



The Family Circle.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

BY CAROLINE MAY.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt v. 3.

How happy are the poor in spirit,
How cheerfully they dwell,
As if the kingdom they inherit,
Were heaven and earth as well!

If wealth is theirs, they are not troubled
To save it, or enlarge;
But others' wants, with gifts redoubled,
They make their willing charge.

If low their lot, their heart is lowly,
Fearing no hurtful fall,
Their highest aim is to be holy,
And find in God their all.

His will they meet with daily gladness,
As guide to their own will;
Whether it bring them joy or sadness
Good things or seeming ill.

If good, they sing aloud of mercies
To which they have no claim;
If ill, they reckon griefs no curses,
If free from sin and shame.

The poor in spirit do not stumble
When dangers round them close,
For brave and true, as well as humble,
They soon disarm their foes.

They bring no Pharisaic merit
To plead before God's eyes,
A contrite heart and broken spirit
Is their one sacrifice.

They were the first the Saviour singled
From out the waiting throng,
Upon the lofty mountain mingled,
To hear of right and wrong.

They, in that sermon of the Saviour,
The world still ponders o'er,
Were first assured of heavenly power,—
Ev'n life for ever more!

Humility, self-abnegation,
Is Christ's most precious gem,
He gives it foremost exaltation
In his own diadem.

And they who have that, well hidden,
Treasured with constant care,
Though poor on earth, shall soon be hidden
A heavenly throne to share.

Who would not wrestle with affliction,
And conquer every sin,
To gain the crown of benediction
The "poor in spirit" win?
—V. F. Observer.

GIVING UP SUNDAY-SCHOOL

BY CHRISTIE CORNWELL.

'Are you going to the Sunday-school meeting this evening, Willie?' Mrs. Morris asked her son, as they sat by their little tea-table one old January night.

'No, mother,' he replied in a quick irritable voice: 'I don't see any sense in having Sunday-school meetings during the week; besides, we are going coasting to-night.'

'I am sorry,' said his mother sighing: 'I think you would enjoy it, and ought to go. Your teacher will expect you.'

'Much he'll know or care! Mother, I think it's time I gave up Sunday-school. There isn't hardly a boy as large or old as I in the school, and all the fellows make fun of me. Tom Hays wanted to know if I belonged to the infant class.'

Mrs. Morris looked up steadily, and said: 'I thought my son was too manly to mind such poor wit and ridicule from a town loafer.'

Will's face flushed as he answered frankly: 'But, mother, it does sting yet I wouldn't mind if I had a teacher I liked. I believe Mr. Dwight takes his class because he thinks as a member of the Church he must and just fills in the time with goodish talk, and procy accounts of the idolatrous Jews. He is as glad as we are when the school is dismissed.'

'Perhaps you don't give him the right attention,' said Mrs. Morris.

'He don't interest us, mother, and don't seem to try. Besides, what does he know or care about us during the week? Even when I meet him on the street, he often doesn't recognize me. Really, mother, I'm going to quit the school. But I'll always go to church with you. I like the old dominie if he does end most of his words with "Hoc." But I must be off it is splendid moonlight! The

hills since the thaw are covered with ice, smooth as glass. All the fellows in the village will be out to-night.'

'Willie, you don't go with boys to get liquor, I hope!' asked his mother anxiously.

'No; sometimes we take a glass of root beer, and once in a while a little lager. You know they can't harm.'

'Don't begin, my son, even with these. Avoid the first wrong step.'

'Don't you worry, dear old mammy I'll take good care of myself, and you too.'

And the boy bent down his handsome, glowing face, and printed several kisses on his mother's thin cheeks: then catching up hat and tippet with a merry whoop, passed out.

Mrs. Morris was a poor widow, renting a little cottage on a side street, in the village of Clayton. Willie, her only child, was a lad of fourteen. He worked in a cotton factory near the village, and his earnings, added to what his mother made with her needles, formed their support. Before her husband's death Mrs. Morris had seen more prosperous days. Since then she had struggled bravely against poverty; and being a true Christian woman had thrown a loving home influence around her boy.

But he was gay, strong, and self-willed. As he grew older his mother could control him only by his unbounded affection for her.

This night, after the conversation just recorded, she cleared away the tea things, then sat down by the fire and gave herself to anxious thought. She knew most of his companions were reckless and unprincipled. How could she shield him from temptations assailing him at every step?

That night he had thrown off one more good influence. 'Why was it?' she asked, and painfully the answer returned, 'Because Satan's emissaries present their attractions in a bright, alluring form. God's servants too often repulse and chill the gay young heart.'

She felt a strange foreboding of evil. Boys were so reckless in their sports; but it was natural injuries she feared the most. Burdened with a sense of her own helplessness, she knelt down, and poured out her soul in prayer, that God would save her son from growing up to a manhood of intemperance and vice.

