

The Fireside.

AUNTIE BARKER.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"We must go and pay our respects to Auntie Barker the first thing," said Deacon Frost to the minister, who had come to a little country church as a candidate and had gone out to the Cobble Hill district to call upon some of the members, who, very seldom, in those days, attended worship at the church.

"Is it near by?" asked the young man as he stood on the porch of the deacon's commodious farmhouse, looking afar at the magnificent view. "Only to the little yellow house under the big buttonwood tree, opposite."

"What an immense tree!" exclaimed the minister, glancing across the broad, grassy street. "All the surrounding trees seem insignificant in comparison. Surely no one living can remember when it was young."

"Oh, no, indeed, and I am reminded to tell you that Auntie Barker, in many respects, resembles that tree. No one can remember when she was young, for she is now turning ninety-five, her wholesome influence is wide-spreading, she is firmly rooted and grounded in the faith, and when we listen to her touching and edifying experiences we all seem weak and puny and youthful beside her."

"Does she live alone?" "Yes, in one sense, although there is nearly always some one with her. She has no relatives, and no means of support yet she owns the little house and garden plot and the big buttonwood tree. But she is the dearly loved pet and the tender pride of the neighborhood. We all look after and care for her. No one can help loving her, for she is like a never-failing spring of pure water in the treasurers of her richly stored mind. She more than pays us for all we do for her by her words of wisdom, and in the example she sets of how beautifully a person may grow old. She deplores with tears the coldness of the Christians about her, and the great desire of her heart now is to see the church built up. Of course she is now hoping for great things from your coming to us."

"I am glad to see you," said the old lady, as they opened the little gate and went up the narrow walk between beds of sweet, old-fashioned flowers. "I was sure you would call early, so I had Emma Robbins, who was in just now, draw my chair to the open door that I might be ready to welcome you. Your name, John Whitford, sounds very familiar to me. I have enquired about your family, and knew that your great-grandfather, whose name you bear, used to come here to this place in my girlhood to exchange with his friend and classmate, William Brown."

"And it is possible that you remember him?" said the young man, holding the soft, old hand in his. "I have never met anyone before who remembered my great-grandfather, he of most precious memory. It seems as if I had taken a step back into the past."

"He was a beautiful old man," said Auntie Barker. "His words

made a deep and lasting impression upon me. He said that the soul, being immortal, could never grow old; that our bodily infirmities often held full possession of our minds, so that the gamut that should reach through time and through eternity only ran up and down from our head to our feet, and in that way was so circumscribed that it lost its rhythm and melody."

"But your bodily health has uniformly been good, I fancy."

"Oh, not always. I have had many infirmities, but such excellent care of me has been taken, I could not help but last. The neighbors all handle me as carefully as if I were made of the finest porcelain. Surely, never any one had such friends as I have. I ask the Lord in my heart continually that His abiding blessing may be upon them all."

"You do not take care of all these flowers that fill your yard here?"

"Oh, dear me, no indeed. The children do it, bless their little hearts. There is nothing they are not ready and anxious to do for me. And I can do nothing for them—"

"Oh, you tell us such lovely stories," spoke up a little girl who had come in, "and I have brought you a custard for your supper, and this little pitcher of tea, and grandma said if the new minister was to hold a prayer meeting here this evening, I was to come directly back to tell her."

"Shall I do so, Auntie Barker?" asked the young man with a smile.

"I should indeed be glad to have you," replied the old lady, and that was the way the series of meetings began.

"You ought to have been there," said Deacon Frost to a lukewarm brother the next morning. "Auntie Barker talked like one inspired. The room was crowded. The young minister stood in the doorway, and people were sitting all about the little yard under the buttonwood tree. The Spirit was there in mighty power, and Auntie asked if we would come again tonight."

"It is three weeks now since these meetings began," said the new minister one September evening. "The interest manifested has seemed to settle it between the people and me that I am to stay. It is really the hand of Providence. Each meeting appointed itself and all correlative matters seem to have happily adjusted themselves. I am already the pastor, with the work well in hand. So many come to the meetings that Auntie Barker's little home will not hold them; and the evenings are getting too chilly to have doors and windows open. What are we to do?"

"Come over to my house," "and to mine," "and mine," said the neighbors.

