



### The Family Circle.

#### WHO BIDS FOR THE CHILDREN?

Who bids for the children,—who?  
“We do,” says Folly and Sin,  
“We want them body and soul,  
We bid, and we mean to win.”

Who next for the children bids?  
“I do,” the brewer replies;  
“I want them to drink my beer,  
I care not for parents’ sighs.”

Who next for the children bids?  
“I,” the wine merchant cries;  
“I want them to buy my wines,  
To make the revenue rise.”

“Stay! stay!” the distillers cry,  
“We bid on behalf of the Queen;  
We want them to drink our rum,  
Champagne, and brandy, and gin.”

“I bid for them,” Satan says,  
“But I need not push my claim;  
If one or the other buys,  
They’ll come to me all the same.”

The parents in sore alarm,  
Cry out for their girls and boys;  
“What right have our statesmen to ask,  
Of our children who bids? who buys?”

“What right have those men to sell  
Our boys and our girls so dear?  
What right to license to kill,  
Full sixty-thousand a year?”

But again the cry, “who bids?”  
The teachers say, “We will,”  
But we cannot give you cash,  
Your gaping chests to fill.

“But we will give ourselves,  
To teach them how to shun  
The dangers of the road,  
On which they have to run.”

“We bid for the boys and girls,”  
The temperance workers cry;  
“We seek to bless them all,  
And end the parents’ sign.”

“We grieve to see the woe,  
In which the drinkers grope,  
So try to guard the young,  
Within our Bands of Hope.”

“So let our statesmen try  
If this won’t pay the best  
To stop the expense of crime,  
Fair trade will earn the rest.”

The Christian church exclaims,  
“Let me the children gain,  
To save from sin and grief,  
And everlasting pain.”

And hark! The Saviour bids,  
“To Me let children come;  
I gave My life for these,  
To gain their Heaven, their Home.”

—S. B. S., in English Paper.

#### CHARLIE’S WISH.

By Mrs. Wallon, author of “Christie’s Old Organ,” etc.

There they sat, in rows in the schoolroom. Their mouths were open, though it was not dinner-time, and they were leaning forward, as if there was something very beautiful to see. But, if you had turned round to look at what the children were gazing, you would have seen nothing but a short, stout man, standing on a platform.

The fact was, the children were listening, and listening so intently, that, as the short stout man said afterwards, they were as quiet as mice.

The short, stout man was a missionary, and he was talking about the land of ice and snow. He was telling the children of people who live in snow-houses and in curious tents made of buffalo hides, of red men with feathers in their hair and dressed in the skins of animals, who spend their time in hunting on the mountains, or fishing in the lakes. He told them that these people knew nothing of God, nor of the home above the blue sky, nor of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood that they might go there.

Then he spoke of the way in which these poor people had longed to hear more, and how they had grieved when he had been obliged to leave them. He told them that many more missionaries were needed to do the work, and he ended by saying:

“Perhaps some boy here, when grown up to be a man, will give himself to the Lord’s

work, and will go out to carry the glad news of a Saviour to the poor Red Indians. I wonder,” said the missionary, “which of you it will be?”

There was a boy sitting in the second row, who had never been to a missionary meeting before. His name was Charlie Paterson. His father had had a farm up on the hills, a long way from any town, and it was only a year since they had all come to live in Burnister, the seaside place in which the missionary meeting was held. The farm had been given up, for mother was dead, and Aunt Jemima did not understand the butter-making, and father had found some other work, and so they had all removed.

Charlie had not expected to enjoy the missionary meeting at all; he had an idea that all meetings were very dry and stupid. But Aunt Jemima had put a clean collar on him, and Fanny and Maggie and Bob all begged him to go with them. And so here he was; and no one listened more attentively to what was said at the meeting than did Charlie Paterson.

The missionary finished speaking, and the children were surprised when they found the hour was done. Then a hymn was sung, and a plate was carried round, and the pennies and halfpennies went in with a clinking noise. After that, Mr. Dunstable, the clergyman, prayed that God would bless them all, and would help them to remember what they had heard that day; and then the meeting was over, and they all came away.

“I’m going to be a missionary when I’m a man,” said Charlie to himself, as he jumped down the schoolroom steps; “I’m going to be a missionary!”

Then he ran down the hill to the sea-shore to stretch his legs, for they were stiff with sitting so long quiet; and still as he ran he said to himself, “I’m going to be a missionary!” Down on the beach, leaping over the rocks, throwing pebbles in the sea, or running along the sands, he still repeated over and over, “I’m going to be a missionary!”

