

## HOUSEHOLD.

## Giving One's Best.

'I think I will give Aunt Miriam the north room. I guess she'll feel more at home here; she's been used to having things sort of plain and ordinary all her life, Aunt Miriam has.'

Miss Prime, the little dress-maker, looked up at the speaker, who sat seeding raisins in the cool hall. She looked as if she would like to say something if she quite dared, but Miss Prime was a diffident little creature, and Mrs. Laurance was a large, confident sort of person, who always knew her own mind, and was fully capable of carrying out her own plans and helping other people about theirs; and then, she was such a good woman, just to a half-penny in all her dealings, generous to the poor, liberal and ready in all church matters, so good in every way; and yet—if only she would not put Aunt Miriam in the back room, said Miss Prime to herself. But when she spoke, she said:

'Let me measure this sleeve once more, please. There, I thought it was a little long'; and while she was carefully trimming the cuff, she said: 'I think you told me this lady you expect had always had a sort of hard life, Mrs. Laurance.'

'So she has, poor soul! And I do suppose the last four years have been the very worst part of it, for she has just given herself up, body and soul, to taking care of a helpless old man—her step-father he was, and none too agreeable in his best days; and what he was them last months, I guess nobody can realize but her. Two years ago John and I were there for a day or two, and mercy's sake! I thought I should go wild to hear him fret and find fault and order her around; and here she's endured it till this spring. He's been clean off his mind, though, of late, so I do suppose one could make more allowance for him.'

'I think Miriam is such a sweet name,' said the dressmaker. 'It seems as if the owner of that name must be someone very calm and stately, and yet very gentle and lovely.'

'She is; she is really like that. It seems to rest one some way just to see her and to hear her talk. John thinks a sight of her; he says she is so much like his mother. Yes, we reckon on her visit a good deal, for she ain't had a chance before in years, and then we lived up in the Berkshires, so she's never been to this place at all.'

'Do you know, Mrs. Laurance, if I was in your place, I should give Aunt Miriam the front room?'

'I want to know! Why would you?'

The speaker rested her hands on the bowl of raisins, while she waited for the answer. Did little Miss Prime dare to criticize the way in which she ordered her household affairs?

'Well, you know I went up there this morning to lay out your new dress skirt on the bed, and I couldn't help staying a minute or two to look around. It is such a sweet, dainty, lovely room, more so than the parlor, I think. I would love to sleep there.'

The face of the proud housekeeper softened at these words of praise.

'Yes, it's a lovely room; I'll own it.'

'I noticed everything,' went on Miss Prime, 'from wall-paper to pin-cushion; and the counterpane and shams and curtains are pure as the snow.'

'Yes, I did have excellent luck doing them up, and the room hasn't been used since; though I do go in and stand, as you say you did, and look about pretty near every day.'

'And that great easy chair by the window, all covered with white cretonne and wild roses twining all over it—that chair actually held out its arms and begged me to sit in its lap, and look out at the Sound and its white sails.'

Both women laughed a little at the quaint conceit, and Miss Prime owned: 'I did accept its invitation just a breath.'

'Why, bless you, child! take your sewing and go right up and sit there an hour, if it's any pleasure!'

'Not in work hours. I should just idle and look at the street and the Sound; but if I was going to make a visit, same as that lady is coming here, and I should be given a room like that, with a warm welcome, I think I should be full of gratitude and delight, and would know what rest means.'

'Aunt Miriam is welcome to anything —

don't fancy she isn't. Only, as she is going to stay two or three weeks, a room with plainer things in it might suit her better—that's what I thought; but of course I want to do what is best all around. John's cousin and her daughter are coming next month, and they're used to things stylish, and Lawyer Nelson is coming for a night when that land suit comes off, and mebbe he'll bring his wife; so you see, I was keeping that room spick-and-span.'

'I see. I didn't know about them when I spoke; and I was thinking there wasn't much view from the back room.'

'No, only some fields and woods; and, to be sure, Aunt Miriam has had such things to look at all her life. To get a glimpse of water will be a treat to her—that is so. That little rise of ground over there is just enough to hide the view of the Sound from this lower floor. I'm always sorry for that. Well, on the whole, I guess I'll put my first company into the best room, Miss Prime, thanks to you.'

'I'm so glad; only I don't want you to feel as if I was interfering. I don't meddle in general.'

'Now, don't you worry. I'm not going to lay it up against you because you're better at heart than I am. You enter right into the needs and feelings of other people, while all the time I'm thinking of how things are going to concern me.'

'Oh, Mrs. Laurance, don't! I never thought of setting up to be as good as you are, for I couldn't be!' and the little dress-maker colored rose-red, and looked quite distressed.

'There, there! we won't quarrel over ourselves; and don't you hurry to get that waist done to-day. I'll get you an early tea, and when John goes to the depot you can ride along home and come to-morrow and finish that and fix another dress a bit, and see Aunt Miriam, too.'

