

LITTLE BILLS.

BY MARY MAYNE.

She was a nice-looking little body, our new seamstress—black hair and eyes, and with a certain tastefulness about her simple dress, and a courtesy of manner that revealed her French descent, although she spoke English readily enough. Indeed her tongue went as fast as her needle, and that is saying a good deal, for she was a swift worker. Her volubility seemed her only fault, but it appeared to be as natural for her to talk as to breathe. She was so good-natured, so desirous to please, so skillful, and withal accomplished so much work every hour that we concluded we did not mind it much if she did chatter. Besides, she did not say unkind things—evidently she was a quick reader of character; but in general she spoke well of all her employers.

So little Miss Gray turned, and tucked, and trimmed all through that dull December day, greatly to our satisfaction—taking such a genuine interest in her work that she seemed in no haste to leave it when her hours were passed, but delayed "just to finish this fold." She was coming again the next day, but when she was ready to go, we gave her the money due for her day's work, according to our usual custom. She looked up quickly, with surprise in her dark eyes, but a grateful expression on her lips, adding earnestly, "There are not many ladies who pay me so promptly."

The next day her own little history came out confidently. Of course she was dependent upon her daily work for bread, as are thousands of other young girls. She was an orphan, and her health not good. She had injured herself by incessant stitching, but her skill lay in that line, and she "did not know what else to do." She was under a physician's care, "and," said she, "it takes almost all I can earn to pay him, and get medicines." She hired a little room by the month, and "boarded herself."

"I could get along," she said, "if ladies would only pay me as you do, but scarcely any one does. I generally have to ask for my pay—sometimes several times before I get it—and I hate to, dreadfully. There is Mrs. Boyle—she owes me for 'most a month's work. I don't work there now so much as I used to. She would like me all the time; but I cannot get along without my money. She is very kind and always says she hasn't the money then, but will pay me next time. She is rich, though, and has no end of dresses."

Thus the poor little seamstress ran on, her needle never stopping, while unconsciously she preached a small sermon. Alas! there are thousands of living texts for similar sermons. If a prosperous merchant sends in his bill for goods purchased, it may be of little consequence to him, although unfortunate for you, if you cannot meet the demand at once.

But there is the poor woman who brings back the clothing she has washed and ironed. Did you notice her sad look, as you carelessly said, "I will pay you next week—I haven't the change to-day!" No; you were examining the nicely-folded garments, to see if her work was well done. Next week! And how are she and her children to live, if all her employers pay "next week?" Money in the bank, think you? Nay, she lives "from hand to mouth," as must needs be while in poverty and widowhood she struggles to keep her little ones together. She has no open account with baker or butcher. She must pay ready money for food and clothing; and her room-rent must never be lacking when her stern landlord calls for it. What she earns from day to day is her all—food, clothing, shelter.

Those who have habits of promptness in little matters, as well as in large ones, may fancy there cannot be any special failure in the payment of little bills among respectable people, who are in good pecuniary circumstances. But in fact there are many—both men and women—from whom faithful employees find it difficult to obtain payment for their services. This is not the result of deliberate intention, but of thoughtlessness, and careless, dilatory habits. Any little excuse suffices—"business," "company," "no change," "just going out," and the poor applicant for just dues is turned away with scarcely a thought. It may be the delicate girl whose fine embroidery has taxed her young eyes; or the rough kitchen maid whose monthly earnings are sent to aged parents, or needy sisters in the "old country;" it

may be the little coloured boy who runs on errands; or the diminutive nurse girl who daily takes baby out in his carriage; or the old cobbler who has mended boots and shoes. It matters not who has served you, be it ever so little; if their comfort is immediately depending upon their daily earnings, the neglect to pay such small bills—whether postponed, forgotten, or deemed of no consequence—is often the cause of peculiar suffering.—*Christian Weekly.*

THE SINGLE CHURCH.

I've been to Quaker meeting, wife, and I shall go again. It was so quiet and so neat, so simple and so plain; The angels seemed to gather there, from off the other shore, And fold their wings in quietness, as though they'd been before.

There was no high-priced organ there, no costly singing choir,

To help you raise your hearts to God, and holiness inspire; But sitting still in silence, we seemed to feel and know The still, small voice that entered in and told the way to go.

The walls were free from painting and costly work of art, That in our modern churches seems to play so large a part; For it seems that each endeavour to please the eye of man, And lose all thoughts of plainness in every church they plan.

The windows had no coloured glass, to shed a gloom around, But God's pale sunlight entered unrestrained and all unbound, And centred in a little spot, so bright, it seemed to me A glimpse of brightness somewhat like our future home will be.

There was no learned minister, who read as from a book, And showed that he had practised his every word and look; But a sermon full of wisdom was preached by an old friend, That took right hold of all our thoughts, and held them to the end.

He used no long, high-sounding words, and had a sing-song way In drawing out his sentences, in what he had to say; But told the truth, and told it so that every one who heard, Seemed to feel the prompting Spirit more than just the spoken word.

