

what was to be the result to himself.

"I was very wild in my youth," explained Mr. Gray. "Mingling with bad companions, I learned to drink and gamble, and consequently to neglect my home. My wife, poor girl, anxious to restrain me from running headlong to ruin, vexed me by her tears and remonstrances, until one day in a fit of fury I crowned my wickedness by deserting her and our infant child. So completely does drink deaden one's sensibilities that, heedless of their future, I left England and started on a career of adventure.

"Apart from evil associates I became sobered, and found time for reflection, in which I realized how cowardly and cruel I had been to one who had ever proved a faithful, loving wife, patient with my faults, and ever ready to forgive my neglect. Humiliated and ashamed, I resolved to earn sufficient to bring Nell and the child to my side, and together we would be happy, forgetting the sins and wrongs of the past. But my misdeeds recoiled upon my own head; my letters were unanswered. Angered by her silence, I feared she was glad to be rid of me.

"I went to the Northwest and there prospered; but after a few years the longing for wife and child seized me, and journeying to the old home I found that soon after my disappearance Nellie went away, it was supposed to join me. All traces of her were lost; every effort to discover her failed.

"A saddened and gloomy man, I returned to Canada scarcely caring what became of me. On board the ship I was drawn to notice you. I used to picture my boy grown to just such a smart little fellow as you were then. But you know the rest, my lad. Ill as I deserved it, Heaven was merciful! I indeed found a son in you; but forgive me if even now my desires turn toward my lost child, whose baby face I last saw nestling close beside that of my ill-used wife.

"I cannot rid myself of the idea that he still lives. What has he become? Fatherless, and perhaps motherless, how has he escaped the temptations so common to those left to fight the battle of life alone? Ernie, will you not seek him? If I might but hold his hand in mine I could die in peace. See, here is a small token—a part of a broken signet-ring. My wife and I shared it in the happy days long ago. Through all my travels I have kept mine; and possibly Nellie kept hers. I fancy she did; and in some way I have always thought that by its aid I should find either my wife or my boy."

Ernest's face wore a peculiar look as, detaching a piece of coin from his watch chain, he asked, "Is it like this?"

Eagerly the invalid joined the edges together—they fitted exactly.

"Where did you find it?" he asked, suspiciously.

"It was found on my dead mother's breast, fastened by a piece of ribbon," replied the younger man.

"Mr. Williams gave it to me when I left home, but I have only recently worn it."

"What was her name?" gasped Mr. Gray.

"She called herself Helen Walters," was the reply.

"It was my wife's maiden name!" the man murmured; "and you!—you are her son!"

"Yes, and yours also, my father!" said Ernest, tenderly.

"My boy! my own at last!" whispered Mr. Gray, who was growing weak, the excitement being almost too much for him. "Surely God is very good. My son! whom I have loved and guarded these many years—and yet I knew him not."

Then to pacify him Ernie spoke of that poor young wife, concealing her last sad days of destitution; he would not unnecessarily grieve this soul so near the borders of eternity. And so the hours passed slowly. The father could not part from his newly found son, and entreated him to remain beside him.

Presently, when the rosy tints of dawn stole over the snow-clad hills, Mr. Gray asked, "What day is this?"

"Sunday," replied Ernest.

"The day on which your mother died," said his father. "Poor Nellie! you suffered much—and I would have made restitution had it been possible; and we shall meet again where all things will be made clear."

Leaning his head like some tired child against his son's arm, he slept—the first time for many hours; and as the sunlight fell upon that peaceful face, a little later, Ernie saw that he was not—for God had called him.

VERY CAREFUL CHIEF.—"You must never throw kisses at me, my dear," said Mr. McBride to his wife.

"Why not?"

"Because women are such poor shots I'm afraid they would hit some other man."

Gigantic Lady (who is very timid): "Can you see me across the road, policeman?"

Policeman: "See yer 'cross the road, marm? Why, bless yer! I believe I could see yer 'arf a mile off!"

