

Family Reading.

Little Joe.

Good for nothing was little Joe,
All the neighbors declared him so.
His mother was poor as poor could be,
And a heavy burden, they thought, was he,
With his twisted limbs, his crooked back,
And his face betraying a mental lack;
And half in pity, and half in scorn,
They said, "It were well had he never been born."

"Good for nothing!" the school-boys cried:
"He cannot swim, and he cannot slide;"
And the master echoed, "For naught indeed:
He never will learn to write nor read;"
And the parson muttered, "'Tis very plain
No thought can enter that darkened brain
Of grace, or election, or primal fall:
I will leave him to Him who careth for all."

"Good for my comfort," his mother said,
As she tenderly stroked the shiftless head;
And smiled, as she would to a babe on her knee,
Till the little one laughed with a vacant glee.
And she said, as she gave him a broken toy,
"I never shall mourn o'er a wayward boy.
There is love in his heart, and I can guess
The thoughts he cannot in words express."

"The boy was a hero!" the people cried,
And the news so wondrous spread far and wide.
The child for this hour was surely kept.
Did it waken some power that long had slept,
That terrible night when the bridge went down,
And the river came up to flood the town?
For poor little Joe, in the wind and rain,
With his tiny lantern had stopped the train.

"A ransom for many," so reads the stone,
That stands by the graveyard gate alone.
No longer pelted or mocked or jeered,
By turns tormented and scorned and feared;
But blest and honored and mourned he lies
Who gave his life as a sacrifice.
And with thrilling heart and a faltering tongue,
The story is told by old and young.

Christian Register.

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A DEACON'S DAUGHTER.

BY MISS LILIAN F. WELLS.

CHAPTER. XI.

MARTHA'S LIFE AS A GOVERNESS,
They brought Miss Goodwin's remains back to New York, and laid her beside the graves of her father and mother. Her nearest relatives—an uncle and cousin, to whom the Goodwin property reverted—attended the funeral; but as they had known very little of the invalid—not having even seen her for many years—it could scarcely be expected that they should grieve very deeply. The only real mourner was Martha. There could be no question as to the sincerity of her grief.

She had lost the only friend who had ever thoroughly understood her—the one who had taught her so earnestly, and loved her so tenderly; whose love she had returned with one equally intense, mingled with the deepest gratitude, and a feeling amounting almost to reverence.

Mrs. Iredell took Martha home with her, and for nearly a week left her free to recover from the shock and the first effect of her grief. Martha did little else during the time but sit alone in her room thinking of Miss Goodwin, and the two happy years they had spent together. But at last, Mrs. Iredell, thinking very wisely that such brooding was doing Martha no good, quietly asked her one day what she was intending to do.

"I do not know, Aunt Charlotte," Martha answered; but the question changed the current of her thoughts. She awoke to the realization of the fact that she could not sit quietly there forever. Her life must go on. She must support herself in some way. What should she do? She could not go home. If she had been more than willing to come away two years ago, she was more than unwilling to go back, especially just now. She knew that her father would ask questions concerning Miss Goodwin that would be unpleasant to hear and hard to answer. To tell the truth, Martha had been just a little shocked by Miss Goodwin's calm avowal of her unbelief, that last afternoon on the beach. Nor is it strange that it should have been so, in spite of her having known Miss Goodwin so long, and their strong mutual attachment. Though having, of course, a

general idea of the latter's opinions, she was yet unprepared for such an entire rejection of the wonderful doctrines of Christianity. Martha had tried to forget those doctrines—tried to satisfy herself in their stead with science, history, poetry, anything else; and with the assertion that whatever Miss Goodwin believed must certainly be sufficient for her. But memory proved stronger than all her efforts to forget. Her home had been by no means as pleasant and attractive as a Christian's could be and ought to be. Still it had this to be said in its favor—it was better than an ungodly home. "The points of doctrine"—as she had heard them from the pulpit, in the prayer-meeting, in Sunday-school, and at home, as she had found them in the Bible, and in books of sermons—had really much to do with the formation of her mind and her habits of thought. Religion, as the deacon knew and taught it, had been, as it were, her meat and drink from her earliest recollection. She had breathed it into her being with every breath of the home atmosphere. It was impossible for her to rid herself of the influence of the truths that she had learned, try as she might. During her stay with Miss Goodwin, she was often conscious of a feeling of uneasiness, of dissatisfaction that sometimes haunted her for days, and threw a shadow over everything.

