

## The Inglenook.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

### Things Small and Great.

#### A THANK OFFERING STORY.

It was with a heavy heart that Mrs. Martin allowed her daughter Hilda to leave her quiet village home, to seek a "place" in one of our bustling Canadian cities, and many were the prayers that the mother offered to the Throne of Grace, on her behalf. But Hilda, with the hopefulness and inexperience of youth, had no misgivings.

"There is only one way of looking at it, mother," she had said in her practical way. "We need money, and I am not going to be a burden to you. Lottie can help at home now, and when Charlie is home from school, he can help too, and dear little Alice will be a good little girlie, will you not, my pet? she asked, turning to her younger sister, a sweet little maiden of five years.

So Hilda started bravely out, while at home her mother waited, watching eagerly for word from the city.

In a week the expected letter arrived, and from Mrs. Martin's heart went up a prayer of thanksgiving, as she read the bright cheery lines.

"Dear Mother," Hilda wrote, "I have taken a situation as maid, with a Mrs. Allison. She is a lovely lady, and Mr. Allison is so good. I seem to have entered into a home, for family worship is held every evening, and I have been asked so kindly to be present. It does seem so good, mother dear, to be in a really Christian home. And there is a sweet little girl here, her name is Alice, too, and she reminds me so much of our little Allie, that I love her already. Mr. and Mrs. Allison live on one of the prettiest avenues in the city." And so the letter continued with little personal messages, and the widowed mother's heart was cheered.

The days and weeks passed on very happily for Hilda. Naturally bright and cheerful, she found her quarters very pleasant. She had no friends in the city, and only went out occasionally, to prayer meeting or Christian Endeavor, and though several had shaken hands with her, and had spoken a little to her, she did not make many friends, for she felt a little different among so many strangers. But there was always one whom Hilda did not regard quite as a stranger, and she watched eagerly every service to see if Mrs. Archer was present for then she was assured of a few pleasant words, and a smile that would cheer her for days.

At home she and little Alice had become firm friends and Mrs. Allison felt she could trust her new "help," which, as she remarked to many of her friends was "such a comfort."

One day, while looking over some packages in the attic, with little Alice beside her, she lifted down a long box, and Alice said, almost tearfully, "Oh that is the pretty dolly Aunt Edith gave me, mother told me to put it away. I love it so much, and I love Aunt Edith so dearly, but she does not come here any more, and it makes me feel so sorry."

"Is she dead, dear?" asked Hilda softly.

"Oh, no, but mother says Aunt Edith hurt her and she doesn't come here any more," repeated Alice, shaking her curls sadly.

Hilda, feeling she must not encourage a child's confidence on what might be a forbidden topic, changed the subject, but her

thoughts often wandered to "Aunt Edith," and she wondered what had happened that would make gentle Mrs. Allison angry.

One Sunday evening as she sat in church with her thoughts, it must be confessed, more on the dear old pastor, and the church and friends at home, she was brought to the present, by hearing the announcement, in a clear voice, "The annual thankoffering meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, will be held in the church parlors on Thursday, 16th inst., at 3 p.m. All ladies will be made very welcome."

Hilda's heart beat quickly. Her mother was a member of the W. F. M. S. at home, she herself had joined the Mission Band and she had been taught that every professed Christian should help in the great work of sending the gospel to the heathen.

"Of course," she thought, "Mrs. Allison will go. How I would love to give as substantial a thank offering as she will be able to," she added regretfully, "but anyway," more cheerfully, "the dear Lord will accept my little offering, when I give it in His Name."

"The thankoffering meeting is next Thursday, Mrs. Allison, said Hilda, the next day," would you mind, she added timidly, "If I asked you to take my envelope when you go. It is not much I can give," she said hurriedly and with burning cheeks, "but I cannot let a thankoffering pass without acknowledging God's goodness to me."

