

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

MY LITTLE LABORER.

A tiny man, with fingers soft and tender, As my lady's fair, Sweet eyes of blue, a form both frail and slender.

A WEEK OF PRACTICE.

BY RISE T. COOK.

The communion service of January was just over in the church at Sugar Hill, and the people were waiting for Mr. Parkes to give out the hymn, but he did not give it out; he laid his book down on the table and looked about on his church.

He was a man of simplicity and sincerity, fully in earnest to do his Lord's work, and to do it with all his might, but he did, sometimes, feel discouraged. His congregation was a mixture of farmers and mechanics. So he had to contend with the keen brain and skeptical comment of the men who piqued themselves on power to hammer at theological problems as well as hot iron, with the jealousy and repulsion and bitter feeling that has bred the communistic heresies abroad and at home; while, perhaps, he had a still harder task to awaken the sluggish souls of those who used their days to struggle with barren hillsides and rocky pasture for mere food and clothing, and their nights to sleep the dull sleep of physical fatigue and mental vacuity. The minister spoke: "My dear friends," he said, "you all know, though I did not give you any notice to that effect, that this is the Week of Prayer. I have a mind to ask you to make it for this once, a week of practice instead. Perhaps you will find work that you know not of, lying in your midst. And let us all, on Saturday evening, meet here again, and choose some brother to relate his experience of the week. You, who are willing to try this method, please to rise.

Everybody rose except old Amos Tucker, who never stirred, though his wife pulled at him and whispered to him importunately. He only shook his grizzled head and sat immovable. Saturday night the church assembled again. The cheerful eagerness was gone from their faces; they looked downcast, troubled, weary—as the pastor expected. When the box for ballots was passed about, each one tore a piece of paper from the sheet placed in the hymn-book for the purpose, and wrote on it a name. The pastor said, after he had counted them, "Deacon Emmons, the lot has fallen on you."

"I'm sorry for it," said the deacon, rising up and taking off his overcoat. "I can't get the best of records, Mr. Parkes, now I tell you. Well, brethren," he said, "I am pretty well ashamed of myself, no doubt, but I ought to be, and may be I shall profit by what I have found out these six days back. I'll tell you just as it came, Monday, I looked about me to begin with, I am amiss! food of coffee, and it ain't good for me, the doctor says it ain't; so I thought I'd try on that to begin with. I tell you it come hard! I had served after that drink of coffee dreadful! Seemed as though I couldn't eat my breakfast with-

out it. I feel to pity a man who loves liquor more'n I ever did in my life before; but I feel sure that they can stop if they try, for I've stopped, and I'm going to stay stopped.

"Well, come to dinner, there was another fight. I do set by pie the most of anything. I was fetched up on pie, as you may say. Our folks always had it three times a day, and the doctor, he's been talkin' and talkin' to me about eating pie. I have the dyspepsia like everything, and it makes me useless by spells, and unreliable as a weather-cock. And Dr. Drake, he says there won't be nothing help me but a diet. I was readin' the Bible that morning, while I sat waiting for breakfast, for 'twas Monday, and wife was kind of set back with washin' and all, and I came across that part where it says that the bodies of Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost. Well, thinks I, we'd ought to take care of 'em, if they can be, and see that they're kept clean and pleasant, like the church; and nobody can be clean nor pleasant that has dyspepsia. But, come to pie, I felt as though I couldn't eat, so ye, I didn't! I eat a piece right against my conscience; facin' what I knew I ought to do, I went and done what I ought not to. I tell ye my conscience made music for me considerable, and I said then, I wouldn't sneer at a drinkin' man no more, when he slipped up. I'd feel for him an' help him, for I see just how it was. So that day's practice giv' out, but it learnt me a good deal more'n I knew before.

"I started out next day to look up my Bible class. Well, 'twould take the evenin' to tell it all, but I found one real sick; been abed for three weeks, and was so glad to see me that I felt ashamed. Then another man's old mother says to me, before he came in from the shed, 'he's been a sayin' that if folks practice what they preach, you'd ha' come around to look him up afore now, but he reckoned you kinder looked down upon mill-hands. I'm awful glad you come.' Brethren, so was I. I tell you, that day's work did me good. I got a poor opinion of Josiah Emmons, now, I tell you, but I learnt more about the Lord's wisdom than a mouth o' Sundays ever showed me.

