

A DAY TOO LATE.

I was thinkin' to-day of something
That happened years ago,
When we lived in Flower Alley
'That hadn't a flower to show'.
Many might call it a trifle, and 'tis but a trifle,
and yet
'Twas a lesson that I shall never, no never, never
forget.

At the end of Flower Alley
There lived a poor old man;
Guffy—the children called him,
He was thin as my frying-pan,
Thin and shrivelled, an' shaky, an' poor as the
poorest mouse,
And he lived alone in a garret at the top of a
lodgin' house.

Nobody knew where he came from,
Nobody knew what he'd been;
He hadn't a relation
That any one had seen.
He used to sell nuts and apples under the station
wall,
For that was just the distance the poor old chap
could crawl.

Once he sat down on our doorstep
And I took him a cup of tea;
And after that beginnin'
He'd creep in occasionally,
And have a talk with the children. And I liked
to listen too,
For bless you! he'd read his Bible, and knew it
through an' through.

And he'd sit an' give a sermon
That splendid! text an' all—
That he might have been a Bishop
A' preachin' in St. Paul.
And then he'd take his basket. "Good night,
my dears," he'd say—
"God bless you for your kindness"—and he'd
slowly creep away.

One day 'twas in the winter,
Jim came in to his tea.
"Annie, the fog is dreadful,
It's as black as your hat," says he.
"I've been leadin' poor old Guffy; he couldn't
find his door.
It strikes me with such weather he won't hold
out much more.

I was grieved to hear Jim say so,
And the thought came—quick as light—
That I'd run down and see him
'Fore supper time that night.
And as our hens were layin', "I'll take him some
eggs," thinks I,
"A real fresh egg for breakfast is what he might
like to try."

The thought was kind and friendly,
And I know it came to me,
From the Lord of all that's Loving,
And Kind, and Neighborly;
But Jim got a-readin' the paper, and I got a-
listenin' so
That by the time he'd finished 'twas too late for
me to go.

The next day was a Friday.
I was busy as a bee,
For Jim is early Saturdays
And likes to find me free,
So I do my cleanin' Fridays. I was most run off
my legs
And never gave a minute to Guffy and the eggs.

But early Saturday mornin'
I thought I'd go and see
How the old man was. Ah, clearly
That mornin' comes back to me!
The fog had gone, and the sunbeams were dancin'
overhead,
And when I reached the lodgin's... I heard that
he was dead.

Dead! He had died o' Friday,
Alone, without a friend,
Without a neighbor near him
To help him at the end.
And me that lived so handy!... And he never,
never knew
The thought I'd had about him, the kindness I
meant to do.

There were the eggs in my basket,
Too late to do him good...
I know I stood in the doorway
Like a stone, or a bit of wood,
While the women gossiped round me. I had
nothing, nothing to say
Except... that I was... "sorry"—and then
I turned away.

Friends, in this world of hurry
And work and sudden end,
If a thought comes quick of doin'
A kindness to a friend,
Do it that blessed minute. Don't put it off!
Don't wait!
What's the use of doin' a kindness if you do it a
day too late?

Good Words.

JIM'S WIFE.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

BY ANNA D. WALKER.

What entertainment shall we give the
children upon the Sabbath afternoon when
the hours seem long and the children grow
restless?

We would make it of the utmost impor-
tance that the hours should be spent reli-
giously; we would teach the children that
the Sabbath day is the Lord's day, not to
be spent in our pleasures or in our ways,
but in His service, especially.

We would take the time, for the most
part to give our children an acquaintance
with the Bible; the Bible gives under-
standing to the simple. More is it to be
desired than gold, sweeter also than honey
and the honeycomb. If it is so to be de-
sired, if taught with discretion, it surely
will not weary the children. For children
eight, ten or twelve years old the history
of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Flood,
of the Patriarchs, of Moses, of different
prophets and beings, etc., are things of
great interest, and so almost any scene in
the life of Christ. Here is a book, a mine
of inexhaustible treasures to which we may
lead the children's minds and yet always
feel safe in what we are doing. We might
have them read a passage and then ask to
have difficulties explained, or let them feel
free to make comments upon the subjects
read. You could give them a Bible story
or passage to write out in their own words,
or set them to write a list of questions
upon the passage, or allow two of them to
compare two accounts of the same matter.
Abbot in his 'Young Christian' recommends
these modes of study.

