

The Inglenook.

Old or New Cashmere ?

"Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel," Miss Abby read, for perhaps the twentieth time that morning. The troubled look on her face deepened. Mechanically she put back from her temples a few soft refractory locks.

"O Lord," she said, wistfully, as rising from her seat she crossed the room and took from her tiny closet a neatly wrapped package. "Thou knowest that it is not ornaments of gold or jewellery that I have desired, nor yet fine raiment, but is not this a necessity?"

She held up in the sunlight the lustrous black folds of a new cashmere, and watched the silky sheen play over its surface with pride. How long it had been since she had such a pleasure. Several years, at least; she was not sure how many had elapsed since she had felt able to afford the luxury of a new best dress, and the old grey had been turned and pressed, cleaned and re-cleaned, yes, and darned, ever so neatly, in several conspicuous places. Could she wear it another season?

Yet here was the call, the great appeal for help in this closing year of the century for those who were still in the shadow of a great darkness.

She had nothing to spare, this economical, thrifty little woman, from the actual needs of her daily life, unless—but could she spare it indeed, she should return the coveted cashmere, and place the price in her next Sabbath's offering. Resuming her seat at the window, she read on:

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of the Lord of great price."

"I hope I have succeeded a little in obeying this command. O, I hope I have," she whispered. The faded blue eyes were near to tears, and Miss Abby closed them for a moment before she went on:

"In like manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." The book closed with a gentle little snap.

"I don't believe they found it so hard anyway," she said, with almost an impatient shrug of her shoulders. "Fancy Sara in a threadbare cashmere with patches. If she had been obliged to wear it, at least she wouldn't have felt ten years behind the styles, for they say that the grandmothers and the granddaughters in those days dressed alike after the same pattern. She ran her eyes hopelessly over the despised garment before her. That front breadth couldn't be moved any more. Already more than once she had relegated it to the back, but to alter the sides was out of the question.

In spite of all her care a few unsightly spots were visible in the most noticeable portion of the poor little skirt. "That is where the Graham children put their dirty little hands last Sunday afternoon," she sighed. "I did not have the heart to draw away from them, poor motherless little ones, and the lesson was about our rising from the dead some day as our blessed Master did. How the little boy clutched me in his eagerness to hear about the resurrection.

"Is that all so, you're tellin', Miss Abby?" he said, looking up so wonderingly into my face.

"As true as anything you ever heard in your life, little man," I said, and then the little girl came closer to me too, and put her hand right there on my knee.

"Did mamma rise just that way, ma'am?" she said.

"Yes, mamma rose just that way, dear," I answered, "and if you will love him and try to do what he wishes you to, he will come for you, too, when you have to die."

"I don't want to go if I have to die," said Harry. "I'd rather go like he did, just rise up out of sight, and go to heaven that way."

"I tried to explain the best I could the sweet old story, and my heart grew very soft as one after another they pressed close to me, and drank in what I said. I did not think of the soiled little fingers then. Oh, no. Their immortal souls were of far more consequence than a few spots on my poor, worn front breadth. Perhaps I can eke out a frill to conceal the unfortunate place anyway."

Miss Abby was very near to yielding. How would she feel to come into the kingdom and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to see these perishing souls, so many to whom she might have given of her bread of life, cast forth into outer darkness.

"How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach unless they be sent?" The words rang in her ears as she went about her daily tasks all day. She could not go into the great world and preach, but could she not give the widow's mite?

"It might save at least one soul," she meditated, "and what a star that would be in my crown of rejoicing. Poor soul, poor soul, you may yet be saved." Miss Abby almost forgot that it would be a star in her crown in thinking of the joy in store for that heathen heart, and lifting her head she sang cheerily:

"Rescue the perishing,

Care for the dying,

Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave."

At length, having finished her morning routine, she took up her mending basket, and set vehemently to work to see what could be done for the old gray. Having seated herself to her satisfaction, she began to work. But fresh disappointment awaited her. She had used so many of her spare pieces last winter in bringing the waist into something like modern conformity, that enough did not remain for the desired ruffles. She slipped again to her closet and surveyed the shining folds of the black cashmere. Her hand smoothed gently a little wrinkle. She rested her faded cheeks lovingly for a moment over it, and if a few tears were carefully brushed from the glossy surface, "He knoweth our frame." No wonder that the struggle was hard and long. How could she resolve to appear Sunday after Sunday in the old shabby apparel?

"Thou only knowest, O Lord, for how long it will have to be," she murmured, lifting her eyes imploringly upward. She wondered if it would be sacrilegious to pray: "Let this cup pass from me," if she

should add, "Not my will, but thine be done."

At the thought the scene in the garden rose in her mind. Not long ago she had studied, she had even taught the story of that dread hour, when drops of blood had borne witness to the agony of her Lord.

"For my sin's," she cried in dismay, and falling upon her knees thanked God that she might yet suffer with him.

"Such a little thing, such a little thing to bear for him who gave his life for me," she whispered to the faded worsted. "That I should be counted worthy to make even this small sacrifice."

The following Sabbath witnessed a larger attendance than usual in the church of M—. There was to be a special service for the purpose of raising funds to meet the urgent appeal for the cause of foreign missions. The minister preached as if he were inspired, setting forth eloquently the desperate needs of perishing millions. Loudly he urged those who were able to give liberally of their abundance, knowing that they must one day give account of their stewardship, and then his voice dropped almost to a whisper, as he softly told the story of the widow's mite.

"Let not those who are poor hold back because they have a little," he concluded solemnly, "Remember her of whom it was said, 'She hath done what she could.'" There was a pause of breathless silence as the speaker closed, and then a grey-haired elder rose from his seat and thanked God that he had called them to be fellow laborers with him.

"Wife," said the pastor that evening, as the two sat together alone in the twilight, resting after the labors of the day, "the unexpected increase in the offering this morning was, I confess, a rebuke to my little faith."

"It was a surprise to us all," she replied. "I overheard one of the deacons say that it was due to the earnest words of your sermon."

"Well," said the minister, humbly, "I never preached with such a sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as I did this morning, and do you know, I traced it to a curious source. I had scarcely entered the church before I was conscious of little Miss Abby's presence. Such a look of exaltation and trust I never saw on any countenance. It seemed to say to me: 'Wait on the Lord.' Surely I thought, she had been in the presence of God."

"All through the service my eyes kept turning toward her shining face. It was positively an inspiration. I was sure that she was praying that the word might have free course and be glorified."

"As no doubt she was," said his wife, in a low voice, adding, "That all would do likewise!"—Wilhelmina Cozly Byrd, in New York Observer.

What's In A Name ?

Bobbie was wearing his first trousers, and was as proud as a boy has the right to be under such circumstances. He felt himself a man indeed, and was very anxious to be recognized as such. But his elders were unappreciative. Uncle Harry had poked fun at him in a quiet way, even going so far as to inquire what 'those things' were. So Bobbie went to Aunt Helen for consolation. "Why, Bobbie," she exclaimed when she caught sight of him, "how grand you look! I never saw you dressed like that before."

"I ain't dressed, retorted the boy, indignantly. 'Vese are pants.'—Brooklyn L. f.