

"WHEN MOTHER COMES HOME."

BY MRS. G. S. REANEY.

The brightest of bright homes! The happiest of happy children! Little Mattie, with her beaming face and golden hair, has the sunniest of sunny lives! She is only four years old; an "upgrown baby" she calls herself, and laughs gaily at the thought. Clambering on father's knee, pleading for "just one more story," sitting at mother's feet, "learning to sew," or "tidying her work basket;" humming snatches of songs and hymns,—

"Will you walk into my parlor?
Said the spider to the fly;"—

"Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod?"

Mattie's bright, gay, joyous spirit seems to fill the home with a sun which has no setting. If asked what makes her glad, she looks into your face with searching wonderment, then her rose lips part with a smile, and she says—

"'S'pose it is because I love everybody, and everybody loves me."

While kneeling down beside her mother's knee, with folded hands and head bent reverently, little Mattie prays her evening prayer.

"Pray God bless us all round, and everybody else; and let nobody be shut outside of heaven's door when Jesus says it's time for all good people to come home to Him."

A strange child's prayer that; but it was Mattie's own, and no one thought to bid her pray in other words.

A dark, desolate home. A child with a weird-looking face and drooping figure! A kind, good-natured woman, busy with her needle, sits beside her.

"When will Mattie sing her songs and hymns again?" she asks in gentle tones.

"When mother comes home," replies the child, pensively, never raising her eyes from the ground.

"Well, have your doll to play with darling," the woman says, and her voice is full of tears.

"Yes! I will, when mother comes home," little Mattie answers.

"When mother comes home!" For six long months that has been the burden of the child's cry. She cannot laugh and play about "until mother comes home;" she does not care to eat her daily food "until mother comes home;" she will not listen to her father's stories "until mother comes home."

In vain they seek to win the little one's attention to those things which in the past made up her life. She waits for mother's coming home; waits, and droops, and pines away, and dies; and even as death comes to set at rest the troubled heart, those gathered about the bed hear her still prattling of mother, and her coming home. Her last uttered question, spoken in tones which fade away into indistinct whisperings, is this—

"Will gentle Jesus hold little Mattie's hand and watch with her at heaven's gate until—until mother comes home?"

Reader, where, think you, was that mother? Come and see.

A crowded thoroughfare! A brilliantly lighted—house! Crowds of men and women thronging the rooms, one, two, and three, each flooded with the light of gas, each scented with the smell of drink! Do you notice that woman a little more excited than the rest? She is laughing now—a loud yet hollow laugh. Her bonnet has caused some remark. She takes it off, turns it inside out, replaces it on her head, and laughs again.

"That is all that remains of—Mattie's mother."

You shudder! Thank God, you do! The days have not yet come when we can bear such sights unmoved. But what are we doing to make such sights more rare? What are you doing readers?

Let me speak to mothers. Is it possible that, as a mother, you early train the babe at your breast to care for stimulants, by taking yourself, for the baby's nourishment, stout ale, and even spirits?

Is it possible that you let your boys and girls, as they gather about the dinner table, see "Mother" taking, as a matter of course, the drink which has such power to injure some? Shall they learn from you that in the days to come they will do right to take the path which leads to the precipice, though

one, hard by, would keep them out of danger's way?

Can it be that you make it possible for one, a slave to evil habit, to say in the future, when you are gone away from earthly scenes, "My mother helped me to become a drunkard?"

Sunday-school teachers, what are you doing? You bear Christ's name, you work for Him. Yet in this thing—can it be!—you side with the world, and refuse to give your scholars the helpful influence of your own teaching? Must they find out for themselves that "wine is a mocker," when a word from you would warn, would reveal truths not yet comprehended, would strengthen some who are unconsciously weak.

Mistresses, what are you, by word and life, doing for your servants? Do they learn from you that intoxicating drinks are harmless—are necessary? learn it, and carry the belief into their own homes some day?—a secret enemy to play them false in times of weakness or despondency.

Christian women everywhere—wives, mothers, sisters, mistresses, servants, neighbors, friends—have you ever asked what Christ, your Lord and Master, would have you do in this matter? Are you helping or hindering, by your personal influence and example, those whom you know to be tempted and tried? All have some influence; or, which side is yours?

