

The Quiet Hour.

Ideal Faithfulness.

Moreover, they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.—2 Kings, xiii. 15. (See also xxii. 7.)

When the Temple was repaired in the days of Jehoash, and later in the days of the good king Josiah, a remarkable fact is preserved in the records, viz.: that the men who handled the repair funds were not required to give any account of their stewardship because their trustworthiness was a self-evident fact. Strange that such common honesty should be worth remembering for thousands of years!

But, when we are striving to win great virtues and graces for our own possession, let us not overlook this glorious grace of faithfulness—a grace which is valued very highly by both God and man. Those who are faithful in the little everyday details of life, will not be likely to fail when a great test comes, for "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." It was a great and important office to be given full charge of the Temple repair fund, but the character of the faithful stewards was not tested when the money was fearlessly trusted in their hands, it had been tested during many years of quiet, everyday faithfulness. How do I know that? Why, if men were wanted for such a responsibility now, those who would be implicitly trusted by the people who paid the money, could only be men who had won confidence by years of unswerving rectitude in trivial things.

Faithfulness is a matter of character, it cannot fail to color the whole life, if it is the real article and not a veneer put on for outward show. The people who are satisfied to give only "eye-service, as men-pleasers," are dead failures, and are usually distrusted instinctively, as they deserve to be. People who only work diligently and thoroughly when they expect their work to be inspected by men, are certainly giving "eye-service." A lad once found a job with a gang of men to shovel snow. The foreman was called away for a few minutes and all the men stopped work immediately; only the lad worked on the same as before. "Why don't you take your chance of a holiday?" said one of the men, "we are paid by the day, not by the job."

"I don't intend to cheat!" was the boy's indignant reply. "This is the first time I have had a man's wages and I intend to do a man's work."

Who can doubt that a boy who was so thoroughly reliable on one occasion had already formed the priceless habit of faithfulness in little things?

A business man said that he owed a great deal of his success in life to a trivial incident. His wife had sent a small order to a large store and received her parcel safely. A day or two later a letter from the firm arrived, stating that a mistake had been made, causing an overcharge of three cents. The stamps were enclosed, with an apology. The lady was much amused to think that a firm which was daily doing a business of thousands of dollars should treat three cents as of so much importance, but her husband took the incident as a model and prospered accordingly. In business, of course, it is a well-recognized fact that the only way to succeed is to pay attention to the smallest details, whether they are likely to be noticed or not; and it would be a very good thing if people were as particular and trustworthy in their family and social relations. Christians are bound to glorify God and to see to it that no one has a chance to sneer at the way those who pray and sing fervently on Sunday can be shiftily or dishonestly careless and forgetful on Monday. One who scamps work, thinking it will not be noticed, or tries to gain advantages which are not rightfully his, is deliberately bringing dishonor on the Master he professes to be serving. It is a shame and a disgrace that the general impression has taken root in the world that a professed Christian is not to be trusted as confidently as a man who makes no profession of being swayed by the love and fear of God.

We should, as the Duchess in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" declares,

"Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves." If we are careful to be true and holy in thought and determination, the "sounds," or outward expression of character in word or act, can safely be left to take care of themselves. God's love of beautiful thoroughness can be seen as plainly in a snowy star which melts as soon as it touches the ground, as in a magnificent landscape. So also a successful departmental store is one where the strictest attention is paid to an order for a spool of thread or a paper of needles, as well as to the attractive arrangement of expensive goods which will catch the eye of millionaires. So also a doctor or a nurse, who will faithfully watch the faintest symptoms of a patient hovering between life and death, should be just as particular to keep the lightest promise to a little child; unless it should interfere with higher duties, when, if possible, the child should be told that his disappointment was not simply caused by careless neglect, but was unavoidable.

Sometimes people are far too particular about trifles. They are fussy and irritating, becoming a nuisance to all their friends. Ian Maclaren describes a man of this sort, who made such a fuss about petty details of housekeeping that his wife was ready to insist on a separation, if he had not found out his mistake in the nick of time.

