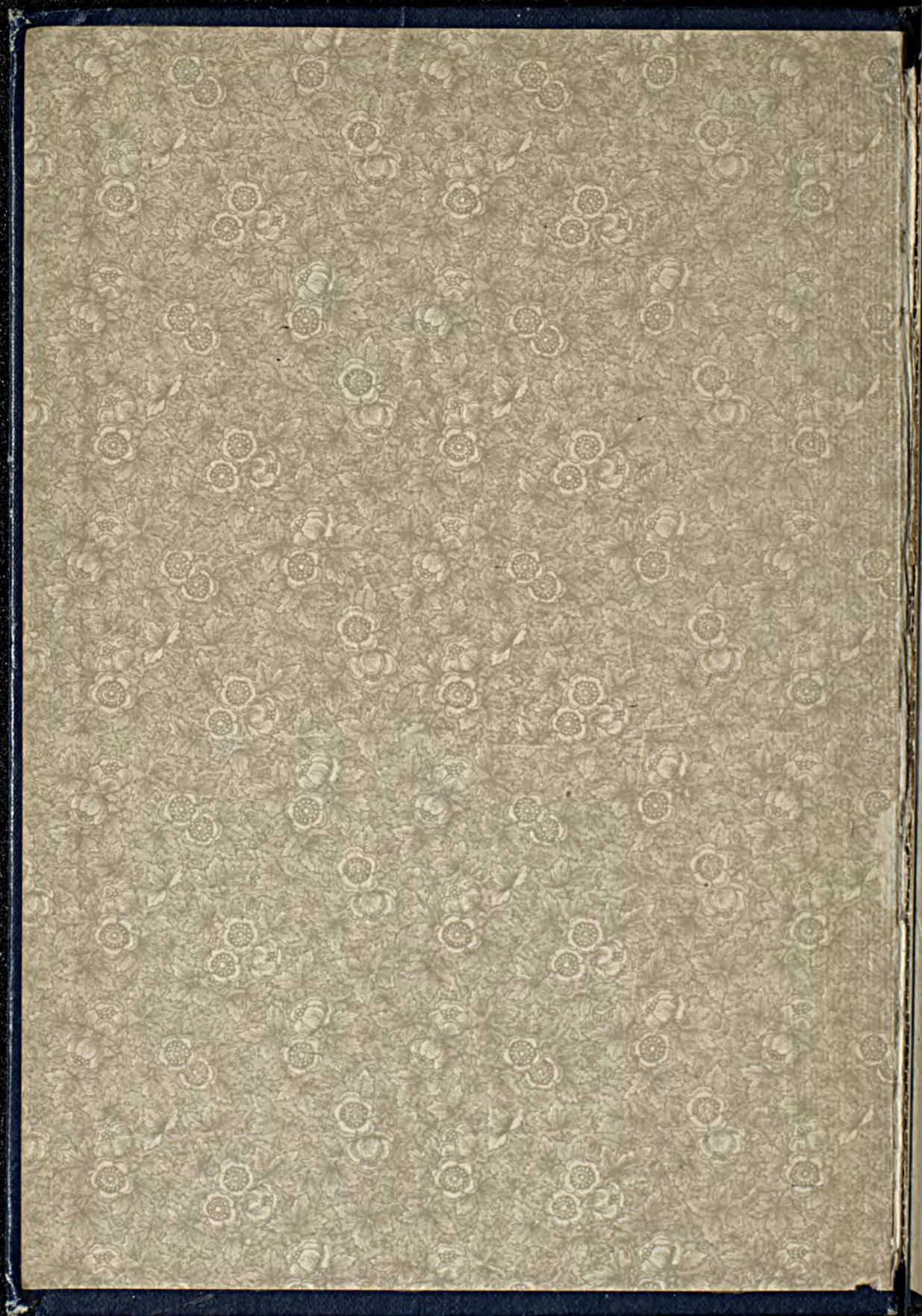


TALKS
TO
GIRLS.

BY
ONE OF THEMSELVES.

D
CSK



TALKS TO GIRLS

BY

ONE OF THEMSELVES,

ON

THE DIFFICULTIES, DUTIES, AND JOYS

OF

A GIRL'S LIFE.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

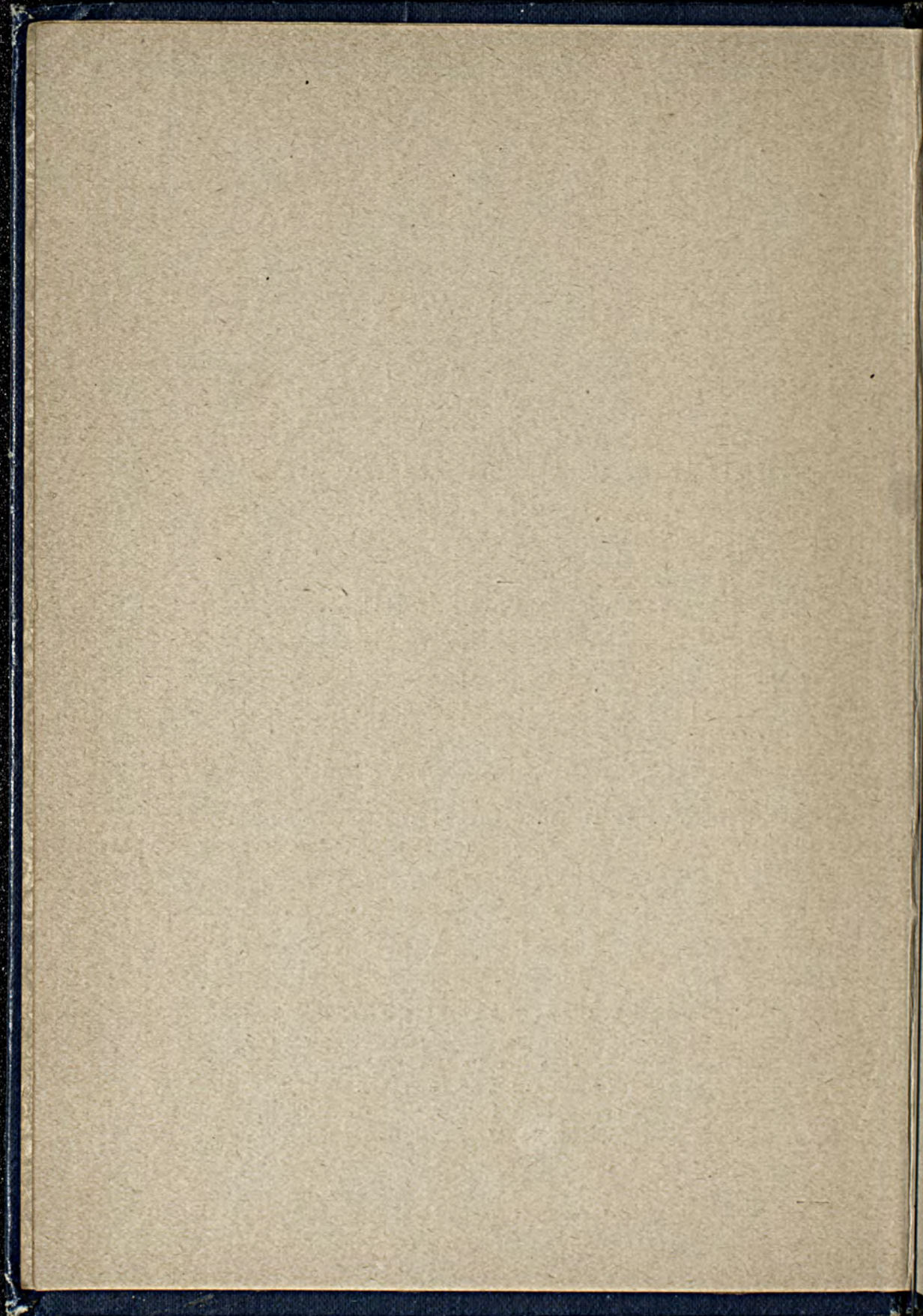
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
LONDON: NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.;

43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.

BRIGHTON: 129, NORTH STREET.

NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1902



P R E F A C E.

IT has occurred to me, who am little more than a girl myself, that I might possibly be of some use to others who are younger than I am, if I were to address to them a series of papers, which would come to them like individual letters. I have often felt that a letter written from another has been to me the greatest help at many times in my life, when I have most felt the need of outward sympathy and kindness.

There is no time in one's life in which one feels more dependent upon loving sympathy than during the years of one's girlhood ; those years in which we seem to stand and look beyond with wondering eyes, having left childhood behind us, and when the future seems so bright, and so filled with every possible joy, while the present seems somewhat difficult and disappointing. It is a time, in many

cases, during which a girl is a trial both to herself and to her friends; because her aspirations and ideas are then forming themselves, trying to grow in the midst of a new life which is sometimes a very sad as well as very happy one.

Who knows so well as another girl who has passed through it all herself, what a fluctuating time it is?—how we seem half crushed at one moment by what seem to us such real troubles; and at the next we are singing for joy at some little pleasure that is placed in our way.

I do not think it is true that girlhood is always such a very happy time; at least not to thoughtful girls; and it is those whom I am principally addressing.

I want to talk to those who are struggling to be true to themselves, and to lead a higher, nobler life, and who are following Christ their Master; to those who find, perhaps, that life is not always bright and easy, that they may take comfort therein, and not fall into despair, or give up struggling to do what is right.

What impetuosity, dreams, enthusiasms, castles in the air attended these years from sixteen on-

wards, and how self-conscious we were, and how careful of what others thought of us! How cold and precise seems the world of those who are older, and how all-important are our own judgments, and yet how often we have had our pride humbled! I feel for girls so much, I have felt for them so long, for I know how disappointing life becomes, and how these early bright dreams crumble away.

Will you, then, read these few papers that I have written for you at different times, when I was really passing through exactly your own experiences, and remember that they are the real thoughts and joys and sorrows of a real person? I want you to know from me, as I have known myself, by God's blessing, from others, what it is to have sympathy; and surely I think it is what a girl needs more than anything else. It seems to make difficulties less, and perplexities less perplexing, and joys more real, if there is only some one at hand to say, "I know all, I feel for you, I am glad with you. May I help you if I am able?"

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. ANTICIPATION	7
II. REBUKE	12
III. PRAISE	17
IV. DISCOURAGEMENT	21
V. TEMPTATIONS	26
VI. TRUTH	33
VII. RESPECT	40
VIII. DREAMS	47
IX. LONELINESS AND LOW SPIRITS	53
X. LITTLE THINGS	60
XI. SYMPATHY	67
XII. SELF-CULTURE	74
XIII. THRIFT	83
XIV. FRIENDS	92
XV. VISITING	99
XVI. THE PURGATORY OF "I"	106
XVII. PRAYER	113
XVIII. HOLY COMMUNION (<i>two parts</i>)	121
XIX. BIBLE READING	135
XX. HEALTH	143
XXI. PURITY	150

TALKS TO GIRLS.

I.

ANTICIPATION.

"But seldom have I found such peace,
As in the soul's deep joy
Of passing onward free from harm
Through every day's employ."

HENRY ALFORD.

I DO not think any one but girls themselves know what a great part of a girl's life is made up of anticipations. The time has come, or is coming, when we shall leave the daily routine of our school-room life, and we naturally begin to think what it is going to be like in the new life; and we think it will be one in which we shall be very happy, and do very much as we like.

The chief idea of all is, that we are going to be quite happy: it is the chief expectation of our lives. We see other people around us who do not seem to be quite happy; but never mind, *we* mean to be happy. We feel sure, somehow, that we *shall* be.

How foolish people are to make so much fuss about trouble and sorrow! Why should either of them come to us? And "they shall not," we say. True, the life that is past has not been always so very happy. We were so often disappointed in something we wanted to do or to be; we were under discipline that chafed us, or we were not allowed to have something we particularly wanted to possess. "Never mind," we say, "we shall do what we like soon."

People look at us half-pityingly and half-gravely, and say we do not know what we lose—that it is the happiest time of our lives; and it is irritating to hear them say so. We do not feel so particularly happy now; but we are quite sure we *shall* be happy some day.

It is the feeling we always carry about with us, and the hope of it carries us over many a present trial, many a silent heartache. We think we shall travel, perhaps, and make many friends, and we think we shall be admired, and that we shall be loved by people; but the thought that we never think, is the possibility of being sad, or lonely, or anxious, or disappointed in the future—that bright future, which is always several steps in front of us, and which we never quite realize.

Something, we think, which we have so long hoped for, is at last going to happen, and we have a strange feeling that we are getting nearer and nearer to what is going to crown our lives with joy,

and we are impatient for time to run a little faster. Every birthday that comes seems another step into the dim, beautiful, unknown life; even the church bells, ringing for some wedding, seem to be ringing in our coming joy.

So time passes on. Sometimes this feeling is really the foretaste of joy; more often I am afraid it is the foretaste of disappointment.

We can only learn by time that this world is a series of changes and trials and disappointments, and that things seldom happen as we once expected they would do. I wonder if you would think me very unsympathetic if I were to suggest that you should not look forward with such confidence to happiness or pleasure. It is possible you may be very happy. It is also possible that you may be disappointed in what you look forward to with such confidence.

When we are young joys seem very big, and sorrows seem even bigger. It is only Time that helps us to see that both are often less than we at first imagined. Why do you care no more for the play of the children? Why do you wander off to a quiet part of the garden? Why does your heart beat with a new thrill of gladness? It is because you are expecting something—it is that wonderful hope of future joy, that you feel is yours.

“When will it come?” you say. “When shall I know what it all means? When shall I be really

happy?" When?—oh, when? I wonder too. Sit in the greenwood and hear the birds sing. They all speak to you of joy. The very flowers at your feet are flowers of promise. The sun glinting through the leaves dances and shines in the joy that is to come.

Get up in the morning, and watch the gray dawn. The day is silent. Presently a solitary thrush breaks the stillness, and the sun comes peeping up over the horizon. "Oh! joy, joy is coming to me," you say, and you wait with outstretched arms for its approach.

But suppose life does not turn out as you expect, what then? Shall you turn round in your despair and say, "Nothing is of any good—I cannot be happy"? Be happy *now* in what you already possess. Enjoy to the full all the little sunshine about your *present* path. All paths must be chequered with shadows; but it is the very shadows which make the woodland glade so beautiful.

We are apt, in looking forward so eagerly to "something better," to forget that the "best" is *now*. Best even to suffer and struggle and bear pain, if it leads us to wish for God more, and to be more thoughtful for others. "Life," some one has said, "is made up of compensations," and truly we may find it so, if we look for them.

I do not mean the large joys so much as the tiny little helps that we forget as soon as they are passed.

If we learn to appreciate small joys as they come, we shall not find, I believe, that our minds are so apt to wander to what God has not seen fit to give us, in larger ones. Expect and look forward if you like, but be ready, at the same time, to have to give it all up, if God wills. It is the way of so many lives in this world.

God gives us this life entirely to prepare us for a better one, and some are taught by joy and some by pain. Life is our school-room, not our resting-place, and at any rate we may feel sure there is *one* anticipation which will come to pass one day—we shall be satisfied There.

II.

REBUKE.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

How disagreeable it is to be scolded! It so often happens too that we are scolded when we imagine we have least deserved it. It is so often the case, just when we have been thinking, "Well, for once I am doing right; I really think I am getting on very well," and so on; and all of a sudden down comes somebody who finds fault with us about order, or punctuality, or manners; and we are taken by surprise and perhaps hurt, and even go off to our room in a bit of a temper, and find vent in a flood of tears. Now when we read of this in a cool, calm mood, does not it seem a very foolish thing to do? What makes you so sure that you did not deserve that scolding?

Other people very often look at us with much truer eyes than we look at ourselves with, and they see what we persist in being blind to, and will not look at. Because they do not like to see this or that spot in our character, they tell us of it, and we do not thank them for their pains.

But surely they do not scold us for their own pleasure? Perhaps it is often an effort to them to find fault. They see that all is not right, and they know it would not be fair to us to let it pass. Why then do we resent it so, and seem so much hurt and offended at their words?

It is very strange what a good opinion we have of ourselves. Sometimes, I do believe, we almost think we cannot do anything wrong; and yet, why is it, I wonder, that we are the first to notice and speak unkindly of the very same faults in others? Supposing we were to change places, in our minds, with our fathers and mothers or teachers. They long to see their children growing up brave, and strong, and noble; and because their children are so dear to them they cannot let them go on and feel that, instead of growing wiser, they are growing up foolish and conceited, all for want of a little courage on their part. I believe it is sometimes a great effort on the part of our elders to scold us; it would be so much easier, and save so much trouble to them, if they passed it over and said nothing about it.

Sometimes, I know, we are rebuked unjustly; and I know few things more trying than to suffer for what we feel we have not really done wrong in. But, even in such cases as that, I do believe we should have some of the bitterness removed if we remembered there might perhaps, after all, be some good reason for part of it.

I have found it a good thing, in such cases, to take as a remedy against taking offence, the following plan. Think over to yourself how many times you have really done wrong, and how many times none but yourself has known of it—even your wrong thoughts, which no one but God knows about—and instead of feeling sore at unjust words, which you do not at that moment feel you deserve, let them be as rebukes for all the wrong things you *have* deserved, and perhaps for which you have gone unpunished.

Have you never observed how foolish, and ignorant, and helpless those people are who have been petted and spoilt all their lives, and who have never been told about their faults? And are you not one of the first to smile when they show you, as plainly as words can say, that they know better than any one else, and that everybody else is in the wrong but themselves? Do not let us grow up like that.

We want to be strong, and sensible, and humble women; and we cannot learn to be any of these things as long as we refuse to be rebuked and found fault with. And so, instead of growing up into a beautiful tree, useful to shade and to shelter others, we shall only remain poor little shrubs, swayed by the faintest breeze and scorched by the summer sun. I think we must try to do everything as well as we are able, and when it seems hard and irksome, to send up a little prayer to

God to help us ; and then, even if we fail in what is expected of us by others, we shall know that we did our best in God's sight.

If we do this with all our hearts, I believe we shall not be so soon satisfied that it is really our best, and shall be ambitious to try and do even better ; for the more we try to please God, the more, I find, one is apt to feel how little one really can do for Him. This is to make us humble, not to make us stop working. If we go on in this spirit we shall be more inclined, when the scolding *does* come, to say, not "It is unjust ; I do not deserve it" ; but "Dear me, perhaps after all I did not put my whole soul into the work" ; or, "Now I remember that I was in a hurry over my prayers this morning, and did not ask God to help me in this work. No wonder I have not done it well." Oh ! if others knew all that was in our hearts, all the wrong wishes and thoughts that come crowding there, as *God* does, should we be in such a hurry to say that we did not deserve the scolding ?

Is it not true that we find that the people who love us most, and take the most interest in our welfare, are often the people who find most fault with us ? When we go to strangers they often flatter us, and tell us nice things about ourselves. We like it so much better than being found fault with. But they are not *really* the kindest to us who never tell us of our faults. It is a disagreeable thing to do at the best of times, and only those

who really care for us will ever do it. Some day we shall thank them for it.

This is what God does. He loves us very much—more, far more than any friend, or parent, or brother, and He hates to see this sin and that sin hurting the pure soul He has made; so He teaches us by pain and rebuke, that we may open our eyes and see ourselves as we really are. Sometimes He makes us suffer in our own souls for what we have done wrong, and sometimes He tells others to speak to us and reprove us. He is like the gardener who cuts and prunes the roses, taking away the worthless shoots, in order that the tree may grow up to its proper size and bear more beautiful flowers. Let us remember, "As many as I *love* I rebuke and chasten"; which means that it is *because* He loves us that He gives us sometimes bitter things to bear. He does not want us to stop short at the very beginning of our journey, and say, "I have gone far enough; I have done enough"; because He knows that if we ever allow ourselves to say that, we shall never get to the end at all. But, like a wise parent, He tells us of our faults to make us go on trying, and working, and struggling (for struggle and work we must always, in this life), that at the end we may attain to the perfect day in His kingdom.

III.

PRAISE.

"When mortals praise thee, hide thine eyes,
Nor in thy Master's wrong
Take to thyself His crown and prize;
Yet more in heart than tongue."

Lyra Innocentium.

WE all like being praised. It is more of a pleasure to think well of ourselves than to think ill, and when other people think well of us too, we feel very happy. I do feel that when we have been really trying to do our best, a little praise goes a long way. It helps us to wish to do more, and we hold up our heads and think that we shall surely get more praise next time.

It is such a satisfaction when the task has been a hard one, to feel that our efforts have not all been made in vain. Praise that merely encourages us is not harmful, but I think we must be on our guard against wishing for praise very often, for it may become a temptation if we are not careful to take it in the right way.

It is not good, in the first place, to have our

thoughts turned often towards ourselves. Praise makes us instantly think of "I," and "I" is not good for us to dwell upon. Praise is apt to make us feel *satisfied* with ourselves, it makes us forget what a very little way we have really gone, and sometimes even goes so far as to make us think we need do no more, and begin to rest. We must not think of "resting" for many years to come; not until we are quite old and life is nearly over, and even then I fancy we shall be more eager than we are now to go *on*.

It is a curious fact that those who are really working hardest and trying most to do what is right, care least for praise. Why is that? Because the more they get really absorbed in their work, the more they feel how very little they really *do*, and how very little they are worthy of praise. They would far rather get to do their work a little better before any one should praise them. I think when we are praised we should ask ourselves, "How much do I deserve of this? If they knew all, and my motives even in doing this thing, would they say so much?"

When some one tells us we are good, and we have done this or that thing well, that even in ourselves we are charming, and all the rest of it, we should at once think, "Oh, how much more God knows about me! Does He praise me like this? Would He say the same to me?" And there comes into our minds the secret thought, and the

wrong wish, and we remember sadly that at that moment we are not worthy of any praise at all.

It often makes me think with wonder how God *can* go on loving us as He does, when He sees so truly what our real nature is like.

There is something in the nature of some of us that is naturally attractive to others. We cannot always say exactly why. Perhaps God has given us a bright face, or a pretty manner, or a gentle voice, and some of us are quicker than others in remembering what is told us, and we are willing to please, not because it is our duty, but because it comes easily to us. We get praise for all these things, when really we have no right to any merit about them at all.

