

time previous. Before the monarch could express his grief, his informant, the warrior Wulph, proceeded to ask Affred to confer on him the estates of Holderness (that part of Yorkshire lying between the mouth of the Humber and the German Ocean), as a reward for his prowess in war. Instantly another noble, the wise Thurstan spoke:—"Nay, king, it would be more just to bestow them on me, for dost thou not remember how, when at thy command I crossed the sea, my wisdom was of more avail at the Danish court than all the warlike skill and bravery of Wulph?"

At that moment a door at the far end of the room opened, and a pale, toil-worn woman entered, leading by the hand a lovely boy, whose flaxen hair, blue eye, and fair complexion, plainly showed his Saxon origin. With difficulty she pressed through the throng of anxious and excited nobles, until she stood before the monarch himself; then, bending low, she said—

"Oh, gracious king, I ask that justice may be done to this boy, the only child of the late Earl of Holderness and the Lady Alice. He has no father now to defend him, no mother to care for him, but orphaned and utterly friendless he looks to thee for protection; his is the orphan's claim—oh, king, regard it!"

Here she was interrupted by one of the thanes, who angrily exclaimed, "His claim, forsooth! What! dost thou think, then, that our king needs the services of babes, such as that? No; in these troubled times, when our Danish foes are threatening us on all sides, we want men with active bodies, stout arms, and brave hearts. If the lands of Holderness were given to that child, even though he were the lawful heir, say, what could he do to guard his country?"

The little fellow lifted his bright blue eye to the stern speaker, and replied, "I would pray to God in heaven."

The good King Alfred—than whom a nobler or better never sat on England's throne—looked earnestly first at the upturned face of the boy, then upon his thanes, who were anxiously awaiting the royal decision, and, rising, said slowly and solemnly—"The king will gladly give all praise and due reward to the faithful thanes who have served him so well in times of need, but the estates of Holderness must be restored to this child, for they are his by birthright and his claim; the orphan's claim is before all other—his Father is God who reigns in heaven."

HOW DO YOU TREAT YOUR SOVEREIGN?

The anecdote of our Sovereign Lady, on which the following little story is founded, was repeated to me a few months ago at Amritsar. It may amuse my young friends, and not only awaken a smile, but leave a lesson behind.

It is well known that our Queen, especially in Scotland, loves to throw aside the trammels of state, and walk about in simple guise, sometimes entering the cottages of the poor.

One showery day, the Queen, on foot and alone, entered the dwelling of an old woman. It is possible that the dame's sight was dim, for she did not recognize her royal visitor, whose face is so familiar to her people. The Queen had come to ask a trifling favour.

"Will you lend me an umbrella?" said the royal lady, who did not happen to have one with her.

The dame was of a somewhat churlish nature, or rather, we should say, of a suspicious disposition. The hospitality of her country would not allow her to refuse the request altogether, but she granted it ungraciously and with grudging.

"I have two umbrellas," said the dame; "one is a beauty, t'other is vara auld. Ye may tak this, I guess I'll neever see it agen," and so saying she proffered a ragged concern, whose whalebone ribs might be seen here and there through the coarse, torn cover.

England's Queen quietly took the umberella, which was better than nothing, and went forth into the rain, not by one word betraying her rank. The next day one of her Majesty's servants brought back the wretched umbrella; and then the cottager knew to whom she had lent it.

"Ay—ay—had I but kenned wha it was that

asked for the loan, she wad hae been welcome to my best, to a' that I hae i' the world!" exclaimed the mortified woman, shocked and grieved at having missed such an opportunity of winning a smile from the Queen!

No one can admire the dame's over-cautious, grudging spirit; but still her fault was not a great one, for she did not recognize her Sovereign. But if we could suppose that she owed her cottage and her daily food to royal bounty, and that she knew that she was asked for a loan by one who was not only her Queen but her benefactress, and that she intentionally—knowingly—insulted a monarch by offering her the worst, the dame's conduct would be utterly disgusting. We could hardly believe that any human heart could be so basely ungrateful!

Yet, oh! careless, worldly, selfish (so-called) Christians, how often such ingratitude is yours! Your Heavenly King asks for your time, how much do you give Him? as much as you can spare without feeling the loss! Christ asks for your silver and gold for His work, and what do you bestow on Missions? Perhaps one-hundredth part of what you spend on your own pleasures or folly. You wear the costly dress, eat dainty fare, and give the tiniest piece of silver to the best of causes grudgingly and of necessity!

But this is by no means the case with all. There are those who know that it is the King Himself who asks for their time, their money, their work, and their prayers! And their joyful reply is, "Take anything—take my best—take myself! Thou art welcome to all that I have in the world!"—C. M., *Juv. Ins.*

LIGHT AT EVENTIDE.

