The Family.

HARVEST.

We said, when the spring was late,
And the bitter winds were chill,
It were vain in hope to wait
For the leafage on vale and hill.
We were fain to mock at ruthless fate,
And were slow the fields to till.

We thought, when the summer rain
In floods from the rifted skies,
Was sweeping the upland and the plain,
A-slant before our eyes,
Our labour hard is a waste, and vain
Each needless sacrifice.

But to-day, O fools and blind!
There are purple grapes on the vine,
And the smell of the fruit on the warm south wind
Is sweet as the breath of wine,
And the sheaves the reapers go forth to bind
Are a gift from the Hand divine!

We never had need for fear,
We had only need for trust;
Ever our lives to our Lord were dear,
And ever His ways were just;
If our faith had but been strong and clear,
We had scorned the moth and rust

Of our shivering doubt and dread; –
Nor all on our way had come,
With many a time, a drooping head,
And lips for sorrow dumb.
Dear Lord, we are hardly comforted,
In Thy harvest's splendid sum.

Pardon our trick of grief!
Give us faith to be glad and gay
In the seedtime as in time of the sheaf;
Make us joyful every day.
For alas! alas! our unbelief,
It shames us when we pray.

—*Margaret E. Sangster, in S.S. Times.*

"NOBODY CARES FOR ME"

THE surest way to make that true is to think it, say it, and act upon it. There are very few people in a Christian land of whom it can really and necessarily be said, but once let a man or woman get the idea that such is their forlorn condition, and the notion will grow with very little feeding until it takes possession of the mind, turning light into darkness, and what might be a sweet quietness into bitter melancholy. Did you ever happen to come across anybody—it is generally a woman, being more in her line—who was continually saying, "It is not worth while for me to go here or there, to do this or that, for nobody wants me—nobody cares to see me—nobody loves me—I am laid on the shelf and useless now?" And coming across such an one, did you not feel like getting as far as you possibly could from her as she thus bemoaned herself? Did she not do much toward producing the very state of things which she deplored?

There comes a time in most people's lives, if they live long enough, when they are conscious of fading charms, failing powers, faltering step, and general falling back in the race of life, while others are pressing on to possess the place and perform the duty which were once theirs. When this consiousness comes, what shall we do about it? Well, there are several ways of dealing with it. One is to fight it, determined to hold our place and not to be beaten or thrust aside, considering the younger, stronger ones, who are rushing by us, as interlopers to be resisted and overcome.

Another way is to stand apart, gloomy and idle, bewailing the loss of opportunity and ability to labour, insisting on the indifference and forgetfulness of former friends and companions, and reiterating the melancholy cry, "Nobody cares for me! I am necessary to no one on earth!"

But there is yet another way of meeting this inevitable point in life, and we submit that it is decidedly the best of the three. It is to accept the position bravely and patiently so far as it is inevitable, and then to resolve to make the very most and best of what is left to us in the service of others. We can make people care for us by caring for them in every way open to us. We can be so cheerful and loving and willing to aid, that our brightness and helpfulness shall become necessary to those who are within our influence. We can quietly yield to younger and more vigorous hands the work which in days gone by we have been glad and proud to hold in our own strong grasp, and we can stand in the lot appointed for us by God to fulfil whatever task he gives us there.

Who does not know some elderly people who have reached and passed the summit of life's hill, but who yet bless the world while they are in it and leave it the poorer when they go out of it! Their opportunities may have been few and insignificant in their later years and their sphere of influence very limited, but there has been no wail of loneliness, or cry after departed friendship, or longing for old-time activity. The heart and life have so gone forth into other hearts and lives in the quiet of the afternoon time that there is no desire to recall the long morning hours or the hot noontide. They are content, and they bring an atmosphere of peace and contentment wherever they go, or wherever they abide.

Are you on the down-hill side of life, reader? Then do not even let yourself say or think that nobody cares for you or needs you. Care for those about you—all within your reach, near or far. Make their joys, their sorrows, their anticipations, their plans your own, even if these are far different from those you once cherished. Live in their lives and you will surely find yourself loved, cared for, needed, so long as you need love and care.

