

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

GOD'S APPOINTMENTS.

BY MARGARET H. FANGSTER.

This thing on which thy heart was set, this thing that cannot be,
 This weary, disappointing day, that dawns, my friend, for thee;—
 Be comforted; God knoweth best, the God whose name is Love,
 Whose tender care is evermore our passing lives above.
 He sends the disappointment? Well, then, take it from His hand,
 Shall God's appointment seem less good than what thyself had planned?

'Twas in thy mind to go abroad. He bids thee stay at home,
 Oh! happy home; thrice happy if to it thy Guest He come.
 'Twas in thy mind thy friend to see. The Lord says, "Nay, not yet."
 Be confident; the meeting time thy Lord will not forget.
 'Twas in thy mind to work for Him. His will is, "Child, sit still;"
 And surely 'tis thy blessedness to mind the Master's will.
 Accept thy disappointment, friend, thy gift from God's own hand.
 Shall God's appointment seem less good than what thyself had planned?

So, day by day and step by step, sustain thy failing strength,
 From strength to strength, indeed, go on through all the journey's length.
 God bids thee tarry now and then; forbear the weak complaint;
 God's leisure brings the weary rest, and cordial gives the faint.
 God bids thee labor, and the place is thick with thorn and briar;
 But He will share the hardest task, until He call's thee higher.
 So take each disappointment, friend; 'tis at thy Lord's command!
 Shall God's appointment seem less good than what thyself had planned?

—Exchange.

BETSY.

The following touching story of a little negro girl who wandered into the Sunday school of a fashionable church, when the children were singing 'Whiter than Snow,' is told by Nettie G. Pullen, in the *Wesley Prelude*, the college paper:

I regarded the child curiously to see what would be the effect of the scene before her. I saw instantly that she was a street waif, and to me the contrast between her and the children composing the school was a painful one. They, in their cool, white gowns could well sing 'Whiter than Snow,' while she, in her tattered garments, could scarcely conceive of such a thing. She wore an old, faded dress, which, in its better days, had been pink, but was no longer recognizable as such; she was barefooted and hatless, her only shield from the sun being her thick, woolly hair. She carried in her hand an immense handkerchief, which might have been white once, and with this she continually mopped her face. She sat perfectly still with her eyes and mouth wide open, evidently satisfied with all she saw and heard.

I soon became absorbed in the lesson, and ceased to watch the little stranger, but at the close of the service I looked around to see her and she was not visible. As I passed the seat, I found her cuddled up fast asleep. She had fallen asleep when the music ceased, lulled by the hum of voices. When we attempted to

awaken her, we found it a difficult task; she was in a kind of stupor, and could not be aroused.

The superintendent happened to be a physician, and he was summoned to the scene. He immediately ordered that the child should be taken to the hospital, and upon examination he pronounced that she had a fever. The poor little thing had probably been suffering for days, with no attention, and had crept into the church as a place of rest when she could go no further. She was carefully tended at the hospital, and, as she had elicited my sympathy, I paid her several visits.

When she was put into her little white cot a look of satisfaction came over her dusky face. Although she was delirious she seemed to notice her white aproned and white capped nurse, who told me that the child was happy if she saw anything white, and in her ravings continually repeated 'white' and 'snow.' The attendant did not understand the significance, nor did I at first; but finally the thought dawned on me that she was thinking of the song she had heard the children sing on that Sunday when I first saw her. I noticed one day, when I took her some flowers, that she singled out the white ones and rejected all the others. And, as the nurse had said, her mind ran constantly upon white. None of us could realize what it really meant.

Little Betsy grew no better, and the doctor said she could not recover. No clue could be found as to where she lived or who were her parents. When asked where she lived she shuddered and said: 'Down there,' pointing indiscriminately north, south, east and west. Her name she gave as Betsy. That was all the information that could be gained from her.

One day she became more quiet and ceased to rave. The nurse thought perhaps the predictions of the doctor would prove false, and Betsy would recover, but such was not the case. Finally the little thing turned to the nurse and said: 'Sing, Lady!' 'What shall I sing, Betsy?' 'Whiter than Snow.' I had told the nurse of her having heard the song, so she knew the meaning of the question, and began singing the song softly. Betsy interrupted her with 'Missis, does that mean me?' 'Yes, Betsy,' 'Me a nigger.' 'Yes, Betsy.' 'Den sing some more.'

