

THE COST OF SENDING THE BREAD OF LIFE.

"Two brown, one white, Nathan," I called out to the baker as he reined his horse at the gate. He drew them out sweet and fresh, warm from the oven, and deposited them on the kitchen table.

"It is comfort these hot days to get good home-made bread brought to your door," said I.

Nathan looked pleased and answered: "Yes; that's what most thinks. We have to run three or four routes through the summer months. One team's gone over to the Cliffs and another down Tuk's Hill road. Folks can't live without bread, and it's a good deal easier to buy than make it, they find.

"Yes," I said, going on with the potatoes I was peeling, "If only all felt the need of the Bread of Life. There are those people on the other side of the world just dying of famine."

"Yes" said Nathan, taking me literally. "Last night's paper told about the *Christian Herald* and them that's sendin' over shiploads of grain. Jolly! seems kind of hard that folks can't get vittles enough to keep 'em alive when there's so much wasted in some places."

"Yes, Nathan, it, is hard, awfully hard: but there's a worse hunger that we ought to supply."

"Oh, you mean missionaries," he said, somewhat less enthusiastically, and then added, "It's all well enough to help 'em if it didn't take ninety-nine cents of every dollar to get the other cent there."

"But does it?" I asked, "Who gave you those figures?"

"Well, that's what they say," he answered. I aint never looked it up, but it always seemed to me a good deal cheaper and easier to tend to the heathen right here."

Nathan was a church member of the ordinary type. I could appeal to something in him which I did not find in all my kitchen callers.

"Nathan, how much does it cost to make a loaf of bread?"

"Well, I should say," he said, gazing judicially at the loaves before him: "I should say, with flour at three cents a pound, and allowing for yeast and baking, perhaps three and a quarter cents."

"And yet you charge me five," I answered. "You must make a good deal with your big trade."

"Oh, no. You see there's rent and work I

did'nt count in. I have to pay the baker big wages. Then there's three men that run the teams, and the feed of the horses, and some continual repairin' and renewin'. No; there aint really much profit in bread when you count in the labor and deliverin'. That swallows up fully a third more than the actual materials that goes into the bread."

"Why don't you save that, Nathan; just keep what bread is needed for the folks near by, and not go to the bother and expense of sending all round?"

Nathan looked puzzled. "Why" he said, "if we keep the bakery we're bound to supply the trade. If they won't come after it,—and some can't—we've got to take it to 'em."

"That's just it, Nathan. It's just it, Nathan. It's just so with the Bread of Life. The main cost isn't in Bibles; it is in sending the Bread to those who can't come. It's got to go in their own language, and men have got to be sent on ships to learn and translate those languages. They can't go free. The business part can't be done free any more than the bakery business. You say it costs a third to get your bread to the people after it is made and baked, and you don't consider that extravagance, it is just necessary expense. Now it only costs one tenth to run the business of getting this Bread of Life out there on the other side."

"You don't say," said Nathan.

"Yes; and every time you give a dollar for foreign missions, if you would first give ten cents to get it there, the whole dollar would go, and you would not have to worry a bit about the running expenses. Why, if you sent the dollar yourself you'd have to pay for paper and envelopes and stamp (five cents) and some one would have to get it into their kind of money wherever it went, and, you see, it would cost most as much as it does now, and it would be in the long run, like employing thirty or forty boys, one at each house on this route alone, instead of having one good man with a horse to go over the whole route and do it up in business fashion."

"Well, I guess you're right," said Nathan, as he took up his basket and ambled down to his wagon.

"The richest experiences of life never come to those who try to win them selfishly."—*Anna R. Brown.*