

their father having given a final quit-claim to them, along with all other earthly things. He was found dead in the street one bitter night, soon after his prison term ended, his drunken sleep having changed into that "which knows not waking."

For two years they lived on, much in the old way; then that great illuminating event of a woman's life (of a man's either) came to Ruth.

She loved. She built up every perfection about her lover, after the dear, absurd, pearl-making fashion of women, and found at last that the nucleus of her gem was a bit of common clay. Probably he was no more selfish than are most young men. His heart was big enough to take in her brother and sister, but as for a lot of nobody's children, and a worn-out servant—she must choose between them and him.

Any one who knew my blessed Ruth might have told how she would choose. Having put her hand to the plough, she never looked back, and though she kept a firm foothold on the earth, she ran her furrow true, by the stars.

This trial was a turning-point in her life. It was not so much that she grew a shade gentler and calmer, or that she henceforth steadfastly put away girlish dreams; but she seemed then first to hear clearly the call of the helpless, and for answer, she took her life in her hand, and gave it to their service.

"I have been thinking," said Ruth, one day, "that we must have another string to our bow. Knitting is very well for as it goes, but our neighbors won't need scarfs and mittens in the summer, just to help us. Now there's one thing they must do all the year round."

"What is that?" asked her listeners, for this talk occurred in a ways-and-means meeting of all the older members of the family.

"Eat." "Eat?" "Well, we must make things so good to eat that they can't help buying them. I have thought of many plans, and this seems best. I will tell you how it has worked itself out in my mind, then if any of you have any objections or suggestions, you will please speak up."

"In the first place, here is Nurse Bromley, who used to be a notable cook. She has experience and recipes. We have strength, and—I am sure I can speak for you all here—good will to use it. She will teach us. Oh, I know you will, you dear old soul, so don't shake your head! We must try one thing until we succeed—and as we shall have to eat our failures, that will make us try the harder—then another and another, till we have a list big enough."

"Plain food, mind you—the town is both too old-fashioned and too poor for knick-knacks. When we have our trade so well-learned that we are sure of results, we will invite every body we know to a trial-tale. Of course, it will cost something, but we must gain their confidence, and that's the only sort of advertisement that will do it. We should never dare take up a lot of stuff to spoil on our hands waiting for customers. One barrel of flour wasted would break us up at the very start."

"Of course, things will be so nice at our tea-party, that our guests will long for more. We will then explain, and furnish them with price-lists—which you, Caddy, and Minta and Linda, shall make out in your nextest heads. We will fill orders at first, and here the boys can help up. When we have built up a safe trade, we will open a little shop in one of the parlors."

You see, this talk is historic in our town, so I don't need to have been a mouse in the wall to know of it. It proved the grain of mustard-seed, from which sprang the mighty tree that has sheltered, and still shelters, so many; and Ruth's hearers were naturally called on to repeat it over and over.

When Ruth tries to make people believe that white is white, she generally succeeds. Her enthusiasm and faith are as "catching" as harmful things usually are. In this case, her plan found instant favor, and was carried out with few changes. Nurse Bromley was happy and important. She stopped talking about her "one foot in the grave," and seemed willing to stay above ground any number of years, now that she could be useful to her "dear young ladies."

The tea-party was a great success. Every body ate and praised, and the old ladies declared that Ruth and Caddy had their grand-mother's "knack"—everything she made used to melt in your mouth," they said.

So the bakery was started, grew and paid. I shall never forget Ruth's glowing face, when she told me she was "rich enough now to adopt some war-orphans"—of whom alas, even our small village had its share.

About that time, however, her family became smaller by one. Araminta Briggs was married. Minta was true gold. She would have stayed by her brothers and sister and broken her heart; or her lover, who was gold too, would have taken them all and broken his back. But Ruth would hear of neither way.

Minta's corner was soon filled. Miss Prime had grown so old and feeble, that the "Beard" concluded to retire her. The tender-hearted soul had always found such a number of people whom just a little money would make comfortable, that she had saved nothing for her own rainy day, though that troubled her far less than leaving her darlings.

When Ruth offered her a home, it was as if paradise opened straight before, chiefly because here were likely always to be young children, whom she could teach and "mother" to her heart's content.

I should like to tell about all Ruth's proteges. Some other time perhaps I may. Young children, most of them were—though there were some queer oldsters too, in the lot—misery being the only passport needed to her home. After the Ammanee crop of wretchedness was gathered, she gleaned from the alleys of Bayview, and only stopped when her granary was full.

