

## MRS. FARR'S LEGACY.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

Mrs. Farr was a poor widow dwelling quite alone in a plain little house, hidden by a clump of evergreens, at the end of a narrow lane that turned off from the handsome village street. She was a devout woman, laying aside from her earnings, as seamstress, a tenth, so that her mite was always ready to help on every good work. She was social, active and earnest, a leader in the church who spoke her mind without acrimony, and whose advice at all times it was considered safe to follow.

On the September afternoon, when most unexpected good fortune stood waiting to enter her portal, her words of wisdom were, like half-fledged birds, destined to come home for shelter. The ladies at the sewing society were talking of a poor young man, an orphan, who had grown up in their midst, and having been recently converted, felt that he had a "call to preach."

"If there is one business more than another that needs careful and prayerful preparation it is the business of preaching the gospel of Christ," said the Widow Farr. "I don't believe in every glib-tongued convert setting himself up as a public leader and teacher, and throwing himself upon the community for support. Let these young men retain their secular employment and devote their leisure to personal work among their unconverted friends and neighbors, and to talking in the social meetings. If they set themselves up as preachers, their zeal will outrun their knowledge, and their sphere of usefulness be a very narrow one. Now-a-days the intelligent, reading, general public demand an educated ministry, and the spirit of the age needs an *ordained* ministry. Churches ought to be particular about licensing uneducated young men to preach. They don't know what mischief they may be doing some small church in the obscure fields, and sigh for the good old days when a man was held in reverence who had fitted himself by long years of study, and been set apart in solemn form, with prayer, as a servant of God. If the Lord has called James Hill to be a shepherd of souls he will open the way and provide the means to fit him for the work. It doesn't educate a person to convert him. Education means money—provided in a natural way. I don't expect a miracle to be performed." She thought of Mrs. Nims, who was worth her thousands, and Mrs. Ames, her tens of thousands, and hoped her words might prompt them to do something for their young brother.

An hour later, when walking home in the twilight, she was overtaken by James Hill, who brought his rapid steps into unison with her slower ones as they talked of the state of the church and of the abounding goodness of God.

As they reached the post-office, she said, "I wish you would look in box 76. I may have a letter."

He returned with one immediately, to her surprise, for she had few correspondents.

"It is a mourning envelope, and is sealed with black," he said.

It set the good woman into a flutter, although she said repeatedly to the young man, who still considerably walked by her side, "I have no near relatives, and I don't know why any one's death need upset me so."

As she reached home, found the key under the step-stone, and unlocked the door, she asked her companion to come in, for the letter had seemed to surround her with an unwelcome gloom of apprehension.

The lamp was lighted, the letter scrutinized, the hand-writing commented on, and at length one end neatly pared off with the scissors. It was a lawyer's letter, apprising her of the death of an aged aunt, who had died intestate, and informing her that she thus became heir to five hundred dollars.

"The most unexpected thing," she exclaimed. "It is like a miracle!" and with the words came a thought of the opinion she had so lately expressed at the sewing society: "The Lord will not perform a miracle. He will provide the means in some natural manner."

Turning to the young man, who seemed to heartily rejoice in her good fortune, she said:

"The Lord sent me this money that I might hand it over to you to prepare you to preach his word. You are to take it, use it judiciously, pay the interest to him in souls, and to me in a good report of your progress onward and upward. I have always wished I could do more for the cause of Christ in the world, and he has given me the opportunity. It is not necessary that you should tell any one about it, as it would give rise to a great deal of unnecessary talk."

The earnestness of her words was so convincing that he accepted her offer without a protest, saying:

"I have been praying that the Lord would give me some proof if

he wanted me to take up his work. I will not doubt that my prayers are answered in this way."

The secret of the legacy remained a secret for some months. Then a cousin, who had received a like amount and spent it, bethought him to borrow the poor widow's portion, and finding her obdurate and uncommunicative, endeavored to learn through the neighbors where it was invested, and so the matter leaked out. The widow was surprised that so many people were interested in her affairs and so anxious to pay her a high rate of interest on small loans, but she kept her own counsel, saying only that she was perfectly satisfied with her present investment.

Meantime, along with the talk of the widow's penuriousness, for she had not in any way changed her manner of life and no one could tell of her making an extra purchase, was the wonder how James Hill was managing to get along through college, and also accounts of his success in bringing souls to repentance, for he preached as he had opportunity here and there. About this time the question of repairing the church came up. A paper was carried around for subscriptions and the sum set down by Mrs. Farr was so small as to give rise to a great many unkind remarks. People said what they thought, and these suspicions were repeated as facts until every one looked askance at the unsuspecting widow who went quietly along the even tenor of her way, wondering, indeed, why the neighbors did not run in, but never mistrusting that she was being set down by them all as a pious fraud.

