

am coming to the cross," and the Endeavorers came to the front singing.

The leader then said: "That we may forget everything else, let us bow our heads and close our eyes, and, so far as possible, remain so during the entire service. Very softly let us sing, as a heart prayer, 'Jesus lover of my Soul.' Now, in silence before God, let us each come with a personal petition. It is a consecration meeting. We have said it. O Lord, thou art looking now for our offering; help us to lay it unreservedly upon the altar." (Silent prayer followed). The leader again said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God—the mercies, oh, how great they have been!—that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." A reasonable service, indeed, after the scenes of Calvary! A reasonable service to Him who went down into the valley of death for my sake! Yet Thou knowest that our feet have oftener grown tired in the pursuit of our own pleasure and business than for Thee. We have been wearing out our bodies for self; now we would give them to Thee. While all is quiet, hear Thou the definite consecrations to service that we make." (Silence). Then we sang softly:

"It may not be on the mountain top,
Or over the stormy sea,
Or in the front of the battle, that
My Lord may have need of me,"
etc.

The regular leader then took his place and the roll-call was taken up. This service transformed the meetings, and has left its impress upon the members of the society. More than one Endeavorer dates his desire to serve from that meeting.—*The Lookout.*



A SEWING SOCIETY SYMPOSIUM.

A little group of ladies sat sewing for a "missionary barrel." On the previous evening, at the church prayer meeting, they had listened to a discussion by their fathers and brothers, of the reasons for the decadence of family worship. There was a suburban town whence many went daily to the city.

"What did you think about it, Miss Dorcas?" asked one.

"I don't think the men quite hit the nail on the head, in giving their reasons. It is the women who are to blame for this giving up of family prayers."

There was a look of surprise on the faces about her, so Miss Dorcas proceeded:

"Now just take the cases you know of where they have given up the habit. There is the Russell family who used to live where I do, before they moved into the city. You remember the oldest son died suddenly a few months after the father died. Mrs. Russell was so broken down by her afflictions that she came to stay with me awhile—my house being a sort of 'city refuge.' Poor woman! she was afraid to think where her boy's soul might be. Well, one morning (when we rose from prayers she sat thinking awhile and then burst out:

"I remember when my husband

and I used to have prayers in this very room. He used to sit there, and I here with the baby in my arms. Oh! why did we ever give it up! And then she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"What could I say? I knew how, from being a tender-hearted little boy, even hoping sometimes he was a Christian, he had grown up to be a worldly man wholly neglectful of religious duties.

"As for family prayers, I knew well enough why they were given up. Mr. Russell used to take up the Bible as soon as breakfast was over, and sit ready to begin, but she would say, 'I'll put away the butter and cream before I come into the sitting-room.' Then she would perhaps think the cat might get the meat, so that must be put away; then the bread might dry, so that must go into the closet. Then she would think of some directions to give the kitchen maid, and by that time the baby would cry or the grocer's boy come for orders, and so by the time she was ready for prayers he would be hurrying off to catch his train.

"This sort of thing happened so often he concluded it was of no use to try to have prayers. When they moved into the city the habit was lost and never resumed."

Mrs. Deacon Benson remarked: "My husband says he feels sometimes as if he would have to give up prayers, Aunt 'Liza plagues him so; you know he is a very nervous man and 'Liza is like Martha in the Bible, so much more anxious about the household than to hear the Lord's Word. She will come all in a rush after we've been waiting for her ever so long, and right out before the children say to my husband: 'Amos, don't read the whole Bible through this morning,' or 'Don't pray more than half an hour, for I've got a lot of sweeping to do!' Or she shows all the time he is reading that her mind is on something else, stretching her neck to see who is going past the house, or picking up threads off the carpet, or jumping up to pull the curtains straight. Mr. Benson says it takes away all his spiritual enjoyment and he does wish she would keep still. She never seems to realize the bad example of irreverence she is setting before my children. To her it is all a mere human performance without relation to the Almighty."

"Miss Dorcas," said timid Mrs. Crosby, "do you think very young children can be interested in family prayers? You know my husband isn't a Christian, but after he goes off to the city I might have prayers with the children I suppose, but I don't know how I could make it attractive to them."

"If you want to make children, young folks, or the uneducated, enjoy family prayers you must use a kind of language they can understand. Most men seem to think they must use a special dialect for prayer. For children the simplest speech is the best, such words as they use themselves. Don't read to little children the Minor Prophets, or the Epistle to the Romans. When Harry lost his wife you know I took his children and kept them till he married again. Neither of the little girls could read, so I used to take some Bible story every morning, putting it into language of my own as I went along. My version would have scared the critics, 'higher' or any other kind, but it carried the mean-

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ing to baby intellects. Then when I prayed I tried to let the story suggest my petitions. For instance, if I read about Moses found by Pharaoh's daughter, then I thanked God for loving and protecting little children, even when He took away their mothers, and I prayed that these children might be spared to become useful as Moses was. Or suppose I read about Joseph sold by his naughty brothers and carried away off to be a poor slave in a strange land, then I could thank God for giving them a safe, happy home and friends to love them, and pray that they might be kept from quarrelling or being unkind to one another."

"But Miss Dorcas, we are not all as bright as you—so ready to think of things."

"Nonsense! you are any of you bright enough to tell a Bible story and find some lesson in it. What do you ever read the Bible for yourselves but to get some practical lesson? Well, those children liked the prayer better than anything else in the day. Annie was a frail child and it seemed best sometimes to let her sleep, but she would surely cry if she found she was dressed too late to be with us at morning prayers."

"I think," said Miss Thompson, the village dressmaker, "the chief reason for dropping family prayers is that folks don't get up in the morning as early as they used to. When our family were all together there were four of us who used to go daily to the city; we had breakfast, summer and winter, at 6 o'clock. Of course that meant early rising for mother in order to get a hot breakfast and put up the lunches."

"Oh, it's family government that is wanting," said Grandma Gould. "Parents are nowadays too indulgent."

Here the ladies were called to supper and the symposium ended. But as they went out young Mrs. Nichols said in low tones to Miss Dorcas, "My husband and I have talked over this matter; we would like to have family prayers, but you know George wasn't religiously brought up; he

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wasn't converted very young, he isn't an educated man, and we have those two high school teachers boarding with us. What can we do? I don't urge him, for I should be so worried myself lest he should make a bad break."

"Dear child, you can surely repeat the Lord's Prayer together, or a Psalm, and there are books made on purpose for use in just such cases."
—*The Evangelist.*

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