

Tea at ten o'clock at night was as unprecedented as dinner at that hour to Flora, for the Castle had been old-fashioned in its habits. She managed to say that her aunt was very kind, but she—Flora—did not wish for anything to eat; she had had a great deal to eat on the road. If she could only get to bed and fall asleep that would be best.

"I daresay that is wise. You shall go to your room at once, Flora," said Mrs. Bennet promptly. "Dorothy, show your cousin the way. But she must not go without food, if it were only a slice of chicken. Amelia will bring it up. Good-night, my dear; never mind the others. Sleep soundly, and you will feel all right in the morning."

Flora stumbled up another flight of wide stairs, accompanied by that shadow of a Cousin Dorothy, whom she could neither see nor hear plainly, though she was not without a consciousness that the shadow stared at her with the modified stare of politeness. The slice of chicken arrived punctually, but Flora could not taste it; and she declined any aid in undressing from so imposing a domestic as Amelia, who did not wear a housemaid's cap and apron, or, for that matter, a cap and apron of any kind. She wore a silk and cashmere gown, such as Miss Arabella would have hoarded for her best dress, and showed elaborately-arranged hair, like what one sees on the heads of "young ladies" in the milliner's department of drapers' shops; for "Amelia" turned out to be Mrs. Bennet's and the Miss Bennets' maid, as well as general factotum to everybody.

All that Flora needed was the peaceful oblivion of profound slumber. Such a boon does not require much wooing from the young, after they have gone through unwonted fatigue and excitement, when their health has all the reserves of vigour and elasticity it ought to have, and the worst burden

they have on their simple minds is tender regret, before the wistful, weary fiend of home-sickness has had time to assert itself. Flora slept soundly, and after the first bewildering feeling of not knowing where she was when she awoke, and the next, giddy sensation of still moving in a moving room—the sympathetic reflection of her many hours of moving yesterday—she was all right, as her aunt had said. She was thankful in her quaint way, as Miss Arabella might have been, to have escaped "the dangers of travel," and arrived safely at her destination. She was ready to be pleased, like the good-humoured, intelligent girl she was, with the novelty and the rush of life around her.

What a beautiful room she was in to begin with! She set it down at first as the spare bedroom in the house, the spare bedrooms being always the best in Inverlochan; the very Castle having its guest-chambers, which were like state-rooms in their out-of-date grandeur.

Later, Flora discovered that the room she occupied was a facsimile of the dainty rooms belonging to her cousin Dorothy and even her half-grown-up cousin Kate, while little Mary still retained for her sole use what seemed to her cousin perfectly sumptuous nurseries, one, that is, for day, and another for night.

Flora had been accustomed to each of the young Macdougals claiming for herself, as she grew up, a room in which she installed her person and her personalities, where she reigned with much good-natured self-assertion and despotism, subject, however, to the noisy invasions of her sisters whenever the fancy took them. Flora had also heard Lady Adelaide say, with fine sarcasm, that she believed the day would soon come in England when only sister-princesses would have a bedroom in common, for the very maid-servants stipulated for separate garrets, and protested against any intrusion on their

privacy. But the Fearnton rooms were not like this one; they were comfortable and showy after their fashion. They contained the last fashion in window-curtains and beds, with commodious wardrobes for the girls' dresses, and, perhaps, an ambitious attempt at a jewel casket, in addition to elaborate dressing-cases, for their trinkets. But the rooms were heavy, dark, and tasteless compared to the room which Flora was henceforth to call her own, furnished in delicate light wood, with its pretty brackets and pictures, its last pleasant fancy of cool, brown Etruscan ware in place of gaudy china, its inlaid toilet-table—a marvel of ingenious and exquisite contrivance—its ivory-backed brushes and hand-mirrors, its swing-glass, its writing-table and work-basket all complete, its book-shelves with their choicely-bound little volumes as dainty as everything else, its little medicine-chest—as if girls wanted medicine!—its bath.

"Why, I might live in this room if I was not frightened to move for spoiling any of these pretty things," Flora said to herself delightedly. "I can write to Miss Arabella without troubling anybody. I declare there are stamps in the little stamp-case, as well as paper and envelopes in the stationery thing. Can I be intended to use them without asking permission? Oh, how kind and thoughtful of aunt Bennet! And I may mend my gloves, and tack in clean frilling, here, at any time." Then she reflected in consternation, what did her aunt think of her bedroom in the manse of Inverlochan when she visited there? Bedrooms in the old home were as clean as well-scoured boards under well-worn carpets and well-washed chintz covers could make them, but as for lounging-chairs and couches, and little tables, they were not so much as thought of. Bedrooms at Inverlochan were for sleeping in, and little more.

