



The Family Circle.

"I MOURN NOT NOW THE DYING YEAR."

I mourn not now the dying year,
I call not back the vanished past;
No vain regret shall vex me here,
Nor doubts perplex to hold me fast.
Enough that from myself I turn,
Still conscious of my sin and wrong—
That thoughts of love within me burn,
And move my heart to song.

O love Divine, love manifest,
In the vast world that round me lies;
That, knowing what for each is best,
In wisdom grants, or else denies;
O'er sun and stars, o'er land and sea
Rules undisturbed with ceaseless care,
Yet condescends to compass me,
And with my weakness bears.

The hurrying years may come and go,
My heart with joy or sorrow fill;
Yet evermore 'tis mine to know
That I am close environed still;
Forgotten not, though I forget,
Still guarded, though I wayward be;
Dear Lord, this is thy love, and yet
How poor is mine for thee!

No king whom armies close surround,
Sits on his throne as firm and sure;
No state with power and blessings crowned,
Can hold its subjects so secure.
Oh sweet persuasion that to-night
Assures what is, and is to be,
That life nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Can take my Lord from me.

Oh, rest of faith—the gift of love—
That dies not with the dying years;
How brighter now the heaven above,
How fair this lower world appears!
No marvel that from self I turn,
Though conscious of my sin and wrong;
That thoughts of love within me burn,
And move my heart to song.

—Anson D. F. Randolph.

SUFFER THE LITTLE ONES.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

The Rev. Thomas Kelton had walked a mile in a stiff January wind to consult Esquire Crowther, a member of his congregation, on a question of finance that concerned their church property.

"I am not a member of your church," said Esquire Crowther, after listening to the reverend gentleman's plea.

"Of that I am aware, but you ought to be, on account of your influence in the community; and then, too, you are old enough to begin to think of such things. Why not come into the church right away, now, at this crisis of affairs? It would be an excellent thing."

"I would not hesitate a moment were I a Christian, but I do not know that I am."

"I want to be a Christian, Mr. Kelton, and I want to join the church," said little Eva Crowther, who had been all along in the bay-window.

As she spoke, she left the picture scrapbook she was neatly pasting, and, crossing the room, stood, with her hands behind her, in front of her father and his caller.

"We don't admit babies to regular fellowship," laughed the minister, catching the beautiful child in his arms and kissing her. "Go back to your dolls. When you are old enough to talk of such things, I will listen."

"Mr. Wheeler, who preaches such lovely children's sermons down at the borough hall every Sunday at five o'clock, will listen now," said Eva, struggling to her feet again, and rubbing her face with her pocket-handkerchief. "I think I like that church best, but because you are our minister, I didn't know but I ought to tell you first. If you won't have me, of course I shall have to go to Mr. Wheeler. And I don't play with dolls any more. I have sent every one of mine to the poor little children at the hospital, and now I am pasting a scrapbook for them," and she tripped away to her work.

"The idea!" said Mr. Kelton, indignantly. "That is what comes of allowing

a child to go to hear such sensational preaching. I should get these notions out of her head just as soon as I could."

Esquire Crowther looked very grave, as he replied, "I don't believe I should dare take that responsibility. My daughter is ten years old, bright and intelligent, but by no means a prodigy. She knew her own mind about sending away her dolls. I am inclined to think that she is not mistaken in her feelings now. I was interested in religion when I was nine. I was not in any way encouraged; in fact, I was discouraged by ridicule. After a time I tried to give the matter up, but I had a miserable, unsettled boyhood, and, in fact, I am in the same state of mind still. It was the Lord Jesus himself who said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me.' I believe that was intended for all time. I believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to every child's heart its loving invitation, and that children who are taught to trust in God, to fear God and to love God are a great deal happier and more free from care, and are stronger to resist their little temptations, than are those who have no such fortress for protection."

"Well, well, you are the last man to enter so deeply into spiritual things; you quite take away my breath," said the Rev. Mr. Kelton, who was a great business manager, and had been hired because the church was in a low state financially. It was also in a low state spiritually, but it was hoped that after the money part was all right the spiritual part would somehow right itself. "We've wandered entirely from our subject, and I am to meet the society this evening and report what I have got pledged. I have several others to see, but I want your name first; it will act as an incentive. You are one of the safe people. Followers in your lead are never wanting."