If physical powers fail more rapidly even than mental, and weak nerves often favour depressing thoughts, all the more does the effort to overcome them become important to those who would hold love and sympathy through the decline of life. As a rule, very few people have patience with the long continued complainings of their fellow-creatures. Nobody will care for us if we keep up a never-ceasing moan in whatever ears we can reach.

The light from heaven, our Father's house, falls more clearly and brightly on the side of the hill nearest to it. Let its reflection shine unmistakably upon all who touch our lives in any way as we travel gently down the slope towards the river, passing which we shall find ourselves encompassed by the changless love and clothed with the immortal vigour of the "life that knows no ending."—*Dorcas Hicks, in Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

HERE AM I, SEND ME.

"FRED, I wish you would run to the corner and get me a package of corn-starch," said mother last Saturday morning.

I was just preparing to go to the hill with my sled. Everything was ready, and the boys were waiting. It seemed as if mother always wanted something of me just at the moment when I was in a great hurry, when somebody was calling for me, or when I was specially engaged in something speciallypleasant. So I said, not a little petulantly:

"O, I can't go now. Won't it do when I come home?"

"It will then be too late to make the pudding for dinner," said mother.

"Well, can't Clara go?"

"No, for she is taking care of baby for me."

"O, dear!" I said, throwing down the sled rope angrily, and looking very sour and dissatisfied. "That's the way it always is. I never want to do anything, nor go anywhere, but there is always some errand to do, or something to hinder me. I have to go to school all the week, and I think I might have my Saturday. What do you want, anyhow?"

Then mother just stopped her work and stood stock still and looked at me for—well, it seemed five minutes. I would far rather she had taken the rolling-pin and knocked me down. It does make a fellow feel so mean to be looked at in that way. Then mother said:

"Do you think I would let a boy do an errand for me who did it in such a spirit as that? I don't want anything. You may go. Good morning."

She didn't say this in a temper, at all, but sort of sorry like. If she'd only got mad I wouldn't care half so much, but when she speaks in that sad, grieved way, my heart always feels as if it was all broken up.

"I'll go," I said.

"I don't want anything now, Fred," she said. "I think the pudding would choke me when I thought of you."

So I picked up my sled rope and joined the boys. The morning was bright, the coasting fine, and the boys all merry; but I didn't enjoy it at all. I can't tell why, but the hill never seemed so long, nor so steep, nor so slippery, going up; nor so crooked and rough coming down. Harry French beat me every time we raced; and Ben Lane ran into me and broke my rope, and tore the shoe off my runner; and I was glad when it was time to go home to dinner.

The dinner tasted good; mother is the best cook in the world; but when the dessert came on, there was only a bowl of milk for father, a baked apple for Clara, and for mother and me, nothing. I didn't make any complaint, but I wished that mother had some thing nice.

The next day was Sunday, and was ushered in with a steady snow-storm. But I would not miss my Sunday-school for a dozen snow-storms, no, not if it snowed icebergs. I knew that Mrs. Stanton would be on hand—she is my teacher—and I knew I could never get through the week without one good look at her face to start with; so, of course, nine o'clock found me in the class.

The lesson was about Isaiah; and how he saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the beautiful winged angels all about Him, crying to one another and saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."

It must have been splendid, I think. Then Mrs. Stanton told me how frightened Isaiah was, and all that he said.

"Woe is me," he said, "I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips," but afterwards, so Mrs. Stanton read to me, when the voice of the Lord said: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah bravely answered: "Here am I, send me!"

I told her that if I heard the voice of the Lord I would do the same thing.

Then what do you suppose she said? That God often speaks to us by the lips of our mothers. I wonder if she knew anything about that wretched affair of the day before. And she read to me, too, how an angel came and took a live coal from off the altar, and touched Isaiah's lips with it; and that that was what made him speak such brave, true words, and she said the altar always made us think of Jesus, and that only after He has touched our hearts will we be brave and true. Heigh-ho! I wish then with all my soul that Jesus would touch my heart and make me brave and true.

I remember once the minister said that good wishes were like prayers, and God would answer them as quickly as spoken words; and I do believe He did notice that wish and answered it.