Our people had become interested in her work. The moral air of the place was better for it. Neighbors "made up" feuds of long standing. The horizon of good will widened, till we could actually extend kindly vision as far as the next town, and that was something, if you reflect that the next town was Bayview, the holder of our lost thrift, and so kind of "receiver of stolen goods" in our eyes.

Many friends began to offer help, which Ruth gently refused. She felt sure it was best to keep her home self-supporting. People's advice is certain to follow their money, and she must either have offended them, or there would have been an end of consistent management.

In all her plans the zeal of Caddy and the rest was second only to Ruth's. Both sisters watched over Fred with motherly devotion. He was an active, heedless boy, risking his neck without stint, and often coming to grief.

When he was about sixteen, he fell into a moody state which filled Ruth with alarm. The war had just ended, and our village, like others, I suppose, was in a ferment, as smilting the returned soldiers to a peaceful life again. It was a perilous time for a headstrong, company-loving boy to be adrift. Ruth felt sure that work suited to his tastes was all he needed to take him safely through this dangerous period, and she racked her wits to devise the right thing.

He was an ingenious and constant whittler and one day as he fretfully hacked a piece of wood, a bright thought struck Ruth. This wood was of a peculiar kind, close-grained and white, easily worked while green, but ivory hard when it seasoned. Plenty of it grew near by.

"Fred," said she, "I want you to whittle some playthings for my babies out of that wood. They suck the paint, or choke themselves with pieces of the ill-made things we buy, so that I actually dare'n't trust them with anything but their fists."

"What does a big fellow want to be whittling baby playthings for?" growled Fred.

"Why, if our babies like them, other babies will. Who knows? You might build up a business as profitable as the bakery."

"I'll try it, sis," cried Fred, in a tone that showed the idea struck his fancy. And to his credit, I will add, that he felt honest shame for his silliness, and manfully begged his sister's pardon.

The babies seized the new toys with eagerness; the town ladies bought them for their children; some of them were sent to Bayview, where they "took" so well that Fred soon had more orders than his jack-knife could fill.

He bought a turning-lathe and suitable tools. Presently it became necessary to hire a whole building—a cheap matter in a town where houses were rotting from disuse. He invented a baby-jumper which would not make babies bow-legged, and that "took" also.

Space will not allow a detailed account of the growth of his scheme. Every one knows

how fast a business increases when its owner is capable and industrious, and when his goods are what people want and well-made. Before Fred was twenty-three, he owned works which employed two hundred men, and many men in the neighboring country earned their living by cutting, preparing and hauling the wood he used.

Meantime, Ruth's bakery had long outgrown the kitchen and parlor. Her tooth-sons and wholesome wares had made such a name that even the big factory, with its scores of hands, could not supply the demand. She had also established a canning and preserving industry which gave an impulse to the whole surrounding country.

Bob and Jod Briggs, when they were old enough were put in charge of these affairs, and Ruth, save for a general oversight, gave her whole time to her "family," and to schemes for the benefit of her employes.

The old satire about "old maid's children" is simple truth in her case. Her "children," we all admit, are the "best brought up" in town. All are taught to work, all are well-educated; the best masters teach them accomplishments (for Ruth well knows the moral and practical worth of these, rightly used); those who wish to learn trades have the chance; those who would later professions are given the proper training.

Above all she strives strangely and symmetrically to build up in them that something we call character, without which all knowledge and accomplishments are vain. When they are ready to leave the home-fold, she helps them to a "start," but so wisely as not to abridge their self-dependence.

She builds houses for her workmen who desire it, giving them ample time to pay her. She has a hall for their use, where all sorts of social gatherings are held. Connected with it are reading rooms, and a library, from which the villagers as well as her work-people are free to take books.

Most of the children she has brought up have settled around her. And now, as she looks upon the town, larger and busier than in its old palmy days, and recalls the turn of her gaze upon the happy children clustering about her own fireside, her heart sings, and she thanks Him whose steward she feels herself to be.

Wings have grown out of the staunch old house in every direction. Surely, years have been outspread above it all these wings to make it so blessing and so blessed.—*M. E. Goff, in Youth's Companion.*

FEED THE LAMBS.

BY DR. GOODELL.

