

## WHAT CAN I DO?

If you cannot from the platform  
Make an energetic speech,  
Or from sacred desk or pulpit  
Gospel sermons ever preach;  
You can visit homes where evil  
Holds an undisputed sway,  
And for Christ's sake you can urge men  
From their sins to turn away.

If you have no love of singing  
And for music have no ear,  
You can enter homes where sorrow  
Pain and grief are ever near;  
And in tones of tender pity  
You can break hearts' console,  
Pointing to the only Saviour,  
Who can make those spirits whole.

If from meetings of Committee  
You would rather stay away,  
You can ask the Lord to bless them;  
At the meeting when you pray;  
And when work has been arranged for  
You some humble part can take  
Which will prove a thorough pleasure  
If 'tis done for Jesus' sake.

If you cannot, then, do great things  
There are small ones you can do,  
And a sphere of Christian labor  
Be assured there is for you.

Get to work then, do your duty  
And your sweet reward shall be  
In the voice of Jesus saying  
"Ye have done it unto me."

—*Berford Adams in British Women's Temperance Journal.*

## "SO MUCH TO DO."—A HOME MISSION STORY.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"The dedication of the Granville church is to-morrow, remember," said Parson Hines, as he arose from the breakfast-table one summer's morning, and followed his wife into the untidy kitchen, where she had withdrawn in the martyr-like mood that now-a-days seemed to enshroud her like an unlovely garment.

"Very well, Mr. Hines, I will have your best shirt and vest and your linen ulster freshly done up, never fear." "That is not the point, wife," he said. "You are to accompany me to Granville. It will make no end of talk if you do not go. Every one will ask for you, and when we are all blessed with good health 'so much to do' is not a reasonable excuse for your remaining at home; besides, I shall enjoy having you with me, and the drive will do you good."

"There are a thousand reasons why I should not leave home for a whole day, as much as I have to do. I am in no preparation to go out among folks, but if you insist, I must go about finishing my new dress at once. You will have to put up with the house as it is, and have lunch for dinner; for supper also unless I manage to get around to cook something."

"Where is Lizzie? Set her about the housework."

"Lizzie!" Mrs. Hines ejaculated the name, and casting an undesirable look at her husband, shut her thin lips very close together, and turned to go up stairs.

"When Lizzie's father, your brother, engaged you to board his motherless daughter, he stipulated that you should teach her housekeeping. He has paid her board regularly, and very convenient the money has been, to be sure. She might be a great help to you. When do you intend fulfilling your part of the contract?"

"When she shows a disposition to be useful, and develops a taste for something beside story-reading and singing the plantation melodies she learns of old Aunt Chloe, whose society she evidently prefers over and above that of any one in this house. She is there in Chloe's kitchen, by this time, I will warrant."

"And might be in worse company," muttered the minister as he crossed the green lawn to a pretty little ornamental summer-house in the farthest corner, used during the warm season as a study.

Mrs. Hines closed the door to the breakfast-room, and calling Tommy, the oldest of her half-dozen children, she said to him:

"If you will be good, and keep the little one out of doors until dinner time, so

that I can finish my new dress, I will give you a quart of molasses to make into taffy while we are away to-morrow, attending the dedication at Granville."

"All right, mamma, hurrah!" shouted Tommy, and gathering his brothers and sisters about him, he imparted to them the sweet tidings, and to pass away the time, marshalled them off to the top of "Birch Hill," a charming bit of woodland half a mile across the field.

Breakfast had not been over fifteen minutes, yet the parsonage was to all appearances as utterly deserted as if it was the habitat alone of the flies that hummed and buzzed and made themselves merry over the traces of maple syrup left upon the soiled china.

As a shout from the retreating children was wafted in by a gentle breeze, the curtains were pushed back from the open window, and a bright-faced young girl, the very picture of active health, stepped into the room from the deep stoop where she had fled with her book the moment breakfast was over.

It was the current number of the *Home Mission Monthly*, in which she seemed to be deeply interested, yet she placed it carefully upon a shelf, saying aloud:

"Charity begins at home; and it is high time my disposition for usefulness developed for the benefit of this household. Poor mistaken Aunt Emily! how much help I might have been to her had she not persisted in maintaining the fiction that I made more work than I saved. I wish there was some way to make her look at life in a different way. She seems to be predetermined to be abused, and her chief glory is in making of herself a domestic martyr. She would not allow of my lifting a finger to help if she knew it, and I will give her a surprise for once, just to let her see what I can do if I have the privilege."

