

Beautiful Hands.

BEAUTIFUL hands! not soft and white!
Not gloved and hid from the blessed light;
On the fingers small no diamonds shine,
No rubies gleam from the distant mine;
No reachings forth to the gaping crowd
As the welkin rings with greetings loud;
No gestures wild, no claspings tight,
In the din and strife for woman's right;
No sceptre grasped 'mid golden sheen,
With the royal grasp of a royal queen,
But stamed and marked by labour hard,
Yet subjects fit for the highest bard,
Beautiful hands!

Beautiful hands! for duty strong,
In the sternest tasks, however long;
The willing hands of the gentle bride
Take up life's work with an honest pride,
Create new charms of garner wealth
For the happy home of peace and health,
Whene'er the husband carries long
In the marts of trade or amid the throng,
The beautiful hands for him prepare
The things that make for his tender care;
And when he returns the wife to greet,
The earnest hands give welcome sweet,
Beautiful hands!

Beautiful hands! in kindly deeds
For the poor man's child or the widow's needs,
They are ever ready, and true, and just
To divide the loaf in quiet trust;
And without a thought of reward or fame
They freely give in humanity's name;
They bear for the thirsty lips to sup
The crystal draught in the humble cup;
Yes, more than this, with a broader care,
Over those who are caught in passion's snare
They would throw that beautiful mantle round
Which tinkles not with an empty sound—
Beautiful hands!

Beautiful hands! the girls and boys
Are ever eager for childhood's toys;
And the diligent hands are seldom still,
But toil with a mother's cheerful will
To form the kite or dress the doll,
To gladden the hearts of each and all.
The years go by and sons are grown;
One goes away to the distant town.
In the sultry days he sickens and dies;
No mother was there to close his eyes.
They bear the corpse to the old home-place,
Her hands are touching the dear dead face,
Beautiful hands!

Beautiful hands! I feel them now
As in other years they pressed my brow,
When the fever burned and the hot blood sped
As I tried to raise my aching head;
I feel the sweetly soothing palm
As it sought the fiery rage to calm;
And when again I was strong and well
Those gentle hands on my head would dwell,
As a voice would speak of a countless gain
Of coming thro' sorrow and strife and pain;
Of a straighter path up life's mountain-side,
To sunlit slopes where our views grow wide—
Beautiful hands!

Beautiful hands! forever at rest,
Now crossed on the cold and pulseless breast;
Their humblest deed has been "well done!"
What grander praise have the grandest won?
Grief sits enthroned by the desolate hearth,
And shadows lengthen o'er life's rough path.
The generous hands are forever closed,
From deeds of love they have now reposed;
The beautiful hands have ceased to guide,
The "bairns" are scattered far and wide;
But often from dreams in stranger lands
I wake to the touch of my mother's hands,
Beautiful hands!
—M. H. L. Buckner.

"Girls, Help Father."

"My hands are so stiff I can hardly hold a pen," said Farmer Wilber, as he sat down to "figure out" some accounts that were getting behindhand.

"Can I help you father?" said Lucy, laying down her bright crochet-work.

"I shall be glad to do so if you will explain what you want."

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if you can, Lucy," he said, reflectively. "Pretty good at figures are you?"

"I would be ashamed if I did not know something of them after going twice through the arithmetic," said Lucy, laughing.

"Well, I can show you in five minutes what I have to do, and it'll be a wonderful help if you can do it for

me. I never was a master-hand at accounts in my best days, and it does not grow any easier since I have put on spectacles."

Very patiently did the helpful daughter plod through the long lines of figures, leaving the gay wot ted to lie idle all the evening, though she was in such haste to finish her scarf. It was reward enough to see her tired father, who had been toiling all day for herself and the other dear ones, sitting so cozily in his easy-chair, enjoying his weekly paper.

The clock struck nine before her task was over, but the hearty "Thank you, daughter, a thousand times!" took away all sense of weariness that Lucy might have felt.

"It's rather looking up when a man can have a clerk," said the farmer. "It's not every farmer that can afford it."

"Not every farmer's daughter is capable of making one," said the mother, with a little pardonable maternal pride.

"Nor every one that would be willing, if able," said Mr. Wilber; which last was a sad truth. How many daughters might be of use to their fathers in this and many other ways who never think of lightening a care or labor! If asked to perform some little service, it is done at best with a reluctant step and unwilling air that robs it of all sunshine or claim of gratitude. Girls, help your father. Give him a cheerful home to rest in when evening comes, and do not worry his life away by fretting because he cannot afford you all the luxuries you covet. Children exert as great an influence on their parents as parents do on their children.—Selected.

How They Gave.

BY ELIZA M. SHERMAN.

It was a motley company who had gathered in the great hall one morning for the purpose of packing a missionary box.

The rich and the poor had met together for a common cause, and to give or to withhold of the gifts God had given unto their care, as the case might be.

"Well, well, now that's a pretty good-sized box!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams, treasurer of the ladies' society; "wonder if we can find enough to fill it?"

"I think so," answered little Mrs. Lewis, laying down her budget.

"We ought to," added Lizzie Elgin, folding up a comfortable patch-work quilt, the work of her industrious fingers.

"I brought these along," said sweet little Mrs. Myrtle, the minister's wife, as she displayed a partly worn suit of clothes in good repair. "They were brother John's, and so I have always kept them for his sake. I had so few of his things left after he died; but they will do some one good."

