

our heart is too full to keep it back. When I was left a widow with three children, I thought it was more than I could bear, but it wasn't bad as this—

The stranger waited till she recovered her voice to go on.

I had only the cottage and my willing hands. I toiled early and late all the years till John could help me. Then we kept the girls at school, John and me. They were married not long ago. Married rich as the world goes. John sold the cottage, sent me to the city to live with them, and he went west to begin for himself. He said we had provided for the girls and they would provide for me now—

Her voice choked with emotion. The stranger waited in silence.

I went to them in the city. I went to Mary's first. She lived in a great house, with servants to wait on her; a house many times larger than the little cottage—but I soon found there wasn't room enough for me—

The tears stood in the lines on her cheeks. The ticket agent came out softly, stirred the fire, and went back. After a pause she continued:

I went to Martha's—went with a pain in my heart I never felt before. I was willing to do anything so as not to be a burden. But that wasn't it. I found that they were ashamed of my bent old body and withered face; ashamed of my rough, wrinkled hands—made so toiling for them—

The tears came thick and fast now. The stranger's hand rested caressingly on the gray head.

At last they told me I must live at a boarding house, and they'd keep me there. I couldn't say anything back. My heart was too full of pain. I wrote to John what they were going to do. He wrote right back a long, kind letter, for me to come right to him. I always had a home while he had a roof, he said. To come right there and stay as long as I lived. That his mother should never go out to strangers. So I'm going to John. He's got only his rough hands and his great warm heart; but there's room for his old mother—God—bless—him!

The stranger brushed a tear from her fair cheek and awaited the conclusion.

Some day when I'm gone where I'll never trouble them again, Mary and Martha will think of it all. Some day when the hands that toiled for them are folded and still; when the eyes that watched over them for many a weary night are closed forever; when the little old body, bent with the burdens it bore for them, is put away where it can never shame them—

The agent drew his hand quickly before his eyes, and went out as if to look for a train. The stranger's jewelled fingers stroked the gray locks, while the tears of sorrow and the tears of sympathy fell together. The weary heart was unburdened. Soothed by a touch of sympathy, the troubled soul yielded to the longing for rest and she fell asleep. The agent went noiselessly about his duties that he might not wake her. As the fair stranger watched she saw a smile on the careworn face. The lips moved. She bent down to hear.

I'm doing it for Mary and Martha. They'll take care of me some time.

She was dreaming of the days in the little cottage—of the fond hopes that inspired her, long before she learned with a broken heart, that some day she would turn homeless in the world, to go to John.—*Epworth Herald.*

Lord Shaftesbury's Conversion.

(By the Rev. Wayland Hoyt, D.D.)

What a touch can turn a child!

This was the manner of his dying and burial. As he lay, feeble with age and toil, and amid the last shadows evidently gathering, one who came to take last leave heard words like these: 'I am in the hands of God; the ever-blessed Jehovah; in his hands alone; yes, in His keeping, with Him alone.' His last words were 'Thank you,' as a faithful servant did him ministry.

And there never was such a funeral as his. It was touching to see the blinds drawn close in the club-houses and mansions of St. James street and Pall Mall, but it was far more touching to see groups upon groups of artisans, seamstresses, laborers, factory hands, flower girls—the poor and destitute from all quarters of London—gathered to pay their last mark of respect and affection. It was no crowding together of sight-seers. Even the poorest of the poor had managed to procure some little fragment of black to wear upon the coat sleeve or in the bonnet; the stillness was solemn and impressive; and as the simple procession passed, every head was uncovered and bowed as with a personal sorrow. He had clothed a people with spontaneous mourning, and was going down to the grave amid the benedictions of the poor.

And there in Westminster Abbey not only was royalty present, with tokens of affection and respect, but deputations from the homes, refuges, training ships, costermongers' society, missions, charities, bearing craped banners on which shone such words as these: 'Naked, and ye clothed me,' 'A stranger, and ye took me in,' crowded the spaces of the great church. By the flowers on the coffin sent by the Crown Princess of Germany lay a wreath inscribed the 'Loving Tribute from the Flower Girls of London.'