God gave us our faces and our voices. Why, then be so satisfied with ourselves?—as if there was anything to be praised for in the possession of these things. Perhaps with all these outward gifts our hearts may be still dark and ugly. I do not think we must ever let praise get such a hold upon us as to make us think we are better than we really are. Praise ought to make us humble, and if it does not do that, I think it is time we looked at ourselves to see what is the matter with our hearts.

We know that man's praise is not always God's praise, and let us first be sure of the praise of God before we begin to delight in the praise of men. Let praise help us on our way like sunshine, but

do not let us look for it, and do not expect it often. It is not necessary to us, and it is a thing we can learn to do without.

If we do our duties well we shall need no praise, because God will Himself bless us, not in empty words or in flattering phrases, but with His own Blessed Peace, which will keep and garrison heart and mind, and hold us firm for evermore.

IV.

DISCOURAGEMENT.

" I know
How far high failure overleaps the bound
Of low successes." LEWIS MORRIS.

EVERY day our life goes on, and we have certain duties to perform, and certain things to do. At first, life seems a very promising thing to us, and we are young, and feel a pleasure in new duties, and new lessons, and new interests. After a time these new objects of interest become things that have to be done every day, and they seem somehow to lose their freshness, and it is not such a pleasure to do them as it used to be.

When we are young there is a great charm in novelty ; but it becomes a very different thing when it is an every-day duty. It is there that discouragement steps in.

It is weary work going on at the same things every day. They seem to us to possess now quite a different aspect to that time when we first began to take an interest in them. At first we were all on fire with the new pleasure we took in them ; now the fire has gone out, and the daily routine becomes

monotonous. It is so discouraging also, to see no fruit in our work. Not to see things improving as we work at them, or even to find they are worth so little after we have taken so much pains over them. We begin to wonder what is the use of it all. People around us seem never to be satisfied; they are always finding fault, and saying that this is wrong and that is wrong, we are to do it over again—and we all know that “doing it over again” is by no means so pleasant as doing it for the first time.

I do not know anything so tiresome as having to undo our work, and begin it afresh. I suppose it is sent to teach us patience, to make us not in such a hurry to finish off; to do it more thoroughly and carefully than we ever did it before.

It seems as if great blocks are always standing in our way, and hindering our progress perhaps just when we were beginning to hope we were getting on. They seem as if they come on purpose to bother us, and make us feel as if it is all no more use to try any more. But it *is* of use. Everything that happens to us is of use. All these things are, I believe, sent by God to teach us patience, and humility, and forbearance, and many other things.

I have known people who, directly any difficulty appears, give it up, saying, “I can’t do it.” I call that rather cowardly. When a thing becomes a hindrance we should not let it stop all our work,

but let us be brave, and just say instead, "I *will* try, I am determined I will not give up, I *will* do it."

Have you ever seen those lovely pictures drawn by Mr. Ruskin in his *Modern Painters* and *Stones of Venice*? They are the result of years of patient work line by line, over and over again, till he had got them as perfect as you see them there. He tells us that it was not at once, but after years of patient attention and examination of the things he saw around him, that he was able at last to draw like that.

All the greatest men are those who are most patient, and because patient, they are often the most humble; for the more one works and the more one studies, the more one realizes one's ignorance.

Do you remember the story of poor Carlyle, who had, after years of research, written a great book, or rather part of a great book? He had done it with difficulty, for he used often to feel ill, and not always inclined to do his daily work of writing. Well, once he lent his manuscript to some one, and by a sad mischance the whole thing was burnt. Imagine what a dreadful loss it must have been. All his work destroyed as it were, for ever. All the time he had spent over it wasted. What do you think he did? At first he was certainly very sorry, so sorry that the grief made him quite ill. But as soon as he was better he set to work and began it all over again, and at last he finished and published it; and the *French Revolution* is, as

we all know, one of the standard histories of the present day. It is no ordinary book either, for every page in it is full of allusions and quotations which in themselves must have taxed the writer's patience and industry to the fullest degree. Fancy having to verify all these again. I often wonder how he cared to do it.

I think we can learn from this that there is nothing too hard for us to do if we really *mean to do it*.

I began by speaking of the irksomeness of monotony, as compared with new interests. The new interests require some of our energy, but the monotony requires a different sort. I feel sometimes as if we live in stages and periods.

Supposing, for instance, that we have passed the stage of eagerness and enthusiasm, and have come to the discouraged stage. What will the next one be? Trying to conquer the feeling of disinclination to go on, I should suppose.

Have you ever felt during a long walk, a sense of fatigue so great that you feel almost as if you can go on no further? Well, have you ever tried walking on still? and a most curious thing happens; you begin to feel less tired as you go on, until at last you almost wonder that you were tired at all. It does not do to stop and rest; you must go straight on before you feel this sensation.

We are not the only people who have to fight on, in spite of discouragement. It is what all the

busy world is doing every day. Every one who works at all has to do it. Artists, poets, musicians, writers of books, clergymen, men and women who teach or labour with their heads or hands. They all have to learn that there comes a time when they have to make themselves *masters* of the monotony of their own chosen work, or else they get to be its slaves.

Work of any kind is not necessarily to be looked upon as a pleasure ; but it becomes a real happiness when we have overcome the monotony of it, and gone on with it because it is our *duty*, and nothing else. God wants to see that we are really in earnest, so He sends us hindrances of all kinds, and if we take them rightly these very hindrances will be our helps. Whenever we once make up our minds that we are to expect these trials, not as accidents, but as parts of our daily life, we shall get so used to them that they will not ruffle us any more.

We learn patience by our discouragements, and when we really are *patient*, I do think we shall have got on a long way in our spiritual life.

V.

TEMPTATIONS.

“Why comes temptation but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his foot,
And so be pedestalled in triumph?”

ROBERT BROWNING.

HAVE you ever seen a picture of St. Margaret standing upon a dragon and piercing it with her spear? The quotation I have given you at the beginning reminds me of that picture. Do you understand what the words mean? Well, think of the picture and then you will understand better. They mean that God sends us temptations to try us and see what sort of stuff we are made of, and if we conquer them we come out stronger, and better, and purer.

In another letter I have shown you that being tempted is not in itself wrong. You know how our Lord was tempted, yet in all things He did no sin. Often the best and holiest people have the most temptations. I dare say you are tempted too, just as I am, and just as everybody is, and sometimes you get quite in despair about these very temptations. They are so many, and they

come so often, that at times you would like to give it all up and take no more trouble, and let things take their course. What an unworthy thought!

Do you know you are honoured in being tempted? It shows that God expects great things of you; it shows that He allows Satan to whisper evil to you just in order that you may get up and say, "O Lord, help me!" and go and conquer that evil one, just as Margaret in the picture conquered the dragon.

You have heard of that beautiful city on the sea—Venice. On approaching it from the sea, you see first a tall granite pillar, and on the top of that pillar is the figure of a man standing upon the dead body of a dragon. I think it was a wise thought of those who put him there many hundred years ago—that before you enter that beautiful church which stands behind, you must pass that pillar, and as you look up you will say to yourself, "So we must conquer our temptations before we can approach near God." It made me think of that when I saw it.

There are so many temptations that come to us all that I can hardly particularize one or another of them. Some of us are tempted to lose our temper; some to be idle, or to speak unkindly of others, or to be untruthful, or to be envious. So many things that I can't think of them all. I think you all know your own temptations better than any one else, and so I will only speak a few words

about some of them, and leave you to fill up the rest yourselves. It is impossible for me to know all your hearts; I can only speak from my own experience.

Take temper, for instance. Oh! I know so well how hard it is to keep calm sometimes! Perhaps some one accuses you quite unjustly of a thing, or another has spoken evil of you, or you are stopped in something you had set your heart upon, or some one else spoils something that belongs to you, or that you have made. It seems just as if a great fire had been kindled within you, and as if it must burst out; you are beside yourself; you have lost your self-control. Others stand and laugh at you, and you seem to get worse and worse; and then the remorse afterwards;—what pain it is, and how ashamed you feel! Now, supposing if instead of having let this temper of yours get the better of you, you had made up your mind on saying your morning prayers that it would be possible that you would be tempted in this way, and asked God to guard you from falling into such sin. I do think it would have been easier for you, if you had done so, to resist the evil.

Try hard not to have the last word. Try to shut up your mouth, and say nothing. It is only a momentary pleasure this, of having the last word; even those who get it forget the next moment the gain of having it, if it is a gain. Do not mind giving it up to your antagonist. Be silent; keep

your mouth shut ; and when the feeling of longing to speak passes away, you will have—oh ! such a feeling of joy in your heart, and the next time it won't be half so hard for you.

Take envy as another instance. This is a most subtle temptation that comes up like great weeds where we least expect it, and if allowed to grow gets bigger and bigger like thistles. It arises from thinking too highly of ourselves as better than others. I do think that is the beginning of envy, because when we see others more exalted and more fortunate than ourselves, we are so apt to be surprised that we were not chosen instead. It arises too from discontent, for if we were satisfied with our lot we should not want to have other people's, should we ? Well, discontent is wrong too ; it means rebelling against what God has ordered for you. We are so apt to forget that every minute of our lives was arranged by God for us ; nothing ever comes by chance—our joys or our sorrows.

If you see another girl better dressed, or in a happier position than yourself, do not be envious of her. She may have *her* trials in life that you can never guess, and were you in her place perhaps you might sooner wish to be back again in your own than you can imagine just now. Try and turn your thoughts into other channels, and make interests for yourself that will take your mind away from the object of your envy. Life is made up of compensations—that is, small pleasures that

make up to you for what you have not got ; and if one girl has more pleasures than yourself, it may be that God wishes to teach you more by self-denial.

Do not run into temptations. You know what your besetting sins are, and much the same rule does for all. If Satan knows you are weak in any particular point, he will be sure to attack the point of weakness. If you are envious or jealous, he will whisper to you that you are badly dressed, or less liked than other people ; and it is ever so much easier to listen to him than to send him away ; he has such sly, insinuating ways of reaching between at the joints of the harness. If untruth is your temptation, he will suggest to you twisted words and deceitful ways, and nothing is easier than to do these things. If you do wrong, he will suggest to you a way of "getting out of it" by not speaking or acting quite truly ; and, mind you, there is as much untruth in keeping back the *whole* truth as there is in telling a downright lie.

But here I would add a word of warning. It *never* answers to twist the truth. However well it may succeed at the moment, it is only too certain that a difficulty shuffled out of by untruth betrays you in the end, and people distrust you and say, "I cannot depend upon a word she says." Public opinion judges hastily, and *one* divergence from truth may make people say, "She tells stories"—so, believe me that it is wiser to tell the truth

at the beginning. If you have done anything you are ashamed of, tell the truth about it, and don't be afraid ; your punishment won't be half so hard, and people will honour you for not being afraid to tell the truth. "Tell truth, and shame the devil," and he, the "father of liars," will slink away with fear from her who attacks him with such a weapon.

Again, *malice*. You can bear false witness to your neighbour in many ways, and they often begin by such very small things. Try not to get into the habit of picking people to pieces, and talking about their faults. It so often happens that a small fault is passed on from hand to hand and exaggerated to such an extent, that you who first suggested the evil, begin at last to believe it is much worse than it really is, and from that you go on to hate and dislike the person who committed it. Before you speak evil of others, just think if you are quite blameless yourself, even about those *very* things you most accuse them of.

If people will talk gossip, do not encourage them in it. It is the sign of a very silly little mind to be always whispering about your neighbours' affairs ; and in what points are you better than they if you come to ask yourself the question ; and how would you like it if you could come in one day and hear people talking in such a way of *you* ? Would you not be very angry ?

Put yourself in the place of other people, and act towards them in absence and presence as you

would to your own self. Once a dear friend said to me, "I will give you a motto for your life." It was this—"*Never listen to any one who wants to tell you some unkind thing that somebody else has said about you.*" They cannot be your real friends who try and make mischief by telling you of these things.

People often say things in a hurry that they do not mean; and therefore if you hear of unkind things being said of you, try to forget them, as no doubt those who spoke them have forgotten them by now; and do not make too much of them, and make them larger by dwelling upon them.

Then idleness, and impure thoughts, &c.; but I will not continue the black list of sins. As I said before, you know your own. Pray to God for help, and keep guard over yourself that you do not get in their way; but if they come across your path, stand up in the name of God, and say as Jesus Christ said in the wilderness, "Get thee behind me, Satan"—and little by little if you fight hard you will come out conquerors. I do not say you will not sometimes fall and fail, but fight on in spite of falls and failings, and God *will* give you peace at the last.

VI.

TRUTH.

"Truth lies at the bottom of a well."

I USED often to wonder what that meant. Truth is the thing that we imagine we hold the firmest, and that we see the clearest; and really truth is often very far away—far away, and hidden, and difficult to get at, at the bottom of a deep well.

I do not want to talk about truth, in its general sense; but I want to talk about the actual fact of telling truths or untruths; and I think if we watched ourselves a little more closely than we are apt to do, we should find that there were very few of us indeed who are really as true in our thoughts or words as we imagine ourselves to be. This sounds rather shocking to us, who are English girls, and who feel it is part of our nature as such to be always *true*. It is almost a pity, I think, that we are so sure we possess this virtue, because it never occurs to us to question ourselves as to how we practise it.

I do not say we are in the habit of telling downright falsehoods now, though it is possible we

might have done so as little children, for fear of punishment or some other cause; but I do think we *do* and tell more indirect untruths now than we are at all aware of. There are certain conventionalities and politenesses in life which have certain set phrases, such as saying "Not at home" when you do not wish to see people; and certain forms of expressions of sorrow in not seeing people you care little about, &c., which I think are so generally accepted as mere conventional forms of expression that they do not belong to the same subject either. I am not going to stop and talk about them, for I think that when an expression or phrase is used in that sort of way, its meaning is so universally understood that it does not stand under the category of falsehoods at all.

I think we may be untrue both to ourselves and others in a far more serious way. I think very often we *do* an untruth that our lips would scorn to frame.

Or we leave a *truth* unsaid—that's another way. Some one may be speaking of another perhaps unkindly, and we may know something good of that person and yet hold our tongue about it, and so leave a wrong impression of him.

Exaggeration is another form of untruth. We use such strong phrases even in our conversation. "I shall *never* do it"; "I never in my life saw anything like it"; "It is quite impossible"; "I shall go on at this for ever"; "It is beyond human

endurance"; "Did you ever see anything so awful in your life?" "An agonizing pain." All these things we mostly say every day, without thinking the least of what they mean. The "for ever" may only last an hour or a day; the "I will *never* speak to her again" may change into a lasting friendship; the "quite impossible" may be your daily future work; and when all these things come to pass we go on our smiling way, forgetting entirely the falsehoods we have sown heedlessly along our daily path, leading others unconsciously to do the same, and to become inaccurate in their turn. Yes, *inaccuracy* is another thing. By exaggerated forms of speech we come to actual inaccuracies, and from inaccuracies we may grow into real lying.

We ought to be so careful about our words, for it is the easiest thing in the world to give a false statement if we are not on our guard; so easy to listen carelessly to an account of one thing, and then to retail it again with some little statement either left out or distorted, which may have endless bad results never thought of at the beginning. They say that our Queen owes much of the good government of her kingdom to her great accuracy in all her relations with people. It certainly is the secret of much of the misery of life, this want of accuracy. It grows upon one so unconsciously and so quickly, and it is one, I think, of the most important things to cure oneself of early, in a girl's life. If you do not take hold of it early you

will find it very difficult indeed to cure yourself of it afterwards ; more difficult, I think, than almost anything else.

People soon find out if you are in the habit of guarding your words in after life ; and you will soon find that no one trusts you or looks up to you if you are inaccurate. You may go through life smiling and good-natured, but no one will come to you for advice or confide anything to you, and you will find bit by bit that you lose all your best friends.

I think inaccuracy grows out of two things—a habit of constant inattention, a habit of dreaming, so that your thoughts are everywhere but where they should be ; and a desire for being popular and amusing. Also, later on, I think, inaccuracy comes from despair. But despair such as that can only arise from absolute emptiness of mind and ennui from want of occupation, which need never be such a lot as yours if you are really trying to lead the noblest, highest life.

I think dreaming is such a temptation to girls like ourselves that I am going to have a paper about it later on, so I will not touch upon it now, but go on to my theory that inaccuracy of speech sometimes grows out of a love of being amusing. How easy it is, when we are relating some adventure that has happened to ourselves perhaps, to make it "draw" by adding a *little* to the original occurrence. It is so gratifying to see your hearers look attentive, to see that you are interesting them, that you are

surprising them, that they are actually laughing; to feel that you are being called brilliant, clever, amusing. Yes, they are bare facts, aren't they? but they are true nevertheless; do you not think so? Life is so full of commonplace and little boredom, it is so tempting to flavour it a little now and then.

Not that we *meant* to tell a lie. "Oh dear, no!—that is the last thing we should think of!"—but there is the lie all the same, and there it is doing its serpent-like, creeping harm. It is better to be dull and commonplace and *accurate* than to be the most brilliant wit on earth; and depend upon it, it is the best in the long run. Better to give up the dearly-paid-for popularity than to tell *a lie* (for it is nothing else) before God.

But I do not think you need become "a bore" by being accurate; on the contrary, people who know you never will varnish the plain truth, will trust you and love you, and believe your statements in a way that they never really believe in those who only amuse them and make them laugh. *You* at any rate do not get talked of directly you leave the room as "Very amusing; but I don't believe a word she says—who does?" and at the same time, if you have a reputation for strict accuracy, when you *do* have an amusing incident to relate, it will "tell" with *far* more force and reality than all the flow of wit from the inaccurate one. It does not answer to be untruthful, even taking it in a worldly sense. If once we prevari-

cate or tell a lie, so many more have to be told to get out of the scrape it entails.

We break something that we have no business to touch at all, perhaps in some innocent way, and even in telling of the breakage we are often sorely tempted to give some other reason for touching the forbidden object than the one we really had, for fear of being laughed at from its very simpleness.

We often prevaricate and distort our real reasons for things from this fear of derision; and that too is a thing to guard against. How much better to be laughed at or scolded even for a small delinquency than to have to bear the burden of a lie on our consciences!

The consequence of the one is passing. The consequence of the other bears its impress upon our moral characters all our lives. We want more *moral* courage; we would rather tell a series of lies than have the moral courage to look full in a person's face, and let him see how much more stupid, or ignorant, or silly, or childish we really are than he imagined. But we forget that people *may* also have the opportunity of calling us *liars*! I say this because it is very seldom prevarications are not found out, and a series of deceptions seldom fail to come, in time, to the light, and then, oh, how earnestly we wish that we had told the whole truth at the beginning! It would have saved such a world of difficulty,

and all for want of a little moral courage at the moment.

Depend upon it, it is better to be scourged for truth, better to lose your high place in the eyes of others, better to be humbled, laughed at, sneered at, than to weave untruths. If you do the one, the punishment will pass; if you do the other you will never feel at peace.

There is nothing so ennobling, so helpful, so consoling, as *truth*; nothing that makes life and its troubles easier; nothing that adds the true piquancy to joy. If you can look into another's face and feel that your heart is open to him; that it is darkened by no double dealings and no deceits; that he at any rate knows *you*, with all your failings, and not the mask of yourself (which, though you know it not, covers but half your face), then depend upon it, neither sin, nor fear, nor pain, nor trouble will hurt you, and you will be saving yourself an endless round of pain and misery that would never have been yours if you had not made for yourself such a maze for your feet by your untruths.

I have spoken plainly because I think it is the only way. Try and remember that the *smallest* inaccuracy and the smallest perversion of truth is a *lie*, and nothing else in the sight of God. And let it be your daily prayer to Him to make you really *true* in thought, and in word, and in deed.

VII.

RESPECT.

"In that fair round we may discern
A beaming smile and an obeisance low—
So forest bluebells in a row
Stoop to the first May wind, sweeping o'er each in turn."
Lyra Innocentium.

THINK of the pretty picture this verse calls up. The path through the woods, clothed in their first spring foliage; the birds calling and singing to and with one another, as birds only can sing in spring, and at our feet a sea of blue hyacinths. Presently a wind sweeps into their midst, and bows them low. They stoop gracefully, as the breeze passes over them; one after another they bend their blue heads, only raising them when the wind has passed them by. They are not broken or hurt by the breeze; they only look as if they are curtsying in its presence; ready to acknowledge the wind in a sort of kingly fashion, which in passing by them helps to increase their beauty. Their pretty reverence does not hurt them—it does not impair their dignity; on the contrary, they seem to rise with a

sort of increased grandeur, and sit upon their green stems with even more fragrant beauty than before.

I think this is an age in which the respect due to those who are set over us, and who are older and more experienced than ourselves, is not so strictly enforced as it was in the time of our fathers and mothers. That was an age when girls and boys were not expected to be much in the foreground ; not expected to give their opinions about things, or to have so many expressed desires and wishes as we have now.

Perhaps, for some things, the change is for the better. We girls feel so much freer and more natural than those whom we hear of as living forty or fifty years ago. We often feel glad that we were not living then, and wonder how they could have borne the repression they had then to undergo.

But there is an evil side to this as well as a good one, and I cannot but feel that disrespect to elders is growing amongst us far more rapidly than we are aware of. We are young and impulsive—want to do everything, and have everything at once. Perhaps somebody older than ourselves is much slower and less active. His or her deliberate ways irritate us. We are inclined to be impatient ; we answer shortly and sharply. Perhaps we have a keen sense of the ludicrous, and are ready to turn into fun and laughter any impediment or infirmity attending older people—forgetting that it is no

fault of theirs; probably even a source of great trouble to themselves.

I think too much is written or laughed over about the infirmities of age; and it seems both hard and cruel to hear young people speaking disdainfully of those who, though older and not so active, are at any rate experienced and wise, which we thoughtless girls certainly are not. I do not see any fun in the banter that goes on about an old man or an old woman—laughing at their weakness, looking contemptuously at their tastes and pleasures, thinking them “bores”; when all the while we forget that we shall be old ourselves one day, and would not like to be treated in the same manner.

