

The Inglenook

A Fool's Folly.

When Robert Roberts died he left a will bequeathing all his real estate to his children. Large sums of money were given to various benevolent objects, but to his nephew and namesake, he left the old family Bible. "I do hereby will and bequeath to my beloved nephew and namesake my Bible, which has been my guide and comfort through my earthly pilgrimage, and which contains riches, both for this life and that which is to come. Search its pages diligently that you may have wisdom given you to know how to use the wealth of this world for your own comfort and pleasure, and for the glory of God; and I pray that you may find therein the Pearl of great price, which is of far greater value than all the wealth of earth, and which can not be taken from you." Thus read the will.

When Robert Roberts Jr., heard the will and received the Bible, his anger and indignation were such that he was about to cast it to the ground and stamp it with his foot, but his wife interposed, saying: "Let us take it home, Robert, and, if we do not care to read it, we can hide it away and forget the miserly old man who had nothing but an old Bible to give to his beloved nephew."

Acting upon this suggestion, the precious book was taken home and placed in a pine box with this inscription: "A Fool's Folly." This was then placed in an old trunk in the attic and locked up and the key was thrown away. Here it lay forgotten for twenty-five years. Children came to the home, but they were never told the story of the neglected Bible which lay locked in the old trunk in the attic. Sickness and sorrow entered this home. Then came long struggles with business matters, bringing discouragement and bankruptcy, and finally dissipation and death. The mother, enfeebled in health and broken in spirit, soon followed her husband to the grave, leaving three lovely daughters alone and friendless in the world.

The home had to be disposed of, and, in the midst of the preparations for the removal of the family, the old trunk in the attic was discovered. It was found securely locked, and when Edith was asked about it she could give no information. As no key could be found, the lock was broken open, and the box was discovered within, marked "A Fool's Folly." This was also opened, and to their surprise contained only an old leather-bound Bible with large brass clasps. Mould had gathered on the cover and the clasps were green with corrosion. On opening it a letter was found directed to their father, written thirty years before. With eager haste they read this letter, which was as follows:

"My Dear Robert—When you open this book to learn from its pages the way of life—which I pray you may soon do—you will find in addition to its sacred teaching a snug little fortune of \$50,000. If you neglect to search for the greater blessing you will lose the lesser, which will matter little if the first is lost. Your loving uncle, "Robert Roberts."

Our great Teacher, who can not lie, has told us that this precious book contains the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Yet there are thousands at the present day repeating the "Fool's Folly." The Bible is to them a sealed book. If they were assured that in every Bible they opened they would find a fortune for this life, there would be a great searching of Bibles, yet they are willing to sell their souls for the wealth that will perish with the using.—Christian Press.

How to Live, to be Loved.

I once heard a dear young girl say, as she finished reading one of Miss Alcott's charming stories: "What a grand thing it is to be able to write a story like that—one that will live in thousands of hearts long after the author is dead!" Yes, it is a grand thing to give to the world beautiful and noble thoughts that will uplift and inspire others to better, higher lives. To do this we must live noble lives ourselves, and keep our minds and hearts filled with good and pure thoughts and feelings. We must live unselfish lives and be ready to spend and be spent for the happiness and comfort of others. Miss Alcott's life was one continual sacrifice for those she loved, and this is why she wrote those charming stories that touched and inspired others. Her stories came from a warm, loving heart; they were heart stories, and they found a response in the hearts of her readers and made them love the woman who could so truly portray the joys and sorrows of childhood. The cold, selfish life never helps or inspires hope in another. It always repels. The warm, loving heart that is open to all sorrow and suffering, whether in man or beast, is the one that will draw others and lift them to a higher plane of living. If we aspire to live in the hearts and affections of others, as Miss Alcott did, we must begin now to live as she did—for others. If we are intending to build a fine house, we would not employ a man who had no knowledge of tools; but we would employ an architect who thoroughly understood planning the building; then we would seek skilled mechanics and workmen who could execute these plans. Thus it is with us. If we hope to do great work in this life we must prepare ourselves for it. We must improve every opportunity for the cultivation of our minds and hearts by reading good and useful books, and studying the biography of men and women who have lived noble, unselfish lives, and who have been a power for good in the world. There are sad hearts and tired hands all about us, and we can do much to cheer others and to brighten some of their lives, if we are always kind and gentle and thoughtful. We all have our cares and our burdens, but it is not right for us to take these burdens with us as we go forth to the duties of the day. "Cast thy burden on the Lord" every morning before you leave your room, and take with you a happy, contented heart, a kind word, a gentle tone and a bright smile, and scatter daily path. You may not then, along your know the good you do, but you will have the consciousness of having tried to make some other life brighter. Some day you may be able to say with Longfellow:

