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Poetry.

The Little Girl and the Rain.

BY M. K. BUCK.

"Little raindrops, falling down
On the earth so bare and brown,
Tell me why you leave your home
In the clouds that look like foam;
Why you patter on the ground
With that gentle, murmuring sound.
I should think you'd rather stay
In the cloud-land far away;
I am sure if I were you
That is what I'd like to do."

"Little girl, we'll tell you why
We leave our cloud-home in the sky:
Every raindrop, moist and warm,
Has a mission to perform;
When we hear the thirsty call
Of the earth, we haste to fall.
Is it not a better way
Than among the clouds to stay,
While the earth should call in vain,
'Come, refresh me, gentle rain?'
What if you for water cried,
Faint with thirst, and were denied?
Dusty, tired leaves rejoice
When they hear the rain's soft voice:
And the seed the farmers sow
But for us, would never grow;
Every pale and drooping flower
Feels our sweet, refreshing power,
While the grasses, creeping low,
Lift their heads, and greener grow;
Happy brooks that sing and run
Love to see us, every one,
Dimpling o'er with merry smiles,
Luring us with winning wiles;
Little children laugh with glee
When we patter merrily;
Everywhere a welcome sweet
Do the tiny raindrops meet.
So, you see, there's work to do,
For the rain, dear, and for you;
Work for others, too, and see
How much happier you will be.
Ah, there comes the blazing sun,
And our task, to-day, is done."

—CONGREGATIONALIST.

Religious.

Gems of Thought from Dean Stanley's Memoir of Dr. Arnold.

"Above all, be afraid of teaching nothing; it is vain now to say that questions of religion and politics are above the understanding of the poorer classes—so they may be, but they are not above their *misunderstanding*; and they will think and talk about them, so that they had best be taught to think and talk rightly."

"The Quakers reject the Communion of the Lord's Supper, thereby losing a great means of grace; but are they not tempted to do so by the superstitions which other Christians have heaped upon the institution; and is there not some taint of these in the exhortation, and even in our own Communion Service? And with regard to the greatest truths of all, you know how Pelagianism and Calvinism have encouraged each other, and how the Athanasian Creed, at this day, confirms and aggravates the evils of Unitarianism."

"It is common to derive from our Lord's words to Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born of water,' &c., an universal proposition, 'No being can be saved ordinarily without baptism,' and then to prove the fitness of baptizing infants; for this reason, out of charity to them; whereas our Lord's words are surely only for those who can understand them."

"Surely one object of the Christian Church was to enable us to aid in bearing one another's burthens; not to enable a minister to pretend to bear those of all his neighbours. One is so hindered from speaking of one's own spiritual state, that one is led even to think of it less frequently than is wholesome. I am learning to think more and more how unbelief is at the bottom of all our evil; how our prayer should be, 'Increase our faith.' And we do fearfully live, as it were, out of God's atmosphere; we do not keep that continual consciousness of His reality which I conceive we ought to have, and which would make him more manifest to our souls than the Shekinah was to the eyes of the Israelites."

"I have one great principle, which I never lose sight of—to insist strongly on the difference between Christian and non-Christian, and to sink into nothing the differences between Chris-

tian and Christian. I am sure that this is the spirit of the Scriptures."

"Let us have a real Church government, and not a pretended one; and this government vested in the Church and in the Clergy; and we may have hopes yet. But I dread above all things the notion of the Convocation, or of any Convocation, in which the Laity have not an equal voice."

"Popery and narrow dogmatical intolerance tainted the Church as early as the days of Ignatius; while, on the other hand, Christ's true Church lived through the worst of times, and is not to be confined to the small congregation of the Vaudois."

"Never read the works of any ordinary man, except on scientific matters, or when they contain simple matters of fact. Even on matters of fact, stilly and ignorant men, however honest and industrious in their particular subject, require to be read with constant watchfulness and suspicion; whereas great men are always instructive, even amidst much of error, on particular points. In general, however, I hold it to be certain, that the truth is to be found in the great men, and the error in the little ones."

"The true and grand idea of a Church, that is, a society for the purpose of making men like Christ,—earth like heaven,—the kingdoms of the world the kingdom of Christ—is all lost; and men look upon it as an institution for religious worship, thus robbing it of its life and universality, making it an affair of clergy, not of people,—of preaching and ceremonies, not of living,—of Sundays and synagogues, instead of one of all days and all places, houses, streets, towns, and country."

"I am well satisfied, that if you let in but one little finger of tradition, you will have in the whole monster—horns, and tail, and all. I teach my children the Catechism and the Creed, not for any tradition's sake, but because the Church of England has adopted them. Each particular Church is an authority to members of that Church; but for any general tradition having authority from universality or antiquity, I do not believe there is any such; and what are called such are, I think, only corruptions, more or less ancient, and more or less mischievous, of the true Christianity of the Scriptures."

