

The Inglenook

Things That Last.

By Pansy.

A whole year went by. It was June again, and Children's Day. Miss Martel and her class were gathered, and they were talking about the year that was gone.

"I remember what I said to you just a year ago," said Miss Martel. "I know that our dear Jessie began that day to live for Jesus, and work at things that will last. I am sure she has never been sorry. Have any of the rest of you tried that road?"

They all waited for Jessie. "Oh, Miss Martel!" she said, "it has been a beautiful year; but it wasn't a bit like what I hoped it would be. I wanted to do some great, beautiful work for Jesus. And I haven't at all. Nothing but little bits of things, like taking care of a baby and shelling peas and picking over strawberries, and things like that; I haven't done a single thing that will last. But I think Jesus wanted me to do them, so I have been happy."

"Ho!" said Charlie Porter, with a good-humored laugh that was yet half a sneer, "you might have known how it would be. Young folks like us can't do anything but little bits of things. There aren't any chances. That is just what I said. If a fellow had a chance to be a hero and do something worth while, he might try."

Oh, Charlie Porter! the things you have accomplished this year about which you know nothing! Chances enough. You had many a chance to take care of your own little brother, and in this way help a sweet, tired mother, but you said it wasn't a boy's work. Not boy's work to take care of a brother! Think of it! You had a chance to keep a seat full of boys quiet and respectful in a Christian Endeavor meeting. And instead you set them all to whispering and laughing. You had a chance to help a tempted boy choose the right turn on the street instead of the wrong one, and you only laughed at him and called him a baby. But you called all those things and a hundred more things not worth doing. That is all you know about it. I think the angels must weep to-day over the picture set before them of the things you have done, and the things you have not done, this year.

"Little bits of things. . . . Not one of them will last!"

That was as much as Jessie knew. What if she had known? Suppose, for instance, she had known that Hannah, who was able, because of Jessie's help, to go to see her brother Jim, carried him their mother's little old worn Bible, and tried to get a promise from him which he wouldn't make, that he would read it in once in a while for their mother's sake. Suppose she knew that weeks afterwards one lonesome Sunday afternoon when Jim didn't know what to do with himself, he opened that little old Bible, and brushed a tear from his eyes at sight of his mother's handwriting, and read some of the verses she had marked, and thought of some of the things she said to him before she went to heaven, and it ended in his turning his feet fully toward the road that would lead him home to mother. How long will that last? Do any of you know how large a thing it is to help save a soul? Well, suppose Jessie had known that Susan, the nurse girl, went that afternoon to a flower service, where the minister spoke directly not only to her, but to Joe, who went with her, asking them in the name of Jesus to live for him? And that they went home with the influence of the service upon them, and it led them to go, later in the week, to the meeting at the

mission, and to sit silent and trembling while one and another moved forward into the smaller room, where those were invited who wanted to learn the way home. And how, at last, Susan said, "Oh, Joe, I wish we were in there!" and Joe said quickly, "Do you now? Then let's go in there." And they went.

Suppose Jessie had followed that letter of her aunt's. She had been describing a fancy dress party to her son, but she interrupted herself to write: "Jessie is a queer little girl. She grows queerer every day; grows like her mother. She has given up her Sunday afternoon to Ned, letting Susan go. And when I ask her the reason, she tells me that she has decided to-day to belong to Jesus, and do things that will last."

Who knows why the young man Leonard read and read that sentence in the letter leaving the fancy dress party unnoticed? Why he started up afterwards and walked the room with perplexed, questioning face? "Things that will last," he said, presently. "Dear little girlie. Some things last too long! She doesn't know anything about them. I won't do it!" he said at last, after another thoughtful walk through the room. And he stopped to his desk and tore in fragments a carefully written letter that was ready for the mail. "There, that's settled. I'll write another letter, saying 'No!' And I'll telegraph my 'Yes' to that other opportunity. Things have got to last, whether we want them to or not. I'll see to it that mine are like Jessie's, befitting one who bears the name of Christ."

Suppose that Jessie had known that "Shannon," the drunkard, who went to that first temperance meeting to please his wife, kept on going to please himself, and finally, in a town fifty miles away, signed the total abstinence pledge. Did you ever think what a lasting thing it might be to help get one drunkard to sign a pledge? Suppose Jessie had been in her father's office the next morning when he looked over his mail. "Things that will last," she might have heard him say to himself, smiling. "That is what my little mouse is after, is it? Her mother would like that. I must try to look out for such things, too. I thought I could not respond to this appeal, but I believe I must. There is that thousand dollars I planned to put into real estate. I'll send it out West instead. That investment will last."