Her Easter Gift.

SILVERPEN.



HOW little we understand the masterful emotions that at times control the words and actions of people with whom we associate. We touch their hand in friendly greeting, looking for a cordial response, and are chilled by their coldness. We endeavor to enlist their sympathy in a project that has engaged our own interest, and marvel at their indifference; nor dream that some overwhelming thought or care may forbid the intrusion of other things. It is so common to resent a listlessness for which we can find no reason; to blame

others for sentiments which in our own estimation should not be indulged; yet how many an outburst of disagreeable feeling has had its origin in a cause which should awake our sympathy, rather than our censure.

How often a fit of apparent sullenness might be accounted for by some disappointment that has stunned the finer feelings, or by some violent struggle of the affections that has blunted more generous impulses. In our ignorance we search only the surface of our friends' nature, and frequently give blame where only pity is deserved; scorn and contempt where, possibly, were but the truth revealed, admiration would be the nearest tribute we would dare to offer.

It was thus with Mrs. Leyton. Many who had been her friends for years, wondered at the change that had come over one always so genial, so ready to engage in works of usefulness. Some, more kindly than the rest, feared she was falling into delicate health; while others harshly attributed her reserve and unsocial manner to worldly pride. They knew nothing of the strife that wearied her soul; the struggle between maternal affection and her duty toward God and humanity. She had but one son—an only child—upon whom the tenderest care had been lavished, and into whose future fond hopes had been woven so closely that his parents shrank from seeing them destroyed. There was a time when Mr. Leyton had hoped that when the frailty of old age came upon him, he would be able to entrust his business in the capable hands of his son. But man's way is not always the wisest. Harold was led to seek another course; and when he expressed a wish to enter the ministry, the old man laid aside those cherished hopes, and rendered every aid to make his boy's pathway easy. Together, the mother and he learned to look forward to a day when, resting from their toil, they might settle near the scene of their son's labors, and watch his growing usefulness, in the sphere into which he had been called.

Gifted, eloquent and learned, surely a bright future lay before him. His letters often bore testimony to work well done, and told with thankfulness of many a soul rescued from an evil course. Such pleasant messages brought gladness to his parents' hearts, who longed to prove their gratitude to Heaven for the blessings they had received. But they had not passed the crucial test; the sacrifice was not yet ready to be offered. It was when Harold desired to volunteer for mission work in a part of Africa where many noble men had already fallen victims to the climate, that their hearts failed to respond to his wish.

"He was so clever, so fitted for service in the civilized world; might not another, less cultured and with fewer claims of kindred, labor as well as he in that remote and dangerous part of God's vineyard?"

The father was led to bow before the call to duty, and bade his son go whither his Master sent him; but the mother rebelled; she could not offer such a sacrifice. Regardless of the voice of conscience, and despite Harold's pleading, she withheld her consent; hence the strife between love and duty that rendered her life unhappy. She was in her accustomed place on Easter Sunday, fixing attention that was unusual. Her eyes wandered from the venerable preacher to the floral decorations that beautified the quaint old church; for on the previous day her busy fingers had helped to wreath those mossy garlands around the columns, and to group the sweet spring flowers in lovely clusters here and there; while the decorations about the desk and pulpit had been her especial care. Even while sad and rebellious thoughts troubled her mind, she had arranged those white and golden blossoms, regardless of Him who demanded a sacrifice she had refused to render. What a mockery that floral tribute seemed now! The sunlight streamed through a memorial window, and falling athwart a cross of pure white lilies, flooded it with a crimson glow. The choir was singing a hymn; yet unheeded by her were the sweet strains, the sweeter theme, until, gazing upon the cross, she heard the words:

"I suffered much for thee—

What canst thou bear for Me?"

Surely there was a ring of reproach in those lines. What had she given? Wealth, profession, service; but the gift of sacrifice was still withheld. She had counted the cost, and esteemed it far too

dear. It seemed as though His voice—the voice of One whom she had vowed to serve—was even then saying:

"Great gifts I brought to thee;—
What hast thou brought to Me."