"But Auntie Barker—"

"Oh, do not mind me," said the dear old lady sweetly. "I am glad to know that there is so much interest, and shall assuredly be with you in spirit wherever you are."

"But we are thinking of ourselves," said the young pastor. "We can not get on without you."

"We will draw you up by hand,

Auntie Barker, in our pony carriage," said Lily Shaw. "We know how very timid you are about horses."

Sure enough the next evening the young minister lifted the dear, little old lady into the small, low basket phaeton, and walked by her side while the village boys drew her safely and steadily to the large house where the meeting was held.

"We are too old to go out to evening meetings," said the elderly people, who had been making that an excuse for not keeping up their obligations as Christians, when the new minister called upon them.

"But Auntie Barker, who is a generation ahead of most of you, goes and takes part at every meeting."

"Auntie Barker? Well, if she goes, I guess we can. Why, she was quite an old woman when we were married," said Captain Miner, turning to his wife, and that was the way the blessed influence spread and Christ's cause was built up.

"We are going to bundle up Auntie Barker in furs and draw her to the meetings in a sleigh," said the girls and boys, after the snow came. And indeed they did so when the weather was not too cold.

"I enjoy it as well as they do," she said, emerging from her wraps. "Of course, I would not venture out for anything, only for a meeting for praise and prayer, and if I can influence others to attend, I am more than glad to come."

"There are so many young people here tonight," said the pastor, "we want you to tell us the secret of your bright faith and holy joy in the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Ah, me! it is not a secret," she said. "I have been a Christian since I was a child. I have looked for God's guiding hand in the events of every day. I have tried to do His work in my little bit of a world as far as I understood it. When one friend has been taken, another has been raised up. I have never had but very little money, but that has always been enough. All my wants are provided for. I have never said 'I am getting old, and it matters not what cold, indifferent ways I fall into.' My body while I inhabit it will always be the temple of the Holy Spirit. I will keep it as neat and dainty as in youth, and I will let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in God's sight."

"I never in my life saw so many lovely and active old people as there is in my church," said Pastor Whitford, the other day, "and I attribute it in a great measure to the beneficent influence of Auntie Barker, who still flourishes in our little parish like a green bay tree."

It was a very pleasant evening only this week, in the new pretty vestry attached to the handsome modern edifice, belonging to the ancient church on one of Connecticut's beautiful hill-tops, where the weekly prayer meeting was appointed, that the pastor, who himself had made the fire, lighted the lamps, and rung the bell, waited in vain for one solitary member of his flock, young or old, to come. As soon as I learned the lamentable fact, I hastened to write out these true incidents, recently related to me, that happened in one of the old historic towns in Connecticut, whose hills are in sight of my window, with the prayer that the simple story may do a little good.

—The Observer.

ALLEN'S LUNG BALSAM

will positively cure deep-seated
**COUGHS,
COLDS,
CROUP.**

A 25c. Bottle for a Simple Cold.
A 50c. Bottle for a Heavy Cold.
A \$1.00 Bottle for a Deep-seated Cough.
Sold by all Druggists.



THAT'S THE SPOT!

Right in the small of the back.
Do you ever get a pain there?
If so, do you know what it means?
It is a Backache.

A sure sign of Kidney Trouble.
Don't neglect it. Stop it in time.
If you don't, serious Kidney Troubles
are sure to follow.

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

cure Backache, Lame Back, Diabetes,
Dropsy and all Kidney and Bladder
Troubles.

Price 50c. a box or 5 for \$1.25, all dealers.

DOAN KIDNEY PILL CO.,
Toronto, Ont.

Samoa and the adjoining islands, which were entirely cannibal at the time when Queen Victoria came to the throne, contain 24,000 Christians.

It is good for Man and Beast.—
Not only is Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil of incomparable value in the household, but the farmer and stockman will find it very serviceable in the farm yard, and on the cattle range, often saving the services of a veterinary surgeon. In injuries to stock and in cases of cough and pains it can be used with good effect.

Henry Martyn said that if a Brahman were converted he would think the age of miracles had returned. Now hundreds have been baptized, and scores have been received into the Christian ministry.

The "D.L." Emulsion

Trade-mark.

Extensively used in Hospitals
The most palatable Emulsion
made

Very easy to digest
Gives strength to the body
Increases the weight largely
The best remedy for
General Debility,

La Grippe, Anaemia,
Consumption.