What a grand thing it would be, to do as he had been asked to do that day, to give himself to the Lord’s work! He would like to be God’s servant, and to do work for Him; and he would so much enjoy riding in a sledge over the snow, and preaching to red men in buffalo-skins.

“Oh dear me, I wish I was a man!” said Charlie; and he stretched himself and made himself as tall as he could, and tried to fancy that he would soon be big enough to go to the land of ice and snow.

Then he turned homewards, with the melancholy thought that it was Saturday, and that Aunt Jemima would be cleaning; and when Aunt Jemima was cleaning, the whole house was a good deal upset.

“I can’t bear Saturday!” said Charlie to himself, as he went up the hill; “and when I’ve a house of my own, it sha’n’t ever be cleaned.”

Aunt Jemima was in the thick of the cleaning when he reached home. There she was, with a handkerchief tied over her head, the long sweeping brush in her hand, and the dust flying in all directions.

“Now, Charlie, don’t you get in my way!” she cried, as soon as she caught sight of him. “There you go, you naughty, tiresome boy, with your wet sandy boots right over my clean door-step! Was there ever such a boy as you are? Get away upstairs, and don’t let me catch sight of you again till tea’s ready!”

Charlie ran upstairs, and found that the people in the house seemed more or less upset, as well as the house itself. Fanny was sitting with a large basket of stockings beside her, trying to darn them, whilst the baby, the pet girl who had been born the week before mother died, was climbing and creeping about the room, every moment in danger of knocking her head against the table, or of trapping her fingers in the door, or of falling headlong against the fender.

“Oh, Charlie,” said Fanny, “I wish you would mind the Baby a bit. I can’t get on; it isn’t safe to leave her alone, and I must get these stockings mended for Sunday.”

“Oh, I can’t be bothered with her now!” said Charlie. “I’m tired, Fanny;” and he threw himself down on the sofa, to think about the grand days that were coming, when he should be a missionary in the land of ice and snow.

“Charlie,” said little Bob, “come and have a game with me; everybody’s so busy, and Aunt Jemima says I’m not to have any toys out, ‘cause it’s Saturday.”

“No, I can’t play now,” said Charlie crossly. “I’ve got my kite-tail to make: I’m going to fly it to-night.”

He was just going to leave the room, when Aunt Jemima’s voice was heard at the foot of the stairs: “Charlie, Fanny, one of you, come along; I want a loaf from the shop for tea!”

“Oh, Charlie, you go,” said Fanny; “Baby always knocks her head if I leave her with Maggie.”

“Let Maggie go, then.”

“She’s tired, Charlie,” said his sister: “it was a long way for her down to the school-room, and she’s only a little girl.”

“She’s big enough to fetch a loaf, anyhow,” said Charlie, as he left the room. He was going upstairs to the attic, when another voice called him.

“Charlie!” said Rose, the little sister who was never able to walk or to run, but who lay all day on her back. “Charlie, come here, and tell me about the missionary meeting.”

It was very seldom that Charlie said “No” when Rose asked him to do anything; but he was not like himself just then, and he told her to wait a bit; he would see by-and-by.

The door of Rose’s room opened into the room where the other children were sitting, and Charlie did not know that Aunt Jeanie was in a corner of the little bedroom, sitting beside the sick child. I think if he had known Aunt Jeanie was within hearing, he would have been more careful of what he said.

Aunt Jeanie was the dearest, kindest old woman he had ever seen. She lived in a tiny house near the sea-shore, with her old maid and her old cat, and her old parrot. Every one in the parish called her Aunt Jeanie because she had told them to do so, although she was not really the aunt of any of them. But she liked them to send for her if they were in trouble, and she popped in and out of their houses, and had a cheery word for everybody, and spent her life in carrying other people’s burdens.

Nobody could help loving Aunt Jeanie! And there she sat by Rose’s bed, and Charlie was ashamed of himself, when he saw a bit of her black and white checked dress peeping from behind the door, and knew that she had been listening to all that went on in the next room.

“Oh, Aunt Jeanie,” he said, as he went into Rose’s bedroom; “I did not know you were here? How are you to-day?”

“Quite well and merry, Master Charlie,” said the old lady; “and I wish you were the same.”

“I’m well enough, Aunt Jeanie,” said Charlie.

“But not merry enough?” said the old woman; “not merry enough, eh, Charlie?”

“Oh, I’m only a little tired,” said Charlie; “and I do hate Saturday!”

“Was not the Missionary Meeting interesting?” asked Aunt Jeanie.

“It was splendid,” said Charlie earnestly. “I’ve made up my mind to be a missionary, Aunt Jeanie—I have indeed.”

“Glad to hear it, Charlie,” said the old lady; “and when are you thinking of beginning?”