Do not let us misuse our freedom; we who are so much more made companions of by those who are in authority than of yore. Do not let us show how ignorant and foolish we are, by daring to assert our small experience against theirs. We are too fond of hearing our own voices; we think far too much of ourselves; we think we are women when we are little more than children. We think our elders are admiring our sharpness and our clever ways. Not so; I think they must often feel out of patience with us, and tired of us, and they must even wonder sadly—What sort of women we shall be worth? What we shall make of our lives? Whether as we grow older we shall learn to be wiser, or whether we shall not improve at all?

Surely, when we think at all about the matter, it

stands to reason that those who are older than ourselves ought to have a respect given to them beyond that which we give to girls of our own age. Think of all they have learnt, of all that they have suffered, of all the disappointments and trials they have gone through, of how much more they know than we do of real life, of how much more of self-discipline, and so how much more fitted they are to guide us and teach us.

Do we ever think how much harder life becomes when youth and perhaps health is passing away ; how much more difficult it is to be light-hearted and joyous when the bright anticipations of early days have gone, and left perhaps only anxiety and weariness in their stead ?

Does it ever occur to you that that ill-dressed teacher, who comes to you once or twice a week, perhaps, and whom you ridicule secretly for her age and her faded looks, has once also been young, and perhaps as light-hearted as yourself ? Perhaps she looked out upon life as you are doing now ; perhaps she thought it was all going to be as happy as you hope yours is going to be ; perhaps, instead, trouble came and marred her hopes, and she had to breast the high salt waves of life, instead of swimming along the sunny stream, and to fight against poverty and perhaps ill-health, in the face of possible failure. We want to be more humble about ourselves ; more diffident about our own powers ; more ready to listen and to receive advice.

Surely we cannot really think that we know better than our elders, we who have lived so few years, and they so many? Surely they must know a little more about what is right and wrong than we do? They are more self-controlled than we are; they are not so demonstrative as ourselves; they do not have such high spirits; they are slower, quieter in their ways. So we despise them, we find fault with them, we laugh at them.

Oh, for more veneration in these days of our youth; more forbearance towards those who have borne so much more from us; more sympathy with those who have no longer the dews of early morning to refresh their way, but who are struggling with the fiercer battle of noonday! Is there no more respect to be given to the mind matured in experience and knowledge? Are we so entirely self-opinionated that we allow ourselves to forget that they are so much older than ourselves, and require of us the deference due to their maturer years? We talk of this age being a progressive one; but it cannot progress in the right way, nor can any good come to it, if we trample on authority, and have no reverence for people or things. Not by trying to struggle against the decrees and wishes of those set over us, but by listening to them with our hearts humble; and so, ready to receive new truths; always bearing in mind that the more we learn the more we shall find out how little we really know; and in that knowledge we ought to be

thankful that there are people who know a little more than ourselves.

Let us believe more widely in people. Let us trust people more; believing that they take an interest in us, though they are less demonstrative than we should be about it. Let us not be afraid of people. So much trouble comes out of that. Girls make to themselves miseries which would vanish away if they only had the moral courage to talk them over with an older person. They are so afraid of being snubbed; they think they will not be understood.

Now I think this too is a sort of disrespect—it is a want of belief in our elders. Perhaps they are wondering why we are so silent and look so sad, and are waiting for us to come and ask their help. If you want something very much, or you are longing for advice, or you are perplexed in any way, why go and mope by yourself, making everybody uncomfortable about you? Be brave, and do not be afraid of speaking about it. Go to some older friend you can trust; do not think about being afraid of her. Go straight to the point, and wait humbly for her answer. It is possible that she may not see the matter as you do; she may not smile and respond in a hurry, as you might wish her to do; she may even reprove you for it; but do not be discouraged. Remember her experience over yours, and let her guide you.

Oh! what troubles we magnify by being too

proud, and too much wanting in courage to share them with others. What anxieties we suffer alone, which perhaps are never realized ; which never might have come upon us at all, if we had spoken of them directly they appeared. Let us not live apart. Let us

" Summon age
To grant youth's heritage."

Let us listen to what they would teach us, and believe with all our hearts that they know better than ourselves. Let us, while we are young, be humble and ready to *receive*, that we may be able to *give* to others in a future day. Let us cultivate reverence for people and things, for that is the only way in which we can learn true reverence for God.

VIII.

DREAMS.

"Unprofitably sweet as morning dream."

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Do you know what it is to dream? I do not mean dreams in sleep; I mean waking dreams. How easily they come to some of us! How pleasant to sit over a cosy fire, and gaze into the red caverns, and dream! How delightful it is to look idly out of a window and lazily watch the trees and the clouds, and the living things outside! How nice to sit doing nothing, and dream! We have got so much to think about; so many pleasant pictures to imagine—and such very impossible ones. What are they all about? Are they not all about ourselves? We think about something that "I" am to do or to achieve; some great joy that "I" am to have; some wonderful journey that "I" am to take; some great success that "I" am to gain over another. Such dreams are always about ourselves, I think. They take up a great part of our time, especially if our lives are dull and monotonous; we indulge in them more often than perhaps we are aware of.

Again, these dreams are always about *happiness*.

We only wish for joy and happiness in the future. We do not sit and dream over possible *sorrows* in our lot, or include in these day-dreams arrangements for future trial and pain. What a strange idea! Of *course* we do not do that. Why, we should not care for the dreams at all if *sorrow* had any part in them. No; our dreams are always about something we have not got, something we want to have, something we are sure we shall have some day. Oh, I know how nice these dreams are! I know well their subtle sweetness. I know the temptation of colouring the long monotonous days with these imaginary pictures. I know how much sweeter life seems for the moment when we indulge in them, and how the more we indulge in them the more we feel how sweet they are. Indeed, after a time they become part of ourselves; we cannot do without them. But they are wrong, they are bad for us, they are temptations of the devil—we must not indulge in them. Life is not a dream; life is a reality—life is for *health*, not sickness, and it weakens the strong vigour of your soul when you give way to dreams.

Have you ever awaked in the morning (say a cold one), and after having heard the hour strike for you to get up, have turned round, not because you were sleepy, but just to indulge in a day-dream; and the time has lengthened out, and you have risen at last with your mind full of foolish thoughts to hurry over your dressing, and

probably to forget or shorten your prayers? I ask you, did you feel the better or the worse for that dream? Did you do your daily duties better for it? Were you more thoughtful and kinder to others? I think, on the contrary, you were gloomy and perhaps cross all day, and life seemed more monotonous than ever. Have you ever stopped short in the service in church only just to have one little think; and have you ever roused yourself up at last only to realize that the service was over, and you had heard nothing? Were you the better or happier for that dream, I wonder?

Do not think me unsympathetic; do not think I am speaking because I do not know. I have indulged in dreams myself often and often; I know their sweet subtlety only too well. But for all that I tell you they are *wrong*; you must fight against them, you must not let them come; they are all the more difficult to fight because they are so sweet, but they do you harm. There are three reasons why they harm us—

1. They hurt ourselves.
2. They hurt our neighbour.
3. They displease God.

How do they hurt ourselves? They weaken us. Do you notice how hard it is to come back to every-day life after one of these fits of dreaming? How bright the dream was, and how dull and irksome the real things seem after it. I often notice that the dreams come *when we ought to be*

doing something else. They do not arise when we are going to bed at night, for instance, half so often as when we ought to be getting up; when we are in church; when we are doing a dull lesson. They do not come when we have the leisure for them. So you see they are a form of temptation to make us neglect our real duties. Then another thing they do—they make us discontented; they make us wish for things we have not got; they make the present a dreary wilderness, in which we grumble because it is hot, and the stones cut our feet. Lastly, do they leave our minds pure and unsullied? I fear not. We are not aware of it at the time perhaps; but if we once give way to these dreams they lead us to think of things of which we have no business to think. Do let us guard our thoughts in this way, for it is only to the "pure in heart" has the promise been given, that they shall "see God." We have the jewel to keep of pure womanly hearts. Let us keep our gift very bright and unsullied.

Now about hurting others. In the first place, is your time quite your own? Are you sure you are not wasting some one else's time as well as your own when you allow yourself to dream?—time in which you have duties to do, and a mission to fulfil; not merely to amuse yourself. Besides, it is a bad example, and younger ones will do as you do, and you will be teaching them in their turn to be idle, and to form the habit of

listless inattention, which grows upon one so quickly, and is so difficult to cure. Never console yourself in yielding to a temptation by saying, "It will hurt no one else." We do not always see or know to what an extent we influence others by what we do, even by what we think. It is only occasionally that our eyes are opened, and we see in astonishment that in some way or another even our evil *thoughts* have harmed some one.

Oh! take care, take care what you are doing, lest some younger sister may say to you in the far future, "She first led me wrong, she was always dreaming herself; I first learnt from her how sweet those dreams were; now she must answer for my further sin."

It displeases God. He has put us into a certain sphere, and gives us just our day's work to do; and He does not mean that we should anticipate *other* joys or *other* trials that do not come into His list. He tells us to live on day by day, and not wish for what we have not got. He does not tell us what is coming, because He knows that somehow or other it would affect our present life, and make us do our work badly for thinking of it. God is wise not to tell us what is coming, for if it is good it would make us discontented till it came; and if bad it might make us to be always fearing its arrival. Still more, then, we must not be always dreaming over what we would *like* to have. Pray to God to help you. We cannot do anything

without Him—you will want a great deal of His help. It is a hard battle, but you can and *will* conquer if you trust to Him.

Try to have as much to do in your day as will quite fill it; have some little work to take up in odd moments; never complain of having too much to do. Busy people have no time to dream, and so their lives are healthier, and happier, and calmer than yours is. They live on from day to day, just doing their allotted work as well as they are able. They cannot waste time in dreaming. Dreams never come quite true—how can they? Have you ever noticed, if you have thought over and anticipated a thing very much—perhaps it may have been an anxiety or a pleasure—how *very* different the reality sometimes turns out to be?

Don't spoil your enjoyments by forestalling them. Nothing ever turns out as we expect, and I am sure that as the thinking of possible troubles is often greater than the troubles are when they really come, so the best and freshest of our joys are taken away by dreaming of them beforehand. Dreams do us no *good*; they do not bring the thing we want any the nearer. Do be brave, do put them away, do just the next thing, and trust to God for what is to follow. Work *now*, struggle *now*, and in the future God will give you the knowledge of Him, and the vision of His glory will exceed the sweetest earthly dream, for it will be a never-ending, never-ceasing *Reality*.

IX.

LONELINESS AND LOW SPIRITS.

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before ;
He that unto God's Kingdom comes
Must enter by this door."—R. BAXTER.

"Let her be rich and weary, that at least
If goodness lead her not, yet weariness
May toss her to my breast."—G. HERBERT.

How dreary and dark some of the days of our life are, even in early girlhood ! There are some days when the sun seems as if it has never shone, and will never shine again ; some days when the daily routine of life is so intolerably dreary, that we feel in a sort of despair. It is hard to find anything to interest us. Everything we try to do is distasteful ; we begin a great many things, but none of them seem to be any good ; and at last we wander about the house doing nothing, though each hour we waste adds to our discomfort, and makes it all the harder to force ourselves to settle down to anything. Then come in all the miserable thoughts that we know so well. Some old anxiety is raked up, or some grievance, and the

more we think of it, the more we feel sorry for and pity ourselves; and then we begin to think what a hard lot we have, and wonder why everybody seems so disagreeable to us. On days like this we feel as if life is not worth living, and we wonder when it will ever end! Everything we touch seems to come to grief. We take up our work, and break needle after needle; then our book gets dull; or the practising seems so particularly difficult, that it is quite useless to do any more of that, and we shut the piano fretfully. Now there is only one remedy for this *ennui*, as the French call it; and that is by resolutely setting ourselves to do *one* thing, even though it is perfectly flavourless and distasteful to us. It is a great thing to have certain definite employments belonging to every day, and the more mechanical they are the better, so that when the low spirits come upon us, we are obliged to do our task just the same. Very often that very irksome duty is the very thing to cure us of our miserable feelings, and even drive them quite away.

I do not believe that poor people who have to work hard for their bread, on the dull days and the sunny days alike, whether they feel ill or well, happy or miserable, suffer so much from occasional low spirits as you or I do, not because they are not capable of feeling them, but because they simply have not the time. It is because you have not enough to do that those feelings come to you.

If your day was quite full of some occupation, you would not have time for them. Oh! it is no curse to be so busy that we hardly know how to get through all in the day; it is the greatest blessing we can have; it is such a safeguard against temptation. However, sometimes, in spite of everything, we cannot always fight against being sad; we cannot always avoid low spirits. Perhaps it has something to do with our bodily health; for health of body and health of mind are very near together; and if our bodies are not well, very often our spirits suffer too. Try to go out for a long walk, or take some other exercise. Very often fresh air is a wonderful means of sweeping away the brain "cobwebs."

One thing about low spirits is, they don't last for ever. Do not go on fancying things will not come right again—for they *will*. To-morrow, perhaps, the sun will shine, and your heart will shine too, and you will be wondering why you were so miserable yesterday. And the dreary days have their use. Think how monotonous it would be to be always in sunshine. They tell us that the hot glare of a noon-day in the Canary Islands, with its everlasting blue sky without a cloud, is as trying in its way, to the people there, as our fogs and mists are to us in England.

There is another and a greater trial than the dreariness and monotony of daily life, which I also feel I must speak of. It is loneliness. We all

feel it at times ; we all know its sharp sting. As we grow older we feel it more, and in time get more used to it. It is in those first years that we feel it most. Some girls are so reserved that they have not the power to express what they feel. They long for sympathy, just like other people, but they cannot say so. They cannot show pleasure at a gift, or look interested at an amusement, not because they are not enjoying it, but because when they want to express themselves they become powerless. There is a sort of barrier between them and others ; a sort of nervousness which makes them do and say exactly the opposite to what they wished to say ; and instead of the thoughts they are longing to put into words, if they speak at all, they say something quite different. They are completely misunderstood. They are called dull, or sulky, and people speak of them as unattractive. No doubt they are ; but who is it that knows or thinks much about that aching void beneath that silent countenance, which is enough in itself to make anybody unattractive ? Have all the grown-up people quite forgotten it all ?—or did they perhaps never feel it ? They did not all feel it. Some few people, I believe, pass through the world without ever feeling lonely. They do not know what it is to feel as if nobody understands, as if no one in this world ever will understand us, and comfort us. Be comforted in your dark hours. Remember, you who suffer, that it is your best

nature, your highest nature, your true self which in this pain is struggling to gain the ascendancy.

It is the sensitive who suffer most; it is the deep, true natures, not the gay and careless, who know the meaning of pain of mind.

Have you ever been in a London church alone? Have you sat amongst the crowded seats, with not a face near you that you have ever seen before? That is loneliness. But I know a loneliness greater than that; it is the loneliness of being misunderstood and misjudged by others, by having our noblest thoughts and aspirations snubbed, by being passed over and forgotten. I do not think that this loneliness is a passing thing; I have not felt it so myself. The only comfort I have ever found in it is rather to acknowledge the fact, and instead of thinking about our own trials, to get up at once, and see if we cannot find somebody as lonely as ourselves. You will not have to go very far for that. It may be that we shall have to be kind, and bright, and loving, to the very people who make us feel most lonely. Be it so; perhaps you will suddenly find that they are suffering in the same way, and how good will be the discovery, for then you will be lonely no more.

"Rich and weary." Did you not read what I put at the beginning? "*Poor* and weary," you say, "it ought to be." It is a great trial to feel lonely, or weary, and sick at heart, but those trials are sent for some good purpose.

What if they "toss you to His breast"? It is the meaning of all our trials to drive us there. We are dissatisfied and so desponding, and we are even tired of being good, so *weariness* tosses us into His arms, and they fold themselves around us, and He tells us to rest there.

Keep up your hope; think of the sun behind the cloud; think that he has never ceased shining in the sky for one single hour or second, ever since the day when God created him; and no one knows how old he is; no one can reckon back to his beginning, and yet God is before all suns. Cannot God, who has no beginning and no ending, hold our little lives in His keeping, and cannot we dare to trust that it will be a safe keeping?

"*Rich* and weary." Old George Herbert knew what he was saying when he said that. He knew pretty well what it was like to feel out of sorts, and tired, and in low spirits. But he was able even then to say that he was "rich." He knew well that those are "rich" who can trust themselves to God in that way. We are too independent; we want to have everything our own way. We work and play when the fit takes us, but when the fit does *not* take us we get weary, and we are too proud to ask Some One else to be strong for us. So we are "poor"—poor because we are so unwise.

We wonder why our duties have become so terribly tiresome, so difficult to do, so distasteful in the doing. Well, we must be tired at times, and

perhaps "being tired" will do us good. If we were never tired, we should never know the blessing of "rest." Who does not know the luxury of lying down in bed after the long tiring day—being still in the dark, alone with God, after all the heat and turmoil? Is it not worth the toil to have such a reward? So, when we are weary, when circumstances in our lives take away our laughter for a time, when our minds are full of conflicting thoughts, let us go straight to God, and ask Him to give us Hope again—and Rest. Just believe that He knows, even if He gives you no alleviation, and believe that it is all part of His working, who is hammering out and chiselling the stone to make it a holy Temple acceptable to Himself.

"If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad—but not in Thee.

"We need as much the Cross we bear,
As air we breathe, as light we see,—
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in Thee."

A. L. WARING

X.

LITTLE THINGS.

"Small sands the mountain,
Moments make the year,
And *trifles* life."

I FEEL obliged to write a paper about "little things," because I think we are all of us apt to forget how really great they are. We spend so much time in thinking of what *great* things we will do, what great sights we will see, perhaps what great and noble lives we are going to lead, and we put aside the fact that all these great things are made up of small ones.

The older you grow the more you will realize this. Perhaps it will be a disappointment to you ; perhaps it will be a long time before you realize it ; perhaps you will fight against it for a long time ; but in the end you will have to acknowledge that it is in the little duties, and little cares, and little pleasures, and the little encouragements, and perhaps too the little failures, that your life will be really lived.

It is a much harder life ; it is so commonplace.

It has none of the honour and glory of great deeds, but it is a life that many women have to live, and to live cheerfully. Supposing instead of talking of all the horrors of it, I were to suggest to you how bearable and even enjoyable it may be.

Think of those who have everything they want, that money can give them, who go where they want, who amuse themselves. Are they always quite happy? No. They have used up all the world has to give them, and nothing gives them pleasure. They are sometimes miserable and discontented. That is because they have not found the pleasure to be got out of "little things." Supposing you have been longing for a great while for a book, or a picture, or some other thing which you wanted to have. How you saved up your money for months, perhaps, until you bought it, and oh, what a pleasure it was to possess it at last! How often you take up that book now, and feel you almost love it. It reminds you of so many little sacrifices, and it is doubly precious to you because it has cost you something. If you had been able to buy it directly you wished for it, you would not have cared for it half so much. You know how to be pleased with little things, simply because you are not spoilt by having too many of the greater ones.

It is a thing not to be despised if you have the power of enjoying small things. It will not debar you from greater ones, but it will give you a great

deal more happiness in life than those enjoy who want much. Great happiness and great sorrow come to us once or twice in a lifetime, and they have their compensations as well as their trials, for they come on the wings of sympathy from others. It is in the small daily joys and daily trials of our common lot that we are so much alone, and no one but ourselves suffer or enjoy those things. They are too small for sympathy. They are such "little things," they are not worth speaking about.

But it is in these very little things which we so much despise that our whole lives and characters are being formed. It is in the little forbearances with the little faults that irritate us in other people that we learn self-control. It is the insignificant little deeds of kindness that we do every day, that others miss most, when we are not there. It is in the daily performance of tiresome little duties that our lives are spent, and we must not grumble at not being given greater ones.

"He that is faithful in that which is *least*, is faithful also in *much*." Who knows but that you are doing a great work in your little life, which perhaps you will never know the importance of till you die, and look back upon it all as a thing of the past. It is a greater and a nobler battle than the taking of nations, this struggle you have with yourself to restrain that temper of yours sometimes. No one knew what it cost you to hold your tongue. No

one but God ever saw you wrestling with evil thoughts, or trying to do your lessons when every inclination led you to long to be out in the woods and fields. No one saw that struggle not to tell that lie, or knew what was under the brave, bright face when some one succeeded better than you in what you had thought you had done so nicely. They seem to the world *small* things, but they were great in the sight of God. Never think a thing is so small "it does not matter." Everything matters—everything that we do or say, or even think, matters very much. Every single incident in your life belongs to a chain of other events which all have their important place in the forming of your character, and none must be repudiated or put aside because it is too small to matter.

One great point in this is the influence we have in little ways on others. Perhaps a smile or a word which we have forgotten all about may have its place in the soul of some other, which marks the turning-point of her whole life. Perhaps an unkind word hastily spoken may change a friend into a foe, long after you have forgotten you ever said it. One unkind remark about some one else may leave a stain on their character always.

Do you remember the story of the poor lonely woman who was going to throw herself into the river from London Bridge one dark night? Every-

thing had gone against her; she was poor and weak, and very lonely, and there were not even "little" joys to brighten her poor sad life. Some one was passing just at the moment, and he saw the poor woman, and he said brightly as he passed, just one little word, "Good-night." She turned her head, she stopped, she was so surprised. Who was there in this wide world who cared to say "Good-night" to such as she? It was such a little word, but it saved her life. She could not drown herself after that; no, she must live now. It led her to find a shelter for destitute women, and she went in and was received kindly; and in after years, when hope and peace had found their way into her heart again, she looked back to having been saved from such a terrible sin by that one word "Good-night" from a passing stranger.

I think we ought to try and make it a sort of duty to be on the look-out to do little services for others. If we get into a habit of it, it is wonderful how naturally they come—and they cost us so little. To be careful not to sit in the most comfortable chair, not to keep the fire away from others, to find a footstool for an old person, to watch if a person seems to want anything at meals, to see quickly when people are tired and do not want you. Oh, so many, many things, I cannot think of them all. You will find them out for yourself if you try.

It is in the losing sight of *little* sins too that we

suddenly find they have become great ones. It is the tiresome *little* habits which, if not corrected, will become unmanageable. It is a small thing to prevaricate about truth, compared to a real lie, but it is the first step to a lie for all that. It is excusable to oversleep ourselves now and then, but it is wonderful how difficult it is to get up in time for the next few days after. A small discouragement, too; how it gets magnified; how we think about it, and how it hinders us.

