

Nativity Department.

REST IN THE LORD, WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM

Though life's long dreary day be hot with strife,
With bitter agony and fever filled;
Or, like a wilderness of hopes and fears,
Perplexity, vague doubts, and burning tears;
Or dull reproach in each deep-laden heart—
Reproach of self, earth's woes, and even God—
Oh, weary soul, forget the past, and look,
Look onward evermore and pierce the blue.
"Forget the steps thou hast already trod,"
Think only of the promise, grand and true;
Strive not so fiercely—calmly walk and learn
All that thou canst and then lie down, and wait.
The Saviour knoweth all, for He has sent
All that each gentle soul doth struggle o'er;
But ever He Himself is to us lent,
And none but He can help us with such power.
Then, sorrowing one, till thou hast calmer grown
And art all ready-chastened, for Heaven's gate,
The Saviour may not make thee all His own,
Patient is He. He, too, doth ever wait.

Ethel's Work and Its Fruition.

A STORY FOR WHITSUNTIDE.

BY MARY D. BRINE.

"There isn't a child among you, dears, who cannot if she choose to do so, exert an influence for good, and for Christ's service, over those older as well as those of her own age." So said Miss Grey, Sunday-school teacher of a class of girls, the eldest of whom was thirteen years of age.

"Dear me!" whispered Susie Steers to her seat-mate. "I'd just like to see the person I could influence for good. Mamma tells me every day I'm a nuisance, I'm so troublesome. Fancy me setting up for a missionary, he! he!"

The smothered little giggle was as softly echoed by her companion, who quite agreed with Susie that the role of missionary was beyond her powers.

But further down the class, in the "lowest seat of the synagogue," sat a fair-haired little maid whose soft blue eyes were earnestly fastened upon the teacher, and into whose heart every word of advice and loving counsel was gratefully received.

"Yes," went on Miss Grey, "each of you who knows the love of God, and His will and commandments, and how to keep them, is able to give to those who are yet in the dark, the light of God's Word, and the Holy Spirit which is from Him. Now this may sound strange to you, my dear girls, for you are very young, and as I heard Susie whisper just now—sometimes as mamma calls you, 'troublesome' at home. But for all that, an influence of one kind or another you must and do exert, though you may not have thought of that fact. If an influence for *bad*, pause a moment and reflect what the result must be, and what kind of an account you will one day have to render of your stewardship. If for *good* think what your record in God's own book of records will be, and of the joy in heaven for the services you have rendered for Christ's sake. We do not often enough give thought to that question or subject. I am speaking of grown people as well as of young persons, and I include myself, dears, for it is always easier to preach than to practice, you know." Miss Grey smiled as she spoke, and remembered how one day not long back she had been "preaching" to her class about patience and forbearance, and making it seem so easy a lesson to be learned and practised, and how not five minutes after the lesson was finished she, herself, had been *instantly* provoked at the naughtiness of a small child who had annoyed her all the morning in various ways, and forgetting to be patient and to forbear had sharply reproved the child and dismissed her from the class. The other girls might not have noticed the lack of consistency in their teacher's con-

duct (or rather *practice*) and preaching, but she recollected herself in an instant, and asked their pardon while reproaching herself. Perhaps that was why Miss Grey had gained such firm hold upon the love and respect of her pupils, simply because she acknowledged herself to be one of them, and as prone to err as were they. They believed in, and trusted her, and the lessons she taught were respectfully received, though it must be confessed, seed that sometimes fell upon stony ground in some little hearts about her.

Little Ethel Brown, however, listened always attentively, and though her parents were in humbler circumstances than those of her mates, and her power for doing good consequently more limited, yet she wondered to-day if there were any way in which she, only a little girl, could work for Christ and chance to open the way somewhere for the "light of His Holy Spirit."

When she went home from Sunday-school her heart was full of desire and zeal; but she knew that there was hardly a way or an opening for her to begin her new service for Christ. Every one she knew was, in her opinion, far better than herself. She was often naughty, she was sure, and her dear mother was already so sweet a Christian that no influence of Ethel's or any one else was needed to teach her Christ's love.

But while Ethel pondered the matter she passed a little house which stood at the roadside, and the sound of sobbing came from the open door.

"Oh, it's Granny Grumble," thought Ethel. "Something is wrong with her."

"Granny Grumble" was not the woman's real name, of course. Davis was her name, but her habit of grumbling had earned her the title, and indeed it seemed as though her cup was always overflowing with gall and all kinds of bitterness. So she thought, at all events, and no one had seemed disposed to try and lead her into a different train of thought. Ethel stepped to the door and looked in. Granny Grumble sat by the bedside of a sick grandchild, the picture of despair and baffled will.

