

"I ONCE KNEW AN EARL."

A GIRL'S GRATEFUL MEMORIES OF THE LATE LORD SHAFTESBURY.

By H. A. M'CAUL.



ONCE on a time—so runs the tale—a very foolish young man stood mute at an evening party, unable to find any subject of conversation wherewith to entertain his fair companion of the hour, and much mortified to hear the fluent eloquence of another pair who stood opposite to them. This other couple were discussing, much at their ease, the merits and personal affairs of sundry grand folk whom they claimed for acquaintance; and our simple youth listened, with inward chagrin, to the titled names which fell so freely from their lips. At last he heaved a deep, deep sigh, and said, sorrowfully, "I once knew an earl, too, but he died!" . . . But the remark so silly, the regret so vain, in these unwise lips, might fall from sager ones this year, 1885, when we have indeed known "an earl"—an "æorl," or "elder," in very deed—and death has taken him from amongst us. Innumerable grateful hearts are ready to own how long it must be ere they shall see in our midst so good and great a man as the Earl of Shaftesbury; many and many a tongue, all unused to flattery or tuft-hunting—is proud to claim even a small knowledge of that noble Christian who has so lately been carried with all honour to his last, long home. True Christian knight, worthy peer of England, sworn defender of the oppressed, it is an honour to have known such a man, a privilege to have clasped the brave hand that wrought such gallant deeds for England's weal; and we will tell you quite frankly, girls, that—as earthly favours count—we reckon it side by side with the good fortune of having lived long enough, and been blessed with a sufficiently good memory, to remember the courtesy of one wayside salutation from the greatest soldier of the century, the Iron Duke, of Waterloo renown. Duke and earl—their fame is fitly coupled together; one fought and conquered visible foes, the other met and vanquished invisible but yet more insidious ones that threatened his country's overthrow. It is difficult to estimate how vast the services of either were to rescue England from absolute ruin.

Our personal reminiscences of Lord Shaftesbury date so far back as to be a nursery tradition that melts into the haze of earliest recollections. The large interests of his career, the amelioration of the condition of the poor and needy, the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, and kindred subjects, were keenly shared by one whose wide sympathies made our home a training school for every such true source of education; and the letters marked without, with the Hebrew seal, שלמה שלום ירוסלם ("Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem"),* and addressed within to "My dear Rabbi," on all questions most important to the welfare of Christendom, were a familiar sight, when our stature was yet too diminutive to reach quite easily up to the letter box, and our childish hands were proud

to be entrusted with its key and allowed to fetch the letters therefrom. And before the small mind had grasped entirely what "church interests" might mean, it had entirely mastered the fact that these letters would come more frequently if there was any special excitement rife on this or that religious question, and that Lord Shaftesbury had, above all, at heart the appointing of good and earnest pastors to any larger field of usefulness that might be vacant in the Church of England. It might be about the same year that we learned to comprehend this much, that the genial frank face—now so universally missed—began to be familiar; certainly a misty recollection of it hovers between memories of the Papal aggression and the first visit of Napoleon III. to England, and takes shape clearly in the year 1852, when all London was set aglow by the description of American slavery in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the petition of the ladies of England against its horrors was sent from house to house to be signed. We knew all about that, too, and thought it a great deal more interesting than discussions about new bishops and prime ministers' appointments; and were woundily affronted at being told "you are much too young to sign the petition." We appealed to fatherly authority, and were overjoyed at permission to write a letter to Lord Shaftesbury himself asking for leave to sign it, despite our less than seven years. What pains that letter cost, and what sort of a document it was when written, history does not relate, and we should be very sorry to have to vouch for at this distance of time. But evidently it contained an exposition of our infantile views as to the preferability of suffering injustice to being an inflictor of it. A rather lonely childhood had developed thoughtfulness, and some curious theories about the great questions of right versus wrong; and the pathetic story of "Uncle Tom's" life and death had fired these notions into enthusiasm. Judge, therefore, of our satisfaction when, within a very short interval, the following letter arrived to delight our eyes:—

December 1st, 1852.

"MY DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,—Your nice letter has pleased me very much; and I am very glad that, though so young, you have learned, under your good papa, to hate slavery, cruelty, and everything that is not according to God's word. You are quite right in what you say; it is far better to suffer ill than to do ill; you will see all that in the life of our blessed Lord, and the good book that He has left us. Good-bye, my dear child, may God preserve you! Your affectionate friend,
"SHAFTESBURY."

"Give my love, and my wife's love, to your sister, our god-daughter."

This letter is a truly characteristic act. At the time it was written Lord Shaftesbury was in the very vortex of one of the busiest, most exciting, careers the present century has seen. Whosoever had a good cause to advance, or a public wrong to remedy, a philanthropic aim to promote, or a needy clergyman to recommend for preferment,—went to Lord Shaftesbury. His correspondence must have been something enormous, and yet he could find time to sit down and write these kind words to a child of under seven. Even the postscript is characteristic. He always kept a kindly memory of his god-children; and,

a few years later, after opening a bazaar in aid of certain undertakings for the welfare of the poor Jews of Jerusalem, we met him wandering about Willis's Rooms in search of my sister, with whom he wished to shake hands.

