

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

AN OLD SONG.

"God hath chosen the weak things of the world."
It was an old and once familiar strain.

A company of strangers met to part,
Spending an evening in the same hotel,

She was a fair and gentle maid who sang,
Who summers seventeen had scarcely told,

We brushed our busy talk to hear her sing,
The eldest student laid his book aside,

To that far distant land beyond the sea,
Which we had left on foreign shores to roam,

Back to the land which we had left behind,
The land of love, and hope, and faith, and prayer,

And one there was who heard that something true,
Whose heart was heavy with its weight of care,

Embittered by the sense of cruel wrong,
No friend might share.

Silently, proudly he bore his pain,
Crushed from his wounded heart each softening thought,

Strange longings rose once more to see the place
Which in his boyhood he had held so dear,

To meet again his gentle sister's smile—
(Twas she who used to sing this self-same song.)

How would their faithful hearts rejoice to greet
Their prodigal's return from distant shores,

Thus he resolved that, when the morning came,
He would arise and homeward bend his way,

Little the singer guessed the power that lay
Beneath the accents of her simple song;

The lengthening twilight stole into the room,
And wrapped as in its mistic cold and gray

The song was ended and the singer rose,
And high were brought, and books and work

And when the morning dawned he homeward turned,
Back to his father's house beyond the sea,

O happy maid! Go singing thus through life,
Bidding the lost return, the weak be strong;

—Lydia Hope, in Sunday Magazine.

THE WIDOW'S PRAYER IN WELSH.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, STRICTLY TRUE.

Near twenty years ago there lived in Birkenhead, near Liverpool, (England), an aged woman, who had suffered four score years and six of poverty.

Though called a pauper here, she had a store of wealth beyond the wildest dream of grasping millionaires.

The wealthy owner of the room in which she lived, with vase-like fingers grasped for rent one-third of her weekly stipend.

In Liverpool at the same time there lived a kindly noble-hearted woman, one whose life had been a constant blessing to the poor; who sought them out with studious care,

plan to honor such an unaccustomed draft. The help came just in time; her wants were all supplied, and there was something left for future use.

A noble woman she was in works of mercy, charity and love, in tenderest sympathy with every soul that needed help; yet she failed to feel and know that God was near enough to hear and answer prayer.

Returning to her home that evening, she found a sailor friend. Arriving from a far off land, and knowing well her household and their generous kindly natures, he had learned to love to visit there, and in the circle of their pleasant home, enjoy a happy hour in cheerful converse, enquire of Maggie and her baby boy in York, how Walter fared in distant Iowa, when Herbert might return from sea—and hear of all their plans and help them to build their castles in the air.

That evening the conversation turned on creeds, opinions, providence and prayer. "Oh, that recalls," the lady said, "my visit of ten years ago to Birkenhead a curious specimen of faith and prayer, an aged Methodist, a widow, who every Sabbath goes three times to hear the gospel preached in ancient Welsh. I was amused to observe her sturdy faith. She prays in Welsh for everything she wants, and thinks the Lord hears every word and answers it in kind.

At times she is in a strait for clothing, food or coal, and prays for twenty cents, and wonders then what messenger he'll send, and how, but never doubts; she feels the answer's sure. She has a shawl, the only thing she owns that's worth a shilling, and she used to pawn it for her pressing needs, till God should send her help. But that she does no more, because it seems to her a lack of faith.

"The widow's right," her friend replied, "please give her this, and say that God has heard her prayer and thus supplied her present wants and for months to come."

The widow's heart was filled with joy to find her prayer so promptly more than answered, and her thanks arose to heaven, and with them went a fervent prayer for blessings on the stranger whom God had moved to do his will.

That stranger went abroad, and in the varying rounds of ocean's storms and calms, among the stirring scenes of strange cities, the world's great marts and merchants, in communion with old friends and new, the lowly widow and her story had altogether passed from his memory.

Next morning saw a hurried letter on its journey of 6000 miles; enclosed it held the answer to the fancied prayer, and asked the lady friend who loved the poor to find the widow, "for I'm sure she's praying; see her wants supplied; but if she's gone from earth and needs no help, just make the money sent an answer to some other prayer."

The impression was correct; the widow was still there, her Father had not called her home; her prayers were going up with vehemence. The rigorous winter threatened, and her tattered garments no long or gave protection from the cold, and several minor wants were menacing. To her a dollar seemed a moderate fortune, no cloud of doubt had ever cast a shadow over the sunshine of her faith, yet she wondered much how God would this time

on why we should be doing what we are doing at this very moment, instead of some one among ten thousand other things? Until we can answer such questions as these, we are living not foolishly, but wickedly; we are not only not builders, we are reckless destroyers.

MY SERVICE.
"Be that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."
I cannot do great things for him, Who did as much for me; But I would like to show my love, Dear Jesus, unto thee; Faithful in very little things, O, Saviour, may I be.