And now Miss Goodwin was gone—where?
"Father never knew her as she lived," Martha said to herself. "He would ask me all about her religious opinions and her preparation for death. I know what he would say about her, and I could not bear it. I do not know but it would make me hate him. No, I cannot go home; but will try to find something to do, since I must, and forget myself, if I can."

She announced her decision to her aunt, whereat Mrs. Iredell was greatly pleased.

"I am very glad you have come to this conclusion, my dear," said she; "for I was afraid you would worry yourself into a fever. And now I have a plan all laid for you. Mrs. Walsingham is looking for a governess for her youngest daughter. Suppose you apply for the position?"

"I will do so to-day," returned Martha.

Mrs. Walsingham had seen Martha a number of times, at Miss Goodwin's, and had always liked her appearance. Miss Goodwin had spoken in the warmest terms of Martha's character, and attainments too; and now when she offered herself as little Miss Fay's governess, Mrs. Walsingham gladly engaged her. The following Monday saw Martha entering upon a new chapter of her experience.

She had been installed in her room in the Walsingham mansion for a half-hour or so, and was busily arranging the contents of her trunk in drawers and closet, when she stopped her proceedings to open the door, in answer to a quick, light tap.

For a moment, it seemed to Martha as if the little creature who stood there might be some sylph or elfin queen, who had just stepped out of a fairy-tale. Her dress was pale blue, of some soft, silken stuff; her tiny feet were shod in daintiest kid boots of exactly the same color; her form and features were perfect in their childish beauty; her eyes were darkest blue, and sparkled like gems; while down from her graceful head to her slender waist, floated a cloud of gleaming golden hair. However, she soon proved herself to be a veritable specimen of humanity.

"Mamma said I oughtn't to interrupt you now; but you see, I wanted to come, so I did," she announced tripping into the room and examining Martha with a critical turn of her head, that was very amusing. "I couldn't wait till to-morrow morning to see my new governess, 'cause I was in such a hurry to see whether you were like my other governess, Miss Madison. You're not one single bit. Miss Madison was horrid. Her hair was just the color of the mud in the street, and she did it up in such a funny way. And her eyes looked as if she'd washed 'em with soap and taken the color off, the way it came off from my new doll's eyes when I gave her a bath the other day. She always wore an ugly, old brown dress too. Oh, I'm so glad you are not like her. I

like you ever and ever and ever so much!"

The child had rattled off all this in a voice like a bobolink's and ended by springing upon a chair, throwing her arms around her new governess' neck and giving her a hearty kiss.

Martha, surprised and greatly pleased, returned the kiss warmly, and pressed the child close to her heart. The affectionate greeting, so entirely unexpected, made her realize how exceedingly lonely she was, and brought a rush of tears to her eyes.

"Oh, what's the matter? I didn't squeeze you too hard, did I?" asked the little girl.

"Oh, no indeed, you dear little thing!" And Martha laughed now, in spite of herself. "A very dear friend of mine died a few days ago, and left me all alone; so it makes me glad to think you like me."

"Oh," said the child, nodding her shining head, but looking mystified. She could not quite understand how one could be glad and sorry, too, at the same time. But she took out a diminutive pocket-handkerchief and gently wiped Martha's eyes, saying soothingly: "Never mind, I'll be just as good to you as ever I can be. You won't have to scold me one bit, I'm sure, the way Miss Madison had to, 'cause I like you. I couldn't bear her. It made me ache to look at her—it did, truly—so I was pretty bad to her sometimes, I guess. Your name is Miss Stirling, mamma said. I think it's a very nice name."

"Do you? I'm glad you like it, I think your mamma said your name was Constance."

The tiny owner of this queenly name threw back her head with a silvery laugh.

