

FOR COMMON MERCIES.

BY MISS MARGARET E. SAUNDERS.

Dear Lord, we are ever so thankful,
As thankful we should be to Thee,
For thine angels sent down to defend us
From dangers our eyes never see;
From perils that lurk unsuspected,
The powers of earth and of air,
The while we are heaven protected,
And guarded from evil and snare?

Are we grateful, as grateful we should be,
For commonplace days and toils?
When safe we have forth to our labor,
And safe we have homeward at night;
For the weeks in which nothing has happened
Save commonplace toiling and play,
When we've worked at the tasks of the household,
And peace has hushed the house day by day?

Dear Lord, that the terror at midnight,
The wind of the wind and the flame,
Hath passed by our dwelling, we praise Thee
That the circle of darlings unbroken
Yet gathered in bliss round the board,
That commonplace love is our portion,
We give Thee our praises, dear Lord.

Forgive us who live by Thy bounty
That often our lives are so bare
Of the garlands of praise that should render
All voice and fragrant each prayer.
Dear Lord, in the slariness of trouble
We cry from the depths to the throne!
In the long days of gladness and beauty
Take Thou the glad hearts as Thine own.

Of common are sunshine and flowers,
And common are raindrop and dew,
And the gay little footstep of children,
And common the love that holds true.
So, Lord, for our commonplace mercies,
That straight from Thy hand are bestowed,
We are fain to uplift our thanksgivings—
Take, Lord, the long debt we have owed.

EARNING HIS SALT.

"You don't earn your salt, that's what you don't! You're just a trouble an' expense."

Miss Hannah Smith shut the milk-room door with a slam, and Sammy, her orphan nephew, took up the pail of milk and went to feed the calf. He walked down through the garden very slowly, and the pail seemed very heavy, judging from the dejected way in which he carried it, or perhaps it was his heart which was so heavy after all.

He did seem to be so unfortunate, he had just broken the blue and white bowl from which his supper of bread and milk had been eaten. Of course he had not meant to break it, and was truly sorry, but it had vexed his aunt all the same, and brought down upon him sharp words of condemnation which he had so often heard:

"You don't earn your salt!"

And he had worked so hard that day. It was hot and sultry after a rainy morning, and he had churned and weeded the garden beds—such long beds they were, too; and raked the dooryard, and hunted out a stolen hen's nest, had picked some currants, and fed the chickens over, and over again, and the calf and the pig—why, it made him tired just to think over all he had done. And it was Saturday, too—a holiday for most boys; but for poor Sammy there had been no time to play, or even to go fishing up the creek with "the boys," or even to look between the covers of a story-book which one of them had lent him; and so the day had gone, and, after all, he had not earned his salt.

He had reached the bars of Spot's pasture, and the pretty creature had just put her eager nose in the pail, when one of the Laurence boys came skipping along the lane.

"Hey, Bert! Come over an' see Spot drink."

"All right!" can't stop but a minute, though, for I've got an errand for Miss Smith; but my grahns! ain't Spot growin' into a beauty?"

"Yes, that she is! she's the biggest eater you ever see! But say, Bert, is salt very dear stuff?"

"Salt? why, I don't know. I guess not, though, for everybody has lots of it. Why Sam, you don't need much to Spot yet, do you?"

"Oh, no. I was jest wonderin' about it, that's all."

"Well, ask your Aunt Hannah, she'll be sure to know, but you'd better ask me first, for I'm the baby's sick an' she's a want-help."

Bert awoke to the house and Sam lingered long over the bars that his aunt had made excuse for the sharpness with which she had spoken to him.

"Sammy! Sam! Sammy! where be you a stayin'?"

And as soon as he made his appearance she said:

"I didn't know but you'd fell in the pail of milk an' drowned yourself. Here, I've got to go straight over to Miss Laurence's cause her baby's sick, and she's a sick high to death, as she always is if the least thing's a matter, an' I want to look up the house an' take the key, so you'll have to come in an' go to bed."

Poor Sam! It was only a little after sunset, and it was getting so pleasant and cool out of doors, and he knew just how hot and stuffy it was in his little room under the eaves.

"Oh, Aunt Hannah! please, mayn't I go with you?"

"You? why, what airly you do you think you'd be to the baby?"

"None, of course; but—but you'll be so awful lonesome a comin' back all alone!"

"Stuff an' nonsense! I don't mean to stay over an hour; I don't like to leave the house all stark alone with all that money in it neither; not that there's any real danger, for there ain't no prowlers around no-ways, an' if there was, they'd never think of lookin' where I keep my money hid. I was a fool for tellin' you, I s'pose."

"Why, Aunt Hannah? you know I'd never touch it!"

