

drowning girl. As Kit stood before them, rosy and blushing, he bore so striking a resemblance in feature and expression to his mother, that Mrs. Armstrong was affected to tears, and eagerly inquired whose boy he was. The reply that "old Ephraim Goodwill had brought him home from somewhere two years ago since" only deepened her interest, and at the earliest opportunity she drove over to Ephraim's to inquire further. He readily told all he knew, and then Kit himself was called in to be questioned about his earlier history. Further back than the wretched New York life he could tell nothing. His mother he could not remember at all, but, said he, "I do remember somebody who was kind to me a long time ago, but I don't think father liked her, for I once saw him hit her with a stick, same as he did me." "Poor Ellen!" thought Mrs. Armstrong, "is it possible that it came to this?" Then, in the hope of finding some further clue, she asked, "Have you anything now that you used to have in New York?"

Kit dived into his pocket, and from a heterogeneous mass of boy's treasures—marbles, nails, string, knife—pulled out a bit of broken silver about an inch square. He did not know where he had got it, he said, apologetically, but he had kept it so long that he did not like to throw it away. Very valuable, however, it proved to be, for in the centre was an engraved monogram which Mrs. Armstrong at once recognized as formed from the initials of Miss King's maiden name. Further information was elicited from the boy of the locality in which he had lived in New York, and by making this the starting-point of after-inquiry in America, they eventually obtained clear and conclusive evidence of Kit's parentage. But when this was established, his interests peculiarly were but little furthered, for two years ago his grandfather's property had been scattered amongst distant relatives and could not be recovered. The difficulty cost Kit's friends much earnest thinking, until Ephraim made the happy suggestion that, though the entire property could not be got back, it was quite possible that each legatee would surrender 10 per cent. of his legacy (merely the amount of duty, argued he), and this, while trifling in each case as a sum to give up, would altogether make a handsome fortune for the lad. If, then, this was at all practicable, none so likely to make it so as Mrs. Armstrong, and accordingly she undertook to wait personally upon the legatees to win their united consent to the proposal. The result will be seen in the following extracts from her diary.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. ESTHER ARMSTRONG'S DIARY.

Nov. 21.—Saw legatee No. 1, an open-hearted, generous man, with a perfect Niagara of talk, which rushed upon me and drowned my thoughts before I had time to present them. Stated my case with a diffidence I certainly felt, but before I had time for a word of pleading, his generosity gushed up charmingly—"My dear Madam, of course I will do it, but you have put the figure too low—say twenty per cent.—I will write the cheque just now." Declined to take more than I had said, and with many thanks took my leave.

Nov. 22.—Saw No. 2, a good-looking farmer, full of sympathy and good wishes for the boy, and promised that his share should be ready when required. Memo. How strangely human nature is maligned! People speak of it as selfish, and I began my work expecting to find it so, but instead, it is so kind and generous.

Nov. 23.—Visited No. 3. Handsome but not nice face—heard my story out, and then waited for my pleading to the very last breath, cautioned me against being cheated; promised to think it over and let me know. Memo.—Perhaps hu-

man nature has, after all, two sides—but we have just heard that he consents.

Nov. 25.—Set off early to see No. 4. Missed the train and had to wait two hours at Long Junction. Met friend D., and told him my errand. Said he, "Your missing your train is fortunate, for I know the man, and have just seen him in the waiting-room. Was introduced, and pleaded the boy's cause. I thought he looked quite disconcerted: kept leading the conversation to other things as if to gain time; then, going to the platform and wondering what *could* be delaying the train; then asked what the other legatees thought of doing, and if a smaller sum would not do. So he dallied and talked, and still to his discomfort the train did not come. Suddenly came news of a dreadful accident, two miles off, to the very train we were waiting for. When the excitement had partially subsided, found him with softened feelings and so ventured to speak to him again on the subject. He consented to give his share if all the others agreed. "Nay," said he, with a burst of emotion, as a poor wounded passenger was carried past on a stretcher, "I might have been lying there: give the lad the money you want from me. I'll pay it, no matter what the others do."

