

## The Deacon's Little Maid.

ADELINA D. T. WHITNEY.

In this new world that was waiting when  
The star in the east shone down  
And lighted the steps of the Magian men  
To the Inn in Bethlehem town,

Many a hillside sloped to the sun,  
Or dipped to a shining sea,  
Fair for God's presence as ever one  
In Judah or Galilee.

Many a soul that was tarrying there,  
Till centuries should go by,  
To take its place in the line of men,  
To the Lord was just as nigh

As John, or Mary, or Lazarus,  
Who walked with him by the way  
For the blessed sign it should be to us  
That he walks at our side to-day.

So lovely with love that hath no compare,  
The very names grow dear;  
And Marys and Johns were everywhere,  
And Bethels were builded here.

Deep in the green New England hills,  
In a dimple fair to see,  
With orchards whose fruitage the summer  
fills,  
Lies a little Bethany.

And looking eastward between the farms,  
As over the river you go,  
Stately with elms as the old with palms,  
You may see sweet Jericho.

What wonder that Mary, the little maid,  
Pondering Bible-love,  
Pictured, wherever her steps had strayed,  
Those marvellous things of yore!—

That the darksome hollow beyond the  
bridge  
Where the pollard willows stood,  
And the steep, rough roadway up the ridge  
In the gloom of the hemlock wood,

Should seem like the wayside where the  
thieves  
Beset the traveller-man,  
And left him, all wounded, upon the leaves,  
For the Good Samaritan?

Or the scathed old pear tree by the brook,  
That the lightning in the night,  
When the farmhouse with the thunder  
shook,  
Left ghastly and dead and white,

Should be to her fancy the fig-tree, bare,  
Or yielding but bitter and worst,  
That the Lord, when he found it fruitless  
there,  
With an awful withering cursed?

That, scanning the houses far away  
On the hillsides in the sun,  
She questioned, many an innocent day,  
Which was the very one

Where the brother and sisters sat at meat  
With their friend, when the day was low,  
And Mary lovingly washed the feet  
That had journeyed in mercy so?

She was Deacon Sternbold's little maid,  
And her mother was kindly true;  
Her primer and hymns to her sire she said,  
But her heart the mother knew.

Helping the dame on Saturday morn  
At the churn all suddenly she  
Cried, "Mother, oh, I wish I'd been born  
Real Mary of Bethany!"

"Or I wish that Jesus would walk in here,  
And would call me to him, and say,  
With his eyes' great glory upon me, 'Dear,  
Come sit at my feet all day!'"

"And doesn't he?" answered the mother  
sweet;

"Can you think it except he say?  
To love him well is to sit at his feet—  
To serve him, to bide alway.

"Now bring me the tray; and the spate,  
and prints,  
Cool in the ice-bowl there;  
Then finish the seams in your gown of  
chints  
That to-morrow you may wear.

"And if baby wakes from his long, nice nap,  
Just sing him your little song  
While mother's busy; the work, mayhap,  
Won't need to hinder her long."

Maid Mary went at the gentle word;  
Some beautiful inward smile  
Dawning up to her face as if she heard  
More than was spoken the while.

For the child's deep heart was beating still  
With the joy of that saying sweet:  
"To bide with him is to do his will,  
To love him, to sit at his feet."

So while she fetched the spate and prints,  
And hastened away to sew  
With ready fingers the gown of chints,  
She went as the angels go.

And sitting there by the cradle-side,  
When a comrade lifted the latch  
And eagerly signed to the pasture wide,  
And whispered, "Blackberry Patch!"

Softly she shook her delicate head,  
But smiled as she did it, too;  
Till the other guessed she must know,  
Instead,  
Of some pleasanter thing to do.

And when the baby awoke at last,  
Fretting with sleepy whim,  
Though the seam was done, and the hour  
was past,  
Still she smiled: "I can wait, with him!"

When the older brothers came whooping  
in—  
Roger, and roguish Dan—  
Routing her quiet with rollicking din,  
And teasing, as brothers can;

And father, vexed for a mischief played,  
Full hastily called and chid—  
Never a cloud on the face of the maid  
The beautiful brightness hid.

For what could take her with ill surprise,  
Or what could provoke a frown,  
When she knew the glory of Jesus' eyes  
Was over her, looking down?

So Saturday's nightfall folded the hill  
And the Day of the Lord broke bright:  
And the good folk gathered sedate and still,  
In the meeting-house on the height.

With her tender secret in her face,  
Maid Mary sat in the pew;  
The Lord who was in his holy place  
Had been at home with her, too.

And when the people stood up to pray,  
As the custom used to be,  
She whispered, "Dear Christ, like yesterday  
Make all the to-days for me!"

Ah, many a Mary, merry or staid,  
On the hillsides there might be;  
But was not the deacon's dear little maid  
Real Mary of Bethany?