"Of course you wouldn't; you're honest, you wouldn't be Benjamin's boy. But, as I was sayin', I ought to have gone in to the bank this forenoon, but it was so hot an' I had so much to do, I must go sure on Monday; an'

you be a good boy an' go straight to bed, an' mebbe I'll let you go along. I've got to buy you another pair of shoes I s'pose. How glad I shall be if you ever do get big enough an' capable enough to earn your salt!"

Sam hung up his hat in the entry and went into the kitchen where his aunt was busy putting things in order for the night and fastening down the windows, but suddenly she ain't cooled off a mite up in your room yet, Sammy, so if you want to you can set here by this window a spell, if you'll promise not to go out of it, an' be certain sure to put it down an' turn the catch down over the top before you go to bed."

Sam gratefully promised, and his aunt, knowing that she could trust him, locked the door, put the key in her pocket and departed, for in spite of her stern and abrupt manner she had the experience and ready tact which made her a blessing to her suffering neighbors.

The lonely boy watched her out of sight up the lane, and thought wistfully of the Laurence boy who was out playing "wip" and "hopscotch" all through the long twilight, and wished that he might be with them; but then with a little thrill of pleasure he thought of the promised new shoes, and there was the door—how sure he might read a few minutes; so he ran upstairs after it, and settled himself close to the window to catch the last remnant of daylight, but he had read scarcely more than two pages when the window suddenly darkened by the figure of a man.

Sam was startled, and, still more, dismayed when he saw that instead of one of the neighbors, it was a man he had never before seen.

"Well, young chap, improvise your mind, be ye? That's a good idee; but couldn't you jest get me a drink of water or milk, or—or ask somebody else to do it?"

"There ain't nobody else; but I can get you some water. I don't hardly dare disturb the milk."

"Ah, I see, afraid! Old lady's a terror, is she? Locks you up alone in the house when she's away."

"Well, I was jest going to bed, you know, an'—"

"Mannerly folks don't go to bed when they've got callers," said the man sitting down in the window. "Come, I'm dyin' for that water, boy."

Sam hardly knew what to do. The water pail was out in the shed, and he could not shut the window down with the man sitting there; but while he hesitated his visitor swung himself in.

"Now, my young friend, never mind the water, but give me that money. I'll take care of it, an' save the old woman goin' to the bank."

The boy's knees shook under him at this fierce demand, but he said bravely:

"I ain't got no money to give you, but I'll try to get you some water."

"Likely not; but you know where her money is. I heard every word she said. Few words an' quick work is my motto, so you jest git it an' I'll be off an' you can go to your peaceful rest. She keeps in some out-of-the-way place, I know; a nake hidin'-spot—now, where is it?"

Poor little Sam! How he wished he could say truthfully that he didn't know where. What should he do? He must keep the secret—that was certain. But what would this dreadful man do to him? Oh! if his aunt had only gone to the bank that day. She never kept much money in the house, but this was the price of a piece of land that one of the neighbors had bought of her.

"I can't tell you," said the boy at last. "Well, then, show me; that'll be all the better."

"I can't do that, neither!" Oh, no, he had no choice.

"I will soon as I get my hands on that money—double quick, too! An' now if you don't git it in a hurry, I'll take means to make you!" and taking Sam's arm in a grip that made him wince, he continued: "Now, lead off lively, an' no false scents, neither, you mind."

But the child refused to take one step.

"You won't hey? I didn't want to shoot you, but—"

For Sam shuddered with terror, and gasped out:

"Oh, mister, don't please—don't. I can't get you the money, but I'll get you the milk right straight off."

"Who cares for milk now? It's the greenbacks I want, d'ye hear? Now git 'em, or you'll suffer."

"I can't! I can't, not if you do kill me! Oh! ain't you got no little boys at home that you wouldn't mind hurt, so you can be easy for me?"

"No, I ain't boys ain't worth their salt, an' I ain't got no home, neither."

"Oh, dear! I wish Aunt Hannah would come home," sobbed poor Sam in an agony of fear and dread.

"Well, she won't—no! for a half hour yet. Now quit that snifflin', an' show up that money."

But Sam's lips were sealed, and his feet motionless.

"Here then," said the tramp, "if you're bound to be dumb, I'll make you so in earnest!" and in a moment the boy was firmly gagged.

"Will you get it now, before worse happens!"

But Sam, though faint with mortal terror, shook his head decidedly, and the man, becoming desperate, took some strong cord from his pocket and tied Sam's hands behind him and then to the door, and proceeded to rummage for himself, assuring the child that if he failed to find the money and he still refused to tell, he should certainly kill him.

