of artificial flowers that had fallen out of the child's box.

"It is hawthorn! How pretty!" said Laban, examining it.

"Some tinsel temptation of Satan, like that doll. Put it away, grandmother," said Evan, severely.

Peggy soon laid, not only the wreath or crown, but May's whole wardrobe, in a drawer which had been previously cleared, and the box was pushed under the crib.

"Here's our Mary's Bible, that the ladies gave her," cried Peggy, breaking down for the first time.

They all examined the sacred volume, and all uttered a "Thank God for this."

"Have you had any more news of her?" asked Laban, who, although a hale man of about forty, was her uncle, and consequently, May's great uncle.

"Nothing but what the clergyman wrote," replied Evan. "He said that he had been with Mary on her death-bed, and that he had asked her for the address of her friends that he might communicate with them about the child. She gave him mine, saying she did not know whether her husband was alive or dead. When I wrote back and asked him to send the child here and see that poor Mary was decently buried, he replied that the child was in the Union, but that my wishes should be attended to. As I can't write English, I asked Miss Edith to write for me, and I expect she will have another letter next week. She was here this morning with one she received saying the child would be here to-day. That Mr. Everton must be a pious man, and I am thankful Mary had him with her."

"How different it would have been if she had married a neighbour," sighed Laban.

"That sort of artist chap was quite unsuitable," responded Evan. "It would never have happened if I hadn't been weak enough to let him paint her picture. He said he was poor, and that her face would make his fortune. Poor indeed! He had better have broken stones upon the roads down here than have taken her up to London to starve."

"I believe they loved one another all the same," put in Peggy. "What a pretty wedding they had, and how happy they seemed!"

"She knew it was contrary to my wishes, who brought her up from childhood," said Evan. "Do you remember the explosion, Laban, when her father was killed in the mine, along with his two sons and five others! Keep your house in order, Laban, lest a like thing come upon you."

"God forbid, father! I shall never forget it," replied Laban, with a groan.

"There now! don't go over that terrible story again," put in Peggy, throwing her apron over her cap and pinners, as if to shut out the recollection. "Go you home, Laban, or you'll never be washed for Sunday," she continued. "And I'll be bound there's 'Lisbeth and Leah and Rachel, and all the rest, waiting with the tub ready and the water boiling."

"Meredith left his post to run across the field to me. You must punish him. 'Spare the rod, spoil the child.' That's what Peggy did to Mary," said Evan.

"He has told me, father; he will never do it again. He wanted just to see the new cousin, and said she was like one of the dolls in the fair," returned Laban, hurrying off with a hasty good-night.

"He spoils that lad," muttered Evan.

"No good to be too strict," said Peggy, under her voice, bestirring herself to clear the kitchen before retiring for the night.

Evan remained some time seated by May's cot. The moonlight streamed in through the window, the firelight through the open door, and the beam and glow kindled the old-fashioned furniture into something that seemed almost like life. The sheep-dog had crept into the room, and lay unnoticed at his feet; while a tortoiseshell cat and kitten lay undisturbed within the large cupboard bedstead that had served him and Peggy as a nightly couch for half a century. This bedstead, with its panelled door, was, like the cot, chest-of-drawers, clothes-chest, and chairs, of carved oak, blackened by time. The old couple might have realised a small fortune by the sale of these articles to some antiquary, but they preferred keeping their own heir-looms to letting them be elsewhere.

Evan had fallen into a dream of retrospection, and while apparently watching May's pale little face, had let his thoughts wander backward through all his wedded life. Although neither he nor Peggy had ever been far from their home, they had seen more vicissitudes in it than most people. They had there brought up a large family, who were, as the market woman had said that morning, scattered all over the earth. He could count his descendants by scores; some of whom were abroad, some at home, but only comparatively few lived in his immediate neighbourhood. His son Laban and his family, and a daughter who had married a small farmer like himself, were the nearest, though he had many grandsons variously employed in the country. He was eighty years old, and now the youngest of his numerous descendants, as far as he knew, slumbered beside him, and he and his wife must begin life again for her sake. The two lofts that used to serve as bedrooms for his children were converted into cheese-room and granary, and she was to occupy the space below-stairs that her mother used to fill. He was too old, he thought, for such a responsibility, yet must he do his duty by the child. But at least she should not be spoilt. He would be strict and stern with her, as he strove to be with Meredith, and if it pleased God to let her grow up, she should go to no worldly amusements, where she could fall in with such a man as her father.

"How much longer are you going to sit there addling your brains over that child," broke in Peggy, startling him from his dreams. "'Tis bedtime over and over again, and here's your pipe unsmoked."

Evan rose at the conjugal command, and the whiff of his tobacco, together with the cheerful sound of Peggy's voice, dispelled his anxieties for the moment.

(To be continued.)

