The Dying Thief in a New Light.

A SERMON BY PASTOR C. H. SPURGEON.

"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—Luke 23: 40-42.

I venture to say that if I stood by the bedside of a dying man tonight, and I found him anxious about his soul, but fearful that Christ could not save him because repentance had been put off so late, I should certainly quote the dying thief to him, and I should do it with good conscience, and without hesitation. I should tell him that, though he was as near to dying as the thief upon the cross was, yet if he repented of his sin, and turned his face to Christ believingly, he would find eternal life. I should do this with all my heart, rejoicing that I had such a story to tell to one at the gates of eternity.

But I do not think, dear friends, that the only speciality about the thief is the lateness of his repentance. So far from being the only point of interest, it is not even the chief point. To some minds, at any rate, other points will be even more remarkable. I want to show you very briefly that there was a speciality in his case as to the means of his conversion; secondly, a speciality in his faith; thirdly, a speciality in the result of his faith while he was here below; and, fourthly, a speciality in the promise won by his faith—the promise fulfilled to him in Paradise.

I. First, then, I think you ought to notice very carefully the singularity and speciality of

THE MEANS

by which the thief was converted. How do you think it was? Well, we do not know. We cannot tell. It seems to me that the man was an unconverted, impenitent thief when they nailed him to the cross; because one of the evangelists says, "The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth." It would appear that by some means or other this thief must have been converted while he was on the cross. Assuredly nobody preached a sermon to him, no evangelistic address was delivered at the foot of his cross, and no meeting was held for special prayer on his account. He does not even seem to have had an instruction, or an invitation, or an expostulation addressed to him; and yet this man because a sincere and accepted believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What do you think must have converted this poor thief? It strikes me that it may have been—it must have been, the sight of our great Lord and Saviour. There was, to begin with, our Saviour's wonderful behavior on the road to the cross. Perhaps the robber had mixed up with all sorts of society, but he had never seen a Man like this. Never had cross been carried by a Cross-Bearer of His look and fashion. Surely that march along the Via Dolorosa was the first part of the sermon which God preached to that bad man's heart.

HIS GOSPEL.

When he saw the Saviour surrounded by the Roman soldiery—saw the executioners bring forth the hammers and the nails, and lay Him down upon His back, and drive the nails into his hands and feet, this crucified criminal was startled and astonished as he heard Him say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He himself probably, had met his executioners with a curse; but he heard this man breathe a prayer to the great Father; and, as a Jew, as he probably was, he understood what was meant by such a prayer. But it did astound him to hear Jesus pray for His murderers. Who else had ever prayed so? Certainly not David and the kings of Israel, who, on the contrary, in all honesty and heartiness imprecated the wrath of God upon their enemies. Elias himself would not have prayed in that fashion; rather would he have called fire from heaven on the centurion and his company. It was a new, strange sound to him. I do not suppose that he appreciated it to the full; but I can well believe that it deeply impressed him, and made him feel that his Fellow-Sufferer was a being about whom there was an exceeding mystery of goodness.

And when the cross was lifted up, that thief hanging up on his own cross looked around, and I suppose he could see that inscription written in three languages—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." If so, that writing was his little Bible, his New Testament, and he interpreted it by what he knew of the Old Testament. Putting this and that together—that strange Person, incarnate loveliness, all patience, and all majesty, that strange prayer, and now this singular inscription, surely he who knew the Old Testament, as I have no doubt he did, would say to himself, "Is this He? Is this truly the King of the Jews? This is he who wrought miracles, and raised the dead, and said that He was the Son of God; is it all true, and is He really our Messiah?"

Peradventure, this dying thief read the Gospel out of the lips of Christ's enimies. They said, "He saved others." "Ah!" thought he, "did he save others? Why should he not save me?" What a grand bit of Gospel that was for the dying thief—"He saved others!" I think I could swim to heaven on that plank—"He saved others; because, if He saved others, He can of a surety save me. Thus the very things that the enemies disdainfully threw at Christ would be gospel to this poor dying man.

But, after all, surely that which won him most must have been to look at Jesus again, as He was hanging upon the cruel tree. Possibly nothing about the physical person of Christ would be attractive to him, for his visage was more marred than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men; but yet there must have been in that blessed face a singular charm. Was it not the very image of perfection? As I conceive the face of Christ, it was very different from anything that any painter has yet been able to place upon his canvas. It was all goodness, and kindness, and unselfishness; and yet it was a royal face. As the robber looked, he believed. I put it down as a very singular thing, a thing for you and for me to recollect, and dwell upon, with quite as much vividness as we do upon the lateness of this robbers conversion.

