



### The Family Circle.

#### WILLING.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

A king whose state was marvelous for beauty,  
Whose royal city shone  
Gorgeous with every grandeur that could render  
Due honor to his throne,—  
Had kept his son from court for sterner training,  
Thro' disciplines profound  
The better so to perfect him for reigning  
What time he should be crowned.  
And now the day was set for his returning  
From that far province where  
Had passed his nonage; and the king was yearning  
To hail the expectant heir.  
So a proud embassy was missioned, bearing  
Word that, probation done,  
The monarch, who for years had been preparing  
Fit empire for his son,  
At length desired that he should take possession  
Of his full birthright dower—  
The honor, glory, good beyond expression,  
Withheld until that hour.  
What said the banished? Did ecstatic pleasure  
Give to his spirit wings,  
Whose eagerness, in overmastering measure,  
Outsoared the waiting king's?  
Nay—when they told the message of the father,  
There was a startled pause,  
A strange, reluctant look, as though he rather  
Would linger where he was.  
Yet since the embassy was urgent, stilling  
Whatever secret throo  
It cost to leave his exile, he was "willing,"  
Half-sad, he said, "to go."  
Ungracious heart!—to wound with hesitation  
Such love!—to hear the call  
Homeward, without one rapturous exultation,—  
"Willing" and that was all!

### A HANDFUL OF CORN ON THE MOUNTAINS.

(New York Observer Prize Story.)

BY FANNIE HYDE MERRILL.

"Alice, what are you dreaming about?" and the girlish speaker turned an amused face toward her friend.  
"I'm actually studying economy for the first time in my life. I'm wondering whether it would be worth while for me to get those seven dollar shoes instead of the ten dollar pair and put the money I save into our next Sunday-school contribution."  
"You are going crazy, my dear! You always give something, and three dollars won't help enough in the evangelization of the world to pay for the discomfort of a cheaper grade of shoes. What uncomfortable theory has taken hold of you, now?"  
"Nothing, only our superintendent asked us to give something more than usual next Sunday for a little school in Colorado, and it's near the end of my quarter, and that little lunch I gave the girls about used up my extra funds."  
"Ah! that was elegant!" responded her friend. "Go without shoes, my dear, if you choose, but never economize when you give a lunch—and invite me!"  
The next Sunday, Alice, a picture of dainty color, under the softened light of the great stained windows of the church, dropped three dollars into the contribution box with a hopeless sigh. It did seem little toward helping the world, but it was the result of the first self-denial in expense that she had ever undertaken.

About a month later, in a mining "camp" high up among mountains that pierced the clouds, a superintendent was talking to a small Sunday-school that was being held in the court house. "After we bought the seats," he said, "there were three dollars left from the money sent us by the school in Massachusetts, and we have bought with it some pictures for the infant class," and he turned to the corner at his left and hung a scroll of illustrated "Golden Texts" over the infant class. As he turned, you could see how worn was his coat. It was dusty, too, for he had not had a minute in which

to brush it since he had come down in the early morning to clean out the room for Sunday-school. Every Saturday night there was a ball in the room, and a great many more people went to the ball than came to the Sunday-school, and they stayed later and left the room in greater disorder. But there were some twenty little children in the infant class who had never been to a ball, and their eyes shone as they looked at the bright picture of Jesus healing the sick man, and they listened as their teacher read. "Wherefore is it lawful to do well on the Sabbath day." There was not a child in the class that Sabbath day whose father was not at his office or shop doing business as on any other day of the week. "Now," said their teacher, "at the end of this quarter I shall take off these pictures and give one to each of you. You may take them home and put them up in any place you like."

So it came to pass that on Sunday, Sept. —, there came out of Sunday-school thirteen very proud little boys and girls, each of whom carried a large picture. The three dollars had bought scrolls for two quarters. The next quarter's pictures were to go to the other part of the class. As one little girl, with eager eyes, climbed on her father's knee that noon as he came home, not from church, but from shoveling silver ore in the mill near by, to show him her pretty picture. "Where shall we put it, papa?" she asked. There was no lack of place, though they had but two rooms, for they had few pictures. There need be no fear of injuring the plaster, for in that high altitude plaster cracks so badly that walls are covered with cloth and then papered.

"Put it anywhere you please, Nellie," he answered, absently; then he added, "Wouldn't you like to go up to the mines in the 'Basin' with me to-morrow?"  
"Oh, I would, I would! Shall we take dinner there?"

