

"No," said the Master-Builder, "whales are too clumsy; besides who would keep the great water free from sea-weeds, if the whales came down here to build these islands?"

"But look how small we are!" cried the coral builders; "no bigger than a pin head."

"But look how many you are," said the Master. "Go ahead, let each one do his part, and I will answer for the whole."

"So the great army of tiny creatures set to work, they fastened their branches on the great rocks in the ocean's bed, and built up the coral, branch on branch, layer on layer, plate over plate, until it reached the water's surface, and rose, foot after foot, above it."

"Then the waves swept over it day and night, leaving in its coral fingers bits of weed and leaves and stems, which decayed and formed rich earth; also the waves washed seed from many lands to these islands, and cocoanuts, and palms, and ferns, and flowers and vines, made it beautiful."

"How the animals got there God has never told us, but there they are. Of course the winged creatures soon made nests in these fair places, and now there are no more beautiful places in all the world than those coral islands, which God Almighty has built by the smallest creatures that live."

The boys were listening with eager interest to this story; some of them wondered where the sermon came in, for there were no stories told in this meeting without sermons to them.

"Boys, there is a great big work God wants done in the world now," said the leader; "what is it?"

"Bringing all men to the Saviour," answered Hugh promptly.

"Right! Now if God could use tiny zoophytes, no bigger than a pin-head, to make whole islands, what can he do with boys much bigger than pin-heads, with brains and souls and hearts?"

There was silence in the meeting; the boys were a little sly of this question, so the leader answered it herself.

"Oh! boys," she said, "God can use you to make this great world the kingdom of heaven."

"I wish Tom had been at the meeting," said Hugh to himself, on his way home; "I wonder if I could tell him that coral story?"—*Elizabeth Preston Allan, in Youth's Companion.*

WHAT WAS THE USE.

"What was the use?" The minister's wife wrinkled her forehead and twisted her fingers in an odd little way she had when half-discouraged and two-thirds ready to give up.

"What's the use, Harry?" she repeated. "Listen! At precisely half-past two o'clock your wife will be in the ladies' parlor, ready for the home missionary meeting—and nobody else. She will fumble with her papers and books for fifteen minutes, and then Sister Brown will stroll carelessly in, moving as if she don't really know if she was coming there or going to some other place. At three o'clock, when we've just finished the weather and the general church gossip, Sister Green will hustle in with, 'Oh, I know I'm late, but you must excuse me. I had so much to do. Why, you haven't begun yet? Dear me! Next time I'll wait till half-past three. I didn't anyway know how to get away this afternoon, but I knew you'd be disappointed. See, Foster, if I didn't come.' Then we shall take a hasty run over the weather and the gossip again, and her three-year-old Frank will be making life miser-

able for all concerned—the child absolutely cannot keep still—while Sister Green is getting seated and composed. By the time we reach the opening hymn Mary Gray will come in from school. I declare, she's the one redeeming tint in the whole color scheme of our church! She will smile and say, 'Oh, I am so glad you're not all through, for now I can get some of the meeting.' Then we shall go through the motions in the same old way just as we did last month, and the month before that, and three months ago. We'll have the minutes, and Mary will read something from the *Herald*, and Sister Brown will waken from her brown study in time to 'move to adjourn.' What is the use of it all?"

"Precious little, I should say," returned the minister, gravely.

"Then you think just as I do, that we'd better give it up—don't you? The question was an afterthought, called for by a curious look that came into the dark eyes of the listener."

There was a perceptible pause before the answer came. When it did it was a surprise:

"I think, dear, there is a better way than doing things 'just as they've always been done.' You and I must study that part of it together. But you have reminded me of a story of my boyhood that I am sure I have never told you. It isn't much of a story, either, but perhaps it will help to answer your question. When I was a little shaver, about the size of Frank Green, my mother used to take me to missionary meetings because there was no one with whom she could leave me. I suppose I was as restless as a boy could be, and I have no doubt I made life miserable for more than one of the good women who kept alive the little spark of missionary zeal in that country church. I played around, winding my way in and out among the old settees—I can see them now—having a fine game of hide-and-seek all by myself, and all unconscious, even to myself, of what was going on. I cannot to this day remember a single thing that was said or done at one of those meetings. I only know that even as a boy of three I felt that, somehow, they had to do with great questions—questions that I could not understand, but that God knew all about, and I was certain that my mother was helping him to make the problems come out all right. I know now that in those missionary meetings small, uninteresting as they very likely were, there came to be as a part of my very self the conviction that when I was grown up I too must have a share in the work of helping God. Dear, I honestly believe that I am a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to-day because my mother never missed one of those missionary meetings, nor failed to take me with her."

The minister's wife could not have spoken if she had tried. There was a soft caress of hand and lip, and then she went to talk it over with the Lord. And when she started for the missionary meeting that afternoon, her face shone with the light that comes only from being on the Mount with the Master.—*Zion's Herald.*

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TO EACH HIS OWN SHARE.

A number of men were once talking about the burdens of duty, and one of them declared that they were sometimes too heavy to be borne.

"Not," said another, "if you carry only your own burden, and don't try to take God's work out of his hands. Last year I crossed the Atlantic with one of the most skillful and faithful captains of the great liners. We had a terrific storm, during which for thirty-eight hours he remained on the bridge, striving to save his passengers. When the danger was over I said to him, 'It must be a terrible thought at such a time that you are responsible for the lives of over a thousand human beings.'

"No," he said solemnly, 'I am not responsible for the life of one man on this ship. My responsibility is to run the ship with all the skill and faithfulness possible to any man. God himself is responsible for all the rest.'—*Ex.*

OBTRUSIVELY GOOD.

"I suppose one ought always to be grateful for good intentions, but really it is hard to, make them atone for a lack of tact," said the invalid, with a laugh that had a questioning note in it. "I was just comfortably seated on the steamboat, the sunshine and air were pleasant, and restful to one who had been shut in so long, and I was enjoying the music of a fine band, when I saw a woman bustling about here and there."

"She pushed her way into one group after another, 'talking good,' as the children say, to all who looked ill or feeble. She stopped beside a little lame boy, who fairly shrank into himself and had scarcely a word to answer when she opened her battery of conversation upon him, and then she came to me."

"I'm trying to do a little good to all the afflicted," she announced, complacently.

"You'll do me a great deal of good if you will kindly allow me to listen to that music without talking to me," I said.

"Now, I'm afraid that was very ungracious, but—oh, dear! one doesn't like

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to be so openly labelled 'unfortunate,' and have pity dispensed by the ladleful. Why can't people learn to do good as the sunshine does—softly and unobtrusively?"

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