



The Family Circle.

HEART-BREAK.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Ah! go with your cold, cold comfort.
It matters not what is said,
You cannot undo God's doing,
You cannot restore my dead.

Why tell me of saintly patience,
Of hearts that can all resign?
Will thoughts of another's losses
Lessen one throe of mine?

You mean it for solace, tender
As sorrow could lean upon;
But what does it all avail me?
The terrible truth stays on.

You talk of a holy quiet:
"The darling has gone to God."
The darling I kissed, I fondled,
My darling is under the sod!

Oh! blue, bluest eyes, whose beauty
Made pallid the purest sky,
Was your far-away look prophetic?
Were ye fashioned so just to die?

Who said that the angels in Heaven
Amidst of their praise might pause,
As inward she stole—my baby—
To marvel how fair she was?

Ah! thanks for the soothing vision;
But the grief that I nurse is wild,
And it cannot repress the wailing,
"Had God any need of the child?"

One face missed out of the faces
That halo his throne, one dim,
Young voice from the Alleluia—
How little that were to Him!

One presence my strained arms filling,
One brow that I faint to see,
One whisper to thrill my silence—
How all of the world to me!

I pray that I may not murmur;
I know it is God's own hand;
His patience will bear with a sorrow
Too frenzied to understand.

"Sometime, when the loss wears lighter,
The heart may heal of its break,"
Sometime? You are kind to say it;
But now give it leave to ache.

—N. Y. Independent.

THE ANTI-FASHION SOCIETY.

"Miss Florence Leslie is down stairs, Miss Grace!"

"Well, Katy, send her right up here to me!" and Grace Adams sprung up from her listless attitude, and met her friend with great effusion.

"I am so glad you came, Floy dear," said Grace, "for I am so blue that everything appears of an indigo hue."

Florence returned her friend's doleful speech with a laugh, and, taking a low rocker, threw aside her hat and said:

"Now tell me all about it, Gracie."

"Well, we've had such a scene!"

"Why, what has happened?" queried Florence in alarm.

"Nothing serious; don't worry," said Grace, laughing at the distress visible in her friend's face.

"You see," she continued, "I asked papa this morning for money to buy a dress for Emma Clare's party, and he told me plainly that I had been so much expense to him lately that he really could not afford me a new dress just now; isn't it too bad?"

"Well!" answered Florence.

"Well, the case is just this: I must try to make over this silver and blue!"

"Why, Grace, that lovely dress! You have scarcely worn it!"

"I know it, but it was made last year, and it is all out of date. It is the most suitable dress I have, if it was only in style, and I am afraid there isn't enough for the long over-skirt, and—oh, dear, I've a great mind not to go at all!"

Tears of vexation filled her eyes, and her brow was wrinkled with frowns most unbecoming.

"Don't alter it; wear it just as it is," suggested Florence.

"Florence Leslie, are you crazy?" demanded Grace in astonishment.

"Not at all," was the reply. "If you will wear that without change, I will wear my

green silk and white that was made even before yours, although papa gave me money for a new dress yesterday."

"What do you mean, Floy?"

"Just what I say, my dear; will you agree to it?"

"Why do you propose it?" asked Grace, still unable to believe her ears.

"Because, Grace, I've been having a think, 'all alone by myself,' as little Ettie says, and I have come to the conclusion that we girls spend too much time, thought and care on dress. We spend one-half the time at a dress-maker's, having new dresses made, and the other half in our own rooms, fixing over. Now I've decided that I will not do it any longer, and I want you to help me in instituting a reform in our set in that respect."

"But what will you do?" asked Grace, with great interest.

"Plenty of things," was the reply. "When I need a new dress, I'll get as nice as I want, and have it made in as pretty style as possible; then I'll wear it until it is not fit to wear, no matter how many styles intervene. English ladies of rank and wealth wear their clothes out the way they are first made, but we poor American girls must spend all our time and strength in devising ways and means to follow every new fashion that appears. The consequence is, we do not take enough out-door exercise to keep us in health; we neglect home duties; we neglect all means of culture, and narrow our minds down to the contemplation of silks, ribbon, feathers and flowers. We assemble at evening parties, and, having devoted every thought and energy to our dress, we can think and talk of nothing else but appearance. No wonder gentlemen stoop to converse with us; we have no ennobling topic to talk on. It is a shameful waste!"

As Florence finished Grace said:

"Well done, Floy; you are an enthusiast! But if you do as you propose, what will you do with your regained time and money?"

"I shall study, for one thing; and gather a valuable library, instead of closets full of old dresses. Now you understand my plan, will you join me? Will you wear that dress unchanged to Emma Clare's party?"

"I will!" cried Grace, with unwonted energy. "I'll join you with all my heart? It will rid me of ever so much anxiety! I believe I should not have nervous headache so often if I didn't have to worry so much about what to wear!"