"Better have left them for Mr. Myrtle," whispered Lydia Ames to her best friend, Sally Porter.

"So I say," said Sally: "I always make it a rule never to give away anything that I can or may make of any possible use, and even if Mr. Myrtle did not use those clothes, they would make nice braided rugs."

"So they would; but some folks always are extravagant."

"I brought these; it was all I could do," and dear old Grandma Wells laid

down a couple of pairs of thick woolen hose.

"Those will be useful, I am sure," said Mrs. Williams.

"Well, I brought these; they are of no earthly good to me, and I am glad to be well rid of them; the people there may find use for them," and Amanda Davis, one of the wealthiest ladies of the town, held up an old bedraggled tarlatan skirt, of which there was hardly enough left to make a decent ruffle, as outspoken Mrs. Williams declared, and an old ruffled muslin apron!

"But," said Mrs. Myrtle, "you will give more than that: we depend on you. You must surely have cast-off garments which would do better service than these."

"That's the way! if we give much, we must give even more. Here take that and let them suit themselves," and from her thousands, Mrs. Davis tossed down just fifty cents, and left the room.

"Please put this in somewhere," said a meek little voice, as its owner handed in a bright half-dollar. She was poorly clad, and the chill air struck through the thin dress.

"Can you afford it, Jenny?" asked Mrs. Myrtle.

"Yes, for Christ," answered the girl, and hurried away, and no one but He to whom the gift was given so lovingly knew that she had given all the wages of two whole days. The actual amount was only equal to Mrs. Davis' sum, but how much greater in the eyes of Him who looks into the heart for the motives of men.

There were many gifts of value in the box that year. One mother brought the clothing of her little dead child. Another, whose boast was that her gift was the best and most valuable of all, did not think, perhaps, that she gave to glorify herself rather than her Saviour.

Ah, well! He who knoweth the hearts of men, knows what was the most valuable of all the gifts in the box that went to that missionary on the far-off prairies of the West.

We Seek a City.

We seek a city, where each quiet dwelling
Stands fast upon the everlasting hills;
Where in the song of praises loudly swelling,
Comes not a discord of our earthly ills.

We know that in that city life abideth;
Nor tears, nor death, can ever enter there;
And One with nail-pierced hands our way still
guideth,
Until we come unto the city fair.

We seek a city—pilgrim feet grown weary,
But we press on; beyond still lies our home,
Though days are dark, and ways are often
dreary,

We seek, we seek a city yet to come!
Lucy Randolph Flemming.

OFTEN on slight examination of the lesson it seems like dry ground, and it will not do to put entire dependence upon the intellectual understanding, nor upon commentators; it is only by earnest prayer that "the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" is revealed. It was Whitefield who remarked, in effect, that the fullest, clearest light fell upon the inspired word when he was upon his bended knees over the open Bible. Words, foather-tipped with prayer, will wing their way to the heart, when lengthened, clear expositions, sent from the head will fall cold and unheeded at the feet of careless listeners.

Daughters who do not Excellently.

THE daughter never stops to think that once her mother enjoyed the sparkle and life of society and gave it up, and became the timid, shrinking, self-conscious woman that she is for her daughter's sake. She only tosses it off with a careless air: "Mother does not care for society somehow." She does not know that her mother has lost the art of graceful dress in forgetfulness of self, because her heart was not large enough to contain both herself and her daughter, and shoots the careless arrow into her mother's heart: "I wish, mother, that you wouldn't dress so dreadfully old-fashioned!" She does not know that her mother has closed for herself the library and the music room forever—too late now to reopen them—that she might give the key of both to her child, who to her companions utters the contemptuous sneer, "Mother is such a drudge! I believe she never reads a book, and I don't believe she knows the difference between Beethoven and Wagner." I see the mother's dream shattered, as most of our dreams are by the hard realities of life, and she toiling on in the kitchen and the chamber, and wearily waiting until the rest shall come, while the careless girl to whom she would have given so much, but by the very idolatry of her love has given so little, lives as a guest for her mother to serve, unpaid by the only wages that can ever pay for such services—a cordial recognition, a hearty, sympathetic co-operation, and a rewarding love.—Selected.

Brevities.

A MONTREAL clergyman was too ill to preach on Sunday, but he wrote a sermon, and by the use of a telephone heard it delivered in his church by another preacher as he lay on his sick-bed in his chamber.

It is not every doctor in divinity who is competent to teach children. It is reported that one of them undertaking to define catechism to a Sunday-School, said:—"A catechism is a synopsis, a compendium, a syllabus, of Christian doctrine."

MANY a promising child has been hurried to the grave or crippled in intellect and enfeebled in body by over-study. A little eight-year-old in Philadelphia died a few days ago of brain fever, in which her delirious thoughts were all about examples in arithmetic. She had been in mortal fear of being set back a grade by failure at examination. Common sense in the school room is one of the chief needs of the period.

THE following epigram was written on a Mr. Wellwood, who was much given to exaggeration:—

"You double each story you tell,
You double each sight that you see;
Your name's a double u e double l,
Double u double o d."

AN Englishman visiting Sweden, noticing the care for neglected children, who are taken from the streets and placed in special schools, inquired if it was not costly. He received the suggestive answer: "Yes, it is costly, but not dear. We Swedes are not rich enough to let a child grow up in ignorance, misery, and crime, to become afterward a scourge to society, as well as a disgrace to himself."