And he wrote his letter and his check to the Board of Home Missions. You think this is a made-up story? You think such wonderful things never happen because one little girl on Children's Day started flowers of unselfishness and self-sacrifice for others? You were never more mistaken in your lives. Things are happening every day; the most beautiful and wonderful and lasting things, fastened close to such small ones as the shelling of peas, and setting of tables, and caring of babies. The reason we do not know about them is because we do not know the end of the stories. Jessie Stuart did not. Do you think hers ended there? Don't you remember that they all went on living? What if I should try to tell you a little bit more of it, that became known to me? There was Nurse Susan's Joe, for instance. He worked in a mill where worked a hundred other young men. And through Joe's influence, the swearing, and the drinking, and the smoking grew less, and less, and by and by there were other young men walking Joe's road. And the first thing they did after starting, was to look out for others, going the wrong road, and coax them to turn and go with them.

There, for instance, was Shannon, the worst drunkard in town. One day he and his wife and

little Tommy moved away. That was all that Jessie Stuart knew about him. But Shannon signed that total abstinence pledge, you remember. And Shannon discovered, by and by, that he could talk about it, could tell others how he came to get on the safe road; could do it so well that hundreds, and, by and by, thousands were led through him to travel the same safe road. And those thousands? Why, each man and woman and boy and girl of them straightway set to work to save others.

What about that thousand dollars? It helped ten missionaries to get to work for Christ. Ten missionaries scattered over our great country, winning people to the right road, and setting them, in turn, at the same work.

Whose arithmetic is equal to it? How much did Jessie Stuart accomplish of things that last in that one June Sunday? It goes on and on. And Hannah's brother Jim goes on living by his mother's Bible, and Susan and Joe go on, winning others. And Leonard, instead of being a great wine merchant, as he was planning to be before he tore up that letter, is a great Christian merchant, working daily for the hundreds in his employ to help them live for things that will last. And Shannon reaches thousands every night by his persuasive voice, and they and the thousands of others who have been reached through the years, are all in turn reaching out after others. No wonder your brains are dizzy. You can not count the multitude. It makes you think of the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands which no man can number."

Do you think this story is finished now? It is only ten years old. Jessie Stuart is a sweet young woman to-day, busy cultivating her quiet little flowers of unselfish love, and knowing almost nothing about the fruitage. I have tried to tell you a little of the influences that reached out from a few hours of that one day. But she has lived three thousand six hundred and fifty days since then, fifty-eight thousand four hundred waking hours, and cultivated all the time flowers that last.

And Charlie Porter, alas and alas! he has lived those same hours, and has been at work all the time, though he knows it not, on things that will last. Words that he will wish some time he had not said. Deeds that he will wish some time, oh, so bitterly, that he had not done! And besides, that long, long list of what he might have done!

But they do not know the story. Oh, no, indeed. Jessie Stuart still believes that she is doing her little bits of things that do not last, but some way, Jesus, whom she serves, seems to ask her to do them. Last! Imagine the mighty multitude that her surprised eyes will greet when some day Jesus calls her to come home.

And as she says wonderingly, "Who are these?" some blessed angel who understands compound interest will explain: "Why, Jessie dear, these are they who came here because of the little bits of influences set in motion by you that fair June day—Children's Day—don't you remember, when you decided to work under Christ's direction at things that last?"

What of it all? Why this? There are Jessie Stuarts and Charlie Porters in every congregation. They are here to-day, scores of them. They are at work, every one of them, whether they will, or not, on things that last. Everything lasts. You can not smile, or frown, or whisper, but you touch influences that are to go on multiplying through time, and lasting through eternity. There are no little things. We go on calling them so, because we see only little bits of the stories. The important point, the all-important point for each to settle, now and here, is, shall we grow flowers or weeds? Both will live forever.

God is not a crutch coming in to help your weakness, unnecessary to you if you had all your strength. He is the breath in your lungs. The stronger you are the more thoroughly you are yourself; the more your need of it the more your need of Him.—Phillips Brooks.