All the long, sweet summer morning Mr. Hines, in his cool, airy study, with all the freshness of out-door peeping in at the open windows, scratched away with his stub pen upon the dedication sermon. The children shouted and laughed the perfumed hours away as merry as the birds in the graceful, swaying black birch trees about them, while poor, mistaken Mrs. Hines, oblivious to everything but the discomforts of life, stitched and fretted, and fretted and stitched in the little close attic chamber that she persisted in using as a sewing-room because it was out of the way. As she put the finishing touches to the pretty dress, she mentally went over and over the work, some of it necessary, some of it unnecessary, that must be done in order that she might make a pleasant and profitable day of the morrow outside of her monotonous domestic round, and more than once she said aloud:

"Lizzie! It is exasperating my being constantly reminded that I promise brother John to teach her to work. When I took her into the family I little knew what a care she was to be, nor how quickly she was going to grow up into the great, awkward, helpless girl she is. I am sure that I am heartily tired of being instructed as to my duty concerning her. If I send her away I lose the board money and her cast-off clothes for the children. If I teach her to work, she will right away think herself capable of keeping house for her father and coax him into sending for her. She is a great over-grown, lazy thing, that is what she is—and never will be good for anything in the world but to read and sing and romp. It is a pity, really, for it was her mother's dying wish that she should be useful. Strange that she develops no practical qualities! I'm sure I'm not to blame for it, and I can only slave myself to death for her and the rest, and let things take their course."

All at once the town clock struck twelve, the shop whistles blew, the factory bells rang, and from below came the merry jingle of the dinner-bell, eliciting responsive shouts from the children who were racing across the lawn.

"Well, I declare!" said Mrs. Hines, "how the morning has flown. My dress almost done, too. Who rang that bell I wonder? Oh, Lizzie, of course, half-finished and as thoughtless as usual, and wondering at the non-appearance of dinner. What an appetite the girl has! I must write an John and tell him that we must raise a dollar a week on her board."

Running down she met her husband in

the front hall, walking with the dejected air of a hungry man, who knows he is to sit down in a neglected dining-room to a dinner of mush.

The children, having performed their ablutions at the wild-flag brook as they crossed the field, came shouting:

"What for dinner?"

"Oh, soup!"

"No, a roast!"

"There was, indeed, a savory smell of meat in the air, but Mrs. Hines hastened to say:

"There is not time for the mush, even and we shall have to make out with crackers and milk."

The parson felt savage, but said nothing, enabling himself with a thought of the ordination-dinner on the morrow, as he pushed open the door of the dining-room. The appetizing smell of nicely browned veal-cutlet set the children dancing.

"What! what!" cried the parson, feeling like dancing himself, and with difficulty subduing the impulse as he saw the dining room in perfect order, the long muslin curtains looped back with roses, a fresh bouquet on the table that was carefully arranged with chairs in place and all ready for the occupants. Through the open kitchen-door may be caught a glimpse of Lizzie in pink dress, white apron, and bare arms, carving knife and fork in hand, flitting around among the pans and pots with the experienced air of a professional cook.

"I thought I would give you a surprise-party, uncle and auntie," she said, with her habitual bright smile, coming forward and placing the temptingly garnished dish upon the table and flanking it with one of mealy potatoes, another of asparagus, these in turn set off by a tray of golden, puffed-up corn cup cakes fairly splitting their sides at the successful combination of cream and eggs and Indian meal.

To the great relief of the hungry children, who were grinning from ear to ear at the novelty of the situation, the parson's grace was very short, and was immediately supplemented by Mrs. Hines saying dolefully:

"We can hardly afford veal cutlet, Lizzie, child; but, of course, you could not be expected to think of the expense."

"I bought the dinner myself, Aunt Emily, even to the quart of corn meal with which I made the cakes, and the stale loaf for the asparagus toast," replied the young girl, with a dignity that at once installed her mistress of the situation. "I should hardly have ventured an experiment with other people's provisions, and it would not have been my party had I not furnished the dinner, or I could not conscientiously have called it so."

"It's the best surprise party ever I went to anywhere," said Tom, with his mouth full.

The parson laughed in a way that gave the young people liberty to keep up the talk, and the meal turned out an unwontedly merry one, even Mrs. Hines' mouth two or three times drawing around in a queer little contortion that would have been a smile had it not been for a thought of the parson's best linen that lay behind it.