"Just so," replied Florence.

"And you spoke of neglected home duties," continued Grace. "It is true, I have neglected some duties this morning, to worry over this dress. Poor little Nina wanted me to practice a duet with her, and I was too cross to do it."

"Find her and try it now," suggested Florence; "I want to hear it!"

"All right, and then I'll walk until dinner-time, and try to get to feeling better," said Grace, bustling around to get ready.

About half an hour after, little Nina, say, but pleased, was trying her new duet with sister Grace, while darling Florence Leslie smiled encouragingly upon her effort. Grace felt guilty when the child threw her arms around her neck and said: "Thank you, sister, you are so good!"

Time passed rapidly away, and Mr. Adams was quite surprised that he didn't hear Grace complain about her party dress. Finally his wife said to him:

"My dear, Grace has acted very sensibly, I think. If you could afford her a dress, it would greatly please me."

Mr. Adams thought for some time, and then said, "Well, I'll see."

That day at dinner he handed Grace a roll of bills, and said: "Here, Gracie, perhaps I can spare that amount for your dress. I should like to let you have all you wish, but 'tis impossible."

But Grace did not take the money. "Thank you, papa," said she, "but my dress is already provided for Wednesday evening."

Mrs. Adams looked her astonishment.

"Yes, mamma," said Grace merrily, "I am to wear my silver and blue."

"Why isn't it made over, then?"

"Because I am going to wear it as it is."

And then Grace recounted the arguments that Florence had used to her. Mrs. Adams was only brought to allow her daughter to appear in an old dress because Florence Leslie would do so, and Grace was unmolested in her "new notion," as her mother called it.

The evening of the party came, and amid a throng of lovely girls Florence and Grace reigned supreme. Florence was standing with a gentleman friend in the recess leading to the conservatory, and overheard one young lady say to another:

"Just look at Grace Adams. She is wearing the same dress she wore to my party a year ago!"

"Yes, but how pretty she looks!" was the answer.

"She always looks well, but what can possess her to wear that dress to-night?"

"I can tell you," said Florence, stepping

quickly forward, "don't you see that I wear an old dress, too? Grace and I have organized an anti-fashion society, and we want you to join us!"

She then went over her arguments in so earnest a manner that the girls caught her spirit, and promised their influence, while the gentleman, whom Florence in her enthusiasm had forgotten, clapped his hands, and exclaimed: "Well done, Miss Leslie, you are right! We gentlemen admire taste in dress, but not a blind devotion to all the ridiculous fashions that come up. Success to your new society. Let us hear from it occasionally."

The influence of these two right-thinking girls affected a large circle. They organized a reading-club, and provided themselves with all the desirable books in the different departments of literature, while the improvement in the tone of society was everywhere visible.

"Girls," said Bertha Ashton, as she entered the club-room one afternoon, "I believe I shall introduce another innovation! Do you see that dress?" and she raised the bottom of her skirt as she spoke. "Filth and dirt!" she continued, in tones of disgust. "I shall have all my dresses clear the ground hereafter, and resign my office of street-sweeper forever! Who will join me?"

"I, I!" cried the girls.

"If you have any of my experience, you feel delightfully free, since it is found not necessary to follow every freak of fashion!" said Grace Adams.

"That is my experience," added Floy Leslie. "I am healthier, happier, better in temper and morals, and have had time to get much information. What is it, Bertha?"

"I say, anti-fashion forever!"—Mrs. F. A. R., in Standard (Chicago).

BOTH SIDES OF THE PICTURE.

BY MRS. G. W. FRENCH.

"I hope our next minister will be a worker and will not have an extravagant family."

"I wonder how many silk dresses Mrs. Rivers has. I have seen her wear three different ones, and I do think it is a shame for a minister's wife to set such an example."

"It certainly does not look well, especially when they are in debt at the stores, and complain so about the hard times."

"Well, I think Mr. Rivers gets all that belongs to him. His salary has not all been paid to be sure, but I do not think he has earned it, and you know it is said, 'If a man will not work neither shall he eat.'"

"He thinks he is not able to preach, I suppose."

"I guess he did have a pretty bad cold, and he coughs some yet, but that is no more than most of us have had and kept at work too."

"Well I hope the new minister will be a good preacher, for if we don't have a revival before long, the church will die a natural death. If he and his wife will only visit and be familiar with the people it will do a vast amount of good, and if she would attend the prayer-meetings it would be an encouragement. We have been quite unfortunate for several years in getting pastors whose wives were not active Christian workers."

This was a specimen of outside opinion concerning the Brookville pastor and his family. Come inside now.

