

## THE LOST SHEEP.

The traveller in Palestine sees not infrequently a parable of the Gospels acted out before him. One of these living pictures passed before Frances Power Cobbe as she was riding through the low hills which bound the blighted flats of the Dead Sea. In her autobiography she describes the beautiful sight, and the impression it made:

While riding along, a few hundred yards in advance of the caravan, she met a man, the only one she had seen passing a few black tents eight or ten miles away. He was a noble-looking young shepherd, dressed in the camel's-hair robe and with the powerful limbs and elastic step of the children of the desert.

Round his neck, and with its little limbs held gently by his hand, lay a lamb he had rescued and was carrying home. The little creature lay as if perfectly contented and happy, and the man looked pleased as he strode along lightly with his burden. As Miss Cobbe saluted him with the usual gesture of pointing to heart and head and the "Salaam alaikum" (Peace be with you), he responded with a smile and a kindly glance at the lamb, to which he saw her eyes were directed.

"It was actually," writes the delighted witness, "the beautiful parable of the Gospel acted out before my sight. Every particular was true to the story; the shepherd had doubtless left his 'ninety-and-nine' in the wilderness, round the black tents we had seen so far away, and had sought for the lost lamb 'till he found it,' where it must quickly have perished without his help. Literally, too, when he had found it, he laid it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

## NO "SHORT CUT."

There is no "royal road" to anything that is worth having in this life. I saw not long ago in a newspaper a little advertisement to this effect: "Violin playing taught perfectly in twelve lessons." I immediately called to mind the reply of Giardini, the great violinist, to some one who asked him how long it would take to learn to play the violin.

"Twelve hours a day, for twenty years together," was the instant reply.

There is no "short cut" to perfection in music, art, literature, or in anything else that brings one real fame and honour. To labour is "the common lot of all." It is God's wise plan for developing the power He has given us. Patience and perseverance, these are the things, combined with unfailing industry, that have made all great men what they are. They have lost no time in seeking for the "royal road" that exists only in the imagination of the idle and the characterless.

## A SECRET OF POWER.

There is marvellous strength in quietness. The low, clear, controlled voice rules as no stormy invective or command can do; the firm, even hand sways more surely than any amount of impatient pointing or pushing. It is to the steady eye and the calm face that we instinctively turn for courage and direction. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," writes Isaiah; but how few of us know this secret of power, or understand that it is something that may be acquired.

—No submarine cable—not even a foot—lay in the ocean sixty years ago. Now millions of messages are sent every year, and the waters of the globe are threaded with over 170,000 miles of wire—sufficient to stretch three-quarters of the distance from the earth to the moon.

## PATIENCE.

We have need of patience with ourselves and with others; for the greatest things and the least; against sudden inroads of trouble and under our daily burdens; in the weariness of the body or the wearing of the soul; in every-day wants; in the aching of sickness or the decay of age; in disappointments, bereavements, losses, injuries, reproaches; in heaviness of the heart or its sickness amidst delayed hopes. In all these things, from childhood's little troubles to the martyr's sufferings, patience is the grace of God, whereby we endure evil for the love of God.

## HIS HOME AND OURS.

This is the glory of the home of Jesus, that it is a human-nature heaven. Jesus tells us of an existence beyond death that is not severed at all from anything that is pure and holy and beautiful in the present life; of an eternal manhood of which this is the infancy; of an eternal harvest of which this is the seed-time; of a family embracing patriarchs and prophets and apostles, and a noble army of martyrs, and all the holy and good who have ever lived, with all the pure and dear of the friends that we have ever known! Then immortality is attractive and to be longed for, for it enables us to follow our departed in thought to the assembly with Abraham; and to feel that instead of wandering lonely through an illimitable desert of eternal existence, they are with friends who care for them and with Jesus who loves them. Yes, let us "think away" the shadows. Let us think much of the light and love beyond.

Just as the tiny shells make up the chalk hills, and the chalk hills together make up the range, so the trifling actions make up the whole account, and each of these must be pulled asunder separately. You had an hour to spare the other day—what did you do? You had a voice—how did you use it? Each particular shall be brought out, and there shall be demanded an account for each one.

