



The Family Circle.

THE LEGEND OF JACOB'S PILLOW.

BY JACOB G. ASCHER.

In the wealth of rabbinical lore
Is a mystical legend of yore,
Of Jacob who wandered afar.
In anguish of spirit, sore pressed
He lay on the desert to rest,
'Neath the light of a tremulous star.

And the moss-covered stones that he saw
Grew still in their wonder and awe,
That the father of Israel's race
Should seek in the gloom of the plain
Surcease of his anguish and pain,
"To lay himself down in that place."

Then they clamored in audible tones,
In the mystical language of stones,
Each claiming pre-eminent right
To be chosen as Israel's bed,
To pillow the wanderer's head
As he lay in the desert that night.

Each stone to the other laid claim
To the honor and marvellous fame,
As contending they scattered his way
But the presence of Jacob was there,
Like the sanctified incense of prayer!
And in rapturous silence they lay.

But a marvellous destiny—true
To the grandeur of Israel's few
Who invoked the religion of man—
Rewarded the rivalling stones,
In harmony blending their tones
Like the hues of a rainbow's span.

For they merged and mingled in one
In the droop of the glowing sun,
And from all, but a single stone
Was moulded for Israel's bed,
To pillow the wanderer's head
As he lay with his God alone!

And when morn shot her golden beams,
As seraphic as Israel's dreams,
The pillow of mystical story
He knew in the depth of night
Had invoked the angels of light,
To compass the heavens in glory.

An altar to Heaven he raised,
And the God of his fathers he praised,
As he set up the pillow of fame;
And the legend divinely has said,
That thus was the corner stone laid
Of the temple to Israel's name.

Like the stones—so scattered and riven,
Was thus a heritage given
To a race bearing proudly their pain;
But the fragments in one shall combine
To build up the Faith of all time,
And the Temple of God to regain!
—The Jewish World.

"MARTHY."

"Marthy! Marthy!"
It was a peevish, querulous tone. Martha Faxon was crying—her head on the little table by which she sat, her miserable tears falling on the coarse gingham apron she was making for her brother Bob.

"Marthy! Marthy! Marthy!"
"What do you want?" was called back crossly.

"Come right down and peel the pertaters. My hands are in the dough. And you'll have to see to Tony. He'll get into some mischief if he's left in the wood-shed."

Martha went down to the kitchen. Potatoes and Tony were duly attended to, the latter being severely tied into a high chair in the midst of a vigorous remonstrance.

"You might as well make the starch in that tin dish, Martha. Your father must have a collar to wear to town-meetin' to-night, and them currants hain't been picked over, and if you could jest stir up some of that mountain cake for tea, and—"

"Oh, mother! mother!"
The words came in a great sob. Her mother, rubbing the dough off her hands, looked up in surprise. Even Tony, who had finally succeeded in emptying a pitcher of milk over himself, gave his undivided attention for half a minute to his big sister.

An instant later Martha disappeared, banging the buttery door behind her, and in its tin-pan solitude was doing her best to keep down another flood of tears.

"Where's Martha?" It was a very sweet voice that asked for the girl. Miss

Livermore, the minister's daughter, had "just run in," as she often did, to have a little chat with worried Mrs. Faxon, who afforded a constant illustration of the fact that "women's work is never done"—at least some women's. This time she had come to invite Martha for a ride in the little phaeton that waited at the door. The mountain cake was indefinitely postponed, and the two set off together.

"You look tired, Martha," was Miss Livermore remark after they had gone in silence for a little way. She made no comment on the tear-stained cheeks, and Martha believed she had scrubbed away all traces of her "crying spell."

"Yes, I am tired," she replied, her lip even then quivering a little. "I wonder if there's never to be any way out of it."

"Then it's the same old story is it?" Miss Livermore looked with keen interest at the gloomy face.

"Yes, only worse. It seems to me sometimes as if I could not stand it any longer. I wish Uncle Crosby had kept his money instead of spending it to unfit me for everything—that is everything I can have here."

"He did not mean to do that, of course."

"Oh, I know it, Miss Livermore, and I am grateful, I suppose; but if you only knew what a hideous change it is to come from Orient Seminary and the society of that beautiful town into this desolate little village and our poky old farmhouse where there's nothing but cooking, dirty dishes, washing days, and—and—mother and father don't care anything about books"—she did not refer to the sore trial of their ungrammatical speech—and I'm just discouraged."

She was sobbing again in good earnest. Miss Livermore waited until she grew quieter, and then asked, "Has anything new happened, Martha?"

"No—only—that is I had a letter from Chrissy Paine this morning. She is going to Europe this fall to stay two years and study the languages. She wrote that May Baxter had been offered a position in the Museum of Natural History in Philadelphia; she always wanted just that sort of work. All the girls are doing something—all my class—except me."

"You told me once you didn't care for the languages."

