

## CLARA'S QUESTION.

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

Clara King laid down her Bible on the stand and looked out of the window. It was the first day of November, and a dull, cold rain filled the streets with mud; a few Irish women were on their way to early mass, and here and there a brown sparrow hopped about looking for his food; otherwise there were brick walls. The outlook was not pleasant. Clara was a teacher in one of the city schools, working hard week-days, so hard that occupation kept her from thinking that her father and mother and sister all lay in Falmouth graveyard, and what other relatives she had less near and dear were scattered far and wide. But this was Sunday, and as she finished her morning reading and looked out of the window while she waited for the bell to ring for breakfast, she could not help a dreadful sense of loneliness settling down on her heart. It is true there was a Bible full of comfort before her, but she was tired, lonely, chilly, and the day was all gloom. She remembered it was November, the month of Thanksgiving; and before her rose like a vision the cosy, warm kitchen at her old home, her mother making pies at the cross-legged table; father filling the brick oven—always heated for that festive use—with long wood shavings, Matty dressing up the sitting-room with bitter-sweet and ground pine, while she herself pared apples, strained squash, or stirred the cranberry sauce on the stove; and without the sea sparkled and roared close by, and the low cedars on the Point rushed and whirled in the keen wind. Then she had found the old red house small and inconvenient, and longed to get away, to see more people and live a less quiet and monotonous life; now, she would have given anything she could give to be back there with those three again. She would have no Thanksgiving this year; she must stay in her cheap boarding-house, spend the long day in her chilly room or the dark, squalid parlor below, and have no ray of light from past or future to be thankful for. Nevertheless Clara was, and meant to be, a Christian woman; the flesh is weak many a time when the spirit is willing, and she had not learned the last, greatest lesson of the Christian life; that we live by daily bread alone; that even heavenly manna did not provide for the morrow's food, only for to-day. She had been reading the first four psalms, and out of them but one clause of a verse remained with her:

"Who shall show us any good?"

She heard this over and over with curious persistency; thinking of what her life would probably be; a long stretch of hard, lonely work, a homeless old age, a death among strangers. Bitter tears rolled down her pale face as she entertained this spectral trouble, and pitied herself so earnestly for that which as yet was not here. There are thousands like her, poor child! thousands who borrow trouble, millions beside who have it without borrowing; but of these last she did not think.

Strangely enough, the minister who preached that day in the church she habitually attended took for his text the very line that had haunted her. He acknowledged that this was a common query among the unhappy of this world, but went on to say:

"If we cannot really find any good—which is a proposition I do not mean to dispute, since a person in the state of mind which asks that question is unable and unwilling both to see good—no, even if it were found for them—let us look for evil. There is enough of that lying about us in every path; we are not any of us 'all alone unhappy,' though we are apt to think so. If there is a soul in this assembly which has ever asked this question in bitterness of spirit, then, oh, dear soul! let me beseech you to begin this very day and see what evil you can find beside your own, to keep it company. Go and measure your sorrows by your neighbour's; put plummet and line to next-door or next-room miseries and find out wherein the scale of human wretchedness you stand. It is real comfort to the mind of man to define and establish its position. If you are once aware of evil, you can do something toward its mitigation, and your own bitter experience will help you to sympathize with others, it may be to help them; though that is scarce to be expected from one who disbelieves in good. This is a good day to begin; it is almost time for the feast of Thanksgiving; and you who are not thankful, since the day gives you no occupation, ought at least to discover others who are also unthankful and tell them how much less their sorrows are than yours. If you are Christians, or think you are, go and preach to them these bad tidings of tribulation and see what audiences you will have. Since you do not accept the gospel for yourselves, except in name, go and see how others live without it. Yes! go fill your soul with husks, and then come back, if you cannot come till then to your Father's house and sit down and make merry in honour of your repentance."

Clara heard no further; this strange outlook from her own stand-point so shamed and confronted her that she went home astonished at herself, yet in a state of despondence still, for she did not know what to do, where to find another discouraged human being. She was a direct, simple-minded creature, in the best sense of "simple," and so the sermon came home to her for herself, not for her neighbors. She looked about her at the ten-table that evening with a new insight; was it possible that she could find unhappiness right under her eyes. It might be so, she thought, as she looked at Miss Allen, an

elderly woman, who had a room on the fourth story, just above her own, and went out dress-making. Clara had never spoken to her before, but to-night she happened to sit next her, and observed that her face was sad as well as grave.