"Now come fellowship day. I thought that would be all plain sailing; seemed as though I'd got warmed up till I felt pleasant towards everybody; but I went around seein' folks that was neighbors, and 'twasn't easy; but when I come home at noon spell, Philury says, says she, 'Squire Tucker's bull is into the orchard, a tearin' round, and he's knocked two lengths o' fence down flat!' Well, the old Adam riz up then, you'd better b'lieve. That black bull has been breakin' into my lots ever since we got in the aftermarth, and it's Squire Tucker's fence, and he won't make it bull-strong, as he ought, and that orchard was a young one, just comin' bear, and all the new wood crisp as cracklin' with frost. You'd better b'lieve I didn't have much teller-feelin' with Amos Tucker. I jest put over to his house, and spoke up pretty free to him, when he looked up and says he, 'Fellowship meetin'-day, ain't it, deacon? I'd rather he'd ha' slapped my ace. I felt as though I should like to slip behind the door. I see petty distinct what sort o' life I'd been livin' all the time I'd been a professor, when I couldn't hold on to my tongue and temper one day!'

"Brethren," interrupted a slow, hoarse voice, somewhat broken with emotion, "I'll tell the rest on't. Josiah Emmons came round like a man an' a Christian, right here. He asked me to forgive him, and not to think it was the fault of his religion, because 'twas his'n and notin' else. I was the one that wouldn't say that I'd practice with the rest of ye. I thought 'twas overlastin' nonsense. I'd rather go to forty-nine prayin'-meetin's than work at bein' good a week. I'd b'lieve my hope has been one of them that perish; it haun't worked, and I leave it behind to day. I mean to begin honest, and it was seeing one honest Christian man fetched me round to't.

Amos Tucker sat down and buried his grizzled head in his rough hands. "Bless the Lord!" said the quivering tones of a still older man, from a far corner of the house, and many a glittering eye gave silent response. "Go on, Brother Emmons," said the minister. "Well, when the next day come, I got up to make the fire, and my boy Joe had forgot the kindlin's.

I opened my mouth to give him Jesse, when it come over me sudden that this was the day o' prayer for the family relations. I thought I would say nothing. I jest fetched in the kindlin myself, and when the fire burnt up good, I called my wife.

"Dear me!" says she, "I've got such a headache, 'Siah, but I'll come in a minnit. I didn't mind that, for women are always havin' aches, and I was just a goin' to say so, when I remembered the text 'bout not being bitter against 'em, so I says, 'Philury, you lay abed. I expect Emmy and me can get the vittles to-day.' I declare, she turned over and give such a look; why, it struck right in. There was my wife, that had worked for and waited on me for twenty o'd years, 'most scart' because I spoke kind of feelin' to her. I went out and fetched in the pail o' water she always drawn herself, and then milked the cow. When I came in, Philury was up fryin' the potatoes and the tears a shinin' on her white face. She didn't say nothin', she's kinder still, but she hadn't no need to. I felt a little madder'n I did the day before, but 'twasn't nothing to my condition when I was goin' toward night, down the sular stairs for some apples, so's the children could have a roast, and I heered Joe up in the kitchen say to Emily 'I do b'lieve, Em, pa's goin' to die.' 'Why, Josiah Emmons, how you talk!' Well, I do; he's so overlastin' pleasant an' good-natur'd, I can't but think he's struck by death.

"I tell ye, brethren, I set right down on them sular stairs and cried. I did, really. Seemed as though the Lord had turned and looked at me just as he did at Peter. Why there was my own children never see me act real fatherly and pretty in all their lives. I'd growled and scolded and prayed at 'em, and tried to fetch 'em up just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined, ye know, but I hadn't never thought that they'd got right an' reason to expect I'd do my part as well as their'n. Seemed as though I was findin' out more about Josiah Emmons' shortcomings than was real agreeable.

