

## Two Or Three.

There were only two or three of us,  
Who came to the place of prayer,  
Came in the teeth of a driving storm,  
But for that we did not care,  
Since after our hymns of praise had risen  
And our earnest prayers were said,  
The Master himself was present there,  
And gave us the living bread.

We knew his look in our leader's face,  
So rapt, and glad, and free;  
We felt his touch when our heads were bowed,  
We heard his "Come to Me!"

Nobody saw him lift the latch,  
And none unbared the door;  
But "Peace" was his token to every heart,  
And how could we ask for more?

Each of us felt the load of sin  
From the weary shoulder fall;  
Each of us dropped the load of care,  
And the grief that was like a pall;  
And over our spirits a blessed calm  
Swept in from the jasper sea,  
And strength was ours for toil and strife  
In the days that were thence to be.

It was only a handful gathered in  
To the little place of prayer,  
Outside were struggle and pain and sin,  
But the Lord himself was there;  
He came to redeem the pledge he gave—  
Wherever his loved ones be,  
To stand himself in the midst of them,  
Though they count but two or three.

And forth we fared in the bitter rain,  
And hearts had grown so warm,  
It seemed like the petting of Summer  
flowers,  
And not like the crash of a storm.  
'Twas a time of the dearest privilege  
Of the Lord's right hand," we said,  
As we thought how Jesus himself had come  
To feed us with living bread.

## A Kettle Saint.

Set down, Mis' Norton, while I  
lift off this kettle.

I was glad to rest, even in the  
hot little kitchen of my poor neighbor.  
The east wind had given me  
neuralgia outside, and Bettie my  
girl, had just broken a valuable  
platter and given me some rude  
words about it, which gave me  
neuralgia of the inner man. My  
usually indulgent husband had de-  
clared expenses must be reduced,  
and hinted his mother did her own  
work, besides rearing eight children.  
Now, the modern woman, with a  
thousand demands on time and  
strength her foremothers never  
dreamed of, hates above all things  
to hear of their doing more than the  
busy women of to-day. I regret to  
say that I made some fitting reply,  
and an almost unheard-of thing—  
John slammed the door and went off  
without the good-by kiss. Of course,  
I was not in the humor to get the  
children off to school in the pleasant-  
est way, and I was thankful enough  
when baby fell asleep (he had fussed  
all night) and I could run out in the  
open air a moment. It was damp  
and chilly, but I wanted some fine  
laces done up, and, even more, I  
wanted to see some one who would  
rub the fur the right way, as some  
people know just how to do.

What have you in that kettle,  
Phoebe? I asked. We knew each  
other in the country as girls. There  
was no social difference then. Now  
I live on a front street and she on  
a back one.  
She laughed her old cheery laugh.  
One of my big boys has a cough,  
and I'm making him some medicine.  
Don't its piny smell make you think  
of the woods back of the school-  
house?

Yes, now you speak of it, though  
I thought it disagreeable at first.  
Well, a good breeze will soon take  
it away, was her cheerful answer, as  
she carried the kettle to the shed.  
Back she came with another in  
which was a generous soup bone.  
My folks are taking more soup than  
usual this week, 'cause Grandma  
Perkins needs it. She's sick, you  
see, and my blessed boys, every one  
of 'em, agreed to go without pie and  
live a little lighter to keep her till  
she gets around.

I declare, Phoebe, if you don't  
find more ways to help people on  
your small income, I replied. But  
you really ought to give up keeping  
boarders; it makes you so much  
extra work, and don't pay half as  
well, at the prices you ask those  
boys, as doing up laces.

I know it, she admitted, but I  
may want some one to mother my  
boys some time, if they are alone in  
a big city. I don't mind giving up  
the front room upstairs, nor letting  
them have a fire evenings and Sun-  
days, for it keeps them out of tempta-  
tion. You'd feel like crying to see  
the bare attic room, and the vile  
stuff they got to eat when they're  
boarded, for they can't afford, out of  
their bawling wages, to pay more  
than two dollars a week, all told.

They help me with the work at night  
for their washing, and their mend-  
ing isn't much. The letter I got  
from Jim's old mother last week paid  
for the extras. Think, Mis' Norton,  
he's give up cards and smoking since  
he came here. Joe's too delicate,  
everyway, to live in a rough life.  
Oh, I'm glad to have 'em, and her face  
shone with a satisfaction that was  
reaching to see, yet brought a mist in  
my eyes not exactly caused by the  
steaming kettle before me. I knew

very well the extra work the close  
planning, and the sitting up late to  
iron and mend it cost her to mother  
these two strangers. I felt ashamed  
of myself as I compared my pretty,  
modern home with her plain, even  
bare little house, but to her I know  
love made it seem a palace.

