

A GIRL'S REGRET.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me" (St. Matthew xxv. 45).

SHE was so pale and worn—I see again
Her patient figure in the drenching rain,
While I (the inner voice one hears and feels
Drowned in the rumble of the carriage wheels)
Drove on, and left her standing by the way,
In the chill twilight of a stormy day.

She was not young, and yet some inward grace
Had set its seal of sweetness on her face,
Making it lovely; in the years to be
I pray that God may grant that look to me!
Could I but have that moment back again,
I would not leave her in the drenching rain.

Who speaks? Ah, Lord, I think I hear Thee say,
"Why didst thou leave Me standing by the way?"
I dwell in all My little ones, and feel
The strokes that wound them, and the hands that heal;
Is it so hard on this rich earth of thine
To show a little love to Me and Mine?"

She was so worn and pale; how could I bear
To drive away, and leave her lonely there?
Oh, Tiou who seest all, forgive, forgive
My thoughtless youth, and teach me how to live!
Softener my heart, and let me warch and pray,
Lest I should leave Thee standing by the way.



AS MANY QUEENS AS GIRLS.

By JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

As many queens as girls.

How can that be?

From the way in which Florence, who loves to grasp at dominion when she has the chance, picked up her ears the other day as she waited an answer to this query, it was clear she expected we were about to announce the dawn of a new era. Perhaps she imagined we were on the point of recommending girls to spread themselves through the world in hopes to find some communities, savage or civilised, still in want of sovereigns, and of a willing mind to treat them to a course of coronations, banquets, processions and fireworks.

We have no such quixotic scheme in view. The answer is on a humbler scale, and more within the reach of us all.

She is a queen who rules herself.

That is the whole secret of a possible queenship for everybody.

It is a good working project, bringing about no glut in the market for queens, because each sovereign will have a territory specially provided. There will be no trouble either in searching for a domain, for every girl will stretch out her sceptre over herself.

Difficulties, no doubt, suggest themselves; difficulties connected with our cross-grained, whimsical, and often so foolish natures. But difficulties are not the same things as insurmountable obstacles. Many girls we know are queens already, and why should not all be? There is really no reason for our not one day arriving at a happy time when frivolous and otherwise objectionable people will be as extinct as the strange beasts that roamed the forests when our world was young. Then there will be no maidens anywhere but those who in their own little spheres are royal personages.

"The land of Myself" may not be a big dominion in the eyes of friends and neighbours, but to oneself it is the most important of all territories. Every girl who has turned from skimming lightly over trivialities and common-places to spending an occasional

quiet hour in serious thought has had forced upon her attention the worth and mystery of her own immortal being. Matter is wonderful certainly, but we may travel the earth all over and make the circuit of the stars without meeting with anything more awe-inspiring than our own spirits. Yes, girls, if we rule these spirits of ours we have as much sovereignty as is good for us, as much indeed as most of us have the ability to manage.

But whether her empire be colossal or microscopic, a queen is a queen, and within its bounds she reigns supreme. If it has only narrow limits we can make the most of it like the German potentate who acted so wisely that his state became famous in literature and art, even though it was so small that, when he sent orders to one who had offended him to leave the country, the message the man sent back was, "Tell him to look out of the palace window and he will see me cross the frontier in three minutes!"

It is no question of rich or poor, well-to-do or badly-off. Queens with a place in history have before now shivered with cold, not having money to pay for wood and coal. Queens they were in spite of the empty grate. And so with a girl of a really good sort—one who is a monarch in ruling herself. When she is met with, people do not too particularly inquire how much she has, and, between ourselves, many sensible folk are of opinion that she is best off who has nothing.

To be a girl-queen too is a matter independent of worldly position. If she can only rule herself she may be of so humble origin that no one could be humbler. Her throne may be a cold stone by the wayside, her palace a gipsy van, her chariot a donkey-cart, and her occupation no higher than that of the rat-catcher's daughter who sold sprats for a livelihood.

She need not be good-looking either. And in saying that there comes to our recollection a girl whom we shall not name who is gene-

rally described in our village as a "wee deformed sort of body." So she strikes one at first sight, but no one knows her long without discovering that if she was behind the door when grace and good looks were given out she is a queen in her intellectual territory, and more to be looked up to and respected than some of the pink and white beauties who criticise her and who, if the truth were told, are good for mantelpiece ornaments, but for nothing else. Outward looks go for little in queenship. You would be a queen no matter in what form you passed through the world, provided only you ruled yourself. You might even be a spell-bound maiden in the form of a tortoise-shell cat.

As queens we may not—and probably will not—have an easy time of it. "God," it has been well said, "opens a very wonderful book for our instruction when He sets us reading our own hearts." We look within and there see two forces, one arrayed against the other. On the one side, conscience with its innocent motives and high aspirations, and on the other a rabble of evil passions and desires. The two can never agree, and the first must conquer or we can never have peace.

As queen a girl must go to war; but if she only asks help from on high, she is sure to win the day, and "God who fights with her will Himself give her the victor's crown."

And let her not expect, even when she seems securely seated as sovereign, that there will not be occasional revolts. Constant watchfulness and as constant heavenly aid is the only safe rule. Take it as you like, girl, life is a struggle, and, if we only give in, the throne topples over, and we become not queens but slaves, going about fettered by our own misdeeds and follies.

The task may sometimes be difficult, but we shall take courage from the proverb:—

"Despair of nothing that you would attain,
Unwearied diligence your end will gain."