Let us try not to forget the all-importance of small things, and at the same time not allow them to be our masters; not to forget that nothing is small in the sight of God, and at the same time not to allow ourselves to be the slaves of circumstances. If we are given a "small life," we must live it, and make it a great one. It is not the sort of life we lead that fits us for eternity, it is the way we live that life.

Remember it is all our great school-time; we are always learning, learning, learning on this earth. Everything that happens, small or great, is ordered for every separate soul by God. Nothing ever comes by mistake or chance. As you see the little children in school going over and over again the same lesson, a little at a time, because they are too young to bear more, so know that you are being guided in your life in the same manner. We are all little children, and in this life of ours we must accept the small things, little by little, as

E

part of our education. We know not what in the far future may be set for us to do or to achieve. All we know is that if we are faithful in small things now, we shall some day learn that it was the only way in which we began to be faithful in many things hereafter.

XI.

SYMPATHY.

“Sympathy

Must call her in Love's name! And then, I know,
She rises up and brightens as she should,
And lights her smile for comfort, and is slow
In nothing of high-hearted fortitude.
To smell this flower, come near it! Such can grow
In that sole garden where Christ's brow dropped blood.”

E. B. BROWNING.

WHAT is it that we turn to as the chief of all the wishes we would like most fulfilled? What is it that we long for before anything else in this world? What is it that we feel before all things else we can the least do without? It is sympathy. It begins when we are little children. Do you not remember the toy or the flower which was given you?—how it filled you with joy—joy which you longed at once for your mother, or some one else, to sympathize in—to be glad with you. Do you remember with what pain you turned away, and how the tears came to your eyes, if she was busy, and could not give you, perhaps, at the moment, all the sympathy you asked for?

As you grew older the feeling grew. You were interested in something. You had just been reading some book ; you were full of it. You were not happy till you could talk it over with some equally enthusiastic girl, whose eyes would sparkle at your description, and who would make you feel as if she enjoyed it as keenly as you had done. Perhaps she became from that moment your friend. You felt she understood you ; and, by degrees, you told her all you wanted so much to do ; all you were thinking about ; all your longings ; all your dreams and hopes and fears. You felt as if you were not alone any more ; you had some one to sympathize with you.

As you grow older and older the deep longing for sympathy increases. Perhaps the early friend, who was once so much to you, grows apart from you. Perhaps you develop different tastes. Perhaps there are some thoughts which come to you at times which make you feel as if they are too great to put into words, and which even that old friend cannot quite understand. You are not happy. You long to express yourself ; you cannot do so. You long for sympathy. It is only after you have felt the yearning for sympathy, though, that you can really appreciate it when it comes.

If there has never been a thought, or an inspiration, or an idea in your mind which some one has not understood, you will not have really felt the

blessing of sympathy. It is only when you have felt the intense need of it, that you can truly know what sympathy means, can truly be thankful when you have it. Who does not know the peace of pouring out all one's troubles—the big ones and the little ones alike—to some one who listens as if she cares, and who helps you to bear them?—who does not misjudge you; who is not too much shocked at you; who does not look as if she is bored at your long story. You feel as if you would go to her again next time. But supposing the next time she is out of the way, or busied with something; you turn with a heavy heart, and feel you can hardly bear your trouble alone.

There are joys as well as sorrows that we need sympathy in. Some wonderful music we have heard seems to fill our whole soul with emotion. We cannot speak; we feel sad, we know not why; we are taken out of ourselves; we want some one to understand our mood, but we cannot exactly explain how we feel. Then, if some one slips a hand into ours, and looks as if she understands our feeling, we are satisfied; we want no more. Perhaps a wonderful picture strikes our fancy, or a beautiful bit of colour makes us feel, we know not what, and we stand and gaze with our hearts full, trying to put our thoughts into order, wishing we could say something, but not knowing what to say. Oh! the rest of feeling that some one is standing by who feels it too; who will not scoff at our

fancies ; will not laugh at what we deem so real ; will not call us silly and sentimental.

If only we can find some one who understands, what matter if the rains and storms blow over our heads ?—what matter if we are poor, or sick ?—what matter anything, so long as we are known, and loved, and felt for ?

But it comes not to everybody to have this sympathy ; and even those to whom it comes have solitary corners in their hearts which never get filled. We have to learn that the older we grow the more we shall have to feel that it is not always for us. It is better for us that it should not be so. If we have never needed sympathy, if we never longed for it so intensely that we feel at times as if we can hardly live without it, we shall never become sympathetic to others.

It is all sent for a good purpose ; to teach us to feel and to think for others, as we so long for them to feel with us ; and you know that to feel and sympathize with others is the true mission of a woman in this world.

Have you ever longed to be greatly loved ? Of course you have. I do not mean in a general way ; I mean exclusively ; to belong to some one ; to be first with some one ; to be the dearest to some one.

You have an ideal, no doubt ; you picture that ideal in your own mind ; you hope you will meet that ideal some day. Most of all, you look forward

to a day when that one will not only love you, but sympathize with you. It is full *understanding* that we long for, and that we cannot get. The older we grow, and the more we learn to care for things beautiful, and good, and great, the more we long to pour out ourselves, to have some one who feels as we do, who enjoys what we enjoy. We cannot enjoy deeply without an oppressive longing to share it with some one. Otherwise it becomes deep pain, and the very thing which we thought we liked so much loses its charm, and becomes distasteful.

I do not think you will find that, as years go by, that longing and craving for sympathy will spend itself. As not even the "tenderest heart and next our own knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh," so will you find that it will never be wholly satisfied. In fact it will grow with you as your mind grows, and you will have to learn in time that there will be some parts of your nature never revealed to any eye but God's. It will come to you slowly, and perhaps with many tears, but it will bring also its own compensations in its train. As you grow less desirous to be *wholly* understood, so will you learn to find out many unexpected points of sympathy in others, which will save you from thinking that you *alone* can know and feel, and in time perhaps be the means of sympathizing with others, in a way you never could have done had you not known the longing

for sympathy yourself. I want you to learn not to make that desire for sympathy so prominent in your hearts; not to look forward to a time when you will be *wholly* understood to make up for all these lonely hours now. Indeed, that time will never come to you in this world. As we are all different in some little point of character to each other, so must we expect not to find perfect sympathy in everything we do or think from others.

I think it may become a terrible snare to us, and even a temptation, to long for this sympathy so greatly, that we may be led into exaggerating our own troubles in order to get it. To those who lead lonely lives I know no greater temptation than that of enlarging upon their troubles—not consciously of course—in order to receive more of that delicious sympathy, which they perhaps receive rarely, and in consequence of its rarity place upon such a high level when it comes. Sympathy is God's own gift. It is the very sunshine of our lives; without it we feel cold and dead. In its presence we warm and expand, and become tender-hearted and happy.

But you, who know what it is to long to be understood, and "felt with"—for that is the true meaning of the word "sympathy"—see that your yearning longing does not make you cold, and desponding, and bitter. See instead, that your yearning, aching heart forces you to look around

you and feel for and with others. You are not the only one who has felt these feelings; not the only one who has been "misunderstood." Turn to them, and draw from them by your gentle, womanly tact what they are longing to express. Listen gently to their pent-up story; show them that you are interested in what they say, and give to them all that you have so longed for yourself. You will not lose by this; you will learn rather that in giving sympathy to others, because you know how dreadful it is to be without it yourself, you perhaps are gaining the longed-for blessing after all.

Make up your mind to forget self. Put it all aside in your endeavours to feel with others. Let them say of you, that they know where to go for help; they know who will not snub them; they know who will *feel* for them, because, and *only* because, she has *felt* it herself first; and truly you will know the meaning of these grand words—

"A child's kiss

"Set on thy sighing lips, shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served *thyself* by every sense
Of service which thou renderest."—E. B. BROWNING.

XII.

SELF-CULTURE.

"Not what I have, but what I do, is my kingdom."

CARLYLE

I HAVE heard people say, "I was never well educated, so I cannot be expected to know much now," and they smile blandly and sit, so to speak, with their hands in their lap—doing nothing ; just as if the fault of their early want of education was meant to continue through life, without an effort on their part to dispel it.

We are sent to school quite as much for the good we receive by discipline, as for what we actually learn there. By regular routine and fixed hours of work we ought to sow the seeds of future desires to learn ; and I do believe true knowledge is much more really gained in the after years, when the school-days are over, by those who have the energy to work for themselves.

We need never be too old to learn, so instead of deploring our past days of idleness, might we not become industrious now as quickly as we can ? There are plenty of ways by which we can im-

prove ourselves. By reading, by conversation, by listening, by not wasting time, by doing everything that is set before us as well as it is in our power to do it. People who are really in earnest can educate themselves better than any one else can do for them.

Now about time. I, of course, cannot lay down rules about time; but we all have some time which we can call our own in the day. Some girls have a great deal more than they know what to do with; but I believe that those who are really the busiest often get through the most. They have not a moment to waste, and so they divide their time carefully, and pick up all the odd moments they can. There is a story of a man who wrote a book by merely gathering up the ten minutes that his wife kept him every day waiting for his dinner. Not a very creditable story to the wife's punctuality though!

You say you have not time for this or that, but I wonder how many hours you can spend over tennis or a novel in the course of the day!

Lord Bacon gives a very short rule for self-education, he divides it into three heads—

1. Reading makes the full man;
2. Writing the exact man;
3. Conversation the ready man—

so suppose we take it in the same order. I think we ought to have a good useful book by us to read a portion of every day. Of course I do not mean a novel or a story-book, but one that has plenty of

solid reading in it, and that will be likely to teach us something. You might begin with a good history or a biography; or travels, which are always such good lessons in geography; but whatever you begin, be sure you continue. Try and read it for half an hour every day, and don't let a day go by without its being done. As you read, keep a notebook beside you, and note down the chief headings of the chapters, leaving one side of your page blank for any notes you may make, or questions you may want to ask. You might go over the reading of the day before, and ask yourselves questions upon it to see if you remember. Keep a map and a dictionary by your side. Look out all the words you do not know, and note them in your book, and find all the places that are mentioned. Even in reading the newspaper a map is a very essential thing, and when you have once found a place there, you will understand so much better any allusions to it, or descriptions of its scenery.

I am rather afraid that when we "are grown up," as we are apt to imagine ourselves at eighteen or twenty, we are in a sort of way ashamed of doing a thing thoroughly—I am thinking of the map business just now, though I think it applies, does it not, to other things as well?—and we let a place go without looking for it, because we think it is so and so, and "it would look so ignorant to look it out." There is no disgrace in being ignorant, but there is a disgrace in remaining so, just because of

a little pride, and a good deal of indolence. The surest way to lose our ignorance is to make up our minds to look our ignorance in the face, and we shall soon be so much ashamed of it, that we shall not want to keep it long.

Beside your rough note-book I advise you to keep another (rather a stout one) always by you. Into this copy passages of poetry and prose that may strike you in your daily reading—your own thoughts, your own poetry, if you make any ; any scraps of letters which may be worth remembering ; any interesting conversation you may have taken part in ; any little sketch or essay ; in fact, anything that strikes you in your daily life. Don't show the book about ; keep it entirely to yourself. If you can get one with a lock so much the better, and do not be afraid of how mixed it is. This one thing only I advise you, let it be clearly and neatly written, and if possible a heading of the subject in the corner of the line above it, and leave plenty of space between the extracts. Also be sure to date each, and where they come from, each time. I advise only one book, because it is more portable, and from having many such books on hand, I have found it irksome ; but if you like, you could keep two books, one for extracts from other books alone, and the other for your own effusions. You will get so fond of your book, if you continue it. It will be like a diary to you as you turn over the pages, and you will remember many a pleasant

walk or talk through its means, which you would otherwise have forgotten all about. Things that happen to us in our daily lives are so all-important at the time, that we think we shall always remember them. Not so; "the petty dust of every day" comes and covers over our memories, and "we forget because we must, and not because we will."

It will be a great help to your memory, to say nothing of the good it will do to you in giving you accuracy and fluency of expression, and in improving your composition. Conversation, too, is another form of education. This may, of course, not be always in your power, but when it comes in your way cultivate it, and don't be afraid to speak out what you really think. Listen carefully to what others have to say, and do not answer at random; and be sure you do not be afraid of asking questions about things you do not understand, or even words of which you are not sure of the meaning.

I do not think I need add much about the ways and means of self-education. Books are now to be procured in such cheap forms—real good standard books too—that even those girls with most limited means can get some of them for themselves. How different it was for our grandmothers, and even our mothers, when books were almost an impossible luxury! Now we have no such excuse. Every means is put in our way; do let us use them well.

Try and cultivate your sense of beauty; keep your eyes open when you go out walking. Note

the beautiful effects of clouds and sunshine, and trees and flowers. Note colour, and how wonderfully nature blends her tints. This will teach you to discriminate between good and bad taste in colour, and help you to understand the laws of true harmony.

Note faces. Look out for the expression which is the real part of a face. Try and do all you can to call up the beautiful part of a person's nature. Note the smile which you like so well on this countenance, or the look of deep inner thought so dear to you on that. Note down in your book little incidents which may strike you as beautiful or unselfish in others. You have no idea how much beauty there is in the world if you keep your eyes open, and don't let your heart be soured by ill-will or discontent. All this is education; all this is forming your mind towards the sun, helping you to look up as the daisies do, to the Source of Light and Life, even to the God of all beauty who gave you your being.

Listen to music, and play yourself when you can. It is such a source of enjoyment both to yourself and others. Try to educate your ear, not only to enjoy mere tunes, but the harmony of certain chords, and more elaborate music. Try to understand some of the great composers; shut your eyes, and try to take in what they are saying to you. Perhaps it will be difficult at first, and you may go away bewildered, if you are not in the

habit of hearing good music. Music is like poetry—it speaks only to those who are willing to hear it, and often indirectly, that is, not to be easily understood. But don't be in a hurry for the result; listen patiently, and let it work its own true way. Go again and again when you can, and you will find that it will slide into the soul of your inmost being, and though you will not exactly be able to translate its speech, you will find it has done you good, has left within you a certain soft tenderness, and a certain longing after higher things. A modern poet speaking of music says that "God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear; the rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians *know*." Music is a great vent to pent-up feelings. But we have many outlets for the overflowing of our young souls. You may like pictures better than music, or poetry than both. Rather, perhaps, I would say, we are creatures of many moods, and one thing helps us at one time and another at another time.

If you have the advantage of living in London, go to the National Gallery, and spend a quiet hour there, amongst the Italian masters. Just try and see a few of the pictures each time, and observe carefully every detail of form and colour. I suggest these old masters because we see that their motive was such a true one. They aimed at higher things than many of our modern painters do, for when they had an idea they tried to carry it out,

without the lower motive of whether they were personally liked by the public; and their pictures, which were for the most part on sacred subjects, were painted with great care, and I dare say many prayers as well. I do not mean to disparage modern art. Go and compare both sorts, and judge for yourself. You will find in the latter more perfect drawing and composition; but I doubt if you will there always find the beautiful humility, and reverence, and perfect forgetfulness of self, so often depicted in the countenances, which fill those earlier pictures with a sort of unearthly light.

Do you like poetry?—I hope so. Anyhow do try and read a very little each day. It is a very good thing to have learnt poetry by heart too. One seems to understand better what one has first committed to memory, than by merely reading over the poem. If you only learnt by heart a verse a day, or eight lines of poetry, you will in time gather up a great store, and though you may not find any particular good in the present by so doing (nay, you may even forget what you have learnt), I do not believe it will be all wasted, for it will come back again to you, when you are ill or lonely in future years. Take a poem of Robert Browning's, we will say *Abt Vögler* or *Rabbi ben Ezra*, or Wordsworth's *Ode to Immortality*, and tell me if you do not find how much better you understand it after you have learnt it, than you ever did before, by only reading it.

Keep your thoughts and readings and studies above all under the influence of conscience. Be very careful to avoid by sight and sound and thought anything that makes you feel ashamed of what you are doing. Avoid what seems to drag you down, even though it may be in itself innocent. Avoid curiosity about what you do not understand, and shut your eyes resolutely if a picture or a book makes you have wrong thoughts. Even the beautiful things which God has given us so richly to enjoy may be turned into harm if we are not careful. Let your mind be like a flower in the early morning, before the hot sun has quenched its dew, and in the right enjoyment of all good things you will find

“Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

XIII.

THRIFT.

"Be thriftie, but not covetous ; therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due."

GEORGE HERBERT.

"Never exceed thy income."—GEORGE HERBERT.

THRIFT means taking care of what is put into our charge, and making the best use of it—our money, our clothes, our books, any other possession. Thrift does not mean hoarding up a thing and putting it out of sight, be it money or any other object. It means making it as useful as possible, for others as well as ourselves, without being extravagant and wasteful.

I am devoting a chapter to thrift, because I think we, as girls, often would be glad of a few hints on the subject ; for we have wasted so much in our life simply from want of a little orderliness and method, and also self-sacrifice. Take the subject of money—it is a wide subject, and a very complicated one. As I am writing to girls rich as well as poor, I cannot put down definite rules about the spending of money. We will suppose

that some have an allowance of their own (whether it is much or little does not signify here—the same general rules apply to all—as it is just as wrong to waste a large amount of money as a little); some, perhaps, if they are poor, have to earn the money they have; some have none at all, and to these just now I am not speaking.

Girls are very much pleased when the first quarter's allowance comes to them, but they often find it very hard to make "both ends meet" when the year comes to an end. Why is this? Simply because they had not forethought, and spent without intending it, more than they were at all aware. We have to learn experience by a great many disagreeable ways, and the learning how to take care of money is one of them.

The first way to get out of this mire is to exercise self-control—not to make up our mind to buy a thing (I am not speaking of necessities) *directly* one thinks one wants it, but to wait awhile, and be sure we can afford it honestly, before we rush off to buy it.¹ I often find it a very good plan not to carry more than a few shillings at a time about with me. It is often a check upon me, and when I have been home and thought it over, I may perhaps find it best to give the coveted thing up. Then about presents too; we must deny ourselves the pleasure

¹ See Jane Taylor's paper, *I can do without it*, in *two* parts, showing the *right* and *wrong* use of the expression. "The Contributions or Q.Q.," vol. ii.

of giving, if we cannot honestly afford it; and I am sure a great many girls to whom I am writing know what it is to want money.

I have, I am sure, come to the right conclusion in this—that in all our possessions our *first* thought is self-control and self-denial in the use of them. This keeps a check upon us, and leaves us more money for charitable purposes, as well as keeping our wills in proper order. If we had £1000 a year, I feel sure we still ought to exercise the same control about it, and not always get a thing just because we want it.

The secret of thrift is to live *within your income*. It does not matter if it is £10 or £100 a year, the same rule applies always, and you will have to arrange your spendings accordingly. Be *very* careful, if possible, not to run up bills, but pay when you can for everything as you get it. I know it is not always possible; but remember this rule as much as you can, for it affects others as well as yourself. Think of the dressmaker, who has to get buttons and tapes and lining for your gowns, and to pay her women, and to earn her daily bread, all on the credit she gets from you. She is doubtless a good deal poorer than you are, and does not like to run up bills any more than you do, but she is obliged to when “the ladies don’t pay her.” To go a lower step, she in her turn is obliged to give credit to her workwomen, and supposing they are mothers, with children depending on their weekly earnings

for their bread, the children can't wait to starve, even if you wait to pay.

It is better to do without, than let so many people suffer for your thoughtlessness—perhaps I might add your selfishness; for if you had not spent your money on something you did not so much want, you would have had enough for this. Is it not so?—you were not exercising the *needful self-control*. If it is possible for you, you should try and save a little each year; it may come in useful one needy day, and it will give you strength in your self-denial—and peace.

Don't forget to keep a book for accounts; it helps us in more ways than one. First, it acts as a sort of conscience to us when we look at its pages, and then too it is very useful in remembering what things cost, and calculating at once if we can afford a new duplicate. This is different to being stingy and miserly; on the contrary, if we know how every penny goes we are much more likely to be *able* to be generous with our money. "But I can't always balance it rightly," you say. No, I know what a bother that is; but depend upon it, if you make it a rule to write down at the end of each day what you may have spent, you will find the difficulty vanish, and you will not find your accounts "all wrong." It is very little trouble, if done at the time, but a great deal of trouble if only noted down occasionally.

Don't spend all your money directly you get it.

Try and keep a little always in hand, in case of any emergency or sudden need. You will be sure to want it—so take care. Try and manage your clothes in such a way that you will not need them all to be renewed at once. Get a set of things one year, and another set another, so that you may have a more equal pulling of your purse-strings. Don't buy a thing unless you *really* need it. Often by spending money on what we think "looks pretty, and *may* be useful to us some day," is only a waste of so many shillings, which we may seriously want sooner or later for some forgotten necessity, when the articles which they were wasted on are thrown away and forgotten.

Now for luxuries. As far as you can afford them, keep a strict guard in your use of them. If it is a desire for books, say, make up your mind not to go beyond a certain sum in the year; or presents, anything that it may be, don't gratify your desires impulsively, but go quietly to work, and let your will be strong enough to keep you from buying them if you are doubtful about being able to do it. You will love the coveted object all the more when you *do* get it, if you have denied yourself something and waited for it.

I don't know any of our possessions that we value so much as those which we had to wait for, or have had some self-denial in procuring. They are so much more loved by us than the things which cost us nothing. Try and be content with not buying a

thing because "other people have got it," if you can reasonably do without. It is often a very strong impulse, but not, I think, always a wise one, and in your cooler moments you will perhaps regret having given way to it.

To keep our clothes as tidy as possible is thrifty, I am sure; not to be lazy and afraid to mend them directly a hole is found, and to put them away carefully, helps to make them last longer. I do not know if you have ever apportioned out any part of your day to different objects. I think it is a good plan to give oneself a "task" for every day; say a certain amount of reading and a certain amount of work to be done and got through. I have found that it is good to set apart one day in the week for mending. If you did this resolutely every Monday, let us say, you would be astonished how little you have to do; whereas, if you let a pile of mending accumulate, it is dreadful to see the quantity of work before you. Look over your clean linen, and never put it away till it is mended.

