

The Great Famine Cry.

"Tell your people how fast we are dying, and ask if they cannot read the Gospel a little faster,"—Words of a Heathen Woman.

Hark! the wail of heathen nations; Loud the cry comes back again, With its solemn, sad reproaching, With its piteous refrain: "We are dying fast of hunger, Starving for the bread of Life! Haste, O hasten! ere we perish, Send the Messenger of Life!

"Send the Gospel faster, swifter, Ye who dwell in Christian lands; Rock ye not we're dying, dying, More in number than the sands! Heed ye not His words—your Master: Go ye forth to all the world? Send the Gospel faster, faster, Let its banners be unfurled!"

Christian! can you sit in silence, While this cry fills all the air, Or content yourself with giving Merely what you "will can spare?" Will you make your God a beggar When he asks but for "His own?" Will you dole Him, from your treasure, A poor pittance, as a loan?

Shame, oh, shame! for very blushing, E'en the sun might veil his face: "Robbing God"—ay, or his honor, While presuming on His grace! Keeping back His richest blessing By withholding half the "price" Consecrated to His service; Perjured, perjured, perjured thrice!

While you dwell in peace and plenty, "Store and basket" running o'er, Will you cast to these poor pleaders Only crumbs upon your floor? Can you sleep upon your pillow With a heart and soul at rest, While, upon the treacherous billow Souls you might have saved are lost?

Hear ye not the tramp of nations, Marching on to Day of Doom? See them falling, dropping swiftly, Like the leaves into the tomb: Souls for whom Christ died are dying, While the ceaseless tramp goes by; Can you shut your ears, O Christian, To their ceaseless moan and cry?

Hearken! Hush your own heart beating, While the death-march passeth by— Tramp, tramp, tramp! the heart of nations, Never ceasing, yet they die— Die unheeded, while you slumber, Millions strewing all the way; Victims of your sloth and "selfness"— Ay, of mine and thine to-day!

When the master comes to meet us, For this loss, what will He say? "I was hungered, did ye feed me? I asked bread, ye turned away! I was dying in my prison, Ye ne'er came to visit me!" And swift witness those victims Standing by will surely be.

Sound the trumpet! wake God's people! Walks not Christ amid His flock? Sits He not "against the Treasury?" Shall He stand without and knock— Knock in vain, to come and feast us? Open, open, hearts and hands! And as surely His best blessings Shall o'erflow all hearts, all lands. —MARIA A. WEST.

God's Providence House.

In a small, quaint English city, On the banks of the river Dea, Is a queer old wooden building Of a style we rarely see. Five hundred years it has stood there In the narrow and stony street, Carved, over its oaken doorway, With a legend, strange and sweet.

The line has been kept so perfect, It is read at a single glance; "God's Providence," so it sayeth, "Is mine inheritance."

And if one should ask its meaning, He would hear this story told Of a dreadful plague in the city Which darkened its days of old.

It ravaged the homes of thousands, And the people wildly fled, Calling on God for mercy While mourning their many dead. In the street where this house is standing, No other escaped the blow, And thanks for such special favor The legend is meant to show.

Each house and heart in the kingdom Inherits God's love and care; Yet seldom it shows such record As is carved on the cross-beam there. Stand strong, old house, in thy glory, Bearing witness as years advance That Providence, caring and loving, Is man's blessed inheritance. —Congregationalist.

Pussy Willow and the South Wind.

Fie! moping still by the sleepy brook? Little Miss Pussy, how dull you look! Prithree, throw off that cloak of brown, And give a glimpse of your silken gown

My gray silken gown, Sir Wind, is done But its golden fringes are not quite spun. What's slow little spinner! pray pardon me, But I have had time to cross the sea.

Haste forth, dear Miss Pussy! the sky is blue, And I've a secret to whisper to you. Nay, nay, they say Winds are changeful things, I'll wait, if you please, till the Bluebird sings.