"Are you my god-daughter?" he said, holding out his hand, as he stopped before the stall where I was proudly undertaking the duties of small shopkeeper. "No? But let's shake hands; and where is my god-daughter? I want to know." He was duly piloted onwards, in the right direction, to find my sister, and say a kind greeting to her before he was obliged to hurry away to other more pressing engagements.

His love of children was a very conspicuous feature of that most benevolent character. A brother of ours was present at another public gathering in which he took part, where a ragged little boy followed him on coming out, and stared most unwarrantably. At last the earl said, "Well, little man, do you want to see if you will know me again, that you stare so hard?" Then his eyes fell on the poor little feet peeping through their dilapidated boots; and he added, "I'll tell you what I will give you. You shall have a pair of new boots!" and forthwith made provision for the bestowal of this much-needed gift to cover the small toes.

Of his own personal self-denial, his honourable retrenchments on the death of the previous earl, his strict integrity in the clearing off debts, and willingness to submit to actual inconvenience rather than incur new ones, we used to hear such frequent accounts, that their repetition would savour of gossip; but surely none of his more public labours was nobler than this strict attention to the rights of others at great self sacrifice? "Faithful" in these "fewer things," who can doubt that, *therefore*, he was called to the "many" and greater things which have made his name renowned all over Christendom?

One small story, contrasting the simplicity of his true breeding with the petty vulgarity of those who have it not, will certainly be none the worse for preserving in this age of pretension and false pride. He and my father were deep in discussion over some subject of church interest one day in his library at Grosvenor-square; the fire languished, though the talk waxed more and more animated, and at last Lord Shaftesbury jumped up to rescue it from absolute extinction before it should be too late. After some minutes' careful use of poker and tongs the hearth looked more cheerful, and "There," said Lord Shaftesbury, returning to his chair and the conversation; "I have three footmen kicking their heels yonder in the hall, yet if I rang the bell there would be such a commotion and such a disputing as to which of the three was bound to attend to my fire, that I had rather replenish it myself than have the trouble of deciding which servant ought to bring the scuttle and put on the coals!" . . .

Of the width and largeness of his charity, none who had personal experience could doubt; that any were in distress was the key to Lord Shaftesbury's heart and purse. Within the last ten years of his life we were entreated by a friend to collect help for a poor invalid, who was at a French school, and seemed deserted alike by her Romish instructors and her English relatives. So destitute and sad was her case, that we sought aid here and there,

* Lord Shaftesbury had this seal cut for himself and for a dear friend, and habitually made use of it; later, his envelopes were stamped with this inscription.

and among others, wrote to ask it from Lord Shaftesbury. Almost by return post came back a handsome donation, enclosed in a most kind letter, apologising for the sum being no larger, and saying how difficult he found it to meet the many such applications for assistance which he would so gladly help, did his income permit. The same kind and ready courtesy was always shown to those who had occasion to ask for his votes for any of the innumerable charities in which he had an interest. Busy as he was to the last, one could not help contrasting the polite promptitude of his attention to such matters with the negligent tardiness of much smaller personages.

This is no sketch of his life—only a very, very small memento of our own purely

personal knowledge of so great and good a man. But when, three weeks ago, we sat in the gathering-place of England's highest chivalry, and listened to the Dean of Windsor's eloquent description of the departed Christian knight, whose banner must now no longer wave in St. George's Chapel, it was a thrilling remembrance that—just that once—the kind hand and brave heart of that true elder (earl) among his peers had sent us such words of personal greeting and goodwill. They were not written in vain; the letter was laid aside to be kept for after years, and its actual phrases were soon forgotten; but the germ of a good purpose was securely lodged in one childish heart, and the passionate longing to be enlisted in the great army of those who

fight against all kinds of wrong and fraud, took root, and grew apace from that hour. And when the echo of those knightly vows, by which all who receive the order of the garter are bound, seems to linger about the beauty, and melody, and glorious worship of that royal shrine—the vows to combat wrong and wage war against evil in the name of Christ—it is a pleasant thought to us that one day yet, when innumerable rescued ones, from ragged schools, mines, factories, give their testimony how Lord Shaftesbury's hand was the one to redress their sorrows and aid them to better things, we too may be allowed to thank him for help given to choose the higher quest—"to suffer ill rather than do ill," to "buy the truth and sell it not."

THE GIRLS OF THE WORLD.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

By EMMA BREWER.

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATION OF THE GIRLS AND WOMEN OF THE WORLD.

"Education is the guardian of liberty and the bulwark of morality."—*De Witt Clinton*.

"The object of education is to develop in the individual all the perfection of which he is capable."—*Kant*.

I SHALL try in this chapter to place before you the result of investigation concerning the education of the population of the various countries of the world, the attainments of girls as compared to those of boys, and the amount of education noticeable in girl criminals.

