

## Moral and Religious Miscellany.

From the American Messenger.

## WHAT ONE MAY ACCOMPLISH.

Travelling in a mountainous region at nightfall of a tempestuous day, and having lost my road, I was directed for a lodging to "Squire D——'s who keeps the ferry." After supper, I had a pleasant talk with the father of Squire D——, on whose head the snows of eighty winters had fallen, and soon the family were gathered around us, engaged in delightful converse. I had heard of the high-handed wickedness of a neighborhood not far off, with which my host was acquainted, where, when a young man who had wandered to a city, was to be hung for murder, his father and other relatives celebrated the day with a fine supper and a dance: no school could be kept, for the boys had whipped off every teacher who came among them; and meetings were frequently held in mockery of religious worship.

"Yes, yes," said the squire, with just enough of the Welsh accent to betray his origin, "and our neighborhood here was just as bad ten years ago; we were all alike; no church, no preacher, no Sunday-school, no day-school. One evening a minister and a young lady stopped at my house for the night; I thought them very inquisitive people. They asked if we had any preaching. No. Any schools? No; we have had several teachers, but no one will stay more than a quarter with us. The young lady said she would come and take a school among us, if we would employ her. After some further conversation, I told her I would see what could be done and write her the result. Next morning they left for the minister's home at M——, some fifty miles distant.

"In a short time I had a school made up and board engaged for the new teacher, and wrote her to that effect. She came and commenced her school at the time appointed. But soon there was complaint, that the new teacher *read the Bible and prayed in school*. And her troubles did not stop here. The man at whose house she boarded, insisted that she should leave, because she prayed, sung hymns, and would keep talking all the time. Miss H—— then set out to look up another home for herself; she applied to most of her employers, but met with the same reply from all: 'We cannot receive you, unless you leave off praying and singing.'

"When she applied to me, I objected on the same grounds. Finally, I told her if she would come on my own terms, I would take her into my own family. She inquired what those terms were. Why, said I, you shall have such a room to yourself; there you are to stay from the time you return from school until you start to go back, only when you come to your meals; you must not sing hymns; you may pray as much as you please, but mind you don't let us hear you at it; and remember, the first time you infringe this contract, you leave the premises. To all this she agreed, with as much meekness as if my terms had been reasonable and right. That evening she took up her abode under my roof; and little did I think what a blessing God was sending me in that frail, delicate girl.

"The children all loved the new teacher very much. So one day she told them to ask their parents permission, and if they were agreed, she would teach them on Sunday too. This proposal pleased us all. If she taught on Sunday, that was so much clear gain to us. And to school the children went every Sunday with clean clothes and clean faces.

"I soon observed that my children took to staying

in the teacher's room much of their time. At length, one Sunday morning, they came down with some tracts; I looked over them, and found they were on the subject of religion. Ah, said I my lady, I've caught you now. I called her down, and told her she had violated her contract, and must be off. The poor girl began to weep; I felt ashamed. 'Dear sir,' said she, 'will you read those tracts? If you do, and still continue in your present mind, I will leave your house immediately.'

"Here was a pretty fix; the children were all crying, and begging me not to send Miss H—— away; and the books, oh, they could not part with the books, I was mightily perplexed; at last I gave in. Said I, Miss H——, you may go back to your room; I will consider the matter. I shall never forget the smile that passed over her face as she thanked me and went back to her room. 'Thanked me, indeed' I deserved a sound basting instead of thanks. Well, I set to work, read one of the tracts, felt self-condemned; read it again, felt dreadfully troubled. Then I read them all, felt that I was a great sinner. I said nothing more to Miss H—— about leaving my house. Each day my conviction became deeper. At last, I could bear it no longer. Thought I, this won't do; I must talk with Miss H——. So I invited her to come and sit with us in the family room. She cheerfully complied. I asked her a great many questions about my concern. But all would not do; my distress continued, or rather my agony, for I thought I was the greatest sinner on earth.

"At last, I sent one evening for Miss H—— to come down, and I told her my troubles: for my proud heart was well-nigh broken. Said I, Miss H——, I feel so and so ever since I read those tracts of yours; and I related all that was passing in my mind; and said I, do you think there is any mercy or hope for such a poor miserable sinner? The tears began to run down her cheeks; then she laughed; then she caught me by both hands, and looking up into my face, she said, Oh, my dear friend, I am so glad. Why, said I, are you glad because I am in trouble? Oh, my dear sir, says she, this is the spirit of God operating on your heart. All at once a great light seemed to shine in my mind. All that I had been learning for so many weeks seemed now just as plain as A B C. Said I, come Miss H——, kneel down then and pray for me; she did pray for me, and I do bless God for his mercy to such a poor hardened sinner. I believe that God did change my heart just while that *very prayer* was going up. All at once it just came; I loved my Bible and I loved to pray, and I could not bear the company that I used to take so much delight in.

"On the next Sabbath, Miss H—— asked me to go along with her and the children to the school—which was, and had been a Sunday-school, though we never suspected it—and here came a trial. If I go, they will say I am getting religious; if I stay, it will be a sin, for I know I *ought* to go; and then it will grieve Miss H——. These last considerations were the strongest; so I went. The room was crowded with children, all waiting for their teacher; I thought they all looked happy. After a little while, Miss H—— took the Bible, and coming to me, she said, Mr. D——, will you read and pray with us this morning? I was startled; my very heart trembled. Said I, Oh, no; not now. Then she read a chapter and prayed herself. Oh, how I felt to think that I was ashamed to pray before those children! Ah, thought I this will never do; I will come here and pray next Sunday. That night I read and prayed with my family; and the next Sabbath I opened the school with prayer.