It snowed all that day, and in the afternoon I took my library book—it was called "Maggie's Text," a splendid story—and was having a good time with it, and so glad that I didn't have to be out in the storm, when I heard mother say:

"I can't help thinking about old Aunty Filkins to-day. She is all alone in the little cabin, and with no one to go to the well for water, or to the shed for wood. If I had anyone to send, I would like to hear if she is in any trouble."

"Here am I; send me!" sounded out a voice like a trumpet. I was so frightened that I almost dropped "Maggie's Text" out of my hand, and looked about to see who had spoken these wonderful words. But father was still reading his Rutherford, and mother and Clara were quiet and unperturbed. Evidently not one of them had heard the voice. Then I remembered the angel, and the live coal and the altar, and then I thought of—yes, and waited for Jesus, for whom the altar stands, and He seemed truly to come and touch me, and I, too, became brave and strong, and laying down my book I rose and said:

"Here am I; send me. I will go to Aunty Filkins'."—*The Pansy.*

AN OLD MAID'S OPINION.

"FOR my part, I'm glad Mrs. Burrill is left with daughters and not with sons to depend on," said Miss Nancy Willis, as she tucked a glass of currant jelly into a basket she was filling for one of Mrs. Jeffrey's poor people.

"Why? Because girls *are* a dependence, and boys are not; leastways, that's my experience. I suspect it's their bringin' up. I think the materi al's the same to start with, but boys and girls have different creeds instilled into them.

"Look at those Lennoxes, now," and she brought her sharp knife through a plump loaf of gingerbread with a whack. "The boys earn about ten dollars a week, and pay five apiece for board. Their washing, ironing and mending are included. Their sisters do all their ironing, and most of the mending. Those boys think they've done finely when they've given five dollars for their board, and never think of any straits or sacrifices in the family afterwards. But the girls—dear me! Sallie gives every cent to her mother; and Ellen not only paid the rent last year—thirty dollars a month—but bought a carpet for the dining-room, and saved enough besides to give her mother three sets of woolens at Christmas. And what does Mrs. Lennox say? 'Oh, Willie and James must have money; they go out among young folks, you know, and a boy looks mean if he has no money.' But the girls? 'Oh, they can't go out much; they must dress well and entertain if they do, and we are forced to economize, you know.' What are those boys in training for, Mrs. Jeffrey? They are learning to consider themselves superior to their sisters, and to feel that sacrifices must be made for them, not by them."

Miss Nancy jerked out a loaf of bread, and poked it back viciously.

"And the airy way in which these boys shirk responsibilities," she went on, as her visitor said nothing. "I knew a boy, Mrs. Jeffrey, who was clever and talented, but too poor to go to college. His sister taught school, and she and their widowed mother saved enough to send Frank to Harvard. He made a name there, and had a fine position given to him soon after he graduated. Instead of lifting the burdens from his mother and sister, now that he had a chance to show his gratitude, what does my fine lad do but get married! Get married, right away!" Miss Nancy's voice rose to a shriek, and her dark eyes glowed with indignation. "That young man teaches ethics in a college not far off, but his sister is drudging still."

"Don't you think these were exceptional cases, Miss Nancy? Can't we hope these were unusually selfish boys?" interrupted Mrs. Jeffrey's soft voice.

"No, indeed," was the quick reply. "They were trained to it. These boys are manly, generous and honourable enough in other things, but they looked upon these sacrifices as their right, and their mothers and sisters were to blame. Why, just listen to this. Near a little Ohio town I once lived in, there was a family named Baxter. The father died when the children were small, and their little farm kept the mother, with four boys and one girl, poorly enough. When the boys grew up, Eliza and her mother kept boarders, sewed for stores in the town, and wore the plainest clothes in the county, to educate these four boys. The girl went without, you see. They were bright lads, and did well, every one of them. They all married into good families, and moved in society several degrees above Eliza and their mother. I suppose they meant to do their duty, but Eliza and Mrs. Baxter had no style and no education, and they weren't comfortable when they paid the boys a visit. So they stopped paying visits, which weren't returned, anyway. The boys think they are not to blame; they are very sorry. Mrs. Baxter is very proud of her sons, but Eliza feels a little bitter towards them. Mrs. Baxter and Eliza are both old and worn out now, but they are working still, and have few comforts in their home. I tell you, Mrs. Jeffrey, there was something wrong in those boys' education. Before they went to college, and in every letter she wrote while they were there, their mother ought to have driven home the truth that it was their duty to profit all they could by the advantages they had, and then to come home, unburdened by any *fresh* responsibilities, to cheer and lift the lives that made these advantages possible. But to go on climbing up and up them selves, and then to leave those that helped them to a colourless life, like poor Eliza Baxter's—I tell you, Mrs. Jeffrey, there's heartache for somebody in such training."