Another way to interest the children is
to direct them to note in their own minds
or with a pencil and paper little incidents
that come up in their reading or in their
lives during the six intervening days of the
week, that may be interesting and profit-
able subjects for conversation or relation
upon the Sabbath afternoon.

A pleasant and profitable half hour or
more may be spent in holding a little prayer
meeting, a children's prayer meeting, and
teaching the little ones to take an active
part in the service. Do you say that these
methods are too passive to hold the inter-
est of children? Not so, these methods
are of genuine interest and highly profit-
able. Even very young children enjoy a
Bible story or a children's prayer meeting.

At one time we were for a few months
closely associated with a family of children,
five in number, the eldest of whom was
scarcely ten years of age. They were rest-
less, wideawake creatures, always busy in
mind and body, and their father, alas,
would not allow his children to enter a
church or a Sabbath school, saying and
striving to make himself believe that while
they were so young they were better with-
out religious instruction, as children were
apt to take up strange and incorrect ideas
of their own in regard to these matters.
And he, poor man, could not see what is so
apparent to the thinking mind, that the
children would necessarily fill their minds
with some kind of food, and if the good
was not provided they would feed upon
the evil and hurtful food. We longed to
help this precious little flock, and we bid
them come to us in our room upon each
Sabbath afternoon and we would have a
pleasant time together, and stipulated that
they should come at a stated hour.

When the children had agreed to our
proposal, we were careful to have for these
occasions a little treat provided, some-
times fruit, sometimes cake and sometimes
candy.

Did the children come to us? Indeed
they did, and so impatient were they for
the hour of meeting that long before its
arrival we would hear little taps upon our
chamber door and childish trebles would
say 'Is it time to come?' or 'May we come
now?'

In our entertainments of these restless
little spirits, this active brained flock, we
kept strictly to religion, that is upon the
Sabbath day. We would sing with them,
give them a little reward for verses learned,
allow them to show their powers of elocu-
tion, so long as they kept within the pale
of religion, and they did know some Bible
stories and religious poems which they,
the older ones, had learned at school. We
always prayed with them, and for the
special lesson of the day gave them a Bible
story, and strove to draw out the teaching

it contained. Did they tire? no, they
loved these Sabbath afternoons, and looked
forward to them as the especial enjoyable
time of the week.

We would then, as far as possible, inter-
est the children upon the Sabbath after-
noon with the Bible, and if rightly used
the Bible will be a sufficient fund of amuse-
ment and instruction for the occasion,
though we have no objections to other re-
ligious books, but do not believe in enter-
taining the children in the Holy Time out-
side of the commandment, which is of
binding force for young and old, 'Let us
not do evil that good may come.' The
children can be kept happy and yet have
constantly before them that the day be-
longs to the Lord.

It is an excellent thing to let them tell
their childish difficulties which have oc-
curred at home or in school, and we can
so advise as to entertain while we are in-
structing the flock. A continued story
works well; take one of the cities or char-
acters of the Bible, and make the story
long enough to continue for several Sab-
baths.

The very little ones must have especial
license given them, they will be restless,
they will run about and play, but can be
so under the religious influence that even
they in their baby way will strive to keep
the Sabbath. One little fellow was allowed
to have a slate and pencil to amuse himself
upon the Sabbath, with the injunction
that he should make Sunday pictures, and
when asked what he had made, answered
with sweet seriousness 'Only just pictures
of angels,' adding 'it isn't wicked to make
pictures of angels on Sunday, is it?'—
Christian at Work.

LAURA'S EXPERIENCE.

When Christine Wall's Uncle John was
going back to New York, last summer, he
said to her: 'Coax your father to bring
you and Laura up to town some day. I
will drive you out to the park, and we'll
take luncheon at Blank's, naming a fash-
ionable restaurant.

Christine's eyes sparkled. 'That would
be delightful! Indeed, we will come,
uncle!'

The Wall girls had few amusements.
Their father was a mechanic in a country
town, with a limited income. But he was
glad to bring any possible pleasure into
their lives, and when he heard of his
bachelor brother's invitation, he promised
to take the girls, in Christmas week, to
New York for the day.

Just in time to see the city in its holiday
dress, said Christine, laughing with delight.

'But what shall we wear?' asked Laura,
anxiously.

'Our cloth dresses, of course,' said
Christine.

'Impossible,' exclaimed Laura. 'Why
all the fashionable women in New York go
to Blank's, and what would they think of
these brown frocks?'

'They would think nothing,' said Chris-
tine, 'and if they did it would not matter
to us.' She went on quietly with her daily
duties, keeping the thought of the day in
New York to cheer her when she was tired.