When the church was finished James Hill was invited to preach the re-dedication sermon. The village folk were all very proud of him now, and all very anxious indeed to entertain him; but all their invitations were quietly declined.

"Where is the widow Farr?" he asked on the eventful morning of his arrival as he was shaking hands right and left, and being told by some communicative person that she was not well enough to be out, he asked:

"Who is with her? Every one appears to be here."

"Well, the fact is, she is able to hire a nurse, and we have made up our minds not to humor her in her penuriousness," and then came the story of the one dollar she had subscribed to the building fund.

The young minister buttoned up his coat. "I will be back before the services begin," he said.

"But the collation in the vestry is just ready."

"I do not care for dinner," and he was gone, to every one's surprise and disappointment.

"He has gone to the widow Farr's," said some one who had watched his tall form speeding down the street, and when presently some one followed to urge his presence at the elaborate lunch, they found him making gruel and tea for the widow, who was sitting in her high-backed rocking-chair, with her dear, motherly old hands folded in her lap. When urged to return to the church he insisted upon sharing the repast he had prepared, saying that what was good enough for his best earthly friend was quite good enough for him.

"His best earthly friend!" was iterated and reiterated when his words were repeated in the crowded vestry. "What does he mean?"

They understood his meaning presently, for when he arose in the pulpit to begin his sermon his carefully prepared manuscript was laid one side and he proceeded to speak to them out of the fullness of his heart, taking for a subject, "The Widow's Mite." He called no names, but he had a good memory, and there were very few of the town-people present who had not at some time, in sickness or affliction, received from Mrs. Farr consolation or kindness. The story of the legacy came out, of course.

"She gave only a dollar toward the building fund," he said, "but she has given you the minister whom you have been pleased to invite to preach your dedication sermon, and who hopes to remain with you until your hearts—that are so hard that you have neglected one of God's chosen servants—may be broken by an outpouring of his love."

That was the beginning of a great revival that continued until many were brought into the church and the gospel of love prevailed throughout that community. With James Hill it is always a time of refreshing. The Lord has proved that he called him to the work. The widow Farr has her home with him. He calls her mother. I need not add that she has never regretted her investment, and it is not surprising that she is fond of whispering to the well-to-do people with whom she is constantly coming in contact:

"PUT YOUR MONEY INTO MEN."

—The Standard.

What unthankfulness it is to forget our consolations and to look only upon matters of grievances; to think so much upon two or three crosses as to forget a hundred blessings.

## Difficult to Become an Infidel.

Many people think that it is difficult to become a Christian; but do they ever think that it is difficult to become an infidel? I have no hesitancy in saying that it is much more difficult to become a downright infidel than it is to become a veritable Christian. There have been a good many, who, with all of their inherent biases and tendencies to unbelief, to assist them, have tried hard to become real infidels, but they finally confessed that they did not make a satisfactory success of it. It is said of a certain studious and intelligent man that "for years he had read every book he could find that assailed the religion of Christ, he should have become an infidel but for three things." The first was this: "I am a man. I am going somewhere. To-night I am nearer the grave than I was last night. I have read all that such books can tell me. They shed not one ray of hope or light upon the darkness. They shall not take away the only guide, and leave me stone blind." The second thing was: "I had a mother. I saw her go down into the dark valley, where I am going, and she leaned upon an unseen arm, as calmly as a child goes to sleep, on the breast of its mother. I know that that was not a dream." The third thing was: "I have three motherless daughters. They have no protector but myself. I would rather kill them, than leave them in this sinful world, if you blot out from it all the teachings of the gospel." Let those who think it hard to become Christians reflect on the difficulties which stand in the way of becoming absolute infidels. Christianity has the strongest arguments, and the best inducements on its side, and the greatest power to sustain it.—Standard.

## A Safe House to Sleep In.

A lawyer of high reputation in the city of Philadelphia was traveling in one of the Southern States, and being belated one evening, after a long day's ride, he was compelled to turn into a house on a solitary plantation and ask for shelter and hospitality for the night. His request was granted. In the course of the evening he thought he observed something reserved in the master of the house which awakened his suspicions. He was at length conducted to his chamber, which was adjoining the family room. There he dwelt on the circumstances that had alarmed him till his excited imagination was filled with thoughts of nightly robbery and assassination. He proceeded to barricade the room as well as he could. He fastened down the windows; against the doors he piled up tables, chairs every thing that was movable in the room. While thus engaged, words uttered in a low voice caught his ear and increased his alarm. He placed his ear at the key-hole. The man of the house was engaged in prayer—in family prayer. Among other objects of intercession, he was praying for "the stranger whom the providence of God had unexpectedly brought to lodge beneath their roof that night." When he got through his traveling friend arose from his stooping posture. Imagine the change in his feelings. All his fears had vanished. Though no Christian himself, he knew that the prayers of Christians are like guardian angels to the abode in which they are offered up, and went to bed and slept soundly and sweetly, feeling that the house where God was feared and worshipped was a safe house to sleep in.—Worker.

