

## THE HOME CIRCLE.

## SPRING.

Open the door, let in the air,  
The winds are sweet, and the flowers are fair;  
Joy is abroad in the world to-day;  
If our door is open wide He may come this way.  
Open the door.

Open the door of the soul, let in  
Strong, pure thoughts, which shall banish sin;  
They will grow and bloom with a grace divine,  
And their fruit shall be sweeter than that of the vine.  
Open the door.

## IN SCOTLAND'S DARK DAYS.

BY BELLE V. CHISHOLM.

Two centuries ago, in Scotland, the Scotch Presbyterians took a solemn oath and covenant to establish and maintain Presbyterianism as the sole religion of the country, utterly excluding prelacy and popery. From this covenant they received the name of "Covenanters." King Charles II., on his restoration to the throne (after the death Cromwell), determined to extirpate the Covenanters, and sent troops to capture them.—(Eds.)

It was in the days of long ago, in the times that tried men's souls, when Bonnie Scotland was under the iron rule of Charles the Second, that such heroes as James Guthrie and Hugh Mackail sealed their faith with their blood rather than break the solemn vows of loyalty to the King of heaven, which they had taken upon themselves.

Sir Arthur Bruce, a staunch Covenanter and a parishioner of the youthful preacher, Hugh Mackail, was one of the noblemen upon whose head the king had set a price. He was a quiet, peaceable man, loyal to his earthly ruler, and so long as principles were not involved in the sacrifice demanded, counselled submission to the government. But on one fatal December day his beloved pastor's work on earth was cut short through the wrath of the king.

As the young servant of God, after being tortured almost to death, went forth from prison to his execution, singing as he went,

I'll in Thy mercy gladly joy,  
For Thou hast seen my grief,  
In troubles Thou hast known my soul  
And sent to me relief.

Good courage have, and He His strength  
Within your heart shall send,  
All ye whose hope and confidence  
Upon the Lord depend.

there arose such a lamentation as had never before been heard in Scotland.

When the young martyr reached the place of execution and laid his hand upon the ladder leading to the scaffold, he turned to his weeping parishioners, who, led by Sir Arthur Bruce, had refused, in this last hour of trial to leave him alone with his enemies, and said, "Dear friends, be not afraid! I care no more for going up that ladder than if I were going to my father's house; every step of this ladder is a step nearer heaven."

After witnessing the triumphant death of this young hero, Sir Arthur returned to his home, declaring that he would consider it an honor to die in such a noble cause, and tread in the footsteps of his pastor.

The noble line of ancestor from which this godly man had sprung was no safeguard now from the persecutions of Charles the Second, who, in his own time of trial and banishment, had so often been befriended and sheltered from his enemies, by this loyal son of the Bruces. With no cause except resistance of his persecutions, the ungrateful King set a price upon the head of Sir Arthur, and for months he was compelled to hide away in dens and caves and mountain fastnesses, while the king's soldiers went up and down over Scottish highlands and glens, in search of him.

For some time after the persecution began, his wife managed to secrete him under the floor of her bed-chamber, between the ceiling, below and the floor itself. But after the second visit of the brutal soldiers, when he barely missed being discovered, a more secure hiding-place was determined upon.

After much prayerful consideration, a secret passage leading from an old family burial vault in the graveyard was selected. It was an old, old vault, built of sandstone, and for generations had not been used. A rusty

key, still in possession of Sir Arthur, held the entrance at his command, and away at the far end of the cave an ordinary boulder covered the secret of the extension, far under the earth's surface, where in the long ago, the persecuted faithful had sought and found security from their blood-thirsty enemies. It would be a doleful place—among the bones of generations long since forgotten—but Sir Arthur was a brave man, and, for the sake of his wife and children, was ready to endure to the uttermost.

How food was to be procured while he remained a prisoner there, was a question that perplexed husband and wife, until Griselda, the second daughter, a delicate girl of fifteen, proposed to carry it to him—by night. Hitherto she had been considered the coward of the family; afraid of her shadow, her brothers said; but now, putting her fear aside, night after night, for almost three months, she went back and forth in the darkness, in the performance of a duty that even her elder brothers would have shrunk from undertaking. In the dead of night, with her little black hood pulled down over her eyes, she picked her way noiselessly along the silent street to the deserted graveyard, where, after wandering in and out among the tall, ghostly monuments, she at length reached the vault, and, letting herself in by means of the rusty key, felt her way to the secret passage, where her father awaited her. She received her reward in the hour spent with the dear prisoner, and it was the sight of her bright, loving face, the messages from the precious ones at home, and the news which she brought from the outside world, that kept up the father's spirits and gave him strength to out-live the gloom and earth-damp to which the King's hatred had banished him.

Once, on her way to the cemetery, she met a squad of soldiers, and only the intense darkness prevented them from discovering her and the errand which had brought her out on such a night. As she stood, trembling, within three feet of them, she overheard their plans of search fully discussed, and learned their suspicion of a hiding-place somewhere in the graveyard, and their determination, on the morrow, to unearth the secret. As soon as they were out of hearing she hastened on to communicate what she had learned to her father, and undercover of the darkness he followed her to the granary in the barn at home. Here, shoveling the wheat aside, he crawled in, while she piled the grain upon him, until the closest inspection would have failed to discover anything unusual under the wheat. Here he remained until the following night, when he sought refuge by escaping to the mountains, and later to Holland, where he remained until it was safe for him to return to his family and to the embrace of his faithful daughter, whose heroism had rescued her forever from the charge of cowardice.—*Forward.*

## WORDS OF WISDOM.

Whatever love undertakes to do, it does well.

A sunbeam in the heart is sure to light the face.

Labour is drudgery only when we do not put heart in our work.

A pessimist is not blind, yet he cannot see even a bright prospect.

Some people prepare their excuses before they make their failures.

Everyone believes in friends until he has had occasion to try them.

He is the prince of cowards who knows he is in the wrong and is afraid to say so.

When we come close to a gaint, he often turns out to be only a common man on stilts.

If a man is busy, and busy about his duty, what more does he require for time or eternity?

To maintain an opinion because it is thine, and not because it is true, is to prefer thyself above truth.

It is not in the power of a good man to refuse making another happy, where he has both ability and opportunity.

Riches without charity are nothing worth. They are a blessing only to him who makes them a blessing to others.

There is no good in arguing with the inevitable. The only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat.