

SELF-LOVE.

Oh, I could go through all life's troubles
singing,
Turning earth's night to day,
If self were not so fast around me, clinging
To all I do or say.

My very thoughts are selfish, always build-
ing
Mean castles in the air;
I use my love for others for a gilding
To make myself look fair.

I fancy all the world engrossed with judging
My merit or my blame;
Its warmest praise seems an ungracious
grudging
Of praise which I might claim.

In youth, or age, by city, wood, or moun-
tain,
Self is forgotten never;
Where'er we tread, it gushes like a fountain,
Its waters flow forever.

O miserable omnipresence, stretching
Over all time and space,
How have I run from thee, yet found thee
reaching
The goal in every race

Inevitable self's vile imitation
Of universal light,—
Within our hearts a dreadful usurpation
Of God's exclusive right!

F. W. Faber.

THE HORSE THAT WENT TO PRAYER-MEETING.

BY ANNETTE L. NOBLE.

It was a curious kind of a horse; but then it was a curious prayer-meeting. You think, it may be, that good people go to prayer-meeting; so they do; but this was a prayer-meeting that went to bad people. It was in the work-house, where idle, disorderly and drunken folks are sent. There were a great many women there; some were sick; some were quite young; a few sent there for the first time were sorry and ashamed. There was once a lady who visited them. If you had seen her climbing up the long stairs with a basket on her arm and a bunch of flowers in her belt you might not have thought she was carrying up the prayer-meeting with her. In a certain big room she used to sit down, talking as pleasantly as if these women had worn silk dresses instead of gowns made of bed-ticking. She might be talking about the weather or the view from the window, but she seemed to be thinking: "Poor woman! I am sorry for you. I wish you were better."

That drew them to her. If she had been thinking, "Oh you wretches! you ought to be punished," they would have found it out, and you can depend upon it they would have had work away in some other part of the house. Well, one day she arrived, sat down and told a story to a girl who was ill; five or six others, who were sewing, brought their work; three scrubbing women chose that side of the room to clean. By the time the story had got itself into the New Testament and was being read aloud there were twenty together, and it was all at once a meeting. Some sat on the floor, two or three were drinking tea from big bowls; but all were orderly. They had sung hymns the lady taught them, and had repeated the Lord's Prayer: then she talked, and they grew stiller, like wicked children who get sorry and ashamed when their mother tells them about God, even if before they had reproached one another.

In the middle of this meeting Jimmy came. He was a queer little chap, four years old. He belonged to a woman who was outside the door in the hall, trying to keep him out of the meeting; but in he pattered on his wee old shoes, that carried him all day long into every corner in search of playthings he never found. He was pale and sharp-nosed, with one black eye; the other had a

film over it, and was sightless. He stood still before the lady when she sang; then he was off, up and down the room, crept under beds, smelt of bottles of medicine, threw a spool of thread out of the window, every few minutes coming back to see what a prayer-meeting was like. His mother shook her fist at him, coaxed and scolded and called him under her breath. Jimmy only shook his head at her when he happened to think of it. At last he espied a little lunch basket by the lady's side, and, going up to it, peered in. She went on with the Bible verse that she was teaching the women, but she slid off the basket cover and slipped into Jimmy's little thin hand a big, big piece of spice-cake. "I think of that, to a little boy fed on black bread and codfish for six weeks! Jim's bright eye sparkled, and those bad women listening to the verse were as glad for Jimmy as he was himself. His mother out in the hall, who had said, "Nobody could come the pious over her," gave up trying to get him, and went back to her work. I assure you Jimmy approved of prayer-meetings after that, and never failed to come when he discovered one. He did no harm, but in your meetings the sexton would have put out the uneasy little midget pretty quick.

One day the lady went to see his mother at her work. She did not talk of her wickedness or ask her to come to the meeting, but spoke of Jimmy and how delicate he looked. The mother's big black eyes grew softer after a while, and she found herself telling how she came to be there. She had "a good, industrious man, too good for the likes of her." He provided well for her, and they would have been happy if she could have let "drink" alone; but she loved beer. One day she drank more than usual, made a great uproar, was arrested and sent here. Her poor husband was discouraged, and she would not blame him if he "went to the bad" himself. Jimmy was their only child: he loved him, but as there was no one to take care of him he was sent with his mother. The next time the lady came she went after Mary and asked her to come into the meeting.

"I won't then," said Mary. "I'm no hypocrite. My old mother was good, and my father too, but there is naught of that about me and I'm too old to put it on."

That same day Jimmy came to meeting as usual, and made very little trouble. The coarse food and the being shut up so closely made him listless. He laid himself across the lap of a woman who sat on the floor to listen, and he watched the lady out of his one eye with a dreary expression for so young a child. She was not ready to end the meeting, but she must have looked very pitifully upon Jim, for he rose and trotted over to her lunch-basket, as if the kindness in her face might have meant—spice-cake. It did: but not that alone; oh no, indeed!

Such a shrill squeal of delight as that four-year old boy set up and kept going! The hymn had to stop short and was not taken up again. Out of that basket he drew, panting with excitement, a bright yellow horse with a scarlet rider; both of them in a green hoop which, when started, rolled down the room, the horse swinging, the rider ringing a bell, and Jim's thin legs spinning along after it in a way to "brake up" any prayer-meeting, gentle or otherwise. They all knew then how much he must have longed for a plaything by the lady's crazy delight he showed over this one. He danced and ran and capered, spinning around with it like an exceedingly frantic little bug. At last he thought of his mother and away he went to her.

