

RUTH.

I walked beside the ribboned corn
One sacred, silent Sabbath morn,
The soft wind in the branches stirred,
I heard a single fluting bird:
And far away o'er stream and tree
The distant church bells chimed for me.

And back from childhood's mist and dream
There came a dear and radiant gleam.
I know not why, this day, in sooth
My thought should stir to that fair Ruth
Who in the barley's harvest sheen
Still walks, still bends the ears to glean.
Still in the dusk of glimmering dawn
Flits homeward e're the dusk be gone,
And in Naomi's loving clasp
Finds hope and joy within her grasp.

But it is Ruth I seem to see,
Sweet, slender, lissome, beckoning me,
To that still time of childish bliss,
Earth's dearest thing, my mother's kiss,
When in a Bible worn and old,
But worth far more than gems and gold,
We little ones on Sabbath day
Would read the stories, spell our way
Through Abraham and Isaac down
To David's deeds of great renown,
And find no lore in all the books
So sure to wake delightful looks
As those old Bible stories did,
Between those leather covers hid.

Ruth and Naomi, deathless pair,
Your voices touch this mountain air;
A vision of you, age and youth,
Naomi grave and smiling Ruth,
Unto my eyes to-day is borne
Here, by these fields of waving corn.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

"RICH TOWARD GOD."

You remember the incident from which this striking phrase is taken. St. Luke gives us the story of the Rich Fool. Read it, and note that the man is rich—rich toward men, but not toward God. To be rich in the wrong way is to be poor in the meanest and most abhorrent sense. Do not believe that because a man is poor therefore he has no God. That would be bad logic, without meaning and without truth. A great impossibility it ought to be, for the poor man's house stands very near to heaven, if it be blessed with love and faith and prayer, and sanctified by such simple service as is possible to the occupant.

Now, think for a moment of being "rich toward God." Without a portion, without a harvest field, without any much-making for the soul in a carnal and worldly sense, and yet rich. Wealthy, with a great and wondrous treasure toward God! Is it possible for me to be rich in that way? Yes. Let each of us say, "I will be wealthy in that sense."

But who is rich toward God? you may ask. Why, he who is consciously dependent upon Him. The man who says: "I can do nothing with this right hand unless it is sustained and strengthened and directed by the Most High. I have nothing that I did not receive. Every morning I turn by bread into sacramental uses, saying, as I use my daily food, 'This is the Lord's body.' Thus I live and move and have my being in God. Then I am rich toward Him—rich in my expectation, in my confidence, in my brightest hopes."

And humility follows dependence and belongs to it. I am nothing in myself, but I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Hear the noble words of Paul, so humble: "I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle." It is out

of true humility that true majesty springs. Until you know the meaning and the infinite significance and suggestiveness of humility, you cannot be really great, really majestic and dignified. Behold, all things come out of the earth, and all things are seeking the heavens. It is God's way. When the little blade cuts the earth it says, "I am coming up to the blue sky." When the acorn begins to open and send forth its first shoots, it says, "I am coming up to the blue sky." They will not reach that blue dome, but they are in that direction. The soul can reach it, beginning in the depths of a true humility. But how does this come? It comes out of obedience. Now, do we obey? If so, we are rich toward God. We are rich toward God just in proportion as we get rid of ourselves. In the degree in which we are poor toward ourselves are we rich toward God. But how difficult to get rid of self! Yet the Christian ought to have no self. The Christian ought to say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Lord, shed light on my way." Speak the word in mine ear this day, and say to Thy poor, infirm one, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

He who is humble, he who is trustful, he who is obedient, is rich toward God. He has imperishable riches. Fail what banks may, they cannot touch his wealth. It is laid up in heaven, where thieves cannot break through and steal, and where no cankers do eat the golden store. Oh, be rich toward God in great, useful service! Heaven is the true storehouse. Lay up for yourselves riches there, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and then you are not dependent upon the harvest, upon the south wind, or upon the fair, calm seas.

A THOUGHT FOR THOSE WHO TOIL.