"Have you had the fairies in to help you, child?" asked Mr. Hines, as he drew back from the table, having eaten until his pale, pinched face looked warm and ruddy, and his white, thin nose shone rubeicant as if it would do to inflate his lungs with for some time to come.

"Aunt Chloe was the fairy who taught me to cook," said the young girl, as she cleared the table and brought in a desert of stewed prunes. "She has been very lame, you know, but she could be head and let me be hands and feet for her. She used to be head cook at her master's house when she was a slave, you know, and you see, auntie, she has developed in me a taste for something besides plantation melodies, although I like them too. You can finish your dress and do anything else you please. I will do up the work and prepare tea when it is time."

"Thank you," said the surprised auntie, "but there is washing and ironing to be done this afternoon"—as if the work were laid back upon her familiar ground of "so much to do."

Lizzie pushed open the kitchen door, disclosing a bit of green yard and the parson's linen, starched stiff, dancing upon the clothes-line in a fresh breeze that seemed likely to take all the dignity out of them,

while the yellow-painted floor of the kitchen shone in a way that proved that good use had been made of the suds.

"You know you are safe to trust the ironing to me, auntie. You have often said I ironed my dresses well."

"I don't see how you have accomplished so much," Mrs. Hines condescended to say, as, turning to go upstairs again, she found the sitting-room and her own room in order.

"I have had a long morning," replied Lizzie, "and Aunt Chloe has taught me to successfully keep more than one iron in the fire at a time."

"I shall not be afraid to call on you in the future, now that I know how well you can do," said Mrs. Hines, but Lizzie replied good-humoredly:

"Too late, Aunt Emily. I am every day expecting a summons to go and keep house for papa. That has always been the understanding, you know. I was to go when I was qualified."

"I know a weed when I see it, and I know a flower, too, even if it do grow up tall and rank, and some ways resemble a weed," said the poor colored woman, one evening in the early autumn when the parson and his wife went to make their first call upon her after Lizzie had started for Maryland to live with her father. "I can't do much, but I like to do a little good as I go along, and it only takes a bit of talk and a pinch of patience thrown in to get young folks interested in what is useful; and they are so full of life that they must be all taken up with something good, bad or indifferent."

It was a lesson that Mrs. Hines will never forget. "I was not looking for a flower," she confessed. "I don't know how it was, but for a long time I have seemed to be like a machine running out of gear. I have not done my duty by myself nor by any one else, and Lizzie has shared in the general neglect."

"The Lord sets all things right if we only take them to him," said the aged woman, "and that is what Lizzie has had to do. Don't you see how sweet and bright she is? I think the Lord sent her to me that I might teach her the needs of my poor people—'home missions,' is what she calls it; and how full her great loving heart is of interest and of plans for work! She says her mother's dying prayer was that she might grow up to be a useful woman, and I think it will be granted."

Lizzie is a useful woman. I will tell you where she has found her work. In her leisure, after keeping her father's house, she teaches a little school for colored girls. And such a model school as it is. Her instruction is not confined to books. She teaches them to sew, and knit, and cook, and clean, to be good domestics, and above all, she teaches them that in whatever paths they are led their lives must be sweet and strong, and active in the service of God for his Son's dear sake.

"I love my work," says Lizzie. "I am fond of my girls. I have no color prejudice. The best friend I ever had was Aunt Chloe, a poor, old, lame colored woman. It is hard telling what I should have been to-day had she not interested me in home mission work, and made me understand that I must, fit myself for the small homely duties in life before I should be able to grapple with any of its weightier problems."

People in general, however, in speaking of the young housekeeper and teacher's great executive ability, will say:

"Miss Lizzie had a most excellent bringing-up in a clergyman's family, and was taught, from her childhood, to be useful." From that early experience, however, Lizzie was taught never, in whatever position of life she might be placed, to let inevitable every-day duties shut out the fact that always and everywhere there is for Jesus "so much to do."—*Standard.*

## "I DO THIS FOR OTHERS"; OR, THE OLD MAN'S SACRIFICE.

BY REV. H. W. COSANT.

Deacon Jones had been a professed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ for forty years and more. Everybody knew Deacon Jones for ten or fifteen miles around as the man that owned all the land that joined him," as through economy, self-denial, and hard work he had been able to buy out his neighbors one after another until his possessions extended over many miles of territory.

But he was not a veritable deacon, al-