

Just on the hill on the edge of the woods stood a little brown house; a man lived there who was her father. He had been a good man once, and the good heart, the possibilities for good were in him still, but the Demon of Drink had taken possession of him; and so, the year before a wife with great dark tired eyes like Polly's, had laid down a burden which had grown too heavy, and sank into her long sleep.

Three little children, younger than Polly, were left there to be cared for.

There was often very little money and very little food; as for clothes, she scarcely ever thought of new clothes as a possibility; but she tried to do everything as mamma would want her to if she could see her; sometimes she was sure that she did see her still, and the feeling was a great rest, poor child.

"Take care of the children and love papa."

That was what the mother said that dreary night when she went to sleep in her little daughter's arms.

Poor little girl, she would have been very wretched then, but she had no time to "be" anything.

It was cold and dark, and the children cried; and it was long before papa came, and when at last he did come, he did not know; and since then she had been always busy. The only rest she ever took was when on Sunday afternoon she came to church and then carried flowers, if she could get them, to her mother's grave.

It was well she had never taken time to think much about that sorrow; when the thoughts would come, she just said, over and over what mamma told her she was "to do," and went right on.

Now that the rector's words recalled it, she remembered how he told her then that she "must try to be resigned," and she wondered now if it was her fault that she never had time to think about that.

She did dearly love the dear Saviour whom her mother loved, and she felt that it was with His consent that all this very hard work was left for her to do in mamma's stead, and so, somehow, it must be right and she would try to do it, and she hoped He would not expect her to think much about what she herself should "be."

"I am so tired, and there is so little time!" sighed Polly. "If only I can make papa better and the children happier, surely that will be more than to be quite a saint myself!"

The sermon was ended, and she had not heard the rest, but when she knelt again, and for a moment all was still, she prayed that God would forgive her, that she did not know how to "be" good and noble and so just had to "do" all she could for the rest at home.

Among all the people kneeling there were there perhaps some others who did not know how to "be," but who could take hold of "doing" and who were puzzled by the preacher's words.

Were there those who, loving some other life intensely, would rather work to make that life safe and sure, than be sure of any perfection for themselves, and who therefore must make "doing" not "being" their aim.

Polly's white sun-bonnet and long apron were not just right for church, and so she slipped quickly out, and picking up the basket she had left outside, ran down the forest road to gather a few flowers for her mamma's grave. Sweet golden blossoms were close about her feet, but even as she took them in her hands she scarcely saw their beauty.

"Can I 'be' as the rector said?" she mused again.

"Can I make Polly Hewitt something almost perfect? I might read the Bible, and pray about myself a great deal, perhaps, but who would dress the baby, and wash the dishes, and cook the dinners, and mend the clothes? And who would talk to dear papa, and be merry, and keep him at home sometimes, and take care of him when he needs my care, and then pray all I can for him to be good, so he can go to mamma some time? Even in the prayers there is so much that I want more to ask God about than just that I, Polly may be good and holy. There are, beside papa, Kate and Bobby and the baby, and if I only work and pray

for them, maybe they can grow up like the rector said, and learn to 'be,' and God will forgive me because I could only 'do'!"

She piled the cowslips in her basket, and with down-cast eyes walked slowly on.

It was sun-set, but a cloud burst away just as the sun dropped down, and flooded the dark wood path with a wondrous light. It had been so dark before, that it startled Polly.

There was a sound, too. She raised her head and listened, and something like her mother's voice said this:

"Noble work makes a noble life. While we help others God helps us."—*Churchman*.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

Addressed to the Bereaved Parents.

"Is it well with the child? It is well."
Better far than earth's language can tell,
Or your hearts can conceive: your dear child
Is with Jesus! Then be reconciled.

The "bare grain," that was sown in the ground
In the Spring's resurrection is found
In the loveliest beauty arrayed:—
Far more lovely your child will be made.

In the meantime his spirit is dress'd
As are all who in Paradise rest.
But remember, he still is your own—
As your son he'll forever be known.

When you had him at home with you here
'Twas your heart's fervent wish and your prayer
That a long, happy life he might see:—
Well, unending his new life will be.

And you wished that true friends he might find,
Of refinement, religious, and kind:—
With the saints and the angels he lives,
In the joy that "to be with Christ" gives.

And you too, perhaps, that his name
Might be halo'd with virtuous fame:—
There is laid up for him a bright crown,
Far transcending all earthly renown.

