

MY REFUGE.

'In the secret of his presence.'—Psalm xxx. 20.
 [The following verses were written by a Brahmin lady of India, Ellen Lakshmi, who for many years has worked as a missionary among her own country women.]
 In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide!
 Oh! how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side!
 Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low,
 For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.
 When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His wing
 There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal spring;
 And my Saviour rests beside me as we hold communion sweet,
 If I tried I could not utter what He says when thus we meet.
 Only this I know: I tell Him all my doubts, and griefs, and fears;
 Oh, how patiently He listens, and my drooping soul He cheers.
 Do you think He never reproves me? What a false friend He would be
 If He never, never told me of the sins which He must see.
 Do you think that I could love Him half so well, or as I ought,
 If He didn't tell me plainly of each sinful deed and thought?
 No; He is very faithful, and that makes me trust Him more.
 For I know that He does love me, though He wounds me very sore.
 Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the Lord?
 Go and hide beneath His shadow, this shall then be your reward;
 And whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting place,
 You must mind and bear the image of your Master in your face.
 You will surely lose the blessing and the fulness of your joy,
 If you let dark clouds distress you and your inward peace destroy.
 You may always be abiding, if you will, at Jesus' side;
 In the secret of his presence you may every moment hide.

BELINDA'S ADVANTAGES.

'Oh, dear!' said Belinda. 'Here are these horrible stockings, cousin Ada. There is always something.'
 I can give you no idea of the combination between whine, snarl, and wail in which Belinda Barton spoke these words as she flung herself into a chair with a sidelong, ungraceful motion which I can only describe by the word 'flump.'
 'Well! Would you rather it was always nothing?' said Miss Ada Strong, a bright, elegant, little elderly lady.
 'Oh, you know what I mean, cousin Ada,' said Belinda, a well-grown girl of sixteen, who would have been very pretty had it not been for the frown on her forehead and the way her mouth turned down at the corners. 'All my aspirations for an education are disappointed, and I must just live on, on this poky farm; nothing but drudgery—drudgery from morning till night.'
 Miss Strong made no reply. She drew the basket of stockings toward her and began to darn a big hole in the heel of little Jack's sock.
 'I do so yearn for the advantages of culture,' said Belinda. 'You don't know, cousin Ada, how miserable I am.'
 'If I don't, it is not for the want of your proclaiming it,' thought Miss Strong, but she said nothing, and worked on.
 'And I thought when you came you would sympathize with me and understand me,' said Belinda, beginning to cry, 'but you haven't a word to say to me. Well! It is my fate to meet with no sympathy,' and Belinda sobbed. Not a word from Miss Strong, but the hole in Jack's stocking went on growing 'beautifully less.'
 'You might say something,' said Belinda.
 'I thought that was just what you were complaining of, that "there was always something,"' said Miss Strong.
 'That isn't what I mean,' said Belinda, incoherently, rubbing her eyes till she looked like 'the maiden all forlorn,' in 'The house that Jack built.'
 'What do you mean then?' said Miss Strong, strangely unmoved.

