

river-side alone. It was a fair spot, exactly opposite to the old abbey, and—well, the scene took hold upon his ardent young spirit, so that, kneeling down upon the greensward and baring his fair head to the sunlight of heaven, he vowed a vow to his God that from henceforth he would dedicate himself and his powers to His service if only He would bless and prosper the work which he had taken in hand. It was a glorious sight; the tall, stately trees, the grey abbey, the shining river, while not far off rose the town of Andernach, with its Romanesque church and pointed spires, as well as the tower of ancient date, of the origin of which so many absurd fancies are afloat. How he pleaded, that boy whose life promised to be so fair and long! Ah, and methinks that God must have heard and loved him; but we must not anticipate. The evening glow became more and more crimson, the barges and boats took to themselves more fairylike proportions, the sky smiled gorgeously down, and Hans still prayed, when, swift as thought, another figure rushed from the midst of the bushes behind and sprang madly into the shining waters. Hans was young and strong; he could swim bravely, and he did, battling with the strong tide as with a mighty sea. He caught her dress, he dragged her to land; but the effort proved too much for his young frame, strong though it was, and as he sank exhausted by the side of her whom he had saved, a stream of blood poured from his mouth till in mercy it was stayed, for Hans had fainted. It was Bertha Sponheim who lay by his side, and, when later, two attendants from the abbey, having missed her, came out to seek their charge, the one bore her back to the asylum, the while the other carried Hans home to the good "pastor."

Kind hands ministered to him, kind hearts tried to anticipate his wants; but it was evident to all that life for Hans was fast ebbing to its close. It was upon a night when the moon was at its full that Hans woke from a light slumber, and found, as ever, Herr Sponheim by his side. He essayed to speak, but the old man stayed him. "Don't, dear boy," he said, in the softly modulated tone which we invariably use when speaking to the dying. "Don't; I have much to say, and you must listen, Hans, mine, while I say it. I went to see *her*, Hans, while you slept, and she is still sensible, still calm, and knows me and those about her. Hans, I owe it to you, this heavenly peace which has fallen upon me; but I would that some other price had been set upon it, for Hans, my son, they say—oh, Hans, you are to me as my own life! My life, did I say? Ah, no! mine is well-nigh over, whereas yours—"

"Hush, hush! my dear friend!" It was Hans who spoke. "I had thought to do a great work, but mayhap the work is done—finished—in the peace *you* feel. *You* loved me, master; you said I was like your Karl; but this cure—for cure I believe it to be—it proves a theory of my own—I can't explain." His voice was getting low, albeit he was very excited in his great weakness. "It was your trouble, master, which set me thinking, and—and there must be a cause, and a remedy too, if men did but—but where am I, master?" He was growing slightly delirious. "The sunset is glorious. What if I should die here, alone on the banks! Ah! how the water gurgles; but 'tis for *him*, and—and, I hope, good will come of it: God have mercy if I fail! If I die, oh God, take me—home!" He started up, and before the "pastor's" hand could lay him gently back, the crimson tide flowed once more, and he fell dead upon the pillows. So the love given and received brought peace and death together, and God spared him—the boy—all further earthly toil. Doubtless the "theory" his boyish vision saw was nothing new; but God's peace wrapped his young soul about while yet it was pure, and the "pastor," who sowed in love, reaped a harvest he dared not to expect, as if she, whose mind was clouded, shared, too, in the peace—the peace which passeth all understanding!

SMALL THINGS.

THE arbitrary terms by means of which we express our sense of the importance or insignificance of things of daily experience, are, after all, liable to revision that may arise out of time, circumstance, and effect. They are relative terms, and may therefore be considered as often in error, and frequently open to direct contradiction. We are too apt to think that the seeming *great* things of life are inherently the most striking in their effects; whereas the lesser and unnoticed details not unfrequently are found to have more

powerfully affected the histories of men and women than would be imagined. It would be but repeating a truism to say that "great events from little causes spring"; but though this is universally admitted in *theory*, it is yet systematically denied in practice; for in intercourse with our fellow-men, we rarely act as though we realised that, from what are called "small things" by the superficial, spring forth a vast deal of the misery, wretchedness, and ill-nature everywhere observable.

It would be a curious study to track out the various biographies of people from early days, and mark upon what slight and trivial hinges turned the whole system of their future lives, for we should often see that small things, totally unconsidered at the time, had, virtually concealed within them, the power of entirely altering the whole course and current of their careers. Such a study would unfold much to sadden and bewilder us; but would certainly teach us the fact that nothing is, properly speaking, "small," or worthy of contemptuous disregard. Without, however, the aid of such a retrospect in the case of others, does not our own life-path, when we retrace it in memory, supply us with abundant refutations of the idea in question? Why, the very events and circumstances we troubled least about, have, in the march of onward years, grown out of obscurity into greatness by singular and unforeseen developments. And, alas! many things also that at one time were to us large in their importance, have lost their ancient lustre and greatness, and under the fierce fires of trial and experience, have dwindled into ashes before our eyes.

We might refer to the name-roll of the past, and the achievement of all our great discoveries, to prove the value of small things in the minds of men who have brilliantly shone in the firmament of Science, leaving an imperishable fame behind them. It would be easy to expatiate upon the various little things that from time to time have given birth to ideas embodying revolutions in the theories and acquisitions of our race. But whilst these facts are patent to all, and cannot be denied, we feel that another branch of the subject is less considered, and deserves more immediate attention. No one disputes the statement that from trivialities often arise great boons to mankind, but in practical existence many ignore the fact that small things are the agents that work such mischief among us unobserved, in jarring and discord that might be easily avoided. In short, it is these unconsidered "trifles," in word and deed, that go to make up the grand total of life, and we cannot scrutinise them too sharply, when their power to make or mar the brightness of daily intercourse is borne in mind. The true spirit of Christianity is infused into the injunction, "Take heed of small things"; for it is the "little foxes that spoil the grapes." It is the petty annoyances, the thoughtless, careless, frivolous words and acts and circumstances that do so much to rob the sunshine from our paths, chilling and souring the generous nobility of the Christian character. Let us explain further.

The present era is one redundant with activity and vigour, and its very morbid restlessness has a dangerous tendency—that of running too wild, of bearing away by eagerness for action the tender, pure, and elevated sentiments of the—these countless little things, well understood, but difficult to describe, that do so much to relieve the tedium of the battle for existence, and soften the harsh realities that surround us with care and anxiety. Let us not lose sight of these small things, for their power and preciousness are assuredly great. Let us not forget that the angry word, the harsh retort, held within them the faculty of making the hearer miserable, and of launching home a shaft that may sink for many a year in the breast we should regret to wound. It is this criminal heedlessness in respect to small things that constitutes the danger trembling over the peace of many a home; it is the disregard of little incidents and the wants of others, that works such havoc amongst those who otherwise would be distinguished by cheerful, healthy happiness. We are not sufficiently on our guard against the "little foxes" that despoil us of the household pleasures, and steal away so secretly and unobserved our home joys. Nay, we do not think them worthy of regard. Let here lie our error. Whilst we are indolent and full of "self," the evil is wrought, and sourness and discomfort creep in. Ah! the small things of the home circle and its relationships—how great, sometimes, they become in after years! Is it a small thing to thrill with sadness the hearts we cherish? Is it a paltry thing to alienate by our heedless conduct the love that, with a word of encouragement or a motion of forbearance, would eagerly have