

## The Midnight Storm.

BY JANE MARIA REED.

The heavens are sombre, shrouded thick in gloom;  
No more the lines repeat their plaintive moan;  
Unto its nest the mother bird has flown;  
The air is still, as if some fearful doom  
Had summoned Life to wed the Silent Tomb,  
And never more give utterance to a groan,  
Spending its years in shadows deep alone.  
A line of light across the clouds which loom!  
And all is changed. The heavy thunder rolls,  
The rain-drops fall, the ocean billows swell;  
Another peal! One of Heaven's homesick souls  
Has vanished quickly from the storm-swept dell.  
The midnight hour from out the belfry tolls,  
The storm is passing by, and all is well.  
Coldbrook Springs, Mass.

## Means of Grace in a Closet Door.

Of course, you are wondering how this can be, and perhaps you are even thinking that it is a ridiculous idea. I presume I would have thought so myself once, but now I know better, and I'm going to tell you how it came about. Quite a good many years ago, I had an invitation to visit a dear old aunt of mine. I was very fond of her, not only because she was sweet and good, but because she was so bright and original, and had such clever, entertaining ways of looking at things. So, of course, I accepted with pleasure, and before many days I was safely ensconced in her cosy home. She was something of an invalid, so we used to sit up in her room a good deal, in front of a cheerful little wood-fire, while we talked about many things that happened long ago, before I was born, when she and my father were children together, or of my own mother, who had died when I was quite a child. In all of these things I was immensely interested, but I doubt if anything she ever told me did me more good than this funny little incident about her closet door. One morning, after we had been busy together, as she rose to put away her work, she said: "My dear, come hold my closet door open for me please." I complied at once, somewhat wondering, and then said, "Why?"—for, I must confess, that habit of my childhood still clings to me.

Many times have I been thankful for the bit of helpful wisdom that came to me in answer to that "Why." She answered: "My dear, years ago, when I took up my abode in this room, I found, to my great annoyance, that the closet door had a way of shutting by itself, without in the least consulting anybody else's convenience. I might be only half-way in, or half-way out, or poking about in its darkest corner with my dim old eyes—slowly but surely, and most exasperatingly would that closet door shut upon me. I'm afraid I lost my temper a good many times over it. In despair I finally sent for a carpenter, who came with his box of tools and fussed a whole morning. As he went away he said: 'I can't say surely, ma'am, and I'm afraid that door'll swing to the end of time.' So I sat and thought about it. 'Swing to the end of time!' I said. 'And am I going to keep losing my temper three and four times a day to the end of time? Wretched prospect! I won't do it. I'll make use of that door. It shall be a means of grace to me. I'll take pleasure in its very infirmity; for I'll make it teach me patience.' And it has, my dear. It sounds strange, perhaps, to say it; but I really believe that closet door has helped my Christian life."

I thought over her story a long time, and a new idea of life came to me. The little things that seem so insignificant—can we use them? Are they among the "all things?" Surely it was true! I could think of several things that had been daily small trials to me at home. I made a resolve that they should be means of grace instead, and I think they have been.—*The Sunday-School Times.*

## Aunt Susan's Suggestions to a Fretful Wife.

Hester! exclaimed Aunt Susan, ceasing her rocking and knitting, and sitting upright, do you know what your husband will do when you are dead?

What do you mean? was the startled reply.

He will marry the sweetest-tempered girl he can find.

Oh, auntie! Hester began.

Don't interrupt me until I've finished, said Aunt Susan, leaning back and taking up her knitting. She may not be as good a housekeeper as you are; in fact I think not; but she will be good-natured.

Why, auntie—  
That isn't all, composedly continued Aunt Susan. To-day your husband was half way across the kitchen floor, bringing you the first ripe peaches, and all you did was to look on and say: There, Will, just see your tracks on my clean floor! I won't have my floors all tracked up. Some men would have thrown the peaches out of the window. To-day you screwed up your face when he kissed you, because his mustache was damp, and said, I never want

you to kiss me again. When he empties anything, you tell him not to spill it; when he lifts anything, you tell him not to break it. From morning until night your sharp voice is heard complaining and fault-finding. And last winter, when you were sick, you scolded him about allowing the pump to freeze, and took no notice when he said, 'I was so anxious about you that I did not think of the pump.'