The pastor and his wife were alone in the room that served as parlor and study; a pleasant room too, but scantily furnished, for the Brookville parish was professedly poor, and the present incumbent had found a home in similar places too long to patronize furniture and carpet dealers very extensively. The minister lay upon a sofa, holding a book, but a close observer would have known he was not reading; there was a troubled, anxious look in his eyes, an expression indicative of physical pain and heart-sorrow lingered around his mouth. His wife sat near, mending a well-worn garment. She too looked careworn and weary. By-and-by the book dropped.

"Mury, there is no use trying it any longer. I am going to leave the ministry and go to work at something else."

"What for?"—in a dreary, absent sort of way.

"Because I am not capable of working in a way that will do good under such discouraging circumstances. You know how earnest and zealous I was when I came here. I knew it was a barren field, but I thought it had not been properly cultivated. I gave them the best sermons I was capable of producing, and during that first protracted effort you know how I worked; worked in every way, worked until my strength was gone, yes, and health too, for I have never been myself since, and what has it all amounted to?"

"Some seed fell in good ground."

"Yes, there are a very few who have proved true, but more have gone back to the world, and I tell you their example and the faults of church-members are edged tools used by Satan to good advantage."

"What do you think is the cause of so many falling away?"

"Most of the converts were young; knew

very little about the Bible, still less about Christian duties and privileges. They needed instruction, encouragement, sympathy. The brethren and sisters labored with me to bring them to Christ, then they seemed to think their work was done, that 'feed my lambs' applied only to me. I tried to do my part, and more, but I could not do all. Criticism too has had a chilling, blighting influence. I know I sometimes say what had better be left unsaid, words that I am heartily sorry for when I take the second thought. But it seems to me that if among much good I have spoken there have been occasional careless, imprudent speeches, they have been sifted out, ridiculed, censured, remembered, while the good was allowed to pass unnoticed, its aim unheeded. Another thing that discourages me is the state of our financial affairs. My salary is small, but if it were paid quarterly, or even semi-yearly, we could live comfortably and keep out of debt. But you know how little we get through the summer: I must wait until the time for sociables and donations, and even then it is not all paid; no year since I entered the ministry have I received the full amount of my salary. The brethren would think it a wicked wrong to keep back part of their hired men's wages, but defrauding the pastor of his just dues does not seem to trouble their conscience at all. If I ask for what is rightfully my own they think I am begging, or caring more for the fleece than for the flock. And then, Mury, I cannot bear to see you grow so prematurely old."

"There, Herbert, that will do. You have told your trouble, now let me tell mine. I know that I am growing old too rapidly. It is hard to keep the house and the children looking respectable on so limited means. So many ministerial brethren and book-agents dropping in to dinner, or tea, or to spend the night, make it harder still. I really need new clothing. I have been ashamed to wear those silk dresses ever since I was married. It is too much like patches on the knees and gloves on." If father had given me money instead, I could have expended it much more judiciously. But the greatest trouble of all is, I am not fit for a minister's wife. I am not strong enough to take an active part in Christian work, and I was not born for a leader either. I can teach the children, read to the old folks, or some such thing, but I cannot make long speeches, or prayers, or preside over society meetings. That it is expected of me I am made to understand too well for my own peace of mind.

"Now all these troubles of yours and mine are discouraging, but let us remember that he in whose service we are engaged was a 'man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' He has trodden the path before us, climbed the steepest hills, ventured down into the misty valleys, over swollen, angry streams, and all along he left waymarks, footprints, that we might not go astray, or become discouraged. If we are tempted, he did not escape; if we suffer, he suffered more; if he triumphed over all, so may we, for has he not said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee?' When these dark hours come, let us tell Jesus all about it, adjust our armor a little more securely and toil on, 'hoping, trusting ever.'—

Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting, as the days go by,
Trusting him whate'er befall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all."

—Advocate and Guardian.

FLYING SQUIRRELS.

During my first year in college, I became the owner of three flying squirrels, and soon found that they could afford as much amusement and do as much mischief as a monkey; and, during the time that I owned them, we were never tired of watching them.

I kept them in the trap in which they were caught, a common wire rat trap, with a door at each end. This I placed upon a bracket on the wall between the two windows of the room, so that they could reach it easily by running up the window curtains, and jumping from them to the cage. In a short time they became so tame that the cage was fastened open, and left so all the time, and every night, about day-break, they would run up the curtain, jump into the cage, and curl up under the cotton with which it was filled, and sleep all day, rolled up with their tails wrapped around their bodies and covering their heads, so that they looked like little round fur balls. If they were disturbed during the day they were very sluggish and inactive, and hunted out another dark corner as soon as they were allowed their liberty; and no one who has seen them only in the daytime can understand what active, wide awake, mischievous animals they are after dark.

Sometimes they chose very odd places to hide and sleep in, when they were driven out of their nest in the day-time. The pockets and sleeves of the clothes which hung in the wardrobe were favorite hiding-places, and the bed was another. They would crawl in between the pillow-case and the pillow, and sleep there all day, and sometimes I have found all three