You'll not mind now, my dinner's  
on, if I put the kettle on for your  
laces. I know the sun is going to  
shine, and I want them out a few  
minutes before I hand-dry them, she  
said as she brought out another large  
kettle.

If any one would suspect the sun  
of any good intentions to-day it  
would be you, Phoebe, I said, laugh-  
ing myself. Don't those heavy  
kettles tire you? You used to suffer  
with your back, I remember.

I do yet, she admitted. I hope  
some time Ben will get work enough  
so we can save enough to get a stove  
with a boiler on. This does very  
well, though, for the price we paid.  
It was old-fashioned when we went  
to housekeeping, but I'm glad I've  
plenty of kettles. It saves time.

Phoebe, you make me ashamed of  
myself. It's hard enough for me to  
get along with hot and cold water at  
my hand, and a girl to lift my  
kettles for me, they are so trying—  
not the kettles. Ben ought to fill  
them for you, anyway.

He's poorly now, and he's tired  
when he gets home, for he's got some  
work now. He's an awful good  
husband, is Ben, and he ain't got  
any bad habits, save chewing to  
keep off the stomach trouble.

I never had any patience with  
slow, good-natured Ben, who was  
as great a contrast to my energetic  
husband as could be imagined. Yet  
I really believe Phoebe thinks she  
has the best husband in the world.

As for kettles, Phoebe went on as  
she put the last heavy one on the  
polished stove, my life's among them,  
and I'm used to it. As I say to  
mother when she complains about  
Ben's not earning more, he's what  
the Lord gave to me, and I'm satis-  
fied. I'm only too thankful to get  
work enough to help keep the chil-  
dren in school. Providence is awful  
good to me and mine, Mary, or I  
suppose I should say Mis' Norton,  
and she hummed a little tune as she  
stirred the fire in the cracked stove.

Mamma, came from the bed-room  
off the kitchen.  
Yes, my lamb, was the quick  
answer; and how that plain,  
freckled face became glorified with  
the look of love that flashed over it.  
Out she came with her youngest in  
her arms—a beautiful child, such as  
painters dream about; great blue  
eyes, with a look as if they saw  
more than we could understand;  
soft, sunny hair falling around a  
fair, sweet face; but alas! the tiny  
feet Phoebe held to the warmth  
would never walk.

Don't the darling grow prettier  
and sweeter every day? she asked  
proudly. He's so good, too. Never  
cries, even when he's real sick. Ben  
and me wish he would fret some-  
times when he hurts, it's so pitiful  
to see the patient lamb-like way he  
bears pain, nestling so close, and  
looking so still and white. He says  
papa and mama, too, so pretty.  
They're all precious, the girls in  
heaven and the boys here; but  
Bennie's the dearest of all. He'll  
always be mother's baby.

I thought of my own strong, rest-  
less baby, and how ungrateful I was  
over the care he made, and rose  
with tears in my eyes as I answered:  
Yes, Phoebe, he's the most beautiful  
child I ever saw. I must hurry  
back to my baby. I was tired and  
discouraged over my little burdens,  
and you've lifted them all by the  
way you bear your heavier ones.  
God bless you, Phoebe, for the good  
you do me!

Why, Mary Pepper, how you talk,  
she said in surprise. I never could  
talk religion like other folks. I ain't  
gifted and educated you know. If  
you feel better, it's baby's face. He  
helps me, too. Come over soon,  
dear, she said, her face shining as I  
kissed her good bye. There, Bennie-  
love, I'll put you in the high chair  
while I finish dinner. Harry takes  
the old lady her dinner before he  
eats, so I have to be ready. He's a  
good boy, if he is full of mischief.  
There's the son, I told you so.

