

## The "Goodest" Mother.

EVENING was falling cold and dark,  
And the people hurried along the way  
As if they were longing soon to mark  
Their own home-candle's cheery ray.

Before me toiled in the whirling wind  
A woman with bun her great and small,  
And after her tugged, a step behind,  
The bundle she loved the best of all.

A dear little roly poly boy,  
With rosy cheeks and jacket blue,  
Laughing and chattering, full of joy,  
And here's what he said I tell you true:

"You're the *goodest* mother that ever was!"  
A voice as clear as a forest-bird's;  
And I'm sure the glad young heart had cause  
To utter the sweet and loving words.

Perhaps the woman had worked all day  
Washing or scrubbing; perhaps she sewed;  
I knew by her weary footfall's way  
That life for her was an uphill road.

But here was a comfort, children dear:  
Think what a comfort ye might give  
To the very best friend you can have here,  
The mother dear in whose house you live,

If once in a while you'd stop and I say,  
In task or play, for a moment's pause,  
And tell her, in a sweet and winning way,  
"You're the *goodest* mother that ever was."  
—Margaret E. Sangster.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 21, 1888.

## THE PRICE OF A SOUL.

A DAUGHTER came to a worldly mother and said she was anxious about her sins, and she had been praying all night. The mother said: "Oh! stop praying! I don't believe in praying. Get over all these religious notions and I'll get you a dress that will cost \$500, and you may wear it next week to that party." The daughter took the dress, and she moved in the gay circle, the gayest of all the gay, that night; and, sure enough, all religious impressions were gone, and she stopped praying. A few months after she came to die, and in her closing

moments she said: "Mother, I wish you would bring me that dress that cost \$500. The mother thought it a very strange request, but she brought it to please the dying child. "Now," said the daughter, "Mother, hang that dress on the foot of my bed," and the dress was hung there, on the foot of the bed. Then the dying girl got up on one elbow and looked at her mother, and then pointed to the dress and said: "Mother, that dress is the price of my soul." Selected.

## KEEP PURE.

THANK God for two things—yes, for a thousand; but for two among many: First, that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I got from my parents. If I were to raise a monument of gold higher than heaven it would be no expression of the debt of gratitude which I owe to them, for that which they unceasingly gave, by the heritage of their body and the heritage of their souls, to me. And next to that I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness. I know a great deal about it; for if I hear a man say A, I know the whole alphabet of that man's life, by which I can imagine all the rest. If I see a single limb, I have the physiologist's talent by which I know the whole structure. But I never became acquainted with wickedness when I was young by coming in contact with it. I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe to my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of these wicked things, which I have gained in later life in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not hurtful to me.

And if there are children that are sometimes impatient of parental restraint, let me say to them, you do not know what temptation you are under, and if held back by your mother, if held back by your father, you shall escape the knowledge of the wickedness that is in the world, you will have occasion, by-and-bye, to thank God for that, more than for silver or for gold or for houses or for lands.

Stay at home nights. There is many a sod that lies over the child whose downfall began by vagrancy at night, and there is many a child whose heart-breaking parents would give the world if the sod did lie over them. What a state that is for children to come to, in which the father and mother dread their life unspeakably more than their death! What a horrible state of things that is, where parents feel a sense of relief in the dying of their children!—Henry Ward Beecher.

## KEEPING ONE'S WORD.

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER was one day taking a long country walk near Freshford, when he met a little girl, about five years old, sobbing over a broken bowl; she had dropped and broken it in bringing it back from the field to which she had taken her father's dinner in it, and she said she would be beaten on her return home for having broken it; then, with a sudden gleam of hope, she innocently looked up into his face, and said, "But ye can mend it, can't ee?" My father explained that he could not mend the bowl, but the trouble he could, by the gift of a sixpence to buy another. However, on opening his purse it was empty of silver, and he had to make amends by promising to meet his little friend in the same spot at the same hour next day. The child, entirely trusting him, went on her way comforted. On his return home he found an invitation awaiting him to dine in Bath the following evening, to meet some one whom he specially wished to see. He hesitated for some little time, trying to calculate the possibility of giving the meeting to his little friend of the broken bowl, and of still being in time for the dinner party in Bath; but finding this could not be, he wrote to decline accepting the invitation on the plea of a "pre-engagement," saying to us, "I cannot disappoint her, she trusted me so implicitly."—Bruce's *Life of General Sir William Napier*.

## DO WHAT IS BEFORE YOU.

Do whatever there is to be done without questioning and without calculation. Make progress in things moral. If need be, utter stammering words. Would you console the troubled if you only had a ready tongue? Take the tongue that you have. Ring the bell that hangs in your steeple, if you can do no better. Do as well as you can. That is all that God requires of you. Would you pray with the needy and tempted if you had eminent gifts of prayer? Use the gifts that you have. Do not measure yourself according to the pattern of somebody else. Do not say to yourself, "If I had his skill," or, "If I had his experience." Take your own skill and your own experience, and make the most of them. Do you stand over against trouble and suffering, and marvel that men whom God hath blessed with such means do so little? Do you say to yourself: "If I had money, I know what I would do with it?" No, you do not. God does; and so he does not trust you with it. "If I had something different from what I have, I would work," says many a man. No; if



SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

you would work in other circumstances, you would work just where you are. A man that will not work just where he is, with just what he has, and for the love of God, and for the love of man, will not work anywhere, in such a way as to make his work valuable.

## A PARABLE.

A CERTAIN tyrant said to one of his subjects, "What is your employment?" He answered, "I am a blacksmith." "Go home," said he, "and make me a chain such a length." He went home; it occupied him several months, and he had no wages all the time. Then he brought it to the monarch, and he said, "Go and make it twice as long." He gave him nothing to do it with, but sent him away. Again he worked on, and made it twice as long. He brought it up again, and the monarch said, "Go and make it longer still." Each time he brought it there was nothing but the command to make it longer still. And when he had brought it up at last the monarch said, "Take it, and bind him hand and foot with it, and cast him into a furnace of fire." These were the wages of making the chain.

Here is a meditation for you to-night, ye servants of the devil! Your master, the devil, is telling you to make a chain. Some have been fifty years welding the links of the chain; and he says, "Go and make it longer." Next Sabbath morning you will open that shop of yours, and put another link on; next Sabbath you will be drunk, and put another link on; next Monday you will do a dishonest action; and so you will keep on, making fresh links to this chain; and when you have lived twenty more years, the devil will say, "More links on still!" And then, at last, it will be, "Take him and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into a furnace of fire." "For the wages of sin is death." There is a subject for your meditation. I do not think it will be sweet: but if God makes it profitable it will do you good. You must have strong medicine sometimes, when the disease is bad. God apply it to your hearts!—Spurgeon.