He lay at the twilight dying,
Falling asleep in faith.
I said, "O my friend is there darkness
In the valley of the shadow of death?"
But he answered me, "All is light,
For the sun is shining bright."

Said I, "It is sunset, brother,
And the wintry day is gone by."
But he answered me, "There is glory,
Glory o'er all the sky.
For the darkness hath fled away
At the dawning, the dawn of the day."

"I must light the lamp now, brother,
For the twilight hour is past,
And the room," said I, "is in darkness,
For the night is come at last,
But he answered, "Beside me is One,
Whose face is brighter than the sun."

"The pathway is full of glory,
No darkness of night is here,
And the birds of God are singing,
And the Christ of God is near.
And home lies full in my sight.
It is light—light—light!"

He ceased, and then there was silence,
For his spirit had passed away,
From the land of mists and darkness,
To the realm of eternal day.
Where the Lamb is all the light,
And the ransomed walk there in white.

I thought of my loss, O brother!
And my tears fell fast like rain.
Then I ceased from my selfish weeping
To think of thine infinite gain;
And how, when my journey is o'er,
I shall meet thee on that far shore.

Now humbly I pray the Saviour,
To guide me along the way,
Which leads to the home of my Father,
The land of the cloudless day;
Where, saved by His wondrous grace,
I too may behold His face.

CONFIRMATION! WHAT IS THE GOOD OF IT?

You have been invited to give in your names as Candidates for Confirmation. Some who read this have perhaps had the invitation given often before, but put it off,—others who have just come to years of discretion are invited for the first time,—and you ask *Why should I be Confirmed? What is the good of it?* Let us see.

1.—Confirmation is a means of Grace of Divine

Appointment. It was not indeed appointed by our Lord during His earthly ministry, because the Holy Ghost was not given till the day of Pentecost. But our Lord during the forty days after His Resurrection gave instructions to His disciples "Speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," Acts i., 3. And we find immediately after the day of Pentecost, that the Apostles laid their hands on those who had been baptized that they might receive the Holy Ghost (Acts viii., 14-17; Acts xix., 1-6). And St. Paul in Hebrews vi., 2, numbers "the laying on of hands" among the principles (or foundation truths) of the doctrine of Christ. The Apostles did not act upon their own authority, but as they were taught by the Holy Ghost.

It would be as reasonable to speak of the Bible being of human authority because it was written by men, as to call confirmation an ordinance of human authority because it was given us by Apostles.

In both cases they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and what they did, they did not of themselves, but of God.

2.—*We are weak, and have need of all the help God gives us.* You are not good enough! You are too giddy! Too young! You can't live up to it! Are these your excuses? Do you imagine that you can prepare for eternity yourselves? If not, when God's hand is stretched out to help, grasp it, because you are not good enough; because alone you would be thoughtless and giddy. Because you are young and need a Father's loving care—because you cannot live up to your Christian profession without the grace of God.

3.—*It is an open profession of your faith.*—You don't like perhaps to commit yourselves by any definite or decided act, to be the faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ and to fight manfully under His banner. You prefer a general consent to the Christian faith, and a general consent to the world too. Remember our Lord has demanded not only a daily bearing of the cross after Him, but an open confession of his name before men.

But you know many who have been confirmed and are no better for it! You may indeed be confirmed and be no better for it; just as you may say your prayers and be no better, because you may do both *insincerely* and *without faith*. But it is no excuse for neglecting prayer, that many say their prayers and are no better; and exactly for the same reason, it is no excuse for neglecting confirmation, that many who are confirmed still live in sin.

Parents, if you have not been confirmed, lead the way. The example of a holy life and a Christian profession will help your children, and bring joy and peace to your homes.

Encourage your children to offer themselves to God, and seek His grace in confirmation. Don't work for Satan! Don't screen your own neglect by keeping them back from God, and the means and grace which God has given, but help them, that one day you may say with joy "Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

Young Men, be strong for God! This is true Manliness! Come out boldly as His! Honor Him and He will honor you.

Young Women, give your first love to Jesus Christ. Let no earthly thing keep you back from confessing Him boldly before a sinful world, and loving Him as He has loved you. Then His love shall keep and strengthen you all your life long.

—A Young American sceptic one day sneered at a remark made by an elderly man, who happened to be travelling in the same train with him. The old man looked up and said: "Are you an atheist?" "No," said the youth, "I am an agnostic. I am investigating the subject. I take nothing for granted. I see the mountains, I smell the rose, I hear the wind; therefore, I believe that mountains, roses, and wind exist. But I cannot see, smell, or hear God; therefore, I am not prepared to admit that there is such a Being." The old man inquired: "Did you ever try to smell with your eyes?" "No," replied the other. "Or to hear with your tongue, or taste with your ears?" "Certainly not," said the youth. "Then why do you try to comprehend God with faculties which are only meant for material things?" was the rejoinder.