

You see, I was an unusually lonesome little fellow, because I belonged to the number of those unlucky waifs who come into this mortal life under circumstances when nobody wants or expects them. My father was a poor country minister in the mountains of New Hampshire, with a salary of six hundred dollars, with nine children. I was the tenth. I was not expected; my immediate predecessor was five years of age, and the gossips of the neighborhood had already presented congratulations to my mother on having "done up her work in the forenoon," and being ready to sit down to afternoon leisure.

Her well-worn baby clothes were all given away, the cradle was peaceably consigned to the garret, and my mother was now regarded as without excuse if she did not preside at the weekly prayer-meeting, the monthly Maternal Association, and the Missionary meeting, and perform besides several pastoral visitations among the good wives of her parish.

No one, of course, ever thought of voting her any little extra salary on account of these public duties which absorbed so much time and attention from her perplexing domestic cares—rendered still more severe and onerous by my father's limited salary. My father's six hundred dollars, however, was considered by the farmers of the vicinity as being a princely income, which accounted satisfactorily for everything, and had he not been considered by them as "about the smartest man in the State," they could not have gone up to such a figure. My mother was one of those gentle, soft-spoken, quiet little women who, like oil, permeate every crack and joint of life with smoothness.

With a noiseless step, an almost shadowy movement, her hand and eye were everywhere. Her house was a miracle of neatness and order—her children of all ages and sizes under her perfect control, and the accumulations of labor of all descriptions which beset a great family where there are no servants, all melted away under her hands as if by enchantment.

She had a divine magic too, that mother of mine; if it be magic to commune daily with the supernatural. She had a little room all her own, where on a stand always lay open the great family Bible, and when work pressed hard and children were untoward, when sickness threatened, when the skeins of life were all crossways and tangled, she went quietly to that room, and kneeling over that Bible, took hold of a warm, healing, invisible hand, that made the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

"Poor Mrs. Henderson—another boy!" said the gossips on the day that I was born. "What a shame! poor woman. Well, I wish her joy!"

But she took me to a warm bosom and bade God bless me! All that God sent to her was treasure. "Who knows," she said cheerily to my father, "this may be our brightest?"

"God bless him," said my father, kissing me and my mother, and then he returned to an important treatise which was to reconcile the decrees of God with the free agency of man, and which the event of my entrance into this world had interrupted for some hours. The