The sun never gets quite out of  
sight from my kettle saint, Phoebe  
Jones, I said to myself, hurrying off.  
She thanks God for this providence  
in her poverty while most of us  
grow weary in our abundance. I  
met her Ben going home, a general  
good-for-nothingness enveloping him  
like a garment. Farther on two  
school boys were hurrying toward  
the little cottage. They were not  
well-dressed like my boys, but  
Phoebe might well rejoice in them.  
As I turned the corner I met three  
two-faced young men, black and  
grimy with work. They, too, were  
eager for the good plain dinner and  
cheery welcome that awaited them.  
Yes, the sun had come out, and the  
last glimpse I had of my saint she  
was stooping in the sunny window  
to snatch a kiss from the little one  
there. Her hands were full of com-  
mon dishes, but in the sunlight she  
looked like a glorified Madonna with

her child, and through the half-open  
door I heard her singing:—

"O happy day! O happy day!  
When Jesus washed my sins away.  
He taught me how to watch and pray,  
And live rejoicing every day.  
Happy day! happy day!"

Northwestern.

## The Message on the Fan.

More than fifty years ago a mis-  
sionary to India was sitting on his  
veranda, languid with illness and  
hard work, and longing for the op-  
portunities to preach the Gospel  
which his lack of strength denied  
him. It was a sunny day, but the  
veranda was cool and shaded. The  
air was sweet with the perfume of  
flowers, and there were curious  
people, strange sights and sounds  
enough to have attracted the atten-  
tion of one not accustomed to life in  
a heathen city.

But the missionary's thoughts  
were busy with a little band of  
native Christians who were about to  
gather for instruction from the  
Word of God, and with whom, alas!  
he could not meet; and then with  
the crowds of heathen on the streets,  
thronging the temples and the  
bazaars.

Day after day he had stood among  
these crowds, telling them the sweet  
story of a Saviour's love, selling or  
giving them Christian books and  
parts of the Bible. How much  
they remembered of what he said,  
how many had read the little books,  
he did not know; yet he loved to  
think that in this way the Gospel  
had found its way to many hearts  
and homes. But to-day all this  
must be left to other hands. Close  
beside him was a palm-leaf, large  
and clumsy, but a comfort in a  
climate like that of India.

Its beauty is not in its shape,  
thought the missionary, but I would  
like to send it on a message. I be-  
lieve I'll try an experiment.  
Taking an iron pen he traced on  
the broad leaf the story of Christ's  
life, of his death for sinners and his  
gift of everlasting life.

After the meeting was over, the  
natives came flocking in to see the  
teacher. Among them was a new-  
comer, a stranger who had followed  
on into the compound, eager to  
gratify a curiosity which had been  
awakened by the singing of the  
hymns. The missionary was too  
weary to talk, but he gave the fan  
to the unknown visitor, told him  
there was a message on it for him,  
and bade him come the next day  
for an explanation.

The next day came, but not the  
native. The missionary gradually  
regained his strength, spent his life  
in India, and finally died. But he  
never heard again from his unknown  
visitor or the message on the fan.  
For all he knew to the contrary the  
'experiment' was a failure. Yet  
all the while that message was doing  
its work.

Not very long ago another mis-  
sionary in India was surprised by a  
visitor who came not from curiosity,  
but with a message from one of the  
tribes of Central India, where few  
if any missionaries have ever gone.  
The native was himself the chief  
or head man of this tribe, and he  
presented an earnest plea that a  
teacher might come and live with  
his people, to teach them the way of  
life.

And what sort of a letter of in-  
troduction do you think he brought  
with him? It was none other than  
the palm-leaf on which, so many  
years before, the missionary had  
traced the story of Jesus' love, worn  
almost to shreds by frequent  
readings.

Where did you get this? inquired  
the missionary.

The Most Holy sent it to us, de-  
voutly replied the Hindu.  
And then followed a story more  
strange than any romance, how a  
chief of a neighboring tribe had  
given it to him with the assurance  
that he had seen a holy man, who  
had put the message into his hands;  
how he had kept it a long time, how  
the people had given up idol wor-  
ship, and in some cases the use of in-  
toxi-  
cating drinks, till now they were  
feeling the necessity of leading a  
holy life and a desire to know more  
of the true God.

All the tribes about us, urged the  
chief, beg that some one may come  
to teach our people about the Lord  
Jesus Christ, and how we are to  
love and serve him. All this bless-  
ing came from the missionary's  
experiment, the messenger far sent  
out in its mission so long ago. You  
may have heard the story before,  
but its meaning is ever new. It is  
only another version of an older  
story, written thousands of years  
ago, which reads:

"My word shall not return unto  
Me void, but shall accomplish the  
thing wherunto I sent it."—Mrs.  
H. E. Mead.