'I wanted you to have some sympathy with me,' said Belinda, 'but you don't say a word.'
 Miss Strong went on darning.
 'I think you might say something, cousin Ada,' said Belinda, passing from sentiment to snappishness.
 'If I don't,' said Miss Strong, after a pause, 'it is because I don't want to say to you what seems to me great nonsense, and I am pretty sure you would be angry if I talked what seems to me sense.'
 Belinda was not yearning for sense. It had never occurred to her that she had any need of that article. Nevertheless, the word awoke in her mind a certain curiosity.
 'Sense, cousin Ada?' she said, in a hesitating way.
 'Just so.'
 'I am sure I should not be angry at that from you,' Belinda said, after a moment's pause. 'You are so cultivated—you live among intellectual people, and—and—all that,' she concluded vaguely.
 'I suppose you think so because I am assistant librarian in the A— library. I assure you there is plenty of what you call drudgery in my work.'
 'But you must understand how I long for a chance to develop my mind's higher faculties,' said Belinda.
 'I confess I never should have guessed from what I have seen of you that you had any such thirst for knowledge,' said Miss Strong, coolly.
 'Why, cousin Ada, returned Belinda, astonished, 'haven't I told you over and over again how I longed, literally thirsted and starved to go to a good school, away from home and all this miserable farm work, and can't because father thinks he can't afford it, and that I ought to help mother. So here I have to stay and wear my heart out over this horrid drudgery that I just hate.'
 'Oh! You mean you want to go to school, leave home, and shirk your part of the family burden,' said Miss Strong. 'That's quite another thing from a wish to improve yourself. If you really desired improvement, you'd make use of the advantages you have.'
 'Advantages! Mine?' replied Belinda, scornfully. 'I'd like to know what they are?'
 Miss Strong was silent.
 'I do wish, cousin Ada, you would tell me what you mean,' said Belinda, fretfully.
 'I thought when father and mother went to town this afternoon I should have a long talk with you and you'd be so sympathetic, and now oh—o-o-o,' and Belinda trailed off into a dismal wail, like a puppy whose paw has been stepped on. 'What can I study here?'
 'Natural history, practical chemistry, botany, history, literature, ethics and theology, not to mention the use of your hands, a tolerably wide field in which to develop the mind of a young woman, one would think.'
 Belinda stared at her cousin in amazement.
 'I do wish you'd tell me what you mean,' she said indignantly.
 'I am afraid it would not be of any use,' said Miss Strong, shaking her head. 'I am going away soon, and I don't want to quarrel with you. It would vex your mother, and she has enough to get along with now.'
 'Indeed, I won't be angry,' said Belinda, more good-naturedly. 'You can say what you like. Oh! do please,' she added, for she really wished to know.
 'Very well, then,' said Miss Strong, picking another pair of socks out of the basket. 'Begin with a lesson in technology; take your own stockings and darn them, not cobble them as you have these of poor little Jack. Here is a big knot of hard thread in the heel, nearly as big as a pea. No wonder the poor child had a sore place in his little foot. Any young woman of common sense ought to be ashamed to put such a piece of work out of her hands. Don't you know any better than to darn with hard thread? Surely your mother must have showed you how to darn.'
 'The cotton was upstairs,' pouted Belinda. 'What does it matter?'
 'Walk about for a day with a pea in your shoe and you'll find out,' said Miss Strong. 'The trouble with you is that you think an education is nothing but going to school, passing through some text-books, and graduating. Educating a human being

is, properly speaking, drawing out and training the powers of mind and body, and yours are all running to waste and worse.' Belinda was so astonished at this assault that she left off sighing.

'There is nothing that you do about the house that is well done,' continued Miss Strong. 'If you are set to sweep a room, it is not half swept. If you undertake to get a meal, you act as if it were a great hardship. You take no pains, and turn out something almost uneatable. Here is your mother ready and anxious to make you as good a housekeeper as herself, and instead of learning, that you may lighten her cares, you wickedly and perversely set yourself against being taught. You might learn of her to be a first-rate dairy woman, and you might read all you can find on that very important branch of practical chemistry; but no! If you are called on to help, you spoil half you touch, and go about with a look that is enough to sour the milk. You might care for the poultry and earn and save money, and learn concerning the ways and habits of animals, but you take pains to show your father how utterly indifferent you are to all his business and his interests, and you think this undutiful folly is a sign you are "superior." I heard Miss Jones offer to teach you what she knew of botany, and that is no little, let me tell you, and you rejected her offer in such an ungracious way that I was ashamed of you. Your mother's manners are lovely, your father is gracious and kind to every one; but instead of profiting by their example, your manners are rude and ill-bred to a degree that astonishes me, and any reproof or advice you resent with sulks and ill-temper. To your little brother and sister you hardly speak a civil word, and set them an example which adds greatly to the cares and worries of your parents. You wished me to speak plainly, and I must say that your perpetual fretting, whining, and complaining because your father cannot, in justice to the rest of his family, send you away to school seems to me much more like stupidity than a desire for improvement. You say you wish to learn. Here in the house are Shakespeare, Milton, and Scott, and other books of the best, but you do not care to acquaint yourself with the great masters of English. You know almost nothing of the history of England, or your own country. Your pastor offered you any books in his library—a good collection, but if you read, it is only the trashiest story. Every week since I have been here I have offered to go over the Sunday-school lesson with you, but you have never cared to learn anything I could teach you, and you are disgracefully and inexcusably ignorant of the Bible for all the pains that have been taken to teach you.'

Belinda sat silent. Her conscience, which under the gentle and affectionate remonstrances of her father and mother had remained fast asleep, had suddenly waked up at Miss Strong's sterner call, and was speaking with emphasis. The girl did not know what to say, and contrary to her usual practice she said nothing.

