

The Model Church.

WELL, wife, I've found a model church! I worshipped there to-day; It made me think of good old times before my hairs were gray; The meetin' house was fixed up more than they were years ago, But then I felt, when I went in, it wasn't built for show.

The usher didn't seat me 'way back to the door; He knew that I was old and deaf as well as old and poor, He must have been a Christian, for he led me boldly through The long aisles of that crowded church to find a pleasant pew.

I wished you'd heard the singin'—it had the old-time ring; The preacher sang with trumpet voice, "Let all the people sing;" The tune was Coronation, and the music upward rolled, 'Till I thought I heard the angels striking all their harps of gold.

My deafness seemed to melt away, my spirit caught the fire, I joined my feeble, trembling voice with that melodious choir, And sang, as in my youthful days, "Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all."

I tell you, wife, it did me good to sing that hymn once more; I felt like some wrecked mariner who gets a glimpse of shore; I almost want to lay aside this weather-beaten form, And anchor in the blessed port forever from the storm.

The preachin'! Well, I can't just tell all that the preacher said; I know it wasn't written, I know it wasn't read; He hadn't time to read it, for the lightning of his eye Was passin' 'long from pew to pew, nor passed a sinner by.

The sermon wasn't flowery, 'twas simple Gospel truth, It fitted poor old men like me, it fitted hopeful youth; 'Twas full of consolation for weary hearts that bleed; 'Twas full of invitations to Christ and not to Creed.

The preacher made sin hideous in Gentiles and in Jews; He shot the golden sentences down on the finest pews; And—though I can't see very well—I saw the falling tear, That told me hell was some way off, and heaven very near.

How swift the golden moments flew within that holy place! How brightly beamed the light of heaven from every happy face! Again I longed for that sweet time when friend shall meet with friend; When congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths have no end.

I hope to meet the minister—the congregation too— In the dear home beyond the skies that shine from heaven's blue. I doubt not I'll remember, beyond life's evening gray, The happy hour of worship in that model church to-day.

Dear wife, the fight will soon be fought, the victory be won; The shinin' goal is just ahead, the race is nearly run; O'er the river we are nearin' they are throngin' to the shore, To shout our safe arrival where the weary weep no more.

THE *Christian Leader* tells this little anecdote of Peter Cooper: A few weeks ago, after he had passed his ninety-second birthday, he remarked to a friend that he seemed to be hearing his mother calling him as when he was a boy: "Peter, Peter, it is about bed time."

Flowers—No Fruit.

BY MRS. EMMA NELSON HOOD.

THE Professor was at his table near the broad window which opened on the flower-garden. The class in botany was to have a public review later in the day, and he had set himself to arrange the work for them here, before breakfast, while the sweet spring air glorified the task.

Out in the garden beyond, young girls, his pupils, were promenading, enjoying fresh nature, and the flowers, and their own glad youth. Their merry voices pleased him, for his heart was kind and young, albeit he had a stern, strong face.

"Good-morning, Professor!" asked Marian Ray, approaching the window. She was the prettiest girl in the seminary, bright and amiable withal. The teacher stopped his work to note the fair pictures the girls made, standing, a rosy group, flower-burdened, with arms entwined, the rose-vine blooming overhead, and a background of shrubbery, while the morning sun rays sifted through the leaves on their heads. He loved everything beautiful that God has made, and his eyes kindled with pleasure. "If I could copy colour I would photograph you, now," he said, with uncertain movement toward the camera.

"What did you say, sir? I asked what you were doing with the flowers?" repeated Marian.

"Ah! I am preparing the work for your botany lesson to-day."

"Oh, Professor, let each of us choose a flower to analyze to-day before our friends, each take the one we like best."

The speaker was Myrtle Spencer. She was older than Marian, and had a plain face, though pleasant, with pale cheeks, grey eyes, and grave smile.

"I am afraid your lesson would be too long if you should have a flower each, my dear. But you may all choose, and I will select from the results such subjects as may suit."

The girls pressed forward with their selections, which they laid on the window-sill, each clamouring to be chosen.

"He'll be sure to take Marian's," said one jealous Miss, seeing the curiously touched expression of the teacher's face, as Marian presented her choice—a bunch of glorious, double geraniums. "Oh, no, he cannot; it is double, and good for nothing," said another.

"No, that flower will not do, dear; it is handsome, but useless, save to illustrate abnormal development. It wants the essential organs."

"Yes," said Myrtle, "the stamens and pistils have all turned to petals—it is imperfect."

"'Imperfect' seems a misnomer when applied to this lovely thing," said Marian, laying the blossom against her lips which matched it with redness.

"Nevertheless it is true," said the teacher, "'perfect,' as applied to a vital organ, means having all parts necessary to the fulfilment of its functions. This geranium has sacrificed its organs of usefulness to self-adornment; it is beautiful but useless, except to please the senses. It lives for itself and the span of its life is measured in hours."

He spoke earnestly, turning his beaming eyes from one to another of the now serious girls.

"And the cause, sir? Tell us what made the change!" asked Myrtle,

softly. She understood already, but she wanted to have the teacher's strong words unfold the grand thought.

