

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE HIDDEN THINGS.

(For the Church Guardian.)

"For now we see through a glass darkly,
"But then face to face—now I know
"In part: but then shall I know
"Even as also I am known."—1. Cor. XIII. 12.

I search the sky and sea and air
For some clear sign of God's great love;
And I can read me everywhere
In deep beneath, in blue above,
Pledges that to all earnest eyes
Are full of gleams of Paradise.

Our eyes are dim, we will not see;
We blunder blindly up the way:
We grope in anguish for the key
That holds the mystery of to-day;
Our parched lips refuse the prayer
That much availeth everywhere.

We murmur at God's great decree
That bids us wait till fuller time;
We say "these things how can they be,"
Impatient we would wildly climb
The heights that only can be won
By those who pray from sun to sun.

Who can lift up their hands and say,
"We have known nought of darkness here;
We have seen clearly all the way,
And from our eyes there falls no tear,
For wandering or waywardness,
For prayerless pain and sins durous."

Who can lift up his hands and say,
"I have not wronged my fellow-man
By word or deed, but have always
Lived life as though a little span
But held the measure of my years;
And have no time for strife or sneers."

We love and wail, endure and hate,
We blindly strike the chords of life,
We fill the air with discord rife,
Then blame our own tyrannous fate.
Creation has grown grey with death,
Because of man that murmureth.

We darkly see each other here,
As through a glass that brittle is;
And all our hopes are fed with fears.
But in a better land than this,
We all shall see—by God's dear grace—
Each other truly face to face.

O God! we know not, *would* not know
Why thou hast bid us suffer here;
O, make our incompleteness shew
Thy Great Completeness, and be near
When we shall lay our burdens down,
And rise to know as we are known.

HORATIO GILBERT PARKER.

January 17th, 1885.

Sunday Chimes.

BY EMMA MARSHALL, AUTHOR OF "GRACE BUXTON,"
"NOTHING NEW," ETC.

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My
brethren, ye did it unto Me."

CHAPTER IV.

MATSIE FINDS A HOME.

They remembered the child, they said, and had missed her. She was not a bad one, they said, and did her best to pick up a living by selling matches and cresses. One woman, more respectable than the majority of dwellers in those dark courts, said she remembered the child coming there before her uncle had sunk so low; that then she was decently dressed, and looked as if she had known better days. She believed

her parents had lived in the country, and that she had been looked after once; for she had heard her talk of things which she could never have seen in King's Alley.

Dr. Mansfield soon saw that Matsie was on the Bankes's hands—that is to say, there was not a creature found to be responsible for her; and that there was nothing but the Union before her. But the question of removal had been set at rest by Matsie's illness increasing. For many days she had been lying in this little upper room, faint and weak, with a low fever sapping away her strength; and the long course of privation and suffering which she had gone through was telling upon her poor emaciated frame. She would lie very still, looking up at the square of blue sky which smiled down upon her from the whitewashed roof, and watching the white clouds cross it or the stars peep out as the summer night drew on.

Dr. Mansfield took care that she had every proper nourishment, and relieved the Bankeses from much expense. Evelyn was busy making clothes for her to wear when she got well; and there was a growing interest in her heart for the little ragged child who had stood looking at her so wistfully in the lane that Sunday morning.

On the day of which I write Matsie had crept downstairs for the first time in her neat frock and good underclothing in which Mary Bankes had dressed her. She was very weak, and could not bear the stout shoes, which were provided for her, on her feet, so long accustomed to be unencumbered with such appendages. Mary gave up the point as she saw the child was really unable to bear the pressure of the shoes; though it tried her a little to see Matsie shuffling along in a way peculiar to these city Arabs, with unprotected feet.

She placed the child in the window next the road, where a canary was singing, and gave her a cushion and little stool for her feet, while she went on with her household occupation. The rest of the family were at church, and everything was quiet and still.

"There! are you not glad to be getting well again?" Mary asked. "It is five weeks to-day since we carried you up to that little room. Now you'll soon be all right."

But, to Mary's surprise, Matsie's only answer was a passionate burst of crying.

"I don't want to get well; you'll send me away then. Oh, don't send me away!"

"There then, my dear, we'll see about it. Don't cry."