"Oh yes, it's my real name," said she; "but it's too big for me till I grow up. Everybody calls me Fay, and I think it's a great deal nicer, don't you? You'll call me Fay, won't you?"

Martha promised.

"Oh, oh! I forgot!" exclaimed Fay, jumping down from the chair. "Mamma told me to ask you whether you would go down to dinner at six o'clock with the rest, or have supper with me in the nursery. Say you'll have supper with me, please, please do!" and she seized Martha's hand, and looked eagerly into her face.

"Indeed I will you little darling," returned Martha, glad enough to escape dining with 'the rest,' who were all strangers to her.

Fay skipped away, much delighted; but came back in a few minutes to say that supper would be ready in half an hour, and she added: "Oh, it will be just lovely to have it together; won't it?"

Fay lingered near the door after delivering this little speech, and finally said, hesitatingly:

"Mamma said I'd better not stay, 'cause you'd probably be busy."

"You won't trouble me at all, and I shall be glad to have you stay," said Martha, smiling. "I am going to take some things out of my trunk and put them in the drawer there. You may watch me if you like, and talk to me."

Fay seated herself, accordingly, with an air of great satisfaction; and while her bright eyes took note of everything she could see in Martha's trunk, she entertained her new governess with the narration of various thrilling events that had occurred during the reign of the much-disliked Miss Madison. More than once Martha found herself laughing more heartily than she would have thought it possible for her to do, an hour ago.

"There's Jane. Supper is ready. Come, Miss Stirling," cried Fay, springing up and taking Martha's hand, as there came a tap at the door.

Trying to keep pace with Fay's dancing feet, Martha hurried along the hall to the nursery. It was a large pleasant room, and fit for a little princess, so elegant were its furnishings. "Isn't my nursery lovely?" cried Fay, twirling about on her toes, and making a sweeping gesture with her tiny hands. "I had the scarlet fever last winter, and 'most died; and papa was so glad 'cause I got well, that he had this room all furnished new for me. None of the others had such a lovely nursery as this when they were little."

During supper Fay began talking about her sisters and brothers.

"I think my sister Agnes is beautiful," said she. "She's awful good too. Sydney and Leland call her 'Saint Agnes,' she's so good. She has a room all fixed up, where she prays—separate from her other room, you know. It's all dark and solemn in there, and there's a cross standing in one corner, with a sort of cushion on the floor in front of it. Agnes says it's a 'prayer-do.' She makes me go in with her every morning, and she reads, and then we kneel down on the pray-do, and she reads a whole lot of prayers out of a book. She says it'll make me a good girl to do so; but I don't see how it can, do you? Anyway, I always get tired kneeling down so long. My other sister, Mabel, is sick—sick all the time. She was hurt, you know, and they can't make her well a bit. I'm ever so sorry, for she was lovely before—a great deal nicer than Agnes, I think. But now she has such awful pains that her face is all wrinkled up, and she cries 'most all the time, and is so cross!"

"Oh, Fay," said Martha, reprovingly, "you should not say such things. Think how dreadful it must be to have to lie in bed all the time, and suffer so much pain."

"Yes, I know it must be; but then she's cross, you see; so I had to say it. Now I think my brothers are nicer than my sisters, ever so much. My brother Sydney is the handsomest man I ever saw; and I guess you'll think so too. He likes me better than Agnes does. She's always telling me to go away, 'cause she's too busy to tend to little-girls. But Sydney lets me sit in his lap, and takes me out riding, and brings me lots of nice things. Leland likes to tease me; but it's fun, 'most always; so we have real good times."

So she chattered on like a veritable magpie, and Martha listened, enjoying the child's frank, amusing talk very much. It was so different from anything that had come under her observation before—this little spoiled plaything of wealthy parents and elder brothers and sisters, privileged from her babyhood to do and say what she pleased, and mingling with her childish ignorance a good deal of keen intelligence, as well as a considerable amount of worldly-wisdom, caught from the conversation of her elders. Already Martha loved the attractive child, and looked forward to the prospect of teaching her with great pleasure, though plainly foreseeing that her little pupil would be a wayward one.

