

the Church should have put upon record so many conspicuous failures to provide a hymnal worthy of universal and cordial acceptance. The foregoing language was used by me in my address to this body three years ago. The then expected Hymnal was reported to the last Convention and, after much discussion, exciting a sharp conflict of views and tastes, was referred back substantially to the same joint committee, with instructions to report the revised Hymnal to the General Convention in October, 1892. The Church has been notified that this revised Hymnal will be published for use and criticism on the first day of June next. I have no desire to pre-judge its merits or demerits. Experience, however, admonishes us not to anticipate any radical change in either. Some will no doubt think it much better, while others will no doubt think it worse than the last venture of three years ago. During the long interval of experiment and uncertainty, 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' has been making its way surely and rapidly in this Church. Wherever used with the tunes of Drs. Dyke, W. H. Monk, and Stainer, (the most admirable music of the kind in our generation,) it has called forth not only intelligent appreciation, but the strongest attachments. Comparisons between it and any one of our proposed Hymnals have not, so far as I know, been to the advantage of the latter. It is used by fully two thirds of the Anglican Communion in the mother country and in her colonies, and with a constantly growing sense of its value.

It is said that over 50 million copies of Hymns A and M. have been sold. Surely the fact speaks more strongly than words as to the work of the book and the hold it has acquired upon the Church at large.—*Ed.*

Family Department.

FOR ABSENT FRIENDS.

"The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

Holy Father, in Thy mercy
Hear our anxious prayer,
Keep our loved ones, now far absent,
Neath Thy care.

Jesus, Saviour, let Thy presence
Be their light and guide;
Keep, oh, keep them, in their weakness,
At Thy side.

When in sorrow, when in danger,
When in loneliness,
In Thy love look down and comfort
Their distress.

May the joy of Thy salvation
Be their strength and stay;
May they love and may they praise Thee
Day by day.

Holy Spirit, let Thy teaching
Sanctify their life;
Send Thy grace, that they may conquer
In the strife.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
God the One in Three,
Bless them, guide them, save them, keep them
Near to Thee.

—ISABEL S. STEPHENSON.

A FARTHINGFUL.

BY L. T. MEADE.

CHAPTER I.

Lassie sat crouched up on the lowest step of a doorway; she was leaning against Jerry, who had planted herself a little above her in the shelter of the same porch. Jerry was fourteen, but Lassie was only seven. They were both the kind of children one might expect to see on a cold, foggy November day, with their pinched faces and sorrowful eyes looking out of the mist and gloom; they were exactly the kind of children to wear rags and to huddle on doorsteps, and to know nothing whatever of the blessings and comforts of a home. Yes, they were the sort of children, only somehow the description of pinched faces and sorrowful eyes did not suit them; their rags were manifest enough, but otherwise the sorrow and distress were invisible, put away, if they existed, quite out of sight, forgotten at this moment as if they had never been. Jerry, who was stout and broadly built, with a full-moon face covered with innumerable freckles, rather thin sandy locks, and small blue gray eyes, was bending down towards Lassie, who leant against her, and looked up and chattered volubly.

Lassie's eyes were brown, her face dark, and her jet-black hair was pushed away from a broad and intelligent forehead. If she had been fed well and clothed nicely, she would probably have developed into a remarkably pretty child, but her little form was now very thin and angular, her cheek-bones were too plainly visible, and her eyes had a sharp, intensely watchful expression, painful to see in a child of such tender years. The eyes now, however, were sparkling, and the lips wreathed themselves into smiles.

'Yes, Jerry,' she said, 'I found it my ownself; I wor a-coming along, and I looked into the gutter as I allers and allers do, for there's many a thing gets swept away unbeknown to none in the gutter, and out comes the missis of the shop; it were a baker's shop, and oh my, didn't that there bread smell good! The missis of the shop turned the corner with a big basketful of things, rubbish of all sorts, in her hands, and I runned up to the winder and looked in. She didn't see me, for her back was agin me, and I pressed my nose agin the winder and looked in. O my word, Jerry, what didn't I see!'

'You might as well tell a body,' said Jerry, leaning back luxuriously against the stone herb of the steps above her. 'I likes to hear of what would make a full meal, even if I can't have it, and I know as you did get the farthings, Lassie, so that part can wait. You tell us what you seen when you pressed your face agin the baker's shop window.'