"It has been a disagreeable day, Miss Allen," she said, by way of making conversation.

"It has been a dreadful day!" returned the poor woman, with a sigh.

"Did you get out to church?" asked Clara.

"Oh, no! This weather gives me the rheumatism so I can scarcely come down to my meals."

Here was an opening. One word led to another, and Clara found that the poor woman was so disabled by pain that her work was delayed or suspended, her daily bread precarious, and besides being poor she was also friendless and no longer young. Here, indeed, she found evil, but finding it forgot her own miseries in consoling another's. It was not much to bring Miss Allen into her room where her one Sunday evening luxury, a small fire, filled an open grate, and where an easy rocker rested the half-crippled limbs of the suffering woman. She rested here for an hour or two, told the young girl her sad story of loss, and pitied Clara's loneliness, and then crept up to her own bed, cheered and helped.

"It'll seem so good," she said, "to think you're right under me. I shall not feel half so lonesome."

"Knock on the floor, then, if you are ill in the night and want me," Clara answered. "I shall be glad to help you if I can," and she went back to her room full of plans to make Miss Allen more comfortable; she would carry her up one of the flannel sheets she had brought from Falmouth, and paste one of her windows with strips of paper about the sash-edges. It was so near her bed. She went to rest in quite another temper from that of the morning; though she did not know it. The next day had its own work, the dull routine of school, the recurring lesson, the stupid children. One was absent.

"Do any of you know where Sally Blair is to-day?" she asked.

"Please 'm she's down with a broken leg," said a boy who lived next door to the Blairs. So after school Clara went down into Elm street, and hunted up the house. It was an old brown tenement, where four families lived, but inquiries enough led her to the back room on the second story, and opening the door to a gruff—"Come in," she found Sally stretched on a cot in the corner, her half-paralyzed father in a chair by the fire smoking a clay pipe, her mother at the wash-tub by the window, two dirty babies tumbling on the floor, and the whole room filled with that indescribable odor of dirt, grease, frying, soap-suds and tobacco, that is so often the only atmosphere the poor know. Mrs. Blair wiped her hands on her apron and set a chair; the man nodded and laid down his pipe; the twins looked up in surprise, and Sally began to cry.

Certainly Clara had found evil here. Sally was so glad to see her, however, that she felt it repaid her coming, and the twins ceased their noisy play while she sat there talking gently and tenderly to the child who had become a burden instead of a help to that poverty-stricken family. When she at last left them, promising to come again, and picked her way back through the filthy, foggy streets to her boarding-house, just within the door she met the table girl coming out of the dining-room with some tea and toast on a waiter; it was for Miss Allen, and Clara volunteered to take it up. She found her friend quite helpless and very tearfully glad to see a kind face. Clara made her more comfortable in a few minutes, and scarcely observed that her own tea was cold and her butter soft because she came late to her supper. Her Bible that night seemed to tell another story to her heart; her little room full of the home tokens and touches she had brought with her, seemed no longer sad. She was filled with the contrast between its appliances and comforts and the four bare walls, the wooden chairs, the uneasy bed above her and the grimy, oppressive poverty of the Blairs' home. She did not even remember to pour out her own sorrows in her prayers, she felt such an earnest desire that these others should be helped and comforted.

Now she had two new interests in her life, and the days seemed too short; she could make Sally a warm sack out of one she had to spare, and little woollen dresses for the twins from a skirt that had outlived its usefulness as far as she was concerned; also out of her scant earnings she could now and then take the child an orange or a few crackers. Then there was a daily visit to pay Miss Allen, a book from the free library to read to her when the room was not too cold to sit in, a flower perhaps that some kindly scholar had brought her, to light up the invalid's room; or a fresh piece of toast which she persuaded the cook to let her make herself.

So the days went on towards Thanksgiving; other people beside Clara had heard that sermon which so impressed her. Mrs. Armstead, whose husband was the pastor of the church, had taken it to her own heart; her boy went to the school where Clara was a teacher, and liked Miss King with boyish enthusiasm. His mother, too, had watched her sad, delicate face across the church, and now that Thanksgiving time drew near, she thought of the girl with kindly provision, and went one Saturday to see her. Clara was both pleased and surprised; and showed all her better self, as we do to genuine sympathy.