'Believe me, child,' said Miss Strong, more gently, 'you have a hundred advantages if you will only improve them. An education which will fit you for the chief, the highest, end of your being is in your reach. If you will set yourself resolutely to work to improve the advantages you have, you may become a noble and educated woman in the best sense of the word.'

'What is the highest end of one's being, then?' said Belinda, after a silence.

'To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever,' said Miss Strong, reverently. Belinda sat looking out of the window for a few minutes; then she put down her work, went upstairs, and was gone for half an hour.

When she came down again there were traces of tears, but a new light was in her eyes. 'Cousin Ada,' she said, 'I have found the soft cotton; will you show me how to darn Jack's stockings? I promise you, that is, I hope he will never have to complain of a hard lump in his heel again.' And now, if any other Belinda reads this story, I hope she will go and do likewise. *Parish Visitor.*

IF CHRISTIANS do not stand up and fight manfully for their Sabbath, Satan and his allies will break it down. The devil is mean enough to do anything.—*Ram's Horn.*

DORA MARVIN.

HOPE DARING.

Dora Marvin is young friend of mine. A bright, merry girl, whom I love so dearly that I wish I could play the part of a fairy god-mother, and change some things that I fear may mar her life.

The Marvin breakfast hour is seven. 'Call Dora,' Mrs. Marvin tells little Tom, as the clock strikes.

'Yes, in a minute, comes the reply, and they wait five. Then, as the father must not be late at his work, they take their places and Mrs. Marvin serves the oatmeal, Dora's work, in addition to pouring the coffee. In a few moments the little daughter appeared, with a bright word of explanation that it had taken her so long to curl her hair.

That afternoon Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Marvin's sister, came in to interest them in a little cripple girl she had found in her work among the poor.

'She is so fond of reading,' she went on to say, 'and, Dora, I wish you would lend her some of your books—your last Christmas "Chatterbox," "Alice in Wonderland," or Miss Alcott's "Jack and Jill." What a delight they will be to little Katie.'

'But, Auntie,' Dora said, 'I am very careful of my books, and could not think of lending them.'

'Why, Dora! I am sure Katie will be careful of them too. Think, little girl, of lying all day alone, for Katie's mamma sews away from home.'

Dora's hand moved slower and slower as she caressed Clever, her pet cat, and she looked thoughtfully into the glowing coal fire.

'I am sorry for Katie,' she said at last, 'and I will give ten cents of my own money towards buying her a book, but I could not lend my dear books. Why, Auntie, they have all been given to me.'

Mrs. Lewis said nothing more, but there was something suspiciously like a tear in her eye when Dora kissed her good-night.

A few days later Tom came rushing into the sitting-room where Dora sat reading. 'O, sister! please read me the stories in my new magazine,' and he displayed with a proud importance his new Nursery.

Dora's fair brow clouded. 'Do run away, Tom. Sister is reading.'

'But read to me, Dora, please do. Here is a funny picture 'bout a real donkey.'

'I wish you'd run away, you little tease. Our teacher asked us to read "In Memoriam," and I wonder how I can read understandingly with you chattering in my ears. And now you are stepping right on my dress. Do go to mamma.'

'Mamma's got the headache. I think you're selfish, Dora, so there,' and he left the room, manfully choking back the sobs, but slamming the door so hard that it caused the tired mother to bury her face in the pillow with a moan.

What did Dora do? She shrugged her shoulders, nestled back in her low chair, and turning a leaf round, without at all comprehending its truth:

'I held it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.'

—*Michigan Christian Advocate.*

THE PRINCE IS DEAD.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

A room in the palace is shut. The king
 And the queen are sitting in black.
 All day weeping servants will run and bring.
 But the heart of the queen will lack
 All things; and the eyes of the king will swim
 With tears which must not be shed,
 But will make all the air float dark and dim.
 As he looks at each gold and silver toy,
 And thinks how it gladdened the royal boy,
 And dumbly writhes while the courtiers read
 How all the nations his sorrow heed.
 The prince is dead.

The hut has a door, but the hinge is weak,
 And to-day the wind blows it back;
 There are two sitting there who do not speak;
 They have begged a few rugs of black;
 They are hard at work, though their eyes are wet
 With tears that must not be shed;
 They dare not look where the cradle is set;
 They hate the sunbeam which plays on the floor,
 But will make the baby laugh out no more;
 They feel as if they were turning to stone;
 They wish the neighbors would leave them alone.
 The prince is dead.