

Poetry.

GOD'S WAYS

Oh! it is hard to work for God,
To rise and take his part
Upon the battle-field of earth,
And not sometimes lose heart.

He hides himself so wondrously,
As though there were no God;
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Or He deserts us at the hour
The fight is almost lost;
And seems to leave us to ourselves
Just when we need him most.

Ill masters good; good seems to change
To ill with greatest ease;
And, worst of all, the good with good
Is at cross purposes.

It is not so; but so it looks.
And we lose courage then;
And doubts will come if God hath kept
His promises to men.

Ah! God is other than we think;
His ways are far above,
Far above reason's height, and reached
Only by child-like love.

The look, the fashion of God's ways
Love's life-long study are;
She can behold and guess, and act,
When reason would not dare.

She has a prudence of her own
Her step is firm and free,
Yet there is caution's science, too,
In her simplicity.

Workman of God! O lose not heart,
But learn what God is like;
And in the darkest battle-field
Then shall know where to strike.

Oh, blessed is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible!

And blessed is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye!

Oh, learn to scorn the ways of men!
Oh, learn to live with God!
For Jesus won the world through shame
And beckons thee his road.

God's glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways,
And of all things on earth, least like
What men agree to praise.

Muse on His justice, downcast soul,
Muse and take better heart;
Back with thine angel to the field,
Good luck shall crown thy part.

God's justice is a bed where we
Our anxious hearts may lay,
And, weary with ourselves, may sleep
Our discontent away.

Select Tale.

From Graham's Magazine.

THE BRIGGS' BABY.

BY ELLA ROHMAN CHURCH.

Lot well enough alone.—OLD MAXIM.

It was a forlorn-looking little object, seeming as though it had got into a tangle, and could not get out again—an undistinguishable mass of nothing in particular, whose chief amusement appeared to be that of digging its eyes out with its fists—and yet the whole house was in an uproar about it; and not only the house but the village too.

The Briggs' baby, to be brief, was an object of universal admiration. Martha Briggs was yet scarcely more than a child herself, and as to Sam every one knew that he had only just completed his twenty-first year. Uncles, aunts, and cousins, flocked in from all directions to gaze upon the wonder and detect in its little, shapeless features a striking resemblance to father or mother, or both. Sam held his head at least three inches higher than before the advent of that remarkable baby; and Martha evidently considered all the extravagant praises bestowed upon the queer little piece of humanity as not the half of what it deserved.

The large, old-fashioned house directly opposite the Briggs', belonged to Timothy Cornwall. Timothy was a rich man; he owned other houses and numerous broad acres—nearly all of which had been acquired by hard work and careful saving. His better-half was a perfect mirror of her husband; to work and to save had been the objects of her life. They had both done this for twenty years; and now they were the richest people in Hornetville.

Every thing about the premises was neat, regular, and plentiful; and it was the kind of place that a traveller in the stage-coach would have involuntarily noticed for its air of old-fashioned comfort and luxuriance; each separate apple or pumpkin upon the farm seeming to grow in a proper, regular way, and every tree leaning out in the most orderly manner. One could tell, at a glance, that there were no children there to put things in disorder—no little, muddy feet to come pattering in upon Mrs. Cornwall's immaculate floors—or childish hand to disarrange the methodically-placed tables and chairs. No, when his neighbors spoke of Timothy Cornwall to strangers, they invariably added that he had, 'neither chick

nor child,' and nephews and nieces began to be quite anxious about the extent of their favor with Uncle Timothy.

Mrs. Cornwall had been sitting with Martha; and she crossed the road to her own dwelling with a thoughtful step, and sat down in her bonnet, by the sitting-room fire, in a complete state of abstraction. She had seen babies before—plenty of them; and yet, somehow, the Briggs' baby seemed to arouse a new and unaccustomed train of thought.