Nov. 28.—Went to see No. 5.—Miss Stoney, a rich maiden lady. As I went, felt quite sure of success, for if the gentlemen had consented so nicely, a woman's heart would be sure to pity the boy. Imposing-looking footman ushered me into the reception-room, where Miss S. joined me. She was straight and thin, and very fashionably dressed. Her face was sharp and bony, and all the rouge on it could not hide its mean look. I told my tale, and was beginning to plead for the boy, when she interrupted me. "Pardon me, but is this all the business you have with me to-day?" "Yes, madam." "And you have told me all about the case?" "Yes, madam, except to entreat your kind—" "Yes, I quite understand, but the money has been left to me, and I shall keep it. Let the boy look after himself. I do it, and why should not he?" Then, summoning her footman to attend me to the door, she made me a stiff curtsy, and left the room. Memo.—What a cold, hard, cruel, selfish thing human nature is, to be sure!"

CHAPTER VI.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE AND ON THIS.

With boundless delight did Ephraim hear of Mrs. Armstrong's success, and nothing would satisfy him but that the generous legatees should spend the approaching Christmas-day at his house. They entered freely into the old man's humor, and upon few spots did Father Christmas smile more benignly than where the little company were gathered together. They met in the true spirit of a "Merry Christmas," the spirit of self-denial for another's good, and they found it a sure path by which to enter into the joy of the Christmas promise, "Peace on earth and good-will toward men." In this spirit came the Holy Child and Lord of Christmas—"not to be ministered unto but to minister;" and still his Gospel, like rich perfume, breathes fragrance on whatever it touches, as was felt that day by Ephraim's guests in the pure unselfish deed they had done for the welfare of the orphan lad.

Ten miles from Alder-fen Miss Stoney spent that Christmas-day alone. She was surrounded by all the material comfort her wealth could bring her; for her money well-trained servers prepared her costly dishes; for her money her tall footman moved obsequiously to do her bidding; but no poor blessed her for gifts, no well-wishers came with kindly Christmas greetings. Wearily to her passed the day, and still wearily drooped the night—her vice the whip that scourged her. In Divine law she con-

tinually ate "the fruit of her doings," and the selfishness which was the indulgence of her life, was also its burden and curse. So, in this simple Christmas story of the Fen Country, we read the poet's lesson that—

*'Tis when the rose is wrapped in many a fold
Close to its heart the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty, not when all unrolled
Leaf after leaf, its bosom rich and fair
Freely its perfume breathes throughout the ambient air*

EVERY-DAY RELIGION.

We must come back to our point which is, not to urge all of you to give yourselves up to mission work, but to serve God more and more in connection with your daily calling. I have heard that a woman who has a mission makes a poor wife and a bad mother; this is very possible and at the same time very lamentable; but the mission I would urge is not of this sort. Dirty rooms, slatternly gowns, and children with unwashed faces are swift witnesses against the sincerity of those who keep other's vineyards and neglect their own. I have no faith in that woman who tells of grace and glory abroad, and no soap and water at home. Let the buttons be on the shirts, let the children's socks be mended, let the roast mutton be done to a turn, let the house be as neat as a pin, and the home be as happy as home can be. Serve God by doing common actions in a heavenly spirit, and then, if your daily calling only leaves you cracks and crevices of time, fill these up with holy service.—*Spurgeon.*

SENSIBLE ADVICE TO PREACHERS.

The editor of the *Christian Advocate* gives good advice to preachers who are troubled with sleeplessness on Sunday nights. He says: Its cause is excessive excitement and fatigue always tends to sleeplessness, whether it be produced by muscular or mental exercise. To prevent sleeplessness on Sunday night, the following hints will be found valuable. So far as possible complete the preparation for the sabbath by Friday night, and spend the greater part of Saturday in the open air. Eat on the Sabbath a good breakfast, a moderate mid-day meal without dessert, and a slight supper, without tea or coffee later in the day than breakfast. Take a nap, if possible, of half an hour or an hour between the two sermons. Cultivate stupidity all the rest of the time. After returning home from the evening service, read twenty-five pages of the drier, least stimulating, and yet important book in your library. On retiring rub yourself down from head to foot with a towel. Make up your mind that you do not care what anybody thinks of the sermons you preached that day. Commit yourself to the Lord, and breathe very slowly and systematically, retarding the natural rate of breathing, and making the inspirations as deep as possible. If you are not a sick man, you will be asleep in less than forty-five minutes.

