

Autumn Leaves.

BY HOLI IS FREEMAN.

HARK! I hear a mournful whisper
From a heart that sorely grieves
"Lo! the spring time hopes have fallen
In a shower of dry dead leaves,
And they bury in their falling
All my golden dreams of youth,
For with hasty strides the winter
Cometh on in bitter truth."

Then I called to secret council
My own heart which answered true:
"Autumn leaves lie deep around us,
And the flowers are pale and few
Your sweet days of hope and promise
These sad, withered leaves enfold.
Bringing laughter hushed to silence,
Gray hairs creeping 'mid the gold."

"What, my heart, if coming winter
Be the cold and darksome tomb?
Oh, let Autumn's footsteps linger,
Yea, amid the mists of gloom,
Never thought I in my dreaming,
Blinded in my headstrong pride,
I had passed the summer boundary
Reached the falling autumn-tide."

"What if all my spring time blossom;
Sleep beneath these yellow leaves,
Highest hope and inspiration
Bound with autumn's darkest sheaves?
Wilt thou in the frozen winter
Torpid grow, and cold and numb
As the twilight shades surround thee?
Speak!" But lo! my heart was dumb.

Then I said, "Thou should'st have told me
Youth and love were fleeting fast;
I had spent a happy spring time
Ere I felt time's wintry blast.
I with life, that dreary puzzle,
Something greater would have done,
Something better, hadst thou spoken,"
But my heart gave answer none.

"Is there left but shortening daytime,
Fainter light and deeper shade,
Feebler footsteps down hill treading,
Westerling suns 'er life's green glade?
Is this all?" Then like a trumpet
Pealed the answer from above:
"No! through autumn leaves you hasten
Homeward to eternal love."

—Zion's Herald.

Hearkening at the Key-Hole.

It is a common saying that listeners never hear any good of themselves by putting their ears to a key-hole. Eavesdroppers are generally condemned, and justly. The French servant in the picture seems to have heard something not very agreeable if we may judge from the way he let the dishes slide off the breakfast tray. I predict that he will hear something before long, on account of his carelessness, not very agreeable.

But there is an example in Scripture of some one who, listening at the door, heard something that made her heart leap for joy. "Rhoda" was not in fault. As a damsel in the house of Mary when Peter "knocked," it was her duty to respond, but none the less to ascertain the character and purposes of the one that knocked in the night before she let him in. So she "hearkened" for his voice or other sign.

In my early ministry, over forty years ago, God visited the people with a time of refreshing, and many were added to the Lord in a small rural parish. Among these were a number of the young; but one of the most intelligent and interesting was absent at the Rutgers Institute. At the end of the term, when she returned to her home, I called to converse with her, desirous that she should follow the good example set by some of her friends, and give her heart to her mother's Saviour. Sarah, a coloured damsel, admitted me, saying "only Miss Mary is at home;" and when her young mistress received me in the parlour, as it was learned in the sequel, Sarah, from curiosity, to

know what the young minister might wish to say to "Miss Mary alone," remained outside the door to "hearken." It pleased God to bless the truth, both to mistress and maid, and very soon after they stood, side by side, in the house of God, to confess Christ.

After a few years I married Sarah to a man worthy of her, and soon after resigned the charge of the parish. In process of time I went to reside where I still live, and found that Sarah and Henry, her husband, were here, much esteemed as faithful Christians. After a few years I was called to minister to her in her chamber of sickness and death, surrounded by her husband and children, and then to preach the funeral sermon. The maid and the mistress are in the mansion in heaven. Henry lived on, held in highest respect and confidence in the community, a pillar in the coloured church, of which he was an officer and to which I frequently minister, until last week, when I preached his funeral sermon also. Such is the sequel of hearkening at the door and of the history of a truly godly and excellent coloured family. S. B. S. B.

A Missionary Talk With the Children.

THE following is one of the chapters from "A Bag of Stories," written by Miss Anna B. Warner, and published by Robert Carter & Brothers, New York:

"The best missionary sermon I ever heard," said the mother, as her children came round her the next Sunday evening, "was on three points: 'What have you given for missions?' 'What have other people given?' 'How much have you left?'"

"But I've got fifty cents left," cried Lex.

"Then you are all ready for the question when it comes," said the mother, smiling. But Lex turned away his head with an air that spoke him somewhat unready.

"And I've got some ribbons," said Try, slowly. "Mamma, I wish you'd tell us more stories about the people wanting teachers. I like that."

"I might tell of nothing else, and then not soon get through. A Hindu woman, with a child in her arms, came up to one of the mission stations and sank down on a mat, all tired out. Four years ago the missionary had been at her village, had talked to her mother, her sister, and herself, and had read them Bible words. From that day to this the three women had never worshipped an idol, and now this one had set out to find the missionary and hear him again. From place to place she had sought him, until now at last she had reached his house. It was a walk of seventy miles."

"Just to hear the missionary and beg for a teacher. All that evening he talked to her and read to her; but next morning, before his wife was dressed, the poor stranger was in her room weeping in great distress. 'I want salvation for my soul,' she said; 'only tell me more about Jesus Christ—that is my life.'"

"But you were told so much about Christ yesterday; was not that enough?"