II. But now I want you to think with me a little upon the speciality of

THIS MAN'S FAITH,

for I think it was a very singular faith that this man exerted toward our Lord Jesus Christ. I greatly question whether the equal and the parallel of the dying thief's faith will be readily found outside the Scriptures, or even in the Scriptures. Observe, that this man believed in Christ when he literally saw him dying the death of a felon, under circumstances of the greatest personal shame. For him to ask Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom, though he saw that Jesus bleeding his life away, and hounded to the death, was a splendid act of reliance. For him to commit his everlasting destiny into the hands of One who was, to all appearance, unable even to preserve His own life, was a noble achievement of faith. I say that this dying thief leads the van in the matter of faith, for what he saw of the circumstances of the Saviour was calculated to contradict rather than help his confidence. What he saw was to his hindrance rather than to his help, for he saw our Lord in the very extremity of agony and death, and yet he believed in Him as the King shortly to come into His kingdom.

Recollect, too, that at that moment when the thief believed in Christ, all the disciples had forsaken him and fled. John might be lingering at a little distance, and Holy women may have stood farther off, but

NO ONE WAS PRESENT

bravely to champion the dying Christ. Judas had sold Him, Peter had denied Him, and the rest had forsaken Him; and it was then that the dying thief called Him "Lord," and said, "Remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom." I call that splendid faith. Why, some of you do not believe, though you are surrounded with Christian friends—though you are urged on by the testimony of those whom you regard with love; but this man, all alone, comes out, and calls Jesus his Lord! No one else was confessing Christ at that moment; no revival was around him with enthusiastic crowds; he was all by himself as a confessor of his Lord.

And, it seems to me that another point adds splendor to that faith—namely, that he himself was in extreme torture. Remember, he was crucified. It was a crucified man trusting in a crucified Christ. Oh, when our frame is racked with torture, when the tenderest nerves are pained, when our body is hung up to die by we know not what great length of torment, then to forget the present and live in the future is a grand achievement of faith! While dying to turn one's eye to Another dying at your side, and trust your soul with Him, is very marvellous faith. Blessed thief, because they put thee down at the bottom, as one of the least of saints, I think that I must bid the come up higher and take one of the uppermost seats among those who by faith have glorified the Christ of God!

Why, see, dear friends, once more, the speciality of this man's faith was that he saw so much, though his eyes had been opened for so short a time! He saw the future world. He was not a believer in annihilation, or in the possibility of a man's not being immortal. He evidently expected to be in another world, and to be in existence when the dying Lord should come into His kingdom. He believed all that, and it is more than some do nowadays. He also believed that Jesus would have a kingdom, a kingdom after He was dead, a kingdom though he was crucified. He believed that he was winning for himself a kingdom by those nailed hands and pierced feet. This was intelligent faith, was it not? He believed that Jesus would have a kingdom in which others would share, and therefore he expected to have his portion in it. Oh, dear sire, if you have thought of this dying thief only as one who put off repentance, I want you now to think of him as one that did greatly and grandly believe in Christ; and oh, that you would do the same!

III. But now, thirdly, as God shall help me, I wish to show you another speciality—namely, in

THE RESULT

of his faith. Oh, I have heard people say, "Well, you see, the dying thief was converted; but then he was not Baptized. He never went to communion, and never joined the Church"! He could not do either; and that which God Himself renders impossible to us He does not demand of us. He was nailed to the cross; how could he be baptized? But he did a great deal more than that; for if he could not carry out the outward signs, he most manifestly exhibited the things which they signified, which, in his condition, was better still.

This dying thief first of all confessed the Lord Jesus Christ; and that is the very essence of baptism. He confessed Christ. Did he not acknowledge Him to his fellow-thief? It was as open a confession as he could make it. Did he not acknowledge Christ before all that were gathered around the cross who were within hearing? It was as public a confession as he could possibly cause it to be. Yet certain cowardly fellows claim to be Christians, though they have never confessed Christ to a single person, and then they quote this poor thief as an excuse. Are they nailed to a cross? Are they dying in agony? Oh, no; and yet they talk as if they could claim the exemption which these circumstances would give them. What a dishonest piece of business! This man came out, then and there, and made all open an avowal of his faith in Christ as was possible.

