

THE QUIET HOUR.

Nursing Our Wrongs.

"Sometimes we fondly nurse our grief
With soothing, tender care;
And then to see how fast it grows,
Makes e'en its owners stare.
We feed it with the richest food
A fertile mind can give,
When smarting under fancied griefs
From those with whom we live.
And with this food it thrives so well,
And grows to giant size,
That though rich blessings strew our path,
They're hidden from our eyes.
'Tis wiser far to take our griefs
And troubles day by day
To Him who waits and yearns to bear
Our every grief away."

In the Sermon on the Mount, one sentence of the Lord's Prayer is particularly enforced, and a terrible penalty attached to the disregard of it. Not only does the punishment for an unforgiving spirit stand in the very heart of the prayer—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive"—but our Lord goes back after finishing the prayer to make this petition even more startlingly emphatic. "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The same warning is given over again in the parable of the unmerciful servant. In this case the forgiveness, given freely at first, is taken back. The servant whose enormous debt has been forgiven, finds that when he shows no mercy to his fellow-servant, he forfeits everything.

Now, I am going to speak very solemnly to-day. Some of you are smarting under wrongs which you have received, or fancy that you have received. Perhaps you carry the unforgiving spirit so far as not to be on speaking terms with the person who has injured you. Sometimes people dare to keep this up for years. Often the first cause of offence is almost forgotten, but each one is too proud to make the first advances towards a reconciliation. I say people dare to do this, for it is a very daring thing to do, although it is so common that no one seems to be alarmed by it—common among professing Christians!

Think what it means to go on day after day without a hope of forgiveness, not daring—if we are honest—to ask our Father to forgive us as we forgive. It is no use asking for pardon when one is openly defying the awful warning, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." If we would not be shut out from God's mercy we must do our very utmost to effect a reconciliation. God will never accept us nor our gifts while we are cherishing an unforgiving spirit. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." It does not say that thy brother must be reconciled to thee—that is not always within our power—but we are bound to do our part.

A sullen, half-hearted forgiveness is worth very little. Let us try to be imitators of God, for "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." As Beecher says, "A forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note, torn in two and burned up, so that it can never be shown against the man."

"'Tis not enough to weep my sins,
'Tis but one step to heaven—
When I am kind to others—then
I know myself forgiven."

But perhaps we are not outwardly at enmity with anyone, and yet are nursing the memory of some small wrongs or slights. We say we can forgive but not forget. Are we really forgiving after the pattern of Him who freely forgave those who nailed Him to the cross? He showed no sign of resentment towards those who heaped insult after insult on Him—insults beside which our trifling wrongs fade into nothingness.

"What? Wearied out with half a life?
Scared with this smooth, unbloody strife?
Think where thy coward hopes had flown
Had Heaven held out the martyr's crown.
How could'st thou hang upon the cross,
To whom a weary hour is loss?
Or how the thorns and scourging brook
Who shrinkest from a scornful look?"

Why is a slighting word so hard to bear? We are ready enough to own that we fall far short of perfection, but if anyone else hints at such a thing, and we hear of it, we are at once stirred up to indignation. Why? Are we seeking to please men or God? The world's opinion of us is of very little consequence, and proves very little as to our real character. One who is seeking for popularity will lead a very unquiet life, and probably fail to win the applause he is living for. No one admires a man who has no backbone; who, like the old man with the ass, is willing to go to any lengths to win approval from men.

Christ generally encourages by promises rather than by threats, and there is a great promise attached to this question of forgiveness—"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." But, as a free and hearty forgiveness of injuries is a very difficult

grace for weak and hasty human beings to cultivate, a solemn warning is also given. Our Lord says, that the unmerciful servant was delivered to the tormentors, and adds, "so likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses." From your hearts! Don't let our forgiveness be a matter of kind words and actions only towards those who have injured us. Emerson knew human nature well, knew that an outward kindness may sometimes be an insult, when he said,—

"Gifts of one who loved me,—
'Twas high time they came.
When he ceased to love me,
Time they stopped for shame."

Every thought must be in captivity to our Master. It is possible to control our thoughts, although many people indolently exclaim, "We can't help our thoughts." We have to help them, or forfeit forgiveness ourselves. One more verse and I have done.

"Kind hearts are here: yet would the tenderest one
Have limits to its mercy: God has none!
And man's forgiveness may be true and sweet,—
But yet he stoops to give it. More complete
Is Love that lays Forgiveness at thy feet,
And pleads with thee to raise it! Only Heaven
Means 'Crowned,' not 'Vanquished,' when it says
'Forgiven.'"

HOPE.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

Studying Our Christmas Number.



Toby and Trotters and Tim
Took a fancy to study the news,
So they hunted around
And an "Advocate" found,
Which they promptly began to abuse.

The three little mischievous dogs
Had never, you see, been to school,
So of course couldn't read—
Didn't try to, indeed—
For they hated to do things by rule.

They tore Father Time into shreds,
Made mince-meat of Edward the King—
That finished the cover—
Then tried to discover
Some pictures that Christmas should bring.

"There's a horse that is having a drink!"
Said Tim, with his paws on the book,
"And five nice little cats!
Are they looking for rats?
And here's Santa! Oh look! fellows, look!"

"Piccadilly" they voted just right,
They kissed the sweet "Christmas Queen,"
Barked at horses and hogs,
Admired all the dogs,
But read not a word in between.

COUSIN DOROTHY.