"The whole question as to the matter of right (i. e., of administering the Lord's Supper), and the priestly powers must be answered out of the New Testament; no one disputes the propriety of the general practice as it now stands; but the Church of England has not said that it adopts this practice because it is essential but leaves the question of principle open; and this of course can only be decided out of the Scriptures. That the Scriptures are clear enough against the priestcraft notion is to me certain; the more so, that nothing is quoted for it but the words of St. Paul, 'The bread which we break, the cup which we bless,' &c.; words which, quoted as a text, look something to the quoter's purpose, because the ignorant reader may think that "we" mean St. Paul and his brother-apostles; but if any from the text looks to the *passage* he will find that the *we* is the whole Christian congregation."

"I hold the Church to be a most Divine Institution, and eminently characteristic of Christianity, and my abhorrence of the Priestcraft and succession doctrines is grounded on my firm conviction that they are and ever have been, in theory and in practice, a most formidable device of the great Enemy to destroy the real living Church and even to drive it out of men's minds by the false and superstitious idea of a Church which never does and never can overthrow his kingdom. And in this sense,—as far as Popery is priestcraft, I believe it to be the very mystery of iniquity; but then it began in the first century, and had no more to do with Rome in the outset than with Alexandria, Antioch, or Carthage."

"The Popish and Oxford view of

Christianity is, that the Church is the mediator between God and the individual; that the Church (that is, in their sense, the clergy,) is a sort of chartered corporation, and that by belonging to this corporation, or by being attached to it, any given individual acquires such and such privileges. This is priestcraft."

"All who go straight to Christ, without thinking of the Church, do manifestly and visibly receive grace, and have the seal of His Spirit, and therefore are certainly heirs of salvation. This, I think, applies to any and every Church, it being always true that the salvation of a man's soul is effected by the change in his heart and life, wrought by Christ's Spirit, and that his relation to any Church is quite a thing subordinate and secondary."

"The Newmanites, [the modern ritualists] would not, I think, yet dare to admit that their religion was different from that of the New Testament; but I am perfectly satisfied that it is so, and that what they call Ecclesiastical Tradition contains things wholly inconsistent with the doctrines of our Lord, of St. Paul, of St. Peter, and of St. John."

"All the Newmanite language about baptism might be, and probably was used by the Jews and Judaizers about circumcision; the error in both is the same; i. e., the teaching that an outward bodily act can have a tendency to remove moral evil; or rather, the teaching that God is pleased to act upon the Spirit through the body, in a way agreeable to none of the known laws of our constitution."

"It is because my whole mind and soul repose with intense satisfaction on the truths taught by St. John and St. Paul, that I abhor the admission of the Newmanites—it is because I so earnestly desire the revival of the Church that I abhor the doctrine of the priesthood."

"The Newmanites say that certain divine powers of administering the Sacraments effectually, can only be communicated by a regular succession from those who, as they supposed, had them at first. W. Law holds this ground; there must be a succession in order to keep up the mysterious gift bestowed on the priesthood, which gift makes Baptism wash away sin, and converts the elements in the Lord's Supper into effectual means of grace. This is intelligible and consistent, though I believe it to be in the highest degree false and Antichristian."

Preaching with a Shovel.

BY EMILY HUNTINGDON MILLER.

It was a dreary winter evening, and Laura was snuggled up in a corner of the sofa with her book in her lap, just in the middle of a most delightful story. The boys were playing in the corner, and now and then she caught a scrap of their talk, but she paid very little attention to it. Bob was putting his locomotive together, and Fred was arranging an orphan asylum with his alphabet blocks. Twenty-seven orphans were ranged about the carpet; some of them in bed, some eating soup out of Laura's china dishes, one desperate fellow in solitary confinement behind the door, and a long row learning to read from bits of newspaper. The only trouble was that they all had such jolly faces; they would grin all the time; and what can you do with a boy that grins even when you whip him?

So presently the orphan asylum was turned into a gymnasium, where twenty-seven little acrobats stood on their heads, walked on their hands, turned somersaults, and performed all manner of wonderful feats. Then they were all convicts in State Prison, and Rob came and preached them a sermon. This was the sermon:

"My brethren,"—
"People in jail aren't brethren," said Laura, looking up from her book.
"Oh, yes, they are," said Rob: "brother is just a kind of preach word that means everybody but the minister. My brethren, folks ought to be good,

and not steal things, and quarrel, and get angry. When you begin to be bad, you can't tell how bad you may get to be. The minister knows of a boy that begun by Wouldn't let his brother take his skates when he didn't need 'em at all himself, and he grew up so't he set a house afire."

"Is that true, Robby?" asked Fred, with very big eyes.

"Course not; that's a 'lustration. Sermons are true, and 'lustrations are just to make you understand 'em. Now, my brethren, you musn't steal, or do any more bad things, 'cause you can't do it any way, and if you try to get out, they'll shoot you."

The convicts now marched back to their cells under the sofa. Rob lay upon the carpet, with his arms under his head, and said, very slowly, "When I am a man, I shall be a minister."

"I thought you were going to be an engineer," said Laura.

"Well, p'raps I shall. Cars don't run on Sunday, and I could think up my sermons all the week, and then go and preach 'em."

"Oh, you can't make sermons just thinking them up on an engine," said Laura, positively; "you have to do 'em in a study with books and writing."