"Come around Friday I got back to the store. I'd kind of left it to the boys the early part of the week, and things was a little clutterin', but I did have sense not to tear round and use sharp words so much as common. I began to think 'twas getting easy to practice after five days, when in comes Judge Herrick's wife after some curtin' calico. I had a han'som piece, all done off with roses an' things, but there was a fault in the weavin', every now and then a thin streak. She didn't notice it, but she was pleased with the figures on 't, and said she'd take the whole piece. Well, just as I was wrappin' of it up, what Mr. Parkes here said about tryin' to act just as the Lord would in our place come across me. Why I turned as red as a beet, I know I did. It made me feel all of a tremble. There was I a door-keeper in the tents of my God, as David says, really cheatin', and cheatin' a woman. I tell ye brethren, I was all of a sweat. 'Mis' Herrick,' says I, 'I don't believe you've looked real close at this goods; ain't thorough wove,' says I. So she didn't take it; but what fetched me was to think how many times before I'd done such mean, unreliable little things to turn a penny, and all the time sayin' and prayin' that I wanted to be like Christ. I kep' a trippin' of myself up all day jest in the ordinary business, and I was a peg lower down when night come than I was a Thursday. I'd rather, as far as the hard work is concerned, lay a mile of four-foot stone wall than undertake to do a man's livin' Christian duty for twelve workin' hours; and the heft of that is, it's because I ain't used to it, and I ought to be.

"So this mornin' came around, and I felt a mite more cherk. 'Twas missionary mornin', and seemed as it 'twas a sight easier to preach than to practice. Thought I'd begin to old Mis' Vedder's. So I put a Testament in my pocket, and knocked at her door. Says I, 'Good-mornin', ma'am, and then I stopped. Words seemed to hang, somehow. I didn't want to pop right out that I'd come to try'n convert her folks. I hemmed and swallowed a little, and, fin'ly, I said, says I, 'We don't see you to meetin' very frequent, Mis' Vedder.'

"No you don't!" says she as quick as a wink. 'I stay at home and mind my business.' 'Well, we should like to hev you come along with us and do ye

good,' says I, sort of conciliatin'. "'Look a here, deacon!' she snapped, 'I've lived alongside of you fifteen year, and you knowed I never went to meetin'; we a'n't a pious lot, and you knowed it; we're poorer'n death and uglier'n sin. Jim, he drinks and swears, and Malviny don't know her letters. She knows a heap she hadn't ought to, besides. Now what are you comin' here to-day I'd like to know, and talkin' so glib about meetin'? I'll go or come jest as I please, for all you. Now get out of this!' Why, she come at me with a broomstick. There was no need on't; what she said was enough. I hadn't never asked her nor her'n to so much as think of goodness before. Then I went to another place jest like that—I won't call no more names; and sure enough, there was ten children in rags, the hull on 'em, and the man half drunk. He giv' it to me, too; and I don't wonder. I'd never lifted a hand to serve nor save 'em before in all these years. I'd said consider'ble about the heathen in foreign parts, and give some little to convert 'em, and had looked right over the heads of them that was next door. Seemed as if I could hear him say, 'These ought ye to have done, and not have left the other undone.' I couldn't face another soul to-day, brethren. I come home, and here I be. I've been searched through and through and found wantin'. God be merciful to me a sinner!'

He dropped into his seat and bowed his head; and many others bent too. It was plain that the deacon's experience was not the only one among the brethren. Mr. Payson rose, and prayed as he had never prayed before; the week of practice had fired his heart too. And it began a memorable year for the church in Sugar Hill; not a year of excitement and enthusiasm, but one when they heard the Lord saying, as to Israel of old, "Go forward," and I obeyed his voice. The Sunday-school flourished, the church-services were fully attended, every good thing was helped on its way, and peace reigned in their homes and hearts, imperfect, perhaps, as new growths are, but still an offshoot of the peace past understanding.

Another year they will keep another week of practice, by common consent.

THEN I'LL DO IT.

Going down the aisle one evening my attention was attracted by a man whose appearance indicated great poverty and upon whose face was the unmistakable stamp of a life of sin. Breathing a prayer for guidance and help, I approached him and asked him to give his heart to the Saviour. He looked at me and then said, "It's no use, I'm too bad." I told him the blessed Jesus died for just such wicked people, and He would save him—yes, had promised to make just such "whiter than snow." Looking earnestly for my answer, he asked, "If I gave my heart to the Lord do you believe He would forgive me? Remember I have been very wicked." I replied, "I believe and know He will, because He has so promised." "Then," said he, reaching for his hat, "I'll do it," and rising, he walked up to the altar of prayer.