"I shall have to think more about it. I am not yet settled in my mind as to what is best," and the disappointed minister went out again into the cold wind, surprised and disturbed at the result of his visit.

"I heard what you told Mr. Kelton, papa," said Eva, coming over to her father and seating herself on the arm of his chair, "and I understand all about it. Cousin Charlie feels just as you did, and he is ten. He is coming over pretty soon with the scrap book he is making for the hospital, and why can't we all go together to Mr. Wheeler's? He is nice and gentle, and would not think of catching me and rumpling me all up and kissing me in such a way," and, producing her tiny handkerchief, the child rubbed her face again. "Here comes Charlie now; I wish you would go with us."

Esquire Crowther allowed himself to be persuaded, and presently the trio were at Pastor Wheeler's door.

"Please say to Mr. Wheeler that a little girl and two boys would like to see him," said Mr. Crowther to the servant, who smiled as he announced them.

"I am very glad; I am always pleased to see my little friends. Show them right in," they heard a cheery voice say through the open study door.

As the owner of the voice came forward and his eyes fell upon Esquire Crowther's six feet in height and two hundred pounds avoirdupois, he laughed heartily, shaking hands, however, and finding seats for his visitors with great cordiality.

"You are to treat me exactly as you do the children," said Mr. Crowther. "I am no further advanced spiritually than they."

"We have all come, papa and all, to talk about Jesus," said Eva, whose childish courage had not yet been daunted by the failures of life. "Our minister won't have anything to do with Charlie and me; he calls us babies, and laughs at us because we want to be Christians. And papa says that is just the way he was treated when he was a boy, and so that is why he calls himself a boy, you see. Of course our minister wants papa now. He came this morning to ask for some money to pay the church debt, and he said, 'Why, you ought to join our church.'"

The two gentlemen smiled at Eva's artlessness, but the minister said immediately, "I think we shall have to kneel and tell God about this. I will pray first, and then I trust you will each follow me."

Esquire Crowther had never before in his life uttered an audible prayer. He

thought it would be hard, but after he had listened to the petitions of the children, the Spirit gave him utterance and he prayed.

"I never felt so happy in my life before," said he, as he stood up. "I seem to be relieved of a heavy burden that I have been needlessly carrying all these years."

"I think your experience is for our example," said the pastor. "Since I have been in the habit of speaking for a few minutes every Sunday afternoon to the children, I have had a good many little inquirers. Some of our members who think it incumbent upon them to follow in the traditions of the First Church, consider it unwise to listen to the children with anything like encouragement towards receiving them. You are sent just at this time to fortify me in my belief that children may be earnest, sincere, helpful Christians."

"I would not unite with a church that would not receive my little motherless girl, who has encouraged me to set my feet upon the solid Rock," said Esquire Crowther. And that was what he said when he related his experience and stated his views at the weekly prayer-meeting that evening.

There was some opposition to receiving the children, but Mr. Wheeler said, "I want to show the world what a church may do with members that make an early surrender to the dear Lord, and live their whole lives engaged in his service."

"We children can do a great deal," said Eva to Pastor Wheeler next day. "My cousin Charlie and I have each ten dollars all our own, and we want to pay it toward building a new church. We met Mr. Kelton last night, and he said we were not wise to join a church that had not a building to its name. So we thought we would start about a building right away."

That indeed was the nucleus of the building fund, that grew rapidly. Many children came forward, and with them older relatives, in more than one instance parents and grandparents.

And have the children held out? Indeed, yes. The church has been wonderfully prospered. The new converts were worshipping in their new and substantial edifice long before the debt of the old church was paid; and the new church is as flourishing as a green bay tree; for the members are young, strong, wide-awake, earnest Christians.—*Golden Rule.*

"KEPT FOR THE MASTER'S USE."

BY ALICE M. GUERNSEY.

Annis Brown was puzzled! She had thought herself given wholly to the Lord, and that her offerings for his cause were all that could be expected from one having so small an income. "A tithe?" Yes, certainly! The Christian dispensation required no less of giving, at least, than devolved upon the Jews!