"Are you going home to Thanksgiving, my dear?" said Mrs. Armstead.

Clara's eyes filled. "I haven't any home!" she said; and the words had scarcely escaped when a gentle kiss touched her forehead.

"Poor little soul!" said the motherly visitor. "You are then the very person I want to see. You must come and take your Thanksgiving dinner with us; Johnny thinks Miss King is 'just bully.' Forgive the slang, dear, it is Johnny's greatest compliment; and you ought to know Mr. Armstead since you attend his church. I shall expect you right after service; don't forget!"

And with another kiss she took leave. A little thing to do, perhaps, but giving a great pleasure. Clara felt as if the sun shone into her room all that day, and in the church porch the next morning, a bow and smile from the minister's wife seemed to make the church itself homelike.

Thanksgiving day came at last; but before it came Clara had learned its lesson; in the want and suffering of others she found fresh knowledge of her own comforts and blessings; works had vindicated and re-kindled her faith; her prayers were vitalized by the spirit of Him who came to seek and to save the lost; and sharing his labor she shared also His recompense. It was with a heart fully attuned to the hour that she sat down in her seat to hear Mr. Armstead's sermon, and as she turned to her Bible to follow the scripture reading, her eye fell again on that text of the query; and with a full heart she read and received it all.

"There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

Clara's question was answered.

## THE GLEANER.

THE Baroness Alphonse de Rothschild, *née* Anspach, has just presented her family with a son. As the weaker sex is in majority in the rising generation of the Rothschild clan, this addition is a subject of much satisfaction.

SIR CHARLES DILKE, it is reported is about to marry a second wife, a daughter of the house of Rothschild. The first Lady Dilke died several years ago, and her remains underwent cremation at her own request in Germany.

*London Truth*:—"Lord Grantley married, last week, Miss K. MacVickers, a young American lady, who has acquired fame from her beauty. It is curious how many American girls marry Englishmen. This is because they know how to make themselves pleasant.

MISS DUDU FLETCHER, who will shortly be Lady Wentworth and in the future Countess Lovelace, is the grand-daughter of the eminent divine, Dr. Caesar Malan, of Geneva, Switzerland, and on her father's side belongs to the family of that wise and beautiful Grace Fletcher, who was Daniel Webster's first wife.

A PARISIAN was on trial recently for stealing some candles, and the counsel was examining witnesses who had bought from him. One of them said that though he had suspected the candles had been stolen he had bought a franc's-worth, but that in order not to encourage robbery he had paid for them with a bad franc.

MR. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA, who arrived recently in the *Seydlitz*, is described as a robust, animated full-blooded Englishman, tall, with a face full of expression that changes rapidly to suit the rapid apprehension of any new topic of discussion. He chats in high spirits with an apparently almost exhaustless fund of vitality, mental and physical, to draw upon. On the trip over, as the captain said, he was the life of the cabin table. His fifty-first birthday fell during the voyage, on the 24th inst., and the passengers astonished him with a "testimonial" in the form of a document full of pleasant words, handsomely illustrated by Col. Hezard, a fellow voyager. Mr. Sala, after spending ten days in New York, wishes to push southward to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and so on into Virginia, and thence to New Orleans. He especially wants to see as much of the South as he can. He would like to spend the winter in Florida. He would be delighted to lie out in an orchard and eat oranges under their native skies. He has been a sufferer from asthma, and thinks a change of air and climate will do him good.

## FASHION NOTES.

STEEL color is again in fashion.

RED bonnets are the rage in Paris.

MOST new costumes are of two materials.

THE Prince Imperial is a new shade of violet.

LOCKS of silk are a very fashionable trimming.

ARTISTIC tapestries are used for draping velvet dresses.

CLOAKS of white lambs' wool cloth are shown for wee toddlers.

BRIGHT red amaryllis may be seen occasionally at the florists'.

ARISTOCRATIC Japanese women eat the bulbs of the tulip and lily.

POLO caps to match ulsters are worn for travelling by young ladies.

"LADY HAINES' Blush" is said to be one of the prettiest tinted camellias.

