

sleeves as if preparing for a hand-to-hand conflict, and called out:

'And now, ladies and gentlemen, how much am I offered for this fine property, worth six thousand dollars if it's worth a cent? Fifty acres of it are under cultivation, and one hundred more in pasture and woodland, with a good ten-roomed house, fine barn and other outbuildings all thrown in. Here they are, ladies and gents. The place would be dirt cheap at six, or even seven, thousand dollars, and I'm offered—how much? How much do I hear to start the thing?'

'One thousand dollars,' said a small man with a squeaky voice, standing directly below the auctioneer.

'One thousand dollars!' roared the auctioneer. 'Put that man out! If I hear an offer less than four thousand there'll be trouble!'

'Four thousand dollars!' called out Nat Dake, in his bold, harsh voice.

'Now that's something like it,' said Ben Jarrold, 'but it isn't enough. Give me another bid. It's worth eight thousand dollars this minute.'

On the outskirts of the crowd a man whom no one knew called out, in a loud, distinct voice, 'Five thousand dollars!'

Every one turned and looked at him. Old Nat Dake started and stared at the stranger with a scowl. His mortgage was for four thousand dollars, and he had expected to bid in the farm for that sum. His savage glance did not disturb the stranger. He was a tall man, not over thirty years of age, with a smooth, sun-burned face.

'Now that is something like it, ladies and gents!' roared Ben Jarrold. 'Five thousand will do very well to begin with, but isn't near its value. I'm offered five thousand dollars. Five thousand, five thousand, am I offered six?'

'Fifty-one hundred!' called out Nat Dake.

'Fifty-five hundred!' said the stranger, and poor Lyman's face brightened. This would enable him to pay all of his debts and save his furniture and farming implements.

'Fifty-seven!' cried the stranger.

'Fifty-eight hundred!' said Nat Dake, between his set teeth. He loved money, but he loved his own way, and he would spend his dearly-prized money rather than be thwarted in anything on which he had set his heart.

'Fifty-nine hundred!' called out the stranger, coolly.

'Six thousand!' almost shrieked Nat Dake; whereupon the stranger called out:

'Seven thousand!'

'Aha! This is something like it!' exclaimed the auctioneer, gleefully rubbing his hands. 'How is it, Brother Dake? Will you make it seven thousand five hundred?'

Nat Dake hesitated a moment; then he said savagely: 'Yes, I will!'

'Good enough!' said Ben. 'And now will the gentleman—'

'Eight thousand!' exclaimed the gentleman; whereupon Nat Dake, livid with rage, mounted the piazza steps and called out defiantly:

'Who be you, and how does any one know that you're making a real bony fide bid? There's some trick about this! Folks ain't going round giving eight thousand dollars for five or six thousand dollar farms! Who be you, and what proof have we got that you mean what you say?'

The stranger came forward, mounted the

steps, and stood on the other side of Ben Jarrold.

'My name,' he said, 'is Harvey Mercer, and here is evidence of good faith.'

He drew forth a large leather wallet bulging with bills, and held it up for all to see. 'Some of you,' he said, 'remember David Mercer, who lived here many years ago.'

'I do!' cried several voices at once.

'He was my father, and I was born on the old Mercer place down by the ferry, about two miles from here. Lyman Hart and my father were boys together, and when, after they were men, trouble came to my father, Mr. Hart befriended him in many ways. He became security for my father on a note of fifteen thousand dollars, and the first mortgage the generous man put on this place, I am told, was to raise the money to pay that note.'

'My father went to the West, where he engaged in mining, but for twenty-five years he experienced nothing but ill luck. He knew worse poverty there than he ever knew here, until three months ago, when, in Western parlance, he "struck it rich."

'But his good fortune came too late for him to enjoy it. While preparing for a trip East for the purpose of making restitution to his creditors he was taken ill, and died after a week's illness. Among his last instructions to me was a request that I should come East and pay Lyman Hart the money due him, with full interest. More than this, he charged me to add to it any sum that might be needed to free Lyman Hart from debt. I was solemnly urged to do this to show my father's love and gratitude to one who, he said, was the friend of the friendless and the helper of the helpless. My friends, I am here to pay that debt.'