"Why, is Nellie worse?" asked Ethel pityingly, and the woman replied:

"Worse? I should think so! And if she dies, as she surely will, it'll only be another of the miseries I'm forever enduring."

"Oh don't be discouraged, granny," said Ethel. "Nellie may get well. What did the doctor say?"

"The doctor? H'm! much good he did. He looked at her and left that stuff; but it's marked 'poison,' and I'm no fool to go and kill my child to get her out of the way of troubling the doctors and the neighbors, who no doubt wish us both dead and under ground already."

Ethel looked at the bottle. It was indeed marked 'poison,' but Ethel knew well enough that it was a strong, powerful remedy, which was perhaps the only thing to reach Nellie's critical case. Ethel's mother had taken it once during a sickness, needing just this dose, and so she said, cheerfully:

"You needn't be afraid, granny. This is poison, sure enough, if you give it wrong; but, you see, if you do just as the doctor said, and give just the dose he told you to measure, why, it will act for good and not ill, and Nellie will be the better for it."

"I've no faith in the doctor," was the cross reply. "No one need tell me that a bad thing like that can do good in the end. No, no!"

Ethel didn't know what to do, so she said:

"I'll go and bring mother. Have you had a good breakfast, granny?"

"Good breakfast? what a question! There's nothing in the house except a few slices of stale bread. Nellie's too sick to eat, and the broth I made her out of the last joint turned sour."

"Oh! I'll bring you something for dinner this noon, and you must cheer up," Ethel said. "I'll ask God to make Nellie well, and to help you granny. He will do it."

"Don't talk to me of Him, child! He don't

take any heed of us poor folks. I don't trust in that, not at all. Sometimes I think there ain't a God, or any heaven, and as for praying, I don't know how, and can't waste time when I know it would do no good."

Ethel was shocked. How in the world could she, only a little girl, do any good here? Suddenly the Sunday-school lesson, which for the time had slipped from her mind, and the words of Miss Grey, flashed across her again. Why, surely, here was a chance to do a service for Christ, if she was only a little girl.

Home to mamma she hastened with the story of poor old granny's woes, and while her mother prepared food and arranged a basketful to be taken back to the cottage, she told her about Miss Grey's little sermon, and—"I wonder," she added, "if I could influence granny for good, and be of just a little service to her for the dear Lord's sake, mamma?"

"Certainly, darling," answered the mother. "You may not help her with things that money could buy freely, in ways that if we were rich we could assist her, but we will do what we can, and she would no doubt be more willing to listen to you, and hear about God's love for her, than to me, because she might consider me an intruder, whereas you, a child, could be more welcome, for Nellie's sake."

So Ethel timidly began her little missionary work. There isn't space to tell of her progress day by day. How she began by devoting herself to Nellie, and coaxing her to take the bitter medicines; how she read stories from the Bible (mamma selected them for her, those stories which she knew would find also a way to the heart of the old woman who listened, as well as to the softer heart of the sick child), a little while each day, staying in from her play after school hours to do so; how she hunted up loving promises from Christ to His disciples who loved and trusted Him; how she did little kindly services for granny which none had ever done before, winning the old woman's gratitude, and making her promise in return that she would read for herself the passages mamma had marked in the new Bible Miss Grey had given Ethel on purpose to give to granny. Ethel had confided to Miss Grey all she was trying to do, and that lady, though tempted to go and see the old woman herself, yet felt it better for Ethel's sake to leave the work entirely to her, aiding and encouraging her in all ways possible.

But the good work went on slowly and surely until one Sunday granny looked up as Ethel entered the room, and with tears in her eyes said,

"Oh, child, I am e'en almost ready to think the Christ you read of does heed me a little. I can understand Him better lately, and last night as I lay by Nellie's side I fancied a voice came out of the darkness and said—'Your years are almost run out; where will your soul live when the body is done with it?' Oh, child, those were scarey kind of words, and they set me thinking, and this morning I opened the Bible you gave me and my old eyes fell upon these words, see?" passing Ethel the book, "I've marked 'em," and Ethel read, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"Why, how strange!" exclaimed Ethel, joyfully.

"That is in the Gospel for Whitsun-day, and see, I've brought my Prayer Book with me, for *this* is Whitsun-day, and I thought Nellie might like to learn the collect with me." Then Ethel explained the meaning of "Whitsun-day" to granny as every little Christian girl understands it, and asked—as Nellie was then sleeping, if she should come in again by and by, and teach the little invalid (by this time far on the road to recovery of health) the collect.

"Ay, child," replied granny, and then, with a little hesitation and a flash on each withered cheek, she added, "Stay, and teach it to me now, if you will, while my old heart is softened, lest something happen to turn me hard again."

Ethel gladly assented, and standing at the old woman's side, while the gray head was bowed,