

Poetry.

WHILE WE MAY.

The bands are such dear hands,
They are so full, they turn at our demands
So often; they reach out
With trifles scarcely thought about,
So many things they do
So many things for me, for you,
If their fond will mistake,
We will mend, not break.

They are such fond, frail life
That speak to us, they lie
Of them of many times,
Or if they speak too slow or quick, such crises
We may pass by; for we may see
Days not far off when those small words may be
Held not slow, nor quick, nor out of place, but
Dear.

Because the lips are no more here.
They are such dear, familiar feet that go
Along the path with our, feet fast or slow
And trying to keep pace, if they mistake,
Or tread upon some flower we would take
Upon our breast, or bruise some weed,
Or crush poor H-m until it bleed,
We may pass by.

Not turning quickly to impute
Grave faults; for they and we
Have such a little way to go—can be
Together such a little while along the way,
We will be patient while we may.

So many little faults we find,
We see them, for not blind
In love. We see them, but if you and I,
Perhaps, remember them some by and by,
They will not be
Faults then—grave faults—to you and me,
But just old ways, mistakes, or even less,
Remembrance to bless.

Days change, so many things and hours
We see so differently in sun and showers,
Mistaken words to-night
May be so cherished by to-morrow's light,
We may be patient; for we know
There's such a little way to go.

—Selected.

The Fireside.

POLLY'S RELIGION.

There can be little doubt that if the people of Ball's Ferry had been asked to decide which was the most pious family in their midst, they would unanimously have named the Demmings. They had long been the nucleus about which the Presbyterian Church had gathered. Now Squire Demming's pew faced that of the pastor, and no matter how stormy the weather there was his venerable white head in its place, and Mother Demming's placid old face beside it. Grace and Isabella, the unmarried sisters, and Joe filled the pew. Young Mr. Floyd (who was radical in his views), or any visiting clergyman, might preach what they chose, the Demmings listened with the same calm, devout pleasure. It never occurred to them to dispute any opinion promulgated by a minister of their church. It was "all good," like the Bible. There was no room for choice in either. The Squire would not just as likely to read a chapter in Numbers to a penitent sinner as one in St. John. The effect on his mind was very much the same. Both had the soothing effect of a repeated charm which set him safely apart from other men.

You would always find on the Demmings' comfortable all the papers and magazines published by the denomination. Their house was the headquarters for clergymen and colporteurs. The girl's could call on at a moment's notice where such or such a minister was now, how long Dr. D. of St. Louis had stayed in Europe, and how much money had been given to Mr. J. by his flock in Chicago to visit the Holy Land. They were exceedingly fond, too, of religious poems, and could repeat those pages of Henry Kirk White and Miss Havergal. They took an eager interest in all Foreign Missionary work; the story of those heroic men in African jungles or Indian bungalows had all the dramatic power of a novel for them. Grace declared that she had a positive affection for that lovely Miss W., who was at work in Ceylon, and considered young Mr. S., who was in Hong Kong, one of the most noble type of Christians, although she had never seen either of them. Isabella took more interest in the poetic doctrines coming into notice. She professed a delight in symbolism, filled her room with religious emblems and pictures, wore black on Good Friday and lilacs on Easter, and fasted as regularly as an Episcopalian. Every week she noted down in her diary the changes in her spiritual condition. The whole family were fluent in the use of theological terms, and talked glibly of the doctrines of their denomination; indeed, words of controversy on this subject filled their group assemblies.

This familiarity with the outer garments of religion made them appear devout in the eyes of others, and in their own. They were naturally gentle, unpretending, amiable folks, and hence were not likely to yield to the temptations of wealth. Their pleasant, mild humors, which was in fact due to temperament, was set down by their friends as the effect of piety.

Life to the Demmings was like a long summer day until Joe brought his wife home. None of the family had ever seen her. They knew she was one of the Anabaptists of Kentucky.

"There are the Anabaptists in the United Presbyterian Church," said Grace. "I hope Mary belongs to our membership."

"Oh, yes, certainly," said Joe, eagerly. He was just starting to be married, and he was very anxious that they should all have Polly in advance.

"I think not. But she has one of the sweetest voices—a low contralto. And you ought to hear her laugh, Belle! The merriest ring—oh, she'll bring new life into this house!"

The girls smiled. They were fond of Joe, and ready to welcome his wife.

"But I hope she is ready to take a leading place in the church," said Grace, after he had gone. "Joe will some day fill father's place, and his description of her does not give me the idea of an energetically religious woman."