"I could," persisted Rob; "I shall say my sermons like Mr. Challis, and I know lots of texts."

Laura looked at papa, who was smiling at them over the top of his paper, and asked doubtfully, "Could he, papa?"

"I suppose he could," said papa.

"But I thought ministers had to be just ministers, and not part something else."

"I know of a boy," said papa, "who preaches first-rate sermons, and he does a great many other things—goes to school, brings in wood, takes care of a horse."

"Me, papa?" asked Rob.

Papa laughed, and shook his head.

"He preaches them to the people on the street; he preached one to me to-night."

"Oh!" said Laura, and Rob sat straight up and looked at papa.

"He preaches them with a shovel."

Rob laughed heartily at this, and Laura looked more puzzled than ever. Fred came and leaned his arms on papa's knees.

"Now, papa," he asked, "how could any body preach with a shovel?"

"I'll tell you," said papa. "All this month of snowy weather there has been one hundred feet on Beech Street of clear, clean sidewalk. No matter how early I go down town, it is always the same—clean to the very edge of the walk. People pick their way through the slush, or wade through the drifts, or follow the narrow, crooked path the rest of the way; but when they come to this place, they stamp their feet, and stand up straight, and draw a long breath. It makes you feel rested just to look at it. The boy that keeps that sidewalk clean preaches with his shovel. It is a sermon on doing your work well, and not shirking; a sermon on doing things promptly without delaying; a sermon on sticking to things day after day without wearying; a sermon on doing your own part without waiting for other people to do theirs."

"Maybe a man does it," said Rob.

"No, it is a boy: I have seen him at it. I saw him one day when it was snowing very fast, and I said, 'Why do you clean your walk now? it will soon be as bad as ever.' 'Yes, sir,' said he, 'but this snow will be out of the way. I can brush it off now easily, but when it is tramped down it makes hard work.' I call that a first-rate sermon, and every one who does his work in this very best way, preaches a sermon to all around him."

The bell rang, and somebody called papa away, but Rob kept thinking of the little crooked, uneven path he had made to the barn and well, and what a stingy little pile of kindlings he had split for the kitchen, and he made up his mind he would try and preach a sermon with the shovel the next day.

Laura saw her mother had laid aside her own book to show some pictures to little Nell.

"That's what mamma is always doing," she thought, "preaching sermons about loving other people better than yourself; I guess I'll preach one about 'Do unto others,'" and Laura left her story and amused her little sister until her blue eyes were too sleepy even for smiles.

The next day Rob widened his path and shoveled it clear down to the firm ground, and then he called Fred to admire it.

"It's nice," said Fred: "I guess it's as nice as that sermon boy could make. 'Spouse'n we go and shovel a path for Mrs. Ranney.'"

"Come on," said Rob; "that'll be a sermon about—about—I wonder about what?"

"Being kind," said Fred; "but I don't know what the text for it is, unless it's 'Love one another.'"

"That's a pretty good text," said Rob, "that fits to most anything good."

Thorns in the flesh.

A great deal of ingenious theory and curious learning has been wasted in vain attempt to guess what was Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Learned books have been written to show what it was, and equally learned books have shown what it was not. Some think that it was weakness of eyesight, some that it was lameness, some that it was an infirmity of temper rather than bodily defect. But whatever it was, it was a sharp trial to the Apostle, and one from which he often longed to be delivered. It concerns us far less to know what the "thorn" was, than to learn how we may obtain that grace which was sufficient for him while he had to endure it.

Every Christian has his "thorn in the flesh"—some trial or infirmity, unknown to all others, perhaps, yet sharp and bitter enough to him. It may not be and probably is not a great affliction, at least it would seem so to nobody else, though to him it very likely seems a heavy cross. But, after all, it is the little worries that make the greatest drafts upon our patience and fortitude. The man who would endure the severe pain of a surgical operation without finching, will be driven to distraction by a few mosquitoes. When a great trial comes, strength equal to the need seems to come with it. An occasion for great self-sacrifice and endurance seldom finds the Christian wanting. But the wear-and-tear of everyday life, its petty vexations and exasperating failures—these are hardest to endure.

Life must have sharp things in it. We may as well make up our minds that these little worries, these "thorns in the flesh," fall to the lot of every Christian, to ours with the rest. It is of no use to pray to be delivered from them, in our case any more than in Paul's. They are sent us by One whose only object is our own good, and who intends them to result in developing and strengthening our character. The discipline may be sharp, but the reward will be glorious.

For this reason Paul was able to glory in his infirmities and to rejoice that tribulation was his. He had learned the secret of enduring the trial appointed to him, and had received that grace which was sufficient for him in the bitterest hour. If it was sufficient for him, it will be for us. If it was given to him, from us it will not be withheld.—*Ex. & Chron.*

TRANSLATE the sense of Scripture into your lives, and expound the Word of God by your works. Interpret it by your feet, and teach it by your fingers. That is, let your workings and your walkings be Scripture exposition, as living epistles read and known of all men.

Wolves may lose their teeth, but not their nature.

A goose-quill is more dangerous than a lion's claw.

God helps those who help themselves.