

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

I am old and blind Men to me, as smitten by God's wrath, Afflicted and deserted of my kind Yet I am not cast down.

I am weak yet strong, I murmur not, that I no longer see, Poor, old and helpless I the more belong Father, Supreme to thee.

O, Merciful One When men are farthest, then Thou art most near When friends pass by, my weakness shun Thy chariot I hear.

Thy glorious face Is leaning toward me, and its holy light Shines in upon my lonely dwelling place And there is no more night.

On my benighted knee, I recognize thy purpose, clearly shown, My vision thou hast dimmed that I may see Thyself, thyself alone.

I have naught to fear, This darkness is the shadow of Thy wings, Beneath it, I am almost sacred, There can come no evil thing.

O, I seem to stand Trembling where foot of mortal ne'er hath been, Wrapped in the radiance of thy sinless land Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go, Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng; From angel lips, I seem to hear the flow, Of soft and holy song.

It is nothing now, When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes, When, as from Paradise refresh my brow, That earth in darkness lies.

In a purer clime My being fills with rapture, waves of thought Roll in upon my spirit, streams sublime Break over me moonlight.

Give me now my lyre, I, feel the strings of a gift divine; Within my bosom glows unceasingly fire Lit by no skill of mine.

Milton.

THE HEART OF A STRANGER.

"There's some sort of a furrin body at the door wantin' ye, ma'am," said an Irish girl to her mistress.

There had been already half a dozen "furrin" and other sort of "bees" asking favors that day; and the little lady of the house was weary, and had lain down on a lounge in her own room with a new book in her hand.

"Tell her I am lying down, and bring up her message," she said, without taking her eyes from her book.

The girl returned, saying, "It's work she's wantin', like all the rest o' 'em, ma'am; but I can't repeat half the gibberish she could me to."

"Tell her I have no work, and know of none elsewhere," was the answer.

The door closed heavily under the hand of the heartless girl; and the lady felt that she had done wrong, and almost heard the words, "For ye yourself know the heart of a stranger." And the days came back to her with strange power, when she, a young and beautiful orphan, had crossed the sea from England to gain her bread by her accomplishments; and she remembered how, after only one year of toil and loneliness, when a kind word was as a jewel to her, she became mistress of this beautiful home, and the mother of the lovely little ones who had been her pupils before.

She wished she had seen this "furrin sort of a body" and listened to her story, if nothing more, and cheered "the heart of a stranger."

As the poor applicant descended the steps, after receiving the cool message, made cooler by the servant's heartless tone, she looked up the street and then down, as if not knowing which way to go; and then moved off in an aimless sort of way, and was soon lost to sight.

She went up one street and down another, occasionally ringing at a bell, only to be told that the lady was out, or that she could not be seen. She was a stranger in the city, and soon got confused in her wanderings; but she knew the street and number of her temporary home. She was weary at last with her ringing and inquiring, and asked a boy the way to it—street.

He directed her, and she turned her face thither, when she was seized with a sudden impulse to ring one more bell.

Ascending the long flight of stone steps before her, she did so, and was not a little surprised to see the same stern, cold woman, who repulsed her an hour ago—miles away as she thought.

Before she could frame a question, she was saluted with "What are ye back again, after the lady tellin' ye to be gone, that she had neither work nor charity for ye! And I tell ye—"

"Catherine," called the lady, who had heard the heartless words, "I want to see that woman in my room. Send her up."

"She's the very same furriner ye sent away an hour ago, ma'am; she's just persistin' on yer helpin' her whether ye will or no," said the woman.

"Send her up, Catherine," was the soft reply.

The lady was surprised to see, in place of the rough creature she had pictured to herself, a well developed girl of twenty years, with cheeks like roses, teeth like pearls, and with a flood of golden hair which the proudest belle might envy—a buxom, rustic beauty.

"Well, my girl, what can I do for you?" asked the lady kindly.