—Emily A. Braddock, in April Wide Awake.

The Sunday School at Bright-acre.

"If you please, miss, there is some one one in the parlor to see you." "To see me! at this hour!"

Belle Dorset tossed aside the book she had been reading, and flew to her mirror. While she bade Bridget say she would be down in an instant, both hands were busy among the braids of her yellow hair.

"I wonder who it can be," she soliloquized. "If any one intended coming from the city, he would certainly have sent a message."

The effect of a red rose pinned at the collar so pleased her, that when she swung her white-robed figure down the stairway, there was a smile of supreme satisfaction upon Miss Belle's face. At first, upon entering the parlor, she failed to see the young gentleman; but when her eyes had grown a little accustomed to the light of the room, and his face had grown a little redder, she saw him starting from a dark corner, and heard him stumbling over imaginary obstacles, as an awkward boy will.

"I am George Anderson," he began when he had found his voice, blurring out what was evidently a set speech; "and I—that is, we—would like to have you do us a favor."

Miss Dorset was so surprised that she scarcely knew how it came about; but in five minutes she had drawn aside the curtains, let in more of the afternoon's sunlight, and was seated chatting to her visitor. He seemed to be very much, in earnest, and awkwardness was almost forgotten.

"You see," he was saying, "it is the only afternoon Sunday school in this whole town, and we ought to have more than than thirty scholars and four teachers."

"I should think so." "I heard that you taught a class in the city, while you were there, and I want to ask you if you won't do the same here?" He did not pause long enough for her to answer, but went on:

"We have not the scholars yet, but me and Frank 'll find them, if you'll promise to come."

"Frank! who is Frank?" Miss Belle asked, more for the purpose of giving herself time to think, than for desire to know him.

"O, he's a boy. He's waiting around the corner for me. He and I have been elected treasurer and secretary of the Sunday school. The superintendent used to have all the offices, but we were elected last Sunday and we are going to build that Sunday-school up." "Yes?"

"Somehow he doesn't think much of us. 'Boys' work is of no use he says."

"And you propose to show him that it is of some use?"

"Yes, ma'am. The Sunday school is breaking up, just because nobody will go to work. The teachers and the superintendent and our preacher all have a dozen plans, but they don't try any of them—they just talk about them, and worry and wait, till I'm tired." "Yes?"

It was evident that Miss Belle was not like some young ladies we have heard of, who talk when they have nothing to say, and who would, most probably, have laughed at this earnest country boy.

"And if you will promise to come next Sunday, anyhow, we will be mighty glad."

"But I have not studied the lesson for that day. In fact I do not know what it is."

"O, I can tell you where it is. Here is our printed lesson slip, and you can soon learn all about it."

"But suppose I say no?"

"Why, then we'll be sorry. If you promise it will make other people promise. I'm sure of that. You see, when we ask some one, they always say: 'Has anyone else promised to come?' and if we can say, 'Yes Miss Dorset will be there,' they will be almost sure to say 'yes,' too."

The upshot of the matter was that Miss Belle did promise. "Somehow I could not bear to refuse him," she told her mother a little later: "he seemed so determined to have me come, and I told him I would be there for one Sunday at least. So now the least I can do is to look up the lesson."

And taking her garden hat from the rack, she was soon seated in the deepest shade of her father's beautiful grounds reading, and thinking of things very different from what had occupied her attention but a half hour previously.

"Hurrah! she'll come, Frank," cried George, when he met his bashful friend waiting at the corner.

"Well, you've been long enough," said Frank. "But will she really be there though?"

"Yes, indeed. And now we've got to raise a class for her first, and then get Miss Parkinson and Mr. Shaw and some more to promise, and we'll have that Sunday school chock full next Sunday."

"But we'll have to work like beavers all the week. I'm good for coaxing boys, but you can bring the girls and teachers."

All right. Mr. Green will be surprised next Sunday when he finds so many there, I tell you!"