There are small crosses I may take, Small burdens I may bear, Small acts of faith and deeds of love, Small sorrows I may share; And little bits of work for thee I may do every where.

And so I ask thee, give me grace My little place to fill, That I may ever walk with thee And ever do thy will; And in each duty, great or small, I may be faithful still. —Associate and Guardian.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF AGE.
Nothing sublimer can be said of a man than that Time as God's servant has done all that it can do for him. If one thinks how time is measured; what a vast machinery is concerned in the swing of its pendulum; on what a magnificent dial-plate its hours record their flight and with what exactness its seconds are registered; if one contemplates Time under this aspect in the motions of the physical universe, he can not but feel the grandeur of duration as conveyed to his mind through such an infinite clock-work.

Notwithstanding all that is said and written about having a purpose in life, one can scarcely engage in a more saddening and yet more stimulating, line of thought than to reflect upon the aimless way in which so many lives, of those in his circle of knowledge, are spent. And very fortunate or very self-confident must be the person who does not find in his own life ample material for correction in this same line of duty.

It is far too seldom that one looks at his life in the light of a fall purpose to make it what it ought to be—a life with a plan—it is still rarer that there exists in the soul a constant determination to make the smallest actions of daily life conform to some determined purpose and some patient following of a clearly-perceived idea. It is easy enough to form a vague intention to accomplish great things sometime, or to rely on the thought that a good deal of life remains to us, in which much can be done. Nor is it much harder to set before us a definite object toward which we may strive, or to form a general resolution of fidelity and devotion to the highest ideal. But it is quite another matter to keep that object or that ideal constantly in mind, in such a way that it shall exercise a present and unceasing influence upon to-day's thoughts, words and deeds.

"In the course of life," these are expressions which are far pleasanter than such hard, blunt words as "now," "this very day," "always." And so it comes to pass that the man who is going to do something, somehow, practically joins hands with him who frankly confesses that he is never going to do anything, anyhow; and both come to a time when they are made to realize with all the bitterness of utter disappointment, that the midnight hour has struck, or that, at least, but a few poor minutes of available time remain.

"It is of unspeakable advantage," says a wholesome and wise writer, "to possess our minds with an habitual good intention, and to aim all our thoughts, words and actions at some laudable end, whether it be the glory of our Maker, the good of mankind, or the benefit of our own souls. This is a sort of thrift or good husbandry in moral life, which does not throw away any single action, but makes every one go as far as it can. It multiplies the means of salvation, increases the number of our virtues and diminishes that of our vices." It is the habitual good intention on which alone we can rely for progress in the Christian life as a whole or in any one of its departments. A thing done with a right purpose is better than a thousand apparently right things done with no purpose at all; and this fact we cannot press too closely upon our minds and souls. We should ask ourselves what is the why and wherefore of our lives and their smallest parts. Why do we live where we do or pursue the avocation in life which we profess to follow? What is the reason that we call ourselves Christians, or that we absent ourselves from church-going, and from religious thoughts and beliefs? Is there any particular cause for spending this very day in the way in which we are spending it? Is there any special reason

over the ashes of Jerusalem, with nearly a century in his heart, and writing the Fourth Gospel with a perfected insight of wisdom and an immortal accent of love.—Southern Pulpit.

WHAT A MOTHER DID.
Some one who had noticed the influence of wives in promoting the good or evil fortunes of their husbands said, "A man must ask his wife's leave to be rich." We doubt not that a similar observation of the influence of mothers upon their sons would justify the remark, "A man must ask his mother's leave to be great."

Years ago a family of four, a father, a mother, and two sons dwelt in a small house, situated in the roughest locality of the rocky town of Ashford, Conn. The family was very poor. A few acres of stony land, a dozen sheep and one cow supported them. The sheep clothed them, and the cow gave milk and did the work of a horse in ploughing and harrowing. Corn bread, milk and bean porridge was their fare.

The father being laid aside by ill-health, the burden of supporting the family rested on the mother. She did her work in the house, and helped the boys do theirs on the farm. Once, in the dead of winter, one of her boys required a new suit of clothes. There was neither money nor wool on hand. The mother sheared the half-grown fleeces from the sheep, and in one week the suit was on the boy. The shorn sheep was protected from the cold by a garment made of braided straw.

The family lived four miles from the "meeting-house." Yet every Sunday the mother and her two sons walked to church. One of these sons became the pastor of the church in Franklin, Conn., to whom he preached for sixty-one years. Two generations went from that church to make the world better.

The other son also became a minister, and then one of the most successful of college presidents. Hundreds of young men were moulded by him. The heroic Christian woman's name was Deborah Nott. She was the mother of the Rev. Samuel Nott, D. D., and of Eliphalet Nott, D. D., LL.D., President of Union College.

"Honors and fame from no condition rise, Act well your part, there all true honor lies." but then, a man who has and accepts his mother's aid is more likely to act well his part than one who has it not, or having, refuses to accept it.—Youth's Companion.