"Oh, don't ee send me away; crusts is enough for me, and I'll try hard to serve you,—I will. I will learn all you teach me; and I love you. I'd die for you."

Mary Bankes was almost frightened at the child's vehemence. There had been for some time a floating idea in her mind that Matsie might turn into a servant, nurse the coming baby, and help her in her household work. But she knew that care and thought were necessary to make both ends meet as it was, and to keep up the appearance of respectability and order for which their house is so conspicuous. But the message sent to her soul that Sunday on which she first saw poor Matsie seemed to sound in her ears, and could not be hushed:—

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did unto Me.

"If I can keep you, my dear, I will," she said; "but I must ask my husband and the doctor before I make up my mind; and I must ask God," she added, in a low tone. "Now you must make haste and get well, and some day you shall go and see the little lady, and thank her for all the nice things she has made for you. Now here is a cup of broth which I fetched from the doctor's last night, and when you have drunk that you'll feel ever so much better."

Then when Mary had finished her work, and set the table neatly for dinner, she came and sat down by Matsie, and read to her from her children's little hymn-book, and then a story from the Gospel. Mary read slowly, and not very fluently; but from her lips, uneducated as they were, the child drew the waters of salvation. As in many instances of a like kind Matsie's little barren soul received the word, and it fell upon it like dew from heaven. She believed the good news without a question; and when she heard of the pure and holy Jesus who loved the little forlorn Matsie, she said at once, then for His sake she must try to be good: if He died for her, how thankful she must be; and to lie and steal and drink and use bad words, became something very different in her eyes now she could understand that they grieved this unseen but present Friend of whom Mary Bankes told her.

As now and then we hear the story of missionary effort in distant lands finding its reward in the complete surrender of some poor heathen heart to God, with a fulness and sincerity which we, who take His Name day by day on our lips, and are familiar with the revelation of His Son from our earliest years, cannot easily understand; so Matsie, who, as I have said, was not one whit less ignorant than a Brahmin or Hindoo child—even within sound of Sunday chimes—lifted her poor little soul to God, and He gave her the Spirit of knowledge and His holy fear.

That night Mary Bankes obtained from her husband leave to keep the child, who had been as she said, sent to their very door. Of course discouragements, and wonder, and assurances from Aunt Jane and the neighbours, that it would not answer, were soon poured in on her. And many were the prophecies of evil in which Aunt Jane, in particular, indulged. The "children would suffer from bad example she said; Matsie would steal and lie, and teach the children to use bad language." But Mary Bankes held on her way, and by love and forbearance won Matsie to her service.

In November, when a baby made its appearance under Tom Bankes' roof, Matsie first developed the power which was in her. She kept strictly to her mistress's orders, and the house was as neat, and the humble dinner as well cooked almost, as when Mary was about. Then the baby! how Matsie loved it. One Sunday morning, when she was trusted to take care of it while the rest were at church, was the proudest of her whole life. The bells were ringing as she hushed it in her arms; and her mistress, looking back on her as she stood by the window, smiled and waved her hand. Then Matsie broke into a low sing-song which kept tune with the chiming bells:—

"Ah! baby, I know not why the bells ring,—why they ring so pretty on Sunday. Because it is God's Day, baby,—the best day of all the week,—and the bells call us to go and hear about Jesus, and pray, and learn to be good. Ah! baby, baby. Sunday is the best day for poor Matsie now,—just the very best day of all."

And as Mary Bankes walked with her husband and children to God's house that winter morning, to her too the bells had a sweet message; and as the image of Matsie with her baby in her arms rose before her, the chimes seemed to bring to her soul the words to which she had listened on the day when she found her ragged and forlorn, and took her in:—

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me."

Some deed of love lies within the reach of all of us, rich or poor, gentle or simple, young or old. We may each find a poor destitute Matsie on our threshold. We may not ever be in the same position as Mary Bankes; but it is impossible to pass through life without some opportunity of doing something for Him who has done so much for us. Let us look for these opportunities, and pray to see them when they lie before us; let us bear about with us, in the working days of the week, messages from God's Day of Rest; and let Sunday bells ring for us a ceaseless chime of Peace and Good-will towards man.