When the great Shepherd comes to draw water for His flock on the Lord's day, how good it is to find all the fold gathered and ready, sheep and lambs alike. The Lord's ministry is to them both, in invitation and blessing. He carries every kind of food in the same hand.

The old are twice blessed in the blessing on the young. Many a little girl is a Christian at four years of age. Many a boy at seven, some earlier. "Feed my lambs," says the Master. Arrange to do it by system and in faith; gather them in, carry the weak ones. Let the truth be unsealed and applied to all their needs. In no other way can so effective and valuable Christian workers be made. All their faculties, taken early, will be limbered and made flexible and deft in their Lord's use.

Do not let us of this age stumble any longer over these great and self-evident truths. Every work has its special wisdom by which it is best done. The secret of success in winning the world for Christ and building the church of God is in gaining and saving the children. That done, all the rest comes as a consequence; for the world's manhood is secure when we have gained its childhood.

The state of the heart toward God determines one's moral condition. That state may be made right in childhood easier than at any other time thereafter. If the heart should with difficulty be brought to God later, the aftermath of the autumn Christian is not like the abounding green of the early summer time.

Why should Christian parents wait, before they strive to make their children Christians, till there has been a funeral among the group of little ones? Why should the pastor's first prayer in the home be at the bedside of the sick?

SABBATH-SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

BY REV. ASA BULLARD, D. D.

More than fifty years ago a teacher gave me the following testimony, from his own experience, of the happy results of faithfulness on the part of a Sabbath-school teacher.

"One Sabbath morning," he says, "I was engaged in family worship. As I came to pray for the Sabbath-school as was my usual practice, the thought flashed upon my mind that I had not been faithful to my class. I became very much affected; made confession of my wrong, and earnestly prayed that the Lord would forgive me, and help me henceforth to be faithful. I went to the Sabbath-school, and after hearing my class recite their lesson, I began to converse with them very faithfully in regard to their spiritual interests." And what was the result? Why, just what we might expect it would be. "To my utter astonishment," he said, "they were all melted into tears!" Several of his class were after hopefully converted.

But this teacher, who had become aroused to duty, did not limit his faithfulness to his class. As he went out the same day, he saw a boy who seldom went to meeting, and whose father had forbidden his going to the Sabbath-school. He was sitting by himself and looking very pensive. The teacher at first supposed he might have been hurt, but he resolved to learn, if possible, the cause of his sorrow, and say a word to him about his soul. He found he was anxious to know what he must do to be saved; and he could not learn that any one had been conversing with him on the subject.

How many teachers have, almost unexpectedly, had their hearts made glad by trying the experiment of being faithful in their efforts for the good of others.

More than forty years ago Deacon took a class of six young ladies which soon increased to twelve. None of them were specially interested in the subject of personal religion. The teacher was in the habit of making practical remarks and of conversing individually with each member of the class respecting the state of her own heart. In less than two years all the members of that class, but one, were either indulging hope or anxiously inquiring after the way of life.

While passing through the town of —, I inquired of a lady of the public house where I stopped, respecting the state of religion and of the Sabbath-school in that place. In a few moments she showed that she was personally interested in the Saviour, and that she belonged to a class of eight young ladies, all of whom had become hopefully pious within a few weeks. It was very gratifying to learn that they had enjoyed the prayers and instructions of a faithful teacher.

A minister of the gospel, more than fifty years ago, when relating at a public meeting what the Lord had been doing for his people, stated that he had a class of twenty young ladies, all of whom, but two, were hoping that they had recently passed from death unto life. His wife also had a class, about the same proportion of whom were giving evidence that they had begun the Christian life.

In my early labors in this cause, I became acquainted with three teachers, two of whom could number each eight or ten, and one eighteen scholars, in whose conversion they had joyful evidence that they had been more or less instrumental by their faithfulness to them in the Sabbath school.

One teacher, when answering some inquiries in regard to her labors in the Sabbath-school said, with much emotion, "I have received letters from several of my old scholars now living in other towns, who refer to the instructions they received in the school, as the means which God had blessed in leading them to the Saviour."

There are no reminiscences connected with this institution that I read with deeper interest than those that illustrate the happy result of faithfulness in teachers. And what a sphere of usefulness does the Sabbath-school open to faithful teachers! What an opportunity to win to Christ those whose influence shall bless the world; and what an opportunity to enrich their own crowns of rejoicing with the precious gems of souls redeemed through their faithful labors! "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."—*Intermediate Teacher's Quarterly.*