And he was. Three o'clock upon the following Sunday afternoon found such a concourse at the little stone church as was never seen there before. Every seat was full of eager, bright-faced children, and several classes had been formed in the nooks about the pulpit with chairs and the pulpit steps for seats.

After the lessons were ended, Mr. Green, the superintendent, clapped his hands, to rouse every one's attention (they had no call-bell) and began a little speech.

"When I was a boy," he began, "my mother used to tell me stories of two benevolent old ladies who were in the habit of talking a great deal. Once upon a time they found a very

poor family, who were in immediate need of help—the mother was sick, the father was dead and three little babies were hungry. But instead of aiding them at once, these good ladies went home and had a talk about it. One thought it would be better to send them something to eat at once, the other thought no, the house had best be put in order first, and a fire built. And then these two old ladies united in half an hour's discourse about the poverty in this world and the various means of lessening it.

"When night came, the poor family would have been in a very bad plight indeed, had not a little girl who lived near by and who was almost as poor as they, happened in. This little girl had no time for conversation. She went to work—hunted up some chips and built a fire, swept the room, washed the children's faces, and gave them her best loaf of bread. And when the two old ladies at last made up their minds what to do, they were sorely mortified to find that a little girl had been before them and had done a world of good while they were merely arguing."

"As these old ladies were mortified so am I. I talked and thought and thought and talked about our lack of scholars, and about means for remedying it, but I did nothing, and now find myself forestalled. Two boys have been before me—I need not name them, we all know who they are—and by one week's hard work have gathered an army which any general might be proud of."

"I want thank them, and I want to say to them and to you all that I have learned this morning that energetic work is the narrow path leading to success.—Ee.

—An Italian philologist has discovered in the binding of a Greek manuscript at Mount Athos two fragments of St. Paul's Epistles in the Greek text.

Itching Ears.

Itching ears are the bane of the world, and especially of the Christian world. People love to be praised and flattered and left undisturbed to follow their whims and fancies. They like to be told they are right, and to find others holding the same opinions as themselves. One is great and wise in their estimation, as he thinks as they think, and does as they do. Self-willed and intending to do as they please, they are impatient at contradiction and spurn restraint. They do not like to hear the truth if it is at all unpleasant, and fancy they cover all their moral defects with the gauze of their vain imaginings, and that their "cloud-built castles," formed out of moon-struck fancies and baseless shadows, are built of adamant and stand upon unshakeable foundations. Facts have no business to be at variance with their notions, and if they are, they think the facts at fault, and not their notions. Their opinions are reckoned the criterion of truth by which everything must be tested, and their way the only right way. The universe has no need of any other light, for they are the light and the universe—it centers in them and irradiates from them.

If you were to tell many a preacher that the amount of money paid him for his services was far in excess of their value; that his eloquent discourses were only froth and gilded bubbles; or that they were dull, stale, full of platitudes and weakness; that they neither quickened thought, nor aroused the conscience, and that the people would be as well off without them; that rant is not reason, nor sentiment sense, nor fancy fact, nor poetry piety; that what he says lacks vigor, point, sense, truth, pathos, power, Christ—being neither intellectually quickening, morally invigorating, nor spiritually stimulating or refreshing; that his talk is twaddle; that his denunciation of the shortcomings of his congregation is the vindictiveness of wounded vanity, coming from the itching of an ear which has had no response to its cravings; that one-half of what he says and does is for popular effect and net for the good of the people, the glory of God, or the "cure of souls," but from a longing for the pleasure of titillation upon the itching member; under such circumstances he would in all probability consider you a calumniator, a slanderer, and a false "accuser of the brethren."

