

## Hope's Quiet Hour.

### God's Little Children.

It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—St. Matt. xviii: 14.

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of being present at the annual meeting of the Children's Aid Society, of Toronto. The meeting was held in The Children's Shelter, Simcoe street, and many interesting addresses were given by Bishop Sweeney, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Mayor, and others. The children marched in and sang patriotic songs with great energy. It did one's heart good to see the happy faces, shining with cleanliness and beautiful with health. Many of them were quite tiny tots, almost babies. Both boys and girls were dressed in white, but there was no stiffness in uniform, for the little girls' dresses were not all of the same pattern, and the boys rejoiced in bright neckties of various styles. We were invited to inspect the building, and it was a great pleasure to peep into the dormitories with their little white beds—each with its dainty white pillow-sham, feather-stitched in red—and the white cribs for the very little children. We also had a glimpse of the schoolroom, where each child was sitting in front of his little desk, and afterwards the little ones trooped into the dining-room for tea, which was evidently very enjoyable—if one might judge from their smiling faces.

Some of the children in the institution are sent there by the Children's Court, others have been rescued from homes of misery and neglect. I should like to quote part of the Report of the Board of Management, which was put into our hands yesterday.

"In presenting the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Society, the Board would place on record its deep sense of the goodness of God manifested in the kind Providence which has guided the hand of Board and workers alike in carrying on the work of the year. There has been much that calls for devout thankfulness—the work is ours, but the blessing is His—to Him be the glory, for without Him the builders labor in vain. . . . The task is not an easy one, and calls for the exercise of grace and patience; but the aim is a noble one, and is well worth the effort. The workers, by the blessing of God, have had much to encourage them, for some hundreds of children, now growing up into manhood and womanhood, in good foster homes, are furnishing evidence of their becoming good citizens, and thus fulfilling the aim and hope of the Society—and what a contrast—some six hundred boys and girls in comfortable foster homes, with every chance for useful, happy lives, instead of, as in many cases, they would have become members of the criminal class. Thus, through the agency of the Society, children have been removed from ruinous influences, trained for a time in self-restraint and discipline, and helped to lives of self-respect and usefulness. . . . The child who has never enjoyed life in the country has missed much, and his development is likely to have been one-sided. Last year, through the large-hearted liberality and Christian kindness of Mr. William Thomson, a holiday outing was made possible, and a vacation of five weeks for the girls, and another five weeks for the boys, was greatly enjoyed, the children having a good time, and many of them a new experience. The place selected for the Camp was upon Lake Couchiching, a few miles from Orillia, and the Camp presented a very picturesque appearance indeed, with its row of small white tents supplied with comfortable beds, with a cottage for the staff and officers, and a dining-room tent. Flags surmounted all the tents, and the name chosen for the Camp was no misnomer, 'Happiland.'"

Children are very quick to receive impressions—especially good impressions. Looking at the sweet, innocent faces, it was hard to believe that those bonny children had been rescued from evil surroundings. Evidently the love and patience of those who now tenderly care for them as God's dear children is already bearing good fruit.

One of the speakers said that thanks were due to the workers rather than to the givers of money. He said that it was a pleasure to care for one's own

children, but that the children of other people were rather trying sometimes. Among those who deserved thanks, he mentioned the farmers who were caring for many of the children, giving them the priceless blessing of real homes to grow up in. It is difficult to find foster homes where the children may be adopted and loved. If you know of any such childless home, here is your chance to supply its need.

In the Book of Proverbs we read that "a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame." Of course, that is the natural result of neglect. You farmers don't expect much from a field that is left to plow and sow and weed itself. It will only produce a crop of thistles and other weeds, when it might have produced good fruit with careful management. (Does God give the harvest in such a case of neglect by man?)

