

At Four-Score.

SHE sits in the gathering shadows,
By the porch where the roses blop,
And her thoughts are back in the summers
That vanished long ago;
She forgets the grave on the hillside,
She forgets that she is old,
And remembers only the gladness
God gave her heart to hold.

As she sits there, under the roses,
She turns her dim old eyes
To the road that leads up the hillside,
To the glory of sunset skies;
"They are late," she says, and listens
With her knitting on her knee;
"It is time for the children's coming;
Where can the little ones be?"

She fancies she hears them coming;
"Ah, here at last!" she cries,
And the light of a mother's welcome
Shines in her faded eyes,
"You've been gone a long time, children,
Were the berries thick, my dears"
She asks, as gathered about her,
Each child of old appears.

She hears the merry voices
Of the dear ones that are dead;
She smooths out the shining tangles
That crown each little head;
She kisses the faces lifted
To hers, as in days of old,
And the heart of the dreaming mother
Is full of peace untold.

She listens to eager stories
Of what they saw and heard
Of a nest in the blackberry bushes,
And a frightened mother bird;
How Johnnie fell and his berries
Were lost in weeds and moss,
And Mary was afraid and dreaded
The brook they had to cross.

So while the night comes downward,
She sits with her children there,
Forgetting the years that took them,
And the snowflakes in her hair.
The love that will last forever
Brings back the dear, the dead,
And then the faithful heart of the mother
With her dreams is comforted.

Ere long she will go to the country
Where her dear ones watch and wait
For her, and I think of the meeting
There at the jasper gate.
She will feel their welcoming kisses,
And the children's father will say,
As the household is gathered in heaven,
"We're all at home to-day!"

The Princess Alice's Book.

ALICE, the third child of Queen Victoria, was a woman of fine character and of good mind. Full of unselfishness, generosity, and kindness, she was a friend to be loved; while her strong common sense, her liberality of thought, and her capacity for looking at both sides of a thing won for her a personal respect as great as that paid to her rank. She had many accomplishments and much knowledge of and affection for all the arts that refine.

This volume, chiefly made up from her letters, testifies to the sweetness of her disposition and the strength of her family affections. The letters deal with little else than her love for her mother, her husband, her children, and her devotion to the memory of her father, of whom she speaks in hyperbole which would be extravagant and unpleasing in any one but so tender a daughter. Domestic details abound—rather too much, for they cause the volume to grievously smack here and there of bread and butter. The letters have evidently been too rigorously edited, and in many cases the residuum of family details is somewhat tawdrier. There is little in the volume that can be of value to the historian or to the student of manners—a strange thing to say concerning the letters of an exceptionally clever woman written during a period filled

with wars, with diplomacy, with triumphs of science and of literature. The Princess' biographer, and her sister, claim for her great political sagacity; but this is not revealed in these letters, which represent her as looking upon the changes of European politics merely with the eyes of a loving woman concerned for the safety and happiness of her own family and of her relatives in other courts.

During most of her wedded life the Princess was poor. There was no suitable house for the young pair in Darmstadt, and the erection of a palace took most of the money that the Grand Duke, then the Prince Louis, could scrape together. The Princess had to endure many privations and she met them with an admirable courage and cheerfulness. Her industry and activity were unailing; of her children she took a personal charge, such as few women of society would essay. She taught them, she sewed for them, she trained them in simplicity, she washed and dressed her plump German babies. She writes to her mother about her little girls, that she strives to bring them up totally free from pride of their position, "which is nothing save what their personal worth can make it," and she adds: "I feel so entirely as you do on the difference of rank, and how all important it is for princes and princesses to know that they are nothing better or above others save through their own merit; and they have only the double duty of living for others and of being an example—good and modest." Her motherly wisdom was of the most wholesome sort. She gave to her little ones tastes that were pure and high. "All my children," she writes to the Queen, "are great lovers of nature, and I develop this as much as I can."

"It makes life so rich and they can never feel dull anywhere, if they know how to seek and find around them the thousand beauties and wonders of nature. They are very happy and contented, and always see the less people have the less they want, and the greater is the enjoyment of that which they have. I bring my children up as simply and with as few wants as I can, and above all, teach them to help themselves and others, so as to become independent."

They are very unspoilt in their tastes, and simple and quiet children, which I think of the greatest importance. You say rightly what a fault it is of parents to bring up their daughters with the main object of marrying them.

I want to strive to bring up the girls without seeking this as the sole object of the future—to feel that they can fill up their lives so well otherwise.

A marriage for the sake of marriage is surely the greatest mistake a woman can make.

There is, as you say, nothing more injurious for children than that they should be made a fuss about. I want to make them unselfish, unspoiled and contented; as yet this is the case. That they take a greater place in my life than is often the case in our families, comes from my not being able to have enough pressure of a responsible sort to take charge of them always; certain things remain undone from that reason, if I do not do them, and they would be the losers. Circumstances have forced me to be the mother of the real sense as in a private family, and I had to school myself to it, I assure you, for many small self-denials have been necessary."

