

THE CHEERFUL GIVER.

"God loveth a cheerful giver."

"What shall I render thee, Father, Supreme,
For thy rich gifts, and this the best of all?"
Said a young mother, as she fondly watched
Her sleeping babe.

There was an answering voice,
That night, in dreams.

"Thou hast a tender flower
Wrapt in thy breast, and fed with dews of love.
Give me that flower. Such flowers there are in
heaven."

—But there was silence. Yea, a hush so deep,
Breathless and terror-stricken, that the lip
Blanch'd in its trance.

"Thou hast a little harp,
How sweetly would it swell the angel's song.
Lend me that harp."

Then burst a shuddering sob,
As if the bosom by some hidden sword
Was cleft in twain.

Morn came. A blight had found
The crimson velvet of the unfolded bud.
The harp-strings ran a thrilling strain and
broke,

And that young mother lay upon the earth
In childless agony.

Again the voice
That stirr'd her vision.

"He who asked of thee,
Loveth a cheerful giver."

So she rais'd
Her gushing eye, and ere the tear-drop tri'd
Upon its fringes, smiled.

Doubt not that smile,
Like Abraham's faith, was counted righteous-
ness.

Family Circle.

MY DREAM.

It was a beautiful Sabbath morning. I seemed to be in a large church filled with attentive worshippers. All around me were strangers; yet so pleasant were the countenances, whose cheerful smiles seemed to say, "Make yourself quite at home, you are among friends." That lonely feeling which often comes over one in a crowded church, to not one of whose worshippers he is known, troubled me not at all. While waiting for the pastor's entrance, I gazed around the building. It was neat and tasteful, but plain in construction. My attention was particularly attracted by the numerous medallions on the walls, most of them insculpting the duty of doing good.

Back of the pulpit was this inscription: "On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." In other places I read, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." These, and other passages of similar import, occupied my attention, when the door of the ante-room near the pulpit opened, and a noble-looking old man, with silvery locks and firm, erect step, entered. He was one of those specimens of beautiful old age of which we occasionally see a type. As he gazed upon his people, the love in his heart seemed to shine through and illuminate his whole countenance. After the preliminary exercise the pastor preached an excellent sermon on Faith and Works. At its close, pointing to the inscription back of the pulpit, he said, "We will now prove our faith by our works, by making our usual weekly contribution. But first, brethren, suffer a word of counsel. Last Sabbath some of you, in your deep love for the cause, made larger contributions than your circumstances would warrant. Remember, Paul says, 'Lay by in store as the Lord has prospered you.' I know it is so pleasant to give to the needy, that we are liable to mistakes in this direction."

I was thunderstruck: "Where am I?" thought I, "in a Christian church, and the pastor cautioning his people against too large contributions."

I remember reading a similar occurrence in a heathen land, among the new converts to Christianity; but to be an eye witness of such a scene in a Christian congregation, it seems incredible.

I watched the people closely as the boxes were passed, and became more and more amazed; for nearly every person, men, women and children, contributed, and did it so cheerfully, even joyfully, that it was a pleasure to see them. "I must speak to that man, and learn the secret of his success with his people," thought I.

After the congregation had dispersed, many of them greeting me cordially as they passed out, I said to the pastor, as he took me warmly by the hand,

"You must have had an unusual collection to-day."

"No," he answered, "no larger than usual. You heard my caution to my people; they enjoy giving so much, that, every now and then, I find it necessary to hold them back, lest some of them do more than they are able." "Why sir," I exclaimed, "how have you educated them? Most ministers are obliged to urge, coax, and sometimes almost drive their people to give."

"Educate them? With the Bible, to be sure. They are Christians, and even the poorer of them, want to show their love to their Master by obeying his commands."

"Christians! but you don't wish me to understand that all the Christians in your church contribute for benevolent objects? Why sir, in the communion to which I belong, two-thirds of the churches do nothing for Foreign Missions and many of them nothing for Home Missions, and other like operations."

The old man raised his hands in surprise and horror, and his voice was very sad as he answered,

"Surely, they cannot be Christians. What book do they take as the foundation of their faith? Not the Bible! for almost every page of that volume is luminous with precepts of love and self-sacrifice. A Christian, and not love to bestow in charity! It can not be. But may I ask," eyeing me curiously, "what is the name of your denomination?"

