

The Family.

A SONG OF SUMMER.

The flowers are fringing the swift meadow brooks, The songsters are nesting in shadowy nooks...

The bobolink tilts on the tall, nodding clover, And sings his gay song to us over and over...

The white lilies sway with the breeze of the morning, In raiment more fair than a monarch's adorning...

High up in the elm is the oriole courtier, A new suit of velvet and gold he is sporting...

The blossoms and birds bring us yearly sweet token That Nature's glad promises never are broken...

SKETCH OF A COUNTRY CONGREGATION (Taken from the Choir Gallery) BY "QUEENIE."

For better standpoints for observing character or studying human nature can be found than from the choir gallery of one of our country churches.

The country church is the general rendezvous for all living within a radius of six or eight miles. Once a week at least are assembled there the various characters that make up the country population.

Besides these three distinct classes there are in every country congregation nondescript characters, consisting of oddities of the neighbourhood, local celebrities, and so forth.

If the reader cares to pursue this subject any further, let him in imagination accompany the writer into the choir gallery of a country church this July Sabbath, and join the band of singers.

We are early, but that is characteristic of choir singers, is it not? and the little church is very quiet. A sort of religious calm pervades the very atmosphere, broken only by the twitter of birds outside.

Presently the sound of a carriage, driving past the side of the church around to the shed at the back, breaks in upon the stillness, and we expectantly await the entrance of its occupants.

The next to enter is a managing mamma, followed by three marriageable daughters. All are fussy and rather overdressed, the daughters especially.

appearance, dress, etc., of those present. When she returns home these notes will be expanded to elaborate criticisms for the benefit of her family.

The next arrival is an oddity in his way. He is thoroughly respectable and respected; but he holds some peculiar ideas and exemplifies them in a peculiar manner.

The next to enter are a young man and his bride. The first appearance of a newly married pair in a country church is regarded as quite a sensation—a sensation of a decorous order, of course, befitting the day and place.

The next arrival is a venerable old man, who makes his way slowly up the aisle to his pew. He is one of the early settlers, having lived on his farm a mile or so from this church for all his life-time.

The church is now filling rapidly, and the arrivals are too frequent to give time for more than a glance at each. The woman entering now has "fret" and "worry" written on every lineament of her face.

The next arrival is a middle-aged man, with a good-humoured looking face, and a rather pompous manner. It is evident that he is proud of his handsome, well-dressed wife, and his fine family of sturdy mischievous boys and pretty girls.

As the service proceeds the great object of life and the realities of eternity are more and more apparent to us, until at length the benediction is pronounced, and we leave with fresh resolves and more charitable hearts.

THE FOUNDER OF THE SCOTTISH RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

PROF. BLAIRIE, the president, at the formal opening of the new premises of the Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland at 99 George street, Edinburgh, gave a sketch of its founder, Mr. John Campbell.

SENTENCED TO BE SHOT.

FARMER OWEN'S son had been found asleep when doing sentinel duty, and was sentenced to be shot. A telegram had been received by his father saying that the sentence would be carried out in twenty-four hours.

"Dear Father,—When this reaches you I shall be in eternity. I am going to write you all about it. You know I promised Jimmie Carr's mother I would look after her boy; and when he fell sick I did all I could for him.

"I can't bear to think of mother and Blossom. To night I shall see the cows all coming home from pasture, and precious little Blossom standing waiting for me; but—I shall never—never—come. God bless you all. Forgive your poor Bessie."

Late that night a little figure glided down the footpath toward the railway station. The guard, as he reached down to lift her into the carriage, wondered at the tear-stained face that was upturned toward the dim lantern he held in his hand.

The President had but just seated himself to his evening's task, when the door softly opened, and Blossom, with downcast eyes and folded hands, stood before him.

"Well, my child," he said in his pleasant, cheerful tones, "what do you want?"

"Bessie's life, please, sir," faltered Blossom. "Bessie! Who is Bessie?"

"My brother, sir. They are going to shoot him for sleeping at his post."

"Oh, yes; I remember. It was a fatal sleep. You see, child, it was a time of special danger. Thousands of lives might have been lost by his negligence."

"So my father said," replied Blossom gravely. "But poor Bessie was so tired, sir, and Jimmie so weak. He did the work of two, sir, and it was Jimmie's night, not his; but Jimmie was too tired, and Bessie never thought about himself, that he was tired too."

"What is this you say, child? Come here; I do not understand."