"I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow still unbroke,
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend."

Margaret M. Dunlap.

Sunday is the golden clasp that binds together the volume of the week.—Henry W. Longfellow.

What She Could.

"Every one of you has a talent that should be cultivated and consecrated to the Master's service," said Miss Carson to her Sabbath-school class. "Now let us see what talents we have among us that can be used for God."

Most of the class responded enthusiastically, and various gifts and qualifications were eagerly discussed; but one little maiden remained still and silent, and there was a cloud on her pretty face.

"Come, Mary," said the teacher, "let us hear from you. What special gift can you keep for the Master's use?"

"I don't think there is anything that I can do real well," Mary replied sadly. "I can't play, sing, or paint."

"What can you do best, dear? There must be something you excel in," urged Miss Carson. But Mary only shook her head in a mournful way.

"She can dress the cunningest dolls of any girl in town," whispered Mary's six-year-old sister, admiringly.

"Ah, perhaps that is your talent, Mary," returned the teacher, and then the superintendent's bell put a stop to any further talk on the subject.

A few days later Mary was reminded of what her teacher had said by the eager glance which a very dirty little girl bestowed on the doll which she was dressing for her baby sister, as she sat on the front steps.

Margery Dix belonged to a locality in the city, which, on account of its filthy and wicked inhabitants, was called "Tophet."

Margery was a fair sample of the shabby, unkempt dwellers of the neighborhood, but even her dirt-begrimed face lighted strangely up at the sight of a daintily dressed doll.

"Come in Margery, and take a look at little Miss Betty's wardrobe," said Mary, and Margery, won by the speaker's kindly words and pleasant smile, came up the steps, and with much interest examined the pretty doll.

"Wait a moment, Margery," said Mary, as the girl turned to go away. Then she ran lightly upstairs, saying to herself, "I am getting too large to play with dolls, so poor Margery shall have by dear Elizabeth. The sunny-haired darling shall go on a missionary tour to 'Tophet.'"

Stooping over the drawer, she lifted from its bed of cotton a beautiful, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired doll, and with a few loving taps and regretful caresses, carried it downstairs, and, putting it in the hands of the astonished and delighted Margery, charged her to be a good mother to Doll Elizabeth and to keep her clean and sweet.

"I must wash my hands before I unwrap it," reasoned Margery, as her bare feet went pattering over the pavement. And she did so. Then the washing of her hands made such an improvement that she put her face through a similar process. As she played with and admired Elizabeth's golden locks her attention was drawn to her own tumbled hair, and the next step was to put that in something like order. Somehow her example was infectious, for by and by her mother, ashamed of her own looks, paid a visit to the old wash basin, and the following day she determined to try the effect of soap and water on the filthy clothes of her children. Then the eldest daughter washed the one window which the dingy room contained, and that led to cleaning the small, dirty room.

The neighbors, as they came and went, were attracted by the change, and some of them tried the same experiment, more or less successfully, on their own homes. So the renovation went on until half the street was infected with the cleaning spirit which one daintily dressed doll had infused into its owner.

By and by Mary coaxed Margery and some of the neighboring children to the Sabbath school, and from one girl's single effort to do what she could, the Gospel of peace was introduced into more than a score of homes. After seeing some of the fruits of Doll Elizabeth's sojourn in "To-