There are hundreds of women to-day like Mattie's mother; women who, all unconsciously—from "sipping wine" when physically weak; from "taking a glass" to "pick up" spirits which are drooping and despondent, because of care and trouble—have become slaves to drink. Will you not help such to forsake their sin and live? Will you not make it less possible for the young to go wrong, by implanting within their hearts principles which shall lead them away from unsafe paths?

BOXES FOR THE FAMILY.

To those who are living in close quarters whose closet room is not extensive, what a boon is found in the covered boxes that are at the same time a convenience as a seat and a useful receptacle! What a comfortable look a sitting-room has if the windows are furnished with broad window seats whose artistic covers do not give the faintest suggestion of the motley contents of toys and books in one, or the pile of garments waiting for the leisure moment in the other! The stool covered with carpet, with tassels at the corners and rollers that allow of easy movement from one place to another, is just the thing for fancy-work that is only picked up when the friends make an evening visit. Then there is the more homely, and less artistic, soap-box covered and lined, and standing ready in the bed-room for the shoes that persist in tumbling out of the shoe-bag, or with pocket in the cover for darning-cotton and darning, is used to hold the damaged hose ready for the mender. For some people have the same repugnance to doing the family darning before the chance public of the sitting-room that they have to doing the family washing. The *Decorative and Furnisher* has a suggestion for a paper box that is timely and will be welcome:

"Ribbon decked bamboo frames are pretty and useful contrivances for holding the current literature of the day, but every woman knows that every man, through some inborn perversity peculiar to his kind, is always liable to demand the immediate production of some special newspaper of a date more or less remote, and is too apt to rend the air with clearly expressed adjectives not designed to compliment the mistress of a house where, etc., etc. A happy relief for a housekeeper who does not love to have three hundred and sixty-five newspapers upon her sitting-room table simultaneously, is a box to stand under desk or table; or, not inappropriately, in a corner by itself. Take a soap-box—it would be hard to find a paper upon a home made furnishing that does not introduce the inevitable soap-box—nail the top on closely, so that it is a complete box, and have it sewed in two, diagonally (let an expert handle the saw, or mutilation to box or sawyer may be the result). Line both sections with thick pink satin paper, and cover the outside with felt, putting a row of furniture gimp with brass-headed nails all around the sawed edge. Put the two parts of the box together with hinges, and by the aid of screw-eyes fasten

two slender metal chains on each side like trunk braces to keep the lid from falling back.

"In putting on the hinges let the bottom piece of the box be the highest in the back, so that the opening with the scissors and a paper match-box will make the position clear. No fastening is necessary, but a hasp and padlock can easily be added as a safeguard against the ravages of combustible-seeking housemaids and other foes to man's divine gifts."—*Christian Union*.

BE TRUE.

"If only we strive to be pure and true
To each of us all there will come an hour
When the tree of life will burst with flowers,
And rain at our feet the golden dower,
Of something grander than ever we knew."

If you would succeed in life, adhere rigidly and undeviatingly to the truth.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!"

"If we only would believe it, 'honesty is' always 'the best policy.' A young man in the jewelry business was severely censured by his employer for speaking the exact truth concerning the articles which he sold. He was told he was 'a fool, and would die in the workhouse.' But, on the contrary, when in course of time he set up in business for himself, he was wonderfully prospered. He never wanted for means to live comfortably, and was always able to pay his debts. The employer who had reproached him for his honesty became so reduced in circumstances as to apply to his former clerk for assistance, and finally himself died in a workhouse.

Be true at any cost, but if obliged to say what is true and disagreeable, express it as pleasantly as possible. Truth has been compared to a picture, the manner of expressing truth to the frame which ornaments it. Do not unnecessarily say disagreeable things. Where truth is not involved, and you have nothing pleasant to say, keep silent.

If you have made a mistake, do not consider it a condescension to apologize. The true gentleman is always ready to acknowledge an error and rectify a blunder. "Only the male bites with one end and kicks with the other."

The truly great men are the truly humble men.

Frederick the Great once wrote to the Senate: "I have just lost a battle, and it was entirely my own fault." Concerning this his biographer says: "This confession displayed more greatness than all his victories."

A certain writer has said: "Acknowledging that we are in the wrong is but saying that we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday." But you who are Christians have a higher motive than any here given for cultivating truth and honesty—the approval of your own conscience and the knowledge that you are pleasing your Saviour.—*Christian Age*.