Yes, Timothy was now hard on to sixty, and she was hard on to fifty; they had worked, and saved and were rich; they could now fold their hands and do nothing, if they liked, for the rest of their lives. But for what had they been working and saving? She didn't see but that it was to make their relations glad when they died; and here Mrs. Cornwall gave a large stick of wood an unnecessary push with her foot. They had an immense house, with no one in it but themselves and Sally, whose province was entirely confined to the kitchen; and, somehow or other, it began to seem kind of lonely. She didn't know as she got rid of trouble, either; for, when anything was the matter with anybody, they always sent for her. 'She hadn't any children,' they said; and on that account, she was expected to be at people's beds whenever they chose to call. Martha seemed so happy, and Sam looked so proud of her and the baby—she really believed that Tim would think a great deal more of her if they had children around them.

She sat twisting the strings of her bonnet, and gazing so intently into the fire that her husband entered unperceived; but, stealing round behind her, he bestowed upon her still red lips a kiss, the warmth of which showed that his wife had certainly done him injustice, as he said—

'Why, mother, what's the matter?' as he noticed the cloud upon her brow.

Now this title of 'mother' bestowed upon his wife, was one of Tim's peculiarities that afforded an inexhaustible subject of mirth to his friends. By what species of mental hallucination, he could ever regard her in that light, was certainly a mystery; but it was known to be an undeniable fact, that within a week after their marriage, he adopted that style of address, and he continued it ever since.

To her husband's great surprise, Mrs. Cornwall burst into tears. She was rarely thus affected; and Timothy began to fear that something more than usual was the matter.

To all his entreaties, Mrs. Cornwall remained for a long time silent; but when, at length, he had obtained a glimpse of her feelings, and found that she was actually jealous of Martha's baby, Timothy indulged in a hearty laugh, partly from a sense of relief that it was no worse. But, observing, from his wife's clouded face, that she was in no laughing humor, he good-naturedly elongated his own visage to a sober expression; and proposed holding a consultation as to what was to be done.

The good man was extremely puzzled at the strange turn that his wife had taken; and thinking that she needed something to divert her mind, proposed a quilting-party.

'I aint agoin' to have any more quilting-parties,' replied Mrs. Cornwall, with considerable asperity; 'there's the house turned topsy-turvy—lots of cake made, and eggs and cream-vanishin' like wildfire—forward youngsters puttin' their noses in everywhere—Sally grumblin' for a fortnight afterward—and much thanks I git for't all. Don't talk to me of quilting-parties, or any other parties!'

Timothy had made himself comfortable with his pipe; and now sat ruminating amid vast clouds of smoke. He was not given to repining, but his wife's words had set him a-thinking; and he became wrapped in a waking dream, that was infinitely delightful. Childish hands clasped his neck—soft, childish cheeks were pressed close to his—and childish tones rang out in glee, diffusing unusual music through the old house.

Twenty—nineteen—yes, Timothy, Jr. would now be a likely young man, who could take half the care of the farm off his shoulders, and go on innumerable sleighing parties with the prettiest girls in the county; and Rebecca, (he would call her Rebecca after his wife,) he saw her a beautiful and dutiful daughter, on whose account the young men were troubling him continually—but he would be stern with them, and make them keep their distance—they were none of them half good enough for Rebecca—'He'd show them—but the pipe had gone out; and Timothy awoke to realities somewhat saddened, and watched his wife as she silently arranged the tea-table, that looked so lonely only laid for two. There should be some little, high-chairs there; and china mugs whose gilt letters traced the words, 'To my Son' or 'To my Daughter.'

The meal was eaten more silently than usual; and Timothy Cornwall and his wife began to feel a void in their hearts—an empty, aching void, that would not be filled.

Mrs. Cornwall went often to the opposite house; and sat there tending the baby, while

Martha, with her bright eyes and rolled up sleeves, flitted here and there—now, plunged up to the elbows in flour, in the manufacture of one of Sam's favorite dishes, or singing through the house, broom in hand, as she swept and dusted rooms that seemed already swept and dusted to the last degree of neatness. She found her neighbors extremely useful; and the baby became so accustomed to Mrs. Cornwall, that it was perfectly satisfied to remain in her charge.

'I do wish Martha wouldn't be so dreadful choice of that baby!' exclaimed Mrs. Timothy to her husband, on her return from one of these visits; 'she really seems to be afraid that we'll eat it, or do something with it! I wanted it over here to spend the day—I thought it would be so nice to have it here for once—it's a dear little thing, and knows me as well as it knows its Mother; but Martha opened her eyes as wide as saucers, and said that she couldn't think of such a thing at present!'