(To be continued.)

## RELIGION.

### AN ADDRESS TO SCHOOLGIRLS.

By THE VEN. ARCHDEACON WILSON, M.A., VICAR OF ROCHDALE.

I AM not going to preach you a sermon of quite the usual type, but intend rather to offer a few detached remarks without attempting to weave them into any unity of plan, or to connect them with any particular text from the Bible. Such unity as these remarks may possess will result not from design but from the nature of the subject. For I am going to write about religion.

Now as I write this word I almost fancy I hear the rustle of an audience composing itself to endure what it foresees must be a dull and uninteresting address. "Religion! he can't make that interesting." Now, why is this? What is religion, that in the eyes of so many clever and intelligent and well-educated young people it should be thought dull?

Of this one point I am quite sure, that it is the fault of our misunderstanding and misrepresentation, in the past and the present, that religion seems dull.

Religion is, in its essence, the opening to the young mind of all the higher regions of thought and aspiration and imagination and spirituality. When you are quite young you are occupied of course with the visible things and people round you; each hour brings its amusements, its occupations, and its delights, and reflection scarcely begins. But soon questions of right and wrong spring up; a world of ideas and imaginations opens before you; you are led by your teachers and your books into the presence of great thoughts, the inspirations that come from beauty in all forms, from nature, from art, from literature, and especially from poets; you come under the influence of friends—fathers, mothers, or other elders—who evidently have springs of conduct and aspirations you as yet only dimly recognise; and mixed with all these influences there is that influence on us from childhood upward of our prayers that we have been

taught, our religious services, our Bibles, and most of all the Sacred Figure, dimly seen, but never long absent from our thoughts, enveloped in a sort of sacred and mysterious halo—the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ enshrined in our hearts, and that Father in Heaven of Whom He spoke. All these are among the religious influences; and what is their aim and object? What is it that we should try and extract from them for ourselves? How should we use them in our turn to better those who come after us?

Well, I reply, they should all be regarded as the avenues by which our human nature as a whole ought to rise, and the only avenues by which it can rise, to its rightful and splendid heritage and its true development. We cannot be all that we might be without straining our efforts in this direction of aspiration towards God, towards all that is ideal, spiritual, and divine.

We are often inert, effortless, and then the religion I have spoken of repels us because it demands an effort; we are often selfish, and it repels us because it calls us out of self; we are often absorbed in the small and immediate aims for present enjoyment, interested in our own small circles, and religion insists that these are not enough. It is for ever calling us, as all true education calls us, as literature and history call us, to rise higher, to see more, to widen our sympathies, to enlarge our hearts, to open the doors of feeling and emotion. Religion therefore may make great demands on us; it may disturb our repose; it may shake us, and say, look, look; look up, look round; it may be unfortunate, insistent, omnipresent, but it is not dull.

There is a sham semblance of religion which you are right in regarding as dull, for it is dull. When it is unreal and insincere it is deadly dull; when phrases are repeated, parrotwise, by people who have either never felt or have long lost their power and inspiration, then too it is deadly dull. When a sharp line, moreover, is made between all the various influences that elevate us, and place us in presence of the ideal and spiritual world; when the common relations of life, when art, poetry, criticism, science; when educated and refining intercourse and conversation, and all that occupies us on our intellectual sides, is classed as secular, and the only helps to religion that are recognised are services and creeds and traditions of our particular church, then such religion cuts itself off from many of its springs, and from most of its fairest fields, and is barren, and unprofitable, and dull.

You are not likely to make this error. You are perhaps more likely to make the opposite error, by a natural reaction from this. Because, when all the world of interest and beauty and human life is opening before you, you cannot believe that religion is confined to the narrow sphere of ideas in which it was once thought to consist, and is still sometimes declared to consist, you may think that you can dispense with that narrow but central sphere of ideas; and there you are wrong. I am quite sure that there is no inspiring and sustaining force, which shall make your lives worthy, comparable to the faith which Christ taught the world, that we are verily the children of God, and sharers of His Divine life, heirs of an eternal life in Christ towards which we may press, and the appointed path to which lies in the highest duties that our daily life presents and consecrates. On this inspiring power of faith in Christ I shall not speak to-day. I mean to speak on one only of the duties which form the path to the higher life, which you may overlook, and yet which is inherent in religion.

