

The Fireside

TELL HER SO.

Amid the cares of married life,
In spite of toil and business strife,
If you value your sweet wife,
Tell her so!

Prove to her you don't forget
The bond to which the seal is set;
She's of life's sweets the sweetest yet—
Tell her so!

When days are dark and deeply blue,
She has her troubles, same as you;
Show her that your love is true—
Tell her so!

There was a time you thought it bliss
To get the favor of one kiss;
A dozen now won't come amiss—
Tell her so!

Your love for her is no mistake—
You feel it, dreaming or awake—
Don't conceal it! For her sake,
Tell her so!

Don't act, if she has passed her prime,
As though to please her were a crime;
If e'er you loved her, now's the time—
Tell her so!

She'll return, for each caress,
An hundredfold of tenderness!
Hearts like hers were made to bless!
Tell her so!

You are hers and hers alone;
Well you know she's all your own;
Don't wait to "carve it on a stone"—
Tell her so!

Never let her heart grow cold—
Richer beauties will unfold;
She is worth her weight in gold!
Tell her so!

—Selected.

WHAT THE GIFT SERVICE DID FOR US.

BY THE REV. C. W. COREY.

The pastor sat in his study reading the *Times'* suggestions on the Christmas gift service. "Capital!" he thought, "and a splendid opportunity for our school."

When laid before the church, the novelty of the idea was apparent. One thought gifts in the church inappropriate, but it was suggested that a loaf of bread for the hungry might be quite as clean as a dollar bill, and enough of them quite as acceptable unto the Lord. Another thought the conveyance of the gifts to the church needless; but the gifts before the congregation would be a very effective object lesson. Another thought a week night preferable to Sunday for the service; but the nights of Christmas week are very full, and we wanted all the congregation present. Besides, the programme was to be sacred—and gifts, "gold and frankincense and myrrh," accompanied the worship on the first Christmas occasion. Some feared the gifts would engender an unseemly curiosity and wish to share in the distribution of Christmas bounties. The church, however, gave its sanction to the idea, but asked the committee to present fuller details.

Had this meeting been discouraging? To some it may have seemed so. There was a complimentary interpretation of

this close scrutiny, however, and the pastor so regarded it, and out of the criticisms and suggestions was gathering ideas. The details for the gift part of the service were prepared. Gift making outside the family, rather than gift receiving, was the plan. The gifts were to be food, fuel, clothing, toys, etc., for the needy, or remembrances for aged, sick, or "shut-in." The committee to receive and distribute the gifts would place them in the church at their discretion, and deliver them before Christmas—no distribution Sunday night. Each gift was to be delivered with the best wishes of the school. These plans proved satisfactory to the church.

The *Times'* blanks for gifts arrived, and were presented to the teachers. They looked curiously at them for a moment, then soberly, and one said: "I wish we had secured these earlier." So all thought. They were beginning to see how practical the service was to be. Another of our teachers, a worthy, comfortable deacon, said: "This is great! Do you know, I have thought I had need that these things should be presented to me at Christmas, but I am beginning to think I have need to share what I have."

The gift-making spirit was fully on. We had sought to make every member of our school a lookout committee. The boys and girls were so happy and so enterprising! Some little girls discovered children who would not have any dolls for Christmas. They would make them home. One of the boys was skating on one of those cold days Christmas. He entered a little house near by to warm himself. As he warmed his feet, he saw the children were bare-footed, and they had no picture-books. His pathetic appeal to his mother brought a way for him to remember these children at the gift service. A class of boys thought of two old ladies in the nineties, cared for by a daughter, formerly a valued teacher of the school, but now a "shut-in" with the aged aunt and mother. The boys arranged a Christmas tree for these, and their preparation of it was a veritable fountain of joy to them.

A class of young ladies in the Sunday-school turned their thought to one of their number who had been invalidated for several years. The primary class, among other things, determined to remember the little baby boy of their former teacher, who had introduced the Cradle Roll. They sent a remembrance, and arranged to place the name of the little new comer on the roll. The father of five children had died recently. The mother found it hard to provide for the little ones by washing, to which her hands were unaccustomed. Comfortable winter garments had not yet been provided for them. Here was another opportunity. The former sexton, a veteran, was growing aged and feeble; he must be cheered. A member of the Bible class has been absent for three months of illness. He was an honored deacon, but was much depressed. The class would send him a suitable book. There were children whom the "cold snap" had cut off from school, their garments were thin and their boots worn. These were being looked after. Teachers thought of their scholars, and scholars of their teachers. In fact, all were

surprised that they had so many opportunities.