I have never been ashamed of my religious home; yet the blood rushed to my face as the question was put, and I hastened to reply.

"But, sir, my denomination is not alone in being derelict to duty in this matter. Almost every benevolent organization is crippled for the want of funds. Many Christians feel that they have no obligations to discharge to others, at least pecuniarily." "No obligations!" exclaimed the old man. "What is it to be a Christian? Why, the very essence of Christianity is to deny self. If there is one duty emphasized from Genesis to Revelation, it is the duty of giving. Don't you remember the many injunctions to God's ancient people on benevolence?"

"O, yes! but many now affirm those old Jewish laws were only for that people who have long been obsolete."

"Obsolete, indeed!" repeated the pastor, as a curious smile played around his mouth. "Then what do these people do with all the injunctions of the New Testament on this same subject? Are they also obsolete? If so, we modern Christians are much to be pitied. If, caring nothing for the interests of our neighbor, we are to look out only for ourselves, our minds and hearts will become so dwarfed that we shall be hardly worth the saving."

"But thank God! his commands are not binding upon us; and it is not only a duty, but a most blessed privilege to sow bountifully and broadcast, of the rich gifts showered upon us."

"When my people are converted, they not only lay themselves, but their possessions, on God's altar, and thus each one of them becomes a centre of holy influence, a point from which radiate beams of yellow light."

The old man had waxed eloquent as he preached. His eyes flashed, as his tall form seemed to tower far above me. In his excitement his tones became deeper and more thrilling; but while I gazed spell-bound, suddenly he vanished from my sight.

Behold it was a dream.—*Morning Star.*

MY SPARE MOMENTS.

A poor country lad came one morning to the door of the head-master of a celebrated school, and asked to see him. The servant eyed his mean clothes, and thinking he looked more like a beggar than anything else, told him to go round to the kitchen. The boy did as he was bidden, and soon appeared at the back door.

"I should like to see Mr. —," said he. "You want a breakfast, most likely," said the servant; "and I can give you that without troubling him."

"Thank you," said the boy; "I've no objections to a bit of bread, but I should like to see Mr. —, if he can see me."

"Some old clothes, maybe you want," remarked the servant again eyeing the boy's patched clothes. "I think he has none to spare," and without at all minding the boy's request, she went about her work.

"Can I see Mr. —?" again asked the boy, after eating his bread and butter.

"Well, he's in the library; if he must be interrupted, he must, but he does like to be alone sometimes," said the girl, in a peevish tone. Opening the library door, she said, "Here's somebody, who is very

anxious to see you, so I let him in."

I do not know how he introduced himself, or how he opened his business, but I know that after talking a while, the Principal put aside the paper he was studying and took up a Latin book and began to examine the new comer. The examination lasted some time. Every question which the Principal asked the boy answered readily as could be. "Well!" exclaimed the Principal, "you certainly do well!" looking at the boy from head to foot, over his spectacles. "Why, my boy, where did you pick up so much?" "In my spare moments," answered the boy.

Here he was, poor, and hard working, with but few opportunities for schooling, and yet almost fitted for college, by simply improving his spare moments! Truly, are not spare moments the "gold dust of time"? How precious they should be! and yet how apt we are to waste them?

What account can you give of your spare moments? What can you show for them? Look and see. This boy could tell you how much, how very much can be laid up by wisely improving them, and there are many, many other boys, I am afraid, in the jail, in the house of correction, in the fore-castle of a whale ship, in the gambling-house or the tavern, who, if you could ask them when they began their sinful course, might answer, "In my my spare moments." "In my spare moments I gambled for marbles." "In my spare moments I began to smoke and drink." "It was in my spare moments that I first began to steal chestnuts from the old woman's stand." "It was in my spare moments that I got acquainted with wicked associates." Take care of your spare moments!—*The Children's Record.*

IN THE OLD GARRET.

I almost pity the boys and girls who have no old garret, with its piles of all sorts of queer old things, to play with "rainy days."

I am very sure that not any neat, new, fixed-up play room would ever seem so nice to me as that big garret, the whole length of the house, where we children used to have such royal times.

Just think of how many queer old things must be stowed away in a garret more than five hundred years ago! and that was the age of a "Trinity Mapor House," which you will find marked down in the map of Jersey, and which had belonged to the old De Carteret family for many years, many generations.

