



"NAY, I LIKE TO HEAR THEM" SAID SHE.

## Mrs. Tucker's Way.

(Florence E. Burch, in 'Friendly Greetings'.)

'How I make 'em mind?'

'Eh, but I never hear the din inside your house that I used when I lived next door to Mrs. James.'

Mrs. Tucker laughed. Her six children were all in bed, and she had been helping her neighbour to store her potatoes in the barn. The work being finished, Mrs. Blaikie had insisted on her having a snack before returning home. But as Mrs. Tucker refused to go into the house, her neighbor had brought it into the barn.

'I thought they made din enough,' was the reply; 'in fact, I've wondered more than once if they were an annoyance to a quiet-living person like you.' Mrs. Blaikie shook her head.

'Nay; I like to hear them,' said she; and Mrs. Tucker, looking up at that minute, caught a wistful expression on the stern Scotch features.

She had always thought of Mrs. Blaikie as one of those selfish, straight-laced people who prefer a tidy house before anything, even though it must be empty of what the true woman counts home's greatest treasures. But that wistful look meant something entirely different.

Mrs. Tucker little knew how often, when the house was quiet for the night, her lonely, childless neighbor had knelt and said 'O Lord, thy will is always best. Perhaps thou sawest that I was not fitted for such work.'

'But those bairns o' Mrs. James,' she went on presently—'twas fair terrible! It was scream and scold from morn till night; and them skirling and greeting—screaming and crying, she meant—'poor bairns, until your heart fair ached. Yet for all she said she couldna make them mind.'

Mrs. Tucker shook her head.

'A rough word and a slap may come handiest sometimes,' said she, 'and I won't say but what a slap may be a thing of necessity sometimes, but not often, and never a rough word.'

'My husband and me,' she went on, 'we used to talk it over, when our firstborn lay

in the cradle there, him rocking whilst I stitched or darned, and we came to the conclusion that what God had given him to us for was to bring him up good, not to punish him for being naughty. And that's the plan I've always tried to go upon.

'Ses John to me, "If I was jes' to keep on weedin, and weedin' all the time, I shouldn't get no flowers nor vegetables. What I must do, is, I must plant. Not but what there'll be a share o' weeding, too, But where a flower's taken root, a weed can't take root, too."

'And John says,' she continued, 'it's what we're coming to see, more and more, with our criminals, that, instead of "executing justice on them," as they say, we've got to help 'em up out of their crime, and make honest men of 'em again, training up the young meanwhile in such love of right that they won't see anything to desire in evil ways. But, after all, there is nothing but religion for it. "Follow me," was what the Saviour said; and how can any love the wrong who have their eyes on him?'

## Neighbor Thomson's Dream

(Ellen A. Lutz, in 'Michigan Advocate'.)

When the clock struck nine, Neighbor Thompson folded his paper smoothly and laid it aside; then drawing the family Bible toward him he opened it at the place where a worn and faded book-marker was keeping charge over the chapter for the next devotional service. He turned back the ribbon to look at the symbol of the cross, wrought in the time-worn card by the fingers of his only daughter, whose pulseless hands had long been folded under a carefully-tended mound in the church-yard. As he read the legend, 'Merry Christmas to papa, from Bessie,' he breathed a sigh, partly of sorrow and partly of resignation, for Neighbor Thomson had a loving heart, although he bowed submissively under the chastening rod.

Mother Thomson was 'pattering about,' ejecting the cat, setting the batter cakes, and getting her household affairs in order for the night. As she went to and fro she was humming a verse of an old song which she had heard her grandmother sing:

'The richest man I ever knew was one that begged the most,  
His soul was filled with glory and with the Holy Ghost,  
And to begging I will go.'

Neighbor Thomson took off his 'near,' steel-bowed spectacles to watch his wife moving about, and noting the words of her carol he said, 'That will do for a song, mother, but how would you like to have to beg in earnest, like an old lady I saw at the corners to-day; she had been robbed of her pocket-book, and was trying to get money enough to carry her on about a hundred miles farther where she had a son living.'

'Poor thing,' remarked Mrs. Thomson, 'I hope she got enough to take her through; I know you helped her, Stephen, and that was the reason you didn't get the new hat you needed for the Lord's Day.'

Her husband smiled and answered equivocally: 'She was old and feeble, and I could not help thinking, what if it were you, Abby, reduced to such straits? Yes, she got enough to pay her fare. I hope her son will be able to do well by her. Now, mother, if you are ready,' and the 'near' spectacles were adjusted preparatory to the evening sacrifice upon the family altar, after which they retired, each with peaceful heart and conscience void of offense.

Neighbor Thomson did not immediately fall asleep, as was usual. A line of the old song haunted him, mingled with a pitiful clause of the unfortunate traveller's story: 'I am not a beggar, believe me,' she had said with tears in her eyes, 'only one of the Lord's poor'; and Neighbor Thomson could but wonder why the Lord's poor were sometimes reduced to such dismal straits. There was Father Hoover, old and crippled, who had outlived all his family except a great-granddaughter. Neighbor Thomson had taken some creature-comfort to his dilapidated hut, which scarcely kept out the cold and wet, and had seen there the little Bessie, a chubby child about four years old, who was hugging a fat puppy in her arms, while with a child's lisp, but the sweetest of voices, she sang a little song about the love of Jesus.

When he spoke to her she held up her rosy lips to be kissed, and his tender heart went out to her. A pair of shoes to clothe her little bare feet had taken part of the money which was intended to renew his own worn head covering, and he consoled himself by saying, 'It's all right, my old hat is good enough to wear along the road and I don't keep it on in church any way.'

Tired with the vain endeavor to solve the problem of divine providence, which has worsted so many wise people, Neighbor Thomson finally fell asleep, but woke with a great start from a strange dream. He rose from his couch and turned to look at the clock, which showed a few minutes past twelve. He went to the door and looked out, as if expecting a messenger. Nothing was moving along the road; even the stockyard gave no sign of life, only the moon sailing in a sea of blue, seemed to look sad, as if it too was wondering at the strange conflict of life upon the greater planet.

He returned to his bed, and falling asleep dreamed again the singular dream which had roused him before. He became nervously restless, and called softly to 'mother,' wishing that she would waken and sympathize with him.

'What is wrong, Stephen?' she asked, surprised to see him standing before the bed.

'I've had a queer dream, mother,' he said, 'and it worries me. An angel was riding