

## GETTING A VISION.

By Sarah Pollock.

**I**T was Mrs. Lowell's last day at her summer home, and she had risen early to enjoy once more the beauty of the morning. On her dressing table lay her invitation to the September Thank-offering meeting, opened the evening before; and the words "*Come and give thanks with us,*" met her eye.

"I cannot give thanks this year," said Mrs. Lowell, "but I will give my offering all the same. From henceforth, all the years of my pilgrimage, I must walk in the shadow of my great life-sorrow," and she quickly tucked three dollars into the envelope lest it should be forgotten in the confusion of flitting back to the city.

Stepping out upon the wide porch, the exquisite beauty of the island lake lay before her in its perfect stillness. The woods, the bending trees, the golden harvest fields that formed pictures along its banks were given back in soft reflections. They brought a sense of perfect peace; and as the pale gray of the sky began to give place to an almost imperceptible pink, the silver mist rose up and lapped the foot of the tiny island near the opposite shore in a snowy billow. On the hither shore, brilliant clumps of goldenrod and purple-red milkweed gave a dash of color to the scene.

Mrs. Lowell's eye and ear were keenly attuned to beauty; it "stole away her sadness ere she was aware." Her eye kindled, her heart swelled; the gnarled oaks between her and the lake gave a sense of protection. As the first bright ray shot upward the liquid notes of a scarlet tanager-voiced her praise.

"Truly 'He leadeth me beside the still waters, He restoreth my soul,'" she exclaimed. "One joy still remains; I do thank Thee, O, my Father, for this inexpressible beauty!" and, entering the house, she quickly added a dollar to her offering.

The loneliness of her first evening in her city home was relieved by a call from her life-long and breezy friend Mary Holding. "You'll come to the Thank-offering meeting to-morrow, Helen?" she said, before leaving."

"No," said Mrs. Lowell, "I shall not be at the meeting, but I have my offering ready and will send it.

"I'm so glad, Helen! for it is sorely needed. These poor hunted Christians in China have come

to the front before the Indian famine children had a good square meal, or the Armenian orphans had time to grow up, and the Board women are well nigh distracted. Mother's illness has diminished my gift this year—I've only made out twenty—and I'm praying that somebody may be moved to make it good."

"But are not the Board women always distracted?" said Mrs. Lowell, with a half smile.

"I should think they would be. Our colored washerwoman says, 'It's pow'ful ha'd to make fo' pair of shoes do for the six chillen';" and Mary went off laughing.

Mrs. Lowell stood wondering. "Twenty dollars from Mary Holding, who supports herself and her mother on a teacher's salary! Can it be possible? I wonder how much it would take to make it good," she said, as she turned away.

The morning of the Thank-offering meeting found Mrs. Lowell busy re-arranging her pleasant home, in which her artistic sense found perpetual delight. As she draped a beautiful piece of Chinese embroidery over the piano, she paused to enjoy once more its rich color and delicate stitches.

"I must secure at once that elegant piece I saw yesterday. Thirty dollars seems a good deal to give, but that peculiar knot-stitch is growing more and more rare, and I may not be able to match it later." Some quaint Chinese characters caught her eye; she paused to examine them. It had once really been in that "poor, suffering, disordered China," Mary Holding cared so much about! How far it had come to give her pleasure.

"I wonder who made it! She certainly loved beauty. Does she know the truth? Is she suffering for it? Is she now one of the poor, hunted Christians chilled, hungry, ragged?" These questions passed through her mind in quick succession, and the bit of gorgeous color became a connecting link between Mrs. Lowell and its unknown maker. As her imagination kindled, her conscience stirred uneasily.

"Perhaps I may as well wait a little before getting that other piece, then I can give twenty-five dollars and make Mary's offering good," she said. "I'll just go over to the meeting this afternoon and carry it myself."

"An answer to one prayer is walking in this minute," said Mary Holding to herself, as Mrs. Lowell entered. "I've been praying that Helen