"You gives me work; I does it good for small moneys. I walk, walk, all day, for veek, and ask much lady vill she give me work. But no work yet! When passago is paid, I has twelve dollars, and I pays Ludvig Anderson vile two dollars veek, and wash and irons and sews for my home till I has work. Now six veek gone, money gone, sleep gone; Ludvig sick, and must work hard for his child and wife, and I can no more eat his bread for no pay. I talks some very good English, cause I know girl in Sweden who had been five year in 'Merica; and more I learn on ship, and of 'Merican family in home with Ludvig Anderson; so ladies have no trouble with my Svede talk."

"What can you do?" asked the lady.

"All things. I spins and weaves this gown and shawl and all my clothes. I can sew for queens; I can knit stockings, wash good, makes breads, cooks dinner, all all things for few moneys. I good to little child and always smiles! I do all the cry in nights, when 'lone,' and here her voice broke, as if she were breaking this rule for once.

"But why do you ever cry, my good girl?"

"Oh, lady, Sweden so far, far away; my van brother so long gone to sea; my mother so sick, and so hopes I vill send her money and some day bring her to me. But I gets no work, and no friend only Ludvig from my place, and he sick and poor. Svede minister here, give me good paper for honest, God-lovin' girl."

And she handed her recommendations from a clean envelope, wrapped in a snowy handkerchief.

"You may come to me to-morrow and stay for a week, and if you are a good seamstress I will get you all the work you can do," replied the lady kindly, after reading the "good paper."

Selma dropped a low courtesy, kissing the lady's hand, and said, solemnly: "God, He thank you; my sick mother, she thank you; and myself thank you."

"How strange," thought the lady, after Selma had gone to tell her joy to Ludvig's wife, "that no one engaged her before I saw her. Who could withstand her innocence and beauty?"

There was good reason why no one had lightened the poor girl's burden before. No lady had seen her! All had left it to the judgment of weary or thoughtless servants to decide whom they should see, and whom they should not!

When Selma had been a week in this house she was found to be a necessity there. No one could sew and darn like her; no one could so gently and tenderly wash and dress the poor little invalid boy of the house; no one could charm away a headache or sing a baby to sleep as she could. Another helper had not been dreamt of in the house; but once Selma was there, life took on new charms for the whole family. Home grew brighter for the father, because he saw more of his wife; she was relieved of much care, and had time to read and make herself interesting; and the children were entertained, and instructed, and loved, by the girl who served them so faithfully.

When she had been two months in the house her friend Ludvig appeared one day with a letter from her mother in Sweden.

And after laughing and crying over it, and kissing it tenderly many times, Selma gave this English version of it to her mistress—

"When you go away from me, child beloved, my heart was dark like night-time. You on the great sea, and many days the sky black, and wind loud; and me lone and with pain. Neighbors come and talk kind, but I went only to God then. When you got to land I say in my heart, My child no home, no money, maybe Ludvig dead, and she be with bad stranger. Many day, many week, I cry and pray, and then come

letter—you safe with Ludwig, but hard times and no work. I want wings to fly over the sea to my child, but I have no wings, so I must sit still. My heart near breaks. All days I think and all nights I dream of only Selma, Selma. My heart be a great load, and my tears a fountain like King David, and I know not how I will live out in two from you, my child beloved!

"One day I sit, knit, knit, knit, for my bread, and sudden fell on my soul a great peace from God above you. I hear no voice. I sees no light; but only God's peace! Then I know it is well with you; that you have friends, and work, and his smile on you shine. All care go to the winds, and I have now wings for fly up to God's home, and thank Him, for He has hide my Selma, beloved, under his wing. That the blessed day of all days. Its sun never set, and all time I am happy for my child."

Here Selma paused, and, looking at her mistress, said: "Perhaps that day I come two times to your door, and God said to you, 'Take her in.'"

"No matter whether it was that very day or not, Selma. He sent you here, and I thank Him for it. That was my work to comfort the heart of a stranger, and yours to relieve me of a load of care and of work which I could only lay off on common hands. Be hopeful and faithful, and before long we will bring the dear mother over the sea; and she can trust and pray, and knit, knit, knit, here as well as there."

Let us be careful how we send the stranger, or any applicant for honest work, from our door. We may thus thrust away both the work and the blessing which God designs for us.—Mrs. J. D. Chaplin.

