

The Quiet Hour.

"Be Ye Kind."

"A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest."

The sun was slowly sinking in the west when a weary traveller descended from his camel beside a well of water, outside an eastern city. The little procession gladly halted after the long and weary journey, and the tired camels waited patiently on their knees for the much-desired water. Their master's wants were not so easily supplied. He had a difficult task before him, and now asks God's blessing on his well-laid plans. He had sworn to Abraham that, if possible, he would bring back a suitable wife for Isaac, but how can he judge of a woman's character? Listen to his prayer:

"Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac."

While he prays a young maiden comes and fills her pitcher at the well. The traveller modestly asks for a drink, and receives a kind and courteous answer. "Drink, my lord," she says, as she hastens to take the pitcher from her head and holds it out to him. Nor is this all. She is eager to show kindness also to the dumb animals, who look with such patient longing at the cool water. Emptying her pitcher into the trough, she runs again to the well, and continues to draw water until the ten thirsty camels are satisfied. Is it any wonder that the man bows down his head and worships the Lord who has so quickly answered his prayer?

It was only a little thing to do, after all. The gift did not cost anything, except the trouble of drawing it, but little things are a better test of character than great things. Rebekah was, evidently, looking out for opportunities of showing kindness, and thoroughly enjoyed being kind. She did not think it any trouble, as both words and actions show, and, of course, she never thought that her simple act of everyday kindness to a thirsty stranger would be told, as an example to others, for thousands of years. "Be ye kind," says St. Paul, and the three little words are very plain and matter-of-fact. Only three syllables, and yet what a paradise this world would be if everybody obeyed them every day. Are we always kind to the people we live with, careful not to be rude to them or hurt their feelings needlessly? Are we watching for chances to do little kindnesses to the friends and neighbors around us? Are we careful to observe the golden rule? We don't like it when other people borrow our things and are careless about returning them, but do we always return things promptly ourselves? Do we pay our debts as soon as they are due? Do we keep our promises in little things?

Then there are the people we don't like. As Christians we have special orders to be kind to them, for our Master has said: "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again."

The little things of life mount up to more than the large things. We may be kind or unkind in hundreds of little ways for one chance we have of doing some really great service. Someone may give you a handsome Christmas present and take no notice of you all the rest of the year. You are grateful, but you don't care nearly as much for that person as you do for the friend who is kind in many trifling ways all the year round. One who is really trying to be kind will find plenty of chances.

"The least flower with a brimming cup may stand
And share its dewdrop with another near."

And right here I should like to thank those who were kind to the little Fresh Air children last July. One of the leaders of that Mission in Toronto wrote to me a week ago, saying:

"We all feel that we owe you a great deal for the help you were the means of giving us, and we want to thank you most heartily for it. Quite a number of homes were offered for our Fresh Air children, as well as money sent, through your column in the 'Farmer's Advocate.' Several sent money, with no other name than 'A Friend' attached, so it was impossible to thank them. We wondered if you would have space to do so some time; if so, we would be very much obliged. Some sent offers to take children when we had disband, so that we weren't able to send them this year, but we were none the less grateful, and hope we may fill these homes next year if they

are willing. We sent out 250 children this year—about 75 more than last year. It, of course, needed more money, but, as has always been the case, we had as much as we needed."

In conclusion, I would remind you of another scene by a well, when another weary Stranger asked a woman for a drink. Surely it is literally true that we have the same glorious privilege of ministering to Him—to-day and to-morrow, and every day of our lives.

"A flower upon my threshold laid;
A little kindness wrought unseen;
I know not who love's tribute paid.
I only know that it has made
Life's pathways smooth, life's borders green."

"God bless the gracious hands that e'er
Such tender ministries essay;
Dear hands, that help the pilgrim bear
His load of weariness and care
More bravely up the toilsome way."

"Oh, what a little thing can turn
A heavy heart from sighs to song!
A smile can make the world less stern;
A word can cause the soul to burn
With glow of heaven all night long!"

"It needs not that love's gift be great—
Some splendid jewel of the soul
For which a king might supplicate.
Nay! true love's least, at love's true rate,
Is title most royal of the whole."

HOPE.



Dear Friends,—At last I have space in which to make at least a beginning in publishing the letters which have been accumulating in the Ingle Nook pigeon-holes. I am sure a great many of our readers will be pleased to read the very helpful letter from Mrs. A. S., which appears this time. Many other delightful letters still await publication, but we have not too many yet. We hope that many of our women will follow the example of Mrs. A. S., and write us about the "good things" they know.

I am also very glad to be able to announce to-day the names of those who have been successful in winning prizes in the last essay competition. Strangely enough, all the competitors this time belonged to Class III. We have, however, decided to award three prizes, all the prizes being equal. The names of the successful competitors are: Alma McLeod, Dugald, Man.; Jean Murray, Lyleton, Man., and Mary Campbell, Bridge Creek, Man. Miss McLeod's essay appears in the Ingle Nook to-day, and the others will be given a place just as soon as possible.