'And then the good housewife went out to the kitchen, and while she was beating her cake, she said to herself: Sarah Ann Laurance, sometimes you think you're quite a good woman, but you can't hold a candle to that quiet little creature in there. You're vain and proud, and striving after the praise of fashionable people that don't care two snaps for you, when you ought to go down on your knees to serve such a saint as Aunt Miriam, and be glad to. I know one thing I'll do, though; when my other company is all gone, and Millie Prime has a slack spell of work, she shall come here for a week's visit and have that front room, and take one real rest in her life, poor soul! To think of her living alone in two tiny rooms, folks all dead, and not a dollar, I guess, but her own earnings, and so sweet and cheerful, always giving to the church, and ready to help anybody; and I've hardly ever given her a thought, only when I wanted to have some sewing done. Well, I've a deal to make up to her and some others.'

The next afternoon, Aunt Miriam and Miss Prime were sitting on the front porch chatting like old and congenial friends. Mrs. Laurance, on her way out stopped to pick up a bit of lint from the carpet, and heard a few words which made her linger to hear more.

'Last Sunday I read the "Pilgrim's Progress" through once more; and you may think me fanciful, Miss Prime, but it seems as if I myself had got over a hard bit of the road, and had come to the Delectable Mountains, or the Border of Beulah. I am sure that I slept last night in the chamber called Peace; and this morning I got up at five o'clock—you see, I am used to rising early—and I sat at the window for an hour, perhaps, and just feasted my eyes and soul.'

'That's the very thing I thought you would do,' said the little dress-maker, with shining eyes.

'Yes, you can't think what a charm that blue, beautiful expanse of water has for one who has lived inland for so many years. God has given us such a beautiful world. How glad people ought to be to travel and see its beauties and wonders! I am so grateful to my friends here, who give me their very best. Did you know we were going to the beach this afternoon, Miss Prime, all of us?'

'I shall have to tell her the truth some time,' said just Mrs. Laurance. 'But dear Aunt Miriam—she is worthy of anybody's best!'—Emma A. Lente, in 'Zion's Herald.'

## Ink Spots.

To remove ink from carpets, when freshly spilled, take cotton batting and soak up all

the ink that it will receive, being careful not to let it spread. Then take fresh cotton batting wet in milk, and soak it up carefully. Repeat this operation, changing the cotton and milk each time. After most of the ink has been taken up in this way, rub the spot with fresh and clean cotton. Continue until all disappears; then wash the spot in clean warm water and a little soap; rinse in clear water and rub until nearly dry. For ink spots on marble, wood or paper, apply ammonia clear, just wetting the spot repeatedly

## NORTHERN MESSENGER.

## LETTER FROM A MOTHER.

The following letter came recently to the 'Witness' Office. There may be many, especially in the United States, who formerly took the 'Messenger,' who do not know that it is continued, or who do not know of its present enlarged form. We hope all our readers will take pains to speak to their friends about the 'Messenger.' When you have read your papers, if you will send them occasionally to friends who do not subscribe you will not only be circulating good literature, but may also be the means of inducing these friends to take the 'Messenger' for themselves.

Wellsville, Kansas.

Dear Editor, — Years ago, when I was a little girl I used to take a children's paper, entitled 'The Northern Messenger,' published at Montreal, Quebec. I think it was published by the same firm as the New York 'Witness.'

I write to find out, if possible, (whether the paper is still published. I was very fond of reading it when I was a child, and know of no other I would be as willing to put into the hands of my own little boys, as I would the 'Northern Messenger.'

I would be thankful for any information you could give me in regard to it. Yours respectfully,

Mrs. A. D. C.

## A MAGNIFICENT BIBLE.

Uxbridge, Ont.

Editor 'Northern Messenger':

Dear Sir, — I take great pleasure in expressing to you my sincere thanks for the magnificent bible sent me, as second prize in your 'Search Question' competition. It has exceeded my fondest expectations. It is one of the best bibles I have ever seen, and all who see it say the same. Wishing future success to the 'Messenger,' and all connected with it, I remain yours sincerely,

JAS. E. GRAY.

Athelstan, Feb. 21, 1898.

(To the Editor of the 'Northern Messenger'.)

Dear Sir,—In the early part of January I sent you twenty subscribers to the 'Northern Messenger.' In due time I received the bible you advertised, and I am very much pleased with it. It is a great deal nicer than I thought it would be. Please accept many thanks for it, as I feel well repaid for any trouble I had getting the names. I go to Huntingdon Academy, and have not much time for writing, but I got the names I sent during my holidays. From your young friend,

ALICE WILSON.

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Three or more to different addresses, 25c each.

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When addressed to Montreal City, Great Britain and Postal Union countries, 5c postage must be added for each copy; United States and Canada free of postage. Special arrangements will be made for delivering packages of 10 or more in Montreal. Subscribers residing in the United States can remit by Post Office Money Order on Boston Point, N.Y. or Express Money Order payable in Montreal.

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JOHN DOUGALL & SON,  
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