Somehow the simplicity impressed me very deeply. I thought of the contrast—this poor sinner who perhaps did not know much of the Gospel, just settling it by the "Tuen I'll do it," then of the one who professes to be God's child, who, on hearing of greater depths, heights and lengths in religion, and knowing it to be God's will that he should taste of these, hesitates and reasons and circumvents all that is said about it and every effort made to help into this better way.

Suppose that every one who enjoys justification should, when they find it to be their privilege to be cleansed from sin, and that this cleansing is received after an entire surrender of self through faith in the Son of God, say, "Then I will do God's will," what glorious results would follow. Suppose every one of these would go in the strength of God to live and work for souls, what revivals would follow. There would be one continuous revival.

Just suppose, dear readers, each of us would, upon finding God's will towards us, say, "Tuen I'll do it," what a change would be wrought. There would then be no lack of funds for the spread of God's work; there would be no lack of persons ready to go to missionary fields; there would be no lack of workers at home. Sin-

ner, it is God's design that you should be saved. If you give your heart to Him He will save you now. Will you do it? Brother, sister, it is God's will that you should abide in Him, being cleansed from inbred sin. He asks an entire surrender of all to Him, and an implicit trust in His word. Will you do it now?

God help us all when we read His requirements to meet them, and when we read His promises to receive them implicitly.—Christian Standard.

THE IMMORTALITY OF LOVE.

We must not doubt, or fear, or dread that love for life is only given, And that the calm and sainted dead will meet estranged and cold in heaven; Oh, love were poor and vain indeed, Based on so harsh and stern a creed: True that this earth must pass away, with all the starry worlds of light, With all the glory of the day, and calmer tenderness of night: For in that radiant home can shine Alone the immortal and divine. Earth's lower things—her pride, her fame, her science, learning, wealth and power— Slow growths that through long ages came, or fruit of some convulsive hour, Whose very memory must decay, Heaven is too pure for such as they. These are complete: their work is done. So let them sleep in endless rest: Love's life is only here begun, nor is, nor can be fully blest: I have no room to spread its wings Amid this crowd of meaner things. Just for the very shadow thrown upon its sweetness here below: The cross that it must bear alone, and bloody baptism of woe, Crown'd and completed through its pain, We know that it shall rise again. —Adelaide Anne Proctor.

ALWAYS NEW.

"How many years has I stood in this place," asked Mr. Spurgeon, "and preached to congregations just like this Sabbath after Sabbath, morning and evening? Now suppose I had preached on some scientific subject, I should have been spun out a long while ago. If I had any other doctrine to preach than Christ crucified, I should have scattered my congregation to the winds of heaven long ago."

But the gospel is always new. The name of Jesus, the music of his silver bell, rings out o'er hill and dale as when on the first Christmas night the angels sang glory to God in the highest. There is a matchless charm about it that never dies out, and never will while the world stands. The force which Christ wielded is love. The only crime which could be laid to his charge was his immensity of love, or as the poet puts it, "Found guilty of excess of love." There is a great attraction about Christ when we see the change he works in men. There is no true conversion except through the cross.

"What," asks Mr. Spurgeon, "made us a Protestant nation for so many years? I don't say we are one now. The stakes of Smithfield did it. Martyrdom burnt a place in the very heart of England for Christ to dwell in." Jesus Christ is the great attractive magnet, and when he gets hold of any of us he turns us into magnets, and we turn somebody else, and they in like manner turn others, and more and more and more the kingdom grows. Christ is still the working power, but he works through those who have received him. If men are in Christ, it matters little how or when they were converted.—Christian World.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

CAP'N SAM'S SERMON.

Cap'n Sam was in no mood for jokes or banter and being very quick to see which way the wind blew, the kind sailor addressed to a row of very serious young faces what one boy afterwards called "a perfect brick of a sermon."

"Boys," he said, "I've been trying every day of my life for the last two year to straighten out furrows, and I can't do it! One boy turned his head in surprise toward the captain's neatly kept place.

"Oh, I don't mean that kind, lad. I don't mean land furrows," continued the captain, so soberly that the attention of the boys became breathless as he went on: "When I was a lad, and what they called a 'hard case,' that is, not

exactly bad or vicious, but wayward and wild.

"Well, my dear old mother used to coax, pray and punish—my father was dead, making it all the harder for her, but she never got impatient. How in the world she bore with all my stubborn vexing ways so patiently will always be to me one of the mysteries in life.

