

MOTHER'S SILK DRESS.

BY ELIZA M. SHERMAN.



INKLE, tinkle, tinkle went the door bell through the little brown house where lived Mr. Howard, the village pastor, and his family, consisting of Mrs. Howard, Henry, Abbie, and Arthur.

"I wonder who's coming so early in the morning," exclaimed Arthur, going to the door.

In a moment he returned with a large package in his hand.

"The expressman brought it and said it was all right, no charges," he exclaimed. "It's for you, mother," laying the bundle in his mother's lap.

"For me? I wonder what it can be," said Mrs. Howard, as she carefully untied the string—"I was not expecting anything."

"Perhaps some one has remembered that it was your birthday," suggested Abbie, peering curiously into the end of the package.

"Oh, Mother Howard!" she exclaimed as she caught sight of the contents of the parcel, "it is splendid!"

"Girls are inquisitive beings," muttered Henry, as Mrs. Howard at length opened the bundle and disclosed an elegant black silk dress, with satin and lovely Brussels lace for trimming.

"It can't be for me," said Mrs. Howard, surveying the silk longingly—for a black silk had always been a cherished wish of the quiet little woman, which as yet had never been fulfilled.

"But it is," shouted Arthur, catching up the wrapper; "who else is Mrs. Arthur A. Howard, care of Rev. A. A. Howard, Brighton, but yourself?"

"I think that settles the matter, dear," said the dominie, with a fond glance at his wife, "do you know who it is from?"

"No," answered Mrs. Howard; "if there was only a note or card to tell, I would be very glad."

"Here's a card!" cried Abbie, picking up one which had fallen unnoticed to the floor, and from it Mrs. Howard read the name of an old family friend of long standing.

"I am so glad you have it, mother, for your old summer silk is getting very shabby," said Abbie, caressing the pretty material.

"So am I; mother will look lovely in it," echoed Arthur.

Meanwhile a new thought was forming itself in Mrs. Howard's busy mind. They had long wished to send Henry to college. Little by little the amount necessary had been raised to within seventy-five dollars; would not this silk, if sold, furnish the needed amount?

Who but a loving mother would have thought of the sacrifice? Perhaps it occurred to her sooner, because of hearing Mrs. Squire Hazelton say that she intended to go to the city soon for a new black silk, her old one was really quite shabby.

One bright morning soon after the arrival of the new dress, Henry started for college in a distant city. He did not know how the money had been raised, and did not care, he said, as long as he got out of Brighton, which he declared was too dull for anything. Henry was a sore trial to his parents.

He was a bright, active lad, could learn rapidly if he chose; but he was what the boys called rather "fast," and he was apt to get into bad company.

Mr. Howard hoped that the restraining influences of the college would be what was needed for Henry.

One year passed away and Henry was home once more. He was changed, however; there was a dissatisfied look on his face which his father and mother hated to see, and his reports showed that his time had much of it been misimproved.

"I say, Abbie," he said one morning, "why don't father have this house painted? It looks as if it came from the ark, and mother still wears her old dress, why don't she wear her silk one sometimes, and not look so shabby?"

"She has no silk one, Henry."

"What has she done with hers, then?" demanded the boy.

Abbie was silent for a moment, and then as Henry repeated his question, she said timidly: "Henry, father and mother have to work very hard to support us. It was a great tax on them to raise money to send you to college. And mother's dress went to help make it up."

Henry was silent for a moment, and then he exclaimed impetuously:

"Oh, Abbie, I would have done better had I known that. I have acted like a fool. I have squandered my time, and not been faithful in my work at all," and Henry walked off.

That evening he had a long talk with his mother, and the next term applied himself so diligently to business as to win the esteem of all his teachers.

"It was the silk dress that did it, mother," he said one day. "If you could afford to sacrifice that, surely I could my laziness. I am going to study with a vim, get through school, and get you another, see if I don't." And as Henry has taken for his motto the words of an old book, "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," it is to be hoped that he will succeed.

"THAT BOOK."

"Toss me that book," said a boy to his little sister.

"It isn't a book," said Miss Three-year-old. "It is the Bible; and it isn't to be tossed."

That was a plea of reverence for her older brother to learn. Charlie's Latin grammar, the stories and histories on the centre-table, even that illustrated edition of Longfellow's Poems, all these were books according to the little maiden's idea; but the big volume out of which papa read in the morning, the morocco one with gilt clasps that mamma carried to Sunday-school, were not books—they were Bibles. Sometimes, perhaps, when mamma was not looking, she might venture to toss a book that did not have pretty covers, but the Bible, never.

We like the way this little girl revered the Bible. It is not a common book. It is the Book of books. When we receive little presents from our friends, we value them very much in proportion as we love the givers. So should we value the word of God, his present to us, so highly that no matter how simple the covers that contain it we shall always desire to take the best care of it, and allow it to serve no ignoble purpose.

HOW LITTLE PRINCESSES DRESS.

