

ance and want of opportunity, the potter had nothing but words of tender encouragement. 'A small vessel thine, but if it is filled to overflowing with love to God and to the brethren, and if thou bearest it just when and where thou art bidden, fear thou not, neither be thou dismayed for He will be with thee and will water thy labors with the dew of His blessing.'

Does my parable appear to you inapplicable or far-fetched, dear sisters of the Woman's Auxiliary, or can you read between the lines, as I do, and take comfort and help therefrom? Just simple earthen pitchers, made strong and serviceable for every day usage, not all like, but all fitted for those to whom they are entrusted and no more expected of them than that for which their capacity provides. Just the willing hand in sympathy with the willing heart, with work enough ever waiting for us, with no need to sigh over the narrowness of our field or the dearth of our opportunities. We can begin when and where we are, where our past failures, errors, and our past sins have left us, and do what just now lies in our power. "Every day," we are told, "brings its own task, each tasks its opportunity, whilst each task accepted and each opportunity fulfilled may be a step towards a higher life."

Who is it that says that: "There is no life so humble that, if it be true and genuinely human and obedient to God, it may not hope to shed some of its light? There is no life so meagre that the greatest and wisest of us all can afford to despise it. We cannot tell at what moment it may flash forth with the life of God. Nor have we any power to escape our responsibilities." Hear what Dr. Chalmers has to say about this: "Every man is a missionary, now and forever, for good or for evil, whether he intends or designs it or not. He may be a blot, radiating his dark influence outwardly to the very circumference of society; or he may be a blessing spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world; but a blank he cannot be. There are no more blanks; there are no more neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the light that splendidly illumines, and the salt that silently operates; but, being dead or alive, every man speaks." I quote again: "Work in God's vineyard is marked as mine. I am called to do it, and without me it will be left undone. God calls me as a laborer, to use for Him, the strength He gives. He might drive me as a slave, but He leaves me free and offers me hire. Does the day go by and call after call still find me standing 'idle.' Am I sure that a call to true work for Him will come to me again, and when the day has gone, can I plead that no man hath hired me?"

Oh! the comfort of knowing that we are in charge of "earthen vessels" only, vessels fit for this work-a-day, very human world, that our tools are human tools, and that we shall only be asked to give an account of what we have and not of what we have not. But what we have we must give;

where an opportunity does offer itself for using any gift of ours, however humble, let us use it freely, willingly, unrepiningly—even if it entails some sacrifice or some personal cost. Let no bugbear of real or fancied unworthiness check our utterance or limit our work. Do not let us wait to be good, before we try to do good. If we wait for that we shall never begin at all. Only let us be up and doing. "The true soldier does not wait for new shoes or a full knapsack before he enters the fight, nor does the wise general tarry till he has full stores." He knows that his call for recruits, and his need of supplies will be understood and responded to at head quarters, and that all that concerns himself and those under his command is to obey the "go ye" which sends them into the fray.

It is not given to all of us to be "enrolled in our Lord's own guard of honor," nor to belong, as has been claimed for every missionary who is true to his vocation, to "the moral aristocracy of the Church of Christ," but though ours may be the smoother, easier lot, yet there remains to us the privilege of helping him just when and where he cannot help himself, to lighten his burdens, to supply his temporal needs and to relieve him as far as possible of anxious cares about the present and future of those dear ones who share in his labors and in his life of daily self-sacrifice in our Master's service.

We may not build the whole edifice, but we may add brick to brick until enough lies ready for the hand of the skilled workman to complete his task. We may not be able to weave the whole fabric, but let not one thread be wanting in the beautiful texture which our hand might have supplied. It may not be within our power to minister to the needs of every laborer in the field "white already to harvest," but we can make one here, or one there, our more especial charge and let nought fail him temporally or spiritually which we can, by our individual or collective effort, provide.

Our gathering together to-day is as another milestone upon our road—a road that has been marked by signal blessings and much encouragement. We have given so little and yet have received so much. Let the keynote of our deliberations be praise and our watchword "rejoice! for hitherto has the Lord helped us." In recruiting for our crusade—"our great missionary crusade," it has been called, "a work which angels might envy and the Son of Man Himself began"—we want to enlist the sympathies not only of those who from their own whole hearted devotion need no urging, but of the many who are perhaps only beginning to take an interest in the good work. Something practical and tangible takes a hold upon their hearts and in working for it step by step their interest grows. They begin with the practical and end with the spiritual side of mission work. "Earthly vessels," but filled to overflowing with love to God and man! There are