

MRS. STANTON'S THANK-OFFERING.



T was a thank-offering meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society of one of our city churches. A pile of envelopes lay before the secretary, the inscriptions on which she read aloud, one by one. They ran something like this:

"For recovery from severe illness."

"For the granting of the dearest wish of my heart."

"For preservation from harm in the great railroad accident, when so many were killed and injured."

Mrs. Stanton sat listening to the reading, and blushed a little when her own envelope was opened and the secretary took out a blank sheet.

Mrs. Stanton's life had been very uneventful the last year. She and her husband and two children had been very well; by close economy they had enough to eat and drink and dress respectably, though this last had not been accomplished without much thought and care on her part, and various pinches known only to herself.

Self-denial had seemed to be the keynote of her life the year past; her sky had been rather gray than sunny. Not that she made any moan over self-denials. It was all done cheerfully, and no one was the wiser for it but herself. Still she had wondered just a little for what special reason she could bring her small gift. She could hardly help contrasting her condition now with the luxury by which she had been surrounded a few years ago, before her husband had lost all his property in an unfortunate speculation. She wondered if the conditions would be fulfilled, if she should bring her offering out of a general feeling of gratitude, that things were no worse with them than they were.

Both she and her husband were systematic givers out of their penury, as they had once been out of their abundance, so this extra gift, small as it was, was the price of large self-denial. It would represent her shabby bonnet worn through another winter, without the furnishings she had hoped to give it, when it had seemed almost too bad to last out the previous season. Still she was warmly interested in mission work, and gave it gladly, only wishing it was more.

Soon her attention was arrested by the reading of this: "For the many pleasant little things that have fallen to my share this year."

Mrs. Stanton went thoughtfully home "for the pleasant little things" ringing in her ears. She wondered if she had always taken note of her own pleasant small things as they came to her. She feared not. Looking back in the light of this thought, she could recall numberless little acts of kindness from others to herself that had sweetened her life and for which, though she had been grateful to the giver, she scarcely remembered to have raised her heart to heaven in gratitude.

"Aunt Elly sent mamma a big box of roses to-day—so many she can't use them all—and will you please take these?" said the little messenger.

Mrs. Stanton loved beautiful things, and often had to take herself to task for her vain longings for them. But now there was a feeling almost of awe mingled with a pleasure as she remembered again the "little things" and how soon her thoughts had met response. She finished her preparations for supper with a light step, and paused often to look at the flowers and inhale their fragrance as she passed. They brought a glow to her heart that was reflected in her face and which her husband and children caught as they sat down to supper.

Before she went to bed that night she inscribed an envelope, "Thank-Offerings for Pleasant Little Things," and dropped five cents in it for the handful of roses.

One afternoon Helen Brown, a member of her Sunday-school class, came in. She seemed depressed and anxious. After a little commonplace talk her teacher said: "What is it, Helen? Does something trouble you? Can't I help you?"

"Oh, Mrs. Stanton, I want to be a Christian? I am so unhappy! Will you tell me what to do?"

The sacred hour that followed neither of them will forget. When Helen left it was with a new light in her eyes, a new love in her heart, a new purpose in her living. Her feet were set in the way of everlasting life.

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Stanton to herself that night, "this is not one of the 'little things'! For this great privilege—this great honor of leading a soul to Christ, all that I have in the world would be a small thank-