"I wish there were some way to cure the wrong. I acknowledge that there is a wrong," said Mrs. Jeffrey, rising and pulling her pretty cloak about her, as the basket lid was tightly fastened.

"Bring the subject to your 'Mother's Meeting,' Mrs. Jeffrey. They will listen to you, though they wouldn't care for my opinion," replied Miss Nancy, her black eyes twinkling as the proverb about "old maid's children" flashed through her mind. "It's the mothers that must mend matters, or nobody can."—*Jean McVeagh, in the Woman's Journal.*

THE VISITING CHILD.

WHEN my friend Ada writes to announce that she is coming through our town, and will pay me a short visit, if agreeable and convenient, my first emotion is one of delight. Ada and I were room-mates at college, shared each other's joys and sorrows for four years, and she will always seem a little dearer and sweeter than any other woman in the world. The prospect of a visit, with its numerous opportunities for recalling school days, and inquiring for old friends, as well as comparing our experiences of life, so different from what we imagined them to be when they were still in the future, is a source of delightful anticipation.

But I am invariably ashamed because, of late, a vague, unuttered wish follows my first thought, which, if expressed in words would read, If she could only come *without* the children! Now I love children dearly, and no visitor is ordinarily more welcome than the child visitor. Ada's two boys are manly little fellows of three and five. As babies they held a warm place in my heart. How is it, then, that now they are to me an undisguised terror? It begins at the table. Baby Ned has some very decided likings. One of them leads him to lay hold of any article of table-ware within his reach, and throw it, with all his small strength, at any person or object which he sees. Ada thinks that he is *so* cunning, that she cannot endure the thought of eating without him, though Baby's meal is taken with his nurse. And he *is* pretty and very sweet in his ways. But there are days when he is the only satisfied party at the table. The crash following a well directed spoon or fork aimed at one of my engraved glasses, is sweetest music to his ears, and last winter, a good half-dozen of my choicest pieces were destroyed in this way. Often the target is some member of the family or a guest who may be sitting opposite. Ada invariably laughs at these small exhibitions, which are really laughable in themselves, and says, "Naughty, naughty," to baby, with a smile on her lips, and baby understands very well that he may repeat the performance when he pleases. Sometimes he chooses to stand in his high chair until he is allowed to get on the floor, where he serenely trots about in front of the waitress or, with a beguiling invitation, secures a seat with some of the company.

"Now don't let him annoy you," says Ada. And we very much wish we were not annoyed. But his little fingers, fresh from the chicken bone or bread crust, are so fond of tracing patterns on pretty gray cashmeres and pink ribbons. Broadcloth, white ties and immaculate shirt fronts are his especial delight, and what can one say when his mother, one of the tidiest of dressers, seems to look over or beyond or through, anywhere but *at* the baby's unwelcome attentions.

The library and drawing room are Master Phil's stamping grounds. His dear little brown hands snatch at everything within his reach. A choice bit of Royal Worcester or Crown Derby is none too good for his plaything. His hands are usually filled with cookies, supplied by his indulgent nurse or mamma to keep him quiet, and when he seats himself jauntily on a delicate satin couch, is the hostess to be blamed if she wishes that both small boy and cooky could be transferred elsewhere? In the library, where no delicate bric-a-brac or furniture are found, and where he may have a good frolic and enjoy the toys with which my cupboard always abounds for the delight of wee folks, his mother insists on showing him my choice books of art treasures, and many a valuable page bears the marks of the small sticky fingers.