Now what that yellow horse said or did in the next week I cannot say; but

when there was another prayer-meeting well under way the door opened, the yellow horse careered down the long room straight toward it, and Jim followed dragging his mother, like a little boat tugging a bigger craft. He stopped at the meeting, took the horse on his knees and put himself in his mother's lap, as much as to say, "Here we are, and going to behave ourselves too." The lady read and talked as she always did, and Mary's eyes got so full of tears that she wanted to hide behind Jim's head, but he bobbed it about so that she could not. When the meeting was all over and the rest had gone to their work, she said, hesitatingly, "If I s'posed it'd be any use to try, I'd let drink alone. I'm wickeder than most of these others here; 'cause lots of 'em haven't got any home, or else they've got a man worse than they be. I can't go straight all alone, but if, as you say, God does help folks that take hold hard to help themselves—why, I might try. Will He help me, do you s'pose? John (that's my husband) he'd be so glad. I am smart when I'm sober, and I keep his home clean. I haven't got any other bad ways and never was accused of any; but I just gave up ever trying to do better when I got sent here. I meant to keep away from you, but Jimmy wouldn't let me. That yellor horse was the biggest thing that ever happened to him, and it had got to come to prayer-meetin'—and I had got to come too."

The lady told her that God's love and help were ready the minute that she was ready to take them. If she did her best she could be kept from strong drink. She told Mary it was indeed a great thing to have a sober, hard-working husband; and she asked her if she wanted little Jim to grow up and be ashamed of her. Mary listened to every word. For three weeks after that she came to the prayer-meeting just as steadily as Jim and the horse. The fourth week she was not there, but there was a letter awaiting the lady. This was its contents, only in the real one every line began with a capital, like poetry; but that did not matter; there was more in it than in some poems. It said:

"Jim and I went out last Monday. I got to thinking before I went out, and I wrote to John that if he wouldn't give up, and if he'd overlook this time, I'd do better. I didn't know if he would or not; but when I got into the city there he was, so glad to see Jim—laughing because he would run and rattle that yellor horse over the pavement. Why, he never said a word about where I'd been. The rooms were all clean and he'd got supper all ready for us. Jim ate up half there was before ever I got ready. It come over me how nigh I'd been to giving up everything and going to the dogs. I told John all you said, and he promised to stand by me. He said we'd move out of that ward, away from old neighbors; that we'd better sign the pledge and on Sundays go to Gospel meetings. Please God, that is the last racket I'll ever go on! Jimmy is awful happy. He didn't like workhouse codfish; now John fetches him every night a big bun with currants in it. When I see him playing with the tin horse I think how it was just that thing that pulled me into your meeting. I could have seen you passing around Bibles and tracts forever and ever and thought it was just your trade, you know; but when you fetched the poor little chap that painted creeter, away out from the city, I couldn't have sassed you, if I had been ugly enough to try it. It is easy enough to hear folks tell me how wicked I be. I guess I know it better than they, though, and 'tain't none of their business in particular either. John, he says you was after me just the same, only

you baited your hook with spice-cake for the baby; but what if you did? it was a nice way. I never shall forget you, and please don't forget to pray for me. From your respectful well-wisher,
MARY WILLIAMSON."

The lady read it and was happy. She said to herself: "The means of grace are many. I thought that horse would draw something good after it." *Christian Union.*

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Sometimes God, for wise reasons, may not answer our prayers at the time they are offered; He may defer in answer for weeks or months; but He is all this time drawing us out to make our supplications with greater ardor, and more humility, and stronger faith. It is in love and mercy to us that He keeps us waiting. It is that our desire for an answer may become more intense, and our perseverance more unflinching, and that the answer when it comes may exceed our expectations. While the blessing is being withheld, it is becoming more vast. While the mercies and favors are kept back, the store of them is increasing. While the heavenly rain is forbidden to descend, it is only preparing to come in more copious showers.

The sweetest and most blessed manifestations of the divine presence are bestowed on those who are most importunate and persevering in their requests at the throne of grace. By continued and fervent prayer, by long and earnest talking with God, a condition of mind is obtained that is well-pleasing to God, so that He can bestow the blessing that is sought in perfect consistency with the administration of His government. To bestow a peculiarly great and rich blessing on one whose heart was not in a fit state to receive it, would be unwise—would be contrary to the laws of His spiritual kingdom. Before God can wisely bestow extraordinary benefits, the heart must be set on their attainment, the desires after them must become intensified, and the purpose must be fully formed never to rest until they are obtained; and this state of mind can only be secured by prayers of uncommon fervor and perseverance. The soul must be full of burning earnestness, and the flame of prayer must ascend continually to heaven.

Get into close connection with the living fountain—the fountain of life in Christ—and then you may be the means of conveying streams of the water of life to others. If full of love yourself, you will kindle love in others. If full of light, you will communicate light. If full of the Holy Spirit and of power, other hearts will be divinely influenced. —From "Pulpit Earnestness."

—How wonderful is the tenuity of some perfumes. Musk is an animal product said to have been known 5,000 years ago. The age of a mummy once found in an Egyptian tomb was traced to be 3,000 years old. A portion of the embalmment was in the form of musk grains, which were as fragrant as ever on resuscitation.

CULTIVATE FLOWERS; NOT WEEDS. — Said a father to his daughter: "When you laid aside that interesting book and attended to what your mother wished done, you were sowing seeds of kindness and love. When you broke the dish that you knew your mother valued, and came instantly and told her, you were sowing seeds of truth. When you took the cup of cold water to the poor woman at the gate, you were sowing seeds of mercy. These are beautiful flowers, Bessie. But when you were impatient with the baby, you sowed the seeds of ill-temper. When you waited some time after your mother called you, you sowed disobedience and selfishness. These are all noxious weeds. Pull them up. Do not let them grow in your garden."