

or pursuits. With secret satisfaction she noted that no enterprise in the church, involving the exercise of artistic faculties, was ever undertaken without consulting her, though quite oblivious to the fact that her assistance was never solicited for anything else. In plans for practical benevolence, like visiting the sick, helping the unfortunate, teaching the sinful and ignorant, she would have been about as useful as the lay-figures in a milliner's window.

By degrees Bertha's wisdom in mere worldly things grew a bit oppressive to her friends. The girls dreaded to converse with her, lest they be tripped up on a grammatical blunder. Any fault in dress became the target for her critical eye. Any lack of harmony in color or arrangement in a room was certain to be noticed, and in a manner, too, which made its occupants feel uncomfortable. A 'gaucherie,' in her eyes, was almost a sin. Said an acquaintance, at one time:

'I met Bertha Dean on the street to-day, and she looked at my shabby gloves in a way that made me feel as if I'd been caught stealing!'

One day news spread through the town that Bertha had been summoned to the death-bed of a brother in a neighboring state. Somehow it seemed incongruous. So utterly impossible was it to conceive of her in any surroundings except the most orderly, in a place where emotion would be sure to overleap her ideas of propriety, that a neighbor voiced the general sentiment by asking, in perplexed tones:

'What in the world can she do there?'

Quickly came the sarcastic response:

'She can tell to an inch what ought to be the length of the widow's veil, and will be very useful in deciding whether the children's mourning hosiery should be with clocks or without.'

Poor Bertha! This was, indeed, about all that she could do in the stricken household. Other hands than hers wiped tears from the eyes of the fatherless children, and others taught them of the resurrection. Other voices spoke words of sympathy to the mother, and prayed for divine comforting. In short, all the real ministry, in this hour of need, came from some one else. The girl was honestly puzzled to see how little weight the family gave to things which she deemed of supreme importance. She tried to be helpful, and was sincerely distressed because some garments, hastily prepared for her sister at the time, were ill-fitting, and because she seemed utterly indifferent to certain rules of decorum for funeral occasions, which Bertha had studied with care.

While facing the realities of death and sorrow, a faint impulse towards better things stirred her heart. For a time life did seem to be more than meat, and the body than raiment; but she soon relapsed into her old absorption in trifles.

It is very desirable to know how to decorate a room and arrange a table daintily; but there is need, also, to store up a wealth of love and tact and sympathy for heart-needs, as we journey through a world of sin and suffering. To girls of Bertha's character it might be said: 'These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'

Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost.

The Force of Example

(Susan Hubbard Martin, in 'Ram's Horn'.)

Constance admired no one in the church so much as she did Mrs. Hartwell, and Constance did not admire everybody.

Mrs. Hartwell was tall and beautiful, and stately, and she wrote for the papers and magazines. This was her crowning attraction in the eyes of Constance. 'Just to think of being talented enough to write for publication, and pay,' she used to sigh. 'If I were in her place, wouldn't I hold my head high? I don't know whether I'd live in Finley or not. It's not good enough.'

But Mrs. Hartwell continued to live in Finley and seemed to enjoy it. Though wealthy in her own right, no one would guess it, until he stepped across the threshold of her home. There beautiful pictures looked down upon one, from softly tinted walls, rare bric-a-brac graced the different apartments, and statues gleamed whitely upon their pedestals. It was a fitting abode for so rare and gentle a spirit.

By right of her splendid intellect, Katherine Hartwell gathered about her the most cultured and cultivated people, and yet in spite of the adulation of the people, she remained as true and simple as a child.

Once in a while Constance went up to see her. She invariably came home flushed and elated, eager to tell mother about it, and she always concluded by saying: 'Oh mother, I'd give anything to be like her. Isn't she lovely?'

'She certainly is,' mother would always say, 'lovely in disposition as well as face. With all her beauty and talent, she could not be spoiled. I believe if anyone has, she does possess "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." That's what God loves in his children. I wish more of us had it.' And Constance would flush up and turn away.

