

atching.

BY BELLA G. G. PAGE.

I SAID, when the early dawning
With its rose-tints flushed the sky,
"I must set my house in order
For the Master comes by and by,
I must garnish it, swept and ready
With spices and odors a-reet,
For perhaps in the early dawning
I shall hear his coming feet."
But dawn passed into morning,
The rose-tints died away,
And the Master came not for me;
I sighed, "Where doth he stay?"

I said, once more, in the morning,
"My house must be sweet and fair,
No spot nor stain to defile it,
And bedecked with blossoms rare,
Cool, shaded, calm and quiet,
From dust and tumult free,
For it may be in the morning
That the Master comes for me."
But morning slipped into noontide,
And more sultry grew the day,
And the Master came not for me;
I wailed, "Where doth he stay?"

I spake again at the noontide:
"I will deck my house once more,
I will draw the curtain coolly
And half open set the door;
In doubt and in anxious longing
I have waited all the day,
Perhaps in the sultry noontide
The Master will come this way."
But noon stretched to quiet evening,
And died in its calm, still gray,
And the Masters foot still lingered;
I sighed, "Where doth he stay?"

Again in the dusk of the evening
I lighted my lamp with care,
So that all might see I waited
A guest expected there,
I throw my shutters wide open,
And I said, "This livelong day
I've watched. Sure, now in the gloaming
The Master will come this way!"
But the evening gave place to midnight,
The stars twinkled far away,
And still did the Master tarry;
I cried, "Will he always stay?"

The midnight came and it found me
Still listening to hear His feet;
And I wept, "The Master tarryes,"
When, lo! far adown my street
Came an angel, tall and stately,
Passed beneath my threshold tree,
Where in despair I waiting cried,
"Will the Master no'er come for me?"
In doubt have I looked and waited,
And watched all the night and day;
Yet the Master came not for me;
Oh, why doth His coming stay?"

And the angel spake to me, gently,
"Dear child, watch a little while;
Keep fair and garnish thy dwelling,
Pray and labour with a smile;
For the Master cometh to thee
At an hour thou dost not know."
So I labour, and watch contented,
Though His coming may be slow;
Some time in the midst of my labour,
A voice will sound on my ear,
"Thou hast wrought and hast had patience.
My beloved I am here!"
—Zion's Herald.

Cap'n Sam's Sermon.

CAP'N SAM was in no mood for jokes or banter, and being very quick to see which way the wind blew, the kind sailor a few minutes later addressed to a row of very serious young faces what one boy afterwards called "a perfect brick of a sermon."

"Boys," he said, "I've been trying every day of my life for the last two years to straighten out furrows, and I can't do it!"

One boy turned his head in surprise toward the captain's neatly kept place.
"Oh, I don't mean that kind, lad. I don't mean land furrows," continued the captain, so soberly that the attention of the boys became breathless as he went on:

"When I was a lad, about the age of you boys, I was what they call a 'hard case,' that is, not exactly bad or vicious, but wayward and wild.

"Well, my dear old mother used to coax, pray and punish—my father was dead, making it all the harder for her, but she never got impatient. How in the world she bore with all my stubborn, vexing ways so patiently will always be to me one of the mysteries in my life.

"I know it was troubling her, knew it was changing her pretty face, making it look anxious and old. After a while, tiring of all restraint, I ran away, went off to sea; and a rough time I had of it at first. Still I liked the water, and liked journeying from place to place. Then I settled down to business in a foreign land, and soon became prosperous, and now began sending her something besides empty letters. And such beautiful letters as she always wrote me during those years of cruel absence! At length I noticed how longing they grew, longing for the presence of her son who used to try her so; and it awoke a corresponding longing in my own heart to go back to the dear waiting soul.

"So, when I could stand it no longer, I came back; and such a welcome, and such a surprise! My mother is not a very old lady, boys, but the first thing I noticed was the whiteness of her hair, and the deep furrows on her brow; and I know I had helped blanch that hair to its snowy whiteness, and had drawn those lines in that smooth forehead. And those are the furrows I've been trying to straighten out.

"But last night, while mother was sleeping in her chair, I sat thinking it all over, and looked to see what progress I had made.

"Her face was very peaceful, and the expression contented as possible, but the furrows were still there! I hadn't straightened them out—and—I—never—shall! never!

"When they lay my mother, my fair old sweetheart, in her casket, there will be furrows in her brow; and I think it a wholesome lesson to teach you, that the neglect you offer your parents' counsels now, and the trouble you cause them, will abide, my lads; it will abide!"

"But," broke in Freddy Hollis, with great troubled eyes, "I should think if you're so kind and good now, it needn't matter so much!"

"Ah, Freddy, my boy," said the quavering voice of the strong man, "you cannot undo the past. You may do much to make the rough path smooth, but you cannot straighten out the old furrows, my laddies; remember that!"

"Guess I'll go chop some wood mother spoke of, I'd most forgotten," said lively Jimmy Hollis, in a strangely quiet tone for him.

"Yes, and I've got some errands to do?" suddenly remembered Billy Bowles.

"Touched and taken!" said the kindly captain to himself, as the boys tramped off keeping step in a thoughtful, soldier-like way.