There was a wild outburst of applause, in the midst of which Lyman Hart stole forward and put his arms around Harvey Mercer and hid his bearded face on the young man's shoulder.

'When that time comes we will hope that some other man who owes him a debt of gratitude will come to his relief,' said Harvey Mercer; and the crowd cheered again, while the discomfited creditor stalked down the steps savagely with his cane.

In ten minutes Lyman Hart's neighbors; men and women, were at work putting down carpets and carrying in furniture: and old Ann Haskins said to Susan Marsh, as they made a bed together in one of the bedrooms that had been restored to order:

'I allus have thought, an' I allus will think, an' I allus have said, an' I allus will say, that the Lord don't allow any good deed to go unrewarded. He puts it down in the book of his remembrance, an' some time, an' in some way, he lets it be known that he ain't forgot it.'

'I reckon you're right, Ann,' said Susan.

'I know that you are,' said Lyman Hart, who chanced to overhear what Ann had said.—J. L. Harbour, in 'Youth's Companion.'

Whenever George Muller, of Bristol, felt that he was getting out of touch with God, that prayer was losing its spiritual tone, that life was losing its spiritual sensitiveness, he went aside and waited with open heart for God's Spirit to fill him. This is a plan which never fails to lift us up into the sweet light of the Divine countenance, which never fails to give our lives a touch of heavenliness, which never fails to keep us from bidding Jesus good-bye.

## Jacinth's Lesson.

(By Margaret E. Sangster.)

'We have a very uninteresting teacher; she does not throw much light on the lesson, nor make it interesting. I believe I'll stay at home, to-day. I don't want to wear my new hat in the rain.'

'Your old hat is very suitable, Jacinth,' said her mother, glancing from the window. 'There isn't rain enough to furnish you with a good excuse. Miss Slade will be disappointed if she misses you. Think how busy she is through the week, and what a long walk she has; yet I question if she is ever absent when she is well.'

'Yes,' said Jacinth, uneasily, and with a longing glance at her library book, which she had not quite finished. 'I suppose Miss Slade is faithful, but Maggie Wilberforce and I both agree that she lacks the gift of imparting what she knows. We would prefer to be in Mrs. Ellison's class. Her girls cluster about her like bees round a flower. Our class is quite different—so stiff and poky. Still, mother, if you think I ought to go to Sunday-school, to-day, I will go, of course.'

'Where is the lesson, daughter?' inquired Doctor Knox, Jacinth's father, looking up from his paper. He was absorbed in an article on the beatitudes, but Doctor Knox could do two things at once, so, with one bit of his mind, he had heard the conversation while with another he followed his author's train of argument.

Jacinth flushed. 'I really don't know, father,' she answered.

'Have not you the habit of preparing the Sunday-school lesson?' asked Doctor Knox, looking at her with his keen eyes, which penetrated her mind as X-rays do the body.

She hesitated a moment, then replied, frankly: 'Why, no; I very seldom glance at it, until I sit down in the class.'

'In that case, daughter, I do not wonder that Miss Slade fails to interest you. The whole work falls on her, where she should have only the half. If her pupils do their share, they bring to that little hour minds eager and alert, they have questions to ask, as well as questions to answer, and they are responsive and receptive. Suppose you took your music master an unprepared lesson, or went with a blank mind to your professor of mathematics or history, would you consider that you were doing a wise or a fair thing? Apply the same rule to your Bible lesson, and see if there is not a change.'

It was a little late, and Jacinth hurried away.

That afternoon Miss Slade took her girls into her confidence. 'I have been praying,' she said, 'that I might be guided aright. Lately I have had the impression that perhaps I ought to resign this class and ask for another. But my heart has been moved, as I have prayed, to wait until you all are in the kingdom. Something seems to hold me back from helping you as I want to, and yet Christ bids me stay here. Will you not promise me, dear girls, to pray and study hereafter, to study and to pray, to devote, every day in the week, a little quiet time, morning and evening, to the Book, and to our lesson? And I will pray, too, that we may know what is best for us all.'

This episode took place a year ago. Last week Jacinth and her friend Maggie united with the church.—'Wellspring.'