

THE HOME CIRCLE.

CHRIST IN THE HOME.

"And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and a'l that he had."—1 Chron. XIII.: 14.

It is said that one night when some English soldiers were shivering in the cold of the Crimea, some band began to play the familiar tune of "Home, Sweet Home," and that they all burst into sobbing, because the air went straight home to the heart. Yes! "there is no place like home." No place like it this side the grave, for there is the place where his heaven or his hell begins for each. There, after all, is the sanctuary of life; there the man is most real; there the character is formed. There is the centre of the true life now, and thence one day he must set out on the last long journey to the far away land.

In speaking of home we propose to say a few words, first, about some things you cannot keep out of the home, then about one thing you can bring into it, and the marvellous change which occurs when it is welcomed there.

There are some things, then, which you cannot keep out of your home. For instance, you cannot make a home that will be proof against *sin*. You may make the walls, and the furniture, and all the arrangements perfect enough to please the most fastidious taste, but you cannot make the inmates perfect. You cannot even make yourself perfect. * * * There are faults of temper and character in every man and woman that breathes. Neither can you make a home proof against *trouble*. Red eyes and sore hearts are not peculiar to homes of any one class. You will find them in the palace of cedar, as well as in the cottages of the poor. In one a son has turned out badly, and in another there is a daughter that causeth shame. Family troubles are the commonest kind of troubles, and no troubles wring the heart like them. God only knows how bitter they are, and the worst of them is that they are so often self bred. They come of neglect and carelessness, and inattention to duty—of evil influence and bad example. * * * It is impossible, also, to make a home proof against *sickness*. Its shelter may be as perfect as can be against rain and cold and heat. Every thing likely to preserve health may be there. But in spite of all you can do, illness will come in: there are always sick homes, and every home in its turn is sure to be a sick one. And then, last of all, and worst of all, you cannot prevent *death* from coming in, and taking away your treasures. The dread foe is always abroad, dropping in unexpectedly on one home after another. Now death comes and snatches away the very pillar of the home—the father or brother on whom the keeping together of the home depends. Or it comes and carries off the mother under whose wings the little ones were wont to nestle up lovingly—the softest and warmest covering in all the world. * * *

So much, then, for the things you cannot keep out of the home; and now a word respecting the one thing which you can bring in. You

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