"I suppose so."  
"I'm going to carry my picture to show Mr. Nichols," she said.

Her father smiled. "You might put it in the miners' dining-room. They need it badly enough."

"Why?" she asked, slowly.  
"I don't believe there's such a thing as a Bible in the 'Basin,'" he said, with a laugh.

Nellie's eyes were large. "Do they need it more than we do, papa?"

He laughed again, rather uncomfortably. "They need it more than you do, puss," he said, lightly, and kissing her, went back to work.

Nellie sat down on the floor, with a sober face. Her father had spoken in jest, but she supposed he was in earnest. She had learned to deny herself, for though her father earned high wages, prices, where everything was brought over the mountains in freight teams, were even higher than wages. So she sat and studied her picture. Christ was the central figure. The coloring was crude, the lines were coarse, but to her it was wonderful. It was Jesus, and she loved him. She took out her playthings and looked at them. There were some bright stones she had picked up, a little cart her father had made, a tea set out of pieces of broken crockery, a small doll and a book. She looked through her book. It had pictures, but not one of Jesus. Again she came back to her picture. Lovingly she laid her cheek against the kind face as the picture lay upon the floor. Mamma was taking a nap; the cat dozed in the sunshine; Nellie's eyes closed, and she dreamed that Jesus held her in his arms.

Bright and early next morning, Nellie's father rode to the door on his bronco. The bronco was a small horse, but he was strong, and his feet never slipped on the steep mountain trail. Nellie climbed up in front of her father, and they began their climb. For three hours they went up, up, up, every minute showing a new view of rocks, rushing water, forests and grand mountain ranges. But Nellie did not chatter as fast as usual.

About noon they reached the mines. It looked desolate, for no trees would grow at that height, and there was little soil for flowers. Nellie sat down in the office while her father talked with Mr. Nichols, the superintendent of the mine. By and by her father went out doors, and Mr. Nichols said, "Helen, you haven't said one word

to me." He always called her by her real name. Nellie got up and came to him, and he took her on his knee.

Now, next to her own father and mother, Nellie loved Mr. Nichols. He had bright gray eyes that looked straight at her, and he talked to her as if she were grown up and never laughed at anything she said or did. So it happened that it was sometimes easier for her to tell some things to Mr. Nichols than even her father or mother. She sat a minute, then she took out from under her little shawl a roll and undid it. It was her picture. She spread it out carefully, and then looked up at him.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she said.  
"Very," he answered gravely, looking straight into her blue eyes.

She drew a long breath. "I got that at Sunday school yesterday; and it is mine to keep; but papa said he thought the miners needed it more than I did," and she watched his face anxiously.

"Tell me about the picture," he said.  
So she told him the story of the picture, and said the verse, for she could not read.

"I suppose the miners do need the picture more than you, Helen," he said, "but it is yours; don't give it to them unless you wish to."

"Do you think Jesus would care if I gave away the only picture of him I had? Do you think he would think I didn't care?" she said with great earnestness.

"No," he said, "Jesus would know you gave it away because you loved him so much you wanted the miners to have something to help them think about him," and Mr. Nichols kissed her grave forehead with a sigh, for he thought, "O, for the faith of a little child." Then he took Nellie and her father to dinner with him. The miners had eaten and gone, and in spite of the variety of pictures which the miners had pasted on the board walls, the long room looked bare. After dinner Mr. Nichols helped Nellie put her picture up where the light would fall brightly upon it, and she went home with the happy heart of one who has given up joyfully. The setting sun shone upon the dining-room walls; upon pictures of engines and shipwrecks, of street mobs and grand balls, of prize-fights and actresses, and then it seemed to linger with glad surprise upon the tall figure and calm face of Christ as he stretched out his hand to the man who knelt at his feet.

It was a week later that a sad accident occurred at the mine. Some of the powder that is used to blast the rocks exploded too soon, and a man was hurt. It was Jack Douglass, too, a fine young fellow, who was lying so still on the ground, and the men were sore at heart. Mr. Nichols came quickly and had the man brought in and laid on the long table in the dining-room that he might examine him. There are many accidents at the mines, and Mr. Nichols knew, in a little time, that the young life was going fast. His heart was heavy, for he liked Jack Douglass and Jack was only seventeen.