Another way to make your clothes last longer, and not look shabby, is to be very tidy in your habits; to put them away whenever you have done with them, and to brush them before putting them in their places. Order and thrift go hand in hand; you cannot be truly thrifty without being tidy as well. Look upon tidiness as a sort of virtue that you must strive to acquire. Let your mind and your room be equally in order. Make a rule

to put away each thing as you use it, in its proper place. It does not take longer to be tidy, though for the moment it may be irksome to stop to put the thing away. It takes you much longer if you have to look for it the next time you want it. People laugh and say, "I am dreadfully untidy, I know," just as if it were something to be proud of, and they toss their things about just as much as before, and then wonder why they have to be always buying new ones.

I believe it is not only a folly but a sin to be untidy. It shows a weak mind, disorderly in itself; it irritates one's nerves; it shows great indolence; it gives trouble to others; it wastes a quantity of time. Try, as you are trying to overcome other sins, to conquer yourself of being untidy in your ways. Do not keep old letters, or at least only a very few. There are some of course which we would never burn, letters of advice or interest, or from those who are dead. But these are few compared with the many we receive and never look at again, but do not like to burn. Be brave and burn them, especially if they relate to others, as soon as they are answered; but keep *their addresses*. Make a point of copying *every* address you write to or receive letters from, in *one* book, and keep that book near your diary and almanac, where you can at once put your hand upon it. You can get a very nice little book for sixpence, with alphabetical index for the purpose. Keep a diary—the smaller and the

shorter it is the better. Do not write long pages of your private thoughts, but jot down every day in the shortest manner just what you have done, whom you have seen, what you have read daily ; it may be very useful to refer to afterwards. If you keep it regularly, it will only take a few minutes each day.

Now one word about punctuality. That too comes under the head of order and thrift. It makes the threefold cord which will not easily break. Try to be always in time for everything. Try to come down in time for family prayers. Be always ready when the bell rings for meals. If you have an appointment, keep it to the minute. Do not hurry to catch a train. Give yourself time for things. It does not *waste* time to go a little earlier to the station, or to be down a few minutes before meals, instead of a few minutes too late. It is a mistaken notion we have of finishing something up to the last minute, and then hurrying to the next thing. Let us have the strength of mind to stop when it is time for something else, so as to give ourselves time for it. If we are a long time dressing for dinner or for a walk, we should go up before the others to get ready. What is necessary is, that they should not have to *wait* for *us*.

Remember how selfish it is to be unpunctual. You do not know to what an extent you can injure another by it, to say nothing of the demoralizing effect upon yourself. Let them not have to com-

plain that you keep them waiting—wait yourself rather. You need not be idle while you wait. Some people have knitting to take up ; others can keep a little book in their pocket. Do you know Cassell's little volumes of poets in paper covers at fourpence ? They are very small, and a play of Shakespeare's might beguile many a waiting moment ; or you might keep a little Testament in your pocket and read that.

It is in want of method, and in being too impulsive, that we become unpunctual ; and if you ever hope to rule a house of your own one day, it will be the first lesson you will have to carry out—this of punctuality. Without it everything goes wrong. Begin now—make order and punctuality such habits with you, that it will be perfect pain to you to see the lack of either in others. Follow out what I have suggested, and it will be the means of making not only yourself, but the lives of those around you better and happier.

XIV.

FRIENDS.

“ When a sense of human kindness hath found us,
We seem to have around us
An atmosphere all gold.”—CLOUGH.

OH the friendships of our girlhood! How quickly they are made, and what a halo of glory there is around them! What life-long vows we made of eternal devotion to one another! How soon we went away and took up some one else! Do not be angry with me for talking like this.

I dare say you have each got a friend, a friend whom you call especially yours, and to whom you confide all your “secrets,” as you walk with your arm round her waist of a summer evening, in the garden; and you love her very much, and you tell her you will love her for ever, and that nothing short of death shall part you two.

I wonder if you will stick to that friend as long as you now think you will; I wonder if, in a shorter time than you think, a cloud will come between you and drift you away from one another, further and further, like a widening river.

It often happens that our girlish friendships drift away like this. We grow in different surroundings, and our friends sometimes outgrow us, or differ from us as time goes on. So it is not always our fault when they change towards us. I am speaking chiefly of our early friendships, when our judgments are not so mature, and we are not able to discriminate character so well as we can later on. I do not say that it is a necessity that we must change towards our early friends ; in some cases the friends of our youth are friends of our whole lives : I only say that it is not an impossibility that we may do so.

However, knowing as I do the blessings of a few really lasting friendships, which are as unchanged now as they were many years ago, I want to give you a few hints about making and keeping friends.

Do not be impetuous ; do not make them in a hurry. It is much better to make friends slowly, than to have to be cold and distant to a person whom you once thought you felt a great affection for, without really knowing her well ; to find after a time that your love for her is cooling. When you are making a friend, find out first if she is a right-minded, modest girl, who is striving like you to act and think what is right. Do not be led away by those who merely flatter you ; they are not true friends who do that. They love you the best who dare to tell you of your faults, and nobody but a true friend will do so. Do not be led away by

mere looks, or a bright manner. Make sure that she cares about the things you do, and that intercourse with her does you good, and not harm. Be sure that she is pure-minded, loving truth and uprightness, and is conscientious over her duties.

There is a bit in one of Oliver W. Holmes' books about our hearts having two chambers; one to admit the world to, and the other to keep as a sacred ante-room for the few whom we love. He says the one is approached by the front-door, and the other by a secret door at the back. The key of this door we should trust only to one or two. He goes on to speak of the havoc that will be made if every one has access to this secret door.

Now what he means is this, that it is only to people who are our *true* friends that we dare tell all the thoughts that are in our hearts. The world would laugh at us, and be unsympathetic. Only to our close friends can we unburden all, with the blessed satisfaction of being "understood." When we are girls we are very impulsive, we long for sympathy, and we are apt to rush too quickly into friendships, just in order to tell out all our pent-up thoughts. In time we perhaps find that they do not really help us, and we begin to wish we had not been so impulsive. We are too fond of lending the key of our little chamber to everybody, and so it becomes our "secret" chamber no longer. Often one, or perhaps two friends, suffice for our needs, though I should not for a moment say it is not possible to

have more. Different people see different sides of our nature, and we can love them each so individually that no one usurps the particular corner of *each* one in our heart. It depends much upon temperament. Some can really confide in one only, and perhaps it is better for those who do so. But rules cannot be laid down on the subject. I do not believe in friendships being made in a day. I have long had a feeling that friendships, more than anything else, must go through a sort of probation before they are established—through parting, through meeting, through pain and even distrust, through trust again, through the ordeal of daily life, through the trial of seeing what a person *really* is apart from her “company manners;” even through falling out and reconciliation, must we pass, before our friends are ours.

When any one says to me “Be my *friend*,” I say “Wait five years,” and I think on the whole it is not a bad plan. If a friend is worth having, she is worth the test of years; and if you both can love each other just the same after all that time, I think such a friend would be one worth having.

Friendship does not mean only kissing one another, and calling each other by pretty names. A friend is a friend just the same on the other side of the world (*even* if you were debarred from letters to each other), as she is when she is sitting close by you, holding your hand. A friend ought to be a “helper.” Etymologically “friend” is the

present participle of the old English verb "to love"; it means "loving"; and if we love, we know that nothing, not even death itself, can really separate us from the loved one. She loves you, and because of it she would sacrifice herself to help you. She is the one who prays for you; who stands up for you when people speak ill of you; who believes in you. She comforts you in sorrow, she is happy in your joy; she dares to reprove you; she is so proud of you when you do well.

Such a friend is a prize; count yourself happy if you possess such an one. Thank God for her every day of your life. Be to others what she is to you. Think how many people there are who have not such a friend as that. Think of the many girls of your own age who have no one to love them and help them in that sweet way. Some are poorer than you; perhaps some of them are longing for help and sympathy. Find them out, and help them as you yourself have been helped. Let your great blessing shed some halo upon the hungry, yearning hearts who are lonely and friendless.

Remember that often a girl can help another girl, where grown-up people can do nothing. That is why I am writing to you now. I remember how a girl feels, and I am not too old even now to forget how I suffered and how I enjoyed. Often a word or a look from friends of an equal age is more reassuring and helpful than many words from an older person,

I have also something to say about the evil as well as the good of friendships. Be sure your friend is not one who would hinder instead of help you in your path towards what is right. Do not be drawn away and flattered by a person who is not as particular about trying to be good as you are, who is not quite truthful, who talks to you of evil, who is inclined to speak unkindly of others, who makes fun of religion and other things that you have been taught to reverence. Just in the same way as two good natures can be a strength to one another in helping one another to do right, so can two evil natures be a strength to help one another to do evil. More, even a good girl may be led away and entirely unhinged by the influence of an evil one; for it is much easier to do what is wrong than to be good always; and sometimes even the best of us are sadly weak and wanting in moral strength. By this I do not mean you to expect to find your friend without faults. That is a very different thing from choosing one for your friend who would absolutely do you harm. We are none of us perfect, and we very often try one another very much. A true friend bears with our faults, and we bear with her's; she may perhaps be struggling to overcome them as you are doing. In this you may be her greatest help and comfort; only be sure that her *aim* is a high one, as yours is, before you take her into your "secret chamber."

Do not be led away into the evils of confidential

talk. - I mean, do not let your close intercourse lead you into speculating and talking together on questions that you are ashamed of. Be very careful that your "secrets" are not of a kind that would make you start and blush if any one should overhear them. I believe it is quite possible for even pure-minded girls to talk about subjects when they are alone together that it is wrong for them to speculate or think about, not perhaps so much from a love of evil as from an intense curiosity. Have confidences if you will, but let them be such as to elevate your soul, not to drag it down. Be, as I said before, a *strength* to one another for good. Let the thought of God and His nearness to you be the third strand in the "three-fold cord" to bind you two for ever together. Be sure that if you make your friendships in His name, that they will last for ever, and be a blessing to you for evermore.

XV.

VISITING.

"Keep the spell of home-affection
Still alive in every heart."—BUCKOLL.

THE smell of clove carnations, and the autumnal freshness of a morning in late August, always reminds me of a country house which I visited for many autumns, and it brings back many difficulties and many enjoyments, the former of which I had to overcome by myself. Perhaps these memories may help others also.

It has become much more the fashion than it used to be, for girls to pay visits alone amongst their friends and relations, without their mothers or their sisters, and it is to those I am speaking, taking for granted that if they had other authority to appeal to they would not need mine. I dare say you think it is great fun being all alone. You have been thinking of this visit for weeks, and preparing all your prettiest gowns for the occasion ; and now your trunk is packed, and you are actually on your way to your destination. You think you are going to enjoy yourself, and to have a great

deal of "fun," and you smile as you think of all the people you may possibly meet, and of the impression you will make on them in return. It seems like a new world to you, and for a time you mean to put away all the little worries of life, and do just whatever you like all day long. I am afraid, however, you will find this not so easy. It is a false motive to start with, and it will not bring you the pleasure you anticipated.

We often begin our visits by going unprepared, and we end by feeling a great deal of remorse and general dissatisfaction. It is so very common to imagine that as we are going to "enjoy ourselves," we therefore may relax our rules of life, and so we are prone to fall.

I believe that we want a more particular strength, and a greater resolution for self-control and self-discipline, before we start on a visit, than before anything else we do in life; and above all I think we need very earnest prayer. Before you start, I do ask you, as you value your own peace of mind, make rules about your daily life there, and try to keep them. You will perhaps find yourself in a house with many more luxuries than you are used to at home, where late hours are kept, and people lie in bed of a morning. Don't let this make you relax your duties too; try and get up at your usual hour, and spend more time in prayer, for you will have great need of watchfulness all through the day; and you might read your solid reading at that

time if you find it very difficult to manage it later. You will enjoy yourself none the less for having fulfilled certain duties, and you will feel much stronger for what is before you. Keep this idea in your head all through the day—self-sacrifice and self-control—both in word, action, thought, and appetite. I want you to be quite happy ; but you must not expect to be happy if you let yourself go, unchecked, and give up all your duties. If you do, you will come back again to your home duties with a heavy heart and a sense of disappointment, and much discontent with your lot in life, which it will take weeks and even months to undo again. I want this visit to be full of happy memories for you to think of all the year ; a time of refreshment to you in body and soul ; a time to look back to in after years, when the scent of the clove carnation again is wafted in through the open window, though your country house visits have passed away.

You will, I dare say, meet many different people of both sexes, who will have come, like yourself, with a determination to enjoy themselves as much as they can, and leave their home cares far behind them, with their every-day attire. If you are young and attractive, they will make a great deal of you, and you will get excited with the undue attention, and will be apt to get off your guard. You will think, "How nice this all is!—I am never treated like this at home ;" and your cheek will

flush with pleasure, and you will really believe that it is all true.

So, first, I want you to think humbly of yourself, and not believe too much all that is said to you—as if it was all meant in sober earnest. These strangers do not know you as your home people know you, and they do not care for you really half so much. They see you in your best clothes, with your best behaviour on, and they want to enjoy a passing hour with you; but they don't really care for you; they forget you when they go away. This is so much the case with men. Perhaps they are away all day out shooting or hunting, and when they come back they sink into an easy chair at your side, and make pretty speeches to you over their tea, and you are flattered at their looks of admiration. The whole atmosphere of the house is so comfortable after their day's tramp; they like to amuse themselves with the girls.

The men we are apt to meet in country houses are very much of this type—busy men who have come for thorough recreation, and pass on from one country house to another, making themselves thoroughly agreeable in each, and sometimes by their thoughtlessness leaving sad girls' hearts behind; or sometimes men who have nothing else to do in life but thus enjoy themselves.

If a girl is with her mother she can be helped and advised in this way; but if she is alone she has

to trust to her own judgment, which judgment, I am afraid, is sometimes an erring one.

Try not to be led away by what the men say; try and not be bold or forward in your dealings with them. Sometimes you may find a man who cares for the pursuits you are fond of; is fond of books or pictures. He will find out that you are a kindred spirit, and you will have plenty of opportunities of talking on the subjects you like; but don't put yourself out of your way to attract him. He will like you much better if you wait for him to find you out. You may think that by coquettish speeches or saucy repartee girls "get on" with men. So they do for the time being, but men do not really respect them for it; and perhaps afterwards, when they have left the ladies, the cheeks of those girls would tingle if they knew how they were being laughed over, and quizzed, and made fun of.

Always look out for opportunities of helping others, even at some personal self-sacrifice to yourself. You will not lose really in such actions. Be kind to the girls who look shy and don't get on as well as you do, and try and draw them out; or take some awkward school-boy out for a game of tennis, or a walk, and make him more at his ease in the evening when he looks as if he were not in his true element.

Be always respectful to the elder ladies, and when you are asked to play or sing, do it with a

heartly grace, and not in a self-conscious way, as if every one is admiring you. Keep a great watch over your appetite. Don't always take the nicest things you see, but be frugal and plain in your tastes. This I say for your own personal comfort, as well as for avoidance of habits of greediness. In short, exercise *control* over all you do, and nothing will come harmful to you. Self-control is to be the moving element in our lives ; without it we can do nothing. Women have more need to struggle for it than men, for their feelings are nearer the surface, and more impressionable. As you grow older and older, and especially as you go into society, you will find how needful it is, and what a help it will be to you. You will find that you will have often to put on a smiling face, when perhaps your heart is waging some hot battle within you ; the world does not look into our inner lives, and what we suffer and what we enjoy must in many cases be borne bravely alone. Never forget, in your visits, that you are visiting with your Master ; that He is with you just as much in the gay assembly as He is in your daily life at home ; and that your life will be just as responsible to yourself there, as it is in the daily quiet home life, or in the school-hours in the days gone by. Try to put away self, and you will be happy ; do not look for pleasure, but for peace. Keep your ears shut to all that may harm you to hear, and your lips guarded, that they may not be led into gossiping about others. Do not

let yourself be led into hasty, impetuous friendships, which are only made to be broken. Be quiet, and calm, and unobtrusive. Let these visits be days of happy memories, with no foolish acts or speeches to cloud them. You will not go about visiting always. Some day you will find yourself an occupation, or you may marry, and have a home of your own; then there will be no time for country house visits. As you grow older and older, you will have to learn, bit by bit, that life is a *real* working life, and the holidays will only come few and far between, and for a very short time. Make the most of your easy, happy life now. Go out and store your mind with the poetry of the woods. Take the opportunity of listening to clever people talking together. Read all you can in the well-stored libraries; perhaps there are books there you may long for in vain in future years. Look well at the pictures hanging round the walls. Be bright and cheerful. Enjoy yourself as much as you can, but always with the thought of your ever-present Father; He is there looking on. Send up a short prayer to Him sometimes; "in *all* your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

XVI.

THE PURGATORY OF "I."

"I falter where I firmly stood ;
I falter with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar stairs,
That slope *through darkness* up to God."

"What am 'I' ?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."—TENNYSON.

ALL our childhood we play and laugh. Some part of our childhood we cry ; then our childhood goes away, and we stand in amazement before the sense of "I." At first, when we realize the "I am" of life, we are almost stunned ; after that the sun doesn't quite shine exactly in the same way as it used to do. There is a harsh note in the songs of the birds ; our days seem to hang all heavily, just as if a strange mist had arisen out of the ground.

As we stand and gaze, a companion whom we used to play with before brushes past us and beckons to us to continue our game, but we stand transfixed with staring eyes. There is something else to think about but games now. We have got

into a new existence. After awhile we begin to awake, and we rub our eyes and sigh—oh, such a sigh! It seems as if all the laughter has gone out of our days, as if we shall never be happy any more in our lives; "there is passed away a glory from the earth," and we are young, and we think it has passed away for ever. But this "I" follows us about; it lies down to bed with us at night; it haunts our dreams; it is there to awake us in the morning. It's a horrid thought not being able to get rid of. We dream and think about it; we cannot throw it off; it is so solemn; it is so depressing.

We used to be so happy, we think; now there is a demon haunting our path. It oppresses us like a weight upon our chest. "We find we are not what we see, and other than the things we touch," and we cannot *understand* what we are. We go out into the garden, and the birds sing around us, but they all jar upon our mood; an organ-grinder comes down the lane, but he grinds the same old remembered tunes outside of us as it were. Then we look up into the blue sky, and shade our eyes and think, "Now I shall get peace"—but no; all of a sudden we think of the interminable space that makes that blue, and the whole universe seems to swim, and our head aches. But "I" remains. Then we are very sad; we do not know why we are sad; we could not explain, if we were asked, what was the cause of our sorrow; but we are very glad to get

into our room at night, and if we are alone, to bury our head in our pillows and sob out all in long, breathless sobs. But nobody seems to hear, no one comes to comfort us, and we wake up the next morning a little ashamed of our outburst, and do our best to bathe away the signs of crying in our tell-tale eyes. But "I" remains on still.

Ah! you little know, you girls, what it is you now possess. You now know what the penalty is of possessing *a soul*. If you were a mere animal you would not feel this pain. I do not think all human beings feel it either. But some I know from my own experience feel it very early, and it is just why I want to speak about it, so that you may use it aright. Do you not know that all things when they come into being have to suffer pain? Birth cannot in any way come without pain; and just as *one* once suffered pain for you in the birth of your body, so are *you* now suffering the birth-pains of your growing soul.

To you, too, has come the burden of life. The blossoms of childhood have fallen to the ground; life will never be the same again; never the same again, but something far better, if you only knew. You won't know yet though. To-day is the day of pain; pain is often the forerunner of good. Did you not suffer odd shooting pain all about you even a little while ago, and you were told it was the "growing pain," at which you drew yourself up bravely and felt the taller for it. Souls have to

have "growing pains" too, and they *are* bad ones, I know.

But there are two things, good and evil, in this sense of "I." It is so terrible, the mystery and bewilderment of self, that after a time one gets to be always morbidly thinking of it. This is the evil side. You feel truly that you cannot get rid of yourself, and so you make yourself the principal object. I do not mean you are selfish; I mean you are self-conscious. One feels so alone in the greatness of self-isolation that one forgets or does not realize that others stand alone too. There is a poem of Matthew Arnold's in which he speaks of each separate soul as an island in a great sea, seldom approached and known; and that is how we feel at the early period of our lives. This state of mind does not, thank God, last much beyond those years. In after life we have other troubles to bear; but the older we grow, we realize more fully that in some things we must each always stand alone, and the very knowledge of the fact enlarges our sympathy, and makes us less sorry for ourselves. There is a great consolation in being one of many in suffering. In early youth "I" is so incomprehensible that we long to escape from it and be general again. But after a time, feeling within ourselves a certain lonely individuality of character, we are more content not to be quite understood in all things. It is a great thing to have one quiet corner of ourselves unknown to any but God; it is like His way of marking us as His own, and it

draws us to Him when we are misunderstood or wrongly judged by other people.

How very interesting we are to ourselves at twenty, and before then—so interested and absorbed that we think other people are absorbed too! Everything we do or say, we fancy they notice, and we get hot and cold and nervous while in their presence; but they are not so observant as we imagine; perhaps they are not even thinking of us at all. They have their own troubles, and they have in their days gone through your's too.

Poor children, it does not make it easier for you in your keen pain to feel that cold looks are your only comfort. Grown-up people do often forget most strangely, that they were once young like you, with all your fears, and heartaches, and yearnings. I have not quite forgotten them yet, for I cried in the night too; and though my language is still "a cry," it does not seem quite such a hopeless cry as it used to do in those eager, fearful, impetuous, hopeless days, when one was in one's "teens." Oh, I remember the tears of those days!—the longing to be known, and loved, and understood, until at last the burden of self became too great for me, and I looked up and round about and said, "Is there *no one* will help me?—will no one give me light?" And it seemed as if there was no one. Then there comes a glimmer of light in the shadow, and after a time a voice seems to come out of the gloom—"Child, hold my hand. I will be to thee a father, and thou shalt be to me a son."

Don't struggle against these inward questionings; don't say you wish you were a child still. You cannot remain a child always; you are destined to become a woman; and standing between the brook and river as you are doing now, the swirl of the waters and the deeper current at first frighten you; but be brave, step in, and in time the very waters themselves will strengthen your timid feet.

