

The Mothers of Men.

The bravest battle that ever was fought,
Has I tell you where and when?
On the map of the world you'll find it not—
Twas fought by the mothers of men.

Nay, not with cannon or battle shot,
With swords or noble pen;
Nay, not with words of eloquence fraught
From the mouths of wonderful men.

Put deep in the walled-up mother's heart
A mother that will not yield—
Put patiently, quietly bears her part
To them in this battlefield.

No marshaled troops nor bivouac song,
No banners that gleam or wave,
But, oh, those battles they last so long—
From babyhood to the grave.

—Joanun Miller.

Hidden Power.

Esther Martine was a poor, untutored, colored woman, crippled and disabled by rheumatism. Her home was in a little hovel without a sign of beauty but the rose which clambered to the roof, and opened its fragrant pink blossoms every June in bright contrast with the coarse, unpainted structure. It was perched on the edge of a high hill, where one side had been excavated to form the High street of a small town, and was reached by a long flight of rickety steps.

But here Esther, cared for by her widowed daughter, had her vantage-ground. She was free from intrusion, and could overlook her neighbors. Placed in her arm-chair every morning she could look upon the street, and note the comers and goers all the day long.

Every man, woman, and child accosted to traverse the paved walk on either side of the street she knew "by name or sight." It was her only diversion to watch them, and it did rarely seem to draw her mind from her aches and pains to notice their doings and attire.

But her heart was not centered on the outside by any means, for she was a sincere "lover of the Lord," and she would wonder whether those she saw were the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and her constant prayer was that they might learn to love and trust the Saviour.

One day the good deacon who brought her the small monthly stipend allowed her by the church said: "You will have something new to pray for this week, Esther. We are going to have special meetings every afternoon and evening, and we know you will join your prayers with ours for God's blessing."

Esther's soul was on fire in a moment. She clasped her crooked hands, and her eyes were suffused with tears.

"I will, Massa Brush, I will!" she exclaimed, and then instantly reverting to her street people she asked, "Massa Brush, is John Switzer a church man?"

"No, Esther; his wife has been praying for him these twenty years."

"Now's his time," she whispered, with a nod of her head. "Is Massa Drew?"

"No, he had a good, praying mother, but he is a very ungodly man."

The black head moved again. "Nothing is too hard for de good Lord," she said, as if accepting another charge.

"And how's dat Farnum, he dat keeps the shoe store?"

"He's not a Christian."

"Massa Cheever?"

"No."

"Day all go by here, two, free, four, times every day. I'll pray de Lord for dese, Massa Brush, dese dat's close by me."

No one knew how devoutly Esther prayed. The deacons went to the meetings, the good women of the church visited and labored with sinners, the ministers prayed and preached, but no one thought not even Doctor Brush, of the poor old shut-in, up in the tumble-down cabin in High street, or dreamed of the grand part she was taking in the precious work of grace that was refreshing the church. But there she sat day by day, as the meetings went on, and wept and supplicated for souls.

She mentioned the names she knew before the throne, and those she did not know by name she designated in her own quaint fashion.

And the glory of the Lord came down and filled that little cabin, and that humble saint shouted "Hallelujah," for she knew she had the blessing she asked.

Among the forty who were received a few months later into the communion of the church were twelve persons, men and women, young and old, who lived in High street, or daily passed through it, whom Esther afterwards identified as "de chillun God gave me." They were those for whom she had personally prayed.

Poor Esther! "Poor, yet making rich!" She makes us ashamed when we think how we, with health, abundance, and every favoring circumstance, often say, "I have no opportunity to do good!"

If every other door is closed, can we not enter into the holy place, as she did, and win souls to Christ by the power of prayer?—*Faithful Witness.*

His Best Self.

"Joe, what do you go to see that Miss Bacon so much for? she isn't pretty, she isn't rich, and she is an orphan; she has no family."

"What do I go to see her so much for?" queried Joe in a dreamy tone. "No, she isn't pretty, and she isn't ugly; she certainly isn't rich for she teaches for a living; and though her parents are dead, they were nice people. I go to see her because she makes me keep company with my best self when I am with her. I say to myself when I am on my way to call on her: 'Now if you have any noble thoughts, you can utter them to her, sure that they will be appreciated. If you've read anything unusually fine or beautiful, you can tell it to her, and find an eager listener.' She always makes me true to the highest and best that is in me."

"What do you think she said to me the last time I was there? I had been telling her some funny stories about old Giles, and I repeated some of his jargon—you know how he talks. Just before I came away she said, in a very modest, downcast kind of way:

"Mr. Lyon may I ask a favor of you?"

"Certainly," I said, "I would be most happy to oblige you."

"Would you kindly refrain from repeating any profane words in my hearing? It hurts me to hear them."

