

A TALK ABOUT GIVING.

"What is the matter with you to-day, Jennie? Something seems to be troubling you," said Mrs. Meredith to a young neighbor, who had run in with her sewing to spend the afternoon.

The usually bright face of the young matron was clouded over, and a heavy sigh, which had just unconsciously escaped her, occasioned Mrs. Meredith's question.

"I am tired of being so poor," she answered, rather impatiently. "It is so hard to have just enough money to live upon, and hardly a cent to spare for anything besides our actual necessities. We never seem to have anything to give to charitable purposes. It seems to me it would be really a luxury to respond freely to all the appeals of charity." And tears gathered slowly in her eyes.

"I always feel that giving is not merely a duty, but a privilege and a luxury as well, my dear," replied Mrs. Meredith, "so I know how badly it must make you feel when you are obliged to let any appeals pass unanswered."

"You remember that poor man who was killed on the railway track last week?" said Jennie, "a subscription has been started for his wife and little children, and this morning the paper was brought to me. I know just how needy the poor woman is, and I would willingly have added my contribution if I had had any money to spare; but I hadn't a cent to give, and it did look so mean in me to refuse. The truth is that we haven't ever got enough to afford to give anything. I manage just as economically as I can, and save in every possible way; and even then we can only just make ends meet."

"Are you sure you can't afford to give anything?" asked Mrs. Meredith quietly.

"Have you tried any system of giving?"

"Any system of giving," repeated Jennie in astonishment. "Why, what do you mean, Mrs. Meredith? We always give whatever we can spare when there is any call for charity."

"And do you make the necessary expenditures for the table, or for clothing in the same way, just taking whatever may be convenient?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"Oh, no," answered Jennie. "We divide Will's salary up, and make allowance for all our expenses, and then we know just how much we can afford to spend on any one thing."

"Don't you think that charitable appropriations ought to enter into your calculations just as much as any other expenditure?" asked Mrs. Meredith. "I know that giving is often a matter of impulse instead of principle, but I don't think that is the way it should be regarded. Suppose you and your husband had pledged yourselves at the beginning of the year to lay by one-tenth of your income for charitable purposes; then you would always have a fund to draw upon whenever you desired to give."

"A tenth!" exclaimed Jennie. "Why, Mrs. Meredith, that would be eighty dollars a year. We could never spare all that."

"Have you ever tried?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"No, we never tried to put aside any certain portion, but I know we couldn't do it."

"You don't know what you can do until you try, my dear," said her friend. "When we were married, Mr. Meredith's salary was only six hundred dollars a year, two hundred less than you have, you see; and it seemed to us that the whole of that sum would be very little to live on. We resolved, however, to consecrate one-tenth of it entirely to charitable purposes, and every month we laid that one-tenth aside before we used any of the money for anything else. It required very close economy, and perhaps a little pinching now and then; but we always had the luxury of giving at our command, and it was a great pleasure to us to know that we could respond to any appeal for charity that might be made to us."

"But a tenth is so much," objected Jennie. "I don't see how you managed to give it, especially when you had so little anyway."

"We felt that we owed a tenth at least to the Lord," answered Mrs. Meredith, "and it seemed to us to be a debt that could not be set aside."

"The Jewish law about tithes is not any more binding upon us now than any other of those laws, is it?" asked Jennie.

"If we go by the principle that our Lord Himself announced, that to whom much is given, of him much will be required, then we owe a great deal more than the little which was exacted from the Jews," answered her friend. "It seems to me that a tenth is the very least we can give, and after we have given that we cannot feel that we have entirely fulfilled our obligations. I wish you would try a regular system of giving, Jennie dear. Resolve to set aside one-tenth, even if it requires a little more economy and self-denial. You will enjoy giving it all the more on that account, and it will be a great pleasure to you to turn this money into the channels in which it will do the most good. I speak from an experience of twenty years in systematic giving, and I have thought a great deal about it."

"But, Mrs. Meredith, it seems to me that if you feel yourself pledged to lay

ing, and I am sure he will be willing to do it. It doesn't seem right, when you think of it, to take care of ourselves first, and then give only what is left to the Lord."

The clock on the mantel chimed the hour, and she looked up in surprise.

"Why, it is five o'clock already, and I must run home, or supper won't be ready. Good-bye. I wish Will could have been here to hear all that you have been telling me, but we will talk it over to-night."

And the result of that evening's conversation was that they solemnly pledged themselves to lay aside a tenth of their income, and on a little box which contains their offerings, Jennie wrote;

"Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."—*Minnie E. Kenney, in the Christian at Work.*

ISHMAEL'S NEW IDEA.

There were three of them at first. Like different children in the same family, they were entirely unlike.

They were born in the barn, and three

By-and-by cold weather came, and Ishmael's fur coat was the admiration of us all. Put down a dish of milk and let his mother begin to lap it, and he would steal up beside her and make a teaspoon of his little red tongue, and the milk would disappear very rapidly. But open the door, and you would see him dashing off for the barn. The tip of his tail would vanish through the cat-hole, and in a moment you would see the tip of his nose peering out just far enough to let him see what was going on.

