

CICELY HUNT; OR, THE LAME GIRL.

WHAT a holy and beautiful thing is a mother's love ! Every morning, about eight o'clock, I have noticed, limping past my window to school, a little lame girl. A woman goes with her ; supporting her gently by the arm, and carrying her satchel of books.

The girl is very poorly clad. Sometimes her dress will be patched with two or three different colours ; but it is always very clean ; and I have observed that her stockings, though coarse, are always whole, and that her shoes are neatly tied up. The woman who goes with her looks tidy, too ; though she wears a rusty black bonnet, of an old-fashioned make, and a faded shawl.

Cicely's little school-mates bound past her ; skipping, hopping, jumping, and running, as if they could not exercise their legs enough. The lame girl looks at them, smiles a sad, quiet smile, and looks up tearfully in her mother's face. The mother answers back with a look so full of love, and lays her hand upon her child's arm, as much as to say, "I love you all the more, because you are a poor, little helpless cripple."

And so they travel over the icy pavements to school ; (stepping very carefully, for it would be a sad thing if Cicely should slip and fall ;) until, at last, they reach the school-house.

What a blessing are free schools ! What a difference it makes in the life of that poor girl, to be able to read ! How many weary hours of pain will a nice book beguile ! And, besides, if one has not a cent in the world, if one has a good education, it is worth as much as money in the bank,—and