

Family Reading.

HEROISM OF A STUDENT.

One fearful winter day the intelligence circulated through St. Andrews that a vessel had been driven upon a sand-bank, in the bay to the eastward of the town. A crowd of sailors, citizens, and students, soon collected upon the beach; for the vessel had been cast ashore but a few hundred yards from the houses, and she lay so near, that though the heavy air was darkened by the driving sleet, they could see at intervals the figures of the crew clinging to rope or spar ere each breaker burst upon her side, and shrouded all in surfy mist and darkness. In a calm sea a few vigorous strokes would have brought a good swimmer to the vessel's side; but now the hardiest fisherman drew back, and dared not face the fearful surge. At last a student of Divinity volunteered. Tying a rope round his waist and struggling through the surf, he threw himself among the waves. Forcing his slow way through the raging element, he was nearing the vessel's side, when his friends on shore, alarmed at the length of time and slow rate of recent progress, began to pull him back. Seizing a knife which he carried between his teeth, he cut this rope away, and reaching at last the stranded sloop, drew a fresh one from her to the shore; but hungry, weak, and wearied, after four days foodless tossing through the tempest, not one of the crew had strength or courage to use it. He again rushed into the waves, he boarded the vessel, he took them man by man, and bore them to the land. Six men were rescued thus. His seventh charge was a boy so helpless that twice was the hold let go, and twice had he to dive after him into the deep. Meanwhile in breathless stillness the crowd had watched each perilous passage, till the double figure was seen tossing landward through the spray. But when the deed was done, and the whole crew saved, a loud cheer of admiring triumph rose around the gallant youth. This chivalrous action was performed by Mr. John Honey, one of Mr. Chalmers' early and cherished college friends, afterwards ordained as minister in Bendoehy in Ferthshire. Though his great strength and spirit bore him apparently through the efforts of that exhausting day there was reason to believe that in saving the life of others he had sacrificed his own. The seeds of a deceitful malady were sown which afterwards proved fatal. Mr. Chalmers was asked and consented to preach his funeral sermon on the 30th of October 1814, the Sabbath after his funeral. It was a brilliant autumn day. The number being too great to be accommodated in the church one of its windows had been taken out and a few boards thrown across the sill to form a platform, from which the preacher, while standing but a yard or two from Mr. Honey's grave might be heard both by those within the building and those seated on the scattered tombstones of the church yard. A hum in the crowd, (I now speak on the authority and almost in the words of an eye witness), and a melancholy toll of the bell announced the approach of the preacher, who seated himself for a minute or two in an old elbow chair, took the psalm-book from a little table before him, turned hastily over a few of its leaves and then rose in the most awkward and even helpless manner. Before he read the lines which were to be sung, his large and apparently leaden eyes were turned towards the new grave, with a look wildly pathetic, fraught with intense and indescribable passion. The Psalm was read with no very promising elocution; and while the whole mass of the people were singing it, he sunk into the chair turned seemingly into a monumental statute of the coldest stone, so deadly pale was his large broad face and forehead. The text was read: Deut 32.29—"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" The doctrinal truth which he meant to inculcate being established on a basis of reasoning so firm that doubt could not move or sophistry shake it, he bounded at once upon the structure he has reared and by that inborn and unteachable power of the spirit which nature has reserved for the chosen of her sons, and which shakes of all the disadvantages and encumbrances of figure, and voice, and language, as easily as the steed shakes the thistle down, from his side carried the hearts and the passions off all who heard him with irresistible and even tremendous sway. "It strikes me said the preacher, and as the words were spoken there was a silence among the living almost as deep as that which reigned among the dead who lay beneath." It strikes me as the most impressive of all sentiments that it will be all the same a hundred years after this. It is often uttered in the form of a proverb, and with the levity of a mind that is not aware of its importance. A hundred years after this! With what speed and with what certainty will those hundred years come to their termination. This day will draw to a close, and a number of days makes