But, auntie—  
Hearken, child. The strongest and most intelligent of them all care more for a woman's tenderness than for anything else in the world, and without this the cleverest and most perfect housekeeper is sure to lose her husband's affection in time. There may be a few more men like Will—as gentle, as loving, as chivalrous, as forgetful of self, and so satisfied with loving that their affections will die a long, struggling death; but in most cases it takes but few years of fretfulness and fault-finding to turn a husband's love into irritated indifference.

But, auntie—  
Yes, well you are not dead yet, and that sweet natured woman has not been found; so you have time to become so serene and sweet that your husband can never imagine that there is a better tempered woman in existence.—*Selected.*

## The Bible in Peru.

The Roman Church is always and in all parts of the world the same in respect to its hatred to the unadulterated Bible. A few days ago Bro. Penzotti (agent A. B. S.) wrote us an account from Callao of the attempt of the curate of Cocachaca, on the lives of Bro. Aranet and Bro. Illescas, colporteurs of the American Bible Society who were there with samples of Bibles and Testaments. This village is not far from Arequipa, Peru, and has a population of some two hundred poor, ignorant people, who are completely under dominion of the priests, and being incited by him, they met together with the purpose to kill the men that had brought them the light of the Gospel, precisely as the priest of Antioch did to Paul and Barnabas in Iconium. Finding themselves face to face with death, Aranet asked permission to pray. This was granted. Upon ending his prayer, he told them that they might now do whatever they wished. At that moment the Governor of the place arrived, and liberated them from the hands of the priest and multitude. He took them to his house, where he guarded them till the next day. When the fury of the people had subsided he sent them to another place. Bro. Penzotti, when he wrote this to us, said that he was going to start for that place as soon as it would be possible for him to leave Callao. Now he writes us that he with the other two brethren are in prison, illegally detained by order of the bishop for selling obscene books. The Italian Consul and other influential persons are taking interest in the matter, and I do not doubt but that the final result will be equal to that which happened to me in an analogous case, when I was detained in the town of Pando, Republic of Uruguay, in the year 1865. This being reported to the superior Government, that high authority granted me full permission without license or hindrance, to sell Bibles in every part of the Republic.

General Caseres, the President of Peru, has already given the clergy of Arequipa and the worthless friars of Lima a few lessons which ought to give them to understand that he permits neither friars nor bishops to dominate his people; and do not doubt that he will cut off for ever these abuses. Meanwhile, we recommend to the brethren in the faith that they do not fail to pray for Bro. Penzotti and those that are with him.—*Rev. A. M. Milne, in Northern Christian Advocate.*

## Strength in Weakness.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. This was the divine answer to Paul's prayer. God works with broken reeds. If a man conceits himself to be an iron pillar, God can do nothing with or by him. All the starch has to be taken out of him first; all the self-conceit and confidence. He has to be brought low before the Father can use him for his purposes. The lowlands hold the water, and if only the sluice is open, the gravitation of his grace does all the rest, and carries the flood into the depths of the lowly heart.

His strength loves to work in weakness, only the weakness must be conscious, and the conscious weakness must have passed into conscious dependence. There, dear reader you get the law for the Church, for the works of Christianity on the widest scale, and in individual lives. Strength that conceits itself to be such is no strength. The only true source of power, both for Christian work and in all other respects, is God himself; and our strength is all ours by derivation; that is, through humble dependence, which we call

faith in Jesus Christ. And the only way by which faith in Christ can ever be kindled in a man's soul is through the sense of his need and emptiness. So when we know ourselves weak we have taken the first step to righteousness; just as in all cases the recognition of the doleful fact of our human necessity is the beginning of the joyful confidence in the glad triumphant fact of the Divine fulness. All our hollowinesses, if we may so say, are met with his swelling fulness that fits into them. It only needs that a man be aware of that which he is, and then turn himself to Him who is all which he is not, and then into his empty being will flow his rejoicing the fulness of God. My strength, says God, is made perfect in weakness.—*Christian Age.*

## If We Faint Not.

Sowing is toilsome work. The Christian's life in this world is a life of labor; but it is not labor in vain; and we are exhorted to "be not weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." The day of reaping may be long deferred, but it will surely come. It is pleasant when we can see seed-time and harvest close together, and when the fruit of faithful sowing appears at once to gladden and bless the heart. But this is not always the case. It is in the order of Divine Providence that seed shall be sown in faith and that time must elapse before the harvest can be gathered in.