THE Observance of a Sabbath Day is part of the eternal law of God. It is not of Moses only, but of the date of the creator. It is not a mere temporary Jewish ordinance. It is not a man-made institution of priest-craft, or an unauthorized imposition of the Church. It is one of the everlasting rules which God has revealed for the guidance of all mankind. It is a rule that many nations without the Bible have lost sight of, and buried, like other rules, under the rubbish of superstition and heathenism. But it was a rule intended to be binding on all the children of Adam.—*Canon Ryle.*

—There are three things which the true Christian desires with respect to sin, Justification, that it may not condemn; Sanctification, that it may not reign; and Glorification, that it may not be.—*Cecil.*

Boys and Girls.

GOING TO JESUS.

"But I'm too little."
"Oh, no, because He says, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me,'"
"But that means when they die to come up to heaven."

"Oh, no; mamma says it means for all to love Him, and pray to Him, and let Him see us love Him now."
"He's so far off, maybe He won't know anyhow."

"But it's most frightful to think of His looking away down from heaven every minute, and how can He hear when He is so far off?"

"God is not far off; He is over near, taking care of us, putting pleasant thoughts in our minds, and helping us do pleasant things."

"I am so little, I don't believe He sees me."

"Mamma says He sees the birds and the flowers, and even watches over the flowers, and that He loves little children."

"I'm sure I don't know how to go to Him except by dying."

"Oh, no, you need not go out of this room, for He is here, and mamma says that going to Him is only giving ourselves to Him—giving Him our love."

Kitty's blue eyes were full of tears.

"Jesus is so good and great and I am so bad."

"He loves you and me a great deal, and though He is so great, He is Jesus after all. He was a little child once, and had every kind of trouble, so that He can feel for little children."

"But, Florrie, I'm so bad; you don't know how bad I am sometimes, and Aunt Harberger says, 'There is no place in the kingdom for such evil ones.' I upset her splatters yesterday night on the kitchen floor because I was careless and putting, and let the tea-kettle go dry and crack, and swept the dirt into the corner instead of into the dust-pan. I know I'm too bad and too small for Jesus to care about;" and Kitty's apron was held close to her eyes as she sobbed herself out of breath.

"Aunt Harberger is cross and cruel," thought Florrie, but she kept her thoughts to herself. "If I had Aunt Harberger, instead of a dear mamma, who knows how bad I might be," and the thought made her sigh, wondering as she did, if she had really gone to Jesus, or if she was only good because those around her were good.

"I'm always forgetting and upsetting always making mistakes and making trouble; nothing but trouble have I brought to Aunt Harberger. Do you think Jesus would ever care for me?"

"Mamma says He cares for the most wicked men and wicked women in the world, and you are only a little girl trying to do right and getting wrong sometimes."

"If Jesus is close by and sees me every minute He knows how bad I am, and He can hear how often Aunt Harberger tells about it. Oh, dear, if I could only find some place where Jesus did not come, but now He sees me all the time and what can He think?"

Florrie's face was very serious as she said, "Jesus came to save sinners; mamma says that knowing He sees us is the best thing in the world to help us do right, because it stops us when we go to do wrong and remember He is just close by."

"What are you crying for?" said Aunt Harberger, popping her head in the door and thinking the little girl was complaining about her.

"Oh, nothing," said Florrie, blushing and looking down, "only we are talking about Jesus, and Kitty is crying because she cannot please you and Him better."

"Humph!" said Aunt Harberger bustling down stairs, the tears bubbling up in her eyes. "Humph!" and though it may seem odd, Aunt Harberger, from that time, found no more "dirt in the corners," no more "splatters spilled on purpose," for the little girl, growing bigger and stronger every day to work, was also learning to remember that Jesus saw her, and that Jesus loved her through everything; and if Aunt Harberger did not tell, as she had done before, fifty times a day, to the walls up stairs and down, and to the people in doors and out, what "a bad child that pesty Kitty Holcomb was," it was hard to say if it was altogether because she remembered the scene in the attic with Kitty crying over her bad ways, or altogether because Kitty, without going further than her own trundle bed and her own little attic room, had found and given herself to Jesus.