



The Family Circle.

WHY WILL YE DIE?

A great rock stands in a weary land,
And its shadows fall on the parched sand,
And it calls to the travellers passing by,
"I will shelter thee here continually."
Then why will ye die?
Oh! why will ye die?
When the sheltering rock is standing by!
Oh why! O why will ye die?

A great well lies in a weary land,
And its waters call over life's rough strand,
"That the great well is deep, with waters ripe,
Springing up into everlasting life."
Then why will ye die?
O! why will ye die?
When the great, deep well is standing by!
O why! O why will ye die?

A wide fold stands in a weary land,
And the sheep are called on every hand;
And the Shepherd no wanderer turns away,
But he changes his darkness into day.
Then why will ye die?
Oh! why will ye die?
When the great, wide fold is standing by!
Oh why! O why will ye die?

A rough cross stands near a city wall,
Where the Saviour dies out of love for all;
Where the angels still tell the message blest,
That the way is now plain to endless rest!
Then why will ye die?
O! why will ye die?
When the blood-stained cross is standing by!
O why! O why will ye die?
—London Freeman.

A GLIMPSE AT PERSIA.

I do not think that the boys and girls who lived in England fifty years ago were half as rich in toys and picture-books as most of my young friends are now.

Lessons, too, were not made so interesting as they are at present, when puzzle maps, and play grammars may be found on the shelves of almost every nursery bookcase.

Still there were many good schools, and though the law of England did not then, as it now does, provide a fair amount of education for every British child, yet it was beginning to be thought a disgrace, even for poor people to allow their children to grow up without knowing how to read and write. But things in Persia were far worse, there was not a single girls' school to be found all through the country. But you ask how was that, did not the girls do lessons at home? No, for I regret to have to tell you their mothers were quite unable to teach them, being themselves very ignorant. But how did they spend their time? I will tell you. The women and girls worked in the fields or vineyards, looked after the sheep and cows, carried heavy loads, and did all kinds of rough outdoor-work.

Many of these poor people were Christians in name. They did not worship idols like the heathen, nor kneel down and say prayers before images or pictures of the Virgin Mary, or Peter, or Paul. But they had no true knowledge of God or of Christ.

For some years kind missionaries had been preaching the Gospel among them, but they had not seen much fruit of their labors. A few boys had been taught in the Mission schools, but most of them after leaving school and choosing wives from among the poor neglected girls I have been telling you of, seemed to forget all they had been taught. One of the Lord's servants, feeling it was time something should be done for the girls, wrote to a friend in America asking him if he knew of a Christian lady who, from love to Christ, was willing to leave her pleasant home and all her friends, take a long journey by sea and land to Persia, and open a school, where those girls might hear of the Lord Jesus and His love.

The letter was put into the hands of

FIDELIA FISKE,

and her whole after life was her answer to it. From first reading it, the Lord put a great desire into her heart to work for Him among the women and girls of Persia. She was quite willing to leave the happy home and go to live among strangers, but one thing stood in the way. Her mother was a widow, and Fidelity was her only child. Could she spare her much-loved daughter? Would she say, Yea, when her consent was asked? At first the thought of parting from Fidelity

was a great trial, but before long she was able to smile through tears and say, "Go, my child; and may the Lord bless and keep you."

When Miss Fiske arrived in Persia, she set to work, before attempting to teach others, to learn the Persian language. Soon after she wrote to a friend in America: "I cannot tell you that I am getting on very fast, but I know a few words. The first Persian word I learnt was daughter, then I learnt the verb, 'to give'; and so I began by asking the people to give me their daughters, and I am praying that God may make them willing to let their little girls come to our school. So I hope soon to be able to tell you I am really at work among the girls of Persia."

Miss Fiske's was to be a boarding-school. The scholars were to live entirely with their teacher; only removing to their own homes for the holidays.

At last the day fixed for opening the school came. Miss Fiske, you may be sure, was ready in good time; but at nine o'clock not one girl had arrived. Miss Fiske felt very disappointed, but she just told the Lord all about it, asking Him to send her some scholars, and before long one of her friends was seen crossing the school-yard with a little girl in each hand.

Miss Fiske went out to meet them with a bright face and words of welcome for her pupils; the man who had brought them said, "Take these two girls and begin your school, let them be your daughters and teach them all it is good for women to know."

So Miss Fiske's school was begun, but before the end of the first week, six girls had been brought to her, and others soon followed.