I should like to know one thing—no, two things—(1) What have the rest of the Territories been doing? How is it that all the entries came from Manitoba? (2) What have the young men been doing? Not a single essay was received from a boy, or a man. Now, can't we have some "fun" over this? Let us try. Next time our competition will be upon the subject, "What kind of a girl the Western man wants for a wife." Now, girls, get your brothers to work. But then, this is sure to be a popular subject. I expect to be fairly inundated with letters during the next two months. Kindly send all letters in before the 25th of January, at which date the competition will close. Address letters to—

DAME DURDEN.

"Farmer's Advocate" office, Winnipeg, Man.

PRIZE ESSAY.

By Miss Alma McLeod, Dugald, Manitoba.

A Winter Holiday.

"Another holiday! Oh! isn't that good; how shall we spend it?" Skating was suggested, but the idea was abandoned, as all in the party could not skate, and someone had said, "Wouldn't it be nice to go for a sleighride?" Soon all were ready; that is, for the ride. Rugs and furs were hunted up, and a lively team of dapple grays hitched up.

The pleasure-seekers crowd into the sleigh before the sun has got well started on his daily march. Here and there is a fleecy cloud, but the brightness of the

sky rivals the brightness of the faces of the sleigh-riders. Overhead is the sun and sky, beneath the dazzling snow, which shines with those thousands of sparkling diamonds that flee before the rude touch. The trees, too, have their share of morning magnificence, for, in the night, the frost king visited them, and now their dress glistens in the glow of the great sun. All nature tends toward purity and perfection, and shall the merry-makers fall short of the standard?

Listen! How merry sounds the sleighbells. What merrier sounds ever greets our ears? Mingled with the merry voices and glad songs that rise from the sleigh, they make a delightful sound. Nothing else breaks the silence of the morning, and when for a moment the conversation lags, the silence is almost oppressive. It seems almost sacrilegious to say noisy and thoughtless things. Now, however, someone, to break the stillness, starts singing a hymn softly, and the others join. Soon again it is the same merry party.

Bells sound in the distance. It is not long until another load of sleighriders come into sight. The road is narrow and the snow deep, but each sleigh gives half the road. While Christmas wishes are being exchanged, one driver has not noticed his horse's haste to regain firm footing. Their sleigh bunts into the other one. It slurs into the side tracks. The sleigh has tipped. It is soon righted, but the upset has not added to anyone's comfort.

The horses have turned and are on the homeward road now, so they go with a will. The bells jingle merrily, the sleigh glides noiselessly along the well-beaten trail, and the riders enjoy their drive greatly. They are sorry it is over when home comes in view, yet they are all glad to gather around the cheerful fire for a moment, while a delicious dinner is being prepared.

LETTER FROM MRS. A. S.

Dear Dame Durden,—Since reading the last "Advocate," I have been wondering if anything I could write would help to lighten anyone's burden. . . . I am a farmer's wife, with five of a family, the youngest under six months. I have found it impossible to get even a wash-woman, or help at housecleaning, and, not being very strong, have had to plan carefully in order to be able to do my work without laying myself up. Often, when there is a special rush of work (for I find there is, sometimes, in spite of my plans), I have to leave many things undone that I would like to do in order to keep my house as it should be, and yet not become thoroughly exhausted myself. So I shall be glad of any hints that may help to shorten and lighten labor.

Here are one or two things that might help someone, yet if you do not think them worthy of space in your valuable paper I shall not feel offended. . . . When sweeping carpets, I take a large pail of water (as it cleanses the broom and leaves your carpet cleaner and more free from dust than a little will), and dip my broom into it; shake the water well out of it and begin to sweep, repeating the operation as often as necessary to keep the broom thoroughly clean and the dust from flying about at all. This keeps the dust from settling heavily on things in the room, and the dusting of these articles is short work after. When a room is very dusty I dust furniture, and either cover or remove it to another room before sweeping. Replace the water by clean water whenever dirty, and your carpets will look fresher and be cleaner.

After washing my tablecloths I starch them slightly and iron them carefully. I usually leave my table set, to save steps, and simply brush my cloth with a tea-towel. If I have occasion to remove the cloth, I fold it carefully in the old creases, as it looks much better so much longer than if carelessly folded. I also have a number of tray-cloths, plain ones. These I put on whenever a clean cloth is put on, at the men's places, and white oilcloth, with a little trough made at the outer edge, for the children, and it saves me much washing, as these cloths are easier washed and ironed than a tablecloth. I also use white oilcloth bibs, the lower edge turned up two inches and stitched at the corners so as to remain up to catch anything that may be spilled.

I have small doors opening from the pantry shelves in my kitchen, and beside them, my table for washing dishes—which, by the way, is a baking cabinet—and as I dry the dishes I set away those not needed for the next meal without an extra step. Our home is old, but we have tried to make it as handy as we could in order to save steps.

Hoping I have not taken up too much of your valuable time, I am,
Sincerely yours,
MRS. A. S.

Mistress (finding visitor in kitchen)—Who is this, Mary?

Mary (confused)—My brother, m'm.

Mistress (suspiciously)—You're not much alike. Mary (stammering apologetically)—We were, m'm, but he's just had his beard shaved off, and that makes him look different, m'm.—[Tit-Bits.]

Girls! Do you want to read a good serial story? If so, get your father to subscribe for the Farmer's Advocate and so secure our new one.