Lessons were to begin the very next morning. At nine o'clock precisely Martha went to the nursery. Miss Fay tried several artifices to bring about several excuses for delay; but Martha was firm, and Fay finally yielded with tolerably good grace. She soon showed herself fully as bright as Martha had expected, though, as she had always been allowed to study or not as she pleased, she had not made as much progress as she might.

The same day came Miss Goodwin's bequest to Martha—the beautifully-carved book-case, with its treasures of books. Priceless treasures they were to Martha, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of her who had known and loved them so well.

After the case had been set up in her room Martha unpacked the books, and with reverent hands placed them in exactly the same order as they had stood at Miss Goodwin's. She remembered it perfectly, from having studied and handled the books so much.

She had completed the work, and was standing before the row of volumes endeared to her by so many associations with Miss Goodwin, while the tears prevented her from reading any of the familiar names, when she was disturbed by a knock. Hastily wiping her eyes, she opened the door and admitted Miss Agnes.

"I hope I shall not intrude, if I come in a few moments," said she. "I am sure you will consider it quite natural that I should wish to know my sister's governess. Some might think such an acquaintance quite unnecessary; but as I am taking great care to train my little sister to habits of religious devotion, I am of course very anxious that no counter-influence should be brought to bear upon her while she is so young and so susceptible, especially as I can see she has taken quite a liking to you."

It would have been impossible to find any definite fault with Miss Agnes' tone and manner; yet Martha was undeniably annoyed. If she had been attracted to Fay, her feeling toward Miss Agnes was quite the reverse. Every word of Miss Agnes seemed to arouse in her a spirit of antagonism. Knowing instinctively the position Miss Agnes was about to assume towards her sister's governess, Martha armed herself for rebellion. Placing a chair for her visitor, she answered quietly:

"I think your anxiety natural, and very commendable, Miss Walsingham. You do not intrude upon me, and you may feel yourself at liberty to make any investigations you think necessary."

What makes Winds.

A teacher explained the cause of winds to a class of little girls about ten to twelve years old. Then they all wrote a composition about it. Here is Allie's: "Wind is air in motion. It is set to going by heat. The sun shines on the earth and warms it. Then the air next the land gets warm and rises up because it is lighter. Then the cold air flies in to take its place. This going up of warm air and filling in of cold air is called wind. In hot countries there are hurricanes and cyclones, which tear up trees and blow houses down flat. Somewhere, once, a wind took a lot of ashes where there was a volcano, and took them forty miles and let them down. Out West they have blizzards, and at sea they have northeasters. I don't ever like winds."

What a Good Laugh Did.

Laughter has been known to save life, in one instance at least. The writer Joubert mentions the case in question. A gentleman, who had been ill for some weeks, was very low with fever. The doctor in attendance, wishing to break the fever to save his patient's life, ordered a dose of rhubarb. When the dose had been prepared, the doctor changed his mind because, as he reasoned, the effects would be weakening on a man already greatly debilitated. It so happened that the goblet containing the rhubarb was left in the room occupied by the patient. During that day a pet monkey belonging to the sick man stole into the room, and seeing the goblet, slipped slyly up and touched it to his lips. The first taste was not satisfying, as the patient on the bed could see through his half open eyes. The monkey made a comical gesture. Another sip, and he got the sweet of the syrup. His keen eyes brightened. He cast a glance around, and then drank it to the bottom, where he got the full strength of the rhubarb. What a face he made! He screwed his funny countenance into all sorts of shapes. He spat out the horrible taste, danced a wild jig of agony, and ended his 'monkey-shines' by seizing the goblet and smashing it into a hundred pieces. The scene was so ludicrous that the sick man burst into a fit of laughter. When the nurse entered he tried to tell what had happened, but he sank back exhausted. A gentle perspiration appeared, and he fell asleep. When he awoke the fever was broken, and he recovered—saved by a good laugh at the antics of a monkey.—*Golden Days*.

Which is the Worse?