## Only One.

After all these meetings and so  
much hard work, and only one con-  
verted, and that one just a young  
girl! said Sarah Payson, sadly.

It does seem very little, replied  
her friend; but we must not forget

the value of one soul. It is beyond  
price: so we cannot count all this  
labor as lost.

Grandma Payson looked up quick-  
ly from her knitting and said,  
earnestly: Girls, you cannot look  
forward and see the influence that  
this one girl may have in the world.  
I can look backward and see the  
influence of another young girl who  
was converted under similar circum-  
stances, the only one after a long  
series of meetings. People made  
the same remarks then that you are  
making now, but a time passed on  
she was married to an unconverted  
man, and, according to 'he rules'  
then in force, she was put back six  
months on probation again, though  
she was then a member in full stand-  
ing.

O grandma! interrupted Sarah,  
how could she bear it?

Because, said grandma, she was  
so loyal to her church, that all its  
rules were cheerfully obeyed. Be-  
fore the six months were past her  
husband was converted, and hence  
forth they walked side by side in  
the Christian pathway. They had  
a large family of children, who were  
all converted early in life. Two of  
the sons became useful and accepta-  
ble ministers of the Gospel, and the  
rest were active members in their  
mother's church. The grandchildren  
were traveling in the same way, and  
one has already been sent as a mis-  
sionary to a distant land. Looking  
forward through the coming years,  
who can estimate the influence of  
that one girl's Christian life? So,  
my dears, do not mourn because  
there are no more, but rejoice and  
be glad that even one is added to  
the army of the Lord.

## Talking Slang.

This 'sermonette' is especially  
for you, dear girls. The advice  
could be put in three words,—Don't  
do it. Possibly there might come  
an occasion—say once in a lifetime  
—when a good round bit of the  
genuine article 'slang' would prove  
funny. But to hear vulgar words  
used by a gentle girl is almost in-  
variably shocking. I remember  
passing two girls in the street, and  
hearing one of them say, 'I'll bet  
you a quarrier.' It gave me a shiver.  
And when a group of school-girls fill  
their conversation—as, alas! they  
often do—with one slang phrase  
after another, the effect on an out-  
sider is painfully disagreeable.

The habit of talking slang grows  
rapidly. It is like reporting a bit  
of scandal. Have you never noticed,  
if you say an unkind word against  
a neighbor, how quickly a chance  
comes to say another? And with  
just that same appalling ease a habit  
of using careless, coarse words in-  
creases. Weeds grow rapidly.

There is plenty of good, strong  
English to give expression to wit,  
drollery, indignation, or sympathy,  
without recourse to the phrases  
which belong to horse jockeys, gam-  
blers, tipplers, and vagabonds. The  
street Arab picks up slang as he  
does the ends of old cigars from the  
gutter. Surely, a well-bred girl is  
not on the same level in her speech  
and manner. Why should she use  
vulgar words any more than she  
would stain her hands?

There ought to be something akin  
to flowers in a fresh young girl.  
She needs not be prudish nor  
priggish. No one wishes her to say  
'prunes and prisms' to coax her  
lips into the proper curves. But  
refined and dainty in speech as we  
are in dress she surely ought to be.  
Won't you please think about it  
five minutes, and see if you do not  
agree with me?—Mary S. McCobb,  
in Harper's Young People.

For the sake of each other, hus-  
band and wife should try to acquire  
the inestimable art of making duty  
seem pleasant, and even disappoint-  
ment not so blank and crushing.  
They should be to each other like a  
bracing, frosty atmosphere, without  
a suspicion of the element that  
chills and pinches.

Our murmurings and repinings  
arise from our ignorance. We see  
not the precious or the pit on the  
other side of the hedge or wall.—Jay.

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| 1880..... | 141,402.81.  | 911,132.93.   | 3,881,478.09                |
| 1882..... | 254,841.73.  | 1,073,577.94. | 5,849,889.1                 |
| 1884..... | 278,378.65.  | 1,274,397.24. | 6,844,404.04                |
| 1885..... | 319,987.05.  | 1,411,004.38. | 7,030,878.77                |
| 1886..... | 373,500.31.  | 1,573,027.10. | 9,413,358.07                |
| 1887..... | 495,831.54.  | 1,750,004.48. | 10,873,777.09               |
| 1888..... | 525,273.58.  | 1,974,316.21. | 11,931,300.6                |
| 1889..... | 563,140.52.  | 2,223,322.72. | 17,164,383.08               |

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