

BEAUTIFUL HOMES.

WHAT a pleasure it is to go into a beautiful home; it need not be a grand mansion to be beautiful. One of the most pleasant homes I ever was in, was a small unpretending cottage, with vine-covered porches, shady walks, and arbours.

Inside the house there were such dainty rooms: no costly furniture or works of art were there, but the windows were filled with choice plants. Ivy vines were trained around the pictures; bouquets and wreaths of autumn leaves, together with a few choice bits of statuary, occupied the brackets. There was a sweet-toned organ in the parlour, and every evening the passers would pause to listen to the melody awakened by the touch of skilful fingers.

On entering the house one would be greeted with a burst of song from a canary, which was complimented by a parrot saying, "Pretty well—for you."

Perhaps one reason everything seemed so pleasant here was the cordial greeting extended by the occupants of this home, to everyone, both stranger and friend; they really made you feel at home, and you went away, leaving your blessing with them.

We are not all rich in this world's goods, but we can by using our ingenuity, make little things go a great way toward making our home beautiful. We are benefiting ourselves in doing this; for by studying and loving the beautiful, we are inclined to study and love the One who made all things for us. With increasing love for God, comes love for our fellow-men, and our influence over them for good is strengthened.

Our every-day lives are the standard by which we are judged in this world; and we all know that surrounding circumstances influence our words and actions greatly; I have seen homes in which it seemed as though it would be almost impossible to have a wrong thought, even; all was so bright, happy, and pure.

"Can we not make our home
The sphere of harmony and peace,
The spot where angels find a resting-place,
When, bearing blessings, they descend to earth."

Baldwin, Kansas.

J. L. H.

ALL MAY HELP

A COMPANY of men were pushing a boat into the water; but it stuck so fast that they couldn't move it. "Another pound," said one, "and it would go." "I can push a pound," answered a little boy. He did so, and she was soon afloat. So you see a little boy can do something.

How well it would be if persons would gather instruction from this simple incident. There is many a boat needing to be pushed out from the shore. A little help, and she would glide gracefully into her native element. In other words, humanity—bound, landlocked, in a thousand ways—is crying for a little help. Who will render it? The boy who said, "I can push a pound," teaches us wisdom. Reader, can you push a pound? If so, do it, and help the boat into the water.—Sel.

THE CHRISTIAN COBBLER.

SOME years ago I was brought in contact with a coloured man. He was nothing but a cobbler—he said himself he was not a decent shoemaker, and I can testify to that from some experience of his work. But if not elegantly done, it was thoroughly done, and that was the point. He told me that when he became too old and crippled to work in the field and house, he took to cobbling. I said to him, "My friend, after this cobbling on earth is done, how about the other world? Have you any hope for a better world?" "Ah! master," said he, "I am nothing, as I told you, but a poor cobbler, but I feel when I sit here and work on my stool, that the good Master is looking at me, and when I take a stitch, it is a stitch, and when I put on a heel-tap, it is not paper, but good leather." It is not the work we do upon earth that makes the whole of life, but it is the way in which we do that work—it is the motive. "Thou, God, seest me."

BORROWING TROUBLE.

"I KNOW it will rain to-morrow, auntie," said Louisa, as she looked gloomily out of the window. "It is clouding up now, and I shall miss going to G... It will be such a disappointment after all my preparations." "Don't borrow trouble, Louie. You have no certain proof that it will rain to-morrow. Many a morning has been fair after a cloudy afternoon. If it should rain to-night, I should rather look for it to be bright in the morning." "Dear me, I hope it will rain to-night then; only it would be so muddy and unpleasant walking. Do you think it will rain to-night, auntie?" "I cannot tell; but I am content to leave the weather in God's hands. Either you will go on your journey to-morrow, or God will have some good reason for preventing you. In either case, contentment is the wisest and happiest course for you. It is your borrowed trouble, Louisa, that brings you unhappiness. Jesus offers us no help to bear these burdens of the imagination."

THOUGHT-HIVES.

EVERY man we meet is a walking thought-hive. To our eye it is hidden; but to God's eye it is a hive of transparent glass. "For there is not a thought in our hearts, but lo! O Lord, though knowest it altogether!" The thoughts which nestle within us and issue from us in language and in actions, determine our moral character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

A man is known by the company he keeps. So the thoughts which we harbour within us, and which go out through the doors of our mouths and our hands, determine our real character. A holy man gives house-room only to pure and noble, and godly thoughts, and he is constantly striving to bar up door and window against foul and wicked intruders; out of the treasure-house within him proceed all the beautiful deeds and white-winged words that are a blessing unto others. Habitual thinking determines a man as either Christ's or Satan's. A sensualist is only a filthy thinker. The walls of his mind are hung around with lascivious pictures; his inmost soul is a brothel. Do a man's thoughts run continually upon the bottle? Then he is a drunkard. Does another man's thought-hive send out its winged messengers every hour to gather honey from God's Word and His world of nature? Then he is a devout and happy being. In such a man, God dwelleth by His Spirit.

One of the highest spiritual luxuries is the enjoyment of pure and exhilarating and sublime thoughts. To such a devout and happy thinker, a prison would be a palace. "I thought of Jesus," said holy Rutherford, "until every stone in the wall of my prison-cell shone like a ruby." Wherefore, let us keep our hearts—our thought-hives—with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. And no one can handle the pitch of a wicked, or obscene, or abominable thought for any considerable time without being fatally defiled thereby.

There is no greater torment than to be an unclean, or intensely selfish, or a corrupt thinker. This is the genuine demonic possession. Such a one is "grievously vexed with a devil." To go through some men's hearts would be like a walk through Sing Sing penitentiary. Every room has a rascal in it. Out of such hearts proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, covetousness, pride, blasphemy. What a hell in advance, to be doomed to live in such a habitation of the devil! To be such a man or woman forever, is the "everlasting punishment" of the lost.

All thoughts have their germs. To kill a sin, the surest way is to kill it in the egg. At the very moment when a wicked thought is born is the right time to strangle it. These little snakes become the anacondas that strangle conscience and destroy character. How important, too, is the nursing into active life and strength of every good and holy suggestion and aspiration. A noble career depends on the treatment given to the infant ideas that are born in the soul. The best of these are the direct product of the Holy Spirit. To quench a good thought is to quench the Spirit; and the everlasting damnation of millions has been the result of this very sin against the infinite love.—*The Living Epistle.*