Ideal faithfulness is faithfulness to God. Those who are trying to pour out all their powers of soul and body in His service will be quick to see where a thing that is really trifling should be sacrificed in order to gain a greater advantage. It is a far more important duty to establish pleasant relations with one's fellows, so that one can influence their outlook and ideals and perhaps color their lives for all eternity, than it is to clear a thousand dollars in a speculation or dust the tops of windows and doors, in the determination to be strictly faithful to household details where no one but God can see. Many a splendid housekeeper makes a reputation for herself and is altogether too busy to ever spend an hour or two in happy social intercourse with her husband and children. If visitors are spending the evening with her, she can take time for pleasant conversation, or even relax her devotion to her idol—"work"—long enough to play a game. But she considers it would be waste of time to lay aside her work in that fashion just to give pleasure to her own family or to get into touch with husband and children. Faithfulness in small matters should never crowd out great opportunities of fellowship with other souls, neither should it be allowed to stand in the way of the rest and recreation which are needed to keep these complex natures of ours fresh and vigorous.

Those who, without absolute necessity, allow their bodies and minds to become dull and faded; or let their souls run thin by allowing prayer and reading to be crowded out by things of infinitely less importance, are not being ideally faithful to the greatest opportunities God has entrusted to them as stewards. "We may fill our hands full of larger work and be constantly extending our interests and be giving our aid to all good causes; but if our own soul is all the time growing arid and lifeless, our service will lose its point and all our activities become hollow." HOPE.

The Master's Call.

"I asked the Lord to let me do
Some mighty work for Him,
To fight amidst His battle hosts.
Then sing the victor's hymn.
I longed my ardent love to show.
But Jesus would not have it so."
"He placed me in a quiet home,
Whose life was calm and still.
And gave me little things to do.
My daily life to fill.
I could not think it good to be
Just put aside so silently."
"Small duties gathered round my way,
They seemed of earth alone;
I who had longed for conquests bright
To lay before His throne.
Had common things to do and bear.
To watch and strive with daily care."
"So then I thought my prayer unheard,
And asked the Lord once more
That he would give me work for Him.
And open wide the door—
Forgetting that my Master knew
Just what was best for me to do."

"Then quietly the answer came:
'My child, I hear thy cry;
Think not that mighty deeds alone
Will bring the victory;
The battle has been planned by Me;
Let daily life thy conquests see.'"

The Ingle Nook.

From a W. I. Delegate.

Dear Friends,—Will you admit another member into your circle? I am an interested reader of the Ingle Nook, and have often thought of writing, and have just returned from the Women's Institute Convention at Guelph and found it interesting, profitable, and inspiring. It was my first trip, and I hope it will not be the last. I wonder how many of the circle were present, and which was Dame Durden. (By the way, cannot we persuade her to publish her photo?) The people of Guelph have reason to be proud of their little city, and the work that is being done in the Colleges. I enjoyed Miss Watson's talk, and Mr. Creelman's idea about more practical teaching in the country schools was very good indeed. Miss Yates and Miss Van Rensselaer, also Mrs. Hunter, gave very interesting lectures. Then the three-minute talks and the question drawer were very profitable, and some of the questions amusing. I thoroughly enjoyed them all, and last, but not least, our worthy superintendent; he observes all the rules of speakers and doesn't waste time over useless talk. I wish he would pay a visit to our branch some time when he is in this part of the country.

A few days after my return, we held our monthly W. I. meeting at the home of the President. The members were interested in listening to my account of the convention. Then we discussed the bird and millinery question. Bread-making is to be the subject next time. After that the President offered a prize for the best hand-sewing, to be judged at the next meeting. Our branch is small yet, but we have interesting meetings. I hope there will be lots of letters about the convention.

MUSKOKA DELEGATE.

Muskoka, Ont.

Aunt Marjorie Speaks Again.

Dear Dame Durden,—I usually drop in for a chat when renewing our subscription to "The Farmer's Advocate," so here I am again.

I have just been reading the "Conference of the Shades," and was pleased to know I was present, but I'm afraid you didn't see very clearly or you would have noticed that I was as busily engaged as Jack's Wife, for we have a wee lady almost eight months old, so you can imagine I haven't had much time for writing all summer, though our oldest girl, who is almost six years, has been a great help in minding the baby.

I think the Chatterers must all have been busy this summer, as very few have put in an appearance. However, I, for one, have enjoyed your talks very much, and especially your description of your trip to Quebec. I could just see you every bit of the way as far as Montreal, as I had that trip myself seven years ago and enjoyed it so much.