In these days education is appreciated and sought after by all classes and in all countries. None are thought too young, too old, too rich, or too poor to learn. Individuals and the states to which they belong are alike energetically working for the same end, a highly educated population, in the firm belief that, if education be accompanied by sound religious principles, it will elevate the nation, strengthen the national character, and check vice, intemperance, and pauperism. We owe our happiness, usefulness, and profitableness in after life to the class of education and training we receive in early days.

Our minds do not remain blank nor our nature innocent as when we were born; each day and hour as they fly swiftly by leave their mark upon us for good or for evil; if good seed be not early sown and carefully tended, weeds will grow, and at such a pace as to choke every aspiration after good, every desire for freedom. We shall be bound hand and foot by our own evil habits.

War against ignorance is being waged in all directions, and rightly so, for it is a great power for evil and an obstacle to all improvement. I remember reading many years ago the following lines upon the recklessness of ignorance, but I do not in the least know whose words they are:—"Knowledge certainly is power, but who hath considered or set forth the power of ignorance? Knowledge slowly builds up what Ignorance in an hour pulls down. Knowledge works patiently through long centuries to enlarge discovery, and, at length, makes record of it. Ignorance, wanting its day's dinner, lights a fire with the record, and the work of ages is shrivelled up in blackness."

Education and refinement may have their evils, but they are infinitely less than those which result from ignorance, and we must never forget that not only our own happiness

and prosperity, but that of future generations, depend upon our uniting in a crusade against ignorance, which is another name for bondage.

Statistics have been the means, not only of placing before us the giant strength for evil possessed by ignorance, and its power of tyranny over and enslaving those who bend beneath its yoke, but they have at the same time shown us the means of escape. We must, each one in her capacity of good citizen, consider the education of the young a paramount duty; we must publish the necessity of this way out of the difficulty, and show clearly the beneficial results of education in checking vice, and producing freedom, order, and happiness. Perhaps there is no surer test of the real condition of a country than the position of its women and girls, and there is no denying that in these days it is a noble and important one in most of the civilised countries of the world. It remains with us to strengthen this position by every means in our power, and carefully to put aside everything that would tend to foster decay in it.

To us women and girls is allotted the rule and government of the homes of the land. We are the companions of fathers, brothers, and husbands, and it is our privilege to influence them, often to work with and for them, and not rarely to comfort and sustain them.

If we keep these homes of ours pure, refined, and virtuous, we wage war against decay, and occupy the proud place of helping to build up the country, and strengthen the hands of the State. Loving, moral, and religious must be the character of the women and girls of a country if the homes over which they preside are to be pure, restful, attractive, and refined. Wherever the homes of the land fall below this standard, statistics prove that the strength, life, and progress of that country is sapped, notwithstanding its armies, its laws, and its institutions.

A great German writer* says, "It is in the home that the true sphere of woman's greatness lies. It is here that she is called upon to comfort those who suffer, to be content with a little, to do nothing for herself and all for others, and quietly but efficiently give new attractions to the uniformity of home life."

The same writer says, "For house and family the husband is everything; within the family the wife is all; she is the inspiring, embellishing, and controlling power. Home

is the central point for all the exertions of the man; for home he traverses, searches, conquers the world; the wife rules by goodness over the sanctuary for which the man has exerted his powers."

Luther, in speaking of the influence and rule of girls and women in the home, seems as though he could not speak too highly of them. He says that good home rule is the basis on which all good governments are formed, and that God ordained it to be the first and most important of all rule—for where the home is well and properly governed all else is well provided for.

You see, then, how noble is our position, how far extending is our influence. There is not one among us, be she ever so poor and lowly, but has the power of forming the thoughts and habits of those among whom she lives,* and through them of contributing to the morality and strength of the country.

Our privileges are great, our position noble, and it must be our care so to educate ourselves that we do not fall short of what is required of us. Until a girl is well educated she does not know what she is or what she is capable of.

By education I do not mean merely reading, writing, and arithmetic, for these are only the implements by means of which we may acquire and communicate knowledge.

By education, I mean the cultivation of the head, the heart, and the hand, so as to enable us to diffuse knowledge, provident habits, morality, piety, and happiness among those with whom we associate. In short, I mean the full and healthy use of all the faculties God has bestowed upon us.

This sort of education has been gradually increasing of late years among the women and girls of all lands, and wherever it has been at work there may be seen clearly a steady progress among the people in social and domestic virtues; there is less crime, less drunkenness, less scandal, less improvidence: a greater power of thinking, a greater desire for improved condition.

If education did nothing more than teach the poor habits of strict cleanliness, it would be a wonderful blessing in the amount of disease it would prevent.

It is not possible to overrate the influence of women and girls for good if they will have it so—for evil if they neglect the duties their privileges entail. The education possible to

* Do you remember in the story of "Seven Years for Rachel," how the heroine, a poor servant girl, influenced master, mistress, child, and fellow-servant for good?

* Zchokke.