While the mother prayed, the boy joined his gay companions. They told him they were going to ride on Post Hill, which passed in front of the church. That street was perfectly smooth, and with sufficient descent for nearly a mile. Will objected, fearing they might disturb the meeting. But his remonstrance was met with shouts of laughter and taunts, as to whether he feared his teacher would catch him playing truant. It wasn't Sunday. They had as good right there as elsewhere.

With this last suggestion he quieted his conscience, as the solemn church bell rang through the frosty air.

It was a splendid night for coasting, and in a few minutes he started at the head of the long board, rearing on two sleds, and crowded full of boys. Some had fish horns, from which they blew long blasts; some strings of bells, that mingled merrily with shouts and laughter.

Oh how exhilarating, as like lightning they sped by trees and houses, the keen wind making their blood tingle, while a slight consciousness of danger gave spice to the sport. Then up hill they pulled, regardless of many a tumble, and again went whirling safely down.

But in the progress of the third descent, a horse and sleigh was seen advancing. Will Morris, an expert steersman, thought he was giving a wide margin to pass; but the unusual sight alarmed the horse, who suddenly swerved, shied his sleigh around, and struck the bob, tossing the boys either and thither on the hard ice.

The occupant of the sleigh was Mr. Dwight, returning in haste from a business engagement, to reach the meeting. He instantly came to the boys' relief. None were found seriously injured, except Will Morris, who was thrown with force against a tree. He was taken up insensible, apparently dead. Putting him in the cutter, Mr. Dwight drove rapidly to his home, while some boys ran for the doctor.

Widow Morris was busy with her needles when the sound of tramping feet made her start to the door with trembling fear. Had God thus answered her prayer?

After a few hours consciousness was restored. A badly broken limb proved the most serious consequence. Mr. Dwight remained, giving efficient help till the lad was made as comfortable as possible. While thus employed, he noticed with surprise the self-control of both mother and son, even when under intense pain as the doctor set the broken bones. He also noticed the neatness and refinement that pervaded the little room.

When leaving, he promised to call again soon, and said he trusted 'William would feel thankful to the kind Providence which had spared his life, and henceforth devote it to God's service.'

Will followed his retreating form with a

bitter smile. He was not yet ready to acknowledge the benefits received, and could only remember that his sleigh struck the blow that laid him there. Aware that probably weeks must pass before he could be out, came the serious question of support meanwhile. His mother could get but little work, and had not strength to undertake more, if she had it to do. A long winter was yet before them, and no funds laid by. His place would be filled by others eager to obtain it, and even with restored health, what could he find to keep the wolf from the door? Over these thoughts he brooded till the weary brain yielded to the lethargic fever.

Mr. Dwight, in the stress of business, forgot the accident for several days. But one night, passing the physician, he recalled their last meeting, and stopped him to enquire for his patient.

Dr. Smith replied: 'He does not progress very favorably. Every day I find a feverish pulse, and fear there are causes at work I cannot control.'

'What are they? Is there anything I can do?'

'I think he fears losing his place in the factory. I know they are poor, but they must be brought pretty low to ask, or even accept help, given as charity. If you could get the mother better pay for her work than she receives from the shops, it would be a true kindness. Then, too, the boy chafes under this long confinement.'

'Is he strong enough to read, or look at pictures?'

'Yes; if of the right kind, they would do more than medicine. I am interested in his case. There is fine material, but it wants peculiar handling.'

'Well, thank you, Doctor, for your suggestions. I'll see what I can do.'

Mr. Dwight entered his comfortable home, and asked his wife to prepare a basket of delicacies for a sick boy, then passed into his library, and took down a handsomely illustrated volume of natural history. He remembered noticing some stuffed birds perched upon a rustic branch on the cottage mantelpiece, also a little painted box filled with carefully-preserved insects. It looked like the boy's work; anyway he would find out.

Mrs. Morris had gone to return some work, and Will was lying pale and weary, watching the little fire die out. The room was cheerless and cold. Mr. Dwight greeted him heartily, and enquired for the broken limb, then, after mending the fire, he began examining the birds and insects. He praised the care with which they were preserved, and made some comments on their peculiar habits, instantly proving that he had touched the right key.

Will's interest and enthusiasm were fully aroused, and with a little skilful questioning he revealed unusual intelligence and careful observation. Mr. Dwight, the unwrapped the book he had brought, and saw Will's eyes dance with delight at the thought of reading a volume he had so often longed for. His heart was won.

With a cool orange pressed to his feverish lips, it was not difficult for Mr. Dwight to draw out his former history, and the troubles which now oppressed him.

He told Will, he stood in need of another clerk in his store, and if he wished, would advance him every week the wages he had received at the mill, till he was able to work. Then, as he could, he should return the money, in just such sums as most convenient, adding, he was sure Will would rather receive help in that manly fashion, than take it as a gift.

'Indeed I would. O Sir, you don't half know what a kindness you have done. I'll prove the most faithful clerk you ever had, and soon pay for this present help. I'll get well now. It was just the worry kept me back.'