GOSPEL WORK.

The next thing he did was to rebuke his fellow-sinner. He spoke to him in answer to the ribaldry with which he had assailed our Lord. I do not know what the unconverted convict had been blasphemously saying, but his converted comrade spoke very honestly to him. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." It is more than ever needful in these days that believers in Christ should not allow sin to go unrebuked; and yet a great many of them do so. Do you not know that a person who is silent when a wrong thing is said or done may become a partic pator in the sin? If you do not rebuke sin—I mean, of course, of all fit occasions, and in a proper spirit—your silence will give consent to the sin, and you will be an aider and abettor in it.

See, again, another mark of this man's faith. He prays; and his prayer is directed to Jesus. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." True faith is always praying faith. "Behold, he prayeth," is one of the surest tests of the new birth. Oh, friends, may we abound in prayer, for thus we shall prove that our faith in Jesus Christ is what it ought to be! This converted robber opened his mouth wide in prayer; he prayed with great confidence as to the coming kingdom, and he sought that kingdom first, even to the exclusion of all else.

Oh, that some penitent spirit here might be helped thus to believe, thus to confess, thus to defend his Master, thus to adore, thus to worship; and then the age of the convert would be a matter of the smallest imaginable consequence.

IV. Now, the last remark is this: There was something very special about the dying thief as to

OUR LORD'S WORD.

to him about the world to come. He said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He only asked the Lord to remember him, but he obtained this surprising answer, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

In some respects I envy this dying thief, for this reason—that when the Lord pardoned me, and pardoned the most of you, who are present, He did not give us a place in Paradise that same day. We are not yet come to the rest which is promised to us. No, you are waiting here. Some of you have been waiting very long. It is thirty years with many of us. It is forty years, it is fifty years, with many others since the Lord blotted out your sins, and yet you are not with Him in Paradise. There is something for us to do in the wilderness, and so we are kept out of the heavenly garden.

I well remember that Mr. Baxter said that he was not in a hurry to be gone to heaven; and a friend called upon Dr. John Owen, who had been writing about the glory of Christ, and asked him what he thought of going to heaven. That great divine replied, "I am longing to be there." "Why," said the other, "I have just spoken to holy Mr. Baxter, and he says that he would prefer to be here, since he thinks that he can be more useful on earth." "Oh!" said Dr. Owen, my brother Baxter is always full of practical godliness, but for all that I cannot say that I am at all desirous to linger in this mortal state. I would rather be gone." Each of these men seems to me to have been the half of Paul. Paul was made up of the two, for he was desirous to depart, but he was willing to remain because it was needful for the people. We would put both together, and, like Paul, have a strong desire to depart and to be with Christ, and yet be willing to wait if we can do service to our Lord and to His Church.

SHORT WORK.

Still, I think he has the best of it who is converted, and enters heaven the same night. This robber breakfasted with the devil, but he dined with Christ on earth, and supped with Him in Paradise. This was short work, but blessed work. What a host of troubles he escaped! What a world of temptation he missed! What an evil world he quitted! He was just born, like a lamb dropped in the field, and then he was lifted into the Shepherd's bosom straight away. I do not remember the Lord ever saying this to anybody else. I dare say it may have happened that souls have been converted and have gone home at once; but I never heard of anybody that had such an assurance from Christ as this man had: "Verily, I say unto thee;" such a personal assurance: "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Dying thief, thou wert favored above many, "to be with Christ, which is far better," and to be with Him so soon!

Why is it that our Lord does not thus emparadise all of us at once? It is because there is something for us to do on earth. My brethren, are you doing it? Are you doing it? Some good people are still on earth, but why? But why? What is the use of them? I cannot make it out. If they are indeed the Lord's people, what are they waiting for? They get up in the morning and eat their breakfast, and in due course eat their dinner, and their supper, and go to bed and sleep; at a proper hour they get up the next morning, and do the same as on the previous day. Is this living for Jesus? Is this life? It does not come to much. Can this be the life of God in man? Or Christian people, do justify your Lord in keeping you waiting here! How can you justify Him but by serving Him to the utmost of your power? The Lord help you to do so! Let us begin to live if we have been half dead. May the Spirit of God make something of us yet, so that we may go as industrious servants from the labors of the vineyard to the pleasures of the Paradise! To our once crucified Lord be glory forever and ever! Amen.

