

## A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

HE had passed her eightieth year, and her worldly possessions were the simple furnishings of two small rooms, and a pension that with wise management enabled her to live in what most people considered poverty, but which this sunny old saint counted as comfort, giving daily thanks for the bounty of the Lord who had not forgotten to "supply all her need" according to His promise.

She sat at her small table in the clean sunny room, an empty box open before her, and six little piles of money ranged about it—quarters, dimes, nickels, and three sprawling heaps of pennies. It was not an orthodox mite-box, a little sermon on red paper, duly supported by Scriptural quotations, but a square sided affair that had originally held mustard, and proffered no exhortation beyond the advice to "get the best," which is certainly Scriptural and applies to all the investments of life.

The mustard box was not an accident. It had been set apart years ago to hold the sacred tenths from the family income, and to Grandma no money could seem so precious as that which was gathered mite by mite in this trusty depository. Besides, was it not a perpetual reminder of the "faith like a grain of mustard seed," before which mountains removed, and of the kingdoms whose beginnings were like the smallest of all seeds, but which would surely fill the whole earth.

She was not very strong on figures, but she counted the piles over and over, footing up the amount with a stubby pencil, and shaking her blessed gray head over the sum total, for there were only two quarters, and pennies count up slowly even when they are new.

"Seems such a mite for a woman to give that has had goodness and mercy for eighty years in this world and is going to have it right along in the place the Lord has prepared for her. I just feel hungry to bring a big gift—a great overflowing cup of thanksgiving." But as she mused her eyes fell on the open Bible, and the smile came back to her face.

"Why, of course it's the Lord that makes the cup overflow. I daresay it was a small pot of oil that widow woman had till she began pouring it into her neighbors' pots and vessels. I'll trust

the Lord to make my offering overflow. He knows I'd love to do more if I could."

She took up her Bible to look for a text, but found it hard to choose among so many words of praise and promise.

"I'll fill the box up with promises," she said triumphantly, and, pleased with the idea, she wrapped each pile in a paper of its own, on which was written one of her favorite texts. Finally she lifted her gown and brought from the pocket of her petticoat a slim knit purse. She poured the small store of coins upon the table, hesitated a little, and then selected a dime.

"There," she said, "I don't really need milk in my tea—folks say it's wholesomer without—don't seem as if a body ought to expect milk and sugar both when the promise only says, 'Bread shall be given him: his water shall be sure.'"

The extra dime was winged with this petition, "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness," and then added to the precious treasure-trove.

"It's such a pretty day," reflected the dear old saint, "I believe I better carry my box right over to Mrs. Lawrence, so's it'll be on hand, case I can't get out to meetin' a Thursday."

## II.

Mr. Lawrence, in his elegant office, was also dimly conscious that it was "a pretty day," and his tide of fortune having long ago set him beyond the need of being a slave to business, he came home earlier than usual, coming up the steps of his beautiful home as a sunny-faced old lady was coming down. In the library his wife was sitting smiling, yet tearful, with the dingy old mustard box on the olive-wood table before her, and the contents lying in state in a card receiver of precious jade and silver.

"Well, Jennie," began Mr. Lawrence, "are you taking account of stock? The mustard seems to be pretty low."

"Oh, Robert, sit down here. Yes, I am taking account of stock, and was just concluding that a good many items besides mustard were pretty low. Look at this, Robert, it is Grandma Ainslee's mite-box; she just brought it in for the Thursday missionary meeting."

"You don't mean to tell me that your Society takes money from a poor old body like Grandma Ainslee, and that you encourage her to give it?"

"She doesn't need encouraging. Giving her