This summer we had a week's holidays in July, and we took a driving trip through the country, and how we enjoyed it! Everything was so fresh and green, and as it was cherry-picking time, we had some fine feeds.

Then during Toronto Exhibition we had another few days' holiday, and we took in the Exhibition and visited Hamilton also, and how we enjoyed the boat-rides! The lake was so smooth.

During the last two months I have had the pleasure of attending evening classes in Domestic Science two nights a week, and have received so many helpful hints and new ideas, and as the members of the class were all very sociable we were all sorry when the course closed.

One evening when we took up "soups," I had to make bean soup, and as I thought it was delicious I will send the recipe along, as perhaps some other young wives have never tried it.

Soak 1 pint of white beans overnight. Drain and cover with cold water and boil until the beans are powdery. In another pan heat a cup or more of tomatoes with a couple of onions sliced

in it and a spoon of cayenne. Add to the beans and strain all through a wire strainer. Add a lump of butter the size of an egg and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of soda. Heat again and serve.

Now, I have made a much longer call than I intended to, so I must hurry away, but first will wish all, and especially our shut-in chatterers, a Bright and Happy New Year. AUNT MARJORIE.
Wellington Co., Ont.

Jack's Wife Makes a Suggestion.

Dear Chatterers,—Now, was not that a mean trick of Dame Durden to "give me away"? Here I was just keeping quiet and taking care of my baby, and she has told it all right out in meetin'. Well, since it is out, I may as well confess that there is a baby—there is a big house and there were a lot of men to cook for this summer, and I wish you would all write and tell us how you do get through with the work. I hear someone say, "use system." Well, if any ordinary baby can't knock out any system ever invented I am mistaken; and if it could not, I am sure two or three men dropping in for a few days—never know when they will come or go—would help the baby; and if that combination would not work, tack on company and more company, and all your system would have vanished for ever.

And now, here is a suggestion to young women who just stay at home—those girls who "gathered nuts and sold them," and a few more that have no claim on anyone in particular and just "live around among their brothers and sisters"—why do you not take up special lines of housework, say sweeping and cleaning, or plain sewing and mending, baking, doing fruit and pickles, any or all of these lines, then go out by the day? I am sure, in any ordinary neighborhood, such help would command a good price, and yet one would be more at liberty than as a servant. What suggested it to me was the fact that I paid one dollar per day to get my fruit done up. I simply could not do it with the work I had, and yet I could not let it waste.

Then there have been so many times I have wished there was someone to whom I could go with my mending and remodeling—dressmakers always discourage all such work, preferring to make new. Would it not be nice if, when spring comes, we could just gather up all the winter clothing and send it to someone who would clean the suits and overcoats, mend the underwear, and make it all ready for next winter? Of course, you virtuous dames, who always manage your work so well, will be saying, "Is not she lazy?" But I am not lazy. "I deny the allegation and defy the allegation"; but I have now, and always have had, more work, far more work, than I could ever accomplish. I won't tell any more of my personal affairs to give you the reason why, but I know scores of farmers' wives who are in the same boat as I am, just worrying along doing the best they can.

Helpnabit, tell your new daughter I envy her good fortune in having her two babies. Of course, they make extra work, but in a few years there will be two pairs of hands to help.

Now, I do think we Nookers should keep up our department better than we have done this summer. Here there have been weeks at a time with never a letter, and our poor Dame working away as hard as she can to interest us. (By the way, if no one else writes about that nervous trouble I will, for I have "done had 'sparence.") She will be having nervous prostration, and then what will we do? Sunglint, send us some of those letters you told us of once that you wrote and then destroyed. (Of course, send them before they are destroyed.) Now that we have the young folks stowed away in the Roundabout Club, we can have regular mothers' meetings in The Nook, and discuss all sorts of things. Margaret Guthrie, I don't believe you have said "Boo" since you were in Toronto Hospital. And where is Bernice and her Township Fair? Is it not strange that so many come to the Ingle Nook for advice, yet never one comes back to tell that they were benefited by the advice given. Do they ever send you little private notes, Dame Durden? I think they might do that much, anyway.

Here is another suggestion, and first I want to tell what put it into my head.