One of the best remedies is to turn to others and try to help them. It helps one to get rid of the haunting demon of our own thoughts, and makes us happier. No; I know you are not happy, poor child, but don't think about that just now. Try and think that other people may be unhappy too; and put yourself in their place, and give them some of your warm, loving, clinging sympathy.

Perhaps there may be some who are learning your lesson; wondering, as you are doing, at the meaning of it all. Try and put yourself in their place, and show them that you understand what is troubling them, because you have been troubled yourself. Let all that troubles you in this world, all that perplexes you, all that fills you with thought and wonder, be used to some good purpose, and what better purpose than to be a bond of sympathy with others? How much more we turn in our sorrows to those who have been troubled, than to those to whom it is a rare visitor!

But, sometimes, in the strange burden of our own identity, there is no human friend to whom we can turn; it is a trouble so vague and so undefined,

that we could hardly describe our own trouble to any one. There it remains ; it burdens our souls ; it oppresses our nature. This is the time when we really feel that the only one who can help us or satisfy us is God ; and we turn to Him as we never turned before. Ah ! this is the good of it all—the feeling of the *need* of God. All our life we have been taught about Him, but never till now have we *needed* Him—never till now, then, have we really *known* Him.

Be assured that this pain through which you are passing will, if you only take it rightly, be your gain. It will lead you to learn that God is the King and Ruler of your nature ; that what you cannot express to others, *He* knows ; that it is He Himself who is drawing you on, making you to grow and to expand in His Presence ; that He will teach you the value of your soul—through darkness and through light. It is only through such hours as those that He gives us “the White Stone on which there is a name written, which none knoweth save him that receiveth it.” Have you thought of it before?—or has it never occurred to you what that means? Do you know it means a certain secret communion between Him and yourself, which each feels who knows Him, but each separately, and alone, and individually? It is the blessing you have for the penalty of that soul of yours. It is the knowledge of God.

XVII.

PRAYER.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make."

TRENCH.

WE have been talking a great deal about work, its failures and its encouragements; and a little about joys and trials that come to us at every step of our daily lives. Suppose we say something now about Prayer, Bible reading, and Holy Communion, and all other things which people rightly call "religious duties," and which are at the same time our greatest helps from God. Now, do not go and shut up the book and say, "She is going to preach to us, we don't want a sermon." I am not going to preach to you; I am only going to tell you of some things which have helped me about these subjects, and therefore I hope may help you also.

1st. *Prayer*.—What does *prayer* mean? Do you really know? Do you know its blessed effects?—or is prayer to you a mere form—a tiresome duty? I do not mean to discourage you. If it *is* an irk-

H

some duty, and you persevere in it, I think it shows that you are not to be daunted in what you know is right. But what I want to ask you is, have you ever prayed a *real* earnest prayer right down from the depths of your heart? Because if you have, I do not think it is presumptuous of me to say that you will never again say, "Prayer is no use."

Tell me how you set about your prayers. (I take for granted, of course, that you say them morning and evening, or if not, take my advice and begin at once, for you *can't* get on without prayer.) But I want more especially to know *how* you say your prayers. Here is a picture—I wonder if it will come home to any of you. You wake in the morning; time to get up. "Oh dear," you think, "how nice bed is!—it is too warm and too comfortable to leave; I needn't get up just yet; I'll soon hurry over dressing." So you stay in bed till the last moment. Then all of a hurry up you jump, and your head aches rather, and you feel rather cross; but you manage to tumble into your clothes and smooth your hair; but where are the prayers? So down you go, and think, "I shall do all right"; but you don't do all right—the prayers are wanting, the soul comes down unwashed and unclothed, ready for all the darts of the evil one, which he is sure to hurl at you at the very earliest opportunity.

It is fatal to miss your prayers of a morning. Believe me, it is the surest way of inviting the day,

as it were, to go wrong. Then at night, how tempting it is to kneel down in a comfortable corner and bury one's head in one's hands, and kneel dreaming for a little while, and then get up only half awake and hurry into bed, with the firm idea in your foolish head that you have "said your prayers." Said your prayers, you may have done; but you have never prayed, and you are none the better for what you have done. I am speaking to you because I have done these very wrong things myself, and I want to warn you against the same temptations. To yield to them means to yield step by step to the devil—whom we have promised to renounce—and to fight against them means day by day fresh strength on God's side. I think some people try too much at first about prayers. At our Confirmation we make great resolutions, and we think we can do so much, and then often we fail and get discouraged, and so leave off altogether. We hear sermons about leading "Lives of Prayer" (I shall have more to say about that presently), and we think it means kneeling down all day upon our knees and saying as long prayers as we can.

A "Life of Prayer" means living from hour to hour in the sight of God. Whatever we are doing—if we are reading, or working, or even playing—we must do as well as ever we can, and in all things be able to look up in our hearts to God, just as one looks up quickly into a friend's face, and catches a smile or a glance of the eye which

is so reassuring and pleasant in all sorts of little ways. We ought to be able to look up to God like that, not to think of Him as we so often do, as a great Being, terrible and severe, who does not come down into the details of our every-day lives; but who is very angry with us when we do wrong, and whom we can only talk to in church, or when we feel very solemn and in "a right frame of mind." You must make God your *friend*—and you do not treat friends as you do a Sunday dress, to be taken out and worn only on best occasions. You think of them and like to be with them always; thus should we think of God. You may think of God when your heart is light and happy just as much as when it is grave and sad: God gave you your merry laughter just as much as He gives you tears.

It is a mistake that we often get into, that of thinking we can only pray to God or think of Him when we are unusually grave; I think we may think of Him at all times, grave or gay; and if we think of Him like this we are apt to find ourselves sending up little prayers to Him often and often in the day. Now I do not mean by this, losing our *reverence* for Him. I do not mean we are to speak to Him with disrespect. Far from it; but I do argue that if we are doing things that are not wrong, and they are innocent in themselves, we have as much right to think of God in our hours of play as in our hours of solemnity.

I believe very much in the habit of talking to

God about everything you are thinking about or doing. If anything goes wrong in the day, or if you want anything very much, or you are very glad about something, just lift your heart up to Him and tell Him all about it. Do not be afraid of asking God for *little* things. If you lose a thing, or if some one disappoints you, or if something happens that you wanted very much to happen, don't be afraid to talk about it to God. Once I was staying in a house with a school-boy who had some money given him for a present, and playing in the field he lost it in the long grass. All through a long hot summer afternoon they searched, but they could find it nowhere, and the mowers came and mowed round about, but it was lost. Then I said, "I will get up in the early morning and look again for the last time." Well, I got up, and went to the place where we had searched so long the day before; and as I went I prayed with all my might that I might find the money; and do you know the *very instant* I arrived at the spot, I knelt down and put my hand upon it. I have thought this a very direct answer to prayer. In many other ways I have heard of answers to prayer, and it shows me that God is *very* near to us, so near that He can hear and answer even little every-day requests. It makes me think, "Oh! if we only *knew* what we could do about prayer, would we not pray oftener and more trustingly for what we want?"

When we pray, however, we must pray only in one spirit. We must *always* say, "Thy will be done," when we ask for things, and always be ready to give up what we want if He does not wish us to have them, because sometimes we wish for things that are not good for us to have at all; and God often sees that our greatest good lies in denying them to us.

Lastly, we must pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Nothing that we ask, can we ask for in our own name, —we must ask for everything in His Name, and for His sake. Do not burden yourself at first with too long prayers morning and evening. If you get yourself thoroughly into the way of saying a few *real* prayers every day, you will gradually make the time for more as you will find you need them.

You can learn a prayer out of some manual which will take in most of your needs for the day, and say with it the Collect for the week, and for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity. (Some people find books a hindrance, and if you are one of them you can use your own prayers in your own words—or else keep a book to use when your thoughts seem to wander, and you cannot keep them fixed in any other way.) I cannot quite define for you what you are to say; we each are the best judges of our own special ways of help and needs; but I should, as I say, learn a prayer by heart to say when your mind seems to be unable to think undistractedly. Added to this,

if you are a Communicant, you should say your short Collect of Preparation or Thanksgiving—and conclude with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace of our Lord.

In the middle of the day is the time for interceding for others, if you can find just five minutes to spare. It is rather difficult, I know, to leave off what we are doing, and often we feel very much disinclined ; but if, as I say, you have been forming a habit of talking to God about everything, you will find this habit too, of saying a short prayer in the middle of the day, not so very difficult.

Make a plan for Intercession—I will give you one presently as a kind of example—and write it out in clear writing, and put it in your Bible, that you may see it and be reminded of it every day. Of course, you can make one for yourself, but I have only given you the plan—as an idea. Take different subjects for different days in the week. Evening Prayer should begin with a short going over in your own mind of the events of the day past. Then a quiet earnest prayer for forgiveness for the wrong, and thanksgiving for the blessings of the day, and grace for the future. Then Intercession for those for whom you pray every day, such as your parents and friends, or any who may desire your prayers. Then a Collect or two, and the Collect for Purity which you will find just before the Commandments in the Communion Service, and an earnest rendering up of yourself

and life to God. Then lie down to rest, and trust in Him. Of course I have merely sketched this plan for you; you may have more time or less for more or less of what I have suggested; but that is to be the *plan* of your prayers, which you may vary in your own way.

It is a good plan to pray for particular persons too in the same order. Give each day in the week to one or another of those who wish for your prayers, and you will be able to make a more lengthened petition for each.

LIST OF DAILY INTERCESSIONS FOR A WEEK.

SUNDAY.—The Church. The Clergy. Missions.

MONDAY.—Church Workers. Artisans. Teachers.

TUESDAY.—Travellers by land and sea. Statesmen. Doctors. Lawyers.

WEDNESDAY.—Prisoners. Wicked men. All troubled in mind. Jews and Heathens.

THURSDAY.—Soldiers and Sailors. Increase of Communicants. Unbelievers.

FRIDAY.—Sick and suffering. Those in sorrow or sin. The Poor. The Tempted.

SATURDAY.—Students. Purity and Temperance in the world.

XVIII.

HOLY COMMUNION.

PART I.—TO THOSE WHO DO NOT COME.

“My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven.”

YOU have been Confirmed, but have you ever been to the Holy Communion? You went to classes about it, and your clergyman talked very seriously to you about it, and you came to the conclusion that you *ought* to go, and you *would* go *some day*. Has that some day ever come?

I remember so well feeling just as you do about it. I wanted to be Confirmed, but somehow I did not want to come to Holy Communion. However, I had no choice in the matter, and I was told I was to come on a certain Sunday. Oh, how my heart beat while I was dressing that morning!—and oh, how I almost wished something would happen to prevent me going! It seemed so *dreadful* to go. It seemed just as if the earth would open and swallow me up if I wasn't quite *ready*—or that God would send His fire and burn me up if I was not quite *worthy*—if I sinned after receiving Holy Communion, I should be eternally lost. Oh, how well I remember the trembling, sinking feeling.

when my mother got out of her seat and beckoned to me to follow! But I went—and I remember the feeling of peace afterwards. Since then I find I cannot get on at all without it.

I know so well exactly what you will say to me. Let me tell you first what is passing in your mind, and I will answer you. You think to yourself, "Oh no, I can't go; I shall have to be so *good* if I go." Isn't that true? You don't want to be quite "so good" as all that. Then you think, "I shall have to get very grave." No, you need not; God gave you your youth and spirits, He does not expect you to be "grave" yet. Wait till the grave days come; you won't want to laugh then. Then you think, "I am not worthy; I have not prepared enough; I am afraid I shan't keep it up; I am afraid of running such a dreadful risk." So you say to yourself, "I am all right as I am; if I don't have so many responsibilities God won't expect so much of me; if I once go to Holy Communion, I shall have to live a much better sort of life than I am leading now"—and all the rest of the excuses which seem so very plausible. Oh, dear friends, you are all in the wrong; you are cutting yourselves off from your greatest Blessing and Help, if you only knew it. Our Lord instituted the Holy Communion not for us to be afraid of, but to help us. You remember He was going away from the sight of His disciples, and though He would always be very near, they would not see Him with their

bodily eyes. So He instituted the Holy Communion as a means of grace and of nearer approach to Himself.

But there was more than that too. It is not in the merely eating bread and drinking wine in *remembrance* of Him ; it is something far deeper still. There is a greater and more solemn duty in it, which is more than a mere memento of the past. First, it is an act of *worship*. Prayer does not only mean that we ask God to give us something. We forget that *adoring* God is prayer as well as petitions for what we need — loving and honouring Him for what He is—so Holy Communion is a great act of *adoration*.

Then it is an act of *Communion*. It is not even like solitary prayer, it must be done in company with others. It is the highest form of worship because it is the least selfish. It is like the worship of Heaven, where there are a "thousand times ten thousand," all praising God with one mind.

Lastly, and greatest of all, it is joining in His great *Sacrifice* for us. Now you remember that a sacrifice means an offering. It means giving something that costs us something. What greater *offering* can our Lord offer than Himself? Why are our sins every day forgiven? Not only because He died on that April day so many hundred years ago, but because He is *still* offering up Himself, as our High Priest, before God continually, for *evermore*.

Another thought which is so wonderful is, that He

was offering Himself to God long before He visibly died on Calvary. He is always before His Father, interceding for us. He thought of us before all worlds were made, and He *will* think of us for evermore.

When we come to Holy Communion we do not come *only* to remember His death, we come to do something *more*—we come actually *to take part* in this Sacrifice which our Lord is offering for us. The clergyman's *hands* may break the bread, and his *lips* may speak the words, but he is only speaking and acting in the name of you and me, who take part with him in the "all prevailing Sacrifice." Our Lord allows us graciously to share in that pleading of His once-offered sacrifice which is His own High-priestly work, for the sake of which He "abideth a Priest continually."

And it is our own thank-offering too. We must not forget this. Our Lord does not offer Himself for us, in order that we may have no sacrifice to make. We must do something too. As He is offering Himself always to God, so we must take His Hand, as it were, and offer our lives and *ourselves* to God with Him. The Bread and Wine placed on the altar, and the alms, are meant as thank-offerings to God; and the words of the *Sanctus* and *Gloria* are the offerings of our voice and utterance to God; and above all, we offer "ourselves, our souls, our bodies," to be a reasonable and holy sacrifice unto God.

So Holy Communion is not merely a religious luxury; it is a most solemn *duty*, which He has above *all* others told us to do. It is also the means whereby our Lord actually comes closer to us than by any other way. He makes us in the Holy Communion part of Himself; He gives us of His very nature; He feeds our souls with new life, and the very contact with Himself gives us fresh strength and fresh forgiveness, and fresh will to go forth into the trials of our daily life.

We cannot understand the reason of this, or why it is so, but so it is. As surely as the flower and the fruit ripen under the summer sun and shower, so do our souls ripen and become true and upright by frequent Communion with Him. How can we say our Creed when we are keeping away from Holy Communion, which means practically denying that need of a Living Saviour to dwell in us and fill us full of Himself?

Now, when you were Confirmed, didn't you *want* "to be good," as you call it? Yes, I know you did. You said to yourself, as you knelt at the altar-rail, and caught your breath, and felt the firm touch of the Bishop's hand upon your head at your Confirmation, "O God, I *will* serve Thee; I *will* be a good girl!" And as you went away, with wet tears still shining upon your cheeks, you felt as if you could never do or think anything wrong any more. Alas! I am afraid you *did* though, afterwards. Now I don't wonder that your Confirmation

vows seem broken, and you feel as if you are going further and further away from those earnest days, if you don't come to the very thing which is to help you to keep on the right path. If you go away, or keep away from Holy Communion, of course you cannot *expect* to get on all right. If I were to give you a great dinner to-day, and say to you, "Now for a year you don't want any more," do you suppose you would live half that time? Why, you would simply die—so will your soul die without the nourishment of the Holy Communion.

"I am not worthy one bit to come." No, for the matter of that you never will be worthy. The greatest saint that ever lived was never "*worthy*" to come near to God. Happily He does not ask that of us.

"I have not prepared enough." It is quite true that we must prepare ourselves to come, just as we prepare ourselves to pray by kneeling down and thinking to whom we are speaking; and as we have the time, so must we prepare more; but you know God looks at the motive of the thing, and if He sees we have tried our best to get ready, then He will not let us lose our blessing, however little that *best* may be.

"I shall have to give up enjoying things." No, you won't. God gave you the pleasures, the innocent enjoyments of your life, the very enjoyment of youth and health, which makes some of us long to dance into the air with glee. He gave them all, and do you suppose the fact of coming

to Holy Communion will give you solemn faces, and take away all these pleasures? Far, far from it; if you come to have your soul strengthened and refreshed in the Holy Communion, you will feel all the stronger to be happy and enjoy life. Why? Because your heart is free, and you know that One stronger than you is by your side, helping you to conquer sin.

It is because you start from a wrong idea about Holy Communion that you don't come to it. Just put all these wrong notions away for once, and listen to me. Is it really *true* that you want to be a good girl? Don't you find it much harder being good than you thought at first? Well, wouldn't it seem easier if some one were to help you? Supposing you let God help you? He can, and will, but He must help you in His way. He has told you that by coming to Holy Communion you will gain His help, and perform a duty to Him. Are you going to be presumptuous enough to say, "Lord, I can help myself much better"? Well, try and help yourself, and you will see how you will fail. We don't do God a great honour by coming to Holy Communion—some of us think we do, I think—but it *is* indeed a great honour for Him to allow US to come.

"So many people don't come." Well, are you necessarily to be one of them? I think, if you really find people who are in earnest, as I hope you are in earnest, about being "good," you will find that they are *not* the people who go out of church in a great

hurry, as soon as the prayer for the Church Militant is finished. And so you, if you are really striving to do right, you won't stay away any more, will you? Come next Sunday, or the next time they have that service. It is not dreadful, but of course it is very solemn; but oh, it is so blessed! It is such a comfort to one. I never wanted to stop away any more after my first or second Communion. It was coming to Jesus, and telling Him all about my life, and being encircled by His loving arms.

It is so blessed after a time, to come oftener, and lay the burden of a week down at His Feet, and say, "Lord, it is too heavy for me; bear it for me!"—and lo! the burden seems half gone. It is so strengthening when one has sinned and felt dreadful remorse and sorrow, to say, "There, Lord, forgive me, and help me!"—and to believe that that forgiveness is all quite true.

Oh, the comfort it is when one is perplexed, to go in that "sweet morning hour," and tell Him all about it, and get our anxieties listened to by Some One; or when we are in sorrow, or feeling bitterly some unjust accusation, how He does sympathize! How He seems to refresh the daily, dull routine of these every-day lives of ours! And you are missing it all, just because of ignorance. Oh, you little know what you are throwing away! Come and be helped; don't be such foolish, silly sheep. Come and rest with Him. He has ordained that we should often speak to Him. True, we may

be aware of His presence with us at any hour of the day or night ; He is always near ; but in the Holy Communion He is nearer still. He draws us up to Himself, as it were, as a father kisses his little children ; and I do think that until we come to Him in Holy Communion, we shall never know the nearness of His Presence *always* with us. We cannot say or imagine we are in Communion with God, unless we come to Him in the way He has most required of us.

Think of some one you love very much. It is not enough for you to say when you are parted from them, "They love me, and I love them." No ; you want to speak to them ; so you sit down and write a letter. You must do something that will make them *know* your thoughts, and bring them as you write nearer to you. Don't you know how near they get, and as you write on, it seems almost as if they are in the room with you ? So in the Holy Communion, your Master draws you nearer to Himself ; He talks to you more directly ; He tells you what you are to do ; He gives you strength to live your hard daily lives—and some of them *are* hard ; and it often seems a long weary road when one is young. Stop occasionally and rest, then, and clasp His outstretched hand. It is not dreadful to come to Him ; He is so tender to us. You will not want to leave Him soon, when once you know the Comfort He is, and the greatest Comfort and Help we can have is in our Holy Communion ;

because then He shows us that He lives so very near, though we sometimes think Him such a long way off.

PART II.—TO COMMUNICANTS.

“Lord, evermore give us this Bread.”

I AM supposing that you do come to Holy Communion ; and just as I hope those who do not come, will read this paper as well as the other, so I hope you will turn back and do the same by that one. Perhaps you will say, “She speaks there as if it is all quite easy to benefit by Holy Communion, and to make up one’s mind to come.” Nothing is easy of this sort. I did not mean you to think that at all ; and therefore I want to write to you to give you some hints in case you feel discouraged at all about it. I wonder if sometimes you begin to think it’s all no use trying, and to wonder what it means by being happy at Communion time. I do so want to ask you, if you feel like that, to go on persevering, and not to give up ; even though you do seem at first to be discouraged. Perhaps at first you will not feel the happiness I speak of ; but remember you must make your Communion a *habit*, just as you make prayer a habit ; not going occasionally when you feel in the mood, but at stated times. Of course sometimes you will feel cold, and

it will be very difficult to give your whole attention to the service ; but you must not by any means give up coming because you don't at once feel the good effect upon your soul. God sometimes tries us by making our Communion very sad and cold ; but that is because He wants to see if we really will go on trying or not. Perhaps when you least expect it, if you persevere like the woman of Canaan, He will one day turn lovingly upon you, and say, "Daughter, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee according to thy word."

If you can manage it, you should begin at first by coming monthly, and on the Sunday before, you should begin your Preparation, by prayers and short questions of Self-examination, apart from your usual nightly questions. You might ask yourself questions about one or two of the Commandments before each Communion, and try and remember where you fail most, and ask God to give you the opposite grace. Then as time goes on, you will want to come oftener, and you ought to make it a weekly practice at last, if the circumstances of your life permit.

It is a good thing to get up early in the morning, as it not only makes your mind feel fresher for such a solemn service, but it helps to keep you in the habit of rising in good time in the morning. It's *very* difficult to get up, I know, but God will reward and help you if you try for His sake. Growing girls like you are often very sleepy in

the morning; but think how thankful you ought to be that you sleep so healthily, and remember the poor older people who toss in their beds, through so many wakeful hours.