When our Lord was asked the question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He said that the path to greatness was open to those who should humble themselves and become like little children. Then He proclaimed the wonderful tidings: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in My Name, receiveth Me," offering to come and live with those who should open their homes to His children. He contrasted with the blessedness of those who receive His children the miserable state of all who lead them into evil, explained—in the wonderful parable of the lost sheep—that His love for each could never be dimmed, and ended this children's gospel with the words I have chosen for our text: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

God's little children! Let us remember that all children belong to the King of Kings. Those who injure them by neglect or cruelty, or who defile the spotless innocence of their white souls, must face the wrath of One Who has said: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea."—(St. Matt. xviii: 6, R. V.)

But that is the dark side of our subject, which shows more clearly the brightness of the other side. Think of the blessedness of those who are patiently and tenderly caring for the children of the King. There is an old saying: "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." But is it not rather true that God is everywhere, and that He is touching His children through the hands of mothers, and of those with mother-hearts?

In all God's Garden of earth, there is no lovelier flower than the little children. Was it any wonder that our Master lifted them in His arms and pressed them against His heart? Is it any wonder that He sometimes lifts them into His arms to be trained and perfected in the sunny fields of Paradise? God loves His little children, and He sends them down to earth to cheer the heavy-hearted, to bless and purify the homes of rich and poor, and to lead His older children nearer to Himself. This world would be a very dreary place, and men and women would grow very hard and selfish, if it were not for the dear, troublesome, glad-hearted little ones. God loves the world, therefore He sends us babies every year. Any kindness shown to them is repaid hundreds of times over by their Father. Our Lord has said: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." We all can do as much as that—or more.

DORA FARNCOMB.

I must again thank those who have sent me letters, valentines, etc. It is always a pleasure to hear from our readers—even when they write to say they disagree with me. We can't always think alike, but we can always be friendly—can't we? D. F.

### To Those Who Sent Literature for Distribution.

Permit me, through your magazine, to express my warmest thanks and appreciation for the generous response of your readers to my appeal for literature for distribution. The publications received were especially well selected and ample. To the individual contributor, let me say:

Could you but see the joy and thankfulness with which those papers are received, I am sure you would feel amply repaid. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."—Matthew 25: 40.

JACOB MATTHIAS.

Uffington, Muskoka, Ont.

### A Blessing for the Blessed

When the sun has left the hill-top,  
And the daisy-fringe is furled,  
When the birds from wood and meadow  
In their hidden nests are curled,  
Then I think of all the babies  
That are sleeping in the world . . . .

There are babies in the high lands  
And babies in the low,  
There are pale ones wrapped in furry skins  
On the margin of the snow,  
And brown ones naked in the isles  
Where all the spices grow.

And some are in the palace  
On a white and downy bed,  
And some are in the garret  
With a clout beneath their head,  
And some are on the cold, hard earth,  
Whose mothers have no bread.

O little men and women,  
Dear flowers yet unblown!  
O little kings and beggars  
Of the pageant yet unshown!  
Sleep soft and dream pale dreams now,  
To-morrow is your own. . . .

Though some shall walk in darkness,  
And others in the light,  
Though some shall smile and others weep  
In the silence of the night,  
When life has touched with many hues  
Your souls now clear and white:

God save you, little children!  
And make your eyes to see  
His fingers pointing in the dark  
Whatever you may be,  
Till one and all, through Life and Death,  
Pass to Eternity . . . .  
—L. Alma-Tadema.

### March.

By Lalia Mitchell.

A bluebird flew from the sunny South,  
Ere the winter's snows had fled,  
And an old owl questioned him hoarsely  
how  
He thought that he could be fed;  
And why he came till he surely knew  
That meads were green and the heavens  
blue?

But the bluebird slept where the woods  
were dense  
And the dry barberries hang,  
And he came at dawn to the orchard  
trees,  
And merry the song he sang:  
"Oh, the summer I keep in my heart, nor  
care  
For the skies, while their blue in my coat  
I wear!"

And the old owl turned to his gnarled  
tree,  
And the bluebird went his way;  
And the winds blew soft o'er the eastern  
hills  
And the crystal skies turned gray.  
And the buds came out on the sun-kissed  
larch,  
And the world rejoiced, for lo? 'twas  
March.