Constance did not have a good disposition. Coupled with a love of dress was an inordinate pride; a selfish pride, that blinded her to everything but money and display. Not any of the young people were quite good enough for her to associate with, unless it were Charlotte Briggs, who had been to Europe, or Ruth Hall, the doctor's daughter.

She liked Ruth because she wore an opal and diamond ring, and rode in a trap. The poorer members of her Sunday-school class she seldom noticed, or even looked at. It was no wonder, then, that the tall, slender, yellow-haired girl in her pretty clothes, was no favorite.

It used to hurt mother a good deal, and she used to pray over the matter in secret. She could not help feeling proud of her little daughter, as mothers will, but she did wish she were less imperious and money-loving.

Father was not rich, and they only kept one servant, poor Sarah, whom Constance ordered about very much as a real Princess would a slave. But Sarah stayed, because she loved and was grateful to the mother.

'Why didn't you speak to Annie Comstock, Constance?' asked mother one day. They had passed Annie on the street, a slender, fragile little figure in a faded dress and hat. 'She's in your Sunday-school class, isn't she?'

Constance turned. 'Why, mother,' she cried, 'she works out for a living, wash-

ing dishes in a restaurant, or something. Didn't you know that?'

'What if she does,' replied mother, quietly. 'You might at least speak to her. A cheery good-night or good-morning is the best tonic I know of. It makes life worth living to these poor little wage-workers who have so little sunshine. Annie has it hard enough. You might have lightened her burden, dear child. Like the Priest and the Levite, "you passed by."'

'I can't help it,' retorted Constance, holding her chin up. 'I've got my own position to maintain. Let people like that go in their own class.' And mother, stifling a sigh, said no more.

The church was full that evening. More than once Constance stole a glance at Mrs. Hartwell as she sat in her pew. Her face looked pure and sweet, and though she wore only a plain black gown, Constance thought she had never seen her so beautiful.

It was a grand sermon, and at the close of it the minister came down to speak to some of the members. Constance lingered. She wanted to catch a smile and a bow from the one she admired most in the world. As she stood there, old Aunt Nancy Bean came up. Aunt Nancy was old, very old, but she never omitted a service. She was a remarkable woman for her years, and eked out a scanty living still by washing and ironing. Aunt Nancy wore a black and white calico, a rusty cape and a black bonnet that had done duty for numberless seasons. She wore no gloves, and her knotted, toil-worn hands, held tremulously a little Bible. She made straight for Mrs. Hartwell.

'Mrs. Hartwell,' she began in her shrill, cracked old voice, 'I've come to ask you if I can walk as far as home with you. I'm a little afraid to go alone. It's dark, and I don't see as well as I used to.'

Constance looked at the beautiful, queenly woman, and then at the little bent figure, regarding her with dim, wistful eyes. What would she do? But Constance did not wait long. Katherine Hartwell acted as she had done all her life, straight on the impulse of a loving and tender heart.

'Of course you may, Aunt Nancy,' she cried warmly. 'I'll be glad of your company,' and then, before half the church, she took the poor old trembling creature tenderly by the arm and led her out of the door and carefully down the steps.

Constance went home with a new emotion stirring at her heart strings. She told mother all about it. 'I would have refused, I know I would, if I had been in her place,' went on Constance. 'Aunt Nancy did look so poor, old and shabby, but Mrs. Hartwell looked as if she didn't care a bit. She took Aunt Nancy's arm as if she had been worth a million. It made me ashamed of the way I do and act. It was lots better than a sermon, mother. I seemed to see my real self all at once, and how small and mean I must look in God's sight. Gifted as she is, if she can notice and be kind to Aunt Nancy Bean, I don't think it will hurt me. I may never be fortunate enough to write for papers and magazines, but I can at least be made considerate of other people's feelings. I scolded and was cross to Sarah yesterday because the tucks weren't ironed to suit me in my pink waist. I'm going to apologize this minute.'

There was a tear in mother's eye, but a new hope was in her heart.