

she was wasting her opportunities. "How delightful it must be to live as you have done, alone in a desert place!"

She had seated herself near Mrs. Darrent. James Darrent took a seat by her side. He was pleased with her. She was like a new type to him—a new type that, correctly analysed, might prove indefinitely instructive. The traveller was a man of theories.

He said, "Did it never strike you that life in a desert might be better in imagination than reality?"

"Oh," answered Sibyl, "everything is better in imagination. I know that."

James Darrent looked at her in some surprise. He was confirmed in his impression that Nature had sent him a typical specimen of girl-nature.

Knitting her brows, Sibyl went on—

"But it was not that I meant when I spoke of life in a desert; and, perhaps, desert is not a right word. I was thinking"—she clasped her hands, and looked out straight before her—"of getting away from every-day things into a new and wonderful world. I was thinking of freedom. I was thinking of discoverers, and of the glory of increasing knowledge for men."

Thus far the young girl spoke with an intensity and fervor that astonished even Mrs. Darrent, well as she knew her. Then suddenly she broke off. A word of her own had sent of her mind on one of its rapid, swallow-like flights.

"Maggie says you make her feel like that," she observed, looking with quick eagerness into the traveller's face.

He was too much interested in her to remark on the vagueness of the observation; indeed, it fitted into his train of thought.

"Yes," he said, "I have made Maggie feel as if there was something to be discovered everywhere—at our feet, over our heads, about us. We don't want deserts and savage countries, to make life interesting, Miss Sibyl. We have only to open our eyes—yes—reverently—and to allow our hearts to speak. The discerning intellect of man, when wedded to this goodly universe, so Wordsworth puts it, may find beauty, interest, the highest pleasure everywhere."

Thus James Darrent spoke, and Sibyl listened with hands joined together, and eyes cast down thoughtfully. Some one else claimed his attention, and Sidney and Maggie were clamorous for hers.

She listened to what they had to say, but James Darrent's words mingling with her thoughts, made an undercurrent of feeling. She was anxious to hear more. For the present, however, her anxiety had no chance of being gratified.

Mr. Vernon, who was deeply read in philology, was endeavoring to draw from the traveller proofs of one of his latest theories, and, with this view, was catechising him closely about the forms of speech of the least known and most backward African tribes; and James Darrent, being himself a philologist in a small way, was only too glad to lend himself to the catechism.

Sibyl was not even able to bid him good-night when she went away later.

(To be continued.)

MIRTH AT HOME.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones," declares the wisest of men. A swift appreciation of the ludicrous is the happy birthright of some fortunate people, but there are those who never see a joke quickly, and who cannot comprehend why it makes others laugh, even after it has been duly explained. If, as the proverb says, laughter is medicinal, they are much to be pitied. They are not cushioned against the sharp corners and hard knocks of life. There is a coarse wit which is allied to buffoonery, and may descend to indecency, and the less we have of that the better. The brightness and buoyancy which make

the dull day cheerful, which lifts the wearied and the ill from their depression, and which imparts courage when disaster seems imminent, are priceless gifts. The merry making the best of things, seeing the silver edge along the thickening cloud, remembering how much worse misfortunes might have befallen, and being cheery when others are discouraged, how noble are these qualities when put in practice, and how brave they may be. I agree in a measure with the brilliant French woman, who said that "The joyousness of a spirit is an index of its power," words true for all time. It should be a matter of conscience with us to maintain serenity of outward appearance, under all circumstances, and never to monopolize the conversation with accounts of our pains, perplexities or grievances.

THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH.

The world has no objection to joining the Church, if it may continue to be the world. A low standard of membership, or even a high standard applied with a slack hand, will bring in numbers. But what are they worth when they come in? If the understanding is that they can enjoy Church privileges on any or no terms, and live as they have lived and as they may still choose to live, the larger a Church thus becomes, the weaker it is.

Let the children alone! Children are children, as kittens are kittens. A sober, sensible old cat, that sits purring before the fire, does not trouble herself because her kitten is hurrying and dashing here and there, in a fever of excitement to catch its own tail. She sits there and purrs on. People should do the same. One of the difficulties of home education is the impossibility of making parents keep still; it is with them, out of affection, all watch and worry.

Children's Department.

THE LITTLE BOY'S TROUBLES.

I thought when I learned my letters,
That all of my troubles were done;
But I find myself much mistaken—
They only have just begun
Learning to read was awful,
But nothing like learning to write;
I'd be sorry to have you say it,
But my copy-book is a sight!

The ink gets over my fingers,
The pen cuts all sorts of shins,
And won't do at all as I bid it;
The letters won't stay on the lines,
But go up and down and all over,
As though they were dancing a jig—
They are there in all shapes and sizes,
Medium, little and big.

The tails of the g's are contrary,
The handles get on the wrong side
Of the d's and the k's and the h's,
Though I've certainly tried and tried
To make them just right, it is dreadful
I really don't know what to do,
I'm getting almost distracted—
My teacher says she is too.

My teacher says, little by little
To the mountain top we climb,
It isn't all done in a minute,
But only a step at a time;
She says that all the scholars,
All the wise and learned men,
Had each to begin as I do;
If that's so—where's my pen?

THE BLACK VALLEY.

STORY FOR YOUNG FOLKS.

Katie stood on the highest stone she could find, and, shouting the name of Herbert, paused, and waited for the answer she so anxiously expected. The

suspense was not of long duration, however, for a voice, seemingly from the opposite mountain, repeated her call distinctly, and immediately the word was caught up on every side, and her brother's name resounded through the valley, and at length dying away altogether in the distance.