But the congregation would be present at the service. Where could they have a part? Rally Day had, with other good things, brought the school a new class—fourteen young men—but there was no suitable room for them. We needed a parlor for this and other purposes. Here was an opportunity for the congregation. Fifty dollars would be required for this and the choir needs. Accordingly a circular was prepared and sent to every family in the congregation. It was an announcement, and an invitation to come with a gift.

Sunday arrived, and the gifts began to arrive also. At the hour of service a table in a conspicuous place was overflowing with parcels. Before the bell began to ring people began to come. An eager congregation filled the church. It was a happy congregation, too. Those gifts and those givers in that programme could not disappoint any Christmas congregation. And when the pastor asked for the offering, he pointed to the gifts of the school, and the congregation were ready for their part. They could do nothing else but give, and they gave heartily.

We scarcely need to detail results. Some—perhaps the largest—cannot be tabulated, but some can. We were able to fill forty-five different blanks on the *Times'* lists, one hundred and fifty articles in all, contributed by a school of one hundred and eighteen enrolment. The collection amounted to \$25. The next Sunday the superintendent saw returned to the school six children comfortably clad and happy; gift-service clothing had made this possible. Some clothing remains for others who will come in later. Our choir had their wants supplied, and we have a good beginning on our parlor fund.

One gift was followed by the pastor. It was a neat envelope, carefully sealed and addressed. The superintendent had feared for the "sensitive," and this envelope was addressed to the person he had in mind. On a former occasion, offerings taken for the poor had been returned to his sister. How would it be now? When the pastor presented this envelope it was declined. "I am poor, I am in need, but, as long as I can work, I will not take things gathered for the poor!" she said. The pastor explained that an officer of the church—teacher and scholars, the pastor's wife and others, had been remembered, but it was in vain. "Then we must open it, and return to the giver," he said. She agreed, the letter was opened, and it read: "Dear sister, I have long thought I would like to remember you with a gift. I enclose one dollar, which I trust you will accept, wishing you a merry Christmas." As the pastor read the name attached, the victory was won. A hard-working woman was sharing her limited means with her needy sister. "You cannot return that." "No," she said, "I never thought of its coming that way. I thought it was taken from the collection for the poor," and the tears began to flow. The church had long feared to proffer assistance to this needy one. They misunderstood her. Another struggling sister had opened the way. Now we understand. The "sensitive" had not been wounded, and gift service had won the day.

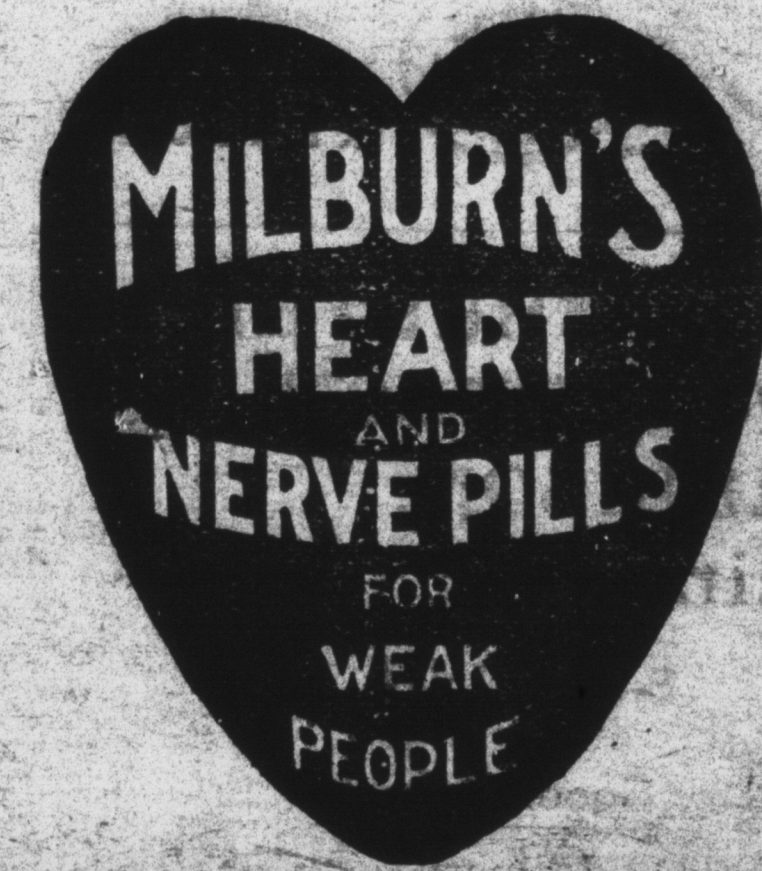
A peculiar happiness pervades our whole congregation. Members of our committees who worked hardest are saying they never were so happy in preparing for a service. Christmas has had a place in our school and church, as well

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as in our homes and community. The school has scored a rare success, and sympathy with the gift service is universal in our congregation.—*S. S. Times.*

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