Don't abuse this gift by using it too freely; get into the habit of getting up *every* day as soon as you wake, and then your weekly (or monthly) Early Communion won't be such a dreadful effort. Of course you feel tired at the service if you only get up so early once a week, whereas if you did it every day you would have no such trouble—and *one* of the secrets of your distracted Communions would be done away with.

There are two more things about Early Communion—

1. You are not wearied by long Morning Service and Sermon, and so are more fitted to attend with an undisturbed mind.

2. You go straight from your room and from your private prayers to the church, and so have had no talking and laughing at breakfast.

If it makes you feel faint you might take some tea or milk beforehand.

It is not wrong to communicate late, if you cannot come early, but it is better for girls like you to come early if possible; it keeps you in good habits, and you are much happier, I think, when you receive a Blessing which has cost you an effort. Don't you think you are? And you have no excuse of failing health, or advancing years, yet, to com-

plain of. You should think over the week before what *one* grace you most want (you will soon find out by your self-examination), and just dwell each time upon *one* request for yourself. It is a good thing to have what I call a Communion "request," both for yourself and for others. It seems to link together each Communion, and gives you methodical ways. Your Intercessions too should be the same. As you are kneeling at the Altar waiting for the sacred Bread and Wine, you might silently make these two requests—one for yourself, and one for some one or other who has especially asked for your prayers, or for whom you have something especial to ask for.

Don't stay away from Holy Communion because you have been doing wrong; that is, I mean, if you are sorry for what you have done. If you have given way to temper, or told a lie, or thought of wrong things, don't stay away from Holy Communion, *if you are really sorry* for what you have done.

The devil has a way of whispering something evil to us, and then saying, "Now you have sinned keep away, don't go to-day"—but *don't* listen to him. He hates to see people going to the Holy Communion, because it loosens his hold upon them, and they get stronger to withstand him by going. If you are *really sorry* for what you have done, it is the *very* reason why you should come all the more; not only to be absolved and cleansed, but to be strengthened against his further attacks next time.

"Lord, evermore give us this Bread." I want you to say that from your whole heart. I want you to be so hungry and so thirsty that you will be obliged to come to Him, the Living Bread, for the continual strengthening and refreshing of your soul, and the Fountain of Living Waters, for your continual washing ; just as you have to wash and feed your body to keep it well and strong, just so must your soul be washed and fed.

Don't look for extraordinary results at first ; don't expect any feelings of extreme joy ; but go because you are told to go by your Master, and because you believe it for your own best good, and because it is your duty to go. The feelings of joy will sometimes come to you, and sometimes they will not come. Don't count on feelings, count on your life, and how you fulfil your good resolutions when the trial of being tempted to break them comes.

It is best perhaps not to have too much joy. It takes one so much away from earth, that we are sometimes apt to answer crossly, or to do wrong, if any one interrupts this happy reverie. Do guard against this ; and especially pray that if God gives you His blessed peace, it may not be marred the next moment by a jarring word from some one at home, but that they may see by your cheerful good temper and calm way of going about your duties afterwards, that "you have been with Jesus, and it was good for you to have been there." AMEN,

XIX.

BIBLE READING.

“ Lord, Thy Word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth ;
Who its truth believeth
Light and joy receiveth.”

I DO not think we read the Bible as carefully and as systematically as we ought to do, so that a few remarks on this subject would not be out of place here. I dare say you read your Bibles, but I wonder if it does you much good. Do you read a chapter here and a chapter there just as the fit takes you?—or do you read in any sort of order and continuance? In short, do you feel really better for your Bible reading, or do you only feel a sort of satisfaction at having accomplished a daily tiresome duty?

Now there are several reasons why we don't read our Bibles as much as we might. In the first place, the very familiarity of the words has a tendency to make us inattentive. We have heard them over and over again for years, until they soothe us like pleasant music, and we seem unable to find anything new in them. Perhaps we hardly

listen, so as to attach any meaning to them, when we hear them read in church.

Another reason is that stupid one, of thinking it a sort of virtue to read one's Bible. Perhaps on a Sunday evening, when we think ourselves very good, we take out our Bibles and read a chapter or two, over the fire; or it may be out in the woods, if it is summer weather; and all the while we are reading we are saying to ourselves, "How good and religious they will think me to do this!" We don't *say* those sort of things, but I do believe we sometimes *think* them, do we not?

It arises out of a distorted view of Bible reading altogether. It is because people so seldom read their Bibles, that to be seen with a Bible in their hands lays them open to the charge either of saintship or cant. Now we do not like to be considered "canting," and if we are honest with ourselves at all, we have not the wish that the world should look upon us as "saints."

It is such a pity that it is not as natural to us to open our Bible, as it is to some of us to open our poetry books, or our stories, which look as if they are sometimes well and often read. Put out of your mind any idea of making "an effect" on others when you are with your Bible. It is not by "reading the Bible" that we become good people; it is only as to whether we follow its teaching in our daily lives. Don't be ashamed of being seen with it.

I think we are rather apt to forget that the Bible is not *one* book, but a collection of many books, and each book is adapted to suit our different moods. There is much history, and prophecy, and poetry, and advice, and warning, all of so varied a kind as to take us all our lives to know well.

I am sure there is no book so full of stories, which are so much more interesting because they are all true; and then we have all those precious letters from the disciples; and above all, that never-wearying, never-tiring story of the life of our dear Lord. There is no need of your losing your reverence for the Bible by thinking of it in this light. I merely want you first of all to get out of that foolish habit of thinking of it as only a book to be opened on great occasions, and that to know it well is a mark of unusual sanctity.

There are two ways of reading the Bible. First, we must read it devotionally; and, secondly, we must read it in order to study it; and these two forms are quite distinct and apart from one another, and must be done at distinct and separate times. There is time for both every day, if you are methodical.

I think the best time to take for the *study* of the Bible is in the morning, when our minds are fresh and clear, just as the time for devotional reading of it is at night, before we sleep. One is generally tired at night, and not so well fitted for serious

thought as in the morning ; so I think it is better to read only a small portion then, of a kind that will give us happy comforting thoughts to take to bed with us. It is better to read a few verses over several times, and better still if you commit them daily to memory, than if you doggedly read a whole chapter, and then forget all about it. I have found that even in this, though, we must use method. Do not open your Bible at random, and read one or two verses of your favourite chapters, and then leave the others, but take them as they come. Begin at a Gospel, or an Epistle, and go straight on. Read your few verses, and put your marker in, and go on the next day from where you leave off, and do not let *anything* hinder you from this daily task. Believe me, it will not be a task long, but it will become your nightly joy and comfort instead. Make a resolution that *nothing* will ever prevent you from doing this. If you are tired you may read less, but make up your mind that you will never sleep without opening your Bible, and do not let *any* excuse whatever keep you from it. It is not at all impossible for you, for it takes a very little time, and the more you do it, the more you will feel the help and the strength and the refreshment of it; nay, more, it will become as necessary to you as your daily food.

I spoke just now of the possibility of *studying* the Bible daily, and I think a great many of us can do that also ; but as it takes longer, you might make

a point of studying it for an hour or two every week, and on Sunday; that is, if you lead very busy lives, and have not time for it every day. It is most important, and not to be neglected; and I think that "where there's a will we know there is always a way"—if we really are in *earnest* we will *make* daily time for this as well. We have time for other books or amusements, and I really believe there are very few of us who really could not *make* time for reading our Bibles also. But it must be done continuously, if done at all; we shall never gain any help by it if we read it diligently one day and then leave it off. It does not do to read it by fits and starts; for *because* it is our *daily* bread, we must receive our *daily portion*. We could not live if we eat our food ravenously one day and starved for two more. No; just as we eat a certain portion every day at stated hours, so must our spiritual food be at stated times and every day.

Suppose you take the history of the Jews, to begin with—reading a few chapters carefully with some commentary, and making short notes upon them. It is rather helpful, I think, to make a genealogical table of some of the characters, say of the kings, in their order; it helps one first to realize what they are and what relations they are to each other. Then you might read some book on the subject. Do not attempt too much, and stop as soon as you feel tired. I do not believe in trying how much one can "get through" at a time. It is

much better to do a little and to do it well, and to do it as I say, systematically. It is not for the sake of *reading through* the Bible that you are to study it, but that it may really teach you something, and make you the better for your close companionship with it in your daily life and work. It may take you years to read it all, but they will be years well spent; and once the habit is formed, you will find the need of studying it all your life, and going over the old ground again and again.

Another way is to take one of the Gospels, or an Epistle, or a Prophecy, and read it straight through, as you would a letter; it will help you to understand its meaning better than by only reading a chapter at a time. Then, having done this, you should take a commentary, and study it line by line and verse by verse, taking notes, as I said before, all the time.¹ I cannot enlarge upon how you are to do it—there are so many ways; but I think you will find them out for yourselves the best.

Now as to the time for it; well, that too is more

¹ It is very important to compare the four Gospels together; for instance, to read of a miracle, or the Crucifixion, or the Resurrection in all four. There is a little book published by the S. P. C. K. called *The Four Gospels arranged in form of a Harmony*, by the Rev. T. M. Fuller, which you can get for a shilling, and which you will find exceedingly useful for this purpose. For the study of separate books of the Bible, the volumes of the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, which vary in price from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d., will be found most helpful. Any bookseller will get you a list to select from.

for you to decide than I ; but I will tell you that I have myself found it not impossible to wake up early for this purpose, and do it before one comes down to breakfast of a morning. This sounds *very* difficult for girls who are so sleepy in the morning that it is hard work even to allow themselves time to dress ; but I fancy if once one gets into the habit of waking at certain hours one can do so ; and every day, if persevered in, it gets easier and easier each time. If you *can* do this you will find it a great boon, for not only does it get you into good ways, but it also is time which is more absolutely *your own* than any other in the whole day. It is not necessary even to get up and dress ; you may, if you find it tires you to get up, simply sit up in bed and read there. On summer mornings I have got through a good deal of reading in this way ; and surely it is better to begin the day with serious reading than by sleeping away the precious hours, or by taking a novel up to bed to read either at night or early in the morning.

Another time for Bible reading is when we are waiting in church. It is better to take out your Bible and quietly read, than to be turning your head here, there, and everywhere, watching all those who come in, and commenting on their clothes. If you go in good time you would be surprised how much of your Bible you could read thus, and it would help to prepare you for the service, and to collect your thoughts. Lastly, read the Bible with

a prayer before you begin, and read humbly and earnestly, and it will not be time wasted or spent in vain.

Here are the names of some books to help you in your study of the Bible, which I have found helpful for the purpose from time to time—

The Teacher's Bible.

Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 1 vol. (abridged ed.). Murray. 7s. 6d.

For Old Testament reading:—*The Promised Seed*, REV. CHARLES R. BALL. S. P. C. K. 2s. 6d.

Judæa and her Rulers, MISS BRAMSTON. S. P. C. K. 3s. 6d.

The Nations Around, ANNIE KEARY (Sunday Library ed.). 4s. 6d.

The Apostle of the Gentiles, REV. CHARLES R. BALL. S. P. C. K. 2s. 6d.

Lessons on our Lord's Ministry, REV. CHARLES R. BALL. S. P. C. K. 2s. 6d.

FARRAR'S *Life of Christ*. Cassell.

FARRAR'S *Message of the Books*. Cassell.

XX.

HEALTH.

“The black North-easter,
Through the snow-storm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.”—CHARLES KINGSLEY

“What Thou hast given me, Lord, here I bring Thee,
Odour, and light, and the magic of gold;
Feet which must follow Thee, lips which must sing Thee,
Limbs which must ache for Thee ere they grow old.”
CHARLES KINGSLEY.

IT is not until we have had to do without something that we fully understand what we have lost; and it is often not until we have once been ill that we fully appreciate the blessing of having had good health. When we are young we are naturally strong and healthy, able to do anything, and I am afraid we are inclined sometimes to be almost impatient with those who are not so strong as we are; who are old and weak perhaps. They were no doubt strong at first, like ourselves; and then some illness or accident came and took away their strength, and left them listless and dispirited, and disinclined to energy.

We who go out in all weathers, and come back with a healthy glow on our cheeks from our walk or our ride, do not understand why some people sit shivering over the fire whenever it is cold or rains ; or how it is that people complain of a headache so often, or say they cannot eat. *We* are always so hungry ; *we* always sleep so soundly. "What do they mean by talking of sleepless nights? As soon as *we* lay our heads down on our pillows we know no more till the next morning, and even then it is hard work to rouse ourselves to get up and dress."

It seems almost as if we must despise people with so many little aches and pains ; it seems almost as if it is their fault that they are not like ourselves ; just as if we would like to scold them or shake them, if we dared, out of what we consider their "nonsense." All of a sudden one day we take some sudden chill or a fever, and we are laid low ; our limbs ache, our head aches, we feel ill all over. Perhaps we are so bad that we can hardly raise our heads from our pillows, and we are so thankful to some kind friend to come and make them comfortable for us ; we are too weak to help ourselves.

We look around our familiar room, and the objects which we call our own seem as if they have nothing to do with us any more. The books shining in their well-known bindings in the firelight are no longer our treasures, prized before all others.

The very pictures on the wall take strange shapes, and irritate us. We trace the pattern of the wall-paper over and over again. Everything is wearisome, and our very food seems to have lost its flavour.

Then comes the long convalescence, and the eager gladness with which we welcome a friend into our tiresome prison-house; and then how vexed we are with our weakness, when we are so tired afterwards that we can hardly sleep! I think very few of even the healthiest girls do not know a few such days in their lives, when the "laugh" seems to have gone away from them, and everything is a trouble and a pain. The worst of it is, that as soon as we get quite well again we forget how tiresome those days of sickness were. With returning health we lose bit by bit the lessons of illness, and I am sorry to say are just as much inclined to feel put out with those who are not so strong as ourselves, as we used to be before we knew what sickness meant.

When you see some one whom you call "fussy," try and remind yourself of how you felt that day when you had that terrible headache, or that bad cold, or that fever, and make all the allowances you can for the sufferer. Think what it was to you to be ill and to have to lie still for even a few days; and what must it be to feel ill and tired always?

So much depends on good health. Our bodies

and our souls are so closely allied, that our very thoughts take a different turn when we are well, than they do when we are out of sorts. Even our temptations take more hold upon us when we are weak and ill; and I think very often a fit of low spirits can be traced to something not quite right in our *bodily* health, as well as in our mind. Is it not so? I think very often that *ennui* that I spoke of in another paper, is because we are not quite well, and so disinclined to do our appointed task; though I do not mean to say that it is not also the result of want of occupation and concentration.

A few words about our own health. I think we are apt to be very careless about ourselves, and to think that nothing will ever hurt us. We have never been ill or felt pain, perhaps, and so we think that we can run any risks with ourselves that we like. Now I do not wish for a moment to make you fussy, and anxious, and "coddling," but I do think it is our duty to ourselves, and to those who have us in their care, that we should try to keep the health that we now possess, by being moderately careful.

You do not know what seeds of future illness you may be sowing for yourself by letting wet clothes go unchanged, or over-walking yourself, or going about with too little clothing. It is all very well now; you are young and vigorous. You will probably never be stronger than you are now,

so you do not actually feel these things at the moment ; but you will in after years. There is a sort of pride about not putting on extra wraps on a cold day which is often, I think, quite ridiculous. On a cold day in summer, for instance, how chilled we often allow ourselves to be before we put on something warmer. We like to boast of being able to do without this or that. It gives us a sort of importance in the eyes of others. We are very silly when we are girls, and often have to pay for our girlish follies.

Very often those people whom we are trying to impress are saying to themselves, "How glad they are they are not girls of mine ; how anxious their parents must be about them." Do not be too anxious to change to cooler clothes directly the first hot day arrives, and do not keep on your cool things to the very last moment at the end of summer.

I have a word to say about cold water. It may not suit everybody. There are some of us whose circulation does not allow of cold bathing. If you cannot get warm after your cold bath I advise you to discontinue it ; it is a sure sign that it does not suit you. But I think a great many of us would be the better for our daily plunge into cold water, and if we made a habit of it we should find it would invigorate body and mind too.

It is a temptation to indulge in warm water, and often the cold plunge requires a real daily

effort on a winter's morning ; but is it not true that if you do it regularly it warms you more than anything else for the whole day after ? The reason is, that you are not exposed to any greater cold in the whole day than that shock of cold over you in the morning, so no cold that you face after seems to penetrate or really chill you. For my own part, I believe that to brace our souls we must brace our bodies as well, and I have found pure cold water a great cure for a good many evils. We are lazy and disinclined to exert ourselves, and we would rather bathe in warm water and shiver over the fire when we come down-stairs, just because it requires an effort of will to warm ourselves in a much more effectual manner.

If the water is really too cold to bear on very wintry days, I have found a plan which I always use. Have a can of boiling water brought up to your bedroom over night, and pour it out in the morning. It will be cold, but several degrees warmer than if taken straight out of the cistern ; there is a medium in all things, and it is not necessary to bathe in iced water, or with a very great chill upon it. What I want to try and impress upon you is, that for most really *healthy* girls there is nothing so good for them as cold water, and by that I mean *not* half warm.

Then walking. To have a daily quick walk ; not to go many miles one day and overtask your strength, and then to stay in for several days after-

wards ; but to make a point of a little walk, even on wet days, and keep as strictly to it as you do to other self-imposed duties. It is impossible that we can be well without daily exercise of some kind.

If you keep to the few plain rules of health you will not be often ill. It is because so many people run in the very face of Providence about the ordinary care of their bodies that they become weak and sickly. Remember your bodies are trusted to your care as well as your souls, and you will be punished, by your own bodily pain, at some future time if you neglect the rules of health now.

When we come to think of the delicate mechanism of our own frame, and the wonderful way in which each part belongs to another, and how our members are all part of one great whole, we ought to stand astonished at God's wisdom. How strange it is to think of, and how easily it seems possible for some little thing to go wrong in that wonderful mechanism ! The marvel is that we live on day by day, and year by year. You know how delicate the inside of a watch is ; well, our bodies are, part of them, *far* more delicate than that. Oh, make the best use of this gift of good health, and see that you do not abuse it ! Treat your bodies reverently, for they are not your own, but God's.

XXI.

PURITY.

"With voices low and gentle,
And timid glances shy,
Which seems for aid parental
To sue all wistfully.
Still wishing, longing to do right,
Yet fearing to do wrong."—KEBLE.

I HAVE kept this paper purposely until the last, because it is, perhaps, the most important one of all, and one which requires very serious thought. Oh, there is a world in this one word Purity! It is the greatest crown of our womanhood; the greatest aim of our life. To be pure in mind, and in thought, and in action! It is like that beautiful flower which some of us call a White Nancy, which smells so sweetly, and stands so firmly upon its strong green stem.

I sometimes think that flower is just an emblem of what our girlhood and womanhood should be. We are meant to stand thus, and shed our pure fragrance all around, white and unsullied, like that blossom. Oh, I wonder how many of us really do it! It has always been a tradition that a

woman should be innocent and pure ; that she should be so guarded from evil that she could not be shocked by the wrong-doing around her. Now why is this ? Simply because, more than all other virtues, a woman is supposed to be pure-minded in thought, and in word, and in deed. Oh, let us be careful that we fulfil this beautiful tradition, which makes the name of a "woman" a glory and a blessing ! Let it not be said of us that we help to break it through. Let us not drag the name of girl or woman in the dust.

Now you will be surprised at what I am about to say, which is this. I think we are apt to accept the fact about our being perfectly pure-minded as too much to be taken for granted, and so it does not occur to us that we ever could be anything else. It does not occur to us to ask ourselves if we are keeping the shield of purity bright, because all the rest of the world takes it for granted we are unsullied. Believe me, it requires as many fights, and as many prayers, and as many good resolutions to be pure in heart as it does for the acquirement of other virtues. Oh, girls, I believe it requires a great many more !

I do not think our elders are aware how much we know of evil in our girlhood ; and we certainly do not tell them of that knowledge. We see sights and hear sounds and, I am afraid, are guilty of thoughts and even actions which are unworthy of our high calling.

I do not consider that in these days we can live long in the world without being aware of a great deal that is bad in it; and the longer we live and the older we grow the more will our eyes be opened to the horrors of it all. But then we must not gain our knowledge in a forbidden way.

I am going to speak to you very openly, and because it is so very serious a question it does not bear any trifling with. I am going, I hope, to probe very deeply, because I know all about your temptations, and because I want to show you how they can be fought against and conquered, not by running away in fear, but by bravely facing them inch by inch. Now, can you honestly say that this knowledge of evil came to you quite by chance? Are you perfectly free from having been curious about what you do not understand? Did you find it out in a book?—or did some girl of your own age talk to you about it?—or did you go quietly and modestly to your mother, or some one older than yourself, and ask them to explain what was troubling you?

Now, there are mysteries in heaven and on the earth, and above all in our own lives, which should come upon us gradually, to show us how wonderful is God's power and wisdom. But because they are mysteries so strange and solemn, they must not be approached too hastily, or with an irreverent hand.

There is a certain curiosity about these things which is a sin; and trying to gratify it, is not

because we want to learn more of God's greatness, but because we want to know what is forbidden. Do you remember the *name* of the tree which Eve eat? It was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. I do not think she gained much by that knowledge! In the course of time you will know all about what puzzles you now. It will come to you naturally and slowly; and if you have not tried to find out things for yourself, it will not come to you with remorse and shame; it will come to you with a sense of reverence and godly fear.

The chief evil of *all* that I know is a temptation to us girls, is to talk together of these things. Oh, if you have ever done such a thing, I ask you, in the name of all that is pure and holy, to give it up at once!

You know quite well how ashamed you would be if your mother were to know what you talked to each other about. As I said before, if you want to know, why not ask her or some older friend? But no, you are ashamed—and why? Because you can fancy to yourself how horrified, and perhaps angry, she would be with you for ever thinking of such things. Instead, you go and speculate over them with some one who is quite as ignorant on these subjects as you are yourself, and together you imagine and distort a great many of what ought to be the holiest mysteries of our existence; besides putting ideas into the minds of those younger and more innocent than yourself.

Girls! I know all about it. I ask you, from the depths of my heart, because I know too well the evil of it, to give it up; to stop all conversation of this kind by resolutely refusing to have anything to do with it; by leaving the room, if you cannot stop it in any other way; by making a firm resolve that you will there and then fight the battle against impurity by firmly setting your foot upon it.