Thus your wishes, dear friends, are, you see
Realized, but in greater degree
And ere long you will go to him there,
His bliss to behold and to share.

As a part of yourselves is so blest
More devoted to God be the rest,
In a service more zealous and true,
Than by others less favored than you.

When you reach your sweet home in the skies,
'Mid the rapturous, welcoming cries
Of your kinsmen all crowding around,
With the first your dear son will be found.
Salisbury, N.C. J. T. WHEAT.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

What good gift shall we ask of our God as we stand on the threshold of the new year?

As a father delights to grant the wishes of his child, so does God love, nay, even waits to be gracious to us. Then let us fearlessly approach Him, and in Christ's name place our petitions before Him.

One more year has passed away—it has gone now beyond recall. Perhaps it was crowded with good gifts from God. Were we thankful for them, looking upon them as direct blessings from a Heavenly Father's hand; or did we proudly consider that we had earned them?

Perhaps the year that is gone was full of sorrow and sadness for us. Did we still see the hand of our Father, and feel His arm supporting us even in the darkest hour?

We might go on with these questions till our heart was sick within us at the thought of our shortcomings; but this is not the time for vain regrets over the past.

It has been well said, "The past is God's, the future is God's, the present only is ours to be given to God;" and if we believe at all in the full and perfect forgiveness of sins through the precious death of Christ, we must trust His promise, and believe that He has blotted out all the sins and shortcomings of the past year.

And now a new life lies before us again, and what gift shall we ask of God to start us on our journey?

Perhaps what we most need in these days is patience.

We live in a time of high pressure—express trains and telegraphic messages; and we are liable to fall into the way of expecting everything to go equally fast.

Have you children to train? "Ye have need of patience." You cannot expect to see the result of your prayers and teaching in a few days. What does Jesus Himself say?—"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." If you are in a hurry you may crush the tender little blade just showing its head above the ground, and lose a rich harvest. Wait and pray, and as you pray work; then in a few years' time, if God spares you, you will see the result of your patience in the loving, God-fearing child.

"Grannie," said a little boy one day, "my kitten is very naughty; she will jump on the table."

"How many times," did you take her off, Charlie?" asked the old lady.

"Quite three times," said the child, with a very long face, "and she jumped on again; so I brought her to you to know what I am to do."

"Get me your little hymn-book."

The child obeyed with wondering eyes.

"Will you learn that verse for me, darling?"

Charlie sat on the footstool, and read the verse aloud. Line after line was repeated over and over again, and as he read it his grandmother made little dots on a piece of paper. "I know it now, grannie," he said, and he repeated the verse without a mistake. "Now tell me what I am to do with my kitten." Then catching sight of the paper, he exclaimed, "Oh! what a lot of dots!"

"I want you to count them, please, Charlie." There were more than eighty.

"You see, darling, you had to say that lesson over all that number of times before you could learn it, yet you were impatient with the poor little kitten because she did not learn her lesson in three times telling. You want to be patient, my boy."

It must have been a touching sight for any one who was there, to see the aged pilgrim, whose need of patience would soon be over as she sank to rest in her Saviour's arms, and the little fellow, whose feet had scarcely started on the rough road of life, but whose very games might gradually teach him the patience which he would want by-and-by.

"Ye have need of patience."

Patience with others, patience with yourselves. Be content to wait for the time of harvest, and don't be like the children who pull up the flowers they planted yesterday to see if they have taken root.

Consider the patience of God. What loving, gentle, uncomplaining waiting! How has He waited for you, for me, to return from our wanderings!

"Oh! for His sake, whose blood for us was shed,
Oh! for His sake, in whom our sins are dead."

let us return to our Father's home, and let Him reap a rich harvest of love! E. M. W.

PROPORTIONATE GIVING.

The members of a large business firm in New York seriously attribute their success to the long standing rule of giving year by year "as God prospers them." Such cases are not unfrequent. There are many of which the world never hears. A divine law is involved in the matter; that law provides increase to him that scattereth; God will certainly bless those who recognize that they have nothing which he did not give them. This kind of giving is good for those who prosper whether greatly or not. "All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee."—*Living Church*.

—The desire to say some great thing has prevented the utterance of many a wholesome word, and anxiety to accomplish some wonderful work has crushed in the bud many an humble deed of exceeding grace and sweetness.—*Fred. R. Marvin*.