"ONLY A SERVANT."
"But they are only servant girls." This was said in reference to quite a number of nice young women who had learned to love the services of one of our churches. A number of them had united with the church and were very faithful in Christian work. "But they are only servant girls," said a somewhat worldly professor, with an unconcealed sneer. Indeed! But he who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."

Many years ago a devout servant girl, whose consistent and beautiful piety won the heart of her mistress—a member of one of the proudest and most honored families of Boston—led her to the (then esteemed) humble altar of Bromfield Street Church, with which she herself was connected, and secured her ultimate Christian fellowship with this people. After an exemplary life, in a very worldly circle, she died, leaving a fund, at her death, which still blesses the poor of this church. No church will prosper that has not room and sympathy for the humblest of the people. It is among these classes that the most earnest and persevering Christian workers are to be found.—Zion's Herald.

A Christian, passing to young men on the sidewalk, heard one of them swear, and remarked, "I suppose it would take a good deal to induce one of us to steal." "I guess it would," they responded. "But," he added, "the law which says, 'Thou shalt not steal,' says also, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' and to break the one commandment is as wicked as to break the other."

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.
HOW THE STORY GREW.
As Kitty Coleman and Maggie Weir were going to school one morning, Kitty said, "I was over at Uncle Fred's last Saturday, and came near staying too late. We had such fun that I did not notice how near the sun was to setting, and I was very much afraid I might meet a tramp."

"Did you meet any one?" inquired Maggie. "No one but Johnny Gates; he was coming down the hill whistling, and with a great big watermelon under his arm; I was scared at first, but when I saw who it was I got over it." At recess Maggie said to Mary Ford, "Kitty told me that she saw Johnny Gates carrying a great big watermelon home Saturday evening. Wonder where he got it, and wonder what he is going to do with it? Before school Mary whispered to Sallie Bates, 'Johnny Gates was seen carrying a great big watermelon on Saturday evening. I wonder if he got it honestly.' Mr. Hart's melon patch was robbed about that time; maybe that's where it came from," answered Sallie.

"At noon Sallie told Susan and Jennie, 'I know something, and I'll tell you if you won't breathe it to a soul.' 'Oh, no, we won't,' cried both girls in one breath; 'what is it?' 'Why, Johnnie Gates robbed Mr. Hart's melon patch one night last week.' 'Oh, dear, isn't that awful?' exclaimed Susie. 'I always thought that Johnnie was not so much better than the rest of us, for all he made believe he was so honest,' said Jennie. 'He couldn't have done it alone,' Sallie said.

Whereupon Jennie hastened to a group of school children who were in the house and told them 'Johnnie Gates and a lot of other boys had robbed Mr. Hart's melon patch and destroyed all they could not carry away.' Just at that moment Johnnie himself came in whistling, and looking like anything but a thief. 'Oh, girls! get together quick; I've got something for you, and it's most school-time.' The girls looked at each other, and with little movements of disgust turned away. 'Why, what's the matter with you all? hurry up, all, as the bell will ring,' cried Johnnie. 'We know what you've got, Johnnie Gates,' spoke up Sallie, 'and we don't want any of your old stolen melon, and I think you should be ashamed of yourself.' 'Who says I stole a melon?' cried Johnny in an excited tone; 'I guess he'd better not tell me so.' I was over at Uncle Henry's Saturday night, and he gave me a splendid one, and I saved it on purpose to give you all some; but if that's the way you are talking about me you may do without.'

'Well, said one of the girls, 'that is what I heard anyway.' 'Who told you, I'd like to know.' Then all began to talk at once, and became so excited that they did not notice that their teacher was in the room until she spoke to Johnnie, asking him to explain the cause of the confusion. Then she carefully examined into the matter until she found that it all came from Kitty Coleman saying she had met Johnny with a melon. The children that had taken part in the story felt somewhat ashamed of themselves, when they saw how much the story had grown in their hands. The teacher said, 'I hope every one of you will learn a lesson from this incident and just now, before the habit becomes fixed, resolve that you will tell nothing but what you know to be true, and what you do tell, you will tell exactly as you heard it; and not tell anything to injure another, even if it is true. I hope Johnnie will forgive you, and that you will never forget the lesson you have learned to-day.' I am happy to say that Johnnie did forgive them, and gave them a piece of the melon all around; and I hope that neither they nor any of my little readers will grow up to be tattling, gossiping men or women.

BOYS, DON'T BLOCK UP YOUR WAY.
I was sitting in the office of a mechanic not long since, when a lad about sixteen entered with a cigar in his mouth. He said to the gentleman: "I would like to get a situation in your shop to learn a trade, sir." "I might give you a place, but you carry a very bad recommendation in your mouth," said the gentleman. "I didn't think it any harm to smoke, sir; nearly every body smokes now." "I am sorry to say, my young friend, I can't employ you. If you have money enough to smoke cigars, you will be above working as apprentice; and if you have not money, your love for cigars might make you steal it. No boy who smokes cigars can get employment in my shop." A word to the wise is sufficient.

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