"No. I don't, very much."

"Necr geology, nor zoology."

"No. I have no particular liking for any of those branches."

"Then I would not be unhappy because I was not going to study one or work in the others."

"Oh, Miss Livermore, you know it's not that! And I can't teach either. I broke down miserably enough when I tried it last spring. It is because—well, because I don't seem to fit anywhere, or be wanted anywhere, or find anything to do."

"Anything to do!" repeated Miss Livermore.

"Well, anything I want to do—anything that is of any use, you know."

Miss Livermore made no response. She had her own views of the case, but this was not the "convenient season" for speaking of them. She had never yet succeeded in making much impression upon the discontented girl; seventeen and thirty-seven see things with such different eyes!

"What would you like to do, Martha?" she asked instead, "if you could have your choice, I mean?"

The answer came hesitatingly.

"You will laugh at me, but if you only knew how I have longed to go down South—to go with the nurses and help take care of the yellow fever patients. That would be something worth while—and I think I could do it," she added after a little pause.

"Do you mean that you have a special gift in that line of work?"

"No, nothing 'special'; but the nurses are all told what to do; they have experienced people to direct them, of course. I'm not afraid of the fever, and—in a more excited tone—"it wouldn't be a bit worse to die in Memphis than to live in Brownville—there! You see now how wicked I am," and she laughed hysterically.

Miss Livermore was busily thinking. "There is a poor sewing-woman," she said at last, "living with an infirm mother in one of the little cottages down there"—she pointed with the whip—"who is sick with gastric fever, brought on by overwork and insufficient food. I've been wondering what could be done for them, for the mother is too lame to walk about. Now, if you could begin there, just to find out what talent you have for taking care of sick people—right here in Brownville—don't you think it would be a wise sort of preparation for a Southern campaign—wiser than to go so far from home?"

Martha was silent: the prospect did not seem attractive. She began dimly to realize that her desire to escape from Brownville was almost as strong as her ambition to be of some use in the world.

"I suppose I might try it," she said at last, reluctantly, "if father and mother are will-

ing." And so it came about that within a day after this talk Martha Faxon was installed as nurse in the poor little tumble-down cottage. Miss Livermore's few private words to the girl's parents were sufficient to obtain their consent.

Poor Martha! She would have been glad to listen even to the obnoxious pronunciation of her own name, to hear it again from familiar lips. "Gastric fever was no joke," the doctor said, and Martha quite agreed with him. In fact she found no suggestion of a joke anywhere. It was all the hardest work of her whole life. The poor woman was very sick, her mother quite helpless, and Martha struggled to do her self-imposed duty by both of them. It was cooking, washing, and dirty dishes over again with the added items of sick-room care; worse than Bob's dirty face or Ned's torn aprons, she was obliged to confess. Nothing was handy in the cottage; it was even worse than the "poky farmhouse" kitchen. And oh, how sleepy she was, and how she longed for liberty! She held out for nearly two weeks, then the physical failed her. Her will was strong, else she would have broken down before—unaccustomed as she was to the work. Dr. Belden took her home in his buggy, got another nurse in her place, and gave her a little of his care for several days.

It was on one of these that Miss Livermore called again. She had been absent in the city while Martha was serving her severe apprenticeship.

"I did more hard thinking in that sick-room, nights, than I ever did before in all my life," the young girl was saying, "and I've made up my mind to stop longing to be something that I can't, and try to do something that I can. 'Tisn't very much and 'tisn't very interesting, but I can do it."

But the tremulous voice told that the prospect looked as dark as ever.

"I've never had a happy or contented week since I left school," she went on. "Now I'll try to fish a little comfort out of the iron pot or wring it out of the dish-cloth. I won't wince, either, when the folks call me 'Marthy.'"

She put her head and her heart, as well as her hands, into the work. It was surprising to see the difference it made! It was "brains applied to bread, broom and buttons," she said, that showed her what a field for usefulness had been waiting for her, "all the time that I've been looking over the fences into other folks' lots."

Mrs. Faxon's face already began to look as if some of the wrinkles were ironed out of it, and the minister and his daughter dined with them one day.

"Uncle Crosby didn't 'unfit' me after all," Martha said to her friend as she bade her good-by that night. "I'm teaching Bob and Ned two hours a day. It's real fun, they learn so fast. And Dr. Belden is helping me get up that reading club we talked about, and do you know this has been the very happiest time of all my life.—*Christian Intelligencer.*"

FINISHED OR NOT.

BY CHRISTINE R. MARSHALL.

It was the hour for arithmetic. I had given out an example, with this remark. "When I knock, you are to stop, whether you're work is finished or not."

With considerable curiosity, I stand watching my class of boys. Some, diligent and industrious, begin immediately to perform their example with the determination to finish it in the allotted time. Others carelessly take their pencils and appear to be working, but every trifle attracts their attention, and the time which ought to be given wholly to their work is divided.

