

Our Mission Bands

A LEPER IDYLL

"She stood outside the settlement
Her eyes bedimmed with tears.
A little outcast leper girl
Of very tender years.

"I sought the keeper of the gate
And paid a trifling fee,
It purchased Paradise for her
And even more for me.

"For as she passed within the gate
She looked at me and smiled
And taught me just what Heaven meant,—
That little leper child."

—S. Isabel Hatch.

May 25, 1925.

In report of work among lepers.

THE TROUBLES OF AN ACORN.

By Rev. G. B. Stallworthy, Samoa, South
Sea Islands.

They were very great troubles. The poor Acorn was no sooner out of one trouble than it was into another.

It began life high up in the warm sunshine and cool breeze. There was just nothing to do but to draw in food, grow big, and swing about in the air.

Then the old tree became stingy and sent it less and less sap, and the tube through which the sap came shrank and became narrower.

"This is too bad," said the Acorn, "just when I might have grown as plump as a pumpkin, to have my food lessened!"

But the old tree wouldn't argue. This was the first trouble—less food. But soon there was another.

The Acorn felt itself getting loose in its cup; it could not hold on as tight as it used to do. Then came a puff of wind which shook it clean out, and threw it to the ground.

Here was a miserable change—instead of swaying in the sunshine on a branch of the oak, to be lying low amongst grass and moss on the damp ground!

But that was not the worst of it. There came by a great cow, and put her heavy, ugly foot right on the Acorn, and squeezed it down into the muddy soil.

Then the Acorn began to swell with the damp, and its skin cracked, and it felt like splitting to pieces. It was very miserable and it moaned and groaned.

Then a cheerful neighbor spoke to it—a big red Haw that had fallen from the hedge and was lying close by on the ground. "Do not make a trouble about anything," said the Haw. "Do as I have done; send a root down into the ground, hold tight and grow."

The Acorn took the Haw's advice and sent down a root. But now it began to get thin and its fat lobes shrivelled. Here was another trouble.

"Don't be silly," said the Haw. "Those fat lobes are your food; they are meant for you to live upon, while you begin to grow into an oak."

"Can I become an oak?" said the Acorn, in great surprise. "Of course you can; all acorns can become oaks, if they are patient and work hard," said the Haw. "Now send a shoot up into the air."

Again the Acorn took the Haw's advice, and soon became a tiny oak-tree, growing up amidst the grass and moss, with real oak leaves.

"This is splendid," said the Acorn. "I see now what can be done by courage, and diligence, and taking a wise neighbor's advice. I should never have become an oak if my mother oak-tree had kept on feeding me, and if I had not fallen to the ground, and if something hadn't thrust me down into the mud, and if I hadn't made good use of the store of food that was in me and the wise advice that was given me, and if I had not sent a strong root down into the ground, and a strong shoot up in the air."

Acorns can't grow to be oaks by swaying about in the tree tops; and boys and girls cannot grow to be worthy men and women by having their own way and their own pleasures. Out of troubles and difficulty comes Victory.—The United Church Record and Missionary Review.