THE SUEZ CANAL.

We are in the canal, and do not find it so tedious as we expected; in fact, it turns out to be interesting. From the earliest ages such a work has been time and again proposed. It was inevitable that it should suggest itself. The isthmus connecting Africa and Asia is a narrow neck of land, low and level, at the east the Red Sea or Gulf of Suez, at the west the Mediterranean. Nothing is more confident than that at one time the two seas met. Down this sandy neck of land from the earliest ages has been carried on the commerce of the desert between far distant nations.

It is certain that as early as Rameses II a project for the connection of the waters of the Nile with those of the Red Sea was set afoot, and was probably successful. The existence of such a canal is mentioned by Strabo and Pliny. At a still later period it was renewed and enlarged by Pharaoh Necho, or his successors, the Persian masters of Egypt, and the Ptolemies. Again, under the Romans it was enlarged and repaired. From time to time, different monarchs east and west have projected its restoration. Mustafa III, Ali Bey, and Napoleon, each had thoughts of it. There has hardly been a time when it was not a matter of interest but it was reserved to the last half of our century to become an accomplished fact on a large and permanent scale.

M. de Lesseps, a French engineer, has the merit of submitting the plan which, under the auspices of England, France, and Egypt chiefly, has resulted in the present magnificent achievement. In March, on the 18th day, 1869, the great work was completed, and the two seas were united in a mission to open up an unbroken channel for the commerce of the world. The cost of the great work was nineteen million pounds sterling. The festivities at the opening cost the khedive £4,000,000. Its revenues have been since an average of more than a million pounds annually. It may be regarded as one of the greatest achievements of man. It is nearly 100 miles in length, with an excavation of a breadth at top of 800 feet, and at bottom of 75 feet, with a depth at the shallowest of 26 feet. It is really a vast river of artificial construction, and requires constant vigilance and an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling. About 1,500 vessels pass through yearly, conveying about 100,000 passengers, and four or five million tons. The average cost for a steamer is between three and four thousand dollars. It is found insufficient for the traffic, and there is much talk of a second canal in the near future, or some means by

which to double the capacity of the present one. The works at either end of the canal are immensely strong and expensive. There are no locks, as the waters of the two seas are on a level. The flow is in a gentle current from the west to the east, never roused.—Bishop Foster.

WHY HE REFORMED.

There was a drunkard in an Arkansas town who became a sober man through a kind providence granting him what Burns longed for:

"Oh, wad some power the giffie gie us, To see ourselves as others see us."

One day several acquaintances, on asking him to drink, were surprised to hear him say: "You must excuse me, gentlemen, for I can't drink anything." To their question, "what is the matter with you?" he said:

"I'll tell you. The other day I met a party of friends. When I left them I was about half drunk. I would not have stopped at this, but my friends had to hurry away to catch a train.

"To a man of my temperament, to be half drunk is in a miserable condition, for the desire for more is so strong that he forgets his self-respect in his efforts to get more to drink.

"Failing at the saloons, I remembered that there was a half-pint of whiskey at home, which had been purchased for medical purposes.

"Just before reaching the gate I heard voices in the garden, and looking over the fence I saw my little son and daughter playing.

"No, you be na," said the boy, 'an' I'll be na.' 'Now, you sit here an' I'll come in drunk. Wait, now, till I fill my bottle.'

"He took a bottle, ran away, and filled it with water. Pretty soon he returned, and entering the play house nodded idiotically at his little girl, and sat down without saying anything. Then the girl looked up from her work and said:

"James, why will you do this way?"

"Whizzer way?" he replied.

"Getting drunk?"

"Who's drunk?"

"You are, an' you promised when the baby died that you wouldn't drink any more. The children are almost ragged, an' we haven't anything to eat hardly, but you still throw your money away. Don't you know you are breakin' my heart?"

"I hurried away. The acting was too life-like. I could think of nothing all day but those little children playing in the garden, and I vowed that I would never take another drink, and I will not, so help me God.—Arkansas Traveler.

AGAINST ANXIETY.