The duty which I shall speak of is the necessity of entering into the life and needs and sympathies of others; of living not with an eye exclusively on yourself, but with the constant thought for others. It is the law of our being that admits of no exception. You may hope that the law of gravitation will be suspended in your case, and leap out of the window; but you will suffer for your mistake; and you will be equally mistaken, and equally maim your life, if you think that somehow the law of the spiritual world would admit of exception, and that you can win happiness, goodness, and the full tide of life; become the best that you are capable of being, while remaining isolated, self-absorbed, by being centripetal—not centrifugal. It cannot be. Now this is worth saying to you, because you know here at school what a united social life is. All girls do not know this. You do. There is distinctly here a school life, a school feeling, a house feeling. No casual visitor to your playing fields and hall can mistake this. And you know that this enlarges and draws something out of your nature that would never

have been suspected had it not been for school life. But when school life ends, what will become of this discovery that you have made? Boys, when they leave school, and have developed the passionate feeling of love for their old school—the strong *esprit de corps*, the conviction that in brotherhood and union is their strength and happiness—contrive to find fresh united activities, and transfer to new bodies their public spirit and power of co-operation. Their college, their regiment, their football club, their work with young employes, their parish, their town—something is found into which they can throw themselves. And again and again I have watched how this has become a religion, a binding and elevating and educating power in the mind of young men; and again and again, too, I have noticed how without it men lose interest, lose growth and greatness; individualism creeps on them, half their nature is stunted. For the individual life is only half the life; and even that cannot be the rich and full and glorious thing it might be, unless it is enlarged on all sides, and rests on a wide social sympathy and love.

But how is it for girls when they leave school? It is distinctly harder for you to find lines of united action. Society tends to individualise young ladies; its ideal for them is elegant inaction and graceful waiting, to an extent infinitely beyond what it is for young men. You do not find at your homes ready-made associations to join, or even an obvious possibility of doing anything for anybody. And so I have witnessed generous and fine schoolgirl natures dwarfed, cabined, confined; cheated of the activities which they had learned to desire to exercise, becoming individualistic, and therefore commonplace; not without inward fury and resistance, secret remonstrance, but concealing it all under the impassive manner which society demands.

Something is wrong: and your generation is finding this out, and finding out also its cure. Year by year greater liberty of action is open to educated women; and educated women are themselves seeing, and others are seeing for them, that they have a part to play in the world which none others can play; if they do not play it, then work, indispensable to the good of society, and therefore to their own good, is undone. I say to *their own good*, for we all want happiness; but happiness is not won by seeking for it. Make up your minds on this point, that there are certain things only to be got by not aiming directly at them. Aim, for example, at being influential, and you become a prig; aim at walking and posing gracefully, and you become an affected and ludicrous object; aim even at breathing quite regularly, and you fail.

So if you aim at happiness or self-culture or individualistic completeness, the world seems to combine to frustrate you. People, circumstances, opportunities, temper, everything goes wrong; and you lay the blame on everything except the one thing that is the cause of it all—the fact that you yourself are aiming at the wrong thing. But aim at making everything go well where you are; aim at using this treasure of life that God has given you for helping lame dogs over stiles, for making schools, households, games, parishes, societies, sick-rooms, girls' clubs, what not?—run more smoothly; wake every morning with the thought, What can I do to-day to oil the wheels of my little world? and behold people, circumstances, opportunities, temper, even health, all get into a new adjustment, and all combine to fill your life with interests, warmth, affection, culture, and growth; you will find it true; good measure, shaken down, heaped together, and running over, shall men give into your bosoms.

Ah! but *what* can one do? It is so hard to find out the right thing. Yes; and no possible general rule can be given. You must fix the ideal in your mind, and be sure that in