PICTURE COMPETITION—CLASS III.

Tired Travellers.

A little boy once got the present of a monkey. His name was Willie. The monkey was young, and he taught it to do a lot of tricks. Willie had a sister. Her name was Bertha. She did not go to school, but Willie did, and the monkey stayed with her. One day the monkey followed him to school. The boys and girls liked to see it going through some tricks that Willie had taught it. He gave it the name of Jack. Willie had no father, and two years later his mother died. They came to a strange place, and had no friends. A short time after his mother died he got a chain for his monkey and started out for town. After he got there he did not know where he was going. He wandered round looking for some place to rest. He sat down on different doorsteps, but when the owners of the houses found him they would send him away. He would linger in front of the house and let his monkey go through some tricks; but even that would not coax them to let him stay. The sun was going down, and he was very tired; so back of a house. He expected to be driven away by looking lady appeared and asked him if he was a stranger, and said she had never seen him before. He told her his story, and she asked him to bring his monkey and come in and stay till morning, which he did.

MARTHA D. CROWE (aged 10).

PICTURE COMPETITION—CLASS IV.

Tired Travellers.

About the year 1870, over in the western part of Ontario, lived a widowed mother and her son Bill. A few months before, a terrible accident happened. Her husband was a bricklayer, and while on a very high scaffold was walking backwards on account of

some bricks falling, but he walked too far and fell on a large, rough rock and was killed. Billie being a manly little fellow (only eleven), wished to take the household cares on his own hands, and always looked up the advertisements in the "Farmer's Advocate." One evening his wish was gratified, for there was a little monkey for sale very cheap, and six months' credit. You may depend that he lost no time in securing him, and was soon on the streets. Billie's mother, before he went out, made him a little blanket trimmed with gold braid for his monkey. Then off he started, looking quite gay. His first day he did very well, but many disappointments happened before he was through. On this particular day, which was the turning point of his career, and which he thought the worst day he ever had, he sat down on an old doorstep, despondent, sad and weary, thinking of all the refusals he had had this morning, when he beheld a stranger coming along the road (who afterwards turned out to be an artist of great renown). When the man saw the little lad and his monkey, he was so taken with the picture that he asked him to remain in that position a few minutes. After using his brushes a little, he took Billie's address, then proceeded on his way. Some time afterwards, when Billie came home from a good day's work, he was surprised to get a message requesting him to be at a certain place that evening. When he arrived there, the artist gave him one-half of what he got for the picture, and asked him how he would like to paint pictures. Billie was delighted with the idea, so the artist promised faithfully to be his teacher without charge. Billie was never so happy as he was that night, and in after years, when he was asked how he got to be so great, he would say, "By looking up the advertising columns in the 'Farmer's Advocate.'"

CHARLES CHAPMAN (aged 9).

If you wrote that story yourself, Charlie, you are surely cut out for an author.—C. D.

A Memory.

(By Mrs. J. H. Doolittle.)

A sweet picture hangs on Memory's wall
Of a far-off April day,
When a wee girl stood on the large doorstep
Of her prairie home at play.

As her shoes were thin and the ground was damp,
Mamma had told her to stay
Right there on the doorstep, nor venture down
On the cool, damp ground to play.

Her father came home from the prairie town,
And his heart welled up to see
His little one there in the sunlight fair,
Playing in innocent glee.

Extending his arms, he lovingly called,
"Come here, little girlie, come."
She started a moment as if to go—
The little feet longed to run.

"Come on! Come to papa." How nice to go!
'Twas a great temptation, you see.
Was not papa there with wide open arms?
Was it wrong? O, how could it be!

She stood but an instant as if in thought,
Then answered, in accents clear:
"I tant time; mamma said I could not,
I must stay and p'ay wight here."
Sparta, Ont.

A Gentle Hint.

Polish yourself up, madam; you had a pretty wit once, a pleasant laugh, a conversation that was not confined exclusively to the shortcomings of servants, the wrongdoings of tradesmen. My dear madam, we do not live on spotless linen and crumbless carpets. Hunt out that bundle of old letters you keep tied up in faded ribbon at the back of your bureau drawer—a pity you don't read them oftener! He did not enthuse about your cuffs and collars, gush over the neatness of your darning. It was your tangled hair he raved about, your sunny smile—we have not seen it for some years, madam—the fault of the cook and the butcher, I presume; your little hands, your rosebud mouth—it has lost its shape, madam, of late. Try a little less scolding of Mary Ann, and practice a laugh once a day; you might get back the dainty curves. It would be worth trying. It was a pretty mouth once.—(Jerome K. Jerome.)

Home.

A prize which was offered by a London paper for the best definition of a home brought about five thousand answers. Some of the best were the following:

"A world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in. Home is the blossom of which heaven is the fruit."

"The only spot on earth where the faults and failings of fallen humanity are hidden under the mantle of charity!"

"The father's kingdom, the children's paradise, the mother's world."

"Where you are treated best and grumble most."

Among the countless parodies of "Hiawatha" there is one which cleverly burlesques the tautological license of the poet:

He killed the noble Mudiokivis;
With the skin he made him mittens,
Made them with the fur side inside;
Made them with the skin side outside;
He, to get the warm side inside,
Put the inside skin side outside;
He, to get the cold side outside,
Put the warm side, fur side inside;
That's why he put the fur side inside,
Why he put the skin side outside,
Why he turned them inside outside.

—Bookman.