Do you know that some things are "secret" because they are so "sacred"? There are some of God's works so marvellous and so beautiful that they can only be shown to a reverent mind; much more are these mysteries of our own existence which must not be pried into by all eyes; they can only be understood by time and by experience.

There are some things which, until God gives us the experience of them, to inquire beforehand what they are like is disobedience to Him, as well as harmful to ourselves, as much as it was to the Israelites of old had they dared to go into the Holiest of Holies, and look into the Ark on the Mercy-seat. Do you remember what the punishment was to them? It was *death*. So will it be death to you—a moral death, I mean—if you dare to look unblushingly into these mysteries. You will not only feel remorse now, but you will be sorry for it for many years, perhaps until you die. You cannot help knowing more and more of good and evil as you grow older, and you will learn how what should be holy, is turned to evil. I do not

say you shall be ignorant, but I do say that you must not try and learn all you can pick up, of what is forbidden you, by all sorts of ways which your conscience tells you is wrong.

I ask you, as you care for the welfare of your souls, to put away from you any book, or picture, or sound, or even *friend*, should any of these tempt you even to *think* of these things. It is all the harder, because very often it does not come to you as anything so very dreadful. Your curiosity is so great that your one idea is to gratify it, and you stifle your conscience by saying to yourself that you are "nearly a woman, and it is time you knew about everything, as other women do."

Did you read the quotation at the beginning; it seems rather to have gone out of date, does it not? I confess I once rather looked down upon that picture; it seemed to me as if it upheld dull, timid sorts of girls, who did not answer when they were spoken to, and who are difficult to get on with. I have since changed my mind. I think "the low and gentle voice" and "the timid glances" show a heart that is pure and modest, afraid of touching upon even the thought of evil. I think we can be just as bright and just as happy if our minds are pure and free, and we can answer just as clearly if our voices are not loud and bold. It is better to shrink and fear from even the sound of evil, than to be too ready to know all about it. Depend upon it you will be never happy if your heart is

not pure. Ask God to keep your thoughts and even your dreams pure, and all day long have plenty of occupation, for being busy is a sure preventative to impure thoughts.

I suppose, like other people, you have your girlish dreams of being loved. You read about girls having lovers, and you picture to yourself what you would like your's to be ; and I expect you clothe him with impossible virtues as well as impossible beauty. Such dreams as these are natural, and I think most girls have them, and they are not wrong in themselves if not too often indulged in. It is, after all, the outcome of a woman's aims to love and to be loved ; and what is, after all, more noble than to be a good wife and mother ? It is the highest of all callings, and the holiest.

But in these days it does not come to every woman—it cannot ; for there are more than half as many women again in the world as there are men, so it is impossible for them all to marry. Some must be left out ; some must live and die old maids. The time has passed when girls expect to be married as the natural object for which to live for. The time has come when a great many women have to learn that they are not to be so blessed ; and happy for them if they find other aims and other objects to engross their loving, lonely hearts.

Thanks to the education of the present day, as

well as other things, a woman need never be without an aim in life, even if she remains single. It is no longer considered a reproach for a woman not to marry; in fact she is respected if she can carve out a career for herself, and make herself happy in helping others, without any particular or especial claims of her own, if God has so willed that she should be alone.

I say this because I think marriage, and the very great happiness which it brings, is not to be looked upon as the one desire of our existence. Of course it is only natural that we should look upon it as the highest state, but we must also make up our minds that we may have to be among the single ones, and prepare for it accordingly, by engrossing ourselves in some study or pursuit which will fill up our time and interests, and so leave no room for wishing for what we are meant to do without.

I mention this here because I want to show how even these natural, and in themselves most innocent girlish dreams are to be kept down and subdued, lest they should tend to engross all our thoughts, and so do us harm, and perhaps tend to great evil. It is possible that we may grow so to yearn for love, and human happiness, that in the course of years we may find that there is nothing we really want except that. Well, supposing God sees fit to withhold such happiness, how are we then fitted to face the loneliness and

the disappointment of middle age, when perhaps it is too late for us ever to hope that we can change our lot? Think what wasted lives ours will be if we find then that we cannot take an interest in anything, or wish for anything, but our own disappointed hopes. I am speaking because I *know* it happens sometimes; I have seen it in the case of one or two, and the result is, that instead of blessings they are only miseries and trials to those around them.

The only remedy for this is—when we are young, not to think and dream over sweet words and caresses which we have not got; not to let our thoughts wander to what we wish to have, but to try to be contented with what we have already; not to yearn for human affection in which we are the principal objects; not to let our youthful dreams get the upper hand of us. I hardly like to say it, but I believe, though we are hardly aware of it ourselves, such dreams are a danger to our purity.

If we wish so much for love, we may some day in a moment of weakness, be tempted to gain it unlawfully, or merely to love an unworthy object for love's sake, not for his own sake. Oh! I do believe this is one source of a great deal of evil, this longing for great happiness—for love; and if we are denied it, and have not crushed that longing by resolutely engrossing ourselves with other interests when we are young, when we get older

it will come with such a tremendous force that if we come out of it unscathed it will only be as by a miracle.

Oh, do you ever realize how all-important is the struggle for purity? Do you ever realize that the whole future of the world depends upon our purity? Yes, the purity of even girls like ourselves. We women are the mothers of the next generation, and if they cannot find purity with us; if they cannot believe absolutely in the whiteness of our souls; where will they be? Let the men of the next century be men who are pure, because their mothers have shown them how they can keep themselves unsullied, by that quiet, unobtrusive example of purity and gentleness in their home lives, without which a home is but a hell.

Think always of your body as not your own, but God's. It is the Temple of His Spirit, but it will not be His abode long if impurity of any sort is allowed to enter.

Oh! it is not an easy battle, I know well, but you *will* conquer in the fight. Don't give up for a single instant; don't despair even if you have fallen and done wrong. Ask God to forgive you for the past, and with His help let the remembrance of it brace you to firmer resolutions in the future. Go on fighting might and main, and scourge yourself if you fail. But you will *not* fail, you will conquer. Think of the boys and girls now standing around God's throne, who have had to fight the battle of

the flesh that you are fighting now. They knew as you do what it is to be tempted in this way. They knew also the many failures and the many falls, but they have conquered at last; they have washed their robes in His blood; and never, never more will they have to struggle with their own poor selves, and with the flesh, and with the devil. Let "Him who Himself is pure" keep and garrison these hearts of yours—He to whom "all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," and you will never repent it in time or in eternity. Keep the narcissus, "the white flower of a stainless life," fresh and unsoiled, and the perfume thereof will go out into all lands, for a woman's purity of heart may—who can tell—move mountains!

THE END.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

Aids to Prayer.

By the Rev. DANIEL MOORE. Printed in red and black. Post 8vo.....*Cloth boards* s. d.
1 6

Authenticity of the Gospel of St. Luke (The).

Its bearing upon the Evidences of the Truth of Christianity. Five Lectures by the late Bishop of Bath and Wells. Small Post 8vo.....*Cloth boards* 1 6

Being of God, Six Addresses on the.

By C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester. Small Post 8vo.*Cloth boards* 1 6

Bible Places; or, The Topography of the Holy Land.

By the Rev. Canon TRISTRAM. New Edition, brought up to date. With Map and numerous Woodcuts. Crown 8vo.....*Half bound* 5 0

Called to be Saints.

The Minor Festivals Devotionally Studied. By the late CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Printed on hand-made paper. Crown 8vo.*Buckram boards* 5 0

Christians under the Crescent in Asia.

By the late Rev. E. L. CUTTS, D.D. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo.....*Cloth boards* 5 0

Christus Comprobator; or, The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament.

Seven Addresses by C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester. Post 8vo.*Cloth boards* 2 0

Church History in England.	<i>s. d.</i>
From the Earliest Times to the Period of the Reformation. By the Rev. ARTHUR MARTINEAU, M.A. 12mo.Cloth boards	3 0
Church History, Sketches of.	
From the First Century to the Reformation. By the late Rev. Canon ROBERTSON. With Map. 12mo.Cloth boards	2 0
Daily Readings for a Year.	
By ELIZABETH SPOONER. Crown 8vo...Cloth boards	3 6
Devotional (A) Life of our Lord.	
By the late Rev. E. L. CUTTS, D.D., Author of "Pastoral Counsels," &c. Post 8vo. ...Cloth boards	5 0
Face of the Deep (The).	
A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse. By the late CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI, Author of "Time Flies." Demy 8vo.Cloth boards	7 6
Golden Year (The).	
Thoughts for every Month, Original and Selected. By EMILY C. ORR, Author of "Thoughts for Working Days." Printed in red and black. Post 8vo.Cloth boards	1 0
Gospels, The Four.	
Arranged in the Form of an English Harmony, from the Text of the Authorised Version. By the late Rev. J. M. FULLER, M.A. With Analytical Table of Contents and Four Maps.Cloth boards	1 0
Great Truths and Holy Lives.	
A Series of Bible Lessons, from Advent to Trinity. By LADY HAMMICK. Post 8vo.Cloth boards	1 6
History of the English Church.	
In short Biographical Sketches. By the late Rev. JULIUS LLOYD, M.A., Author of "Sketches of Church History in Scotland." Post 8vo.Cloth boards	1 6

FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

3

Land of Israel, The.

s. a.

A Journal of Travel in Palestine, undertaken with special reference to its Physical Character. By the Rev. Canon TRISTRAM. With two Maps and numerous Illustrations. Large Post 8vo.Cloth boards 10 6

Lectures on the Historical and Dogmatical Position of the Church of England.

By the Rev. W. BAKER, D.D. Post 8vo. Cloth boards 1 6

Martyrs and Saints of the first Twelve Centuries.

Studies from the Lives of the Black-letter Saints of the English Calendar. By the late Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES. Crown 8vo.Cloth boards 5 0

Paley's Evidences.

A New Edition, with Notes, Appendix, and Preface. By the Rev. E. A. LITTON. Post 8vo. Cloth boards 4 0

Paley's Horæ Paulinæ.

A New Edition, with Notes, Appendix, and Preface. By the Rev. J. S. HOWSON, D.D., Dean of Chester. Post 8vo.Cloth boards 3 0

Patriarchal Palestine.

By the Rev. Professor SAYCE. Crown 8vo. With MapBuckram boards 4 0

Peace with God.

A Manual for the Sick. By the Rev. E. BURBIDGE, M.A. Post 8vo.Cloth boards 1 6

Plain Words for Christ.

Being a Series of Readings for Working Men. By the late Rev. R. G. DUTTON. Post 8vo. Cloth boards 1 0

**Readings on the First Lessons for Sundays s. d.
and Chief Holy Days.**

According to the New Table. By the Rev. PETER
YOUNG. Crown 8vo.*In two volumes* 5 0

Religion for Every Day.

Lectures for Men. By the Right Rev. A. BARRY,
D.D. Fcap. 8vo.*Cloth boards* 1 0

Revised Version of the Holy Scripture,

Addresses on the. By the Right Rev. C. J.
ELLICOTT, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester. Small post
8vo.*Cloth boards* 2 0

Seek and Find.

A Double Series of Short Studies of the Benedicite.
By the late CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Post 8vo.
Cloth boards 2 6

Servants of Scripture, The.

By the late Rev. JOHN W. BURGON, B.D. Post 8vo.
Cloth boards 1 0

**Spiritual Counsels; or Helps and Hindrances
to Holy Living.**

By the late Rev. R. G. DUTTON, M.A. Post 8vo.
Cloth boards 1 0

Spiritual Progress.

A Book for Young Communicants. By the Ven.
G. R. WYNNE, D.D. Small Post 8vo. *Cloth boards* 1 6

**Things Lovely; or, The Ornaments of the
Christian Character.**

By the Rev. CLEMENT O. BLAKELOCK, M.A. Post
8vo.*Cloth boards* 1 0

FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

5

Thoughts by the Way.

s. d.

By the Rev. F. C. WOODHOUSE, M.A., Author of
"The Life of the Soul in the World." Crown 8vo.

Cloth boards 3 6

Thoughts for Men and Women.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. By EMILY C. ORR. Post 8vo.

Limp cloth 1 0

Thoughts for Working Days.

Original and Selected. By EMILY C. ORR. Post 8vo.

Limp cloth 1 0

Three Martyrs of the Nineteenth Century.

Studies from the Lives of Livingstone, Gordon, and
Patteson. By the late Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES.

Crown 8vo. *Cloth boards* 3 6

Time Flies; a Reading Diary.

By the late CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Post 8vo.

Cloth boards 3 6

True Vine (The).

By the late Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES. Printed in red
and black. Post 8vo. *Cloth boards*

1 6

Turning-Points of English Church History.

By the late Rev. EDWARD L. CUTTS, D.D. Crown
8vo. *Cloth boards*

3 6

Turning-Points of General Church History.

By the late Rev. E. L. CUTTS, D.D., Author of
"Pastoral Counsels," &c. Crown 8vo. *Cloth boards*

4 0

Verses.

By the late CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. Small Post
8vo. *Cloth boards*

3 6

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS.

This Series furnishes in a brief and popular form an accurate account of the great Non-Christian Religious Systems of the World.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. each.

BUDDHISM—BEING A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF GAUTAMA, THE BUDDHA.

By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, M.A., Ph.D. With Map.

BUDDHISM IN CHINA. By the late Rev. S. BEAL. With Map.

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM. A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST.

By the Rev. T. STERLING BERRY, D.D.

CONFUCIANISM AND TAOISM.

By Professor R. K. DOUGLAS, of the British Museum. With Map.

HINDUISM. By the late Sir M. MONIER WILLIAMS, M.A., D.C.L. With Map.

ISLAM AND ITS FOUNDER. By J. W. H. STOBART. With Map.

ISLAM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION. By C. R. HAINES. (2s.)

STUDIES OF NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. By ELIOT HOWARD.

THE CORAN—ITS COMPOSITION AND TEACHING, AND THE TESTIMONY IT BEARS TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

By Sir WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I., LL.D., D.C.L., Ph.D.

THE RELIGION OF THE CRESCENT, OR ISLAM; ITS STRENGTH, ITS WEAKNESS, ITS ORIGIN, ITS INFLUENCE.

By the Rev. W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, M.A., C.M.S. (4s.)

THE HEATHEN WORLD AND ST. PAUL.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. each.

ST. PAUL IN DAMASCUS AND ARABIA.

By Rev. G. RAWLINSON, M.A., Canon of Canterbury. With Map.

ST. PAUL AT ROME.

By the late Very Rev. C. MERIVALE, D.D., D.C.L. With Map.

ST. PAUL IN ASIA MINOR AND AT THE SYRIAN ANTIOCH.

By the late Rev. E. H. PLUMPTRE, D.D. With Map.

CONVERSION OF THE WEST.

A Series of Volumes showing how the Conversion of the Chief Races of the West was brought about, and their condition before this occurred.

Fcap. 8vo., cloth boards, 2s. each.

THE CELTS.

By the Rev. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D. With Two Maps.

THE ENGLISH.

By the above Author. With Two Maps.

THE NORTHMEN.

By the above Author. With Map.

THE SLAVS.

By the above Author. With Map.

THE CONTINENTAL TEUTONS.

By the late Very Rev. Dean MERIVALE, D.D., D.C.L. With Map.

ANCIENT HISTORY FROM THE MONUMENTS.

This Series of Books is chiefly intended to illustrate the Sacred Scriptures by the results of recent Monumental Researches in the East.

Fcap. 8vo., cloth boards, 2s. each.

ASSYRIA, FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

By the late GEORGE SMITH, Esq., of the British Museum. A new and revised edition by the Rev. Professor SAYCE.

SINAI: FROM THE FOURTH EGYPTIAN DYNASTY TO THE PRESENT DAY.

By the late HENRY S. PALMER, Major R.E., F.R.A.S. With Map.
A new and revised edition by the Rev. Professor SAYCE.

BABYLONIA (THE HISTORY OF).

By the late GEORGE SMITH, Esq. Edited and brought up to date by the Rev. A. H. SAYCE.

PERSIA, FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE ARAB CONQUEST.

By the late W. S. W. VAUX, M.A. A new and revised edition by the Rev. Professor A. H. SAYCE.

THE FATHERS FOR ENGLISH READERS.

A Series of Monographs on the Chief Fathers of the Church, the Fathers selected being centres of influence at important periods of Church History and in important spheres of action.

Fcap. 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. each.

BONIFACE.

By the Rev. I. GREGORY SMITH, M.A. (1s. 6d.)

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

By the Rev. F. R. M. HITCHCOCK, B.D. (3s.)

LEO THE GREAT.

By the Right Rev. C. GORE, D.D.

GREGORY THE GREAT.

By the late Rev. J. BARMBY, B.D.

SAINT AMBROSE: his Life, Times, and Teaching.

By the Ven. Archdeacon THORNTON, D.D.

SAINT ATHANASIUS: his Life and Times.

By the Rev. R. WHEELER BUSH. (2s. 6d.)

SAINT AUGUSTINE.

By the late Rev. E. L. CUTTS, D.D.

SAINT BASIL THE GREAT.

By the Rev. RICHARD T. SMITH, B.D.

SAINT BERNARD: Abbot of Clairvaux, A.D. 1091-1153.

By the Rev. S. J. EALES, M.A., D.C.L. (2s. 6d.)

SAINT HILARY OF POITIERS, AND SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS.

By the Rev. J. GIBSON CAZENOVE, D.D.

SAINT JEROME.

By the late Rev. EDWARD L. CUTTS, D.D.

SAINT JOHN OF DAMASCUS.

By the Rev. J. H. LUPTON, M.A.

SAINT PATRICK: his Life and Teaching.

By the Rev. E. J. NEWELL, M.A. (2s. 6d.)

SYNESIUS OF CYRENE, Philosopher and Bishop.

By ALICE GARDNER.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

By the Rev. Canon SCOTT HOLLAND.

THE DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH; or, The Christian Apologists of the Second and Third Centuries.

By the Rev. F. WATSON, D.D.

THE VENERABLE BEDE.

By the Right Rev. G. F. BROWNE, D.D.

LONDON:

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.; 43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.
BRIGHTON: 129, NORTH STREET.

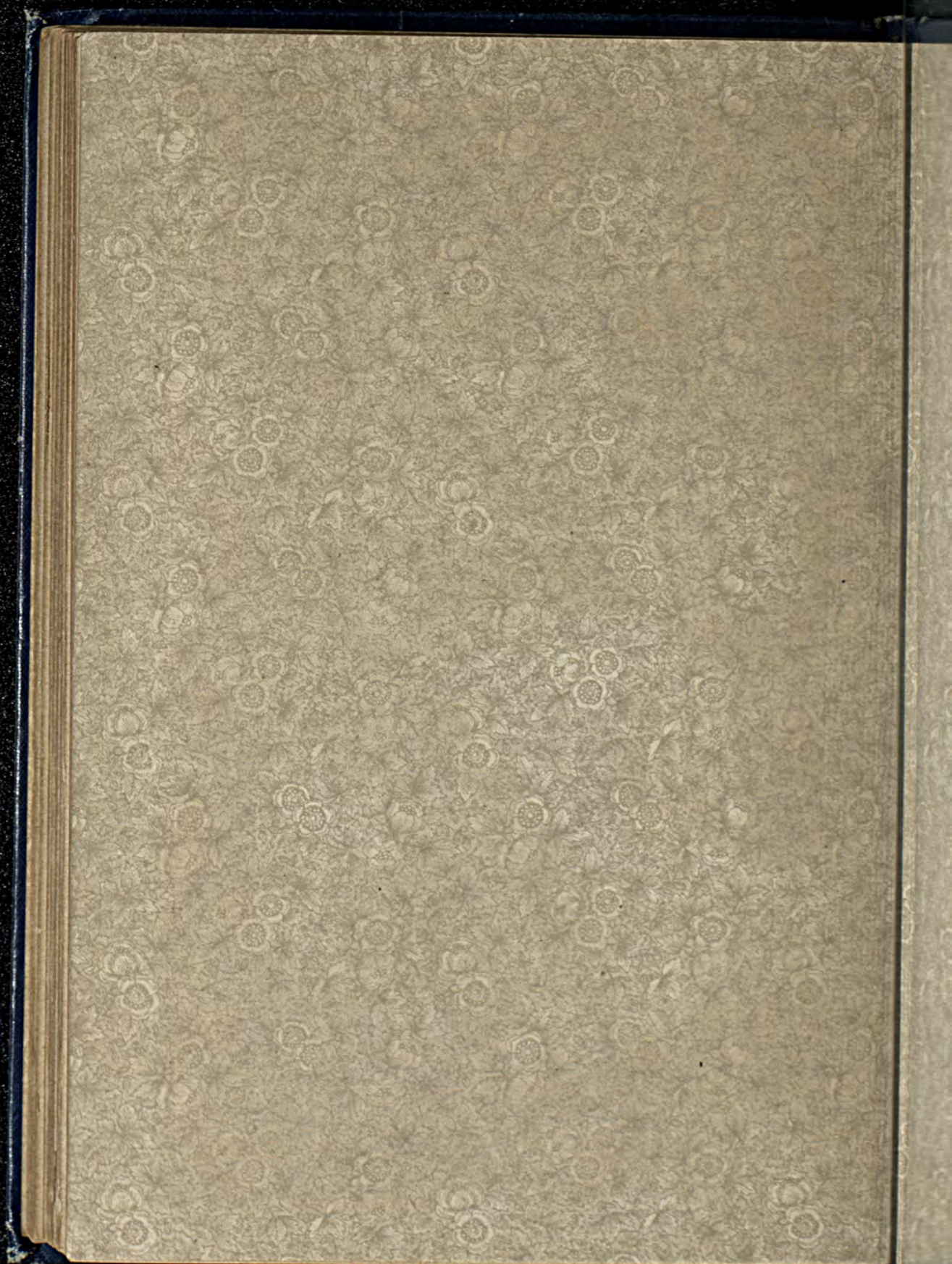
TERS.

there selected
and in

OF TOURS

pologists of

REET, E.C.



(BI)

TALKS TO GIRLS

1902



37131 009 564 121