TWO AMERICAN HEROINES.

THE name of Darling is already famous in the annals of heroism. As long as English men and women value the courage which outweighs the thought of self it always must be reverenced by them.

In our own time two girls of the same name dwelling upon the Canadian shore have proved themselves not unworthy namesakes of the heroic Grace.

Upon the 5th of December, 1879, Maggie and Jessie Darling were quietly occupied in their father's house at Lansdowne, Ontario, when a cry of alarm reached their ears. Starting up from their work, they rushed to the window which overlooked the river St. Lawrence, and a terrible sight met their gaze. Robert and Alexander Carnegie, in the full enjoyment of a day upon the river, found themselves face to face with death by the sudden upsetting of their boat, to which as it floated upside down they were clinging with the energy of despair. Happily for them their agonized cry for help reached ears open to the dangers and sufferings of others. Without a thought of themselves, Maggie and Jessie hastened to the shore, where the light skiff in which their father journeyed up and down the St. Lawrence was moored.

Quickly, with prompt and energetic action, they launched it, and in almost as short a time as the record of their deed consumes, were rowing rapidly against the current to the assistance of the drowning men. With firm hands and muscles straining in the effort the brave girls lessened the distance with every stroke. The spectators quickly gathered upon the shore and watched with breathless interest the rapid transit of the little skiff. As they neared the struggling figures in the river, the silence was only broken by a sigh of anxious expectation from the waiting, watching group. Every eye was strained in the effort to watch the event, and when the boat was within easy reach and the sole remaining question was how the rescue so gallantly attempted was to be carried out, it is not difficult to realise the overwhelming anxiety which must have made the flying minutes appear like hours.

How it was accomplished none can tell, but in a very short space of time the little skiff was on its homeward way, the heavier by the weight of the two young men, who thus saved by the prompt heroism of the brave girls, were too overwhelmed for words. As they neared the land, outstretched hands welcomed them, and a few moments found them receiving such succour and assistance as willing hearts and hospitable homes could afford. An account of this noble rescue was forwarded to our Royal Humane Society, and to the numbers

of those whom England loves to honour have been added the names of two noble American girls.

Self-forgetfulness, the highest quality of human nature, meets its own reward. Dearer to Jessie and Maggie Darling than any fame which their deed has brought them, more precious than the glory attached to the medal which has been awarded them, will surely be that triumph over self and selfish considerations which they so abundantly proved by their action.

It is not given to everyone to rescue the life of another, but it *is* given to us all to live in daily conquest of self. Courage is not the work of a moment; it is the outcome of previous training in thought for others, in self-control, and in noble deeds. Let us live nobly, and when occasion arises, the spirit which teaches us to forget ourselves in little things will surely aid us in any attempt which we may be called upon to make for the succour of another.

J. E. RUNTZ REES.

MY DISTRICT, AND HOW I VISIT IT.

In these few remarks about my work amongst the poor it must be premised that they do not apply to those towns and parishes of which the visiting is organised, mapped out, and superintended by the clergyman. The visitor in such happy cases knows exactly what she has to do, and does it, and applies to the superintendent if she wants advice or help.

But in many large towns the place of such a system is taken by a band of city missionaries and Bible women, whose number is small compared to the extent over which they are spread. So that much good may be done by the individual exertions of any who are willing to help, without in any way interfering with the missionary work.

It is necessary at the outset to have a clear idea of one's object in thus visiting amongst the poor. Some people will make temperance their one aim; others will affirm that no good result can be gained till cleanliness and neatness reign in the home, cleanliness being next to godliness. But though there are many different ways of working, still all these ways should lead up towards one object, namely, the improvement, spiritual and temporal, of the poor and wretched people in our midst.

Before I began district visiting on my own account, having had no experience whatever of it, I thought it prudent to accompany a friend round her district who had been engaged in the work for some years. I knew that she was a thoroughly good woman, and was most anxious for the spiritual and temporal good of those she visited. But as we entered house after house, I noticed that her manner was as though she considered that the poor people were of a different race from herself, and that they ought to be overwhelmed with gratitude at her condescension in visiting them. She marched into their rooms without any regard as to whether it was convenient, and the inhabitants wished it or not. I think it must have reminded them of the visit of a detective armed with a search warrant. For some inscrutable reason also, she invariably raised her voice and addressed the people in a commanding tone, which frightened the children and offended the mothers.

At last we entered a room where the father, mother, and family sat at dinner together. Without any apology for the intrusion, she began at once to cross-question the woman as to why the children had been absent from Sunday-school the previous day. I felt so ashamed of our rudeness and utter want of consideration for the feelings of the poor that my friend's attention being diverted, I made the best apology I could to the man, who sat scowling at us, for interrupting them at their meal, to which he replied:

"You see, miss, it ain't but what I'm very glad to see a lady now and again, but what with the landlord and the School Board and the district visitors, a man don't feel as if his home's his own."

