

THE THANK-OFFERING.

("Woman's Missionary Friend.")

"There is a sudden and urgent need for an increased appropriation," wrote the general secretary of the Woman's Board of Missions; "can you not double your thank-offering this year?"

Mrs. Ayres, president of the society of Fairtown, read the appeal with a sigh. Winter sunshine flooded the cheery room, parlor and library in one, that busy Monday morning. Evidences of a refined and cultured personality were in all its appointments, though the only expensive article of furniture was the fine piano, vibrating yet from the touch of skilful fingers.

"How can a greater effort be made?" she thought a little wearily as she left the room to take up the work waiting for her busy hands, and recalled meantime the earnest appeal she had made at the last meeting. "Yes," she soliloquized regretfully, "I must make time somehow, and send a personal note to every member. Twenty-five letters, and the days are so full. That lecture and social afternoon must be given up."

The president of Fairtown society had a genius for figures. With a moderate income, by her careful, intelligent management, she made home a cozy nest of comfort for her scholarly husband and their children. Brimful of executive ability, she marshalled her forces for success. She knew the exact condition of the treasury, and supposed she knew the resources from which she might draw. With characteristic force she bent her energies to the task of doubling the amount of last year's thank-offering. By Friday evening personal notes had been delivered to each of the twenty-five members.

They ran after this fashion:—

"My Dear Friend:

"Money is the great need of the hour. I never longed for wealth as I do now. An urgent appeal has come from the

secretary of the Woman's Board of Missions for an increased thank-offering. Let us double our contribution, by a great personal sacrifice, if necessary. With an earnest prayer for God's blessing on our effort,

Your sister,

"Frances Ayres."

The last note despatched, she turned for an hour of needed rest to her favorite corner, at the sunset widow of the dainty parlor, her well-worn Bible in her hand. With a sudden flash of illumination she read words long familiar, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Over and over the sweet, imperative command she went, and a voice whispered:

"You have done with your might what your hands found to do, how about the loving?"

"I love my Lord and His work," she said faintly.

"Yes, truly and earnestly," come the answer, "but with your might? Are you willing to pour out your heart in more than the abandonment of loving, to give treasures of your home and friendship that all such possibilities in you may be laid at His feet, a joyful thank offering? You have longed for wealth in this emergency, and not for selfish purposes. God knows the latent power of your heart. You do not, and now He asks the priceless gift of the might of your love."

"O Christ!" The strong, sweet face was buried in her hands. The hush of the quiet room was broken now and then by a long, quivering breath. "It means so much. Help me to love with my might."

The clock on the mantle ticked the minutes away; the half-hour, the hour. A shining face was lifted. "With my might," she said softly and left the room.

Days sped rapidly away, full of joyful service. With them came a sense of