But Laura was weighed down with
anxiety. She consulted every fashionable
paper within her reach; she had long con-
sultations with the village dressmaker.

She and her sister were able to earn
more or less money at certain seasons of
the year, by doing work at home for a
manufacturing establishment in town. So
she felt at liberty to incur some extra ex-
pense in dress. After much thought and
hesitation, she at last discovered that a
certain color was in vogue in Paris. She
bought a gown of it, which she had made
in what she supposed was the extreme of
the fashion, going in debt to the shop-
keeper, the dressmaker and the milliner,
for a new hat, gloves, shoes, and a fine um-
brella carried the bills up to a height
which it terrified her to think upon.

'But it would be impossible to appear
among fashionable people in New York,
unfashionably dressed,' she said.

'I do not see why,' said Christine calmly.
When the eventful day arrived, and the
girls with their father entered the great
room at Blank's, their Uncle John glanced
at Christine's plain brown gown and hat
with a pleasant smile. He knew nothing
of details, but he saw that the dress was
neat and becoming.

They passed to their table. Christine
was delighted with the pretty room, deli-
cate dishes, the gay groups around her;
but Laura could enjoy nothing, so great
was her astonishment and chagrin. Not
an eye rested on her or her gown. These
people were all too busy with their own
meals or companions to notice her.

The waiter, indeed, who served her like
an automaton, observed her dress, and
thought it loud and vulgar. But fortu-
nately, Laura did not know that. The
day was one of continued bitter mortifica-
tions to her. When she went home, her
useless finery remained, and with it a load
of debt which proved a burden of misery
to her for months.

When at last it was paid, she said to
her sister, with a laugh which was not far
from tears, 'Ah, Christine, how much
worry and anxiety and money would be
saved to a girl if she only knew in the be-
ginning how insignificant a place she holds
in the world!'

The lesson of our own insignificance is a
bitter and hard one, which some men and
women never learn. But those who do
find that it greatly simplifies the conditions
of life and lifts them above all petty
anxiety, envy and jealousy.

The poor in spirit reach even in this
world the peace of the kingdom of heaven.
—Rebecca Harding Davis, in *The House-
hold*.

CIVILITY AT SEA.

An American steamer anchored off the
port of Nassau early one morning and
transferred all her passengers who wished
to go ashore, with one exception, to a steam
tender. The exception was a traveller who
had not heard on the previous night the
warning that every one who wished to go
ashore for the morning must be on deck
by six o'clock. He appeared upon the
scene a moment after the tender had cast
off.

His fellow-passengers waved their hand-
kerchiefs and laughed at him. The captain
undertook to discipline him roughly.

'There is always one fool left behind!' he
shouted angrily. 'You didn't know enough
to get up when I warned you it would be
your only chance of going ashore.'

'But I received no warning!' meekly
answered the traveller.

This protest called out a volley of oaths
from the captain. The traveller bristled
in his turn.

'It is my misfortune to be left behind,'
he said. 'But it is not a brave officer who
abuses a passenger for his hard luck. I
have travelled under many flags, and I am
sorry that the first captain to treat me with
discourtesy should be an American.'

Before half an hour had passed a sail-
boat ran in close to the steamer, and in
response to a signal from the passenger
carried him ashore. Soon after he turned
the tables upon the captain and the pas-
sengers.

He had letters of introduction to present
to the Governor of the Bahamas, and was
hospitably received by him. When pressed
to remain over night he explained that the
steamer was to sail at one o'clock for Cuba.
The governor turned to his secretary.

'Tell the agent that the steamer must
not sail until he hears from me,' was the
order.

Then the governor explained to his guest
that by virtue of a mail subsidy he could
detain the ship for twenty-four hours.
'You can stay over night and get off in the
morning,' he added.

It was a complete reversal of conditions.
At sunrise the traveller had been alone on
the ship, looking regretfully after his fel-
low-passengers who were on their way to
the shore. At noon they were back on the
steamer, and he was on shore, holding the
ship for his own convenience with the
governor's permission.

The traveller, however, was merciful to
the captain. He did not detain the steamer
longer than six hours, and returned to it
at nightfall to meet the captain's flashing
eye.

'Always behind time!' exclaimed the
martinet. 'You've kept all hands waiting
since noon.'

'Long enough, I hope,' was the cool
reply, 'for you, sir, to learn that civility
should be one of the rules of the sea, and
that the use of abusive language may be at
least—injudicious.'