'With God's help, my boy. We are all poor servants working in our own strength.'

Just then Mrs. Morris returned, and in eager words Willie told of Mr. Dwight's kindness, ending his story with the exclamation, 'O mother, isn't he a brist!' Then blushing apologized as his elders laughed. But Mr. Dwight left the cottage, feeling it was the highest encomium the boy could give.

As the church bell rang for the weekly prayer-meeting, he turned his steps thither. As he went he asked himself why he had known so little of that boy or his surroundings before. Nearly a year he had been a member of his class, yet was virtually a stranger. Will's comparison came back with a deeper meaning now. How had he been building? Was he in Christ's temple only a poor, worthless brick, made with stubble, that would not stand the fiery test, or 'a living stone, offered as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God.'

Full of this thought, he addressed his brethren, speaking from his heart, and reaching theirs. And so, no one really knew how it came about, but in a few weeks there was such a revival in the village of Clayton had hardly ever known before. Quietly it began in a renewed consecration of Christ's followers, then working outward to the haunts of sin, till

many a youth was drawn safely into the fold. And Will Morris on his sick-bed was not excluded from the blessing.

None of Mr. Dwight's class complained of want of interest after this, and there were boys past fourteen not ashamed to join them.

Years have passed by since these events occurred, and in the village of Clayton, now much enlarged, may be seen a fine store, with the sign 'Dwight & Morris' over it.

Within, often on an older day, you will see Mr. Dwight, now an old gray-haired man, sitting in his arm-chair near the stove, and gathered around him an earnest group of men, discussing public improvements and moral reforms. Behind the busy counter stands our old friend, Will Morris, a matured man, who adds now and then a wise suggestion, or if the discussion grows too warm, tosses into their midst a merry joke, cooling them down like a summer breeze which leaves no sting behind.

By the sunny window of a pretty Gothic cottage, sits Widow Morris with her knitting; but sometimes she lets it drop unheeded on her lap, as she watches her little grandson trudging by with his sled, and her thoughts go back to the January night long ago, when she sought God's help to save her boy, and his blessed answer came, but not by means she would have chosen.—N. Y. Evangelist.

THE CONFESSION.

PAUL HANSON.

Bert was in trouble. His father was away, but was coming home in a day or two, and it seemed that one of the first things he would hear must be bad news of his boy.

A couple of days before, some of the school-boys had begun teasing a poorly dressed little girl, and had kept on, from one thing to another, until the child's clothes were torn, and she was thrown down and hurt. And now it was said that she was sick, and her father was very angry, and threatened to have the boys arrested, and Bert was one of them. He was sitting in his room upstairs, trying to think how he could manage this bad case and keep his father from being so disappointed in him.

While he was thinking, there was a rap at the door, and his uncle came in. Now, Bert was rather afraid of Uncle John, for he had talked pretty plainly to him about some of his mischief. But now it seemed that he must speak to somebody, and hard as it was, he had soon given his uncle an account of his troubles.

'Yes, yes, a bad case, indeed,' said Uncle John; 'a little girl going about her business, doing no harm to anybody, and a mob of great boys, any one of them three times as strong as she, setting upon her, blackguarding, pushing, pulling and abusing, until she is hurt and frightened into sickness! And Herbert Bronson one of the leaders in such a noble game!'

'Oh, no, Uncle!' exclaimed Bert, eagerly. 'Jim and Bob began it, and I was led into it. I'm sure I shouldn't have done it, if it hadn't been for them.'

'Led into it,' said Uncle John. 'Led into it. I believe this is not the first mischief you have been in, in the same company!'

'No,' said Bert, faintly: 'mother says if I was away from them I should do better.'

'Maybe so; but what kind of a man will you make if you are going to be led into whatever an evil companion chooses to have you do? Jim and Bob, we will say, want you to play truant, to rob orchards, and bully those who are too weak to resist. By-and-by, they, or somebody else, will want you to drink and gamble with them, and then to steal. Must you be led into it? If so, you are bound for prison anyway, and I don't know but you may as well go now.'

'O, Uncle,' said Bert, 'can't you do something to help me?'

'Probably I could, if I could get you to change your course. I wish you had been made with backbone, and not like a toad or a caterpillar, or like a quart of water, which takes the shape of any dish it happens to be put into. It sickens me to think of it. What were you doing while they were leading you into the meanest kind of mischief! Besides, there were Will and Ned—what were they doing?'

'They said it was a shame,' owned Bert, 'and the boys stopped once, but began again after they were gone.'

'And you were so easily led, how is it that they did not lead you out of it? Don't you see it was because Bert Bronson was on the side of meanness and rowdyism!'

Bert had no answer for this question, but he asked again. 'What can I do, now that this is done! Can't you tell me something?'

'Yes, I can tell you something. Go right to Mr. Green, and tell him you were one of the boys who hurt his little girl, and that you are sorry, and will do anything you can to remedy your mischief. If you will do that, I will try to smooth matters with him, and I think we