AMONG costly novelties in fur is Russian silver fox, a muf of which costs \$80.

AFRICAN grue is a new fur that will be very popular for trimmings and sets.

A NEW material for underclothing is Japanese silk—a soft, uncrushable fabric.

STYLISH wrappers open in curtain fashion over a front breadth of gray brocade.

TROPICAL plants are much lower in price this season than they have been heretofore.

SOME persons who profess to know say that honey from teasel bloom is the choicest.

THE new silver foil for covering bouquet stems looks something like gros grain silk.

"LOVE lies bleeding," is another name for the feathery crimson coxcomb, now plentiful.

GOLD, ruby, amber and sapphire beads are formed into costly passementeries and fringes.

WAISTCOATS reaching to the knee, with large pocket flaps, are among the very latest novelties.

NEW ulsters are so tight that only the dress-shirt can be comfortably worn underneath them.

MANY skirts are raised on one side only, and waists are long, lacing in the backs as in the Renaissance period.

AN old fashion that is very pretty has been revived. It is the lacing of dresses with gold cord over a white chemise.

DRESSES, except for fullest dress, are short. Full-banded bodices, gathered at the waist and on the shoulders, are to be worn.

SOME of the newest evening dresses are made with Medici's trouts of satin, on which flowers are painted by hand in water colors.

LACE is worn in masses, ruffles, thick ruffs and paintings, tripled and quadrupled, in order to produce the most becoming effects.

ASTRACHAN fur and cloth, so long popular, have entirely disappeared. The fur was handsome and becoming, but the cloth imitation ruined its sale.

## BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

NOTHING so quickly dries a woman's tears as a kiss.

NEXT to a wife the easiest thing for a poor man to get is to get into debt.

THE reason why women prefer canaries to parrots is because canaries can't talk back.

THE new style of wedding invitation will read: "Mr. and Mrs. Proudfoot respectfully request your presents at the marriage of their daughter," etc.

WHEN a young lady has money everybody knows it, because she puts it in an open worked purse and holds it in her hand so every one can see it.

WALKING parties are now becoming fashionable in the country. They are generally the most enjoyable when made up by two persons presumably cousins.

THE woman who doesn't begin now to answer that she is just 30 years old may be caught napping next year when the census-takers start out to pillage the country.

WHEN Naomi stood up to get married and the clergyman asked her if she was sure she was fourteen years old, it must have been a terrible twist for her to admit that she was 580.

"HAVE you in your album any original poetry?" asked one young lady of another. "No," was the reply; "but some of my friends have favored me with original spelling."

FASHIONABLE cooking clubs consist of a heap of young ladies who want a square meal and one old woman who knows how to cook it. The only good result is that the old woman gets paid for her work.

To be just big enough for the girls to flirt with and not have spunk enough to return the compliment, is the distressing situation of many a young fellow who has his first gleaming of thought about his coming moustache.

SEVERAL young men were sitting together, and a young lady happened to approach the vicinity. One "real sweet," young fellow, seeing, as he supposed, the young lady looking at him, remarked playfully, and with a becoming simper, "Well, Miss—, you needn't look at me as though you wanted to eat me." "Oh no," sweetly replied the young lady, "I never eat greens."

Two ladies, both over 45, but each still young in her own estimation, are travelling on the Continent together. They send letters home, of course. Mme. de B. writes to her friend: "I am delighted with my travelling companion. Mrs. C. is a truly adorable woman. She takes care of me in a most motherly way." And Mme. C. writes exactly the same thing to her friend. Naturally the two letters are read to an admiring circle of ladies and gentlemen, and they laugh a good deal over the highly ridiculous pair, each of which is trying to pass for the other's mother.

PATTY TAKENOT, a bright, frisky little five-year-old miss, went for the first time to the infant department of the Sunday-school. "What was the golden text, birdie?" was the anxious inquiry of the fond mother when her darling got home. "O, I don't know, mamma; but there was Susie Dresswell, she had on such a love of a hat! It was dark blue, trimmed with light blue and brown silk, and the front had a white ruche; and she had on a lovely dress with brown silk ribbons and a brown circular cloak without pleats. O, she was lovely!" The girl is mother to the woman.

## CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure of consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full direction for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.