To an Honest Inquirer.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

When a person is thinking seriously and earnestly about the welfare of his soul, he does not want to sit down to a treatise on theology. He wants practical direction, not philosophy—the plainest truth in the plainest language. Such a person sends me this question: "I read in the Bible that I must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if I wish to be saved. Please tell me just what the faith *is* what I must possess. I am not an infidel; I believe the Bible, and all that it says about Jesus Christ. Is this faith enough? If not, what is required of me? I want to do what is right."

Perhaps other readers of this journal may be raising the same questions, and, in replying to one, I may offer a word of guidance to all. This short, but vital word—*Faith*—has fared like a rose in the hands of a botanist. It has been pulled to pieces and analyzed until the beauty and fragrance and the very existence of the flower has departed. It is the simplicity of faith that often puzzles people, and perhaps puzzles you. You are studying a definition when you ought to be performing an act. You are worrying your brain when you ought to be yielding your heart. It is not a doctrine, it is a *doing* that must save you. It is a great advantage, and one for which you may feel grateful, that you assent to the truth and the divine authority of the Bible; you believe in the "record" God has given. But this is only an intellectual act. It can no more renovate the soul than a bare belief in the existence of a Divine Being. God's Word distinctly declares that, except you repent, you cannot be saved, and that without holiness (which signifies a healthy affection of the heart toward God) "no man shall see the Lord." An intellectual assent to the truth of the Gospel and to the claims of Christ—such as is yielded by the great majority of respectable church-goers—may exist without the slightest penitence for sin, or any conscientious obedience to Christ's commandments. There are intellectual believers in the world of lost spirits; we are told that the "devils believe also—and tremble." Some one has told you that faith is "taking God at his word." A very correct description is this of a certain feature and a very essential feature of true faith. If you do not believe God's promises, and if you do not take God at his own word, you cannot become a Bible Christian. But does any "word" of your loving Heavenly Father save your soul? Did the apostles ever preach "believe the *word* and be saved?" Assuredly not. Nor did they ever draw up a system of Christianity and then declare that if you accept that system you would be saved. Paul and his inspired fellow apostles directed weak, guilty, sinful man not to a system of religion, however true, sublime or heavenly, but to a *Personal Saviour*. They point all eyes, all hearts, all footsteps toward the compassionate Almighty Atoner for human sin, toward Jesus, the Son of God. What must I do to be saved? The short, prompt answer is: "Believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Observe that little, but most vitally important word, *on*. It is not enough for you to believe in Christ Jesus as a divine Being—just as you believe in John Howard as a noble philanthropist or in Abraham Lincoln as a noble patriot. Suppose that you were lodging up on the eighth or nineth floor of one of those lofty apartment houses over in New York. As a protection from the danger of fire, you procure a stout rope to lower yoursely by, down to the pavement. You may have perfect faith in that rope as made of good hemp, and well braided; yet the rope lies unused under your bed. But suppose that at the midnight hour, you heard the terrible alarm of "fire!" and, coiling that rope fast to your furniture, you swing out of the window and lower yourself down into the street. My friend, don't you see that your life is saved—not by believing in that rope, but by trusting yourself on that rope? The good opinion you previously had of the stout rope now gives place to positive act of grasping it, and clinging to it, and to it alone until you are on the ground. That is saving faith. Even so you must realize your need of having your soul saved—which you say that you do already admit. Then you must let go of every other reliance, and put your trust entirely *on* the Lord Jesus Christ. You must entrust yourself to him as the Atoner for your sins, as the Pardoner of your sins, as the Giver of all strength, as the source of your inner life. "He that hath the Son of God hath life eternal." But you cannot have until you lay hold of, or accept; and that is a voluntary act. Christ declared that "as many as received him," should become the children of God. Receiving him is an act of the soul. Every description of salvation in the New Testament implies some doing on our part. Saving faith, then, is not a mere orthodox belief; it is a transaction, by which you attach your weakness to Christ's infinite strength, your guiltiness to his pardoning grace, your whole soul to him as your Lord, your King, your owner for this world and for evermore. The "Analysis" or Congress Water which is posted up over the springs at Saratoga may induce you to try it; but the water cannot do you an atom of good until you actually drink it.