"O no; I can never hear enough. He is the Saviour of sinners, and I want to be saved. I have not heard enough yet; that is why I ask for a teacher for my village. I cannot read, but he could read to us."

"Mamma, they sent her one didn't they?" said Try, eagerly.

"They could not, Try. They had no money."

"No money!" The children repeated the words with a caught breath.

"Teachers and missionaries must live, you know, little ones. And though they can and do live on very little, yet they must eat. And it costs something to build a house, even in India. All day long the woman listened and asked; she went to the Sunday service; she waked up in the middle of the night and begged some one to read 'just a little of the Bible' to her. Then Monday morning came and she must go. But she stood lingering. 'All this way I have walked,' she said, 'and here I have heard much to make me glad; but I must go back to my husband and mother. They are in the dark, and I—what do I know?—I cannot tell them much, and I cannot get a teacher. I want him for my mother, and for my poor husband, and for my village.' She broke down in bitter sorrow, and the missionary's wife and she wept there together. 'Lady,' said another, an old woman to whom the Bible-reader had been preaching Christ: 'Lady,—and she drew out her long hair from under her veil—'my hair has grown white waiting for news like this.' And another said, 'There are hundreds of women in Japan who are weary, weary, weary to see the light shine in their prison-houses.'"

I do not know what possessed the children, but at this point they burst forth together and sang at the top of their voices:

"Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,
And you, ye waters, roll!
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole."

"There—now I feel better," said Lex. "Mamma, here's my fifty cents, and I want you to send it to the missionaries. That woman's going to have a teacher; and I just wish I could stuff an envelope full of money for them. It's time such things were put a stop to."

"But that's all you've got!" said Try. "You'll be sorry to-morrow, Alexander."

"I won't, neither. Look at my baby picture! While such things as that are going on I ought to give what I can."

"Well, now we've got through the first question," said Try. "And the next is, 'What other people have given.'"

"They have given so much, and of so many kinds, that I hardly know where to begin," said the mother. "Money, of course, is one thing; money given by people out of their abundance, or spared, by others, from their deep poverty, or earned by yet others who had nothing at all."

"Let me see," said Lex: "then I was a rich man when I gave five cents, and a poor one when I gave fifty cents, and now I've got to be t'other man and work it out?"

"Something so," said his mother, laughing; "only your poverty does not go very deep, Lex."

"Down to the botton of my pocket, ma'am."

"But food and fire and clothes are quite independent of your pocket. The people I speak of, children, are those who have got no money to give but what they can save from their daily

comforts or make by extra toil. Thus one will quietly go without butter or sugar and give the worth of them to the Lord's work. Another, unable to labour in the evening, puts out her light and sits till bedtime in the dark, and the pennies the candles would cost she gives to missions."

"Sits in the dark!" Trypho repeated.

"But I s'pose it never is really very dark where such folks live," quoth Lex.

"Another turns again her old dress and wears her old bonnet one more season; or, perhaps, gives up kid gloves, and puts no bows on her slippers."

"Mamma, it don't sound nice," said Trypho, ready to cry.

"It is 'nice,' love—it is joyful to those who do it for Christ. The people who bear about in their hearts these words:

"I gave my life for thee.
What hast thou done for me?"

are only too glad of the chance to do even a little. The poor servant in India gives a handful of rice if he can no more; the South Sea Islander brings his small measure of cocoanut oil. It is pretty to see the Fiji people march up with their little vessels, singing as they go, for joy that they can give something for Christ."

"Have they nothing but oil down there?" said Trypho.

"Oh, yes; various other little things, sometimes. I have seen the quarterly account of what the people gave in one of the Fiji islands for the support of their preacher and school-master. From one poor village came 'two bottles of oil, twelve pieces of native cloth, nine whales' teeth, eight hanks of sinnet,' and about four dollars of our money. Another, less able, brought just seven pieces of cloth. Another brought two, but added to these one whale's tooth, three hanks of sinnet, and about fifty cents. From yet another came twelve cents, one piece of cloth, one hank of sinnet; and among the little gifts of the next village was marked, 'one basket.' People who are in earnest bring what they have and are not ashamed of it."

"Could the missionary use all those funny things?" said Trypho.

"Some of them—and some he could sell. A man in the West Indies planted five cocoanut-trees and set apart one of them for missions. It grew faster than all the rest and became the most fruitful of all, yielding every year three dollars' worth of nuts. A fisherman gives one of his fish pots with all it may catch; a farmer gives an apple tree, with its yearly crop, or a hen and all her chickens, or a swarm of bees and their honey. In England, Lex, two very poor boys made a bargain. One had a hen and the other had pennies enough to buy a few duck eggs. 'If you'll let your hen hatch my eggs,' said the one, 'we'll both of us work and buy food for the young ducks, and then we'll sell 'em for missions.' So, by-and-bye, a little package of money, worth more than three of our dollars, was handed in at the mission rooms, the price of the young ducks."

Lex was profoundly struck. "Why, you can make money out of anything," he said.

"Anything and everything. There is nothing a man cannot use for himself, and there is nothing he cannot use for God."

"If Aunty would give us one of her lockets, we could sell that," said Try.