## THE GIFT OF APPRECIATION.

There is, perhaps, no other natural gift that brings so much genuine pleasure to its possessor as does the keen sense of appreciation. It teaches us, or points out to our understanding, the beauties of Nature that are all about us, gilds the commonplace, and emphasizes the joys of life and of living. Appealing to us through all our senses, the pleasures that it brings are ceaseless and unfailing. Seen through appreciative eyes the beauties of life overshadow and eclipse the homely, rough places. There is an attractive side to everything, and this an appreciative mind will see first, and longest remember.

—Railways were just beginning in those days. The world's mileage was only 1,600 miles; now it is over 420,000. In 1837 twenty miles an hour was considered good time; now we have regular trains making over fifty miles an hour. Cars were then lighted with candles and heated with cheap stoves. There were no double tracks, no telegraph stations, no baggage checks, no printed railway tickets, no modern sleeping cars, no vestibule cars, no library cars, no air-brakes, no safe coupling apparatus, no dining cars, no smoking cars.

Slavery existed throughout the world sixty years ago. In the second year of Victoria's reign emancipation was complete in England. Ten years later France and South American republics freed their slaves. Russia and the United States followed in 1863. Then Brazil declared its slaves free in 1871, Portugal in 1878, and Cuba in 1886. To-day slavery has been abolished throughout all parts of the civilized world except in portions of Africa.

## LITTLE THINGS OF LIFE.

Why is it that we so easily forget that the little things of life are what make it easy or hard? A few pleasant words, a warm hand-clasp, a cordial letter, are simple things, but they are mighty in their influence on the lives of those about us, adding a ray of hope to many disconsolate hearts, giving a bit of courage to disappointed, weary ones, and helping to make our own lives sweeter at the same time. Few people realize how much the little attentions of everyday life mean to their associates in the home, the church, the business place. It is generally a lack of consideration which makes one forget the tiny pleasures, but lack of consideration is really one form of selfishness, and selfishness is not considered a desirable quality. Remember that the little things in life, whether good or bad, count for more with those we love than we ever know, and we should be watchful of our actions and our words.

## WHAT TO RECKON UP.

When one has met with disappointments or losses, it is a great temptation to stop and make a list of the grievous things and ponder it over. To the actual things, an active fancy often adds the might-have-beens, and so the list lengthens.

As a fine corrective for the gloom this brings, and as something certain to balance the account of grievances, it is well to reckon up what is left, even after subtracting every loss.

A single disappointment written in capitals may cover a whole page of experience, and leave no room to record gifts and gains and blessings, but the capitals are out of place and should not be used.

In reckoning losses one may indeed spend his whole time and strength and may feel that there are enough distresses to occupy him fully, but, after all, one is apt to count the same things over and over again, if he is not careful. Is that fair? In reckoning mercies, there is no need of doing this.

## HOW TO MAKE A SCANDAL.

Take a grain of falsehood, a handful of run-about, the same quantity of nimble tongue, a sprig of herb backbite, a teaspoonful of don't-you-tell-it, six drops of malice, and a few drachms of envy. Add a little discontent and jealousy, and strain through a bag of misconception, cork it up in a bottle of malevolence and hang it up on a skein of street yarn; keep it in a hot atmosphere; shake it occasionally for a few days, and it will be fit for use. Let a few drops be taken before walking out, and the desired result will follow.

—Christ, to the Christian growing older, seems to be what the sun is to the developing day, which it lightens from the morning to the evening. When the sun is in the zenith in the broad noonday, men do their various works by his light, but they do not so often look up to him. It is the sunlight that they glory in, flooding a thousand tasks with clearness, making a million things beautiful. But as the world rolls into the evening, it is the sun itself at sunset that men gather to look at and admire and love.

—Many a poor man owns more of a railroad by being able to now and then ride a few miles upon it, than the millionaire whose stock gives him a controlling interest. The artist gets a glimpse of heaven in the meadow, where the farmer sees only so many loads of hay. The covetous man, in wishing for his neighbour's possessions, loses his own, while the man who gives to help another, learns how best to help himself.