

AN OPEN DOOR.

It was the morning of a busy week-day. The windows—and the doors too—of a city church were open, and above the noise of wagons and carriages and the hum of trade, the notes of the organ rolled out, and for the moment a single clear voice filled the air. "Nearer, my God, to Thee," it sang. A woman, magnificently dressed, with a wearied face and wandering, restless eye, was passing in her carriage. As the way was blocked, she was forced to stop, and though she did not listen, she heard that voice, and caught the words of the singer. She sat erect, startled. "Nearer to God!" Why of course she meant some time to come nearer to Him—as she had been when a child. She was growing gray. Why not begin now to be done with folly?

How peaceful and quiet the church was; she could go in and pray; she could look into her life, into her soul, hold account with God. She pulled the checkstring. The carriage stopped; the footman opened the door. She hesitated. How many receptive she had to go to to-day; and there were her spring gowns to design. "Drive on, William," she said.

A hard-featured merchant also heard the words of the hymn as he hurried by. He had a disagreeable work before him that morning; a sharp financial game, which would bring him in a vast sum. It was sharp even to the point of downright cheating; it would ruin his partners; and in the main he had heretofore been a man of ordinary business honesty. A few years ago he was a church-member, but of late he had been so crowded and hurried as to leave no time for thoughts of serious things. "Nearer my God, to Thee!" Nearer? He had been going away from Him. "I will not make that bargain," he said, halting. "It is the trick of a thief, and I—I hope I am a Christian." But what an enormous profit it would pay! He hesitated a moment. Then he hurried on. In that brief time he had decided in favor of the profit.

A young fellow, his eyes red and his face bloated from last night's debauch, was passing in the crowd as the familiar words sounded through the air. He stopped as if he had been struck a blow. His mother used to sing that in her old trembling voice. She kept near to God, too. "Why did I ever leave her?" he thought. "I am too weak a man to stand alone in this great city." He paused by the gate. Before his eyes rose a picture of the quiet old farm house; of his old mother and the wife and child whom he had deserted. They would welcome him back. But God? Could he come back to him?

He pushed open the gate and went in. Two days afterward he returned to his home and those who loved him. The merchant completed his bargain, and the lady her business, and as they passed the church again, a few hours later, a vague impression touched them of some open door awaiting entrance, some noble summons, some chance of escape to a higher life. But the church was closed, and the voice was silent. The roar of trade filled the busy street, and they went on their way. Who shall tell whither. —*Youth's Companion.*

"KISSING MOTHER."

A father, talking to his careless daughter, said:

"I want to speak to you of your mother. It may be you have noticed a careworn look upon her face lately. Of course it has not been brought there by any act of yours, still it is your duty to chase it away. I want you to get up to-morrow morning and get breakfast; and when your mother comes and begins to express her surprise, go right up to her and kiss her on the mouth. You can't imagine how it will brighten her dear face.

"Besides you owe her a kiss or two. Away back, when you were a little girl, she kissed you when no one else was tempted by your fever-tainted breath and swollen face. You were not as attractive then as you are now. And all through those years of childish sunshine and shadows, she was always ready to cure, by the magic of a mother's kiss, the little dirty, chubby hands whenever they were injured in those first skirmishes with the rough old world.

"Of course she is not so pretty and kissable as you are; but if you had done your share of work during the last ten years, the contrast would not be so marked.

"Her face has more wrinkles than yours, and yet, if you were sick, that face would appear far more beautiful than the angel's as it hovered over you, watching every opportunity to minister to your comfort, and every one of those wrinkles would seem to be bright wavelets of sunshine chasing each other over the dear face.

"She will leave you one of these days. These burdens, if not lifted from her shoulders, will break her down. Those rough, hard hands, that have done so many necessary things for you, will be crossed upon her lifeless breast.

"Those neglected lips that gave you your first baby kiss will be forever closed, and those tired eyes will have opened in eternity, and then you will appreciate your mother; but it will be too late."—*Eli Perkins.*