



The Irish Spinning Wheel.

This is one of the pictures which "Mollie" sent us from Ireland, and taken in conjunction with what she tells of the beautiful lace fabrics, a revived industry now becoming a profitable source of breadwinning, once more we can endorse the testimony of Ruskin which accompanies it: "The Irish people cannot only design beautiful things, but can also execute them with indefatigable industry." Irish linen is celebrated for beauty of texture and finish all the world over, and though scientific methods have driven the useful old spinning wheel into the corner, or made of it simply a relic for the rich man's drawing-room, yet so closely is it interwoven with the histories of the Irish homes of the past that in song and story alike its memory will never wholly die out.

H. A. B.

THE QUIET HOUR.

To-day or To-morrow?

"I know of a land where the streets are paved
With the things which we meant to achieve.
It is walled with the money we meant to have saved
And the pleasures for which we grieved.
The kind words unspoken, the promises broken,
And many a coveted boon,
Are stowed away there in that land somewhere—
The land of 'Pretty Soon.'

"There are uncut jewels of possible fame,
Lying about in the dust,
And many a noble and lofty aim
Covered with mould and rust.
And oh! this place, while it seems so near,
Is farther away than the moon,
Though our purpose is fair, yet we never get there—
The land of 'Pretty Soon.'

"The road that leads to that mystic land
Is strewn with pitiful wrecks,
And the ships that have sailed for its shining strand
Bear skeletons on their decks.
Is farther at noon than it is at dawn,
Farther at night than at noon,
Oh! let us beware of that land down there—
The land of 'Pretty Soon.'

My father used to be very fond of the saying,
"To-morrow never comes"; and, as a child, the words often puzzled me. It seemed to me that to-morrow—Saturday or Sunday, as it might be—would surely come in time. The fact that although Saturday might come, to-morrow was still as far off as ever did become clear at last, but even then I did not at once understand the great significance of the truism.

"To-day" unsullied comes to thee—newborn,
To-morrow is not thine.
The sun may cease to shine
For thee ere earth shall greet its morn.
Be earnest, then, in thought and deed,
Nor fear approaching night.
Calm comes with evening light,
And hope and peace. Thy duty hied 'to-day.'

We can live only in the present. This is a truism, of course; but, though it is a self-evident fact, we are constantly forgetting it and trying our very hardest to live in the future—wasting strength in attempting to perform an impossibility.

Don't misunderstand me. We must never refuse to attempt a task just because it is impossible. When Gideon was told to deliver Israel from the Midianites, to conquer an innumerable army with only three hundred men, the apparent impossibility of success was not accepted as an excuse. When God says, "Have not I sent thee?" that is enough. His soldiers have no need to question whether the duty set them be impossible or not, for "with God all things are possible."

But it is folly to attempt impossibilities without His authority or help, and, as I said before, it is impossible to live in the ever-elusive "to-morrow." How often we hear people talk of the

great things they would do if they only had the opportunity. "If I were only rich," they say, "I would do a great deal to help the world." Is it only possible for rich people to do good? Our Lord seemed to think very differently, for, though He was rich, yet in order to help us effectually, He became poor. Do Christians really agree with the world, and trust implicitly in the power of the "almighty dollar"? The chief business of the Church often seems to be to raise money. Not to give money, but to raise it—generally a very different thing.

God has made us for a particular purpose, be sure of that. If He wants us to do good with money He will give us money. Let us see that we spend it as His stewards. But, after all, do you think that our chief business here is to do good or to be good? The two things should go hand-in-hand, shouldn't they? But, although it is hardly possible to be good without doing good, it is quite possible to do good without being good. If we are branches of the True Vine our chief business is to grow and bear fruit.

Instead of dreaming of the great things we hope to do some time, let us grasp the opportunities which present themselves every hour.

Tradition tells of an Eastern prince who asked Solomon for a maxim that would make him strong in misfortune and humble in prosperity. The maxim he received was: "Even this also will pass away." Our opportunities will pass, like everything else—and they never come back again. Let us make use of them to-day, remembering the familiar description of the ancient statue of Opportunity. It stood on its toes and had wings on its feet, to show that it could only stay a moment. A lock of hair hung on its forehead, as a sign that men might seize it if they would. The head was bald behind, showing that when it had once passed it could not be caught.

"To-day is added to our time,
Yet, while we speak, it glides away.
How soon shall we be past our prime,
For where, alas, is yesterday?
Gone—gone into eternity.
There every day in turn appears.
To-morrow? Oh, 'twill never be,
If we should live a thousand years!"

We did not come into this world by chance. God has called us to some particular work, and specially fitted us for this, our true vocation. Planning great things for to-morrow will not make up for the neglect of the work put into our hands to-day.

A vine was once entwined 'round a column of a ruined temple. One night part of the roof supported by this column was blown down. Next morning the gardener noticed that the vine was drooping. Examination proved that it had not been injured by the storm, what could be the matter? The leaves answered: "We have failed in the work the Master gave us to do. We were set here to support the temple roof, and it has fallen." The gardener smiled as he held up a cluster of rich purple grapes, and said: "This is the work the Master set thee to do and thou hast done it." Then a thrill of new life stirred through every twig. It is very important that we should not mistake our vocation. There is another way in which we are apt to waste our strength by trying to live in to-morrow instead of in to-day. I mean, of course, in being anxious and worried about the future. I can't take up that question now, for our editor will be down on me if I take up too much space, but I should like to tell you what one old woman thought about it.