Poor Miss Fiske, I think she must often have felt very sad and lonely during the first year of her

SCHOOL KEEPING IN PERSIA;

for her little scholars were often very naughty and trying. We must remember they had not been taught in their home to be obedient or kind to each other. Indeed, at first they hardly seemed to know how wrong it was to tell untruths or to steal, and when their kind teacher told them how displeasing to God such conduct was, they would answer "In our country everybody tells lies, and we know many that steal, why should not we?"

All this grieved Miss Fiske deeply, for she really loved her scholars, but it led her to pray much that the Holy Spirit might shine into their dark hearts, shewing them their need of a Saviour.

One morning Miss Fiske put some black pins she had brought from America, in a cushion in her room. Before evening they were all gone. Miss Fiske felt quite sure that no one but her girls had entered the room, so calling the scholars together, she told them of her loss, asking them not to add to their fault by hiding it. She then questioned them one by one. But all said they had not taken or even seen the pins and one little girl was even bold and naughty enough to say, "God knows we have not taken your pins."

Miss Fiske was much grieved, but said gently, I think God knows that you have taken the pins, now I wish all of you to kneel down while I ask God to shew me where they are. Perhaps, added the kind teacher, "God may not see it best to shew me now, but I feel sure he will some day."

Without a word the children knelt down, and Miss Fiske prayed; as she rose from prayer, it came into her mind to search for the pins in the small cloth caps, or turbans, all the girls wore. She told them her intention of doing so, when one little girl, holding her cap very tightly with both hands, cried out, "Do not look in my cap, no not in mine!"

Of course, hers was the first searched and the pins found in her cap so nicely hidden away that only their black heads could be seen.

This was the last serious case of theft in Miss Fiske's school, for after that, if a new-comer stole anything, her companions would say to her, "Run, Saetie, or run, Kera, and put that in the place you took it from, or God will tell our teacher you have stolen it."

And as the little offender always took the advice of her companions and restored the stolen property, cases of dishonesty soon became a thing unknown among Miss Fiske's scholars. The little girl who had taken the

pins from her teacher's cushion was one of the first to give her young heart to the Lord Jesus, and grew up a happy Christian girl, and a great help to Miss Fiske in the school.

From the time that her pupils began to shew any real interest in the word of God, Miss Fiske was often asked to go to their homes and tell the sweet story of a Saviour's love to their mothers and elder sisters.

The mission school at Gong Tapa was a subject about which the mothers of the girls who were Miss Fiske's first scholars never seemed tired of talking.

Like the women of all Eastern lands, they went daily to the well to draw water for household use, and when they met there, or visited each other at home, one would say to her friends, "When my daughter Mohana came home for her holidays, she told me such a beautiful story about a prophet who was cast into a den of lions because he prayed to the true God. But the God whom he served took care of him, and would not suffer the lions to hurt him."

"And I," said another closely veiled woman, "visited Sache at the school; I saw her among her young companions, and I heard her singing with them the praises of Jesus. The girls are truly taught many things we their mothers do not know. They can read and sing Christian hymns, as well as sew and embroider. I almost wish I were a child again, for then I would go to school."

"Thou canst not go to the school, Salome," said an aged woman. "But why should not the teacher come to our homes? We will sit at her feet, we will hear the words of wisdom from her lips."

A murmur of "Good, good," ran through the little group of women as they turned to go to their homes. Soon a messenger was sent to invite Miss Fiske to spend her next holiday at the house of one of her pupils. A promise to do so having been given, the news spread quickly, and on the day fixed for the visit, quite a large company of women had gathered to receive her. A mat had been placed for her to sit upon (the Persians do not use chairs), and the women sat or stood on the earthen floor.

A few were anxious to hear the sweet story of a Saviour's love, but by far the greater number had been attracted only by curiosity to see Miss Fiske. As soon as she entered the room, they began to ask questions about her dress, her home and her relations. "Why do you not wear rings in your ears, or silver ornaments in your hair, as we do?" said one. "Tell us about your grandfather and your great-grandfather," cried out another. (The Persians are very fond of talking about their relations.)

Poor Miss Fiske soon found it would be impossible to answer all their questions, and that to attempt doing so would only be a waste of time; so lifting her heart to the Lord in prayer, she said to the women, "I see the customs of your country are very different to those of mine. Now as I am almost a stranger in your country, you will not be angry with me for telling you that in my country when one speaks the others remain silent."

