

## THE HOME CIRCLE.

## SONG OF THE BURDEN BEARER.

Over the narrow footpath  
That led from my lowly door,  
I went with a thought of the Master,  
As oft I had walked before  
My heart was heavily laden,  
And with tears my eyes were dim  
But I knew I should lose the burden  
Could I get a glimpse of Him

Over the trodden pathway,  
To the fields all shorn and bare,  
I went with a step that faltered  
And a face that told of care  
I had lost the light of the morning,  
With its shimmer of sun and dew -  
But a gracious look of the Master  
Would the strength of morn renew

While yet my courage wavered,  
And the sky before me blurred,  
I heard a voice behind me  
Saying a tender word -  
And I turned to see the brightness  
Of heaven upon the road,  
And suddenly lost the pressure  
Of the weary, crushing load

Nothing that hour was altered,  
I had still the weight of care,  
But I bore it now with gladness  
Which comes of answered prayer  
Not a grief the soul can fester,  
Nor cloud its vision, when  
The dear Lord gives the spirit  
To breathe to His will, Amen

## THE MINISTER'S WIFE.

BY KILMURRAY.

The respected and much-loved minister of "Second Millbridge" had taken unto himself a wife, and his people were much exercised about the matter. Some time ago the elders and chief men had settled amongst themselves that no more suitable wife could be found for their minister than Miss Margaret Graham, daughter of William Graham, Esq., the leading man in the town, and one of the most liberal members in the congregation of "Second Millbridge." Miss Graham was bonnie, but not too bonnie; she was a notable house-keeper, and a shining light in the Sabbath-school, Dorcas Society and Missionary Association. Besides possessing these qualifications, a sum of money just enough to keep away the wolf from the door, yet not enough to make her hold her head too high, stood to her credit in the county bank. And now their plans were upset, the minister had suddenly married a little bit of a thing from London, a little bit of a thing, with golden curls, and wide-opened eyes like a child's. It was real vexing to say the least of it. But the minister's wife knew nothing of all this. Away down in London she had made up her mind to love the people in "Second Millbridge," for "dear John's" sake; he had told her often of their kindly hearts, of their faithfulness to him, of the beautiful lives led by many, and of the opportunities open for useful work. And so, on the evening of her arrival, as she walked up the narrow, box-edged path to the manse door, she bent for a moment over a big white rose-bush just to hide the tears of happiness that would come welling up into her eyes, as she prayed, oh! so earnestly, that she might, indeed, be a very faithful minister's wife.

On the Sabbath following her arrival she made her first public appearance in the meeting house. She wore a pale blue silk, matching the hue of her eyes, a dainty little French bonnet perched lightly on her golden curls. In the morning she had been rather undecided about that blue silk; it struck her that, perhaps, the people would like best to see her attend in white as a bride. John had been consulted on the matter, but he had no opinion to give, she was beautiful to him in either white or blue, and he was quite sure the people would admire her in whatever color she finally decided to wear. When the minister's wife arrived at the place of worship the doorkeeper started back in dismay at the vision before him; he felt impelled to call out, "Jesebel," but restrained himself, and a kindly feeling arose in his heart as she smiled up into his face and held out her hand in the most friendly manner. But before "the minister's wife" was fairly seated in the pew, she was conscious of breathing an antagonistic atmosphere. A slight rustling sound stole over the congregation. Once she lifted her eyes and she caught the grim glance of a stern looking woman, and she did not dare to raise her head again. Through the long opening prayers, and the psalms, and the reading, she felt by intuition the burning eyes of the congregation fixed upon her, and at the end of the service, when she

stood in the pew whilst the people passed, and some stopping to shake hands and give her welcome, she was well aware that something in her dress, or manner, or face, had offended the taste of "Second Millbridge." But as she walked home with John in the beautiful Sabbath stillness, along the hawthorn-scented road, she said nothing of the ache in her heart.

On Monday the congregation began individually to call at the manse, and "the little thing" thought she was making a good impression. But on the Thursday Mrs Graham drove up in her carriage—Mrs. Graham, a woman accustomed to take the lead in most social matters in Millbridge, who had attained in the course of years a pompous, dictatorial manner. Seated in the parlor, she looked critically at "the minister's wife," and proceeded to ask as many questions as she decently could, about her education, etc., and mode of life prior to her advent in Millbridge. Gradually she began to give advice on the duties devolving on the mistress of a minister's house, and finally hinted, that many were grieved at the sight of gay raiment in the manse pew last Sabbath. She hoped no offence would be taken, for no offence was meant, but one or two "families" had a hankering after Mr. Martin, at Castle hill, and it would take less than a French bonnet and a blue silk dress to turn the scale in his favor. Then she arose, said "good-bye," and went out to her carriage in a very comfortable frame of mind. She had done her duty by "the minister's wife." And after Mrs. Graham went away, "the minister's wife" sat still for a little while, and her face was very white, and somehow she could not see clearly. But presently she ran away upstairs, singing softly to herself. In the solitude of her own room she went to the old chest of drawers and took out the causes of offence—the bonnet and the dress. Her hands trembled as she laid them on the bed. Swiftly her thoughts fled back to the old home in London, fled back to a certain day when she stood arrayed in that same dress and bonnet, "trying on" amidst a chorus of admiring exclamations from brothers and sisters. And "father" had said "Why, child, you look just like your mother twenty-five years ago."

Now,—now,—the room seemed to grow dark, and there was a mist before her as she folded away the beautiful gown and placed a plain bud in the little bonnet where the spray of blossoms was wont to dance and quiver. Then she sat down and cried, for she was only a foolish weak woman, and not fit to be a minister's wife.

The error in dress was the first mistake, and many others followed. Her ignorance of housekeeping was a sore subject in "Second Millbridge." It was an open scandal that she burnt raspberry jam, for Mrs. Tod had lent the manse her copper preserving pan, and when it came back there was a big black patch right in the centre. All the good wives were united in the opinion that it was a great pity such an example of carelessness should be set to the young people about. Any one could see that the minister was not carefully looked after. His hands were frequently yellow. At the last Friday night prayer meeting it was noticed that the lining of his coat-tails was ripped, and the gloves he wore in the usual house to house visitation were a perfect disgrace. Very soon the congregation, by much brooding over these little matters, began to think itself hardly used, and much to be pitied in having such an incompetent "minister's wife." She, poor thing, struggled on bravely, although sore wounded. She sought advice from the most notable women about cooking and sewing, and copied as closely as possible the wife of the Rev. Mr. McShane, of the neighboring town, who had been held up as an example of well-doing. Neither heat nor cold kept her awa from the weekly-meetings. Every Sabbath saw her seated in the manse pew, dressed so plainly, even dowdily, with the golden curls all swept away out of sight. Long ago she had put away her painting and fancy needlework in order to devote more time to the congregation.

But in some strange way she never seemed to gain ground in "Second Millbridge." Towards the end of the summer she began to feel ill and weary. Frequently after a long walk she was quite exhausted, yet she held on to the Bible Class, looked after the manse, enter-