"Must I not pray?" Yes; but prayer is the act of the heart in speaking to God, confessing sin and asking for help. "Must I not repent of sin?" Yes; but the only genuine repentance is a turning away from sin and this is the act of the soul. "Must I not love Christ? Very true; but faith works by love, and the one indispensable evidence of love is that you "keep Christ's commandments." Then, my friend, begin to keep them at once. Jesus speaks to you through your conscience. Do the very first right thing which conscience commands. Fight the very first sin that you are tempted to commit. "Take my yoke upon you," says your Saviour. Then the old yoke of selfishness, or covetousness, or sensual appetite, or cowardice that made a beast of burden of you, must be thrown off. His yoke is "easy" because it does not gall your conscience; and you take it upon you just as soon as you can honestly say: "Now, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

You say that you "want to do what is right." Then do it. Hitherto you have been in the attitude of a hearer, of an inquirer, and at the utmost a theoretical believer. I never knew just what faith was until I began to practice it," was the remark of a man who became an eminent Christian. You will find out what it is in the same way. Instead of sitting still (which is a state of actual sin and disobedience) begin to move. Faith is a venture; take it, just as you would, take the rope, out of that burning house. I may condense your whole duty—as far as the Gospel reveals it—into three points. First, you must venture toward Christ. This will take you away from your old attitude and sinful practices. Secondly, you must venture on Christ. This is the entire trust of the soul on him and him only. Ever afterward, as long as you live, you must venture for Christ. That signifies a life of self-denial, and courage, and obedience to him—a life of spiritual beauty and usefulness. Are you ready for these ventures? Then underneath you will be the *Everlasting Arm*.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Aunt Hetty's Visit, and Its Results.

She came to the old farm late one June evening, a complete surprise to the family. It had been many years since they had seen her, so that to the three girls—Jeannie and Lizzie and Nell, pretty, merry lasses, with ages ranging from twelve to sixteen years—she was only a dim memory.

But it never took long to become acquainted with Aunt Hetty. She was so genial, with a tender smile which seemed to hold a world of meaning, a pleasant voice, and such mild blue eyes. The girls felt at once that they had found a new friend.

But these mild blue eyes were sharp enough to see many things, and before a week had passed they saw just how the family machinery ran, and, not liking its working very well, resolved to oil the wheels a little.

Now this is what Aunt Hetty saw, and the way she took to remedy matters.

Her brother's family consisted of himself and wife, the three girls already mentioned, and two little boys of four and six years. Their means would not admit of hired help in the house, and with the double burden of dairy and housework, poor Mrs. Lewin seldom found a spare hour for rest or recreation True, her daughters had been trained to such light duties as dish-washing, bed-making, and sweeping, but when those tasks were finished, no matter how much extra work overtasked the time and strength of their mother, neither she nor they had ever thought that they could help lift the burden. Consequently, while they went here and there wherever pleasure called—now a picnic, then a strawberry party or a children's ice-cream supper—it was very seldom that when the Ladies' Sewing Society met, or the "Grangers" held their monthly reunions, some wearying household work did not keep the mother at home.

So, as Aunt Hetty summed it up to herself, "Mary is just working herself to death, while these dear girls are growing up ignorant of many household duties, and with few seeds of unselfishness being sown—though I think the soil is fertile. At any rate I'm going to see what kind of crop I can raise upon it, with careful directing and watching."

The next day dawned bright and beautiful. The afternoon had been selected for a picnic by the young people, and there must be baking done and white dresses ironed at the Lewin home, for it was Tuesday. Mrs. Lewin arose, and went about her daily toil, still weary and unrefreshed by yesterdays hard work at the washtub.

Just as they sat down to breakfast, a note was handed in, from a distant neighbor and cousin of the family. It was addressed to Aunt Hetty, and she read it aloud. It said:

"Mother and Louise are coming to-day, and they want you and Mary to meet them here this afternoon. Be sure and have Mary come. It will do her good. She gets away from home so seldom."

"Mary," said Aunt Hetty, smiling, "we will have our 'outing' as well as the children."

Oh, you must go, of course; and Robert will be glad to drive you over. I don't think he will be averse to a chat about crops with Sarah's husband; but, really, I cannot leave the work to-day. The butter has to be packed for the market to-morrow, and, as the extra baking and ironing will take all my spare time this forenoon, the butter must wait till you are all gone."

"Now, mother, that's too bad!" interposed her husband.

And Jeannie said: "You ought to go, some way."

But the minds of all the matter seemed settled. Only Aunt Hetty said nothing, but her mind was busy.