some way or other openings will arise. I will not touch life at school; you *know more about* that than I do, and perhaps need not that I should speak of public spirit, and generous temper, and the united life. I will only say that a girl who does not throw herself into school life with the generous wish to give pleasure, and to lift the tone around her, does not get more than a fraction of the good that a school life like this can give, and does not do her duty. I speak of later years alone. And in the first instance, and always in the first place, stand the claims of home. I dare say you remember the young lady who wanted to go and learn nursing in a hospital, and was asked by the doctor why she desired this. "Father is paralysed," she said, "and mother is nearly blind, and my sisters are all married, and it is so dull at home; so I thought I should like nursing." I don't want you to emulate that young person. Grudge no love and care at home; no one can give such happiness to parents, brothers, sisters, as you can, and to make people happy is in itself a worthy mission; it is the next best thing to making them good. And remember also, that there are many years before you, and that though it may seem that years are spent with nothing effected except that somehow things have gone more smoothly, you yourself will have been matured, deepened, and consolidated by a life of duty, in a way in which no self-chosen path of life could have trained you. And if, as is quite possible, some of you are impatient already for the exercise of your powers in some great work, I will preach patience to you from another motive. It is this: that you are not yet capable of doing much that is useful, from want of training and general ability. I remember Miss Octavia Hill once saying that she could get any quantity of money, and any quantity of enthusiasm, but that her difficulty was to get trained intelligence, either in men or women. So, a few days ago, a lady, who is Hon. Secretary of the Women's Trade Association, said to a friend of my own that she had had many voluntary lady helpers of various degrees of education and culture, and that she had found without exception that the highly educated students were the most fitted to do the work well; that they alone were capable of the patience, accuracy, and attention to detail which were one essential quality to the doing of such work, and that they alone could provide the other essentials, which can only spring from a cultivated mind, viz., wideness of view, sense of proportion, and capacity for general interest in other important questions—social, literary, and intellectual. "It is this cultivation of mind which prevents you from being crushed under the difficulty and tedium and disappointment which must attend every effort to teach principles and promote ideal aims among the mass of ignorant, apathetic, uninterested, and helpless working women, who must themselves in the last resort be the agents in bringing about a better condition of industry."

You may rest assured that if you set your mind on a career of splendid usefulness for your fellows (and I hope every one of our girls aims at this), then you will need all the training that the highest and most prolonged education can give you. Become the most perfect creature you have it in your power to become. If Oxford or Cambridge is open to you, welcome the opportunity, and use the extra power they will give you. If not, then utilise the years that lie before you, in perfecting your accomplishments, in self-education; in interesting and informing yourself on social questions; in enlarging your horizon, while you cheerfully, happily, brilliantly perform *all* your home duties.

And during this period of preparation which you all must go through, remember that there

are some things which you can do better in your inexperience and ignorance than any other people. How is this? Tell me why it would be more comfort, and do more good sometimes to a poor sick woman to bring her a few primroses or daffodils than to give her any substantial relief? The reason is the same. The very freshness and innocence of young faces, that sympathise without having the faintest suspicion of the sin and misery of the world, is more refreshing and helpful than the stronger sympathy of one who really knows all the evil. You can be primroses and daffodils, and give glimpses into a purer world of love and gentleness and peace.

And if a prolonged training is impossible to you, it is often possible for you to assist in some humble capacity some lady who is so engaged in work on a scale which you could not yourself touch. Be her handmaid and fag and slave, and so gradually train yourself to become capable of independent action.

But to sum up all I am saying it amounts to this—Where there's a will there's a way, and I want you to have the will.

Did you ever think for what reason you should have had such a splendid time of it in your lives? Not two girls in a thousand are getting such an education as you are, such varied studies, such vigorous public school life, such historic associations. And why? Because you are better than others? I think not. It is that you play your part in the great social organism—our national life; hundreds are toiling for us, digging, spinning, weaving, mining, build-

ing, navigating, that we may have leisure for the thought, the love, the wisdom that shall lighten and direct their lives. You cannot dissociate yourselves from the labouring masses, and in particular from the women and girls of England. They are your sisters; and a blight and a curse rests on you if you ignore them, and grasp at all the pleasures and sweetness and cultivation of your life, with no thought or toil for them. Their lives are the foundations on which ours rest. It is horrible in one class to live without this consciousness of a mutual obligation, and mutual responsibility. All that we get, we get on trust, as trustee for them. I remember that Thring says somewhere, that "no beggar who creeps through the street living on alms and wasting them is baser than those who idly squander at school and afterwards the gifts received on trust."

I know that our class education isolates us and separates us from the uneducated and common people as we call them, makes us perhaps regard them as uninteresting, even repellent. Part of what we hope from the girls who come from great schools is, that they shall have a larger sympathy, a truer heart. Remember all your life long a saying of Abraham Lincoln's, when he was President of the United States. Someone remarked in his hearing that he was quite a common-looking man. "Friend," he replied gently, "the Lord loves common-looking people best; that is why He has made so many of them."

You can all make a few friends out of the lower class; you cannot do much; but learn to

know and love a few, and then you will do wider good than you suspect.

