

Children's Department.

THE GIFT.

Out of all kingdom under the sun
What shall I bring to thee, little one?

Bring me the smile of my mother's eyes,
Dearest than sunshine out of the skies;
Bring me a kiss from her lips to set
Warm on my cheek, with the tears still wet.

Nay: there are treasures far over the sea,
What shall the flying ship bring to thee?

Out of the silence of unknown land
Bring me the touch of my mother's hand;

Keep thou the treasures of sea and shore,
Bring me the sound of her voice once more.

Nay: there are wisdom and wealth and power,
Little one, choose of these thy dower.

Give me my mother's sweet love untold,
Better than measureless wealth of gold,
Wiser than wisdom of sages all;
Let me hear only her soft footfall.

Little one what thou askest me,
Only Death's angel can bring to thee.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

WHEN on His Passion eve our Lord was seated in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, with His disciples around Him listening to His last words of consolation, instruction, and encouragement, He said to them, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." Mysterious words! full of sadness, yet not of despondency, for though they speak of the Lord's being withdrawn from sight, do they not close with the promise of seeing Him? The way they disclose may be gloomy, its end is a vision of light.

Doubtless our blessed Lord, in thus speaking, meant to prepare His disciples for the sad time when, hidden from their sight, He would be laid in Joseph's grave, and for the forty days during which He would be seen of them after His resurrection and before His ascension to the Father. But we are also taught that they depict the life which the Christian leads upon earth while his ascended Lord is in heaven.

Do you recall any bright summer days, glowing with sunshine from morning to evening, without one cloud darkening the sky? Such days are very glorious, but they are no type of the Christian's life. Or any days of constant down-pouring rain, uncheered by a single ray of sun? These wet days may be welcome to the parched earth, but they too fail to typify the Christian's life. No, the day which does shadow it forth is a chequered one. It is described in the prophecy of Zechariah, a day when "the light shall not be clear nor dark," but when "at evening time it shall be light." If you bear in mind that Christ is the Sun of righteousness, you will see how this prophecy corresponds with our Lord's words to His disciples; and it is certainly fulfilled in the life of every

Christian. As our Lord sees best He unveils to His people the light of His countenance, or He hides it from them. And it must needs be so. There must be the cloud as well as the sunbeam, or how would the manifold graces of the Christian be called forth? What but tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope? No, the Christian day is neither clear nor dark, but it brightens towards its close. The gracious promise stands that "at evening-time there shall be light."

About eighty years ago, in a secluded village in Westmoreland, a little boy was brought to baptism, and received the name of Leonard. He was the eldest child of the curate of the parish, a man poor in this world's goods, as are still many of the clergy of that district, but rich in good works.

Leonard's early life was bright, though scarcely with a brightness of earth. He was plainly fed and poorly lodged, but love illumined all, the love of his Heavenly Father, and of fond, earthly parents. Years passed, and other children were added to the family; then the clouds of sorrow gathered. A desolating fever entered the pastor's cottage; father, mother, all were stricken, and when from the gates of the grave Leonard struggled back to life, he found nothing left him on earth but one little baby brother. The orphans were penniless too, for the expenses of illness and death had consumed their father's little property, and his income ceased with his life. A friend came forward, however, and put Leonard to school, while the baby became the nursing of the village, received into one cottage after another, as a precious legacy from the pastor they loved. It was a sad change for Leonard, from a happy home to school—school with no home to return to. The clouds still hung about his path, but he went on bravely, and so his nature was strengthened and refined; tribulation worked patience.

He knew his father had devoted him to the Church's special work, and this made him very diligent at school. When school was over there was no money to send him to college, but one of his father's friends finished his education in his own house, and at the proper age, clergymen then being wanted in the neighbourhood, the Bishop ordained him to a curacy not far from his birthplace.

And now a bright time of Leonard Whitley's life began. Certainly his income was only £60 a year, and he had to serve two churches nearly three miles apart, with a scattered population. He had plenty to do; still he was very happy; he loved his work, he loved his people, and he loved the few books which had belonged to his father. So time passed till he was forty years old, when anxiety and sorrow again brooded over him. His brother, Michael by name, whom we spoke of last as the baby in his father's parish, was now a man. He had not received such an education as Leonard's, and as he grew up, and was desirous no longer to be a burden to the friends of his childhood, nothing occurred to him but to walk over the hills to Whitehaven, and ask to be taken as sailor-boy on board one of the brigs which carry coals from that port to Ireland. It was rough work, but he got through it, and maintained himself respectably as a sailor, till at the age of thirty he was taken ill with rheumatic fever. His little savings were soon spent, and he wrote to his brother, who went to him, and, as soon as he was well enough, brought him to his little parsonage.

By degrees the fever abated, but the limbs remained paralysed, and it soon became evident that Michael would not be able to earn his bread. And now Leonard had seriously to ask himself how the income which had scantily supported one, could be made to provide for two. He had always lived so frugally, that there was little he could give up now. However, there were a few comforts he could deny himself, and he could earn something more by open-

ing a school for the sons of the neighbouring farmers. They could not pay him much, however, and his income was not very largely increased. Often there was hardly food enough in the house for both brothers, and Leonard (or Mr. Whitley, as we ought to call him) would often on holidays go to one of the farmers in his parish, and help in the field work, that he might feel at ease in accepting a meal there, and so leave more for the sick man at home. Yet strive and save as he would, after a year he found himself in debt. Quite overpowered, his health broke down, and he was laid up with a severe illness. It seemed now that the floods of affliction were overwhelming him, but he struggled through the storm. The clergy round were eager to help one whom they respected so much. They took his work for him while he was ill; they found out and paid the oppressive debt; they obtained a small pension for Michael, and when Mr. Whitley recovered, they put him in the way of earning something by writing of an evening. So he started again with fresh spirits, nor did he ever again sink into despondency; patience had worked experience, and experience hope.

