

COULDN'T STAND HIS WIFE'S RELIGION.

In 1887 I attended a great camp meeting in Georgia. I was leading an experience meeting one morning when I noticed a big-hearted farmer very restless on my left. I said to him, "Brother, you want to talk—I'll stop all others and hear from you now." He sprang to his feet, and said, "I do want to talk. I want to tell what I never told a living soul before. Across that altar sits my wife—she knows nothing of the secret purpose I am going to tell. I was converted before the war, but lost all my religion in the army. I became worse than I ever had been. I came home, but my dear wife was as true as steel. I hated the church—I hated the Bible—I was harder than a rock. Years went by and all the time there was a gulf between my wife and me. I hated her religion, and she seemed to love it more, even than she did me. No man ever had a better wife.

"Now I come to my secret purpose. I determined I would sweep all that Bible nonsense out of my house. Every time I would try to settle it for good, I would run against her pure life, and I could not get an inch further. Again and again I failed.

"At last I said, If I can just unsettle her, I will know it is all a sham. I picked my chance. Children all out, I said: 'Wife, we have been very happy together. We used to think and feel and act just alike, and we were so happy. But it is different now. You believe in that old Bible, the now it is not true. You believe in praying to and serving God; I know it is all a sham. Now let us throw that all aside; let us be happy like we once were.'

"She said not a word while I was talking. When I was done she leaned forward—her eyes kindling as she spoke, like I had so often seen them. 'Husband, I am very sorry I have not been a better wife to you. If God spares me, I will do better. I will go with you anywhere you want to go. I will work these fingers down to the stumps for you—but hear me—I will die in my tracks before I will yield one inch from my Bible or my God!'

"Brethren, when she said that, the lightning struck me—the old-time conviction. She had got her grappling hooks into me, and jerked me clean over to her side again. I am there today—happy on my way to heaven. That good wife did it."

I went back next year to the same camp meeting. I missed him. Second day I missed him. The third day I said: "Where is my Brother White?" "Have you not heard? He died shouting last January, and blessing his good wife, who had saved him from ruin by her heroism."—Christian Companion.

Be ready. Your business is to be ready. Have your tools well sharpened, and know how to handle them. The place will come to you, the best place for you, if you are not so much looking after that which meets your taste, as after that which proves you to be a vessel fit for the Master's use.—Spurgeon.

"IF I WERE A GIRL AGAIN."

One afternoon, when the sewing circle met, one of those present, a dear, beautiful old lady, said: "If I were a girl again, I would be more thoughtful of my mother. Not until I had girls of my own and to work for did I begin to realize what my mother had done for me."

Then another lady, middle-aged, with sharp, worried face, spoke quickly: "If I were a girl again, I would learn to do something to support myself. Here I am, forty-two, as you all know, and I can't earn my breakfast unless I go out and do housework. Nobody cares for an unskilled and untrained work woman, and that's what I am. It's a blessing to me that I don't have to earn my breakfast."

"If I were a girl again," said a lady with a sweet voice, "I would never leave my Sunday School. You can't think how I envy the girls who have grown up in Sunday School as if it were a home. They are as much at home as I am among my children. I've been out of Sunday School thirty years, and it is a loss that can never be made up to me."

"I have been out of Sunday School a year. I left because I didn't like my teacher. I am going back next Sunday," said a young girl listener.

"If I could be a girl again," a placid-looking woman said, "I would never give up studying. I would never allow myself to lose the habit of learning things. Why, it is even hard for me now to learn a Bible verse. I must choose a short one or humbly write it on a slip of paper to look at the last minute."

"And if I were a girl again, spoke up a lady with a quick tongue, "I would never allow myself to speak of anybody's faults—no, not anybody's. You can't think how much you get to see faults if you let your mind run on them."

"If I could be a girl again, I'd begin by not being ashamed to be a Christian. I would take a stand and stand. You who have never failed cannot think how it helps to have people know what to expect of you.

Then a lady in a corner spoke sadly: "By shilly-shally work you don't know what to expect of yourself."

The girl again seemed to be going through the two rooms, and every lady had something encouraging or discouraging to say about her own girlhood. "If I could be a girl again," came from somebody, "I would make myself write letters. Today when I write one of my awkward letters (and I never write a letter if any one else will do it for me), I regret that I hated to write letters and would never learn to make it easy. I always feel that I have lost something when I hear people who have letter friends. My sister writes the happiest letters to twenty invalids. She is doing a cup-of-cold water work in a way that I never can."

"And I," said a little woman, "would learn to sew. I am as awkward with a needle as though it were a hoe, and my work shows it." Everybody laughed.

Then a very pretty woman said: "If I could be a girl again, I think I would rather be a homely girl. I was pretty, and people told me so, and I was spoiled. I loved admiration better than bread and

butter, and twice I lost promotion in school for having beaux and going to parties. Not but that a pretty girl can have good sense."

"If I were a girl again," said an intellectual-looking lady, I would not give up everything for study. I would be a womanly and housewifely girl as well as a student; and if I had one taste that dominated all others, I would not let all the others run to waste. I was deep in mathematics when I could not spell my own language as correctly as a girl of twelve and my penmanship was disgraceful."

"If I could be a girl again," said somebody whose face I couldn't see, "I would read only the best books." ("I would study and read the Bible more," somebody said in reply. "I would take it as real and alive and meant for me and grow upon it.")

Then quite a young lady said the sweetest thing: "If I could be a girl again I wouldn't grow so fast. I would stay as fresh and young as I could, not live ahead of my age, but just as a girl flower and bloom as God gave sunshine and rain."—Unknown.

THE SHINE.

"Well, grandma," said a little boy, resting his elbow on the old lady's stuffed chair-arm, "what have you been doing here at the window all day by yourself?"

"All I could," answered dear grandma, cheerily; "I have read a little, and prayed a good deal, and then looked out at the people. There's one little girl, Arthur, that I have learned to watch. She has sunny brown hair. Her brown eyes have the sunny look in them, and I wonder every day what makes her look so bright. Ah! here she comes now."

Arthur took his elbows off the stuffed arm and planted them on the window-sill.

"That girl with the brown apron on?" he cried. "Why, I know that girl. That's Susie Moore, and she has a dreadful hard time, grandma."

"Has she?" said grandma. "Oh, little boy, wouldn't you give anything to know where she gets all that brightness from, then?"

"I'll ask her," said Arthur promptly, and to grandma's surprise he raised the window and called:

"Susie, oh, Susie, come up here a minute; grandma wants to see you!"

The brown eyes opened wide in surprise, but the little maid turned at once and came in.

"Grandma wants to know, Susie Moore," explained the boy, "what makes you look so bright all the time?"

"Why, I have to," said Susie; "you see, papa's been ill a long time, and mama is tired out with nursing, and the baby's cross with her teeth, and if I didn't be bright, who would be?"

"Yes, yes, I see," said dear old grandma, putting her arm around this streak of sunshine. "That's God's reason for things; they are, because somebody needs them. Shine on, little sun; there couldn't be a better reason for shining than because it is dark at home."—Word and Work.