'It would be nice,' said Tim, reflectively; he having a vision of a model baby that never cried, behaved with all the consideration of a grown person, and went quietly to sleep when people were too busy to attend to it.—'Yes,' said he, 'I should really like to have it here.'

Mrs. Cornwall sat nursing her wrath in the rocking chair; and thinking what an ungrateful creature Martha was, that she wouldn't lend them the baby for a little while!

The months wore on, and the Briggs' baby had got to be quite an old story. It now seemed like a kitten that has commenced growing, and lost its prettiness; except, that it was a fat, good-natured little thing, and daily increasing in strength and beauty. It was now ten months old; aspired to eat and drink like other people; and, as its father said, behaved in all respects, like a christian.

Sam and Martha were not much given to jaunting—it took time and money; but quite suddenly one morning, they made up their minds to attend a State Fair, about fifty miles off; for, as Sam said, 'he jest wanted to see if them pumpkins, and squashes, and things, was any such great shakes, after all.'

They would be gone but one night,—and after considerable hesitation, Martha listened favorably to Mrs. Cornwall's proposal of taking charge of the baby. Sam laughed at his wife's fears, and declared that 'the young one was well enough in such hands; the only danger was, that having tried the delights of having a baby in the house, they might insist upon keeping it altogether.' And Martha fully agreed with him in the latter idea.

They would take the afternoon train, and return the next evening; and it was a settled thing that the baby was to be left with Mrs. Cornwall.

When Timothy came home to dinner, he found his wife radiant with smiles. She informed him that they were going to have a visitor, and told him to guess who it was.

'I'm sure, I don't know,' he replied, half-absently.

'Well, guess,' rejoined his wife, quite provoked at his indifference. 'I'm sure you're Yankee enough for that!'

But Timothy's perceptions were very much clouded; and, when in despair, his wife was obliged to divulge the secret, he seemed fairly staggered by it.

'The baby,' he repeated, 'are you sure it's quite well? Maybe it'll have a fit, or something.'

'Nonsense,' replied his wife, 'all babies don't have fits—Martha's never had a fit in its life.'

Timothy was rather fearful; but, being reassured by his wife, he ventured to give himself up to all the pleasure of the anticipated enjoyment.

But suddenly his anxiety assumed a new form.

'How are you going to feed it?' he inquired; 'won't it want a teapot or something?'

The expression of intense contempt in Mrs. Cornwall's eye, as she repeated the word 'teapot,' effectually silenced her husband, who meekly admitted 'he didn't know much about babies.'

Martha came over herself, with the baby carefully bundled up, to reiterate her charges; and almost bewildered good Mrs. Cornwall with the multiplicity of disquisitions. Timothy listened in considerable awe; and, at first, gazed upon the baby as though afraid that it might hurt him. The object of all this solicitude looked remarkably well satisfied with the arrangement, and parted from its mother without a single whimper.

'Didn't I tell you it was a darling?' said Mrs. Cornwall, as she sat down to untie its cloak and hood.

The baby laughed and crowed, gazed from Timothy to the fire, and from the fire to Timothy, and sucked its thumb in perfect contentment.

The old gentlemen shook his newspaper at it, but the baby started at the sudden noise; and then Timothy started because the baby did, and looked so frightened, that his wife laughed at him. The child was playful, however, and after puckering up its mouth a little,

concluded not to cry; and amused itself pulling at Mrs. Cornwall's cap.

Timothy gazed upon it with the utmost yearning; he fairly longed to take the child in his arms, and yet he didn't dare to say so. He was afraid his wife would laugh at him; he couldn't imagine how she held it so nicely; and he sat there watching and endeavoring to learn something. He tried all manner of devices to attract the child's attention; but it looked upon his efforts with such evident contempt, that Timothy really felt hurt.

At length, watching his opportunity, he snatched it suddenly from his wife's arms, and began dancing violently around the room with it. But Timothy was not accustomed to babies; he handled the child awkwardly; and by his violence, it set up a cry that fairly terrified him.