It is distrust of God which lies at the root of unlawful anxiety. A feeble apprehension of God as the agent who overrules everything, and determines those causes which lie outside of our reach, and those events which escape our foresight—this it is which shakes the soul with vague uncertainty, and fills with causeless alarms the darkness of to-morrow. The doubt whether God, who counts for so much in contingencies of life, be one whose attitude to us may be wholly trusted, or the suspicion that we may have really as much to dread as to hope for from his superintendence—this it is which cannot but unsettle a man's steadfast outlook into the coming days, and toss his spirit to and fro in the restlessness of distraction. Because we are of "little faith," therefore we are not content to plan and work, and having planned and wrought, to sit and wait; but must fidget ourselves about that which may be, until impatience gnaws us like a worm, and our imagination, picturing disasters in the dark, burns us like fire. Why is it that popular proverbs attest how much worse are fancied ills than real ones, and how the evils which we most dread never overtake us; but just because this distrustful human heart of ours is so prone to prophesy, and so lively to exaggerate, misfortune? Like a soothing, cooling breath from a serene world, there comes down upon the feverish, self-tormenting spirits of men this word of one who was a messenger of him whom we distrust: "Be not anxious about your life; be not anxious about to-morrow."—Rev. J. Oswald Dykes.

IN THE EAST WIND.

Merciless and unrelenting Is the wind that beats to night, And the bare boughs shrink and tremble, As in dread of its dire might; And my heart, as weak and timid, Questions, "Can such things be right?"

Early spring-flowers try to bid them From the fury of the blast, Each young corn-blade shrinks and trembles, Sighing, "Will it soon be past?" And the pilgrim on the mountain Prays the east wind may not last.

Memories of summer comfort Found me, as in vision, throng, Dreamings of the gentle west wind, And warm woodlands full of song, And the glad flowers and the sunshine— Oh, let not the cold be long!

Yet a voice speaks in the east wind That my soul has often heard: As I listen, growing so hopeful, Better thoughts are in me stirred; He who roeth is my Father, Stray winds fulfill His word!

Therefore, welcome, tracing breezes! Foes they are not, but true friends, Searching, drying, courage-giving, Working roughly to right ends; Are they not among the "all things," Which for good the Father sends?

Marianne Farningham.

GROWTH IN SPIRITUALITY.

Daily habits of devotion are as indispensable as our necessary meat. But it is extremely desirable to supplement them by periods of special and protracted retirement, and to hold a sort of "review lesson." This practice is a marked feature in the lives of saintly persons, who at the same time were busily and fruitfully engaged in religious work. I can only specify Dr. Chalmers, whose diary discloses the fact that he had his annual, his quarterly and his monthly stated seasons of self-examination and private devotion, besides occasional ones, when he would spend half a day in such challenge of himself and communion with his God. We find the same feature in the glimpses which we get of Bible saints, such as Moses and Elijah, Simon and Hannah, Paul and John. The great Captain of Salvation himself made such "retreats" a factor in his victorious strategy.

Two things are necessary for a deep and growing religious experience—acquaintance with God and acquaintance with self. Religion is real to us, and effectual, in proportion as we have these. And neither can be gained without a silence of the spirit and a withdrawal from the world, which shall free us from distraction and enable us to be long enough in the presence of God and of ourselves to render intimate acquaintance possible. There is such a thing as "fellowship" with the Father, and with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost. No one knows God in any restful or sanctifying sense, who has not learned by experience the meaning of that word fellowship.

And a few hurried moments, however conscientiously snatched, for daily devotions will not supersede the necessity of more lengthened interviews. We must not only run away from our enemies. We must withdraw ourselves from our friends for a season, to seek God only. And then He will draw near and manifest Himself, not only as He does not to the world, but with a Shekinah revelation as to one within the veil.—Christian Intelligencer.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT.

"I don't like Grandma at all," said Fred—"I don't like Grandma at all." And he drew his face in a queer grimace. The tears were ready to fall. As he gave his kitten a loving hug, and disturbed her nap on the soft warm rug.

"Why, what has your Grandma done," I asked.

"To trouble the little boy?"

"Oh, what has she done, the grand one, To scatter the smiles of joy?"