“Beginning what, Aunt Jeanie? To be a missionary? Why, as soon as ever I’m a man, I shall begin. I shall be twenty-one in ten years.”

“Oh dear, oh dear!” said the old lady; “I wouldn’t wait so long, if I were you!”

“Do you think they will take me any sooner, Aunt Jeanie? I didn’t think they would.”

“The Lord will take you sooner, Charlie.”

“But I thought missionaries always had to be grown-up men, Aunt Jeanie.”

“Nay, Charlie; the Lord’s missionaries are of all ages and of all sizes. I never knew the Lord turn any one away because he was too young.”

“I don’t see what you mean, Aunt Jeanie,” said the boy. “I couldn’t go out to foreign lands till I’m a bit bigger, could I?”

“Do ye think the Lord always sends His missionaries out to foreign lands, my lad? Nay, nay; He has scores of missionaries who never set foot out of England, and never know a word of any language but their mother tongue. “What is a missionary, Charlie? Come, tell me that, my boy.”

“I thought it was a man who preached to black folks, Aunt Jeanie.”

“A missionary means one who is sent,

Charlie. Anybody who is God’s servant, sent by God to do anything for God, is a missionary. Do ye think the Lord’s work is all over the seas, my lad? If you want to be a missionary, begin to-day Charlie. Strike while the iron’s hot. Go and give yourself to the Lord at once. Give in your name for the work, and begin.”

“But, Aunt Jeanie,” said Charlie, in a very puzzled voice, “wherever in the world am I to work? I shouldn’t have the least idea where to begin.”

“Where to begin! Why, Charlie, ye’ll not have far to go; begin in this little room. Tell poor Rose here about the meeting; that’s the first bit of work the Lord wants ye to do. And when that’s done,” said the old woman, “ye may go as far as the next room. There’s poor Fanny, she’s got more to do than she can get through; go and mind Baby a bit, and give her a helping hand. I am sure that will be a bit of work for the Lord. And then there’s Bob—poor little Bob—with no toys to play with and nothing to do; the Lord has work for ye there. Ay, my lad, ye’ll not have to hunt far. The Lord’s missionary soon finds his work; when once he has given his name in, the Lord sends the work quick enough.”

“Aunt Jeanie,” said Charlie, “do you call such little things as that, work for God?”

“Charlie,” answered the old woman, “did ye never hear this verse: ‘He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much’? There are no little things in God’s sight, Charlie. These little things, as you call them, are just the work He has given you to do. And if you are a missionary at home, and do the little home-work well, who knows but the Lord may some day send you abroad to the great work among the heathen?”

Charlie sat very quiet for two or three minutes, and then he said: “I see what you mean, Aunt Jeanie. I will try to be a home missionary.”

“Ask the Lord to help ye, Charlie. Run up to your own room, and tell Him all about it. Ask Him to forgive you all your sins, and to make you love Him so much, that you may long to serve Him. Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you your work, and to help you to do it, and then come away downstairs and begin at once.”

Charlie went up to the attic, as Aunt Jeanie had asked him, and a few minutes afterward he came downstairs to begin his work as a missionary. Little Rose’s pale face brightened, as he told her the stories he had heard at the missionary meeting. Then he went into the next room to have a game of play with little Bob; and when Aunt Jeanie passed through the room half an hour afterward, she found Charlie on his hands and knees on the floor, and Bob riding on his back as merry as possible, shouting, “Gee-up, Dobbin; gee up, Dobbin; gee-up, my lad!”

“That’s right, Charlie,” said the old lady, as she laid a hand on his head. “That is just as much work for God as preaching to Red Indians, or teaching Esquimaux children. I’ll copy you a little hymn to-night, my boy, and you can learn it as you sit on the shore to-morrow.”

Charlie was very much pleased with Aunt Jane’s hymn when it arrived; and as he has given me a copy of it, I will put it down here:

“I cannot do great things for Him,  
Who did so much for me;  
But I would like to show my love,  
Dear Jesus, unto Thee:  
Faithful in very little things,  
O Saviour, may I be.

There are small things in daily life,  
In which I may obey,  
And thus may show my love to Thee;  
And always—every day—  
There are some little loving words  
Which I for Thee may say.

There are small crosses I may take,  
Small burdens I may bear,  
Small acts of faith and deeds of love,  
Small sorrows I may share;  
And little bits of work for Thee  
I may do everywhere.

So I ask Thee, Lord, to give me grace  
My little place to fill,  
That I may ever walk with Thee,  
And ever do Thy will;  
And in each duty, great or small,  
I may be faithful still.”

—Child’s Companion.

A RETURNED MISSIONARY from India says that during ten years she never saw a Hindoo child receive a caress from its mother.