"I felt as though six inches had been taken from my stature, and I replied:

"I will not offend that way again. I know the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' and I suppose one ought never to repeat profane language."

"I tell you such a woman as that has courage as well as conviction."

Miss Bacon had brothers from whom she was separated, and for whom she felt a sisterly solicitude. If I am careful to hold my young gentleman friends to high standards, she said to herself, "some lady perhaps will do the same for my brothers." And this motive actuated her in all her intercourse with young men. She had no thought of self in the matter, and when Mr. Lyon said to her that he could be a better man with her as his wife than with any other woman in the world, the declaration came as a surprise to her. Friendship ripened into love, love which had "its seat in reason, and was judicious." United in everything that was sincerely good, the home they founded was the home of peace, the cradle of all noble virtue, the reward of high endeavor, and its most potent stimulus.—*Selected.*

Reasons for Attending Prayer Meeting.

1. Because he is a Christian.

2. Because the prayer meeting is a place where prayer is "wont to be made," and every Christian needs the uplift of social and public prayer.

3. Because the prayer meeting will doubtless be thinly attended, and you, if present, will count one.

4. Because few men can get religion enough on Sunday to last all the week.

5. Because Christians should be no more afraid of rain-drops than Union soldiers in the late war were afraid of rebel bullets.

6. Because the prayer meeting is intrinsically of more consequence, in the sight of God than a whist party, social dance, theatrical performance, popular lecture, or cultured concert.

7. Because the prayer meeting has often proved restful to a weary body and a distracted mind, as well as being a very important means of grace.

8. Because the prayer meeting demands in itself only one hour of time, and every Christian ought to be willing to give one hour in every one hundred and sixty-eight for the glory of God.

9. Because, financially, the prayer meeting is the best possible investment a man can make. It asks no admission fee, and the poorest prayer meeting can do any man some good.

10. Because, in the long run, and other things being equal, the men and women who faithfully attend the prayer meeting, and take part in it, most heartily enjoy religion.

11. Because the prayer-meeting affords excellent opportunities for influencing others to walk in the way of life.

12. Because the prayer meeting, when true to itself and to Christ, supplies the best tonic for the Christian life, and affords the purest social enjoyment.

13. Because the prayer meeting is the true spiritual thermometer in every church.

14. Because we are told in God's Word not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is."

15. Because few Christians would hardly have the face to offer upon any other question of duty two-thirds of the excuses that are now offered for not attending the mid-week prayer meeting.

16. Because Christ has promised that were two or three are gathered together in His name, there He will be to comfort and bless, and all God's people are in great need of getting near to Christ.—*Christian Mirror.*

How to Give Cheerfully.

There lived in a little village an old man and woman who were very poor. They both earned their living by weaving. By working hard they could earn about four shillings a week. By being very careful they managed to live on this sum. They had no d-bts, but not a penny to spare.

One day they returned home from a missionary meeting, feeling very sad. They had nothing to give.

Wife, said the husband, doesn't it make you feel badly to feel that we haven't a penny to give for the heathen? We both know how blessed it is to have a Saviour, yet we cannot help to spread the news.

I've been thinking about it, she said, if we only knew a way to earn a little money. There is what we put aside to bury us, but then it wouldn't be right to take it; for somebody else would have to pay for funeral expenses; and as for eating less than we do now, that is impossible; for then we should get sick and other people would have to take care of us. I don't see any way.

We must tell the Lord about it, the old man said. And then it was time for family worship, and they knelt down to pray.

Two months afterward, one cold winter morning, there came a knock at the minister's door. When he opened it there stood the old woman her face bright with joy.

I've brought our money for the missionaries, she said. My husband and I are so glad to show somebody the way to the Saviour. Then she unwrapped a large piece of paper, and carefully counted five pennies.

The minister was surprised; for he knew that these two people were very poor. How could they spare even five pennies? But she had a joyful story to tell.

Why, we wanted to give something, and we didn't see how; so we asked the Lord about it, and he put it into our hearts to save the potatoes to parings. We have to use a dozen small potatoes in a day, for it is about all we have to eat. Well, I dried them and kept them in a bag until I got a nice lot, and this morning I took them to a neighbor who keeps pigs, and she gave me five pennies. We are so glad to give it.

Then the old woman, nearly eighty years, limped away leaning on her cane, her face aglow. Her pastor said he could not keep back the tears as he looked at the five pennies. O thou faithful God! said he, how well these children of thine have understood thee. And by and by thou wilt give to them good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.—*Way of Life.*

Be Brief.

The leader had talked long. The people had followed the leader's example. Thirty minutes remained. The leader took fifteen minutes of that time, telling the rest to speak briefly. The rest did better than the leader. Is it possible for us, who are talkers by nature and by gift and by habit, ever to quit when we ought—and long before we do?