Lord Shaftesbury was the impersonation of the philanthropist of the nineteenth century.

And if you should ask, How came it all about that he lived the Christian, benignant life he did, and was crowned with such a death and burial, you would find the answer in this statement of his biographer: 'Throughout his life Lord Shaftesbury had never the least hesitation in tracing the time when his spiritual history had a beginning. He unhesitatingly affirmed that it was when he was seven years of age, under the influence of his nurse, Maria Millis.'

The Christian hand of this humble Christian woman touched and turned the heart of the little boy, and against the influences of an utterly irreligious home. What a blessing to the world that she saw the possibilities in a little child!

Anybody can see the wonderful advantages of the early touch and turning of that faithful Christian hand. Even though Lord Shaftesbury had become a Christian in later life, anybody can see the disadvantage he had been under thus, the wrench and strain it had then required, the hard unlearning and difficult battlings with evil habits already formed, how thus, at best, but a fraction of his life could have been given to God, whereas, because of this early and deciding touch, his whole life was dedicated to God and to humanity.

How foolish and blind we are! Some middle-aged man is captured for the Lord Jesus, and we rejoice, and we ought to, and have right to. But who has not heard the almost, if not quite, sneering remarks, 'O they are only boys and girls who are becoming Christians and joining the Church.' Only boys and girls! But by as much as,

even according to our poor arithmetic, a whole is better than three-quarters or a half, by so much is the conversion of a little child a larger victory for Jesus than that of a man or woman who can, at the most, yield but a fragment of a life to Him.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

Spurgeon in a Hospital.

The following anecdote was told by John B. Gough. He says: 'Mr. Spurgeon and I, visiting a hospital, went into an airy and pleasant ward where the boy lay whom he wished to see. The boy was greatly delighted on seeing Mr. Spurgeon. The great preacher sat down by his bedside and took his hand, saying,

"My son, there are precious promises for you hanging on these walls. You are going to die, my dear boy. You are tired of lying here on your couch, and soon you will be at rest. Nurse, did he sleep well last night?"

"No, he coughed a good deal."

"Oh, my son, it is very hard for you to suffer all day and cough all night. Do you love Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Jesus loves you, and bought you with his precious blood, and he knows what is best for you. It seems hard for you to lie here in bed and hear the boys playing on the streets, but soon the Lord will take you home and then he will tell you why there is so much suffering in the world, and you will be happy forever."

Then, placing his hand on the head of the child, he said, "Jesus, Master, this dear lad puts up his little hand to reach thine. Take it, beloved Saviour; bear him over the river of death and take him to heaven when it seems best to thee. Comfort him until that happy time arrives; reveal thyself to him while he remains here, and let him look to thee and think of thee more and more as his loving Saviour."

After a moment he said: "My son, is there not something you want? Would you like a canary in a cage, so that you can hear him sing in the morning? Nurse, bring him a canary to-morrow morning. Good-by, my boy; very likely you will see the Saviour before I do."

Seeing Mr. Spurgeon seated by the cot of a dying lad whom he had taken from the street, he seemed to me even more grand and noble than when I saw him moving great audiences with his eloquence. Like Richter, the great German poet, he loved God and he loved children.—*American Messenger.*

China the Greatest Mission Field in the World.

Look at the uncounted number of her people. Think of four hundred millions of human hearts capable of being converted into altars from which shall ascend the offerings of thanksgiving and praise. The homogeneity of this mighty population makes unlimited expansion easy and promising; of one speech, of one susceptibility, of one general make-up, of the same laws and usages and manners; what affects one will affect all; an objection met at Canton is an objection met at Peking. A message sent by telegram has to be translated afresh in Europe, each time it crosses a provincial line—first in France, then in Germany, and then in Russia; but in China a leaflet about the true God, struck off in one of the great mission presses in Shanghai, utters its voice to the millions in Chin-Kiang, then on the millions of Honan, and on still further to the forty millions of Szchuan, from east to west, from north to south, everywhere one and the same intelligible utterance of eternal truth. In the propagation of influence this is a fact of boundless efficiency.—*The Standard.*