"Jack," he said, tenderly; "I'm afraid it's more than it looks. Is there anything you want done?"  
Jack turned his face toward Mr. Nichols in surprise. He had felt no pain, and had not thought of death.

"I ain't ready," he said, slowly.  
Then "Big Tom," who called himself Jack's "pardner," a fellow rough and heavy, but with a kind heart and a great love for the younger Jack, came up and took his hand.

"Jack," he said, "old fellow, you've been good to me. We've all got to go some time. You ain't afraid, be you?" and the great blundering fellow looked anxiously in Jack's dark eyes.

"No," Jack said. "Tom, you know I ain't afraid. Would I gone into the mine when I did if I'd been afraid to die? But there's something I ain't done yet. I told mother when she died I'd meet her in heaven, and I ain't ready yet. I never broke my word to any one and now—not to mother! Can't somebody pray? Can't somebody tell me what to do?"

He looked with troubled face at the group by the door; then his eyes rested on Mr. Nichols's face, so full of power and sympathy.

"Boss," he said, "won't you pray for a fellow?"

Mr. Nichols bowed his head, but no words came. Then, "Jack," he said, "I'm not a

praying man, but God is good. You've been a good fellow. You never wronged a man. You never drank hard, or gambled or swore much. You've done your work well. God knows a miner's life. He won't be hard on you, Jack. It's all right."

There was a stir of approbation among the men at the door.

"No," said Jack, with sudden energy, "things look different now, Boss. I said so to myself all the time. But it won't work now, I tell you; I want something out of the Bible for a bad man. That's what I am! Haven't you got a Bible, boys, some of you?" and in his eagerness he raised his head and looked about the room. Not a man moved. "I tell you," he said, again, "I want something out of the Bible! There's things there—I know"—then his eyes caught the tall figure of Christ with outstretched hand, in the picture on the wall. "What's that, Boss, what's the reading there? I can't see." And Mr. Nichols read with earnest haste, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jack sank back; his sudden strength was gone. "Again," he whispered. Again the mighty words filled the room. Jack smiled. His eyes were on the picture, "Son of man save—" he whispered, and held out his hand. Mr. Nichols took it, gently Jack's eyes closed and a look of rest shone on his face. The men took off their hats. Once more the dark eyes opened, but they looked beyond the kind face over him, beyond the pictured walls, even beyond the golden gates of the setting sun. "Mother," he said, "He did," and all was still.

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Some days afterwards, Nellie looked out of the window and saw Mr. Nichols on horseback, talking with her father at the door. She ran out. Both Mr. Nichols and her father looked grave. She put up both hands and Mr. Nichols lifted her, as she climbed on his foot, into the saddle before him.

"See, Helen," he said, "I've bought two Bibles alike; one is for you and one for me; how do you like them?" and he undid two beautiful books.

"Oh," cried Nellie, "a whole Bible all my own!" and she hugged it with delight. Then she looked up at him. "Are you going to carry yours to the mine with you?"

"Yes," he said.  
"Then there will be a Bible there all the time, won't there?"  
"Always," he said.

### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

With gradual gleam the day was dawning,  
Some lingering stars were seen,  
When swung the garden gate behind us—  
He fifty, I fifteen.

The high-topped chaise and old gray pony  
Stood waiting in the lane;  
Idly my father swayed the whip-lash,  
Lightly he held the rein.

The stars went softly back to heaven,  
The night-fogs rolled away,  
The rims of gold and crowns of crimson  
Along the hill-tops lay.

That morn, the fields, they surely never  
So fair an aspect wore;  
And never from the purple clover  
Such perfume rose before.

O'er hills and low romantic valleys  
And flowery by-roads through,  
I say my simplest songs, familiar  
That he might sing them, too.

Our souls lay open to all pleasure,  
No shadow came between;  
Two children, busy with their leisure—  
He fifty, I fifteen.

As on my couch, in languor, lonely,  
I weave beguiling rhyme,  
Comes back with strangely sweet remembrance  
That far-removed time.

The slow-paced years have brought sad changes,  
That morn and this between;  
And now, on earth, my years are fifty,  
And his, in heaven, fifteen.  
—Atlantic Monthly.

IT IS THE CROSS that makes the peace so sweet. Amid the tears of grief, peace keeps her silent place, like the rainbow upon the spray of the cataract.—Horatius Bonar, D.D.