We need not murmur at this delay. It is wise, it is necessary. We need not be discouraged, nor fear that our labor has been in vain; we must wait. We may sow in other fields, and pursue other toils, but we cannot hasten the Lord's work. He will bring it to pass in his own good time. Doubtless many a seed that has been sown, despaired of, and forgotten, will yet bring forth an abundant harvest, and many a discouraged laborer shall see with glad surprise upon the hills of God, the ripened sheaves that sprang from seed which he supposed had been devoured by birds, or had withered beneath the summer's heat.

"We shall reap if we faint not." The "due season" will come; the time of resurrection, of revelation, of manifestation, reunion, of reward. Blessed are they who shall endure to the end, and fainting not, shall join with sowers and with reapers, to sing with joy the eternal harvest home.—*The Christian.*

## When Shall the Children Be Taught To Pray.

To wait, as some people illogically advise, until children are old enough to understand about God before teaching them to pray, is to believe as nobody behaves in regard to any other thing under the sun. The sensible way is to do as a mother, whose children are among the best trained and best behaved I know, tells me she always does; namely before the children can talk, in the very dawning of intelligence, to clasp the tiny hands in hers, and say the little prayer while yet it can only be the mother's saying. The habit may be established by the time the baby is talking and walking, the blessed thing about it being then that the whole conscious life of the child will be fast bound to God. There will never be the memory of the time when the heart's burden was not rolled away at his feet, when the day did not begin and the evening close with a sweet Amen. As children grow older, they should learn to repeat reverently the Lord's Prayer, and should be encouraged in the tender bedtime talks with mamma which are mamma's most precious opportunity for winning their confidence, and keeping them close to herself, to make prayers of their own. A child's day, like the day of a grown person has its lights and shadows, its trials and anxieties. Temptation has met the little one in the playground, the street, or the school-room, and she has had her fits of naughtiness, her gusts of temper, or her disappointments, as great to her as her father's to him. So the child as well as the adult, may learn the comfort of just resting on that precious truth, He knows.—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

## "What Doest Thou Here?"

How often is that question put still! When a Christian worker, sorely needed, deserts his post because of some unforeseen difficulty, or to secure selfish gratification and ease, to that couch of indolence or to that forest glade where soft breezes blow, the question comes, What doest thou here? When a child of God is found in the theater, the dancing saloon, or the place of evil companionship, sitting in the seat of scornors or walking in the way of the ungodly, again must the question come as a thunder-bolt out of a clear sky, What doest thou here? When one endowed with great faculties digs a hole in the earth and buries the God-trusted talent, standing idle all the day long among the loungers in the

market-place, again must the inquiry ring out, What doest thou here?

Life is the time for doing. The world is a great work-shop, in which there is no room for drones. God Himself worketh as the great Master-builder. All creatures fulfill their needed functions, from the angel that hymns God's praise, to the insects that float in the air. There is plenty to do; evil to put down; good to build up; doubts to be directed; prodigals to be won back; sinners to be sought. What doest thou here? Up, Christians; leave your cares and do. Do not do in order to be saved; but, being saved, do.—*F. B. Meyer.*

## Turpentine.

After a housekeeper fully realizes the worth of turpentine in the household, she is never willing to be without a supply of it. It gives quick relief to burns; it is an excellent application for corns; it is good for rheumatism and sore throats, and is the quickest remedy for convulsions or fits. Then it is a sure preventive against moths; by just dropping a trifle in the bottom of drawers chests and cupboards, it will render the garments secure from injury during the summer. It will keep ants and bugs from closets and store rooms, by putting a few drops in the corners and upon the shelves; it is sure destruction to bedbugs, and will effectually drive them away from their haunts, if thoroughly applied to the joints of the bedstead in the spring cleaning time and injures neither furniture nor clothing. A spoonful of it added to a pail of warm water is excellent for cleaning paint. A little in the suds on washing-day lightens labor.

