

## Home and School.

### THE TRAP-DOOR SPIDER.

BY THE REV. JOHN TODD, D. D.

I sometimes hear it said, "Such a young man is sceptical," or, "He is trying to be an infidel."

I inquire, "Was he instructed in religion when a child?"

"Yes, he had a very faithful, pious mother."

"Then I am not worried about him; he will come all right before long."

And so such usually do. They are held by unseen cords, and cannot break away. There is a very wise period in the life of every young man, when he "knows all about it," and, taking counsel of his own heart, is ready to believe as much or as little as he pleases. But I have been amazed and delighted to see how easy it is for God to take such in his own hand, and bring them out in his own light. I have lately had such a young friend, who had too much conscience to feel easy while neglecting his eternal interests, and yet loved sin too well to yield his heart to reason, to conviction, or even to love. But one day I saw he was in trouble—distress—and yet was trying to conceal it, and shut his soul away from the light. So I said to him, "Look here, George; here is something which a friend has sent me from California."

"What is it? It looks curious."

"It is the home of the trap-door spider. Now, just examine it. Here is a lump of the yellow soil of California cemented together, so that it adheres firmly. It is about eight inches long and three in diameter. You see on the bottom the silken bag that hangs down. That bag is the home of the spider. But look carefully at the top. You see a circular top, perhaps three quarters of an inch across it. You see nothing but this covered top. Now, with the point of my knife I just raise this top. It has a regular hinge, and shuts down so snugly that you would never dream that it could open. But you see it

does' open, and the spider—a huge fellow he must be to fill that hole—can run in and out just as he pleases. Now under the lid, the lower side of it, you see some little holes. The creature when pursued leaps into this hole or house, draws the door down over him, and then, thrusting his front claws into the lid, and bracing himself against the sides of his house, he holds it down fast and so there in the dark he feels safe. The harder he holds on the safer he feels, and the darker it is the more secure he thinks himself. But mind you, man is wiser, stronger, and greater than the spider. He comes and digs down, and takes up houses, trap, spider and all. He is his master now. He can kill him or save him alive. Now my dear George, you are just like that spider."

"Pray, how do you make that out?"

"Why, don't you see, you have a certain dark place in your heart, where you retreat every time the truth of God, or love of Christ, or the influence of the Divine Spirit, seek you. You run into your place of doubt and unbelief, and, like the spider, draw the door and hold on to it, and tighten your hold the darker it is; and there you are, and there you intend for the present to remain. But there is a powerful hand that is digging down below all this, and will soon, I do believe, lift you and your retreat out into the light."

"There is another resemblance. This trap-door spider is very poisonous in his bite, but he is powerless when man has taken his strong-hold. So you would be poisonous among your companions and the boys who are looking up to you, should you communicate your notions. But God won't let you. He opens your eyes to the light and he holds you in his hand, and he won't let you poison others."

"O, sir, I see it, I see it all!" and he burst into tears; his heart was softened; his refuge was gone, and thus the trap-door spider preached a ser-