## I CAN AND I WILL.

How many boys there are who can,  
but never do, because they have no  
will-power, or if they have do not use  
it! Before undertaking to perform any  
task, you must carefully consider  
whether you can do it, and once con-  
vinced that you are able to accomplish  
it, then say, "I will do it," with a  
determination that you will never give  
up till it is done, and you will be  
successful. The difference between  
"Give up," and I "can't" and "can  
and will," is just the difference between

victory and defeat in all the great con-  
flicts of life.

Boys, adopt for your motto, "If  
I can I will," and victory will be  
yours in all life's battles. "I can and  
I will," nerves the arm of the world's  
heroes to-day, to whatever department  
of labour they are engaged. "I can  
and I will," has won all the great  
battles of life and of the world.

I know of a boy who was preparing  
to enter the junior class of the New  
York University. He was studying  
trigonometry, and I gave him three ex-  
amples for his next lesson. The fol-  
lowing day he came into my room to  
demonstrate his problems. Two of  
them he understood, but the third—a  
very difficult one—he had not per-  
formed. I said to him!

"Shall I help you?"  
"No, sir! I can and will do it if you  
give me time."

I said, "I will give you all the time  
you wish."  
The next day he came into my room  
to recite another lesson in the same  
study.

"Well, Simon, have you worked that  
example?"

"No, sir," he answered, "but I can  
and I will do it, if you will give me a  
little more time."

"Certainly, you shall have all the  
time you desire."

I always like these boys who are  
determined to do their own work, for  
they make our best scholars, and men  
too. The third morning you should  
have seen Simon enter my room. I  
knew he had it, for his whole face told  
the story of his success. Yes, he had  
it, notwithstanding it had cost him  
many hours of the severest mental  
labour. Not only had he solved the  
problem, but what was of infinitely  
grater importance to him, he had be-  
gun to develop mathematical powers  
which, under the inspiration of "I can  
and I will," he has continued to cul-  
tivate, until to-day he is professor of  
mathematics in one of our largest col-  
leges, and one of the ablest mathema-  
ticians of his years in our country.

My young friends, let your motto  
ever be, "If I can I will."—N. Y.  
Evangelist.

THE MINISTER AND THE  
INFIDEL.

SOME years ago a well-known Ameri-  
can minister delivered a series of  
discourses against atheism in a town,  
some of the inhabitants of which were  
known to be infidels. A few days  
afterwards he took passage in a steamer  
ascending the Mississippi, and found  
on board several of the people of the  
town, among whom was a noted infidel.  
So soon as this man discovered the  
minister, he commenced his blas-  
phemies, and when he perceived him  
reading at one of the tables, he pro-  
posed to his companions to go with  
him to the other side of the table, and  
listen to some stories he had to tell  
about religion and religious men, which  
he said would annoy the old preacher.

Quite a number, prompted by curi-  
osity, gathered around him to hear his  
vulgar stories and anecdotes, all of  
which pointed against the Bible and  
its ministers. The preacher did not  
raise his eyes from the book which he  
was reading, nor appear to be in the  
least troubled by the presence of the  
rabble. At length the infidel walked  
up to him, and, rudely slapping him  
on the shoulder, said:

"Old fellow, what do you think of  
these things?"

The minister calmly pointed to the  
land, and said:

"Do you see that beautiful land-  
scape spread out before you?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you were to send out a  
dove, it would pass over that scene,  
and see in it all that was beautiful  
and lovely; but if you were to send  
out a buzzard over precisely the same  
scene, it would see in it nothing to fix  
its attention, unless it could find some  
rotten carcass that would be loath-  
some to all other animals. It would  
alight and gloat upon that with ex-  
quisite pleasure."

The infidel walked off in confusion,  
and went by the name of "the  
buzzard," during the remainder of the  
passage.

## KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

THIS order was organized by King  
Arthur. He was the eleventh king of  
England after the departure of the  
Romans, and was crowned in Paris  
about the year 516. After he had  
expelled the Saxons from England,  
conquered Norway, Scotland, and the  
greater part of France, he returned  
home, and lived in such splendour that  
princes and knights from all parts  
visited his court. He organized a  
brotherhood of knights, numbering  
24, of whom he was chief. To avoid  
any disputes about the most honour-  
able place he had a round table made.  
Encircling that table the knights sat,  
and from this the order was named  
Knights of the Round Table. Their  
place of meeting was in the castle of  
Winchester.

To become members of this order  
persons were required to give proof of  
their valour and their skill in the use  
of arms. Whether on horse or on  
foot, they were always to be well  
armed.

Some of their principles, at least,  
given in an old account of them, were  
good, and worthy of study and observ-  
ance. "They were to protect and  
defend widows, maidens and children;  
relieve the distressed; maintain the  
Christian faith; contribute to the  
Church; to protect pilgrims; advance  
honour and suppress vice. To bury  
soldiers that wanted sepulchres, and  
administer to the cure of wounded  
soldiers hurt in the service of their  
country; to record all noble enter-  
prises that the fame thereof may ever  
live to their honour and the renown  
of the noble order."