### Mary's Costly Clothes.

Mary had a little lamb—  
'Twas Persian—on her coat;  
She also had a mink or two  
About her dainty throat;  
A bird of paradise, a tern,  
And ermine made the hat  
That perched at jaunty angle  
On her coiffure largely rat;  
Her tiny boots were sable topped,  
Her gloves were muskrat, too;  
Her muff had heads and tails of half  
The "critters" in the zoo;  
And when she walked abroad I ween  
She feared no wintry wind;  
At keeping warm 'twas plain to see  
She had all the "skinned."

## The Roundabout Club

### Study IV.

Those who earned the highest marks in Study IV.—"Write a Character Sketch"—were "Scottie," Glengarry Co., Ont.; S. E. Oill, Welland Co., Ont.; "Honor Bright," Halton Co., Ont.

Extra awards were given to "A Friend," Prince Edward Co., Ont., and Fawcett Eaton, Wentworth Co., Ont.

During the judging, there was some discussion as to whether an essay on "A Country Church" might be considered a character sketch, but as, in the competition, considerable latitude was allowed in regard to subject, the emphasis in marking being placed especially upon literary quality, it was decided that the disputed essay must stand, the more especially that the church was, to some extent, personified, and that human characters were really introduced. One or two competitors wrote on "character" in the abstract, but clearly this was not what was required.

Very excellent essays were also written by J. W. Thompson; A. M. Freeborne; "N. B."; "A Maid"; "Forget-me-not"; "Constant Reader," and "Larry Larkins."

### Essay I.

#### The Country Church.

It was not a striking specimen of ecclesiastical architecture either externally or internally. Like most of its neighbors, it was but a white-painted, square-walled building, unornamented save for the tapering steeple, which pointed heavenward, showing the path to—

"The land that is fairer than day,  
Which, by faith, we can see from afar."

Ranged in front of the double-doored entrance was a line of young and vigorous maples, stretching their leafy heads over the sharp-pointed pickets, and the little gate that fastened with a hook in a ring; on the north side, the old graveyard hugged the foundations of the church as if the two were good friends; to the east stood the sheds, with the right-hand stall reserved for the minister's sorrel horse. Take it all in all, it was indeed a homely church—old age and summer rains and winter snows, had covered the paint-streaked clapboards with a network of wrinkles, and even a bit of gray showed here and there. The belfry, with its tiny window-eyes partly closed, was sound asleep the day I wandered to the dear old spot. The sexton, who for many a long year had "played the sexton's part," had just finished his weekly sweeping of the aisles and left the door open. Dear-a-me—the same old knob that always creaked so in prayer time! The same capacious woodbox in the corner of the anteroom; the same—what! crimson cushions on the seats? carpets on the floor? matting in the aisles? a new railing in front of the communion table?—and even a new pulpit had introduced itself, displacing the high old box stall of my remembrance, which hid from view all but the head and shoulders of the preacher. The Iconoclast had created sad havoc. The disappearance of the collection bags attached to long poles, and the high-backed family seat in the right-hand corner where Deacon B—sat for twenty years' of Sundays, and half as many prayer-meeting nights, was further evidence of it. But it only needed a momentary flight of the imagination to restore the former landmarks and repeople the old-fashioned seats with the religious stalwarts of thirty or forty years ago. Every pew was a monument; every corner was "In Memoriam" to some departed saint. It only needed the birth of the thought to place mother in the pew under the large window nearest the organ, and to put in the rack her Bible with the brass clasps, and her black-bound hymn-book, with a cross pencilled opposite each hymn whenever it was sung. What an array of pencilled stars surrounded "Rock of Ages," and "Nearer My God to Thee"! It only needed the merry twittering of a sparrow on the window-sill to lead me to lean over the ledge and peer through the branches of the wild rosebush that clung affectionately to the wall, to the marble-lined streets beyond, and to mother's grave, covered with sunshine and flowers. . . . And the day mother was carried there! Every seat of the church was