

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

A QUESTION OF GIVING.

(By "Bennie Brae.")

That Mrs. Robert Emerson was a good house-keeper was acknowledged by all who knew her; her home was a model one to all young house-keepers, and to her neighbors generally, for whose children were better or more neatly dressed than were Mrs. Emerson's? Yet she did all the sewing herself. What linen, or whose collars and cuffs, or white shirt fronts, were whiter or smoother than those worn by the members of the Emerson family, and did not the wife and mother, actually do all the ironing and clear starching at home? And what table was ever more bountifully supplied with tasty and wholesome food than that of the Emerson household, the viands having been prepared by Mrs. Emerson's own hands? Or, in the drawing room, when free from her many family cares, who could entertain with more grace or tact than did Mrs. Emerson? And so it came about quite naturally that should any question arise as to how a certain thing should be done "Mrs. Emerson does it this way" usually settled the discussion.

On a particular afternoon Mrs. Emerson sat with her month's allowance before her, making a careful survey of the weeks to come, and calculating as closely as possible the cost of living. "There," she said to her daughter, who was watching,

"I have set aside the expenses that come every month, that is rent, light, music, school fees, and other items, have left enough for running expenses, and I think your set of furs may be safely counted on. I always like to have everything arranged first, then I have clear sailing for the month. Run, now, Mabel, it is time for your lesson." And now, just at this time, in the house immediately opposite, young Mrs. Ralph Graham was looking at the windows of the Emerson house, with anxious eyes. In her ears were ringing over and over again the words her husband had said, so innocently, at lunch, "Could you make some lemon pies, dear. My mother made such delicious ones."

"The dear deluded man," she thought, "does he think I or anyone else can make anything taste as good as when he was a hungry young school boy? Nevertheless, I would like to try, and I am sure no one can help me more than Mrs. Emerson. I believe I will just run over and ask." And so a little later Mrs. Graham, having been welcomed most cordially by her neighbor, was listening most carefully to directions as to "how Mrs. Emerson done it," and while chatting merrily and laughing over some of Mrs. Emerson's early domestic experiences and mistakes, they were joined by Miss Hazel Bell, who had just been admitted, and who was soon much interested in the conversation.

"Lemon pies are under discussion," said Mrs. Emerson, with a knowing look at her young guest, "Aren't you interested?"

"I am, indeed," replied Miss Bell frankly; "I have been watching and helping mother quite faithfully and am making good progress. I baked a batch of bread this morning."

"I know you are always interested in good works," continued Mrs. Emerson. "I think you are particularly interested in a home mission just now," with a quizzical look in her eyes.

"No," she replied hastily, but with heightened color, "Foreign missions today, Mrs. Emerson, that is to say, the collection this month is for Foreign Missions."

"Dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Emerson in

dismay. "Is it really time for Foreign Missions again? Surely it is only a couple of months since the last time."

"A full year," said Miss Bell with a faint smile, "and did you not hear the announcement given from the pulpit last Sunday?"

"No, I did not. As I am unable to get out to any of the meetings I do not take much notice of the intimations," she added by way of apology.

"Now, you are giving an argument in favor of my plea that you should join the W.F.M.S. I am certain if you were a member of the society you would not have missed hearing that announcement, and so would not have been surprised today."

"Well, I assure you I am not prepared, as when I was planning my money today I did not take missions of any sort into consideration; but, of course, I will give my mite," said Mrs. Emerson.

After Miss Bell's departure, the conversation lagged a little, as Mrs. Graham seemed to be thinking. Suddenly she asked, "Mrs. Emerson, what is your idea of Christian giving?"

"Well, really," was the reply, "I have never thought very seriously about it; if it is convenient for me to give anything when the collectors call I give, if not—why, then I cannot, that is all," she concluded lightly.

Yet Mrs. Emerson was a professed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had heard of His command to His followers to preach the Word to every creature.

But Mrs. Graham was not satisfied, and at dinner that evening she asked the same question, "Ralph, how do you think Christians should give?"

He looked at her in surprise. "So that is what you are puzzling your head about." "I thought you were very quiet, what made you think of it?" But Mrs. Graham was loyal to her friend and adviser of the afternoon.

"But, really," she persisted, "there surely should be some systematic rule carried out, and not give just when we happen to have some spare money, without considering whether the object be a worthy one or not."

"Well, of course you know that the Jews were commanded to give a tenth of their money, and later Paul says we are to give as the Lord prospers us. I think that is about all I know on the subject."

"Ralph," she said earnestly, "we are beginning life together, and we want to begin right. Shall we not, each time the money comes, lay aside some proportion to be used entirely for the Lord's work. I feel strongly on this, and have been thinking a great deal about it today, and I think we should do something definitely."

"Mother had a verse, I think it was in Malachi, underlined, and opposite it the word 'proved.' Hand me that Bible, please—thanks—yes, here it is, the third chapter, tenth verse, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the store house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' Is that what you want, Flo?"

"Yes, that is it, Ralph. We can surely take Him at His word."

"Perhaps you may want something and wish to use that money," he said, watching her closely. "I hardly think it will be a temptation," she answered. "Can we not make some little sacrifice and rejoice in it. You have made me very happy, dear, and I do not think we will regret the step we have taken. There is one other

thing—I would like to join the W. F. M. S.; have you any objection?"

"What makes you think I would object?"

"Is there not a prevalent idea that men do not wish their wives connected with anything apart from the home? I know of cases where the wife may spend her afternoons at the matinee, or other nonsense, and nothing is said about her; but let her join a church society and at once she is neglecting her family. Have you never noticed what a demoralizing effect church meetings have on the home?" she finished demurely.

"My mother," he began, but she interrupted. "Now, Ralph," warningly, "it is not another kind of pie this time?"

"No."

"Nor muffins, nor anything in that line?"

"No, nothing, I assure you."

"Dear me, I am so glad," she said, with a pretty display of relief. "Now, what were you going to say?"

"My mother," he repeated more soberly, "never neglected her home to attend a matinee or other nonsense. She did attend the missionary meetings, however, but her family never suffered. One of her favorite sayings was that to Christ and His work she owed her happy home, and she felt bound to do her part in sending the glad message to women who knew Him not, that they might be lifted from their degradation. She always tried to make her own home happy, and," with a quiver of the voice, "she succeeded. No, I am not ashamed to have my wife belong to the missionary society."

"And now, to change the subject," she said after a pause, "I will give you, not my own, but Mrs. Emerson's word, that the lemon pies I am to make tomorrow will be delicious."

"That's good news," he said with a laugh. "Mrs. Emerson is a fine house-keeper, I hear." "She is," responded his wife promptly. "She fulfills Scripture in as much as she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

"A good manager, too, I believe," he continued.

"Well, she certainly 'managed' to make me think this afternoon," said his wife with a happy laugh; "and to think to some purpose, I believe."

Ottawa, Ont.

GOOD NIGHT.

By Emma A. Lente.

O, toiler, sleep! The weary day is done,
The day so filled with tasks and vexing cares;
And now release it all, and put it by,
And let thy quiet thoughts be of thy prayers.

O, toiler, sleep! The morrow may be full
Of many hard and trying things to meet,

But do not wake and dread the coming day,
New strength will come with need;
Good night, sleep sweet.

There was an increase of more than fifty per cent in the number of college students enrolled in mission study last year over that enrolled in the year preceding. The total was 12,629 students in 1,049 classes, in 373 institutions. The youth of our colleges are keenly alive to the missionary question and the missionary call.