"Well, Hilda," said Mrs. Allison "I will not be at the meeting, I do not take much interest in Foreign Missions." Then, seeing the astonished look on Hilda's face she added quickly, "I do not believe God will be hard on the poor heathen if they do not hear about Him, so I just leave them with Him. 'Besides,' as Hilda still looked unsatisfied, 'The President of the W.F.M.S. has treated me very badly, and I cannot attend a meeting where she will preside. Perhaps I should not have said so much to you," with a smile, "But I feel that I can trust you."

Now Hilda knew that Mrs. Archer was president of the society, and instinctively she felt that Alice's Aunt Edith, and Mrs. Archer were one.

Her mind was much troubled as she turned away, and she was far from satisfied. That Mrs. Allison, whom she knew to be so kind and thoughtful, and Mrs. Archer, whom she felt assured was also kind and good, should be enemies, "Actually enemies," thought Hilda, oh, it was too dreadful. "There must be a mistake, some where," she meditated, "and can it be true, what Mrs. Allison says, that God does not require us to send the gospel to the heathen? and yet Jesus said plainly 'Go ye into all the world' and promised to be with those who obeyed Him—Oh I am not as wise as Mrs. Allison, but I know He meant me to help, and how thankful I am that He should count me worthy."

That evening little Alice was restless. "Mother, read me a story before I go asleep," she pleaded, as she lay in her little white bed.

"Well, what shall it be, dear," replied the indulgent mother, "Cinderella? or shall it be about one of your dear Bible heroes?"

"Oh, no mother," said Alice, "In my Sunday school paper there is a picture of little boys and girls, but, oh, they look so thin and sick, and have hardly any clothes on; read

me the story about them, please mother."

"Oh, Alice dear," said her mother, "let me read you some thing more cheerful, even this picture makes my flesh creep."

"I want to hear about *them*, mother," Alice insisted, and so Mrs. Allison read about the poor starved children in India, and how they came to the mission stations where so many were relieved.

"Now, don't think any more about it, Alice dear," said her mother, "but just thank God that you have enough to eat, and a nice little bed to sleep in."

"Oh, but mother," persisted Alice, "could we not send them something? I am sure we have more than we can eat."

"Don't trouble your little heart, dear," replied her mother, "but go to sleep now, like a good little girlie."

But, as she turned away, her thoughts went back to the conversation she had had with Hilda about the Thankoffering. "Ought I to take more interest?—but then there is Edith, I cannot go. Perhaps I should have come down stairs when she called to explain but my feelings were hurt, and I sent back her letter unanswered, too, if I have not been perfectly happy since, I expect I deserve it," with rather a sad smile, "However I will think no more about it."

But Mrs. Allison was not to dismiss the subject so easily. At family worship that evening, did it just happen that Mr. Allison should read the 116th Psalm? Mrs. Allison's thoughts were wandering to the little children in India, how thankful she was that her little Alice had need of nothing,—what is that Mr. Allison is reading? "What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits," involuntarily she looked up and saw her own thoughts reflected in Hilda's eyes. Hurriedly she covered her own, as the thought came "Oh I have just taken and taken, and have let God's people starve—and perhaps it was a mistake about Edith."

And on her knees during the prayer that followed, she asked God to forgive her, and as she repeated "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows now unto the Lord; in the presence of His people." A peace unknown for months filled her heart.

On Thursday afternoon, as the Thankoffering was assembling, the president looking up saw her husband's sister, Mrs. Allison, enter the room. A flush rose to her sensitive face, and her heart sent up the cry, "Father, I thank Thee, Holy Spirit direct me."

Mrs. Allison went right up to the front, and said quietly, "Edith, I am sorry, can you give me a few moments after the meeting?"

A nod in the affirmative was all the overjoyed heart could give.

But what a meeting it was. Surely the presence of the Lord Jesus was there, and again and again Mrs. Allison thought, "Oh, what I have missed."

And after the offering had been taken up, and the president read aloud, one by one, the written texts, a mist rose before her eyes, as she saw the well known and loved handwriting, and a tremble came into her voice as she read, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me," and immediately below, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—amount \$25.00c."

Two hours later, Alice ran into Hilda, her face bright and happy.

"Oh Hilda" she exclaimed "Perhaps I