"Well, hope for the best," said Isabella. She was very busy making an imitation stained glass window for the Sabbath-school room, and was anxious to finish it before Mary arrived.

"Uncle Ben must be kept in his own room when she comes, and Tom can be sent to the country for a month's visit," Grace said, her delicate cheeks flushing painfully.

For there were two skeletons in the Demming household. The Squire's brother, Ben, who was a paralytic old soldier and a most cross-grained, profane old fellow, occupied one wing of the mansion. He had a man to nurse and read to him, for his calls were intolerable to his nieces. Tom was their brother younger than Joe. Tom Demming had disappeared for three years after he left college, and came back a haggard, dissipated fellow. Nobody in Ball's Ferry knew what he had done in that time, but it was certain that he was under the ban—a marked man.

The family treated him with gloomy patience. They had taken up their cross and bore it; but it was heavy, and he knew that they found it heavy. Tom was never seen by visitors at the table or in the parlor. At dusk he would stalk out to join some of his comrades at the village grog-house, and occasionally, but not often, was brought home brutally intoxicated.

Joe's wife disappointed them all. She was a plump, merry little girl, nothing more. "A very pleasant little heathen!" sighed Grace, after two days had passed.

"I named some of the best books of religious

fiction, but she never had heard of them; and she did not know of a single one of our Foreign Missions.

Good Mrs. Demming was uneasy at this, and that evening turned the conversation on doctrinal subjects. Polly grew red.

"I am afraid," she said, "I am not clear in my ideas concerning those difficult points. The truth is, after mother's death, I had the charge of my four brothers, and I had so little time."

"You will have more time now," said Isabella. "I will mark out a course of doctrinal reading for you."

But Mary made slow progress with the course of reading. As time passed and she settled down into her place in the household, she proved to be a very busy little woman. She had a positive talent for finding work; took her share of the family mending, tossed up dainty little deserts, and helped Joe with his accounts. When Joe had given to his five, she took tremendous walks, advised Mother Demming about her fancy work, or copied the Squire's papers for him.

"What a clerical hand you write!" said Grace one day. "I often wish mine were so delicate, when father worries over those papers. But as for mother's embroidery, women of her age ought to give up that useless work when their eyes are failing."

"It does not seem useless to me," said Polly, gently. "She thinks you all value it."

"Where can Mary go to those interminable walls?" said Isabella one morning to her father. "You should wear her about Black Lane. She might wander into it and bring home typhoid fever."

"You ought to report that lane as a nuisance, father," said his wife. "It is a perfect sink of filth and vice."

"It is a disgrace to Ball's Ferry that such wretches can find harbor in it!" added Isabella. "They ought to be driven beyond the borough limits."

"Well, well, my dear! It doesn't do to be too energetic," said Isabella. "They are poor creatures—runaway slaves before war. They never had a chance."

He was roused, however, to mention Black Lane at a meeting of the town burgesses that day.

"Something must be done, or we will have typhus among us," he said.

"Something has been done," said Judge Paule. "I came through the lane this morning and hardly knew it. There has been a general draining and cleaning, the dung hills are gone, the cabins are whitewashed, the women—some of them—had actually washed their faces."

"What has happened?" asked the Squire.

"I heard the sound of children's voices singing in one of the cabins, and the men told me it was 'Miss Mary's class.' Some good woman has been at work, I suspect."

"Miss Mary?" The Squire's face grew red, his eyes flashed, but he said nothing more.

At home, he met Polly coming to meet him. He looked at her with the eye of a judge. "Are you the good Samaritan? Have you been in Black Lane, my dear?"

She blushed, laughed, and stammered: "Oh, that was the most natural thing in the world, father. You know I was brought up among colored people. I know how to manage them. It was only a ditch dug here and there, a few panes of glass and bushes of lime. They are good, affectionate creatures, and so anxious to learn."

The matter was driven out of the Squire's mind before he reached the house, for he saw Tom skulking round the stable door. He had returned that day, and a dull weight of misery fell on his father's heart at the sight. Tom did not enter into the house until late in the evening, when the family were gathered about the lamp. He came into the room with a swagger, unshaven, his boots rocking of the stable. "On purpose to mortify us," thought Grace bitterly.

"I came in to see Joe's fine lady wife," he said, in a loud voice. "Unless he's ashamed to introduce his scapegrace brother."

"Where is she, Grace?"

"In Uncle Ben's room. She reads the New York papers to him every day now. They play backgammon together, and they have one of those little books of Artemus Ward's. I heard him laughing and swearing harder than ever, so he must be pleased. I wonder how she can stand it."