After Mary had gone to the dairy to perform the usual duties there, and the girls were preparing for their morning tasks, she called them to her, and asked, pleasantly:

"How long is it, girls, since your last picnic?"

"Oh, we had one last week, and had a good time. We have one almost every week, and to-day we are going to Miller's Island. And isn't it nice that it's such a beautiful day?"

"Well," said Aunt Hetty, smiling, "how long since mother has had a picnic?"

"Why, I don't know." The question seemed like a revelation to them. "But, auntie, mother would not care to go to our picnics. It is only real young people and child-en who go," said Lizzie, at last.

"Yes, my dears, but don't you think there are places that mother would like to go? Would she not like to go this afternoon to Cousin Sarah's?"

"Yes, I suppose so. But, Aunt Hettie, what can we do? Stay away from the picnic, so she will not have the baking to do?"

And the three young faces grew very grave at the prospect.

"Surely you would be willing to deny yourselves sometimes for the sake of seeing mother having rest and pleasure," said Aunt Hetty, seriously. Then she continued, smiling again: "Though I do not believe that will be necessary in this case. But really, dear Jennie, do you not think your cakes would taste better if you were to make them yourself, and that by the means your mother was having a pleasant visit instead of drudging at home? And, Lizzie, would not that pretty white dress feel more comfortable, if you had ironed it yourself, with like results?"

"Why, of course," cried both girls.

"But, auntie, I never made a loaf of cake," added Jeannie ruefully.

"And I never did any fine ironing," said Lizzie.

"Well, there must always be a 'first time' for everything. Now, as I am here to help and teach you, I propose that each shall finish her morning work as soon as possible, and then we will all go to the kitchen, and while your mother is busy in the dairy, I will show you how to do the baking and ironing, while Nell can press out the boys' linen suits, which they will need to wear, and by the time mother comes in, we will have it all done and surprise her. Then she will be ready to pack her butter, and after dinner we can all go for our rest and pleasure. Now, what do you think of my plan?"

"Splendid!" chorused the girls eagerly.

And, after a moment's bright chatter and planning, all were busy as bees, Jeannie attending to the chamberwork, Lizzie sweeping and dusting, while Nell, with Aunt Hetty's help, cleared the table and washed and put away the dishes.

Light hands make nimble fingers, and soon the quartette met in the kitchen, where Aunt Hetty had taken care to have a good fire ready.

After much anxiety and hard work, Jeannie had the satisfaction of taking her pies and cakes from the oven, looking "just as nice as mother's," while Lizzie forgot the smart of a blistered finger, in her pride, as she hung up the last, nicely ironed dress upon the rack to air, and was just calling upon all to admire her work on the little linen suits, when the door opened and Mrs. Lewin stood upon the threshold.

Such a look of astonishment as spread over her face at sight of the tempting pies and cakes upon the table, and the rack full of nicely ironed garments! How the girls enjoyed that moment! And when she found words to say, "Why Hetty, what have you been doing?" and Hetty answered, "It is the girls' work, not mine," words can scarcely express their pride and pleasure.

The tears of pride and appreciation in the mother's eyes as she turned to them were "worth more than diamonds," as Jeannie said when they were alone.

That evening, when they were all gathered in the pleasant sitting-room, each one ready to recount the pleasures of the afternoon, Mr. Lewin remarked to his wife:

"Why, mother, your visit must have done you good. You look years younger!"

"Indeed, it did! The visit with Louise and Aunt Jane brought back old times, and made me feel almost like a girl again."

The daughters' faces shone with a new pleasure, and when the mother turned her loving eyes toward them with the question, "And how did my girls enjoy their picnic?" Jeannie rose and crossed the room to a low seat by Aunt Hetty, and became spokesman for the rest."

"Very much, indeed, dear mother. It was the pleasantest one we ever had. But, Aunt Hetty, I think that we owe it all to you. It was so nice to think that we had helped so that mother was resting and having a pleasant time as well as ourselves; but we all agreed, coming home, that ah, the picnic wasn't equal to mother's surprise and pleasure this morning. You have taught us a lesson besides that of making cakes and doing fine ironing, and we've made up our minds to help mother more after this, and give her a chance for half the fun."

"Bravo, my daughters! that is a good resolution," cried their father, approvingly; while the dear mother could not trust her voice to speak, and Aunt Hetty bestowed upon them one of her tender, meaning smiles. But I think the seeds of unselfishness she had sown had grown to her full satisfaction, don't you?—*Golden days.*

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