I learnt a valuable lesson that day, and there and then made a resolve to treat any poor people with whom I had to deal with as much consideration and politeness as I should use towards my own friends. Nor have I ever had cause to regret my adherence to this rule. I have met with my share of rebuffs, but never with rudeness, and I am more and more convinced that by good temper, politeness, and quiet perseverance a lady may win her way anywhere with perfect safety, often in places where the city missionary would meet with a cool, if not a rough, reception. My district is a scattered one, and in order to go all round in a day it is necessary to start betimes in the morning. I always devote Monday to this work, because in London, in common I suppose with other large towns, the women seldom or never go to work on that day.

Before discovering this fact my visits were not very successful. When the house to be visited was reached I was usually confronted by a small child probably carrying a baby but one size smaller than herself, and a dialogue similar to the following would take place:—"Well, little girl, is your mother at home?" "No she ain't." "Where is she?" "Gone to work." "Well, will you open the door for me? I have a picture to leave for her." "Please'm the door's locked, and mother took the key." This was my first experience of town life in the back slums, and I was very much shocked to find that it is the usual practice of mothers to turn the children out into the street when going to work, and leave them to their own devices till dinner-time. If it is very wet the children are locked in the room instead of out of it, an alternative the poor little things very much dislike, for without any playthings the time goes very slowly, whereas there is always entertainment of some kind in the street.

By choosing Mondays, however, I am pretty sure of finding the women at home. Another advantage of this day is that Saturday being pay-day, there is more chance of persuading them to put something into the Savings Bank than there would be towards the end of the week. It is very difficult to get them to see the advantage of laying by for a rainy day, though one would suppose the sufferings and privations of a hard winter would teach them wisdom. Unfortunately as a rule all the extra wages of the summer are squandered on expensive food and gay clothing, and no provision is made for the morrow.

I take with me a number of cards ruled for accounts, and give one to each individual willing to deposit, entering the amount they pay me on their card and in my bank book. For the children, a loop of ribbon at the back of the card is a good plan, by which to hang it up on the wall, where it will be safe and tolerably clean.

They have to give a week's notice before drawing out their money, as a rule, but in case of necessity the regulation is allowed to be broken, and I take a few shillings with me for this emergency. Should there be more deserving applications to draw out money than I am able to meet, without the week's notice, I have a fixed hour on Tuesday, when they may come to my house for their money, but at no other time are they permitted to come. This is quite necessary, as otherwise I should be having visitors of this description the whole week through.

One piece of advice which I have proved good from my own experience I would urge upon every one who visits amongst the poor. Do not make a practice of *giving*, either money or goods, except in cases of special and urgent need. There are so many grasping people who only welcome you in proportion to your gifts, and who will always have a harrowing tale of distress ready, if they find you are likely to listen. There is no lack of real want, caused by illness, scarcity of work, and other things, which can be readily proved to be real, and where help may be well bestowed. But the thing is to know how to refuse. If your district be a large one the truly necessitous cases will tax your purse to its utmost limits; and the people will respect you all the more when they see that you are not to be imposed upon.

The habit of promiscuous alms-giving in the street has been too often denounced to need enlarging upon here; the true way of helping such beggars is to take their address, visit them at their homes, and if their tale be true you will soon find it out, and by getting them employment, or other assistance, you may benefit them for life, and perhaps help them to become respectable members of the community, instead of encouraging them to live as professional beggars.

Visitors working in connection with any church or society are usually supplied with soup, and coal tickets for distribution during the winter. These are, it is true, occasionally sold by the recipients to their neighbours; still they are, on the whole, much more satisfactory than gifts of money, because there is at least a probability that the charity will be used according to the intention of the donor.

There was one room in my district to which I had long wished in vain to gain admittance. It was over a stable, and whenever I knocked at the front door, a head would be popped out at the window and a voice would say, very decidedly "Not to-day, thank you," as though I were the baker. Now, in many, nay, most cases where one is refused admission to a room it is because the inmates have an objection to visits from any one whom they think likely to talk to them about religion or teetotalism. Sometimes, however, it is really inconvenient to them for you to go in. If the woman be at work, she feels obliged to leave off as long as her visitor remains, and when we remember that time to her means money, we cannot wonder that we are not welcomed cordially.

The case I am speaking of was one of this sort; for after a time the neighbours told me this woman always did her washing on Mondays, so, for fear of encouraging me to force an entrance, she even declined the little books I offered to leave on the doorstep. I always made a point of saying something civil in passing about the weather, or anything else that presented itself, so as to keep on good terms with the lady of the house.

At last one morning the door was standing open, so I entered, and, going upstairs, knocked at the room door. It was immediately opened by the woman whose head