One anecdote, one illustration, one train of thought suggests another and we cannot help but talk them all out, until we have talked the meeting out and the people out and the Holy Ghost out. Somebody else talks, and suggests to us some other idea, and we must tell that too, until we are in danger of telling all we know the first time, and then repeating ourselves at all other times.

Some of us are like an automatic organ, that was bought for a church, that played a certain number of tunes, and that was regulated by a stop. The choir, on the first Sunday, started the organ on the first tune. They knew how to start it. They thought they knew how to stop it. But, unfortunately, they did not. So the organ clicked and went over the second tune. Their frantic efforts to stop it were in vain. The congregation was convulsed with irrepressible mirth. As the organ kept on, evidently bent on showing all it could do and playing every tune on its list, nothing remained but to pick it up bodily, carry it out-doors, and let it play on till it was done. What a relief it would be if these professional and long-winded talkers who seem bent on showing all they can do the first time, could be served like the organ—picked up bodily, landed outside the meeting, and left there to play out all the tunes and talk they have on their lists.

Then when they have talked exhaustively, it seems necessary to these worthy leaders that, after a number of testimonies, there should be a suggestion or a correction or something of that sort, and then comes from the lengthy talking leader a long stream of words, words, words.

A Touching Incident.

An incident of a peculiarly touching character occurred recently in one of the elevated railroad trains that brought tears to the eyes of the passengers. The train had just left One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street when the passengers saw entering the car a little boy about six years old, half carried by an older boy evidently his brother. Both were well dressed, but at the first glance it was seen that the little fellow was blind. He had a pale, wan face, but was smiling. A quick look of sympathy passed over the faces of the passengers, and an old-grey-haired gentleman got up and gave his seat to the two. The "big brother," who was about eleven years old, tenderly lifted up the little blind boy and placed him on his knee.

"How's that he asked?"

"Nice," said the little chap. "Where's my 'monica'?"

This puzzled some of the passengers, and several turned to see what the child meant. But the "big brother" knew, and immediately drew out a small mouth harmonica, and placed it in the little fellow's hands. The little fellow took the instrument into his hands, ran it across his lips and began to play softly, "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

Tears came into the eyes of the old gentleman who had given up his seat; and as the little fellow played on, running into the "Rock of Ages" and "Abide With Me," there were many moist eyes in the car.

The train rushed along; the passengers listened, and the little fellow played on tirelessly, never missing a note of "Annie Laurie" or "Home Sweet Home." Finally the "big brother" leaned down and told the little one to get ready to leave, as the train was nearing their station. Then, as if he knew he had won a whole carload of friends, the blind boy quickly changed the "Swanee River" into "Auld Lang Syne," and with one accord the passengers burst into a round of applause while the "big brother" carried the little one out of the car. *New York Times.*

Influence.

A man's influence lives forever. He dies, is buried, and goes to his reward; but his influence is left behind to work on; and it will build up or wreck lives down through the coming ages according as it is good or bad.

Gather up my influence and bury it with me, were the dying words of a wrecked young man to his weeping friends. How his request troubled them and lacerated their bleeding hearts with a deeper agony! How impossible to comply with their request. By living as he had lived he had created a working force which only the Omnipotent could annihilate; and God does not annihilate.

The young man saw his great mistake, and was truly penitent. Like the thief on the cross he sought, and it is to be hoped secured pardon; but the influence of his immoral life he could not annihilate, and his friends could not gather it up and bury it with his body.

Young friends, take warning. You are creating and wielding influence. Some day you will lay upon a dying bed. Before you will then pass in panoramic review all the deeds of your life. To you will then be revealed, as in characters of living light, the clearer view of the effect of your influence. What will that view be? How will the sight of it affect you? It is for you to decide these questions now! Then it will be too late.—*Telescope.*

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Mother.

All that I am my mother made me.—*John Quincy Adams.*

Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother.—*Bulwer.*

The mother's heart is the child's school room.—*H. W. Beecher.*

All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.—*Lincoln.*

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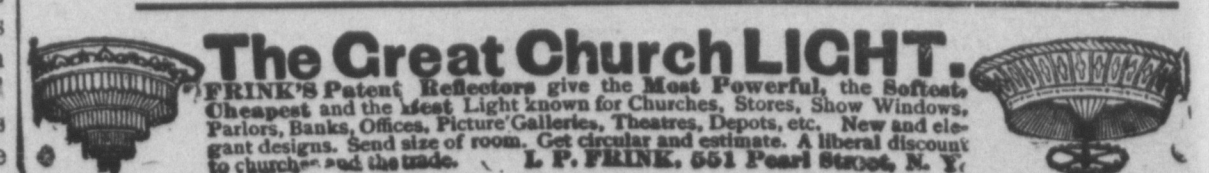
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