The signal is given—the diligent, industrious ones quickly lay down their pencils and are ready. While here and there among those whom I noticed wasting the time, I hear this request. "Teacher, I am almost through; can not I finish?" The answer is, "No; finished or not, you must stop now."

Dear Christian friends, we have a work to do, and just so much time to do it in. By-and-by, death will knock at our door. If we have been faithful and diligent, our work will be finished. We will be ready, yea, glad to lay down our work, and go to our reward. Joyful and restful will the welcome words of our dear Saviour be, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But what of those who have wasted their time and talents: who have not finished the work given them to do? Perhaps they will appeal to the Saviour, saying, "Lord spare us still longer, we have not finished our work." The answer will be, "Finished or not, you must stop now."

"Begin in the morning and tell all the day. Thy strength I'll supply and thy wages I'll pay. And blessed, thrice blessed, the diligent few, Who finish the labor I've given them to do."
—*Christian Weekly*

JACK McCLOUD.

"There were three boys," said uncle Peter, "in my school, one winter, that were fun-loving, rollicking fellows, nothing really vicious or ugly in them, yet they made me a great deal of trouble. If I had occasion to mend or make a pen, set a copy or work a difficult sum, there was sure to be a twitter, which swelled to a snicker around the room. When I looked up all eyes would either be upon me or the 'three boys,' who of themselves never seemed so studious, at one of their tricks, by the way. Matters stood this way some days. I could find nothing special to accuse them of, yet I knew they were the cause of the whole disturbance. Something must be done. After one of these periodical snickers, one day I went to them, and said, pleasantly:

"Boys, you seem to have a great deal of fun here all to yourselves, which is most too bad; now tell us all what pleases you so and we will enjoy the laugh together and have done with it, for we are here for something besides laughing. What is it?"

"Oh! nothing," they answered with such grimaces that, of course, made the whole school laugh.

"If it is nothing, then we have had quite enough. You are the oldest in the school, and I had looked to you to help me preserve order; I am sorry to say I am much disappointed. I am satisfied you are the cause of all this confusion in our otherwise pleasant school."

"Now, while I do not intend to cane or flog, I want you to distinctly understand that I will not permit anything of this kind longer. Orson Pratt, will you try to do better in the future, laying aside this silly waste of time, and help me by your example?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, frankly and readily.

"Nathan Hawley, will you make the same promise for the future; will you be a help instead of a hindrance?"

"Yes, sir," came slowly, as though costing an effort. I expected opposition from this boy and was pleased with my success.

The other boy, Jack McCloud, was the most good-natured in the school. I knew him at home as a pleasant boy. It was with easy assurance I turned to him and asked a similar question; to my surprise, he dropped his head and laughing, said:

"I dun—no."

"You don't know!" I exclaimed, expressing my astonishment a little sharply. "You know whether you mean to go on annoying me and disturbing the whole school, or whether, like your companions, you are ready to make the same promise, don't you?"

"He-he-he, I dun—no," he chuckled. I turned away amazed yet determined. I went to the boy several times during the afternoon asking if he were ready to make the promise, always receiving the same answers, "He-he-he, I dun—no."

After the closing exercises of the school I requested Jack McCloud to remain in his seat, which he did in a serio-comic manner, hands in his pockets, and eyes rolled to the ceiling, that sent the children laughing from the house. When we were alone, I said:

"We will make ourselves as comfortable as possible here; but you must understand that, be it a night or a week, you can not leave this house until you have made up your mind to do differently."

No answer, but a very significant shake of the head.

I deliberately looked the door, putting the key in my pocket. I fastened all the windows, and renewed the fire. It was a short winter's day—cloudy, and threatening a storm. The wooden shutters rattled, and the wind whistled weirdly around the corners; quaint shadows crept boldly out from the darkness and lengthened on the walls; now and then limbs of the forest trees struck the old school-house spitefully, or dragged their length on the roof as though making an entrance.

"By the way," I remarked, as though to myself, "we may as well have supper, we needn't starve." Stepping to the door, I called to some children, still lingering in curiosity, "Run home and tell your mother to send supper for two here."

They scampered off, well pleased to have something to do.

Jack's face grew longer and longer as the darkness deepened. I began a search from desk to desk, gathering a few stubs of candle left from a recent spelling-school. I laid them in a row upon my desk, continuing my soliloquy.

"That piece may burn an hour, this," measuring and examining carefully, "an hour and a half,—I don't know, pretty small pine may burn a half-hour—the whole, perhaps, three hours." I heard a faint sigh, then an audible sob. I knew Jack had been looking at me, but as I turned, his head dropped upon his arms, stretched on his desk, in real grief, a pitiable sight in the dim light. Without noticing his dejection, I asked:

"Which would you rather do, Jack, burn these pieces in the forepart of the night, or reserve them to the last? The hours will