If you were to look in upon a company of "official brethren" assembled to estimate a salary for their pastor, representing two or three millions of property themselves, besides what the unofficial held—if you were to hear them bemoaning their poverty, the hardness of the times, and the illiberality of their brethren, asserting their inability to support the Gospel, and fixing an amount which they knew would hardly keep their pastor and his family from starvation—with a mental reservation not to pay all that—and then if you were to tell them that they were a set of cheats, swindlers and robbers, filching their religious privileges, and blessings, out of self-denials of God's ambassador, and taking the comforts of life from his wife, the clothing and food from his children, to pay for the religious advantages of themselves and their families; such "official brethren" might consider you impertinent, and inform you that their ears were not itching for that kind of scratching, but considered themselves generous in doing anything at all.

If a man avails himself of the privileges of public worship, occupies a pew, hears the sermon, enjoys the warmth and receives the benefits of the sanctuary, and from year to year does nothing to support it; if told that he is a sponge and a religious "dead beat," taking privileges which somebody else pays for, and that he might justly get his groceries, dry

goods, clothing and railway fare in the same manner—he might feel hurt over the insinuation and inform you that he thought he was conferring a favor by attending the sanctuary at all, and that his ears expected to hear praise and not censure.

People do not like to have the truth told them from the pulpit. Like the olden kings of Israel they seek the prophets who will prophesy the things they wish to hear. "The time will come," said Paul, "when they will not endure sound doctrine, but will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." That time has come, and is now. Such persons propose that God's ambassador shall deliver their message, not His. They have no hesitancy in telling him what he shall say, and to soundly berate him if he fails to obey. The stern truths of God are unbearable. Sin's sinfulness and fearful retribution, the exaltation of justice and righteousness, the rebuke of iniquity, the insisting upon "truth in the inward parts" and unimpeachable integrity and unspotted purity in the life; accountability to God in little things as well as great—repentance, regeneration, pardon and purity are forbidden themes unless they refer to the people on the other side of the globe. They do not tickle the itching ear; offend polite and refined tastes, render people uncomfortable, make ministers unpopular, and are an infallible recipe for emptying pews. Multitudes attend the house of God simply to be entertained. They go as they go to the opera or the play. Spiritual quickening and instruction in righteousness is not the object they seek, but entertainment. Fancy pleased the conscience quieted—flights of imagination, pictures of beauty, some novelty in doctrine, some dissertation on literature, science or philosophy, the rounded period, the thrilling story, the flashing rhetoric, the scintillations of genius, the manner, the elocution, the sound and tinsel, it is these which attract, please and for which they clamor. Is it at all to be wondered at, that the demand creates an abundant supply, and that for the incense of praise and seeming success that men are found lower than Judas, and sell their Lord for a much less substantial reward than thirty pieces of silver?

What is largely the result of all this? The sanctuary of God trodden beneath the heels of the world! Dishonesty, knavery, corruption, and uncleanness reeking around God's altars. The church a whitened sepulchre, often painted, veneered and varnished on the outside, but within "full of dead men's bones" and wierd ghostliness of corruption! Its "holy of holies" covered with dust and hung with cobwebs, the shekinah having long since departed. Has there not been and is there not now, too much pandering to "itching ears?" Is it not time to call a halt? He who shall administer the remedy will cure one of the worst maladies of humanity. Shall not the church apply the discipline of the school room, and instill the truth regardless of the wishes of the pupil, or his conceits and false tastes? Humanity is corrupted, its inclinations wrong, its sentimentalities false. Gospel truth is God's cure for its ills, and can have no substitute, nor be superseded by anything for which "itching ears" may clamor.—Central Christian Advocate.

By The Shore.

I stood by the shore as the anchor went down, And the merchant-ship swung to her chain, And saw the dark sailors row up to the town Returned from the far-away main. I cried, "What a glorious thing it must be To come home in a ship from the deep, With heart-stirring tales of the wonderful sea, And the coasts that all latitude sweep?" But a sailor replied, 'mid the laughter and din, And the hand-shaking going about, "Before you can be in a ship coming in, You must be in a ship going out!" —Youth's Companion.