Here the mystery unravelled at last. When the nurse finished, she told little Betsy how Jesus could wash all of us and make us whiter than snow, and how, even though her skin was black, her soul was as white as any one's. This made her very happy, and she lay perfectly still a long, long time.

Betsy grew weaker, and weaker, and when evening came they knew she could not live to see another day. As the twilight was growing deeper, she whispered, 'One more.' 'What Betsy?' 'Sing.' And the nurse did sing, and as she sang the spirit of little Betsy went to Him who was able to make it whiter than snow.—*Apostolic Guide*.

IT'S GOOD ENOUGH.

'There! I guess that will do,' said John, as he took a shovelful of ashes out of the stove. 'The pan isn't empty, but it's near enough; nobody will see it. If I can get the store swept in about five minutes, I can finish the story in the *Fireside Companion* before any one comes.'

The store was swept very much as the stove had been cleaned. The open spaces presented a good appearance, but out of the way corners and underneath boxes and barrels told a different story. However, John said it was good enough. The story was finished and the paper hidden out of sight before the clerks arrived. Then Mr. Willis, the proprietor, came in, bade them all 'good morning,' glanced around the store and went into his private office. Presently he called John. 'Take these letters to the office as soon as you can. They will be just

in time for the nine o'clock mail. Come right back.'

John hurried to the office, as he had been bidden, but, having deposited the letters safely, saw no reason for haste. Indeed, he indulged even in a game of marbles before returning to his work.

When he entered the store again, Mr. Willis made no comment on his tardiness, but remarked: 'Well, John, I've almost learned my lesson.'

John stared, 'What lesson, sir?'

'Why, the one you've been teaching me lately.'

John was more puzzled than ever, and all day long he wondered what lesson he could possibly teach Mr. Willis.

The next morning John's work was done as speedily and no better than the day before.

Mr. Willis came before the clerks, and sent John out on an errand. While he was gone, that gentleman with a quiet smile, began to investigate the corners that John thought nobody would see. When he returned, Mr. Willis said: 'John, I told you yesterday that I had almost learned my lesson. To-day I know it thoroughly. Would you like to hear it?'

'Yes, sir.'

'You have been teaching me how well I could get along without you. I thought the stove needed cleaning and the store sweeping every morning, but it seems they don't; so I shall not need you any longer than this week.'

—Selected

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH OPINION.

Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette:

If our readers would desire to see what 'unsectarian education,' as it is called, has come to in France, we can refer them to a 'Manual of Unsectarian Instruction,' in daily use in the State-aided public elementary schools of Paris. The following are some questions and answers to be found in this catechism:

Teacher—What is God?

Child—We cannot tell.

Teacher—Do you acknowledge a Superior or controlling Being?

Child—Why should we? Prove to us the necessity, and show Him to us.

Teacher—It cannot be proved that such a Being is indispensable.

Child—Then it is waste of time to talk about the matter.

The catechism is summed up in these words:—'The term 'God' has no signification; it means nothing at all.'

It is a startling fact mentioned in *The Banner* that 'in Wales, with a population of about 1,500,000 souls, there are fifty public elementary schools, rate-aided and State aided, in which the Holy Bible is a prohibited book, and in which neither prayer nor religious teaching are permitted.' Thank God that, with all our shortcomings, we have no such Board Schools established in this country, and that, moreover, there is no prospect of such!

A correspondent writing in the columns of the *National Church* says: 'In October, 1839, I obtained from the Church Defence Institution a set of four cards showing the succession of the Welsh Bishops from the earliest times. These I had put up in the vestry. We had a choir of twenty five men and boys, nearly all of them miners, and I was greatly pleased to find (whenever I went to the vestry before service) some of them studying with interest and wondering admiration these telling tables. From the remarks which they occasionally made to me about them, I used to feel that those tables were doing, not merely in but through these choir members, real and solid Church work.'

We are obliged from divers causes to give our readers only half a number this week.—Ed.