She could withhold that gift no longer—even though it involved a life long parting from her boy; and kneeling there, while the prayers of the congregation ascended on high, she crucified her rebellious will, her pride, her mother love, and dedicated her child to the service of the Master. It was her Easter gift—a pleasing sacrifice.

Christening Stories.

DR. CROMBIE, of Scome, used to tell a good christening story. One of his church members had an intense admiration for Sir Robert Peel, and asked the doctor to baptise his child with the name of that eminent statesman. The minister did so, but when the ceremony was over the father still continued to hold the infant up, and on being asked what he wanted, replied, with a disappointed look—

"You have not baptised him *Sir Robert*."
Dr. Paul, of St Cuthbert's Parish, Edinburgh, tells a similar incident regarding his predecessor, Sir Harry Moncrieff. In Scotland it is a common practice, when a minister is settled in a new parish, that the first male child he baptises has the honor of bearing the same name as the minister.

Sir Harry Moncrieff on one occasion was performing baptism. He named the child—the first child he baptised—"Harry Moncrieff." This caused a flutter in the paternal breast, and, bending forward to the minister the father whispered—

"*Sir Harry*, if you please, sir."

In Scotland it is the usual custom for the father of the child requiring baptism to hand the name he desires pronounced over it to the minister written on a scrap of paper. On one occasion the father, in his excitement forgot to take the paper bearing the name of the child from his pocket before he was called to present it for baptism.

"What is the name?" asked the minister.

"It's 'I ma pooch' (pooch), said the father.

"It's Emma what?" queried the minister.

"It's 'I ma pooch,' again said the distressed parent.

"I don't understand; can't you give me the proper name?"

"Well," said the man, desperately, "just tak' hand (hold) o' the bairn a minute till I seek it out for you."

An interesting article, "Rural Reminiscences," which appeared in *Cornhill* recently, supplies another amusing incident. A Dissenter, at the time of the introduction of the first Reform Bill, brought his child to church for baptism. When the clergyman said

"Name the child," the father replied—

"Reform, sir."

This was too much for the old Tory parson, who refused to proceed, saying that there was no such name. Next Sunday the father returned, and the parson said—

"You've found another name for your child?"

"Yes," said the father, "it's all right this time. Its name is John Russell Brougham Fergus O'Connor."

And so the child had to be named.

Another story tells of a new minister coming to a new country parish, and proceeding to baptise a child, found no water in the font.

"Why, bless you, zur, the old master didn't want no water; he did so," and then he gave a graphic illustration of how the former parson used to moisten his palm by licking it.

Though the following incident is funny enough to hear about, it very nearly turned out a serious matter for a poor harmless infant who had not a chance of entering an emphatic protest.

A Buckinghamshire farmer some time ago presented his first-born for christening at the parish church with no fewer than twenty-six Christian names, selected with great care from Scripture, representing every letter in the alphabet, beginning with Abel and ending with Zachariah.

It was with the greatest difficulty that the clergyman could persuade the father from placing such an incubus upon the child, and content himself with the first and last of these appellatives. The proposed full title of the unfortunate infant, from which he was mercifully delivered, was to have been Benjamin Caleb David Ezra Felix Gabriel Haggai Isaac Jacob Kish Levi Manah Nehemiah Obadiah Peter Quartus Rechaah Samuel Tobiah Uzziel Vaniah Word Xystus Yariah Zachariah Jenkins.

It is a blessing that Mr. Jenkins was prevented from labelling baby Jenkins in this outrageous fashion. To carry about a name of these tremendous dimensions would cause a man to be a terror to himself and a plague to everybody concerned. Even the child's own mother would have shattered her memory in telling the little darling's complete designation. Young Jenkins wouldn't need to make a name for himself—he, unhappily, would have had it made for him.