## Life A Failure.

A gentleman of high standing, a lawyer, a politician, a man of talents, and, as the world estimates, a man who was successful in all his undertakings, was suddenly arrested by disease, and soon brought to the close of life. As it was evident that he could not live but a few days, he was asked by a friend how he felt as he looked back upon his past life. And the answer, coming from a man of sense and thought, with eternity full in his view, was striking and memorable. "With all its success, I now see and feel that my life has been a failure! I have not gained one of the great ends for which life was given, and now it is too late to gain them!"

What a thought, what a feeling, what a prospect for the hour when life is closing and eternity is to be entered, and character and destiny and state are to be forever fixed! What a lesson to impress on all right views of the great ends for which life was given, and to lead every one to live here prepared for the life beyond this world.

## An Affectionate Spirit.

We sometimes meet with men who seem to think that any indulgence in affectionate feeling is a weakness. They will return from a journey and greet their families with distant dignity, and move among their children with the cold and lofty splendor of an iceberg surrounded with its broken fragments.

There is hardly a more unnatural sight on earth than one of those families without hearts.

A father had better extinguish his son's eyes than take away his heart. Who that has experienced the joys of friendship, and knows the worth of affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery, than be robbed of the hidden treasures of his heart?

Cherish, then, your heart's best affections. Indulge in filial, parental, fraternal love. Think it not a weakness. *God is love.* Love everything and everybody that is lovely. Teach your children to love—to love the flowers, to love the birds, to love their parents, to love their God. Let it be the studied object of your domestic culture to give them warm hearts and ardent affections. You cannot make the cords of love too strong; and be assured that in nurturing the principles of affection, you are nurturing the principles of virtue.—Christian Field.

## "Avenge Not Yourselves."

An Eastern story tells of the haughty favorites of an Oriental monarch who, as he was passing, threw a stone at a poor dervish or priest. The dervish did not dare to throw it back at the man who had assaulted him, for he knew the favorite was very powerful. So he picked up the stone and put it carefully in his pocket, saying to himself: "The time for revenge will come by-and-by, and then I will repay him for it." Not long afterward, this same dervish, as he was walking in one of the streets of the city, saw a great crowd coming toward him. He hastened to see what was the matter, and found, to his astonishment, that his enemy, the favorite, who had fallen into disgrace with the king, was being paraded through the principal streets on a camel, exposed to the jests and insults of the populace. The dervish, seeing all this, hastily grasped at the stone which he carried in his pocket, saying to himself: "The time for my revenge has come, and I will repay him for his conduct." But, after considering a moment, he threw the stone away, saying, "The time for revenge never comes; for if our enemy is powerful, revenge is dangerous as well as foolish, and if he is weak and wretched, then revenge is worse than foolish, it is mean and cruel. And in all cases it is forbidden and wicked."

## Money Like Muck.

Bacon said that money is "like muck—not much use unless spread." It is nothing to him who does not know how to use it wisely, and on the other hand poverty is nothing when it is not felt. If you mix with people better off than yourself, you feel poor; but it may be only by contrast, for perhaps you do not want more than you have. In one of his stories a well-known writer describes the effect upon a poor teacher of \$6,000 a year. Suddenly the cottage he has lived in for so many years, seems to have grown very small—the furniture looks old and worn. Claire had never remarked the fact before, but now she perceived clearly that there was no longer any possibility of tracing the pattern of the carpet, that the curtains were dingy, the coverings of the chairs faded, the table rickety. "The poor old furniture," said Claire, "must that go? Yet it is frightfully shabby." "The poison is eating into our souls," her father went on with deeper gloom. "For twenty years and more I have thought this little *salon* a model of good taste. Claire, when we get into a large house, we will keep the old furniture all in a room by itself, whither we can go and remind ourselves of the past. If we are to be rich, we must never forget that we were once poor and happy."

## Not For This World.

One evening, in a parlor at a summer watering-place, the young people were dancing. One young lady was not taking any part in the exercise.

"Does not your daughter dance?" asked another lady of this young lady's mother.

"No," was the reply.

"Why, how will she get on in this world?"

"I am not bringing her up for the world," was the quiet answer.

That young lady is now a woman, and the influence of her consecrated life is felt in many of the Christian interests of a great city.

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