In good sense and in womanly unselfishness the Princess was a model for her sex, and those letters which reveal these qualities were eminently worth printing. The domestic feature of the book, the insight which it gives us into her personal thoughts, her private life, the affectionate intercourse between the Princess Alice and her royal mother, and especially her devotion to the memory of her lamented father is a refreshing evidence that human hearts are cast in the same mould whether in a palace or a cottage. The Princess was endowed with rare, good sense, and seems to have been wholly free from that feeling which has led many in her position to look down upon those who were in humbler stations. Her ideas on this subject, often expressed in her letters, are very striking, coming from such a source. Nur is the religious element of the volume its least interesting feature. Her correspondence with her mother during the latter years of her life reveals the deep experience of a truly Christian heart. Her writings are all marked by vigour of thought, and great felicity of expression. The sadness which pervades a portion of this record of her life will only serve to commend the book to those who read with their hearts as well as with their eyes.

The Venture of Faith.

MANY years ago, when living in the country, I observed several men running rapidly down a wooded slope toward the river near by. Thinking something unusual had happened, I quickly followed, and was surprised to see, on a little rock that rose midway in the stream, a boy about six or eight years, drenched and trembling. He looked timidly towards those who had gathered on the bank, and now and again glanced with alarm on the boiling river he had just escaped from, and which threatened to devour him. How he came there we afterwards learned. The first thing to be done was to save him. A long ladder was speedily procured and pushed out to the rock, and a brave man volunteered to rescue the child. Slowly and steadily he stepped along the ladder, till he reached the rock and stood beside the boy. So far from gladly welcoming his deliverer, he refused to leave the rock. "You may trust me, I will carry you safely to the shore." The boy answered, "No, no, I cannot do it." Then said the other, "You will perish if you stay here." The conflict in the heart of the child could be seen in his face. At length trust conquered fear, and he yielded to the love of his hitherto unknown friend who, clasping him to his heart, returned with him by the ladder, and landed him safely, amid much rejoicing.

This is an illustration of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. The child is a picture of the sinner, miserable and helpless. The ladder is the Cross by which the Saviour finds His way to the sinner's side, to plead for the sinner's heart. Happy is the man, who, by God's grace, makes trial of Christ, and speaking in the Holy Ghost can say, *I believe*. Christ saves no man against his will; and it is not until the sinner is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, that his salvation is an accomplished fact. There is only one way by which the unsaved sinner can put his honour on Christ, and that is by trusting Him. Do you trust Christ? If not, why not?

"Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

The Two "Whosoever's."

WE have been accustomed to look at the word "Whosoever" as one of the most encouraging in the Bible; and, blessed be God, it is full of encouragement to the seeking soul; for sinful though he may feel himself to be, yet, listening to the words of Him, who is "the Truth," that "Whosoever believeth" is saved from the guilt of sin, and that *even now* there is no condemnation, he is enabled to trust that he is included in the "Whosoever;" and, casting himself on the mere word of Jehovah, that "peace which passeth all understanding" flows into his soul; he knows that he is adopted into the family of God, for he has received the Spirit whereby he is enabled with confidence to look up, and say, "Abba, Father."

But there is another "Whosoever" spoken of. "Whosoever believeth not." Dear reader, have you ever thought of the solemnity of *this* "Whosoever?" "Whosoever!" no matter who he is, young or old—rich or poor—learned or ignorant—man or woman. "Whosoever" believeth not, "shall not see life;" and, if he "shall not see life," what is before him but "the second death;" or, as our Lord calls it, "outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!" "Darkness," because they have closed their eyes against the "light of life," and now they cannot see. "Weeping," because too late they perceive what they have lost. "Wailing" over opportunities once within their reach, now gone forever! "Death," because they would not come, that they might have life (John v. 40).

Beloved reader, to which of these "whosoever's" do you belong? You may decide the matter *to-day*,—and why should you not? So much is involved in your decision. If you *believe*, you have "eternal life" already begun (1 John v. 11). If you *believe not*, there is nothing before you but death and eternal misery; for "whosoever" not found written in the book of *life* was cast into the lake of fire." Just as surely as *not one* of those who believe, will be shut out from heaven, so surely will not one of those who believe not, be admitted. WHAT THEN OF YOU? Will you not *now*, before another hour rolls over your head, cast yourself on that Saviour, who is waiting to be gracious to you, and realize in your own case, that the word of Jehovah is true, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." "WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE."
MISS DORA ALLEN.

Let the Drum Beat.

AN old soldier was lying on his bed sick and feeble. The doctors, after examination, gave up all hopes of his getting health again, in fact they did not think he could live many hours.

"Ah, well," said he, "let the drum beat. I have done my duty. I am ready." So died a hero. He had braved the terrors of the battlefield, he had helped to give glory to the victory, as men count glory; but that which now made him happy was that he had been faithful to his God. He had obeyed the orders of the great Captain. He had been loyal. He was ready to obey the call,