"Four pounders," said Lassie, "and "two pounders," and little loaves all a crinkly up, and cakes with sugar sprinkled on the top, and cakes with raisins in them and currants on them, and buns, whole trayfuls of 'em, and biscuits, more'n you'd count, and the whole so 'ot and spicy, I did h'ache with hunger when I looked in at that there shop.'

Jerry gave vent to a very brief half sigh.

'If I 'anker after anything,' she said, 't's a cut off a crispy loaf and a pat of butter, and a cup o' tea werry strong and sweet. There, I can't have 'em, but I can fancy as I'm a eating of them. Go on, Lassie; you looked in at the shop and you saw all them loaves, and then you turned away and you watched the woman, and then, and then?'

'She threw all the rubbish out,' continued Lassie, her dark eyes sparkling. 'Real awful rubbish it wor, but I heard a clinking sound, and I runned, and oh my eyes, there were the farthing. It lay there, shining and round, and

beautiful as you could wish. and I picked it up, I did.'

'And you put it in your pocket,' said Jerry, 'or more like you shoved it into the front of your dress—you kep' it anyhow.'

Lassie raised herself from her lounging position, and gazed full into Jerry's eyes.

'I did nothink of the sort,' she said; 'I ain't a thief whatever you may think of me, Jerry Fielding! I picked up the farthing, and I looked at it. There it wor, as neat and purty as you please, with the head of her Majesty, the great Queen Victory, on the one side, and a woman sitting on a kind of a wheel with a ship in the distance on t'other. Oh, it wor new and bright, and I loved it uncommon, the moment I sot eyes on it. But I wern't going to turn into a thief like Thady Doolan, not for no farthing, so I walked into the shop and up to the counter, and I says to the woman, "If you please, ma'am, you throw'd this out along wid a heap of rubbish," I says.

"Oh my word!" says she, "it ain't half a sovereign, is it?"

"No, ma'am," says I, holding it out on the pa'm of my open hand. "It's only a farthing, ma'am," says I.

"A farthing!" she says, taking it from me, and she looks me all over from top to toe. I was trembling ever so, for fear she should drop it into the till, and I'd see and hear no more of it. But she were a good-natured woman, and when I twisted my head a little crooked like, and looked up at her as hungry as you please, she smiles at me, and says werry cheerful and hearty, "I will say as you're an honest little gel, and now what shall I do for you? Will you have this bunch of stale bread, or shall I give you the farthing back?"

"Oh, the farthing back, please, ma'am," I says; and then she tosses it to me, and I bolts out of the shop. Here it is, Jerry, and don't it look beautiful? And don't Queen Victory look fine, and don't the woman on the wheel make an elegant sort of a picter?"

'Yes,' said Jerry, rising to her feet, and putting two crutches, which had lain by her side all this time, well under each arm. 'It's a fine thing for you, Lassie, to have a farthing of your own to spend, and come by so honest too; it ain't every gel of your age as can say as much.'

'No, that it ain't,' responded Lassie, and she tied the precious farthing into an old pocket-handkerchief, which she trust into the front of her dress.

'Good night,' said Jerry, hobbling off on her crutches.

Lassie still sat on her doorstep; she felt rich and contented and happy. The bitter cold fog crept up and enveloped her round, but her little spirit was quite impervious to its chilling influence. In her own opinion she was the possessor of wealth. Not a child in Green Street East, where she lived, had ever called any coin of the realm her own. By comparison, then, Lassie was wealthy and as all things after all are but a matter of comparison, she was also happy.

The fog grew thicker and thicker and at last, with a start and a little shiver she rose to her feet and prepared to return home. She and Jerry had taken refuge on one of the steps of a tall house in Bloomsbury Square; she had some distance to walk to her own poor home east of the city, but she started off vigorously, steering her way without any faltering footsteps through the fog.

Of course she meant to spend the farthing, but she was not going to be in any hurry about it; she meant to look round her, and carefully consider the relative values of all the different purchases within her reach. A bunch of stale bread, that was one thing, that would be very filling and comforting, but then it was common-place, and she was pretty sure of finding a supper of some sort awaiting her at home. No, no, she would not part with her precious bright farthing for anything so common-place as bread,