Sammy's whole life of twelve years seemed to him as if it were a dream, and he lay there in misery with the cords cutting into his flesh. Oh, how sweet life looked to him now—even the homely duties which he that very day grumbled over.

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on her knees by his bed, sobbing and kissing his poor, swollen wrists.

When he became strong enough he was told the balance of the story. How Mr. Laurence had been a stranger in the vicinity that evening, and had heard rumors of late robberies, and Miss Smith, quite uneasy, had hurried home as soon as the baby was better; how Mr. Laurence had gone with her, and they had surprised the burglar and found him captured him but for the daring leap through a second-story window, and how Sam had been released and carried over to Mr. Laurence's house, where he and his aunt and the money were to remain over Sunday at least! All this he was told, and also that he was one of the very best and bravest and dearest boys in the whole world! And Sammy had heard no allusions to salt since that evening night.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

Children's Day at Hubbard's Corners.

"I wish you could get up the hill to the school-house next Sunday, Grandma, to hear us sing the songs Miss Hartley is teaching us for Children's Day."

Letitia Hartley, who was in the school-house, and stood in the doorway of the old-fashioned kitchen.

"Children's Day! What's that?" asked her grandmother. "When I was a child, we had General Training Day in the spring, when all the militia was out, and I remember we always had green currants stewed for tea, and great yellow squares of baker's gingerbread that day. They don't have such gingerbread now! But I never heard of Children's Day."

"No," said Letitia, "we never had it up at Hubbard's Corners before. We are going to bring all the flowers that we can, and have the school-house trimmed with them, and Mr. Hartley's is coming from New York to talk to us. Miss Hartley says he is busy working and speaking in Sunday-schools all the time, and has been invited to go to several other places next Sunday, but some have been so interested in her school. You know Miss Hartley came up to Newton early this summer, just on account of this Sunday-school that she started last summer."

"Why?" called a sharp voice from the back porch, "git your things right off and come down in the back lot and help me bring up the old turkey and her young ones. Len found her there this mornin', where she'd stole her nest, and Sunday or no Sunday she's got to be put in a coop. You needn't cumber down by the road, but through the lane, 'cause the Shultzes and Newmans I'll likely be cummin' from meetin'," she added, as Letitia went up her room, his mind troubled and perplexed by the offer made by her aunt's strange method of reasoning.

"I suppose I could get the coop ready," mildly suggested Grandma Murray, as Letitia went up her room, his mind troubled and perplexed by the offer made by her aunt's strange method of reasoning.

"You're a wonderful manager, Maria," said her father, placatingly, "and would have made some man forehanded, if—"

There, there," said his daughter. "I wonder who would have taken care of you and mother and John's orphan girl if I had got married; for it ain't every man that wants to marry his wife's family. If John 'd only had sense enough to wait, he might have brought up to work, instead of that minister's sickly daughter, it might have been different. Tishy's just like her mother!"

"Tishy's a good girl, Maria, and helps you a sight, and saved you hiring; you can remember that," answered Letitia. "And leads a life that might put some of us 'professors' to shame," he added, with more earnestness than he was accustomed to use in his discussions with his daughter.

"Good enough," said Maria, "but 'no judgment. Why she'll spend hours waterin' that climbin' rose bush, and countin' the buds, and wonderin' if they'll open in time for some fandango or other!"

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way Letitia was leading a Christian life, but when she spoke of it to Miss Murray, and urged that the child might be allowed to publicly confess her love for Christ, she met with a prompt rebuff.

"Tishy's had no experience," said her aunt. "Why I was under conviction for six months, and Elder Gates used to come and talk to me every week. Tishy knows nothing about it, and is too young to become a professor."

Children's Day dawned brightly, the last of a succession of very warm days. Miss Hartley's uncle was there, and the school-house was packed with children and their parents, drawn thither by the novelty of the celebration. Mr. Swanzy gave the children a beautiful address on the Bible as a light to guide them in the path of safety as they journeyed through life. He brought with him and lighted a torch, and as he used by the shepherds in the East, and such as was probably used by David as he tended his father's sheep, and of which he might have been thinking when he wrote the 117th Psalm: "The Word of the Lord is like a light to my feet." Then the speaker told them of Jesus, the living Word who declared Himself the Light of the world, and in closing, urged each little one before him to take this Light into his heart, that he might reflect its beauty in his life, and thus win others to the path of safety and of peace.

An impressive address settled upon the little congregation, and in the interest of the hour, few noticed the approach of a storm, until the heavens were overpiled with blackness and heavy peals of thunder announced that the rain was close at hand. Miss Murray, who was present, was the first to feel the alarm, and thinking of her brood of young turkeys who were in a position where they might be exposed to the fury of the storm, she left the school-house hastily, and was soon beyond the reach of the warning voices that called her to return.