Perhaps some mother says, "What a fuss about a small matter," but let me ask you, dear friend, is there not a courtesy due to one's hostess which the guest is bound to respect? Are the children any happier for being allowed to indulge in the habits of vandals? It is my opinion that Master Phil enjoys the Red Riding Hood and Jack the Giant Killer books, which he is free to tear and read to his heart's content, and which I will gladly replace each day of his life, much better than the reproductions of foreign etchings in their dark, rich bindings, with which Ada tries to entertain him. And a bag of bright marbles is every bit as useful for purposes of amusement, as a choice vase or plate. Moreover, a child who is early taught to refrain from touching objects within his reach without permission, learns one of the cardinal principles of good-breeding and, indeed, of a good character. For meddling will always appear wrong to him, whether the object be a person's property or his reputation. It is really quite as easy to teach the little one obedience in this particular as it is to be forced to watch him constantly, or to replace broken or defaced articles. And I heartily wish that some one would teach Ada this simple lesson.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

ESTEEM.

IN domestic rule esteem 's more potent than indulgence or even forbearance. When boys or girls go wrong, a very frequent cause is that they are not esteemed at home, or fancy they are not. This esteem must be genuine, it cannot be pretended or counterfeited. Hence in a governing person there are few qualities so valuable as readiness to appreciate merits, or ingenuity in discovering them, especially the latter. In every large family or small circle of friends there is generally some very difficult person to understand. This person is often exceedingly troublesome, and to use a common expression, "very trying." His or her merits, for he or she is sure to have some, have not been found out. Find them out and appreciate them; a great deal of the trouble of dealing with that person will be removed. The value of imagination in domestic government is very great. If we could have statistics on the subject we should find, I think, that the children of unimaginative people are particularly prone to go wrong. —*Arthur Helps.*

DANGERS FROM BEER DRINKING.

IN appearance the beer drinker may be the picture of health, but in reality he is most incapable of resisting disease. A slight injury, a severe cold, or a shock to the body or mind will commonly provoke acute disease, ending fatally. Compared with other inebriates, who use different kinds of alcohol, he is more incurable and more generally diseased. It is our observation that beer-drinking in this country produces the very lowest kind of inebriety, closely allied to criminal insanity. The most dangerous class of ruffians in our large cities are beer drinkers. Intellectually, a stupor amounting almost to paralysis arrests the reason, changing all the higher faculties into a mere animalism, sensual, selfish, sluggish, varied only with paroxysms of anger, senseless and brutal.—*Scientific American.*

METHOD.

IT must have occurred to every observer of work in progress how much time may be saved by a little method in the way the various operations are performed. One man will take half the time another requires to get exactly the same result, although they may both apparently be equally busy. The one who gets through with whatever he has in hand first does not seem to go about it hurriedly, nor does the other seem to dawdle and waste time. Why is it? Simply because one works by method, using the accumulated stores of experience, while the slower one does not, possibly only because he may not have done the particular piece of work so frequently that he is able to grasp all the facts in connection with it. The man who is constantly at one class of work acquires a manipulative skill which not only causes admiration in the onlooker, but conveys lessons which it is unwise to disregard.—*American Workman.*

The Children's Corner.

THE BLACKBERRY TART.

MAMMA was busy in the kitchen making blackberry pies, and Freddy was standing at one end of the table watching her intently.

Oh, how good mamma's blackberry pies were! Freddy smacked his lips in anticipation as he thought of the treat in store for him. There was a little piece of pie-crust left over, so mamma rolled it out flat, and cut it in a circle, and then crimped a cunning little edge around it, and, lo! it was a little tart.

Freddy's eyes beamed approval as he watched her. He knew what delicious things mamma could make out of left-over bits of dough, and he knew, too, to whose share these cunning little dainties usually fell. Mamma filled it with blackberries, and spread a little criss-cross of strips of pastry over the top, and then it was all ready to go in the oven with the "grown-up pies," as Freddy called the larger ones.

An hour later, Freddy came in the kitchen for something, and there were the pies and the little tart cooling on the dresser, looking so tempting and smelling just delicious.

Freddy turned the little tart around with his brown fingers, and sniffed the inviting odour till his mouth watered. He was so hungry, and he was sure he could never wait till dinner-time. It was of no use to ask mamma for the tart now, for she never let him eat anything rich so near the dinner-hour. Oh, dear!