"There must be people on the hills calling him," thought Katie, when she had recovered from her first start of astonishment. "I'm so glad, for now he will surely be found. I'll sit down here and listen; perhaps some one will come to look for me, too."

A long time passed by as she waited in breathless anxiety, but all was still and silent as before.

"Tis very strange," said Katie to herself; "I hope they have not gone away. I'll call again, and tell them where I am." Then, raising her voice to its loudest pitch, she cried, "Come here, to Katie."

In a moment the answering shout was heard, first from the nearest, then from the more distant mountains, "Katie! Katie!"

"Yes, they are calling me now, but I wish they'd come for me," and once more she screamed out, "Come here!"

Immediately from all the rocky mountains sounded the oft-repeated, "Come here!"

"I can't, for I don't know the way," exclaimed Katie; "but I suppose I'd better try."

And leaving her mossy stone, she commenced a new struggle to free herself from the morass in which she was entangled.

Just at that moment a strange but picturesque-looking figure appeared in view, winding down a rocky path near the foot of the mountain; and soon Katie could see that it was an old woman wearing a red petticoat, and with a bright-colored shawl thrown over her head.

Delighted at the approach of any one who might extricate her from her difficulties, the child at once called out, and entreated assistance.

It was useless, however; for the only reply she received was, "I have no English, alanna."

Still, she seemed to understand Katie's dilemma, and managed, by signs, to point out the various turnings and stepping-places through the morass by which to reach firm ground; then, taking the child by the hand, led her up a steep pathway to a small hovel built on the mountain-side.

Katie was so tired that at each step of the rough ascent she felt it almost impossible to take another, and was glad to sit by the cheerful turf fire, and refresh herself with some potatoes and a drink of goat's milk given her by the kind old Irish woman.

"Ah, if papa could only know where I am," was her thought; when, just at that moment, a girl carrying a few books in her hand appeared at the door on her return from school.

Starting at sight of Katie, she drew back a few steps in surprise until the old woman gave a long explanation in her own language. Then turning to the little visitor, she said—

"I know English, though my grandmother doesn't. I learned at school; and so I'll tell you whatever you want to know."

"Can you tell me where my papa is?"

"I saw a party riding along this morning at the foot of the purple mountain. Maybe, he was one of them. And just now I saw a boat coming up the lake as if to meet them."

"You don't think they'd go home without me?" said Katie.

"Sure," said the girl, "I'll slip out and see if I can find them; stay you here till I come back."

"Oh! you'll meet some one, for there are people on all the mountains, searching for me and my brother Herbert. Didn't you hear them calling out our names?"

"No, but grandmother heard you shouting, and that's what brought her to you."

"There were plenty of other shouts, too."

"Oh, that was only the 'voice of the rock,' as we say in Irish."

"Have the rocks a voice?"

"Well, yes; I think you call it an echo in English."

"I never heard anything about it; but indeed it was little I imagined, when I asked God, who made the great mountains, to let my papa know where I was, that He would teach them to speak, and to call out my name ever so loud, just to tell where to find me."

Yet so it was, for in a few moments Katie's father, accompanied by a guide, entered the hovel, and after thanking the old woman and her granddaughter in a substantial manner for their care and kindness, carried off the tired child to the boat, where Herbert was waiting with the rest of the party.

He, too, had lost his way in another part of the valley, when, hearing his name called, as if from the nearest mountain, he took courage, and hastening on, guided by the voice, soon found his father impatiently awaiting his return.

Katie's absence was now the great cause of uneasiness. An anxious search had been made for her, but all in vain, until suddenly the echo of her name was heard from the neighboring mountains; then, after a pause of astonishment, came the second cry, "Come here!" and the guide's experienced ear knew by the sound in what direction the child must have wandered, and conducted her father by the shortest path to the river's bank, and afterwards to the hovel on the hillside.

And so Katie was found by means of the mountain voices. And now, in her quiet home, she is never tired of repeating to her faithful nurse the story of her adventures in the Black Valley.

S. T. A. R.

"MY SON, GIVE ME THY HEART."

God is our Maker and our Father. He calls us His children, and tells us how we may please, obey and honor Him. He gives us all we have, our life, our friends, our home, the air we breathe, the beautiful things we love in nature, and all that makes us happy.

It seems strange that He who rules in glory with myriads of angels to love and serve Him, who keeps the sun, moon, and stars in their places, who gives seed-time and harvest, whose are all the gold and silver in the world, should ask anything from His children below. And yet he does so; He says to every child, as well as to every one of His creatures, "Give me thy heart."

God never asks what His children cannot give. He does not say to the child, "Build me a church in which my name may be honored;" or "a ship to carry holy men over the sea with the word of life to the heathen." He does not ask them for mines of gold, for costly gems, or for the herds of cattle that are grazing on the hills.

He knows that they have none of these costly things to give. But He knows that every child has a heart, with power to love and obey; for He made the heart and controls its beating.

If He should for a moment forget one of us, the heart would cease to throb, the cheek would grow pale, and the eye dim, and the soul would at once return to Him who gave it.

It is this heart that He has given which He asks again. He asks its love and all the good deeds that spring from love. And surely this is not much to give, when by so doing we become His child in a double sense, and are made rich and glorious and happy as the children of a King.

BIRTH.

On Monday, 26th inst., the wife of the Rev. G. I. Taylor, Rector of St. Bartholomew's, Toronto, of a daughter.

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