After many years of suffering Michael Whitley was at last released. His brother missed him sadly; he felt alone, though not lonely. From this time his health and his eyesight began to fail, but he struggled on, till, at the age of sixty, he became quite blind, and was obliged to give up his curacy. Friends pitied him very much, but he was hopeful and full of confidence that he should be provided for. And so he was.

Just at this time a rich man was building near one of our noblest cathedrals a house of shelter for those who had grown old and continued poor in the service of the Church, and hearing of old Mr. Whitley, he invited him to it. So the aged clergyman went to dwell under the minister's shade, and found there as much of rest and home as he could enjoy on this side the grave. Very grateful it was to his weary spirit and worn-out frame. For a few years his frail form was seen daily entering the house of God, and now he rests close to its walls.

You may think it strange to illustrate "light at eventide" by an old age, blind, and dependent on the bounty of others; but remember that it is not earthly light or earthly splendour that is promised us; and for inward, Divine light, be sure that in that peaceful shelter it beamed upon the weary servant of God, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

PATCH, BUT NOT CROSS-PATCH.

"MOTHER, I just can't wear this patched coat to school!" said Fred, flinging himself into a chair, and sticking out his feet, while his face was drawn up in such an ugly scowl you would have thought him a dreadful boy.

"Why, Fred, I am surprised; only this morning you looked at these patches and said: 'Good for you, mother, these sleeves are jelly, now the elbows are all in'; and when you put it on you smoothed it down, and gave me a kiss, and told me I was the best mother in the world."

"Yes, so I did," and at the pleasant voice of his mother the boy drew in his feet, and the frown went off his face a little. "But you don't know how hard it is," added Fred, every boy in my class has a new coat, and some brass buttons and all. I can see the very shine of them now," and Fred kicked the poor cat as it was lying in the sunshine streaming over the bright kitchen floor.

"Come, come!" spoke up his mother, "this will never do! Your coat is well enough, if you only think so; at any rate I cannot buy you a new one," and Mrs. Green put the baby in his arms and began dishing up the soup for dinner.

Out on the little porch went Fred with baby. The sun was so bright and warm that in spite of all his trouble he couldn't help feeling just a little happy. Seating himself on the step he began to talk to the dear little fellow, as he often did when in earnest about things.

"Baby, wouldn't you hate to wear patches? Patches on the elbows, patches on the knees, patches all over! Why, I am almost all patches, and the boys have nicknamed me 'Patch.' I tell you, baby, it is pretty hard; but when I get to be a man, you shan't know what a patch looks like." Here the baby crowed and jumped as though he understood every word.

"Come," called mamma, "bring baby in; your dinner is ready."

Fred seated himself at the small table and waited for his mother; but she took the rocking chair by the stove, and commenced to sing baby to sleep.

"Mother, aren't you going to come?"

"No, son; I feel too tired now."

Fred helped himself to a plateful of the delicious soup; but somehow it didn't taste good, and there was a big lump in his throat, and glancing round to his mother he saw a sad, troubled look on her face. She had stopped singing, and was stroking baby's hair softly. He couldn't stand it any longer; but jumping up he ran to her, and hugging her tight round the neck, boy-fashion, burst out with,

"Mother, don't you look so sorry. I can wear the patches as well as not, and the old coat's real warm. I guess it won't kill me if the boys do call me 'Patch'; and Mr. Maxwell said yesterday I learned ever so fast, and he hoped some day you'd be proud of me. But you can't if I don't get over these proud fits, can you? Come now, mother, let's eat up all the soup, and have a good time."

And they did: and how they both enjoyed that dinner! Just before Fred started for school that afternoon, he ran up to his little room kept so clean by his own hands, and there he asked the loving Saviour to give him more help to overcome the small trials of everyday life, and to make him a wise, good boy, adding at the close, "Please make me a comfort to my mother."

He reached the school-room just as the bell rang, so he was spared any taunts from the boys then. But at recess Harry, remembering how easily he had fired him up in the morning, began again calling him "Patch," but to his surprise Fred's laugh rang out pleasantly and he answered:

"Yes, I s'pose that's my name as long as these clothes last. But, boys, look! I tell you there's some fine work on this old coat; and if I've got to wear it and be called 'Patch,' I'd better keep my temper, and not give you a chance to make it 'Cross-patch.'"

DON'T GIVE UP.

A GENTLEMAN travelling in the northern part of Ireland heard the voices of children and stopped to listen. Finding the sound came from a small building used as a schoolhouse, he drew near; as the door was open he went in and listened to the words the boys were spelling. One little boy stood apart, looking very sad. "Why does that boy stand there?" asked the gentleman. "Oh, he is good for nothing!" replied the teacher. "There is nothing in him. I can make nothing of him. He is the most stupid boy in the school." The gentleman was surprised at his answer. He saw the teacher was so stern and rough that the younger and more timid were nearly crushed. After a few words to them, placing his hand on the head of the little fellow who stood apart, he said: "One of these days you may be a fine scholar. Don't give up; try, my boy—try." The boy's soul was aroused. His sleeping mind awoke. A new purpose was formed. From that hour he became anxious to excel, and he did become a fine scholar. It was

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