

of them so much of the real milk of human kindness as there is in any one of your old blue deacons here." This unbelief, which is so rife among us, which leads some to doubt the resurrection of the dead and others try to disbelieve it and by which seek to justify themselves for living as though it were no sin to ignore the mission of life, is demoralizing and destructive. Negation and denial have a tendency to make men act as though life were unreal and frivolous and the grave its goal. Our Christian congregations are called upon to oppose to the negative, the positive; to the destructive, the constructive; to frivolousness, earnestness; to the deadening influences of doubt, the vitalizing influences of faith and of love for Christ.

THE NEXT BEST THING.

"Mr. Moncton," said my grandmother, "I have no wood to burn to-day. What shall I do?"

"Oh, send Louisa round to pick up some," said the good man, making a stride towards the door.

"But she has picked up all she can find."

"Then let her break up some old stuff."

"But she has broken up all the old stuff already."

"Oh! well, then, do the next best thing—I must be off," said the farmer; and off he was, whistling as he went, and no doubt wondering in his heart what the next thing would turn out to be.

Noon came, and with it came my grandfather and four hungry laborers. My grandmother stood in the kitchen, spinning on her great wheel, and singing a pleasant little ditty; Louisa was scouring in the back room, and the cat purring on the hearth before a black and fireless chimney, while the table was set in the middle of the room ready for dinner, with empty dishes.

"Well, wife, here we are," said my grandfather, cheerfully.

"So I see," said she placidly. "Have you had a good morning in the cornfield?"

"Why, yes, so-so. But where is the dinner?"

"In the pot on the doorstep. Won't you see if it is done?"

And on the doorstep, to be sure, sat the great iron pot, nicely covered, but not looking particularly steamy. My grandfather raised the cover, and there lay all the ingredients of a nice boiled dinner—everything placed in the nicest manner, and all the vegetables as raw as they had ever been. My grandfather started, and my grandmother joined another roll of her yarn upon her distaff and began another verse of her song.

"Why, woman, what does this mean?" began my grandfather, indignantly. "This dinner isn't cooked at all!"

"Dear me, is it not? Why, it has set in the sun this four hours."

"Set in the sun!"

"Yes, you told me to try the next best thing to have a fire, and I thought setting my dinner in the sun was about that."

My grandfather stood doubtful for a moment, but finally his sense of humor overcame his sense of injury, and he laughed aloud. Then picking up his hat, he said—

"Come, boys, we might as well start for the woods. We shall have no dinner until we have earned it, I perceive."

"Won't you have some bread and cheese before you go?" asked my grandmother, generous in her victory, as women always are. And so she gained the day.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Some of our exchanges have received the following old but good story:

A number of politicians who were seeking office under the government, were seated on a tavern porch talking, when an old toper named John D——, a person who was very loquacious when corned, but was exactly opposite when sober, said that is the company had no objection, he would tell them a story. They told him to "fire away": whereupon he spoke as follows:

A certain king—I don't recollect his name—had a philosopher, upon whose judgment he always depended. Now, it so happened that one day the king took it into his head to go hunting, and after summoning his nobles, and making the necessary preparations, he summoned his philosopher, and asked him if it would rain. The philosopher told him it would not, and he and his nobles departed.

While journeying along they met a countryman with a jackass. He advised them to turn, "for it will certainly rain," said he. They smiled contemptuously upon him and passed on. Before they had gone many miles, however, they had reason to regret not having taken the rustic's advice, as a heavy shower coming down, they were drenched to the skin. When they had returned to the palace, the king reprimanded the philosopher severely.

"I met a countryman," said he, "and he knows a great deal more about it than you, for he told me it would rain, whereas you told me it would not."

The king gave him his walking papers, and sent for the countryman, who soon made his appearance.

"Tell me," said the king, how did you know it was going to rain?"

"I didn't know," said the rustic, "my jackass told me."

"How, pray, did he tell you?" asked the king.

"By pricking up his ears, your majesty," returned the rustic.

The king sent the countryman away, and procuring the jackass from him, he placed him—the jackass—in the office the philosopher had filled. And here [observed John looking very wise] is where the king made a very great mistake.

"How so?" inquired the auditors eagerly.

"Why, ever since that time every jackass wants an office!"

Said the late Hugh Stowell Brown at the conclusion of one of his lectures: "Now I've done, and when I've done I sit down. That's a thing many men have yet to learn to do. I don't make 'Perorations,' and I don't like them. Take my advice—whenever you see a man getting red in the face and striking an attitude, you make for the door. You may be sure the balloon is filling, and it may explode. Some of my young friends will excuse me if I disappoint any expectations they may have had of an explosion, but I always sit down when I have done, and, having now, I resume my seat."