

## THE MAN WHO WAS MISSING THE POINT.

It was on the Lake Shore railroad. The time was midnight. The train was pulling out of the Cleveland depot when a man of about five and thirty looked up from his book, and, after a time, engaged me in conversation. "What business are you in? You act like a commercial traveller, but your talk and the subjects you speak of are more like a lecturer."

"Well," I replied, "I do lecture some."

"On what subject?"

"Home Missions."

"Home Missions," he said, with a slight tone of sarcasm.

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, well, I used to be a professor."

I was converted in the old-fashioned way and joined the church, but now I don't believe anything. I don't believe there is a God or a hereafter. In fact, I have lost all faith in anything of that nature; but there is one thing that troubles me. I have a little girl of three, and I don't know what to do with her. I can't teach her, 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' and that humbug, don't you know, but what to do with her puzzles me. You seem to be a man that has read a good deal, perhaps you can tell me; give me your advice."

"Let her go," I rejoined. The man stared at me with a questioning look in his eyes. I went on: "I suppose you know that a child with a father that believes in neither God or a hereafter has a good chance of going to the bad. Does your wife share your views?"

"No, my wife is a good woman, but slow to see a point. Why, only the other day I told her of a farmer who saw a dromedary for the first time, and he stayed so long staring at it that all the people had gone into the circus; but as he turned away an employee heard him say: 'Shucks, there isn't no such animal!' Well, sir, my wife did not see the point for five minutes."

"Now, look here, my son, your wife is not the only one to miss the point. I was a sceptic before you were born. I lived on Infidel street and all the houses are furnished apartments."

Said the man: "I have lost all faith."

I said: "Are you in business?"

"Yes, and a good one."

"Well, you must have faith to run that. Nothing is ever accomplished without faith."

"Well, but what do you mean about my not seeing the point?"

"Why, you live in a land of free schools and hospitals, and fresh-air funds for the poor, and aid given to the needy, and like the man with the dromedary, you say: 'Shucks, there ain't no Christianity!'"

He was a little taken back at this, and then I went on: "An old prophet once said: 'A little child shall lead them,' and it may be your little child will help you."

"If I could only believe anything."

"You believe there was once a man born whose name was Jesus?"

"Yes."

"Well, you believe he was a good man? Did you ever read or know of a better?"

"No."

"Well, why not begin by believing in him?"

"I can't believe the miracles."

"Man, man, I am not talking of miracles. If you believed all the miracles ever recorded, it would not bring you a step near God. Now, listen. You and I may never meet again. Take my advice and get acquainted with Christ and try to follow his counsels, try and walk after his pattern, for the sake of your little girl. Tell her of Jesus and his love. Never mind the hard parts, for you will find if you once get acquainted with Jesus Christ all things will become plain, for if ye do his will ye shall know of the doctrine."

The train was slowing up as the man grasped my hand. He said: "I am glad I met you. You have done me good, and I thank you for it. Good-bye." He was gone, and my train plunged

forward into the darkness, but I felt that God would lead my fellow-passenger into the light.—Rev. W. G. Puddefoot.

## THE TOUCH OF THE VANISHED HAND.

We sigh for the touch of a vanished hand—

The hand of a friend most dear,  
Who has passed from our side to the shadowy land—

But what of the hand that is near?

To the living's touch is the soul inert  
That weeps o'er the silent urn?

For the love that lives is our hand alert

To make some sweet return?

Do we answer back in a fretful tone,  
When life's duties press us sore?

Is our praise as full as if they were gone,  
And could hear our praise no more?

As the days go by, are our hands more swift

For a trifle beyond their share,  
Than to grasp—for a kindly, helpful

life—

The burden some one must bear?

We sigh for the touch of a vanished hand,

And we think ourselves sincere;  
But what of the friends about us stand,

And the touch of the hand that's here?

## THE THINGS THAT WERE LEFT.

Aunt Lydia put her big motherly hand over the girl's thin, white one. She had never seen the poor sick little summer boarder until two days before, when she had come with her nurse to try to get well, and Aunt Lydia had taken her straight into her warm heart. Already in the two days, the child had had three long crying spells and wished that she were dead. If Aunt Lydia was shocked, she showed no sign of it.

"I wonder if you'd do something for me," she said.

"Why, if I could," the girl answered, doubtfully.

