

There seemed to be no end to the dilapidations in the pretty little house, which, after all, had been unoccupied but one short year.

It was not until late in the day, when they were quite wearied with the disheartening work, that they again took up the morning's conversation.

Aunt Sarah was resting in a great armchair before a cheery wood fire, when Estelle, who had been flitting about the room uneasily, touched the piano carelessly. She started back in annoyance at its jangling tones. Then closing the lid gently, she walked to the hearth rug, and kneeling down, hid her face in Aunt Sarah's lap.

"Auntie," she said, "I understand now what you meant this morning about the danger of my voice wearing out with not using. All these dear things about our home have got worn out or damaged or lost just because they were not in use. I have been learning the lesson ever since I saw my ruined cloak and my tattered parasol, and, please God, my voice shall have no chance to wear out in the same way. To-morrow I will go to the superintendent of the Sunday school and offer to help in training the children, and if the minister wants me, I will gladly sing in the choir. If I can help by giving anyone singing lessons, I will do that, too. I see now what a mean, ignoble, wasteful thing it is to wear out with not using."

Aunt Sarah smiled happily as she stroked her niece's downcast head. "My dear," she said, "if the state of our house has taught you this lesson, I shall regret neither the inconvenience nor the extra expense which we are put to. It is a lesson that many people go through life without learning."

And for answer, Estelle tenderly kissed Aunt Sarah's shapely white hand.

FOR JESUS' SAKE.

"Mother," said a little five-year-old boy, "I wish Jesus lived on earth now."

"Why, my darling?"

"Because I should like so much to do something for Him."

"But what could such a little bit of a fellow as you are do for the Saviour?"

The child hesitated a few moments, then looked up into his mother's face, and said:

"Why, mother, I could run on all His errands for Him."

"So you could, my child, and so you shall. Here is a glass of jelly and some oranges I was going to send to poor, old, sick Margaret by the servant, but I will let you take them instead, and do an errand for the Saviour, for, when upon earth, he said: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me.'

"Whenever you do a kind act for anybody, because you love Jesus, it is just the same as if the Saviour were now living on earth, and you were doing it for Him."

LITTLE SHIPS IN THE AIR.

"Flakes of snow with sails so white,
Drifting down the wintry skies,
Tell me where your route begins,
Say which way your harbour lies?"

"In the clouds, the roomy clouds,
Arching earth with shadowy dome,
There's the port from which we sail,
There is tiny snowflake's home."

"And the cargo that you take
From those cloudy ports above—
Is it always meant to bless,
Lent in anger or in love?"

"Warmth for all the tender roots,
Warmth for every living thing,
Water for the river's flow,
This the cargo that we bring."

"Who's the Master that you serve,
Bids you lift your tiny sails,
Brings you safely to the earth,
Guides you through the wintry gales?"

"He who tells the birds to sing,
He who sends the April flowers,
He who ripens all the fruit,
That great Master, He is ours."

GIVE HER THE BENEFIT.

A teacher was leaving the city where she had taught several years, for higher work in a distant State. As her pupils bade her good-bye some of the girls sobbed outright, and not a few of the boys found a curious lump rising in their throats, as they shook her by the hand. Presently one lad, who for ten months had been her constant "thorn in the flesh," and had cost her many an anxious day and sleepless night, came up with his head hanging to say:

"Miss B——, I'm really thankful for the help you have given me, and I'm ashamed to think how much I have annoyed you. I wish I could live the year over again."

The teacher looked at him smilingly, and laid a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"We can't call back the past, Joe," she said, "but we can make it influence the future. Give your next teacher the benefit of your being sorry."

Some of you boys and girls who are passing from one grade to the next higher, say good-bye to your teacher with this same regret, that you cannot live the last year over again. You have been inattentive and indifferent so frequently, when she was devoting all her energies to helping you. There have been many times when you have given her trouble and annoyance, in return for her pains and kindness. More often than you like to remember, you have wilfully distracted the attention of your school-mates, and made her work hard and unpleasant. As you think of it all, you wish that you might wipe out the year's record, as one erases an incorrect problem from the blackboard, and try it all over again.

That, as you know, is impossible, and yet there is a way in which some good may be gained from this year of mistakes. Give your next teacher the benefit of your regret. Let her profit by your good resolutions. See to it that when the time comes to bid her good-bye and pass on to a



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higher grade, there may be in your heart only sorrow over leaving a good friend, without a single trace of shame or self-reproach.

DO PART OF THE GIVING.

We talk a great deal about being kind and helpful to others. We do not think so much, however, about letting others extend kindness and helpfulness to us. While each has a duty to reach out and encourage others, is there not a duty, on the other hand, to let friendliness meet friendliness, and to make kindness reciprocal?

Writing to a friend from a little town in Italy, Ruskin indites this sentence: "The population are charming—a word of kindness makes them as bright as if you brought them news of a friend." And the picture is two-sided. Upon the one hand we see the great artist-author extending the pleasant word and smile, and upon the other people in the foreign village ready and pleased to accept them as a pleasure. Without such a reception, the kind word, the friendly look, are a blessing only to him who tenders them. To bring forth their best fruit they must be met half-way by the recipient.

In these days of young people's societies in the Church, handshaking committees are common. Yet how often it is next to impossible to get the stranger by the hand, simply because he is readier to dodge out of the door at the end of the service, than he is to meet half-way the proffered hand and word of friendship. One goes along the street, with a greeting ready for friends and acquaintances, only to find, often, that these others are so wrapped up in

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self, or are so engrossed with the rush and hurry of life, that they do not look to the right or left in search of words of greeting.

Let us meet others part way. Nothing so chills the cordial spirit as to encounter a repulse—to reach out with anticipation and eagerness to another, and then to find that other unresponsive. It is true that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive. Only, let the recipient do part of the giving, and then will the blessing be multiplied on both sides.