Blossom went to him. He put his hand on her shoulder, and turned up the pale, anxious face toward his. How tall he seemed! And he was President of the United States, too. A dim thought of this kind passed for a moment through Blossom's mind; but she told her simple, straightforward story, and handed Bessie's letter to Mr. Lincoln to read.

He read it carefully; then, taking up his pen, wrote a few hasty lines and rang his bell. Blossom heard this order given: "Send this despatch at once." The President then turned to the girl, and said: "Go home, my child, and tell your father, who can approve his country's sentence, even when it takes the life of a child like that, that Abraham Lincoln thinks that life far too precious to be lost. Go back, or—wait until to-morrow; Bessie will need a change after he has so bravely faced death; he shall go with you."

"God bless you, sir!" said Blossom. Two days after this interview the young soldier came to the White House with his little sister. He was called into the President's private room, and a strap was fastened on his shoulder. "Mr. Lincoln then said: 'The soldier that could carry a sick comrade's baggage, and die for the act so uncomplainingly, deserves well of his country.'"

Then Bessie and Blossom took their way to their green mountain-home. A crowd gathered at the railway station to welcome them back; and as Farmer Owen's hand grasped that of his boy, tears flowed down his cheeks, and he was heard to say, fervently, "The Lord be praised."—Evangelical Churchman.

"Why do you not come to church?" said a Christian to a working man. "Why don't the church come to me?" was the blunt reply.

MISSIONS A SUCCESS.—In the island of Madagascar there are twelve hundred churches, eighty thousand communicants, and these churches are self-supporting, and more than that, they gave \$20,000 in one year for missions.

THE MEASURE OF SACRIFICE.—"Do you think the Lord will be satisfied with what you can spare the 'strait' of your full measure? Has it never occurred to you that God demands, not what you can spare, but what you will miss, that He requires a real sacrifice at your hand?"—Pollock.

TAKE HEED HOW YOU PRAY.—A little girl who had a thoughtful Christian mother, overhearing her little brother saying his evening prayer in a careless manner, said to him, "Willie, if you do not mind how you pray, God will not hear you. You wouldn't ask mamma for anything you wanted in such a careless way."—Presbyterian Journal.

SAVOURLESS SALT.—A Christian who has lost his influence over men for their spiritual good is like salt that has lost its savour, it is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill; but men cast it out and tread it under foot. (Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 35). What kind of salt are we? Are we salting men with the truth of God, both by precept and example, or is our savour gone, and we being trampled under foot of the men we were sent to save? There is no character which the world holds in such contempt as the Christian who has lost the savour of a Christian life.—Words and Weapons.

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGY.

BY REV. THOS. CROSKERY, D.D. (Continued from p. 207.)

But then the revival of High-Churchism in our day, in its attempt to restore a patriarchal theology, put Calvinism once more into abeyance, and we now see the unhappy results in the enormous growth of Anglo-Catholicism, with its sad chronicle of perversions to Romanism.

As to the position of the Nonconformists, it seems impossible to deny that their success in the last hundred years—and it does not cover quite so long a period—has been due mainly to their Calvinism, as represented by the divines already mentioned. Though Dr. Dale speaks of the defection from Calvinism as beginning a century ago, it is a well-known fact that its actual rejection, so far as it is a fact, has occurred during the present generation.

The remarkably wide and uniform success of Methodism in Britain and America may seem to be inconsistent with the position taken up in this section of our lecture. We have already described this system, however, as Calvinistic in essential belief, though not in dogmatic statement. Its success has been due, undoubtedly, not to the Arminian, but to the Calvinistic, elements of its creed; and there is reason to believe that these are becoming more accentuated with the progress of time.

Our Westminster theology, notwithstanding the modifications it has undergone under various circumstances and at various times, has been more successful than other systems in reverting to its original type.

The three rival systems are Calvinism, Unitarianism, and Arminianism. Let us first consider the case of Unitarianism. It has essentially changed its ground since the days of Socinus, and has at last almost placed itself outside the pale of historical Christianity. It once believed in canonical Scripture. Now Professor Martineau, its most eminent representative, repudiates "all external authority in matters of religion," for "the yoke of the Bible follows the yoke of the Church."

Unitarianism is, indeed, the poorest and the most pallid of all religious developments, giving no play to the higher emotions, coldness being its constitutional vice. In its mutations it has never taken any strong hold upon the truly Christian consciousness, and has never maintained itself for any length of time in the Church.