

## FIRESIDE READING.

### THE WHEEL OF PRAYER.

A TRUE STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

*My Dear Children:*—In the Steppes of Tartary, the various tribes live in tents, and roam from place to place with their flocks in quest of pasture. No man calls a foot of the land his own; all have an equal right to any part of it. They neither plant, sow, nor reap. They live chiefly on milk and flesh—horse-flesh being always preferred. One day, when on a preaching tour among them, as I almost daily was, I was informed that a Calmuck princess had pitched her tent near by. Feeling this to be a fine opportunity of informing her of the true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he had sent into our world to save sinners, and that it might be the only opportunity I could have, or she enjoy I rode to her tent, and received an invitation to enter.

I found her at prayer. "At prayer!" you exclaim. Yes, children, at prayer. You are surprised, and ask me if she was converted to Christ. No, my dears, she was not; she had never heard of him, and though a praying princess, was an ignorant heathen. But you ask me, How did she pray, and to whom? That is just what I was going to tell you. In the back part of the tent stood the household or family god—a rude carved image of wood, and painted black. It had eyes, but saw not; ears, but heard not; hands, but handled not; feet, but walked not; and a mouth, but spake not. Such was this heathen princess's god. Before his face she placed a wheel, in the rim of which were cut a multitude of niches, into which were stuck small written prayers, purchased from the molla, or priest, at a great price. She sat on the floor of the tent, turning the wheel round, so as to bring each prayer right before the idol's eyes, allowing it a short time to read the prayer before she turned up another.

What a lesson—a heathen princess at prayer! And what a rebuke, it is to be feared, it administers to some children of Christian parents, and to some, it may be, who attend Sabbath-schools! Children, dear children, do

you pray? True, her god was no God; her prayers, being offered to an idol, were sin. Yet how her conduct reproves and condemns those children who know the true God, yet pray not to him! If her praying to an idol was sin, how great theirs, who, knowing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, pray not to him! Surely their silence is more sinful in his sight than were this heathen princess' prayers to her idol; and does not her conduct rise up to condemn theirs? Children, will you not now, all of you, pray to God? All good children do; only wicked children neglect prayer. And God says it is only such as call upon him who shall be saved. Children, your prayers to God cost you nothing, but this heathen princess' cost her much. She had her god, her wheel, and her prayers to buy from the molla, at a high price. You have none of these to purchase. Neither your prayers nor your praying cost you any thing. How true that the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light! Praying to him costs us nothing! Shall a heathen be found praying to an idol, which can neither hear nor help her, when it costs her so much, and will not you, each and all of you, pray to the true God, when it costs you nothing? I hope you will. I pray God you may!

### "HAVE YOU A HOUSE WHERE YOU ARE GOING, PAPA?"

Many years ago you might have noticed, in one of our large cities, a sorrow-stricken young man, with a lady leaning upon his arm, making their way through the crowd and onward, entering a large handsome house on ——— street. They ascend silently to a chamber in the third story, in the north-west corner of the house. The room is spacious and airy, the furniture all rich and elegant, but the room is darkened to the sombreness of twilight, for a sick man lies stretched upon the couch. He is panting for breath, yet he is fully conscious of all that is passing around them.

The young man who has just entered is his eldest son. In that same room