A little girl came in her night-clothes very early one morning to her mother, saying:

"Which is the worse, mamma, to tell a lie, or to steal?"

The mother taken by surprise, replied that both were so bad that she couldn't tell which was the worse.

"Well," said the little one, "I've been thinking a good deal about it, and I think that it's worse to lie than to steal. If you steal a thing, you can take it back, unless you've eaten it; and if you have eaten it, you can pay for it. But, —and there was a look of awe in the little face—'a lie is forever.'—*Children's Paper*.

"Ripple, ripple, ripple," sang the brook, "neath yon sunny skies, in all its quiet beauty, the pleasant meadow lies. There among the daisies and rushes on my brink, at morning and at evening the cattle come to drink. The mil-

ler's little daughter, with song and laughter sweet, will stand to let my wavelets caress her white bare feet, or stooping shyly over, with childhood's gentle grace, again she laughs to see me reflect her smiling face. Yet here I cannot tarry, so merry though it be; I must run bravely onward—no time to play for me; with many a splash and spatter as over stones I go, by many a vine and willow that on my margin grow. I water all their rootlets; how thirsty they would be if I should lag and loiter and make them wait for me! So onward, ever onward, I go from day to day, content to do each duty I find upon the way."—*The Watchman*.

Cultivate a sweet Voice.

There is no power of love so hard to keep as a kind voice. A kind hand is deaf and dumb. It may be rough in flesh and blood, yet do the work of a soft heart, and do it with a soft touch. But there is no one thing so much needs as a sweet voice to tell what it means and feels, and it is hard to get it and keep it in the right tone. One must start in youth, and be on the watch night and day, at work and while at play, to get and keep a voice that shall speak at all times the thought of a kind heart. But this is the time when a sharp voice is most apt to be got. You often hear boys and girls say words at play with a quick, sharp tone, as if it were the snap of a whip.

If any of them get vexed you will hear a voice that sounds as if it were made up of a snarl, a whine and a bark. Such a voice often speaks worse than the heart feels. It shows more ill-will in tone than in words. It is often in mirth that one gets a voice or tone that is sharp, and sticks to him through life, and stirs up ill-will and grief, and falls like a drop of gall on the sweet joys at home. Such as these get a sharp home voice for use and keep their best voice for those they meet elsewhere, just as they would save their best cakes and pies for guests and all their sour food for their own board. I would say to all girls and boys, "Use your best voice at home." Watch it by day as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you in the days to come than the best pearl bid in the sea. A kind voice is a lark's song to the heart and home. It is to the heart what sight is to the eye.

Tired Birds.

Many of our birds fly several thousand miles every autumn, passing not only over Florida, where they might find perpetual summer, but over the Gulf and far beyond into the great summer land of the Amazon; after a short stay, returning again to the North, some penetrating to the extreme shores of the Arctic seas. How the small birds fly so great distances is almost incomprehensible, but I have seen many of our small feathered friends on the little Key of Tortugas, two hundred miles or more from Cape Florida, the jumping off place of the United States. Great flocks of them would alight upon the walls of the fort, especially during storms, evidently thoroughly tired; but the next day they were up and away off over the great stretch of the Gulf and the Caribbean Sea.

Numbers of the English birds and many from Northern Europe make yearly voyages down into the African continent, and careful observers state that they have seen the great storks, so common in Germany, moving along high in the air, bearing on their broad backs numbers of small birds that had taken free passage, or were, perhaps, stealing a ride. In these wonderful migrations many birds are blown out to sea and lost, while others become so fatigued and worn out that they will alight upon boats. A New England fisherman, who in the autumn follows his calling fourteen or fifteen miles out from shore, informed me that nearly every day he had four or five small birds as companions. They had wandered off from shore, or were flying across the great bays on the lower coast of Maine, and had dropped down to rest. One day the same fisherman fell asleep while holding his line, and upon suddenly opening his eyes, there sat a little bird on his hand, demurely cooking its head this way and that, as if wondering whether he was an old wreck or piece of driftwood.—*St. Nicholas for March*.

To POOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS.—We have a Price Books in stock, Baptist Book Room.