## Why the Ball was Given up.

A young girl came to me once after a meeting I had conducted, and said, I want to follow Christ. Well, I replied, we always follow whom we love. But I love the world too. But, I said, you cannot love both. There is a ball next week, she continued; do you think it is wrong to dance? Well, if you love dancing, go to the ball. What! she exclaimed, go to dancing! Yes if you love it. Why if I told you not to go, and you stayed away, you would be dancing in your bedroom; but mark my words, if you love Christ you will not go.

It was a testing moment for her. She did not go to the ball. Instead of that, she made a bold confession of Christ before her companions. What we follow we love, and the god whom we worship. If it be not the one living and true God, let us turn away from it and give our hearts wholly to him.—*J. G. Gregson.*

THE YOUNG HUSBAND who exclaimed, half in jest and half in earnest, If we only had a few less curtains and a few more comforts! struck the key note of unhappiness in many a home. It is on the basis of what others expect of us, instead of what will really contribute most to the enjoyment of the family, that we furnish our houses and spread our tables, and clothe our children, and entertain our friends. This clouds our vision as to the relative value of things. We forget that a woman of sunny temper and unruffled nerves, presiding over a table of the plainest fare, gives a charm to the meal which the most delicate viands and the costliest china can not furnish if they be provided at the expense of worry and fatigue on the part of a nervous over-taxed mistress. Contentment, repose, cheerfulness, freedom from petty anxieties—these are some of the essential elements in a happy home. Let us beware of sacrificing them to artificial standards as to dress and equipage.

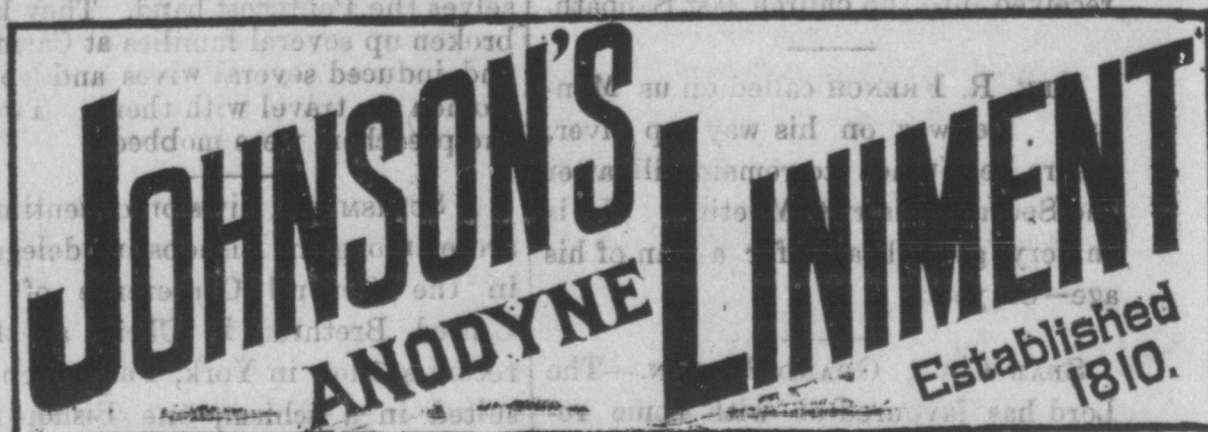
## Praying For Little Things.

I remember hearing it said of a godly man: Mr. So-and-so is a gracious man; but he is very strange; for the other day he prayed to God about a key he had lost. The person who told it to me regarded with astonishment the idea of praying to God about a lost key; and he seemed altogether surprised when I answered him that I prayed in like manner.

What! pray about a key? Yes. Please tell me how big a thing must be before you can pray about it! If a certain size is appointed we should like to have it marked down in the Bible, that we might learn the mathematics of prayer. If we might not pray about minor matters, it would be a terrible loss of comfort.

## Hints to Mothers.

Do not think your boys will go to ruin because they make a racket. Children when they are healthy always make a racket. I want you at the very first sign of depravity in a child to correct it. Do not laugh because it is smart. If you do, you will live to cry because it is malicious. Do not talk despairingly of your child, making him feel that he is a reprobate. Do not say to your little one: You're the worst child I ever knew.



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