But you are beginning to ask—Is all this religion? You expected something else. Let me remind you of the man who came to Jesus Christ, and asked Him what he should do to obtain eternal life. And this question, I may explain, means—What shall I do that I may enter on that divine and higher life now while I live; how can I most fully develop my spiritual nature? And the answer was—Love God; and love your neighbour as yourself. Go outside yourself in love to all that is divine and ideal in thought and duty; go outside yourself in love to your neighbour—and your neighbour is everyone with whom you have any relation; and then, and then alone, does your own nature grow to its highest and best. This is the open secret of true religion.

Religion glorifies, because it idealises, that very life we are each called on to lead. Look, therefore, round in your various lives and homes, and ask yourselves—What is the ideal life for me here, in this position, as school-girl, daughter, sister, friend, mistress, or in any other capacity. Education ought to enable you to frame an ideal; it ought to give you imagination, and sympathy, and intelligence, and resource; and religion ought to give you the strong motive, the endurance, the width of view, the nobleness of purpose, to make your life a light and a blessing wherever you are.\*

\* From *Three Addresses to Girls at School*.—Percival & Co.

## THE FLOWER-GIRLS OF LONDON.

By EMMA BREWER.



### CHAPTER I.

"Flowers are, in the volume of Nature, what the expression, 'God is Love,' is in the volume of Revelation."—Chapter on "Flowers."

MANY and varied are the servants that wait upon our great city, supplying its needs day by day. Merchant princes and humble traders vie with each other in satisfying the needs of body and mind; and so efficiently is this done, that we take to it all quite naturally—as if, in fact, all things grew to our hand.

Rich and poor alike are born with a love of the poetic and the beautiful, and it is well for their happiness if this can be satisfied. To the rich of course this is easy, for money will buy all things, whether for mind or body; but the majority of the five millions of inhabi-

tants of London are not rich, and yet are filled with a yearning for the bright and the graceful; and so, if it were not for the existence of the more humble street-traders, many of them would never have a chance of indulging it.

Owing to the splendid arrangements of London in the matter of supply and demand, all classes may, according to their means, provide themselves with things of beauty to cheer and refine their daily life.

The most poetic and exquisite among things graceful in Nature are flowers, and in a city like London, where the struggle for daily bread is all-absorbing, they are of infinite value in keeping alive within us the desire for things lovely, and the longing to grow nearer and nearer to the good and loving Father who made them all.

This love of flowers is a naturally implanted passion in rich and poor alike, and is without any alloy or debasing object as a motive.

Yet it is not so long ago that the sale of these in our streets was of rare occurrence, and never at a price which brought them within reach of our poor. Now, on the contrary, every corner of our thronged thoroughfares is graced by their presence, taking away from us the reproach that we only worship capital, and that there is no particle of poetry in dear old London.

The trade in cut flowers is quite of recent growth, and is still rapidly increasing. It has sprung from a single grain into a mighty tree sufficient for everybody's needs. The origin of it was that some thirty years ago the farmers brought to the market a few old-fashioned flowers, such as the stock, sweet william, polyanthus, cowslip, and cabbage rose, mixed in with the various vegetables; and seeing that these always found ready purchasers, they gradually increased the number, setting aside in their country homes a little

more land than formerly for the growth of flowers.

These were sold, as a rule, in front of the railings round St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, but without stalls on which to display them. One of the flower-sellers of twenty-five years ago is still remembered and spoken of; his name was Smith, and he was known to the flower world as "Napoleon." He was always to be seen on market days at the corner of King Street with arms folded, his basket of flowers at his feet, looking for all the world like the general after whom he was called. He was quite a character, and it would not have been market day without his familiar figure. Mr. Barr says he remembers him well. As time went on it was necessary to put up some benches for the flowers which came in in such abundance. It was about this time that Mr. Dorrien Smith persuaded the farmers of Scilly to cultivate flowers for Covent Garden. They, as a rule, were disinclined to follow his advice; but one man thought well of the plan, and collected some then growing in his garden and sent them, and for the little lot cleared two-and-sixpence. This was the commencement in those islands of the flower trade, which sends out in a season as many as two hundred tons of cut flowers—the expense of conveying them to the market being seven-and-sixpence a ton. At length the benches gave place to the new flower market, which, within the last few years, has been enlarged to its present magnificent proportions, and where one can see and purchase all the choice flowers which England, Scilly, the Channel Islands, France, and other places supply.

The capital locked up in the culture of flowers round about London is enormous, and it is every year increasing. One man whom I could name started twenty years ago with a five-pound note, and now has so much glass that no insurance company could pay for it; and his success is that of many another.