After a while the cold grew intense. Finally Ishmael would remain on the floor of the wood-house and let us see him take his meals if we did not touch him. His meals were not served exactly on the European plan, though when he was hungry he would always call for them.

One night I went out for an armful of wood, and set my candle down on the floor while I carried the wood in. Quietly opening the door when I came back for my second armful, there stood Ishmael evidently making a study of the candle. The flicker of the blaze seemed to interest him. He smelt at it, but jumped back as his nose came in contact with it. Then he tried to play with it, touching it half carelessly with his velvet paw. What could it mean? Something evidently hurt the little creature, but he had no idea what it was. He wanted to be friendly and shake hands, but the candle did not appreciate his friendly offer. You ought to have seen how puzzled he looked. He had never seen or felt fire before. He had gained a new idea, but it had cost him a blister.

How does a little child gain new ideas? Many new ideas come through the fingers, just as that of heat found its way to Ishmael's brain through one of his paws.

There is a fire that burns with a beautiful flame. It has burning-places all over the world. It is not the Northern Light, that is beautiful, but there is no warmth in it. The fire I speak of is of various colors. Red and its different shades are more common than any other. Men keep it where children can see it and where they can be burned by it as Ishmael was by the candle. Boys and even men sometimes swallow this fire. They do not get off, however, with a little blister like the one you could have seen on Ishmael's paw.

They get a wound that reaches to the very heart.

Need I tell you what this fire is? You can see it wherever there is a bar with its brilliant cut-glass bottles and tumblers.

Ishmael's blister taught him a wholesome lesson. He does not play with candle-flames now. You might leave a tallow-dip on the floor, and if the door were open he would at once walk out into the snow by the light of it.

Men who swallow the fire that sparkles in the beautiful bottles often walk out of the house and home into the street, yes, into the snow and rain. I cannot say that Ishmael ever signed the pledge, but I do know that that one small blister taught him not to play with fire.

Dear boy, now reading about the new idea that Ishmael gained, can you not learn to keep away from a fire that would burn all the beauty out of your life by seeing how it has burned others? Must you suffer before you can exercise common sense? You ought to be wiser than Ishmael was. And yet he was no fool, for one blister taught him what some men never learn, though they suffer every day from a fire that they ought to keep away from.—*Child's Paper.*

I CAN LET IT ALONE.

"I can do something you can't," said a boy to his companion; "I can smoke tobacco."

"And I can do something you can't," was the quick reply; "I can let tobacco alone."

A LABORER was recently fined for allowing his dog to drink beer, which made the animal savage. The judge thought it was the man's fault for allowing the dog to drink. Why shouldn't a dog have a right to drink beer if it's given him? How can appetite be controlled? This question has been asked: "If that laborer was under obligation to keep his dog from drinking beer and hurting people, ought we to permit men to receive liquor, and injure themselves and their fellow-men?"—*Pansy.*

Christ Arose!

"He is not here, but is risen. — LUKE xxiv. 6.

R. L.

REV. R. LOWRY.

1. Low in the grave He lay— Je - sus, my Sa - viour! Wait-ing the com-ing day—
2. Vain - ly they watch His bed— Je - sus, my Sa - viour! Vain - ly they seal the dead—
3. Death can-not keep his prey— Je - sus, my Sa - viour! He tore the bars a-way—

CHORUS. *faster.*

1. Je - sus, my Lord! } Up from the grave He a - rose. With a
2. Je - sus, my Lord! } He a - rose,
3. Je - sus, my Lord! }

'migh - ty tri-umph'er His foes: He a - rose a Vic - tor from the

dark do - man, And He lives for e - ver with His saints to reign He a -

ros: He a - rose! Hal - le - lu - jah! Christ a - rose!

aside a certain sum, it becomes an arbitrary and exacting thing, instead of a free-will offering. Doesn't it seem very hard to put aside a tenth, and know that it isn't yours to use in any way except for charity?"

"Speaking from my own experience, dear, it has always seemed a precious privilege to lay aside for the Master's use a portion of that which He has given us, and I believe every one else who has tried it will bear the same testimony; and, surely, money put aside systematically and regularly, is just as much of a free-will offering as money that is given on the impulse of the moment. Won't you promise to at least give this plan a fair trial? I am sure you could not be persuaded to give it up after you had once undertaken it."

"I will," promised Jennie, earnestly. "I will talk it over with Will this even-

handsomer kittens are seldom seen. As soon as they were discovered we tried to give them pleasant accommodations in the wood-house next door to the kitchen. An old basket made a nice cat's cradle—no, a kitten's cradle, with only a little less open-work than you find in the cat's cradle that school-children make on their fingers with a string.

We could get hold of only two of the kittens. One of them kept himself out of sight behind the piles of wood, where he made himself heard at all hours of the day. The other two were easily tamed, and we soon found pleasant homes for them, for the neighbors' children all fell in love with them. But the third kitten was a wild fellow. Whenever approached he would spit and then run away, as if he thought every man's hand was against him. So we called him Ishmael.