"I felt sort o' grumpy this morning," Aunt Lydia explained, "and when I feel that way there's nothing cures me so soon as counting over my blessings. I thought maybe if you wouldn't mind, you'd jot them down for me while I'm shelling these peas, and then I'd have them to look over the next time I get blue. I've brought a pencil and piece of paper. Well, first—I guess the first is that, good or bad, sick or well, I can't tire out the Lord's loving kindness."

The girl looked up, startled; then she wrote in silence.

"Then," pursued Aunt Lydia, "there's always folks to love—that comes next, and then there's always something to do or bear for the Lord and for them. Then there's birds and flowers, and that I've got eyes and ears to enjoy them with; and food and clothing, and books and letters, and—"

But the girl interrupted. "Thank you, Aunt Lydia," she said.—Forward.

## "THIS LITTLE PIG" IN CHINA.

The mother of a Chinese baby counts her little one's toes just as American mothers do. When the gay, embroidered shoes are taken off she pinches one tiny toe and then another, as she sings:

"This little cow eats grass, this little cow eats hay,

This little cow drinks water, this little cow runs away.

This little cow does nothing but just lie down all day.

We'll whip her!"

That old age will never pass the "deadline" which undertakes to do difficult tasks, which dares the Lord to fulfill his promises, and which keeps unfrosted the faith and hope and love of younger days.

## JUST HELPFUL.

A group of girls sat around a bright fire. It was the half hour before the ominous call, "Lights out!" would silence the merry voices. They were discussing ideals—what they would rather have, do and be in life.

Nannette wanted plenty of carriages and servants at her bidding—dear, pretty Nannette, whose curly head was already full of the gay doings which, in her limited vocabulary, spelled "Life."

Ruth was not so particular about money, but was planning to be an artist and paint pictures that would rival modern artists.

Dorothy meant to write books. She had already received "Excellent" on her themes, and felt sure that if she sank into any ordinary career a great writer would be spelled.

The girl who looked dreamily into the fire had been silent during the gay chatter.

"The returns are all in except from the fourth ward. As usual, it is slow in letting itself be heard," prodded Nannette, giving the long braids of the silent one a playful twist.

"I have been listening to you all and thinking," was the reply. "I am not pretty, and I can't hope to be a belle; I am not intellectual or gifted, and can't hope to write books or paint pictures. So, while the rest of you are filling your lofty stations, I will hunt me some quiet little corner, and just try to be helpful."

Looking back through the vista of years, and recalling the varying fortunes of those four roommates, I believe the girl who aspired to be "just helpful" has reaped life's best reward. Instructors are many, and may be hammered out in schools, but the helper must drink at a deeper fount. In the school of love, unselfishness and sympathy, the helper must matriculate, and only in the larger school of experience are the subtlest lessons learned. It sees such a simple thing to say, "I will be helpful"; yet adopt this as your creed, go out with wide-open eyes, and see what infinite vistas stretch before you. You never noticed before how many people needed help—not necessarily money, or things that money buys, though these have manifold uses, but the help that comes from simple brotherliness and readiness to "lend a hand."

## CAN YOU SPELL?

If you think you can, ask somebody to dictate the following jumble to you and see how many mistakes you make!

Antinous, a disappointed, desiccated physicist, was peeling potatoes in an embarrassing and harassing way. His idiosyncrasy and privilege was to eat mayonnaise and mussels while staring at the Pleiades and seizing people's tricycles and velocipedes. He was an erring teetotaler, and had been on a picayune jamboree. He rode a palfrey stallion and carried a salable papier-mache bouquet of astors, phlox, mullein, chrysanthemums, rhododendrons, fuchsias and nasturtiums.

He wore a sibyl's resplendent turquoise paraphernalia, an ormolu yashmak and astrakhan chaparejos. He drank crystallizable and disagreeable curacao juleps through a sieve. He stole some moneys and hid them under a peddler's mahogany bedstead and mattress.

Like a fiend in an ecstasy of gaiety, I rushed after him into the maelstrom, or melee, and held him as in a vise. I could not freeze him, however, and he addressed me, with autocracy, in the following imbecile words which sounded like a soliloquy or a superseding paean on an oboe: "You are a ratable lunamoth; a salaaming visier; an equinoctial coryphe and an isosceles daguerreotype."—The Bookman.

Self-serving and self-seeking will find no place in heaven. They are of the earth, earthy, and will be laid aside with the old Adam when the soul departs to its everlasting home.