There was no pulpit decked with flowers of beauty rich and rare, And made from foreign costly woods, almost beyond compare; But plain and simple as the truths that we had that day heard, The common painted gallery did much to help the Word.

There was no bustle, noise, or stir, as each one took his seat, But silence settled over all, so solemn, but so sweet, As each one in his solemn way implored for strength to know The right and wrong in everything, and asked the way to go.

It seemed when I was there, wife, so peaceful and so still, That I was in God's presence, and there to do His will; This simple, peaceful quiet did more to move my heart Than any worship yet had done, with all its show and art.

I'm going there again, wife, and you will like it too; I know what it has done for me—"twill do the same for you; And you, when once you've entered through the plain but open door, Will wonder why you've never tried the simple church before.

GOOD ADVICE.

Mr. R. S. Burdette, he of the *Hawkeye*, gives the following advice to a young man:—

"My son, when you hear a man growling and scolding because Moody gets \$200 a week for preaching Christianity, you will perceive that he never worries a minute because Ingersoll gets \$200 a night for preaching atheism. You will observe that the man who is unutterably shocked because F. Murphy gets \$150 a week for temperance work, seems to think it is all right when the barkeeper takes in twice so much money in a single day. The labourer is worthy of his hire, my boy, and he is just as worthy of it in the pulpit as he is upon the stump. Is the man who is honestly trying to save your soul worth less than the man who is only trying his level best to go to Congress? Isn't Moody doing as good work as Ingersoll? Isn't John B. Gough as much the friend of humanity and society as the bar-tender? Do you want to get all the good in the world for nothing, so that you may be able to pay a high price for the bad?

Remember, my boy, the good things in the world are always the cheapest. Spring water costs less than corn whiskey; a box of cigars will buy two or three Bibles; a gallon of old brandy costs more than a barrel of flour; a 'full hand' at poker often costs a man more in twenty minutes than his church subscription amounts to in three years; a State election costs more than a revival of religion; you can sleep in church every Sunday morning for nothing, if you are mean enough to dead-beat your lodging in that way, but a nap in a Pullman car costs you two dollars every time; fifty cents for the circus, and a penny for the little ones to put in the missionary box; one dollar for the theatre and a pair of old trousers, frayed at the end, baggy as to the knee, and utterly bursted as to the dome, for the Michigan sufferers; the dancing lady who tries to wear the skirt of her dress under her arms and the waist around her knees, and kicks her slipper clear over the orchestra chairs every night, gets \$600 a week, and the city missionary gets \$600 a year; the horse-race scoops in \$2,000 the first day, and the church fair lasts a week, works twenty-five or thirty of the best women in America nearly to death, and comes out \$40 in debt. Why, my boy, if you ever find yourself sneering or scoffing because once in a while you hear of a preacher getting a living, or even a luxurious salary, or a temperance worker making money, go out in the dark and feel ashamed of yourself, and if you don't feel above kicking a mean man, kick yourself. Precious little does religion and charity cost the old world, my boy, and when the money it does give is flung into his face, like a bone to a dog, the donor is not benefited by the gift, and the receiver is not, and certainly should not, be grateful. It is insulted."

A GRUDGE-KILLED CHURCH.

We were riding through a pretty village up in the hill country, when we came to what had once been a neat, attractive church.

"That is deserted; there has not been a meeting in it for five years," said my friend. "We call it 'the Grudge Meeting-House,' because old grudges held on to shut it up. Every minister tried to do something, but it was of no use. He was short-handed at best, and he had to do so much manoeuvring, not to put grudges together, that in the end each and all got discouraged and left the field. Sister Bibbins could not work with Betsy Haynes, because the aforesaid Bibbins' father *familiars* had a little unpleasantness in regard to the purchase of a calf. To be sure, both of these men had been quietly resting in the old graveyard for years, but their children held faithfully to the grudge legacy, and made it the leading article in their creed.

"Leading repressed, monotonous lives, they had the habit of watching each other's movements, and looking for slights, and grew expert in finding them and magnifying trifles into monsters of offence. With these thoughts in their hearts they went to the Tuesday night meeting, and instead of taking the truths of God's Word to themselves, the little vestry became an exchange or Wall street, where choice hits or reproofs were snatched up as capital for the future increase of their stock of grudges. The minister meant Deacon Pinch, or he had such a one in his mind; no wonder, then, that I feel injured, they are to themselves.

"With one hand on the grudge, and lifting the other in prayer, they asked God for the gift of the Spirit, and wondered that the blessing did not come. It took years to do the work, but backbiting, fault-finding, and want of that charity which covereth, not uncovereth, sins and weaknesses, has accomplished the sad result."—*Watchman.*

PHILIP HENRY'S DEDICATION.

A good man, named Philip Henry, resolved when he was young to give himself to God, and he did it in these words:—

"I take God the Father to be my chief end; I take God the Son to be my King and Saviour; I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Guide and Sanctifier; I take the Bible to be my rule of life; I take all God's people to be my friends; and here I give my body and soul to be God's—for God to use for ever." At the end of it he put—"I make this vow of my own mind freely. God give me grace to keep it."