

UNDER THE EVENING LAMP.

"AS YE 'OULD."

BY EDITH V. BRADT.

If I should see
A brother languishing in sore distress,
And I should turn and leave him comfortless,
When I might be
A messenger of hope and happiness—
How could I ask to have what I denied
In my own hour of bitterness supplied?

If I might share
A brother's load along the dusty way,
And I should turn and walk alone that day—
How could I dare,
When in the evening watch I knelt to pray,
To ask for help to bear my pain and loss,
If I had heeded not my brother's cross?

If I might sing
A little song to cheer a fainting heart,
And I should seal my lips and sit apart,
When I might bring
A bit of sunshine for life's ache and smart—
How could I hope to have my grief relieved,
If I kept silent when my brother grieved?

And so I know
That day is lost wherein I fail to lend
A helping hand to some wayfaring friend;
But if it show
A burden lightened by the cheer I sent,
Then do I hold the golden hours well spent,
And lay me down in sweet content.

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.

BY WILLIAM H. RENDER.

In a quaint old Eastern legend, we are told of a certain Prince who went in search of happiness. After many disappointments, he met a poor but cheerful-hearted labourer, to whom he puts his urgent query, "How can I be truly happy?" The simple-minded man smiled serenely and replied, "Do good, and trust in God."

This is an old-time parable, but a similar instance of practical wisdom may be found in the life of Samuel Rogers, the famous poet. Lady Holland had been complaining to him that she had nothing to do—nothing by which she could employ her time, and that she felt very miserable in consequence. "I recommended her," said Rogers, "something new—to try to do a little good."

Capital advice, surely; for experience proves there are no surer means of securing lasting joy than doing good. There is a positive pleasure in benevolence, indeed, doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life. All true philanthropists are happy-hearted men. Dulness departs while doing good. More than that, noble deeds seem to have the power of staying with us, and become a perennial spring of happiness.

Unfortunately, most of us are always *going* to do good. Perhaps it is as the great French writer remarked, "It is easier to be good for everybody than to be good for somebody." We forget that when we do good to our fellow-creatures we invest in a savings-bank from which the heart receives interest.

Who can gauge the real joy of doing good? The secret pleasure of a generous act is a very sweet one. Dear old George Herbert declares that

"All worldly joys grow less
Than the one joy of doing kindnesses."

By sharing our blessings we increase our own joys. The power of making others happy is two-fold in its effects—probably, he is more happy who can and does confer happiness than the empty ones who need it. How delightful is the feeling which arises in our hearts while assisting the distressed! A sweetness, a gentleness seems to enlarge our whole soul while "doing the business of Providence," and we cannot but feel honoured in having a hand in God's work of blessing others.

And all circumstances of life yield opportunities for doing good. Young and old, high and low, can join in this pastime. Says a well-known mission worker: "A short time ago I was passing along a busy thoroughfare as two of the Shoe Black Brigade were getting their dinners. With the causeway for their table, and a coup'e of thick slices of bread and meat each for their portion, the poor lads seemed thoroughly content, and ate with a relish which many a rich man would have given pounds

to possess. When they had about half done, one of them made a sudden stop, as something attracted his attention. Whispering a few words to his companion, he gathered up the remaining half of their dinners, and running after a poor beggar-man, generously gave it to him, and then, with happy face, returned to his lowly work."

Surely this humble lad carried a princely heart beneath his coarse jacket, and was infinitely richer for his splendid self-denial.

Strange to say, too many of us are sadly ignorant of the art of being generous. We lack the imaginative power of putting ourselves in the place of an unhappy brother or sister. Yet if we would but look through the spectacles of selfish love we should discern many a sorrow which we could heal. If we could realise the pangs of hunger, despair, bereavement, what a tender pity should we feel! It is patent that the best men who have lived have had this power of pitiful imagination. General Gordon once had a gold medal with a personal inscription, which was given to him by the Empress of China. Feeling deeply for the victims of the cotton famine in Manchester, he sold it in order to send a subscription to the fund.

A tender little story, too, is related of Goldsmith. A poor woman hearing that he knew something of physic, applied to him for her suffering husband. He promised at once to help, putting some guineas in a pill-box and labelling it, "These must be used as necessities require. Be patient, and of good heart."

True, ingratitude is universal, but this should not freeze our every generous impulse. We can do good as to God. The hand of poverty is Heaven's purse, and charity is the clearest expression of inward religion. If we possess the faintest spark of Christian love we cannot help having a tear for pity and an open hand. As shrewd Mrs. Poyser observed: "A pig may poke his nose into the trough, and think o' nothing outside it; but, if you've got a man's heart and soul in you, you can't be easy a-making your own bed and leaving the rest to lie on the stones." We cannot work miracles as Christ did, feeding five thousand with five small loaves and two fishes, but we can, like the little lad, give Him our best to bless and multiply.

Yes, doing good is a luxury, and its rewards are infinite. The smile and blessing of the aged poor are worth something. The broken words of thanks of the widow and orphan are sweetest music. Doing good never shames us; it becomes a source of continual delight. It is so cheap, too—a kind word, a cup of cold water, a visit to a sick one, a thoughtful act. Such things, like virtue, are their own reward.

"Nothing can embitter
That best portion of a good man's life—
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."

There is even a higher aspect of the matter. Good actions are the invisible hinges of the doors of paradise. Treasures in heaven are real things to the man of faith. "Giving to the Lord," as a quaint author says, "is but the transporting of our goods to a higher floor." God counts them, and *knows* their owner. Think of it! He it is who shall pronounce the "Well done!" and welcome the humblest benefactor of others to His treasure-house of everlasting joy.—*Family Friend*

A BOASTER SILENCED.

"A rich man," says the Rev. W. M. Hay Aitkin, "was showing a friend through his house, and, after scaling a high tower, pointing in a northerly direction, said:

"As far as your eye can reach that is all mine."

"Is that so?" said the friend.

"Yes. Now turn this way; that is all mine."

"Indeed?" said the friend.

"Now look southerly—that is all mine, and westerly is mine also—in fact, on all four points of the compass, as far as the eye can reach, it is all mine."

"His friend, looking at him, paused, said:

"Yes; I see you have land on all four quarters; but, pointing his fingers upwards, said, 'What have you in that direction?'

"The rich man was unable to answer."

How many there are who are rich in this world's goods, but poor in the inheritance of life eternal.