And Mrs. Bowles declared a fortnight afterwards that Billy was really getting to be a comfort instead of a pest; guessed he was a-copying the captain, trying to be good to his ma—"Lord bless the dear, good man!"

Then Mrs. Hollis, meeting the captain about that time, remarked: that Jimmy always meant to be a good boy, but he was actually being one now-a-days. "Guess your stories they liked so much have morals to them

now and then," added the gratified mother with a smile.

As Mrs. Hollis passed on, Captain Sam, with folded arms and bent head, said softly to himself:

"Well, I shall be thankful enough if any word of mine will help the dear boys to keep the furrows away from their mother's brow; for once there, it is a difficult task straightening out the furrows!"—*Christian Weekly*.

Richly Rewarded.

HONESTY is its own reward to every honest person. When a man or a boy expects pay for being honest, his virtue is worth little or nothing. The old negro in the following story, told by the *Atlanta Constitution*, had the right of the matter:

Anderson, the coloured porter of the Butler House, picked up an open roll of \$100 at the door of the post-office. At once he approached a man who he thought had dropped it.

"Mister," he said, "is dis yourn?" The gentleman paid no attention to him.

Again he asked, "Mister, is dis money yourn?"

Still the man gave no heed.

"Boss," he asked again, with the rising inflection, "is dis money yourn?" The man then turned and stared at the negro, searched his pockets, said yes, and gave the negro twenty-five cents.

Anderson could have kept the money, as no one saw him pick it up. Some one rallied him afterwards, and asked him why he did not keep it?

"No," said honestly, "I feel richer wid this quarter dan wid \$100 da. want mine."

Scrap-Books.

THE scrap-book is a useful friend, and you owe it to yourself and the children to have one. I find a half-dozen not only useful but necessary. I want one for bits of missionary news and jottings of personal interest from the foreign field. Scattered through the religious papers and magazines are many articles of real value, and to find the information which they give in brief and comprehensive form I should have to go through libraries or ransack encyclopedias. She who has her carefully kept missionary scrap-book, properly indexed, will never be at a loss when called upon to lead a meeting or to assist in entertaining a circle of young people with something more serious than mere frivolities.

I want a scrap-book for poetry. Some of the sweetest and most comforting strains in the language are floating about in the newspapers, waifs of song, fragments which will never find their way into volumes, but which do find an open door to many a weary heart.

A scrap-book for receipts is exceedingly "handy" to the housekeeper:

To the Sunday-school teacher a scrap-book filled with short anecdotes, stories, illustrations and notes on the various lessons is beyond price. It grows imperceptibly, costing only a few moments now and then, but, like all growths, it becomes very precious after awhile.

A charming scrap-book might be made containing only thoughts for devotional seasons, culled from many sources, sometimes from a quaint old divine, again from a modern sermon or a suggestive editorial.

The children's scrap-book should be rather miscellaneous, and they should be allowed to make their own selections for its pages.

It is a good plan to cut out, paste in a book and keep for reference the notices and reviews of current literature which appear in the daily or the religious journal. These notices give you a good idea of the books that are coming out. You cannot possibly read them all, but you want to know something about their general scope. When you can treat yourself to a book, there is your scrap-book to aid you in buying intelligently. Books should be selected for the family collections with great care.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

Her Last Ball.

DRESSED in delicate silk and lace, Alice Leslie sat for a few moments in the drawing room, waiting for the carriage that was to take her to the ball, where she intended to dance away all the earlier hours of the night. As she sat there one of the housemaids came in on an errand, and Alice noticed that the girl's eyes looked as if she had been crying.

"Is anything the matter, Lucy?" asked Alice kindly.

The girl coloured up, not liking to speak, till Alice repeated her question, when she told a sad story of her sick father and delicate mother having been turned out of their cottage because they could not pay the rent.

"I give them every shilling I can spare of my wages; but you see, Miss Alice, it is not enough, for father has been ill a long time, and things have not behindhand."

Alice said a few kind words and the girl left the room. But when Alice was left alone her thoughts were busy as she glanced at her rich dress and ornaments.

"Why, the money I spent for these would make those poor people quite happy," she said to herself.

But the carriage was announced, and she hastened off to meet her friends. All was gay and bright, yet Alice did not enjoy the ball; Lucy's sick father kept coming before her eyes, and she wondered if he had any bed to sleep on that cold night. Then deeper thoughts came, and she wondered how she, an immortal soul, dare waste the hours in such a way, when there was an eternity before her, a heaven to seek, and work to be done.

That was Alice's last ball. She sought some of God's servants, and from them learned the true source of joy; and then her greatest happiness was to do good to others, and bring comfort to sad hearts. Thus God blessed the simple words of the maid to arouse in her young mistress' heart desires which He alone could fully satisfy.—*From Our Darling*.

A CYNICAL old bachelor, who firmly believes that all women have something to say on all subjects, recently asked a female: "Well, madam, what do you hold on this question of female suffrage?" To him the lady responded calmly, "Sir, I hold my tongue."

"Your daughter! It is impossible. Why, you look more like twin sisters." "No, I assure you she is my only daughter," replied the pleased mother. And the polite old gentleman spoiled it all by remarking, "Well, she certainly looks old enough to be your sister."