"It is hard to understand her," said Isabella dryly. "Mary is not so careful as to her associations as she should be."

Tom had been listening eagerly. "Enough said," he broke out, with a thump of his fist on the table. "If Joe's wife can take thought of that lonely fellow up there, there's better stuff in her than I expected. I'll go up and make her acquaintance."

For several days afterwards Tom's voice was heard joining in the jokes and laughter that came out of Uncle Ben's room.

"Mary seems to have enchanted them both," said Grace. Tom is clean and shaven to-day, and looks like a human being."

"Perhaps she treats him like a human being," said Joe.

But even he was startled when Mary came down that evening dressed for a walk; and nothing brightly to Tom asked him to go with her. "Finish your book, Joe. Brother Tom will be my escort."

Tom followed her slouchingly to the gate. He stopped there. Shame, defiance, misery looked out of his eyes. "See here, Mrs. Demming! I reckon you don't know who I am, or you wouldn't have asked me to go with you."

Polly's tender, steady eyes met his. "Yes, I know."

"Dye know I'm a thief? I was in jail in Pittsburg for a year."

Polly drew her breath hard. A prayer to God for help went up from her heart in that second of time. She held out both her hands. "Yes, Joe told me. But that is all over now—all over. We have begun new again, Brother Tom. Come!"

She put her hand in his arm as they walked down street. He did not speak to her until they came back. Then he stopped her again at the gate.

"My sisters never have been seen with me in public since I came back. I'll never forget this of you, Mary, never!"

A month later the Squire said to his wife, "Did you know Mary was going over her mathematics with Tom? Regularly coaching him. That little girl has the clearest head for figures I ever knew. But what can be her object?"

Mrs. Demming cleared her voice before she could speak. "She has applied to some friends of hers in Kentucky to give Tom a situation. Father, I think there may be a chance for the boy. He wants to begin his life all over again among strangers."

"God help him," muttered the Squire. He surprised Polly when he met her the next time by taking her in his arms and kissing her with the tears in his eyes.

In the spring Tom went to Kentucky and began his new life. He has not broken down in it yet. It was in the spring, too, that Uncle Ben began to fail. The old man was so fond of Polly that she gave up most of her time to him; so much of it, indeed, that Joe complained.

"Don't say a word, dear," she said, "he has such a little while to stay. Let me do what I can."

"I say, Polly, what that Bible you were reading to him—do you?"

"Yes. He asks for it often."

Joe began to whistle and choked down into a sigh. Uncle Ben had been such a godless reprobate in his youth that it had never occurred to any of the Demmings that there was a way to reach his soul. He lived until late in the summer. The Sabbath before his death he sent for Mr. Floyd and talked to him for a long time.

When the young minister came out of the dying man's room he was pale. He had been such moved.

"I will give him the sacrament to-morrow, he said to Squire Demming."

"You think he is worthy of it?"

"If sincere repentance and trust in Christ can make any of us worthy, he is. He asked that 'little Polly' should take it with him. 'She has done this for me,' he said. 'It's her work.'"

The girls overheard the conversation. They sat gravely silent after the minister was gone.

"I do not understand Polly," said Grace at last. "She never seemed to me to be a religious person."

"Perhaps," said the Squire, "we have not clearly understood what religion is. We took too much for granted. We should waken up and look into the truth of the matter."

YOUNG FOLKS' COLUMN.
CONDUCTED BY C. E. BLACK, CASE SET-
TLEMENT, KINGS COUNTY, N. Y.

ORIGINAL PUZZLES WITH SOLUTIONS, ORIGINAL OR SELECTED STORIES, AND SOLUTIONS TO THE MYSTERY RESPECTFULLY SOLICITED.

STORY AND POETRY.

PUT SOME SALT IN IT.
"Mother, what makes you put salt in everything you cook? Everything you make you put in a little salt, and sometimes a good deal." So spoke observing, little Annie, as she stood looking on.

"Well, Annie, I'll make you a little loaf of bread without any salt in it, and see if you can find out."

"O mother, it doesn't taste a bit good," said she, after she had tasted it.

"Why not?" asked her mother.

"You didn't put any salt in it."

"Mother," said Annie, a day or two afterwards, "Jane Wells is the worst girl I ever saw; she slaps her little brother Johnny, and pulls his hair, and acts real hateful. When I told her it was naughty to do so, and if she would be kind to her brother he would be kind to her, she only spoke rough to me, and hit him again. Why won't she take my advice, mother?"

