

## HER GIFT.

BY GERTRUDE MANLEY JONES.

**T**HE minister's eyes swept with intense searching, the apathetic faces of his stylish, worldly, congregation. He had made an impassioned appeal for help in the support of a little mission church among the mountains—a section where rough men and women knew scarcely anything of God and the religion of Christ. He had hoped to inspire the people with the spirit of giving, to make them feel that it was a sweet, blessed privilege, and—he had failed. A sense of utter desolation crept over him.

"God help me," his lips murmured mutely. He could not see the bent figure of little crippled Maggie in the rear of the church—a figure that was trembling under the fire of his appeal.

"Lord Jesus," the little one was saying brokenly, "I ain't got nothin' ter give: I want the people in the mountains ter hear 'bout my Saviour. O, Lord, I ain't got nothin' ter"—

What was it that made the child catch her breath as though a cold hand had taken hold of her heart? "Yes, you have, Maggie," whispered a voice from somewhere; "you've got your crutch, your beautiful crutch that was give ter you, an' is worth a lot of shinin' dollars. You kin give up your best friend what helps you ter git into the park where the birds sing, an' takes you ter preachin' and makes your life happy."

"O, no, Lord," sobbed the child, choking and shivering. "Yes, yes, I will! He give up more'n that fer me."

Blindly she extended the polished crutch and placed it in the hand of the deacon who was taking up the scanty collection. For a moment the man was puzzled; then comprehending her meaning, he carried her crutch to the front of the church and laid it on the table in front of the pulpit. The minister stepped down from the rostrum and held up the crutch with shaking hands. The sublimity of the renunciation unnerved him so that he could not speak for a moment.

"Do you see it, my people," he faltered at last; "little crippled Maggie's crutch—all

that she has to make life comfortable? She has given it to the Lord, and you—"

There was a moment of silence. The people flushed and moved restlessly in their cushioned pews.

"Does anyone want to contribute to the mission cause the amount of money this crutch would bring, and give it back to the child who is helpless without it?" the minister asked gravely.

"Fifty dollars," came in husky tones from the banker.

"Twenty-five."

"One hundred."

And so the subscribing went on, until papers equivalent to \$600 were lightly piled over the crutch on the table.

"Ah, you have found your hearts—thank God! Let us receive the benediction," almost whispered the minister as he suddenly extended his hands which were trembling with emotion. Little Maggie, absorbed in the magnitude of her offering and the love that prompted it, comprehended nothing that had taken place. She had no thought of the future, of how she would reach her humble home, or of the days in which she would sit helpless in her chair as she had once done. Christ had demanded her all, and she had given it, with the blind faith of an Abraham. She understood no better when a woman's arms drew her into close embrace, and soft lips whispered in her ear: "Maggie, dear, your crutch has made \$600 for the mission church among the mountains, and has come back to stay with you again. Take it, little one."

Like a flash of light there came the consciousness that in some mysterious way her gift had been accepted of God, and returned to her, and with a cry of joy the child caught the beloved crutch to her lonely heart; then, smiling through her tears at the kind faces and reverential eyes, she hobbled out of the sanctuary.—*Christian Observer.*

How like to the gift of the poor widow, who put into the offering two mites, all that she had, and of whom the Lord said, "She hath cast in more than all they that cast into the treasury."