Hanging on the walls of the Louvre, that beautiful art gallery which is the pride of Paris, there is a painting called "The Miracle of San Diego." It is one of Murillo's masterpieces, and in it the great artist has expressed in a striking way a noble and inspiring truth.

The scene represented is a convent kitchen, and none of a kitchen's homely details are omitted; the rough walls, the uneven floor, the clumsy furniture, are all faithfully reproduced. But in this lowly place, instead of coarse-clad monks busy about the prosaic duty of preparing food for themselves and their brethren, there are stately, white-robed angels doing the humble offices with heavenly dignity and grace. One hangs the kettle over the fire in the dingy fireplace, as serenely as though the commonplace task were something grand and noble and eminently fitted for angelic hands. Another lifts a heavy pail of water and seems to rejoice in the effort it costs. A third stands before the kitchen dresser reaching for the plates with which to make ready the table for the coming meal, and there is even a plump little cherub running around trying to help and getting in the angels' way instead. All are busy, working with a will and such evident enjoyment and so ennobling the work as they do it that the one who looks at the picture forgets to notice the homely things in it. He sees only the angels and thinks their occupation natural and beautiful—the very tasks that angels would choose.

It is the spirit in which work is done that dignifies or degrades it. The thing that is done grudgingly or complainingly is the thing that belittles the doer; the one which is done heartily, as unto the Lord, is the one which elevates and refines him. When performed in the angels' spirit of cheerful self-forgetfulness the disagreeable duties of everyday life are changed and transformed and glorified into form of beauty and grace. The little

maid who washes the breakfast dishes with a smile on her lips and a song in her heart makes the homely task pleasant to do and see; and good George Herbert says with quaint truthfulness:

"Who sweeps a room as to God's grace
Makes that and th' action fine."

The young man who labours cheerfully and faithfully on the farm or in the factory, at the carpenter's bench, or the blacksmith's forge, has nothing to be ashamed of, though hands be hard and clothing coarse. Industry is a king, though clad in jeans and homespun, while idleness, though dressed in purple and fine linen, is but a beggar living on the bounty of others.

Rightly understood and used, work is a blessing,—that which develops body, mind and heart into the best that these may become. It is the underlying principle of life, the foundation-stone upon which God has created the universe. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," said our Master when He lived on earth, and He was as much the Messiah when he toiled at Joseph's workbench as when He healed the sick and raised the dead. So labour—the labour of necessity as well as works of love and mercy—brings the soul into closer fellowship with its God when it is received as His gift and done as to His honour.

ALL THE PEOPLE.

Should keep themselves healthy, and especial care should be given to this matter at this time. Health depends upon pure, rich blood, for when the blood is impure and impoverished diseases of various kinds are almost certain to result. The one true blood purifier is Hood's Sarsaparilla. By its power to purify and vitalize the blood it has proved itself to be the safeguard of health, and the record of remarkable cures effected proves that it has wonderful power over disease. It actually and permanently cures when all other preparations fail to do any good whatever.

A HELPING HAND.

Whenever our Lord performed one of His acts of love and mercy He was giving an object lesson for us to copy. When He washed His disciples' feet it was a lesson of unselfish ministry to others, as though He said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." When He made the blind to see, He taught us the duty of removing, as far as possible, the ignorance or prejudice which makes people blind to the truth. When He made the lame to walk, He showed us that we should be always ready to help a brother over the rough places of the road of life. One golden lesson appears through every act of Jesus, that love is the fulfilling of the law, love to God as shown by loving acts of ministry to our neighbour.

AN EFFECTIVE REPROOF.

That great preacher, the Rev. Rowland Hill, one day heard two of his domestics disputing as to which of them should wash the hall, each declaring that it was not her business.

Sending them both out on an improvised errand, the eccentric clergyman took up the mop himself, and when, upon returning, they found him busy at his self-imposed work, they each warmly protested against his being engaged in so menial an occupation.

"Pooh! pooh!" said he. "It's not your business, Peggy, nor yours, Jane; so it must be mine, I suppose."

The hall was regularly cleaned after this without any dispute.