"The cause? Ah! too easy a life. Light, air, nourishment, too much luxury, without self-effort—sheltered from every rude wind, pampered by affluence, ruined by prosperity!"

"Why, Professor, you speak as if the flower were a human being—a girl, for instance!" exclaimed Marian, laughing.

"I had forgotten it was not a girl of whom we were speaking. I have seen lovely women ruined in the same sad fatal way."

"How does it come, Professor?"

"Shall I draw out the analogy?"

Well—the abundant light and nourishment produce a too free flow of sap. This is propelled to the flower, and the hurried development forces the essential organs to abnormal growth, and they spread themselves into petals which are showy and high-coloured, fitted to attract the eye, but incapable of any useful results. With girls, the case is similar. Freedom from care, much time and wealth, given as opportunity for improvement, are perverted to idleness, vanity and selfishness until the maiden cares for naught but admiration and pleasure. Had she been compelled to struggle for these blessings they would have been less recklessly squandered and might have matured results."

"Whose fault is it, sir? Not the flower's?"

"What strange questions you do ask, Myrtle!" said a companion.

"Whose fault?" repeated the old man, with a pained look. "No, not the flower's; for it is unthinking, inanimate, irresponsible. It is the gardener's mistake. He loves it too well, and forces it too rapidly; he desires to make it grander, more beautiful than nature designed, and he ruins God's handiwork."

"But if it were a human creature, whose fault?" queried Myrtle.

"The human creature has a mind, a will. It is in a measure responsible and ought to struggle against the silken fetters of indolence—should rise on the propitious circumstances to greater heights of usefulness"—he stopped suddenly as though checked by a thought.

"But if it be a weak nature?" persisted Myrtle.

"God pity it, then—I am afraid the gardener would not be held blameless."

The words were full of contrite bitterness. Myrtle was sorry she had permitted the metaphysical turn of her mind to press the conversation on, for now she knew the old teacher was thinking of his own beautiful, wilful daughter, whom he had reared in luxury, only to see her turn into a butterfly of society. She had died a year ago, a victim to the dissipations of pleasure.

"Oh, you all are so serious! You have forgotten about choosing a flower," complained Marian.

"We had almost forgotten our work," said the teacher, sighing, "Myrtle is a good questioner. What other flowers have you, girls?"

"Here is a sweet pink. We analyzed it once—the *Dianthus Caryophyllus*. I think it will be more fortunate than Marian's geranium, for it is both perfect and complete. See how beautifully developed are the stamens and pistils."

"And in the eyes of the scientist far more charming in its simple fitness for usefulness, than its brilliant companion."

"Excuse just one more question, sir," said Myrtle; "does the analogy hold in the human application? Are there any so scientific as to prefer ugly usefulness to beauty?"

The teacher read the thought in the grey eyes uplifted to his—the craving of the womanly nature for comfort because of that lack of beauty that had been a hardship in her life. He smiled as he answered:

"With fitness there is no ugliness. A thing that is perfectly suited to its functions in life cannot be otherwise than beautiful to the thinking mind. This is less true in material nature than in human. I will unfold the thought. Let us suppose—but I need say no more since Mr. Symmes gives you a practical illustration more forcible than argument."

Mr. Symmes was their teacher in geology. He had just joined the group at the window, and had in his hand a curious petrification, the spoils of a morning walk. Passing, unnoticed, the several pretty girls, he laid it in the brown hands of Myrtle Spencer and had for reward her swift blush which he judged to be of simple pleasure, not knowing of the conversation, to which his evident preference for the only homely girl of the lot had given pertinent illustration. He was young and talented, and more than one young lady of the school and village had sought to magnify her charms to the pleasing of his eyes. But the beauties of Myrtle's mind had outstripped their roses and dimples. When her grey eyes kindled with thought he forgot they were not dark; when her cheeks flushed with feeling he did not know they were sallow; her lips speaking sensible words of truth and beauty were better than rosy—"Myrtle" was to him the name of the sweetest flower in the world. The old teacher had seen these things but wisely said nothing until just now, when the temptation to give an "object lesson" to his favourite pupil had overpowered his discretion. He added, smiling, "The analogy holds as well in the human application. Fruit is better than flowers."

"Is thy cruse of comfort wasting? Rise and share it with another, And through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother; Love divine will fill thy storehouse, or thy handful still renew; Scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two."

"For the heart grows rich in giving: all its wealth is living grain; Seeds, which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain. Is thy burden hard and heavy? Do thy steps drag wearily? Help to bear thy brother's burden; God will bear both it and thee."

In common with the rest of the world, Dr. M., an eminent Church of Scotland divine, visited the International Exhibition, Paris. Shortly after his arrival in the gay metropolis, an Irishman came running to him in the street, crying, "Och, blessin's on ye, Docther M.—! How are ye?" "I'm very well," replied the Doctor, rather dryly. "And when did ye come to Paris?" "Last week; but how do you come to know me?" "Give me a franc, and I'll tell ye!" The Doctor, curious to know how the fellow had found out his name, gave him the franc, and was answered by the Irishman, "Sure, then, I saw your name on your umbrella."