The darkness grew more intense, and a fierce wind began to blow, against which she could scarcely keep her footing. The rain fell in torrents, and soon deep channels were worn by the rivers of water, and the poor woman, blinded and bewildered, the poor woman stumbled on, unable to see a step before her, except as at intervals a lurid flash showed her for an instant the path, only to be succeeded by an interval of darkness even more intense. She had almost reached the foot of the long hill, when there came an awful crash; a tree fell directly across her path, and with a groan of fright and pain, she fell senseless to the ground.

Letitia's experience with an invalid mother proved of value to her now, and her gentle ministrations at the bedside of her aunt would have won a heart more callous than even hers. Miss Hartley was also daily visited had all sick-room, and though it was hard to bear the sufferer's self-dennunciations, as she spoke of her own miserliness and unkindness, Miss Hartley wisely allowed her to feel the burden of her own shortcomings, and that she might be able to lay her sins on Jesus and thus find peace.

Miss Murray rose from her sick bed to be a light-bearer in the world, as she now felt that "Tishy" had been, in her simple way, during the time that had passed since Miss Hartley first came to Hubbard's Corners.—Josephine C. Goodale, in Evangelist.

The Ignorant Educator.

The self-satisfied manner of the ignorant "educator" is a rare study in human nature. In the rural regions it frequently happens that a man whose education has been sadly neglected is elected to the position of school director or member of the school board.

He is a man who has been in the office that he begins to infest the school-room and mix into the practical machinery of education. The results are usually amusing enough to furnish many a hearty laugh to the overworked teacher, as soon as he is alone and dares to indulge in a little hilarity.

A few weeks ago I visited a graded school in one of the lesser Indiana towns. It was "examination day," and the president of the school board—a large, pompous old fellow—began to presume that school-room never was a quiet before. A reading class was called, and a bright little fellow read in a monotone drawn through a paragraph about a massacre in the time of Nero.

"Ah! Um!" interrupted the "educator." "Will you please have the little boy read that verse again?"

The paragraph was given precisely as before.

"Ah! Um!" exclaimed the wise man, smiling like a pleased chimpanzee. "Why do you pronounce that word 'massacre'?"

The youngster hung his head and made no reply.

"It should be pronounced 'massacre,'" continued the board member benignly.

There was a painful silence for a moment, and then the educator meekly said: "Excuse me, Mr. Board, but the fault is mine, I think, if that word was mispronounced. I have told the class to pronounce it 'massacre'."

"But why, sir, may I enquire?"

"I believe Webster favors that pronunciation."

"Impossible, sir."

"Well, that is a matter easily settled. Here is a copy of Webster's Unabridged."

The "educator" seized the dictionary and hurriedly turned to the word. For a moment his face was a study. Then he removed his glasses, slowly wiped them on a red bandanna handkerchief, and then, repeating them, said very solemnly, "I am perfectly astounded, sir, that Mr. Webster should have made such a mistake as that!"—Chicago Mail.

—Don't be deceived with imitations; take only McLean's Vegetable Worm Syrup.

Majestic Palms.

The talipot, or great fan-palm, grows for about thirty years, and reaches a height of more than one hundred feet. Then, for the first and only time it blossoms. What looks like a single huge bud four feet in height is developed, and finally bursts into a pyramid of snowy plumes composed of numberless small cream-colored flowers.

The cluster is sometimes twenty feet high, and at its base has a diameter of forty feet. As Miss Cumming says in her "Two Happy Years in Ceylon": "It is a glorious object, and is visible from an immense distance, as it often grows among flat surroundings, such as rice-fields."

The natives turn the leaves to a thousand uses, domestic and literary. When on a journey, and especially if they are on a pilgrimage to some sacred shrine, each of them carries a portion of one of these great leaves tightly folded into a long, narrow form, like a gigantic closed fan.

This serves as a sun-shade or rain-cloak by day, and at night several friends contribute every man his palm leaf, three or four of them, with the pointed end upward, forming a very fair bell-shaped tent. And very picturesque a group of these tents glistens when pitched in some forest glade round blazing camp fires.

Formerly the exact grade of every great noble was shown by the number of such sun-shades which he was entitled to have carried before him, and on state occasions a leaf, inscribed with pieces of glittering tale, and folded like a huge fan, formed the ceremonial canopy which was held above his head by one or more attendants.

The leaves attain their largest size when the tree is twenty years of age, at which time they sometimes measure twenty-five feet from the base of the leaf-stalk to the outer edge of the fan.—Louth's Compendium.

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