Why not take it and eat it, any way? Freddy knew his mamma would not be pleased to find that her little boy had taken what did not belong to him, yet he wanted the tart so much that he did not stop to listen to his conscience, but, taking the delicious morsel in his hand, ate up every crumb.

As he passed the parlour window he heard the sound of voices, and, standing on tiptoe, so his bright eyes just peered over the sill, he looked in, and saw a lady there talking to his mother, with a dear little girl whom Freddy was always glad to see.

"Freddy!" said mamma, "suppose you go out in the kitchen and get that little blackberry tart. You can put it on a plate, and bring in two forks, and you and Natalie can eat it together."

"Yes'm" came in such subdued tones, as the eyes vanished, that mamma wondered whether her little boy was becoming selfish, and did not want to share his tart with Natalie.

How Freddy did wish from the depths of his miserable little heart that he had never touched the tart! If mamma was only alone, he could have confessed the truth, but he did not want Natalie and her mother to know how greedy he had been. It was a long time before Freddy's slow reluctant steps came along the hall.

"Well, Freddy, where is the tart?" asked mamma, glancing up.

Such a guilty-looking boy stood in the door, with his flushed face all smeared with blackberry stains, that mamma guessed the truth at once.

"I can't find it," Freddy answered slowly, his eyes fixed on the carpet. "I guess the cat must have eaten it up. She looked like it."

Then a little sob choked his voice, and he rushed up stairs and threw himself down on the floor, much more unhappy than he had ever been.

He had really told a lie, one of those wicked things that he had promised mamma that he would never, never do.

A queer swelling came in his throat as he thought what a sorry look would come into mamma's loving eyes if she should ever know it, and he cried softly to himself.

In the meantime, mamma had comforted Natalie for her disappointment concerning the tart, by giving her a generous piece of pie. Her heart was almost as full as Freddy's; for, with all his other childish faults, he had always been truthful, and now she could not doubt that he had told her a falsehood.

When the visitors left she went upstairs, and took Freddy up in her lap. He turned his head away, and would not meet the grave, tender eyes.

"Freddy, look at me," said mamma; and very slowly the little boy lifted his flushed face and his brown eyes till they met mamma's looking straight into his guilty heart, as it seemed to him.

"Has my little boy anything to tell me?" asked mamma.

Freddy was silent for a moment. He did want to tell mamma all about it, and lift the burden of guilt that made his heart so heavy.

"The cat did eat it," he faltered, but mamma checked him.

"Freddy, go and look in the glass, and tell me what you see."

Freddy slipped down from her knee, and went and looked in the mirror. The tell-tale traces of his guilt were on his lips and cheeks, and he realized that mamma knew he had told a lie.

He burst into tears, and put his head on the shoulder that was still his refuge in trouble, while he sobbed out his sorrowful little story. Very tenderly and lovingly mamma talked to him, making him feel what a terrible thing a lie is in the sight of a pure and holy God.

"These stains on your lips can be washed away," she said; "but, Freddy, the stains on your heart I cannot wash away. Do you know who can?"

"Jesus," whispered Freddy.

"Yes; He can wash away the stains of sin, if you ask Him. Shall we kneel down now and tell Him all about it?"

The burden was lifted from the childish heart at last, as mamma asked that Freddy might be forgiven, and washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God. And Freddy resolved that a lie should never again stain his heart.—*S. S. Times.*

A LITTLE LIGHT.

'TWAS but a little light she bore,
While standing at the open door;
A little light, a feeble spark,
And yet it shone out through the dark
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar
As brightly as the polar star.

A little light, a gentle hint,
That falls upon the page of print,
May clear the vision, and reveal
The precious treasures doubts conceal,
And guide us to an open door,
Where we new regions may explore.

A little light dispels the gloom
That gathers in the shadowed room,
Where want and sickness find their prey,
And night seems longer than the day,
And hearts with many troubles cope
Uncheered by one slight ray of hope.

O I sore the need that some must know
While journeying through this vale of woe!
Dismayed, disheartened, gone astray,
Caught in the thickets by the way,
For lack of just a little light
To guide their wandering steps aright.

It may be little we can do
To help another, it is true,
But better is a little spark
Of kindness, when the way is dark,
Than one should miss the road to heaven
For lack of light we might have given.

—*Selected.*