Through quivering lips the answer came, "She—she—she—my—kitty—a—horrid—name."

"She did? are you sure?" And I kissed the tears.

Away from the eyelid wet, I can scarce believe that Grandma would grieve.

The feelings of either net, "What did she say?" "Boo-hoo!" cried Fred.

"She—called—my—kitty—a—'Quot rap—pet!'" —Harper's Young People.

BURNING JUDAS.

It was holy week in the queer old Mexican city. Every day Nellie saw many people go into the church across the square or piazza. Every evening the priests and monks carried great wax images of Jesus and of the virgin and saints through the streets. When they passed the people lay down on the ground, praying to the images.

On Friday all the Spanish ladies, and even the little girls, were dressed in black, in memory of the death of Jesus. At night Nellie went with papa and mamma to the church. A few candles were burning, and before the altar lay an image of

the dead Christ, and people were kneeling before it, crying and praying. Nellie was glad to come away when papa and mamma were ready.

When she went out early Saturday morning what a change she found! In every street queer images were hanging from trees or from ropes stretched from house to house. She thought they looked like scare-crows trimmed with fire crackers, but her papa told her they were meant for images of Judas. She wanted to know what they were for, but her papa told her to wait and see.

The morning was hot, and she was glad to go home and take her nap. When she awoke the bells were ringing for twelve o'clock. Then all at once—fizz! pop! bang!—all over the city there was such a noise! It was as bad as three Fourth of July. She ran to the window, and saw men, women and children shouting and laughing. Then papa came to the window, too, and said, "Well, little girl, this is what they call burning Judas. Isn't this a queer ending to a holy week?"

Was this, too, a part of their worship? Was this the way they kept the day between the death of Jesus and the morning when He arose?

Mamma knew what her little girl was thinking. When all was still she gave her an open Bible, and Nellie spelled out the verse which you will find in Isaiah xix. 13.—Children's Work for Children.

WHAT OUR GOOD BOYS MUST LEARN.

To cultivate a cheerful temper. To choose their friends among good boys.

To learn to sew on their own buttons. Not to tease boys or girls smaller than themselves.

To take pride in being a little gentleman at home.

To be polite and helpful to their own sisters as they are to other boys' sisters.

To treat their mother as politely as if she were a strange lady who did not spend her life in their service.

To feel a noble pride in making their mothers and sisters their best friends.

When their play is over for the day, to wash their face and hands, brush their hair and spend the evening in the house.

If they do anything wrong, to take their mothers into their confidence and above all, never to lie about anything they have done.

Not to take the easiest chair in the room, and put it directly in front of the fire, and forget to offer it to their mother when she comes in to sit down.

Not to grumble or refuse when asked to do some errand which must be done, and which otherwise will take the time of some one who has more to do than themselves.

To make up their minds not to learn to smoke, to chew, to drink, remembering that these things cannot be unlearned, and that they are terrible drawbacks to good men, and necessities to bad ones.—Exchange.

THE USE OF SNAKES.

C. C. Hoopes, in his very interesting work on "snakes," writes of their usefulness as follows:

"Persons who dislike snakes continually ask, 'What is the use of them?' That they are not without a use will, I hope, appear in the course of this work, were it necessary to preach that all things have their use. But in one habit that offended Lord Bacon, namely, of going on their belly, lies one of their greatest uses, because that, together with their internal formation and external covering enables them to penetrate where no larger carnivorous animal could venture, into dark and noisome morass, bog, jungles, swamps—amid the tangled vegetation of the tropics, where swarms of the lesser reptiles, on which so many of them feed, would otherwise out-balance the harmony of nature, die, and produce pestilence. Wonderously and exquisitely constructed for their habitat, they are able to exist where the higher animals could not, and while they help to clear those inaccessible places of the lesser vermin, they themselves supply food for a number of the smaller mammalia, which, with many carnivorous birds, devour vast numbers of young snakes. The hedgehog, weasel, ichneumon, rat, peccary, badger, hog, goat, and an immense number of birds keep snakes within due limits, while the latter perform their part among the grain-devouring and herbivorous lesser creatures. Thus beautifully is the balance of nature maintained.

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