick Children.

Shall we send the children to the hospital, and will better care be afforded in that way? So long as the home is healthful and the mother well and able, the answer is pretty nearly a unanimous negative. For the child, the comfort of the mother's presence and his trust in her, and the comparative ease with which he can be cared for, make it, as a rule, a better thing to have home conditions. If the mother be nervous however, or if she be poor, and must neglect her child for her daily work, then by all means give the baby the benefit of quiet, skilful attendance and sunny rooms and be sure he will be better off. A nurse having charge of the children's ward in a large hospital tells the writer that after once sending a child to them, the mother never hesitates to trust them with her little ones a second time.—Clara L. Came in Good House-keeping.