I HAVE seen the three little daughters of the Prince and Princess of Wales with their parents, when, on one occasion, the little one getting sleepy, her mother took her up on her lap, and let her sleep there on her knees all the evening. I have seen them riding, driving, walking, boating, and on none of these occasions, I venture to say, did the wearing apparel of either exceed in cost a ten dollar bill. A simple white muslin frock, undecorated by any lace, unrelieved by any silk slip or expensive sash, formed the costume, the winter and boating dresses are of serge, the summer dresses of washing prints. And all are made in the simplest style—no gossamers, no puckerings, flouncings; no bias bands, no knife plaitings. No feathers in the hats; no furbelows anywhere. Would that the "Mrs. Lofties" of America, those vulgar and tasteless creatures who at the present time at the watering places all over the country are making the bodies of their children a mere means of parading their power to spend money, and who are ruining the moral health of their offspring by inculcating in these impressionable young breasts a mad passion for personal adornment—would that these silly and reprehensible mothers, I say, could be here to see the pattern set in this matter by the Princess of Wales. The example is followed, as all examples are when coming from the fountain heads of social eminence, and the result is seen in the admirable dressing of young English people, universally extolled in every community of taste.

—London Letter to Philadelphia Times.

GIRLS' MANNERS.

The Christian Union utters a wise word to the girls, which we trust may be so heeded by them that the faults which it seeks to correct may never appear in your manners:

If our little girls greet their brothers and sisters, and perhaps even their parents, boisterously,—if, instead of "Good-morning!" they cry, "Halloo, papa! Halloo, mamma!" and call playmates in the streets in the same rough manner,—who will be surprised if this style follows them as they grow up and appear as young ladies?

Referring to this unlady-like manner and mode of address, a gentleman writes that, passing two pretty, well-dressed, stylish-looking young ladies in the public street, he was surprised to hear one meet the other with "Halloo, Sid!" and the other respond, "Halloo, Tudel!" to her friend's greeting; and he remarks that it was just what two lounging young men might have said, or stable-boys for that matter.

It might not have been so much out of the way for the latter, but I confess it sounded very odd and offensive in what I supposed to be two well-bred young ladies—as much as if I had heard two beautiful, gay, and rose-colored birds begin to swear.

It was so unnatural and out of place. It may be the "style" for young girls or ladies to greet each other with a "Halloo!" but I can't like it or get used to it. These things may seem but a trifle, but they make all the difference between nice things and very common things.

GARFIELD.

AT last!
The night hath passed;
The long, dark dream of suffering; hath withdrawn,
And o'er the everlasting hills the dawn
Of day that hath no night hath sudden
flashed
On his glad vision. Lo, he rests—at last!

Oh, strong and tender soul!
Patient beyond belief, nor once com-
plained,
That thus thy sun must needs go down
at noon,
Leaving a nation rest of that rare boon,
A ruler, noted for a life unstained,
An honest record and unchallenged worth,
Of dauntless courage, daring to unearth
The hidden evil, and to set wrong right,
With steadfast purpose and with faith
unfeigned.

Oh, the rare beauty of the strong, pure life!
From the log cabin in primeval grove,
Clearing a path to wealth, and name, and
fame,
Resting awhile with quiet and reverent
love,
To woo the muse, conserving through the
strife,
The fervent poet soul; and yet again
Haunting the halls of learning, so to frame
From all, stout stepping stones, whereby
to climb
To that high place his nation chose for
him.

Yes! it was well he should be crowned so,
The people's chosen servant tried and true;
But yet another crown must press his brow,
With suffering's thorns, e'er we could fully
see

How truly grand and great the man could
be.

Oh! yet the world is wholesome at the
core!

A Czar is killed, and there's but little rue:
But touch the good, and how its great
heart bleeds,

Mourning the loss of one of its great needs;
How every pulse doth quicken into pain,
While o'er the Atlantic comes the inflated
roar,

O' British horror, and a sad low strain,
With love and blessing all the lines be-
tween

The voice of England's and the world's
one Queen.

And we, by virtue of our near neighbour-
hood,

Of common brotherhood alike with all;
But chiefly, by the tender ties of blood,
A triple claim advance to bear the pall,
To share the sorrow, shedding tear for
tear,

With his great nation, and his near and
dear.

—Grip.

"THE day of the Christian's death is better than the day of his birth. It is the day, when, as a weary traveller, he arrives at home; when, as a sea-tossed mariner, he enters his desired haven; when, as a long-enduring patient, he throws off the last feelings of his lingering complaint; when, as an heir of immortality, he comes of age, and obtains the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus, whatever may be the manner of his death, for him to die is gain."—W. Jay.

THERE is nothing lovely in any creature, but what it receives from God; and by how much the more it is like to God, by so much the more it is lovely unto us. Hence it is, that grace is the most lovely-thing in the world, next to God, as being the image of God Himself stamped upon the soul; nay, it is not only the image and representation, but it is the influence and communication of Himself to us, so that the more we have of grace, so much the more we have of God within us.—Bishop Deveridge.