Timothy listened meekly to his wife's reproof and sat down in a cool perspiration, while she endeavored to soothe the fractious infant. But it would not be soothed; its feelings had been very much injured; and it cried so loud and steadily, that they began to fear Martha would hear it, and come posting back to execute summary vengeance upon them.

'I declare,' exclaimed poor Mrs. Cornwall, panting with her exertions, after trotting, and walking, and tossing the child, until she sank down from sheer exhaustion, 'this is worse than churning-day even, or bakin' day either! I couldn't feel more badly, if I'd done the hardest day's work I ever done in my life.'

The baby was tired out, too, and lay sobbing on her knee—Timothy regarding it with a rueful countenance, and wondering what in the name of common sense possessed it. Afterwhile, the sobs nearly ceased—the tearful eyes were closed—and with an ejaculation of thankfulness, Mrs. Cornwall deposited the child in its cradle, which had been brought over from the other house. She rocked it and hushed it twice as much as was necessary, for fear that it was not really asleep; and frowned down all her husband's attempts at speaking, until he became quite impatient, and looked upon the baby as something of a bore. Timothy obeyed his wife's beckoning nod, and stood beside the cradle.

'Isn't it lovely?' she whispered—and he gave a fervent assent.

The round cheek was flushed with its late excitement—one or two tear-drops still trembled on the long lashes—and the tiny, dimpled hand rested, like a rose-leaf, on the coverlet. The childless couple stood regarding the sweet picture with a feeling of indescribable tenderness; and the infant slumbered on, undisturbed by their low whisperings.

Leaving the cradle and its precious contents in her husband's charge, Mrs. Cornwall went to the kitchen to superintend some arrangements for feeding the baby. Martha had brought over a paper of arrow-root, the boiling of which had been entrusted to Sally; but that damsel, having cooked it with a most homoeopathic allowance of water, had manufactured a compound that tasted like burnt pudding. Mrs. Cornwall was fairly discouraged.

'It's a great bother, that baby,' muttered Sally, 'cookin' up messes jist to throw away—and then to hear this little varmint squeal! My sakes why the pigs is nothin' to it!'

Timothy sat meditating by the cradle, until, to his great delight, the baby opened its eyes. It was now perfectly good-natured, and smiled at him and sucked its thumb, as though it had quite forgotten its late wrongs. He held out hands—the baby manifested a decided disposition to accept them—and the next moment, the delighted Timothy, with the child tightly grasped in a highly novel and astonishing manner, paraded up and down the room with all the feelings of a conqueror. The baby was satisfied, and looked at him approvingly.

It seemed to be particularly fond of snatching at things, and, having cornered Timothy somewhere near the fire-place, made frantic grasps at an ancient china bowl, that had descended to Mrs. Cornwall from her great-grandmother. Every morning did the good woman dust and polish it with the most reverential care; it was so thin as to be almost transparent, and an object of especial admiration to all their visitors.

Timothy gently disengaged the baby's hands, and tried to divert its attention but the little tyrant twisted its lip in such a manner that made its guardian shake in his shoes, and he felt very much in the same predicament as does a man who is perched on a fence with a tiger awaiting him on one side, and a lion on the other. The baby struck the first notes, and Timothy cowered as he was, with a nervous 'h-h,' drew near again to the enchanted spot.

The catastrophe soon followed—and Timothy awoke from his blindness, to hear his wife exclaiming—

'I wouldn't have it broken for the world!' as she gazed sorrowfully upon the shattered fragments—and the baby screaming over the ruins! 'I declare,' continued she, half crying, 'I almost wish that Martha had taken the baby with her—I had no idea of its behaving in this way!'

'That's jist the tricks of babies,' observed Sally, who had been drawn from the kitchen by this uproar, 'you never know how they air goin' to behave; sometimes, or most times,

uther a-cuttin' us like Old Scratch, himself—and then pretendin' to look so sweet, as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouth. I know 'em—Miss Briggs' welcome to her baby, for all me.'

But Martha would have said that Sally was a soured spinster of forty, viewed other people's happiness through a perverted medium, and was prompted entirely by malice in her unamiable reflections.

