

The Inglenook

Small Things.

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It is said that some of the most notable events in history have been brought about by what appear to be very trivial occurrences, and that the greatest forces in nature are silent forces. How insignificant, says E. Paxton Hood, have been the trifles which have aroused great nations: sometimes a hymn, sometimes a song, sometimes a martyr's scaffold, sometimes a discovery in science, sometimes a ship lighting by chance on a foreign shore; a common soldier—a child—a girl at the door of an inn, have changed the face and fortune of empires. The smallest thing may give equilibrium to the world. If He weighs the mountains in scales, so He does also the small dust of the balance. Taking these facts into consideration are we not justified in concluding that none of His creatures are too weak, obscure or illiterate to play a part in carrying out the great purposes of Him, who taketh the base things, and things that are despised to bring to naught things that are.

While some are prone to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think there are not a few who underestimate the latent powers and possibilities of their nature and life. In our congregations we have many women of this type, faithful, industrious, kindhearted women who are not opposed, to mission work but who hesitate about uniting themselves with our auxiliaries lest they should not come up to the standard as some one else does. It is in the hope of encouraging and stimulating such that I have chosen this subject. Many look at the president of their presbyterial or auxiliary with admiration and not unmixed with envy and say, "if I could preside as she does, I would only be too willing to assist, but then you know she is a clever woman and I have no talents." She is gifted, it is nothing for her to address a meeting, but remember that you only see the God-inspired, God-strengthened effort, the president alone knows the trembling that laid hold on her, the misgivings, anxiety and nervous strain that probably preceded and followed it, but if some one had not ventured you would never have had a president.

Waste not the precious moments, when you might be doing something, in wishing that the Lord had fitted you for some great work. Do not be over-anxious for the highest place in His Kingdom on earth, lest like the mother of the apostles, you afterward find that you knew not what you asked; to be qualified for it might mean to be baptized with a baptism from which your humanity would shrink. The gods sometimes give genius when

they take all else. If we knew the application, suffering, discipline and terrible experiences necessary in some cases to the development of talent, we would draw back and feel thankful that God has set us in the lowly places. Some writers say:

Will you seek it? Will you brave it?
Tis a strange and solemn thing,
Learning long before your teaching
Listening long before your preaching
Suffering before you sing,
And the songs that echo longest,
Deepest, fullest, truest, strongest,
With your life blood you will write.

There are diversities of gifts, but it is God who maketh one to differ from another.

The more talents He has endowed us with the greater our responsibility, for to whom much is given of him shall much be required, I fear we shall all some day be like the young minister who was sighing for a larger field and wider scope for his abilities and to whom one grown grey in the service remarked, "You will find your congregation quite large enough when you have to give account for each of them." How much truth there is in the statement that "Between the great things we would do that we can't do, and the small things we can do that we won't do we are apt to do nothing at all." Once when Sir Michael Costa was having a rehearsal with a vast array of performers and hundreds of voices as the mighty chorus rang out with thunder of the organ and roll of drums and ringing horns and cymbals clashing, some one man who played the piccolo far away up in some corner said within himself, "In all this din it matter not what I do," and so he ceased to play. Suddenly the great conductor stopped, flung up his hands and all was still, and then he cried aloud, "Where is the piccolo?" The quick ear missed it and all was spoiled because it failed to take its part. This striking illustration suggests such questions as these to each one of us. While others are doing their best does the great leader, miss my praise? Are there, dark, despairing souls who will never listen to the song of the redeemed because my hand has failed to do its work? Am I doing nothing because the part assigned me is so insignificant that I have concluded it is not worth while. Just think! this grand missionary movement which is striving to win the world for Christ may be retarded by a single individual. What our auxiliaries need is not ten-talent men but women who are willing to do what they can.

A few years ago we had two ladies in our own congregation who were interested but rather loth to join our auxiliary. They said we cannot pray or take any part in the meetings, after further consideration however they decided to become members and do what they could. When we were arranging for our Thank-offering

meeting they offered to make the coffee which is usually served at the close of the service and everyone who was present can testify that the fragrant, delicious coffee which they prepared was one of the most pleasing features of the programme. How many little things there are to be done which every one can do, speaking a word to stranger, gathering up the hymn books, lifting the offering, keeping the door and last, but not least, washing the dishes, a department of domestic science in which I think we have all graduated. If we can not speak with the tongues of angels or pray like a Solomon, there is always room at the Master's feet and at the monthly meeting for the Mary's who care to listen and brighten it with their presence, and you have no idea how much a bright face encourages the two or three who meet so often under discouraging circumstances, or what an inspiration it gives to the President to know that you are interested enough to attend and contribute of your means to the society. And who can tell the feeling of joy in the heart of the God of missions to see one woman witnessing in this way for Him. It seems to me that when the secrets of all hearts and lives shall be revealed that it will not be the men and women of genius that have made the world ring with their plaudits who shall receive the Master's sweetest smile of approval, but those who are patiently and bravely doing for love and duty's sake the disagreeable ungenial, insignificant things which are all unseen of men, but not unseen of Him who had for the widow and her mite the wonderful commendation "she hath cast in more than they all." Others may be kept back from fear of being asked to engage in prayer. This should not hinder any one. I am sure no one would insist upon you doing so if you were not inclined; but if, after you have become accustomed to the ways of the auxiliary, some person should request you to do so, do not decline without considering a moment. So many people conclude they cannot do a thing before they try. We do not know how many talents God has entrusted us with until we begin to use them. Like the man in the parable we will probably discover that in using those we have gained or developed other five. Begin with the Lord's prayer until you get accustomed to your voice and the sound of it does not terrify you. If you never get any farther you have gained a point in being able to repeat a prayer, divine in its nature and origin, embracing every claim of God and need of man, and far transcending any human effort. When you have thus gained courage and confidence attempt a short prayer of one or two sentences. Do not be discouraged at its brevity.

The model prayers of the Bible are short prayers, and we are told of a publican who could not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, whose prayer "Lord be merciful to me a sinner" was heard and answered while the Pharisee's egotistical and lengthy petition was disregarded. Depend wholly on God and rest in His promise, "It shall be given you in that hour." You may never have had the advantages of a liberal education, but the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. He can teach you deep spiritual truths and fill your mind with