She says: "I never found the work any the forwarder for worrying about it over night. You can't mend a thing before it's torn; and if you get a hundred pieces ready, the rent'll always be sure just to go in the way that fits none of 'em. Things be perverse most times, and there's no way that I know of being up with them before-hand."

Our business, then, is with to-day. Are we going to waste it, or lay out its hours as precious talents committed to us in trust by our Master? To Him we must render an account.

"Lose this day loitering, 'twill be the same story
To-morrow, and the next more dilatory.
The indecision brings its own delays,
And days are lost, lamenting o'er lost days.
Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute.
What you can do, and think you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, magic in it.
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated.
Begin it, and the work will be completed."

HOPE.

To Cure a Child of Croup.

Wring flannel cloths out of hot water and apply them to the throat, changing them frequently. Make a tent over the crib by means of sheets over a screen or umbrella, then place a small teakettle over an alcohol lamp near the crib and let the child inhale the moist vapor which may be conducted inside the tent, care being taken that the child does not come close enough to the hot steam to get burnt. If the attack is severe you may give ten drops of ipecac every fifteen minutes until vomiting results. It would be best to keep the patient indoors for a day or two after the attack.—(Emelyn Lincoln Coolidge, M. D., in the January Ladies' Home Journal.

On Some Practical Topics.

(NO. 1.)

ON CENTRALIZATION OF SCHOOLS IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

In the final paragraph of an admirable editorial on the first page of the "Advocate" of the 15th of January, headed "An Important Educational Announcement," its readers are invited to give an opinion regarding the proposition to centralize country schools; possible legislation to make such action permissible being fore-shadowed.

The writer has come across a very clear presentation of the subject in the Canadian Teacher of 1st September, and as it is a magazine which may not fall into the hands of those who are not strictly educationists amongst "Advocate" subscribers, an opportunity is asked to make some quotations which may help towards the formation of a fair consideration of the same before the invitation to give such an opinion is accepted.

The Canadian Teacher says: "The improvement of school conditions for the children of country districts is the most important topic for consideration by the people of Canada to-day. The country school is the great formative force in the nation's life. To the school more than anything else must we look for the character of our future legislators, for the uprightness of our future judges, for the dignity of our future pastors, and the integrity of our future citizens. . . . But, someone will say, how do you propose to give us better and more experienced teachers, and how can you increase the salary sufficiently to induce such teachers to remain in the service? The Canadian Teacher believes that the solution lies in the CENTRALIZATION OF SCHOOLS. By this we mean the closing of the different schools, and the transportation of the children to and from that school in waggons at the public expense.

"By this system pupils from every part of the township enjoy a graded-school education. With the grading of the school and the larger number of pupils come teachers of a more highly-educated class. Higher branches of study are taught, the teachers are more conversant with the needs of their profession. The salaries are higher, the health of the pupils is preserved, because they are not compelled to walk to school in slush, snow and rain, to sit with damp, and, perhaps, wet feet, in ill-ventilated buildings. There is no lounging by the wayside. The use of indecent and obscene language is prohibited in the waggons, thus all opportunities for quarrelling or improper conduct on the way to and from school is removed. The attendance is larger and truancy is unknown, and the boards of education exercise as much care in the selection of drivers as they do in that of teachers. . . . In many parts of the United States this plan has been tried and found a complete success. . . .

"The educational influence of a central school over that of eight or nine widely-scattered, neglected buildings is beyond controversy. On the playground all the big boys of the township play baseball. Think what it is to get all the boys of a township—country boys, I mean—on one playground! There will grow up a unity. Each boy, having studied and played with other boys of the entire township, will be stronger for it.

"The youth of the farm dreams and longs for the intenser life of the city. He feels an almost irresistible desire to get closer to the nerve center. The great outside world is calling him, and his nature answers the call. Country life demands and must speedily have more of city advantages. With the free transportation of children our youth can be educated at home, be at home evenings and not on the streets of a distant city. The Canadian Teacher looks for objectors to the plan. Progress is rarely along the path of least resistance.

"But to the man, rich or poor, who has a family of growing children, living in a country district, far from a city, any reasonable proposition to better the educational facilities for his children ought to receive from him a candid consideration.

By centralization all the children of the township have the same chance for higher educational advantages, which under the present plan only five or ten per cent. are able to get by leaving home and going to the city. With a central graded school and a High School course the children can be at home during the evenings under the care of their parents. The people of the country districts are entitled to receive the fullest benefits for money expended. Better means of education, better training, stronger characters, the possibility of all these must appeal to every parent and to every public-spirited citizen of any community.

"By centralization we go a long way towards the solution of the problem, 'How to keep the boys on the farm.' We bring to the farm that which he goes to the city and town to secure. Such a school may become the social and intel-