

the country. Their possessions were small, and by the time they had passed through their sickness and death, there was nothing but their three children left behind."

With a sympathy of soul for the poor little orphan daughter that was even painful, we bade the good Matron adieu for the evening, with a promise of attending the Sabbath services next day in the institution.

We could but think when lying down for the night how melancholy and hopeless is the prospective destiny of the tens of thousands of orphan children which are to be found scattered over our country. We thought devoutly, too, of the "All-seeing eye," and wondered if there was not an especial assurance given to all such in that old Jewish inspiration, "When thy father and mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up." Surely if God pities the poor, there must be some special hope for the helpless orphan in the divine compassion. Life's relationships are often sad at the best, for men and women are weak and frail, and too frequently are wanting in education and intelligence, as well as in self-government, and even with their children around them they are far from being happy. They fail to recognize the highest gifts of heaven, and draw closer upon themselves the sorrows of life, when they should only be drinking of its most pleasurable realities.

The next day in the Chapel of the Orphans' Home we again met the Mason's orphan daughter. She was dressed in her plain Sunday suit of buff calico, with a neat little ruffle of the same color round her neck, which was partially hid by the beautiful clusters of auburn curls which hung down her back.

The children all looked well and appeared to be happy, and we joined with them in their Sabbath school services with much more than the ordinary interest. Little Annie sat near us, and we had a fair opportunity of noticing her intelligent readiness in answering questions, and when the school closed, by permission of the Matron, we held a long and interesting conversation with her in regard to what she knew of her history.

"Do you remember, Annie," we asked her, "your father and mother?"

"O, yes, sir," said she, "as well as if they had only died yesterday."

"What do you remember of England, your native country?" we enquired.

"Why, sir, I remember Manchester, the place where I was born. My grandfather and grandmother and Uncle James live there, and I often think," said she with an air of observable sadness, "if my dear parents had remained there we might all have been living yet."

"You have no relatives in this country, Annie," we asked.

"Not one," she answered promptly.

"Would you like to go back to England?" we enquired.

"Indeed I would," she affirmed.

"Well, then, why don't you write to your relatives to send for you? Wouldn't they do it?"

"Yes, sir, I think they would," she quickly responded.

"Do you know, Annie," we asked her with some delicacy, "whether your father was a Mason?"

"No, sir," she responded, "he was a machinist."

We could but smile at her simplicity, and explained, by asking, "if he was what they called a Freemason?"

"I think he was something of that sort," she responded with a laugh, "for I have in my little trunk up stairs a purple apron which has a good many things on it which I don't know anything about. I found it in one of our drawers after mother died, and as I thought it was very pretty I have kept it ever since."

I asked her if she would please go and get it, and let me look at it.

She flew up stairs at once, like a little bird, and in a few minutes returned and spread out on my lap a very well preserved Master Mason's apron.

"Was this your father's, Annie," we inquired.

"I presume it was," said she, "though I don't know what he did with it. I have often taken it out and looked at it, and thought that it was something that belonged to the machinists."

"No, Annie," we assured her, "this is what we term the apron of a Master Mason, and we presume your father held this relation to the craft in England."

"It may be, but I don't know," said she, "for I was only eight years old when we left England, and I never saw it until after my mother's death, when I was nine years old."

"And you have kept it ever since?"

"Yes, sir, for since Joseph and Fleming died, this is nearly all I have left of anything that belonged to our family."

That Masonic apron was a relic worthy of her tenderest regards, for it gave to others whom she knew not an interest in her which perhaps nothing else in her possession