Sally banged the high chair, which had also been sent over for the baby's accommodation, as she drew it up to the table; and looked with ill-concealed scorn upon Timothy, who was shaking his wife's thumb on a pair of scissors for the amusement of the responsibility.

Baby graciously recovered from its displeasure at the china bowl for being broken, and requested by signs, that the sugar-dish and preserves should be handed to it immediately. Mrs. Cornwall answered this demand by placing it carefully in the high chair, and her husband seated himself beside it with much satisfaction.

What should the baby have to eat, was the next question. Mrs. Cornwall was very much at a loss what to substitute for the arrow-root, and the child seemed in a fair way of getting no supper at all.

At length, a bright idea struck her, while regarding a dish of apple-sauce—that was soft enough, in all conscience—and Timothy immediately heaped a liberal allowance upon the young visitor's plate. The baby liked it, that was very evident—Mrs. Cornwall was famous for her apple-sauce—and it dribbled in the plate with its little fat fingers, and conveyed the palatable compound to its mouth with astonishing rapidity.

The two old people sat gazing upon the child in a sort of delighted surprise, as though they had not expected to see it eat; and finally, Timothy placed a crust of bread in the little hand, in order to diversify the performances. Poor man! what ever he did, was done with the best intention, but somehow or other, it always seemed to be the thing that he should not do; for, after putting the crust into its mouth, and attacking it in a manner that delighted its entertainers, the youthful scion of the house of Briggs suddenly became grave, and exhibited symptoms of choking. Timothy's evil genius again beset him, and he lifted the cup of milk and water to the child's lips—it was swallowed the wrong way, and the baby began to grow black in the face.

'For mercy's sake!' exclaimed Mrs. Cornwall, as the child gasped for breath, 'pat its back, quick, or it will choke to death!'

Timothy patted with frightened vigor, his wife patted, and Sally, too, lent her services with a zeal that looked very much as though she considered this a fine opportunity to revenge herself upon the baby. Having been pounded within an inch of its life, the child stopped choking in self-defence; but Timothy continued to pat, as though resolved to prevent all future accidents.

Mrs. Cornwall wiped the perspiration from her face, and sat down considerably sobered.

'For pity's sake,' said she, 'give it nothing but apple-sauce—that's safe enough, for I took out all the cores myself. I wish to gracious Martha'd come and take it, while it is alive!'

Another supply of apple-sauce was placed before it, and baby finished its supper without any more mishaps.

When the candles were lighted, the visitor became sleepy and cross; and, after sending Sally up and down, much to that damsel's displeasure, to be sure that the room was warm and comfortable, Mrs. Cornwall wrapped the baby in its cloak and hood, and her husband conveying the cradle, they proceeded up stairs to put their charge to bed. A roaring fire, a luxury to which they were quite unaccustomed in their sleeping apartment, had been made on baby's account; and Timothy declared that the room felt like an oven.

The undressing was a complicated business; first, Mrs. Cornwall took things off, and then upon holding a consultation with Timothy, she put them on again, fearing that it might take cold; and baby, indignant at being thus trifled with, rubbed its eyes with its fists, and squirmed about in an uncontrollable fit of passion.

'There—there!' said Mrs. Cornwall soothingly, 'hush, now—that's a darling!'

But baby wouldn't hush, and kicked and screamed: while the husband and wife sat regarding it in perfect bewilderment.

'I know what that young 'un wants,' observed Sally, who stood by the door with an expression of intense disgust upon her features; 'a few good slaps would bring it to its senses mighty quick!'

This, however, was not to be thought of; Mrs. Cornwall rocked vigorously, with the baby on her lap—Timothy keeping up an industrious accompaniment to her constant 's-h'—and, at length, the baby became too sleepy to cry, and dropped off like a lamb.—It was deposited in the cradle in triumph; and with a sigh of weariness, its nurses sank into their respective seats by the fire.

'I feel dreadful tired,' said Mrs. Cornwall, 'kind of aching like the rheumatism.'

'So do I,' rejoined her husband, 'and yet goin' to behave; sometimes, or most times,

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