Under the eaves in that old garret were suits of armor, and helmets and big swords, and battle axes, and war saddles and bridles—but the helmets! How queer and grim they looked to us children. I always fancied that there must be heads in them.

Then there were broken spinning-wheels, and side saddles, and pillows with green cushions, trimmed with fringe, and funny looking babies' cradles and high chairs, and high candle-stick snuffers, and ancient-looking fire screens, and everything else you could think of.

It was a laundry as well as garret, and in the middle of the room stood the monstrous mangle.

The washing was done down stairs in the large wash house, but the ironing and mangling were done up in the laundry, and in the large stone chimney was a quaint-looking fire-place, where Molly heated the irons.

But the mangle was the attraction for us little folks, and as soon as we heard the rumbling and rolling of the monstrous stones in the mangle-box, we used to run to see Leonard turning the great handle, while Molly would place between the smooth, heavy rollers the nicely damped and folded linen sheets and table cloths, which would roll out on the other side, not only smooth, but really polished by the great pressure. We called the rumble of the mangle our "garret thunder."

O, what splendid times we had in that grand old house! I think I told you some little time ago about my school days in Jersey. Well, that was the house we lived in then. The De Carteret family had gone abroad for three years, and my father had rented the place, furnished just as it was, until they returned.

I should like some time to tell you of the drawing rooms, and the library, and the "unknown room," and all sorts of queer places about the old house; but I think, after all, our big play room at the top of the house was the charming room to us children.—*Companion.*

"IT MAKES IT ALL WRONG."

"Please, father, is it wrong to go pleasureing on the Lord's day? My teacher says

it is."

"Why, child, perhaps it is not exactly right."

"Then it is wrong, isn't it, father?" "O I don't quite know that; if it is only once in a while."

"Father, you know how fond I am of sums?"

"Yes, John, I am glad you are; I want you to do them well, and be quick and clever at figures; but why do you talk of sums just now?"

"Because, father, if there is one little figure put wrong in a sum it makes it all wrong, however large the amount is."

"To be sure, child, it does."

"Then, please father, don't you think if God's day is put wrong now and then, it makes all wrong?"

"Put wrong, child—how?"

I mean, father, put to a wrong use."

"That brings it very close," said the father, as if speaking to himself; and then added, "John, it is wrong to break God's holy Sabbath. He has forbidden it, and your teacher was quite right."

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Smiles.

MODERATE CHRISTIANS.—"I never intended to be more than a moderate drinker," said a drunkard, now happily converted and saved from his cup. "My parents did not object to my drinking wine and beer, and that is the way it began." "Were your parents Christians?" I asked. "Yes," he replied, hesitating, "they were moderate Christians." Alas, thought I, moderate Christians are often the best promoters of that moderate drinking which is the path to drunkenness.—*The Watchword.*

A WESTERN JURYMAN.—It was out West, in one of those local courts where a friendly, talkative way marks the intercourse between judges, juries, counsel, and clients. A man of the law, after developing considerable eloquence and perspiration in behalf of a prisoner, perorated by saying: "Gentlemen, after what I have stated to you, is this man guilty? Can he be guilty? Is he guilty?"

Greatly to his disgust, the foreman of the jury, after a copious expectation, replied: "You just wait a little, old hoss and we'll tell you."

As the poker-player would say: "Foreman had the age, and counsellor passed out."—*EDITOR'S DRAWER, in Harper's Magazine for October.*

THE ENFANT TERRIBLE.—The speeches of *l'enfant terrible* on his first appearance at church are many and singular—not to be Irish about it—and they have not all been printed, either. This time his name was Fred, a bright little nephew of the writer, and he lived in Illinois—he was an Illanoyster, as Thatcher says. His mother had taken him to a concert where there were recitations and music. The piece which most captivated his youthful fancy was "Captain Jinks," which was sung with great *clat* by a sober-sided fellow. The next Sunday was Fred's first day at church, and he watched with interest the progress of the exercises, keeping very still during the reading, and nearly through the "long prayer," when, becoming somewhat restive, he pulled at his mother's dress and asked quite audibly: "Mamma, isn't it most time for 'Captain Jinks'?"—*EDITOR'S DRAWER, in Harper's Magazine for October.*

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