CHILD RELIGION.

A religious life, a life of faith and prayer, a Christ-like life, is natural for a child, and we make a woful mistake when we think that there is a certain amount of boyish wickedness and girlish frivolity which must be run through before the religious life can begin. How did our Saviour himself begin? Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." A child, do we say, cannot be religious because he is still a child! This is a fearful mistake to act upon. Cannot a rosebud contain the sweetest fragrance and be perfumed with the most delicate colors because it is yet a bud and not a full-blown flower? Cannot the tiny cascade that flows down the mountain-side be pure and sparkling and life-giving because it is not yet a sweeping, rushing river? We expect to find fragrance in the bud and purity in the mountain rill; we should expect to find religious fragrance and purity in the child's life, implanted there very early by the Saviour of little children. We should look for it, plan for it, and be alarmed if we do not find it; and regard a young soul without it as a distorted and ill-proportioned object, a soul that lacks its chief excellence, just as a scentless bud or a brackish mountain brook would be re-

garded. But this early religious life, we must remember, does not take care of itself, any more than a rosebud springs up out of the ground without care; the soil must be prepared, the seed must be dropped, the little plant must be watered and nourished and pruned and trained.

The education of the Jewish children, as we have seen, was eminently a religious training. "If you ask a Jew," says Josephus, "concerning any matter concerning the law, he can more easily explain it than tell his own name; since we learn it from the first beginning of intelligence, it is, as it were, graven on our souls." "The Jews," says Philo, "look on their laws as revelations from God, and are taught them from their earliest infancy; they bear the image of the law on their souls." The children were bound to worship God in his sanctuary "as soon as they were able," was the regulation, "with the help of their fathers' hand, to climb the flight of steps into the temple courts." This was the way Samuel was trained, and David and John and Timothy; and because of this training they became Samuel and David and John and Timothy. It depends upon the parents and teachers of to-day what the next generation shall be, and it depends upon what they do and teach to-day. We have the clean, white, smooth tablets in our hands, in the souls of our children: what shall we write thereon, religion or worldliness?

A CHEERFUL WIFE.

Better than gold to a man is a cheerful wife. But he must do his part toward making her cheerful. It is easy enough for a man to marry a happy woman. But the bride expectant, when she thought how happy she would be, never contemplated the picture of a husband coming home cross as a bear; she had never thought of the long evenings when he wouldn't come at all, or his bringing some one home to dinner without warning or preparation. She had no idea, in fact, that there could be anything but happiness in married life, and she had determined to be happy and to distribute her happiness to those about her. It is not often her fault if she does not succeed. Men, as a rule, do not exert themselves to secure their wives' happiness. They know that it requires a constant and a great effort to possess property and be secure in its value in the midst of constant commercial changes. The cheerfulness, the happy, hopeful character which every woman displays at the beginning of marriage is not so easily lost as a fortune; it requires but a small share of his attention and yet she often does not get that little share.—*Selected*.

TWO WAYS OF ASKING FAVORS.

"Mag, go in the other room and get my new banjo string can't you? It's on top of the bureau, hunt it up."

"No! What made you break that one? Careless boy, wait on yourself. I'm busy doing examples," came the impatient reply from sister Mag.

Now here were two children, brother and sister, who loved each other, and were usually willing to favor each other, but they both felt cross this morning and speak accordingly.

Two hours later Mag had finished her lesson, and comes tripping down the steps where Harry is sitting with his banjo newly strung. He looks up, smiles, and calls out as she passed him:

"Mag, bring me home some blue-bells, please."

"Yes, dear, if I can find any."—*Household*.

COFFEE CUSTARDS.—For six cups measure out four cups of boiled milk; put it in a basin, with one cupful of very strong coffee; add five yolks of eggs and one and a half ounces of pounded sugar; mix well, and strain through a sieve or gravy-strainer. Fill the cups with the mixture; skim off carefully all froth from the surface; put them into a flat stewpan, with boiling water to half the height of the cups; put the stewpan, with live coals on its cover, on a very slow fire for fifteen minutes; the water should only bubble slightly. When set, let the custards cool in the water. Vanilla and lemon custards may be made in the same way, using flavoring of vanilla or lemon instead of coffee.