"I knew it was troubling her, knew it was changing her pretty face, making it look anxious and old. After a while, tiring of all restraint, I ran away, went off to sea; and a rough time I had of it at first. Still I liked the water, and liked journeying from place to place. Then I settled down to business in a foreign land, and soon became prosperous, and now began sending her something better than empty letters. And such beautiful letters as she always wrote me during those years of cruel absence! At length I noticed how longing they grew, longing for the presence of a son who used to try her so; and it awoke a corresponding longing in my own heart to go back to the dear waiting soul.

"So, when I could stand it no longer, I came back; and such a welcome, and such a surprise! My mother is not a very old lady, boys, but the first thing I noticed was the whiteness of her hair, and the deep furrows on her brow; and I knew I had helped blanch that hair to its snowy whiteness, and had drawn those lines in that smooth forehead. And these are the furrows I've been trying to straighten out.

"But last night, while mother was sleeping in her chair, I sat thinking it all over, and looked to see what progress I had made.

"Her face was very peaceful, and the expression contented as possible, but the furrows were still there; I hadn't straightened them out—and—I never—shall I never!

"When they lay my mother, my fair old sweetheart, in her casket, there will be furrows on her brow, and I think it a wholesome lesson to teach you, that the neglect you offer your parents' counsels now, and the trouble you cause them, will abide, my lads, it will abide!"

"But," broke in Freddy Hollis, with great troubled eyes, "I should think if you're so kind and good now, it needn't matter so much!"

"Ah, Freddy, my boy," said the quavery voice of the strong man, "you cannot undo the past. You may do much to atone for it, do much to make the rough path smooth, but you can't straighten out the old furrows, my laddies; remember that!"

"Guess I'll chop some wood mother spoke of, I'd most forgotten," said lively Jimmy Hollis, in a strangely quiet tone for him.

"Yes, and I've got some errands to do!" suddenly remembered Billy Bowles.

"Touched and taken!" said the kindly captain to himself, as the boys tramped off in a thoughtful, soldier-like way.

And Mrs. Bowles declared a fortnight afterwards that Billy was really getting to be a comfort instead of a pest; guessed he was a-copying the captain, trying to be good to his ma—"Lord bless the dear, good man!"

Then Mrs. Hollis, meeting the captain about that time, remarked that Jimmy always meant to be a good boy, but he was actually being one now a days. "Guess your stories they liked so much have morals to them now and then," added the gratified mother with a smile.

As Mrs. Hollis passed on, Captain Sam, with folded arms and bent head, said softly to himself:

Well, I shall be thankful enough if any word of mine will help the dear boys to keep the furrows away from their mother's brow; for once there, it is a difficult task straightening out the furrows!—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

SINS BLOTTED OUT.—A little boy was once much puzzled about sins being blotted out, and said, "I cannot think what becomes of all the sins God forgives, mother." "Why, Charlie, can you tell me where are all the figures you wrote on your slate yesterday?" "I washed them all out, mother."

"And where are they, then?" "Why, they are nowhere; they are all gone," said Charlie. "Just so it is with the believer's sins; they are gone—blotted out—remembered no more." "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us."—Phil. Meth.

THE SA 1. A con reign had of our pre interval h wisely mined to would sho ed to act a which the lish , or the way was some prev sent to received his was bound After this in the Lord the Amale of Jeho a ages before over the tion of the dm. (Deut 10), the h (Num. xiv and had n 48 of the five bu Being of t as plunder particular This co ready to o like disp with all p sult was, s vah, that rious; the ed through country, er, and a cepting su warriors o realities w ers of a D blood thro recent an the carry ed agis gully of i and His e existi had prov their fore slay the w it seems b judged b standards viously gi of the C this partic suffer wit and little pestilence lies. Th to us, but 2. Sau mand; but own purp positive a spared the presly cor had tided and child some excu to impuls spared the the grate ple, and t the most y His motiv was a dition and glorify no in re tive king ion in b But what when Se gult. I real son the blam tend that for sacril real me would st that whi knew w ed, was the deen tive coul decree. ly than S peared S stood col uel. Si one of t which is disposing doing u 3. Fro ed from which s justice striking over-who pelled to is no evi repent row for arose fro We sho between leads to worse a We n reasons was not in the c led to the exp "The m x, 26, n the peo that be videred antecrated ed to be liked. who wi genant, of king orable curse i to our youth—