"Perhaps you didn't put any salt in it. Season your words with salt, my child. Ask the help of God in all you say and do, and your words, spoken in the Spirit of Christ, will not fail to the ground. Don't forget to put salt in it, or else it won't taste good."—The Sunbeam.

WHAT A LITTLE CHILD CAN DO.
I'm a very little maid;
I can't do much, 'tis true;
Yet the mission I can aid;
This a little child can do.

I can run on busy feet;
I can work for mamma all day through;
What I do for her is sweet;
This a little child can do.

I can talk to wicked boys;
I can tell them what is good and true;
I can make them love the Sunday-school;
This a little child can do.

I can run on mission I can give;
I can send to heathen children too;
I can teach them better ways to live;
This a little child can do.

If "She had done what she could,"
Jesus should say to you,
You'd be glad; I know you would;
This a little child can do.

—The Sunbeam.

Contributions from Young Folks.

THE MYSTERY.
No. 150.—BIBLE REBUS.
(ED. Y. F. C.)
Wear A B Y Knot UN YYY
standing

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what the
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LOVE.

No. 160.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.
FROM "MARIANNE," KINGS.
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No. 161.—ENIGMA.
FROM "VAN," YORK.
My 1 and 8 are found in tipping;
My 2 and 9 are found in sipping;
My 3 and 10 are found in gale;
My 4 and 11 are found in sale;
My 5 and 12 are found in plaster;
My 6 and 13 are found in a wilder;
My 7 and 14 are found in master;
My whole was a king of ancient Assyria.

No. 162.—WHEEL PUZZLE.
FROM "RECE," PORTLAND.
1
8 * * * * * 2
7 * * * * * 3
6 * * * * * 4
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4 * * * * * 6
3 * * * * * 7
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1 * * * * * 9

N. B.—Read as numbered.
Jinx.—An admonition of St. Paul.
Hail.—A shout forth to preach the Word of God.
Spokes.—1. A city of Palatines. 2. A wilder-ness. 3. Son of Koth. 4. A king of Moab. 5. A country. 6. A mount. 7. A seller of purple. 8. Son of Simon the Cyrenian.

No. 163.—BIBLICAL ANAGRAM.
FROM "MATTY," KINGS.
Eh si depeidaa nad jeredet to emm a nma to rooer, dan quadeatid twi feid; dan ew diw an t'rew roe sacf roth; eh sac depeidaa dan ew demest inuch.

(The Mystery solved in three weeks.)

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.
(No. 32.)
No. 146.—(1). Acts xviii. 16. (2). Acts xvii. 22. (3). 2 Corinthians iii. 16. (4). Isaiah xiv. 9.
No. 147.—(1). Gen. xxi. 27. (2). 2 Kings x. 2.
No. 148.—(1). Gen. xxi. 46. (2). Job xii. 23.
No. 149.—(1). 1st Cor. x. 16. (2). 1st Cor. x. 17. (3). 1st Cor. x. 18. (4). 1st Cor. x. 19. (5). 1st Cor. x. 20. (6). 1st Cor. x. 21. (7). 1st Cor. x. 22. (8). 1st Cor. x. 23. (9). 1st Cor. x. 24. (10). 1st Cor. x. 25. (11). 1st Cor. x. 26. (12). 1st Cor. x. 27. (13). 1st Cor. x. 28. (14). 1st Cor. x. 29. (15). 1st Cor. x. 30. (16). 1st Cor. x. 31. (17). 1st Cor. x. 32. (18). 1st Cor. x. 33. (19). 1st Cor. x. 34. (20). 1st Cor. x. 35. (21). 1st Cor. x. 36. (22). 1st Cor. x. 37. (23). 1st Cor. x. 38. (24). 1st Cor. x. 39. (25). 1st Cor. x. 40. (26). 1st Cor. x. 41. (27). 1st Cor. x. 42. (28). 1st Cor. x. 43. (29). 1st Cor. x. 44. (30). 1st Cor. x. 45. (31). 1st Cor. x. 46. (32). 1st Cor. x. 47. (33). 1st Cor. x. 48. (34). 1st Cor. x. 49. (35). 1st Cor. x. 50. (36). 1st Cor. x. 51. (37). 1st Cor. x. 52. (38). 1st Cor. x. 53. (39). 1st Cor. x. 54. (40). 1st Cor. x. 55. (41). 1st Cor. x. 56. (42). 1st Cor. x. 57. (43). 1st Cor. x. 58. (44). 1st Cor. x. 59. (45). 1st Cor. x. 60. 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