"Now I have something to say to you about a relation of yours, and mine also; her name was Eve. Do not you think that is a pretty name? But before I can tell you her story, I want every one of you to place the fore-finger of her right hand on her lips, and keep it there until I have done speaking."

The women looked surprised, but became very quiet. Miss Fiske then told them in very simple words the story you have often read in the opening chapters of Genesis, of the creation of Adam and Eve. She then told them of the Fall, or how sin first entered the world, and of the first promise of a Saviour. (Gen. iii. 15.)

The women looked very sorry when they heard that, on account of their disobedience to the command of God, Adam and Eve had to be sent away from the garden of Eden, and one or two took their fingers from their lips as if just going to speak, but remained silent at a sign from their companions.

When the Bible lesson was over, and they were at liberty to talk, more than one said to Miss Fiske, "We did not know God was so good. Eve was the first to disobey God, and yet He said a woman should be the mother of the Saviour. Will you not come again very soon, and tell us more of these good things?"

On the next visit, Miss Fiske had a still larger number waiting to welcome her, and God richly blessed the simple gospel mes-

sage she carried to the homes and hearts of these poor ignorant Persian women. Many of them became true-hearted disciples of Christ.

Some of Miss Fiske's pupils were among the first converted in her school, and they were very anxious for the salvation of their schoolfellows, speaking to them about their souls, and holding little meetings to pray with and for them.

Soon the Lord called one of His young disciples to be with Himself in Heaven. Her name was Sarah, she was received into Miss Fiske's boarding school when she was about ten years of age. She learned to read the Persian Bible (printed in Syria) very quickly, and was very fond of learning psalms and chapters, but it was not until about five months before her death that her teachers were quite sure she was really the Lord's. From the time she first confessed Christ, she grew rapidly in grace, and was a real help and comfort to her teachers.

When she became very ill, it was thought best for her to leave school, and return to her father's house. On being told so, she said, "Let me pray first." After a little time spent in prayer, she came to her teacher, and smiling through her tears, said, "I am ready to go now." She then left her much loved school, never to return to it. During the last few weeks of her life, though often in great pain, she was always bright and cheerful, and often spoke of the loving kindness of the Lord.

The last day of her life was a Lord's day. She was very weak that day. Her father, who was a preacher of the gospel, and had been asked to go and preach at a village some miles distant among the hills, noticing she seemed worse than usual, said to her, "Sarah, shall I go to preach, or shall I remain at home with you, as you are very ill to-day?" The dying girl answered brightly, "Go, dear father, preach the gospel, and I will pray for you."

Her father then set out on his long walk. Early in the afternoon Sarah became much worse, and forgetting through weakness where her father had gone, asked for him; on being reminded he was away preaching, she smiled and said, "It is well, do not send for him, I can die alone." Soon after, she expressed a wish to see Miss Fiske. Her sister was leaving the room to fetch her, when Sarah call her back, saying, "Do not go, for I remember this is the hour when Miss Fiske reads the Bible and prays with my companions. Do not disturb her, I can die alone." Half an hour later, and dear Sarah's spirit, absent from the body, was present with the Lord.

Blind Martha, as she was always called, was the next to follow. From the time of her conversion she seemed to long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. She would often say, "I have never seen the sunshine on the flowers, but I do not mind, for soon I shall see the face of the Lord Jesus, and His face is brighter than the sunshine, and more beautiful than the flowers."

Like Sarah she was obliged to leave school on account of illness. One night she called her mother, saying, "Mother, I think it is time to get up, for I can see a great light. Is not the sun shining?" Her mother told her it was still quite dark, and asked if she felt herself worse. "No, I am not worse," she replied, "but I think I shall soon see His face." Her mother lay down again. When the morning light filled the room, she saw that God had given blind Martha the desire of her heart. She was truly asleep in Jesus.—Little Friend.

MUCH ATTENTION is being given in these days to the teaching of temperance in the schools. There is reason to hope that by the knowledge imparted of the effects of alcoholic stimulants upon the physical system, and especially upon the brain and nerve apparatus, a powerful impetus will be given to the cause of temperance. The next generation should be a much more sober and healthful body than the present. But how about the tobacco? Few will deny that it, while of course a lesser evil, is yet one of the vices of the day. The narcotic poison can be only less injurious than the practice is disagreeable and disgusting to those who do not use the weed. These, including the ladies, are the great majority, a fact which is too often forgotten. On which side is the influence of the schools? How many teachers in Canada are slaves of the habit?—School Journal.