But really after the necessary expenses of living were met, the tithe of what was left was not very much of an addition to the master's treasury. Now and then conscience gave a little twinge as the question, "What are 'necessary expenses'?" forced itself to mind. And it was this uneasiness which sent her one day to the story of the first tithes brought "into the storehouse."

There was Jacob's vow at Bethel: "Of all thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee;" there were the directions unto the Israelites to bring the first-fruits—"the tithes of the ground"—for the maintenance of the Levites; there was the blessing of the people when, in Hezekiah's time, they brought "in abundance" the tithes of oxen and sheep and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God. Everywhere a tithe of all—no mention of a reserve from which they themselves should live, and then a tithe of the remainder given to God. It is always, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruit of all thy increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

This was decidedly a novel view of the case, a troublesome as well as a puzzling view. After a firm belief that one's purse is soundly converted, a comfortable feeling of having always been generous, and a real contempt for stingy people—after all this, you will acknowledge that it is mortifying to find only that one has never given, but that one has actually withheld what was due—has stolen from the Lord. Add to

this the surprising revelation that one is not quite willing to lay aside one dollar of every ten received, for the Lord's service, and you will not wonder that Annis Brown was both puzzled and troubled.

But there it stood! A duty so plainly shown that she could not pass round it without entering a "by and forbidden path." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." There was nothing to do but to pray for the spirit of the "cheerful giver."

The victory once gained, how delightful it was. Somehow money never seemed to go so far before! From each payment for services a tithe went promptly into the box, on the bottom of which was written, "Kept for the Master's use."

Missionary Sunday came, and the pastor made a stirring appeal. A year ago she had heard just such another, and the twenty-five cents which she meant to give was doubled, as a result of the eloquence, when the box was passed; but by the time she reached home her enthusiasm had somewhat cooled, and she decided that a quarter was really all she ought to have given. But this time she knew just where she stood. She had noted the contents of her box that very morning, and the question was simply, "How much of this money does the Lord wish put into the missionary treasury?" And the two-dollar bill that dropped into the collection, knew—if money has consciousness—that the three dollars left behind were waiting till the claims of the "Woman's Foreign" were presented. Forgive her, dear brethren, that, being a woman, woman's work came a little nearer to her heart than the general work.

"What will you do for these pressing needs?" asked a gifted speaker as she closed a sad story of suffering and ignorance and wrong. Oh, the thrill of joy that came to the heart of Annis Brown at the thought: "There is money to help supply this need, already waiting, 'Kept for the Master's use.'" From National headquarters came the call for "thanksgiving offerings" for F. & D. M. The envelope which carried that of Annis Brown bore the text which she had just found—a fresh nugget from the inexhaustible mine, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

And if, now and then, the account in this consecrated bank was overdrawn, can you imagine the pleasure of really giving to the Lord? I have no story to tell of wonderful inflows of money that followed the new plan. But, somehow, there was a wonderful blessing "in basket and in store," a spending power like that of the cruise of oil in Zarephath. And with this came a sweet rest and peace and communion with the Lord, in giving, that nothing would tempt Annis Brown to go back to the haphazard way of giving "as the spirit moved," and supposing that she thus fulfilled her whole duty.—*Selected.*

"UNTIL YOU FEEL IT."

A woman went round my church to get offerings from the women of the congregation for foreign missions, and her uniform plea was, "You can give this, and you will not feel it a bit." That was the damaging recommendation. That is the trouble in the Church of Christ. We give and we do not feel it; neither does the world feel it very much! I cannot conceive how God can take much pleasure in a gift that costs us nothing; and I pray God never to let me use such an argument as that; rather give until you do feel it.—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

CIDER.

Is it right to make cider? Is it right to drink cider? These questions are asked us. Certainly it is right to make cider, if the cider is used for vinegar. The drinking of cider rests right here: It soon contains more alcohol than lager beer does, and more than some of the light wines. Besides this, the alcohol seems to be so combined with injurious ingredients that it operates with more than usual effect. It is often said that a "cider drunk" is the worst kind of a drunk; and it is. We have seen men drunk on cider who seemed to be more stupid than any man would ever become in the same degree of drunkenness on liquor. In view of these facts we do not believe that any one who believes it wrong to drink beer or wine will conclude that he is justified in drinking cider.—*Western Rural.*