



The Family Circle.

TEACHER'S FAVORITE,

BY IDA M. GARDNER.

Three little rosy-checked children,
Rebecca, Tom, and Rob,
Sat laughing and chatting together
As fast as their heads could bob.

"Come, children," cried the good mother,
"Put all your fun away,
And bring out the sacred volume
That tells of our dear Lord's day."

"O mother! let me choose a chapter!"
Cried Tom, his rosy face
Aglow with the depth of his feeling
As quickly he found the place.

The chapter he chose was the story
Of talents, great and small,
Entrusted to men for their using
Till the shadows of death shall fall.

Giving that tale of the talents,
The ten, the two, the one,
He read the kind words of the Master,
Pronouncing a sweet, "Well done."

Baby's lips scarcely could utter
The woe for him undone
Who showed, when the napkin was opened,
That unused, pitiful one!

"Darling, how well you have read it!
Tell me, where did you learn
To give it such perfect inflections,
And all its meaning discern?"

"Oh, many a time I have read it,"
Whispered Tom, in accents low;
Then he flushed rosy red in his gladness,—
"Tis our teacher's fav'rite, you know!"

AUNT TRUDY'S TRAMP.

BY MRS. L. E. THROPE.

All the merry week, that so pleasantly
closes the old year and welcomes the new,
was gone, and aunt Trudy Maydew sat
thinking in her great chair. Her eyes
were very red and the room was topsy-
turvy, for a huck load of furry, woolly
bundles had just trundled out of sight, and
she was left again alone in the old home.

She had thought and cried awhile, and
now felt comforted as her mind turned
from the children, who had now homes and
interests of their own, and the companion
who had so lately gone to the better home
above, to him who said, "Lo, I am with
you." Dear words! uttered by lips that
had borne the silence of death and moved
again glorified with eternal power! Aunt
Trudy was just thinking how they formed
the golden staff of hope when a loud rap
on the kitchen door called her attention.
Opening the door she was accosted by a
boy in his early teens, in a coarse voice;

"Can you give a fellow somethin' t'
eat?"

"Well, now! I hardly knew you, Char-
lie Bruce! Where did you come from, and
what's the matter of you?"

"I'm not out a answering questions— all
I want is somethin' to eat."

"Well, come in, child, and sit down
while I set it on the table."

"I'd ruther have it here, if you please,"
said the boy forgetting his assumed tone.

"No; it is too cold to have the door
open, and you can eat here, and warm
yourself. The children have left scraps
enough to feed a small regiment! You can
help save them, can't you, Charlie? I don't
see how you could go so long without break-
fast. See how nice they are."

The boy flung aside his ragged cap and
began to eat in true boy fashion. Aunt
Trudy eyed him a few moments in silence
and then drawing her chair sociably nearer,
said: "Charlie Bruce, are you just trying to
deceive me for fun? You're just the picture
of your mother, child, and I have known
her too long not to know you. Now just
tell me all about yourself; where you've
been since your mother died, and why you
have to get your breakfast this way."

The boy's face colored; he coughed,
pushed back his plate and seemed calculat-
ing how to make his escape, but aunt Trudy
said: "There, eat your breakfast first,
Charlie; I wish I could get you to finish up

my choring for me, I am alone, too, now.
Just see how it snows! You can stay here
while it storms, and help me clear up after
those romping children, can't you? Law
me—it's many a time your poor little mother
has helped me rid up this old house."

The reference to his mother and aunt
Trudy's kind voice and manner brought
tears to the boy's eyes in spite of himself,
and his roughness seemed to disappear like
frost before sunshine. After a while he
said:

"I didn't think you'd know me. I didn't
want any body to know me here, any
more. I'll tell you the truth, aunt Trudy
Maydew, I've been served worse than the
dogs where I've been staying, and paid
good as nothing for it, and it's 'bout played
out! I've made up my mind if no body
cares nothin' for me, I'll care nothin' for
nobody, and I'm going to be a tramp. I've
been out since the day after Christmas; it's
pretty tough, but when a feller's mother's
dead he's got to get toughened!" Here a
sob escaped the boy's control, and he buried
his face in his hands. Aunt Trudy's kind
heart was so moved with pity she could
only lay her hand on his head and say:
"Don't feel that way, Charlie, don't;
there'll be lots of chances for you yet."

"There's the girls," continued Charlie,
"everybody was good to 'em, and got 'em
places, but they said a boy could shift for
himself. Folks thinks as boys have no
feelings! They never get hungry or tired;
and don't care if their bed is dirty and
hard; and of course boys can't freeze and
are only good for to be ordered and
scolded! I tell you, aunt Trudy, I wasn't
raised that way, and I won't stand it!
And when a feller's out on the street folks
act like he's pizen—because he's raggy;
and you just go to ask 'em for 'mployment
'f you want to hear snarls and snap-
words!"

"Well, I say you have had a hard time,
but I know, Charlie, there are lots of good
folks in the world after all, and you just
stay here now and help me till we find
some of them. Here's the corn for the
chickens and you will find fodder for old
Pink in the south shed, and the pig must
have more straw. Bring your bundle in
and put it here in my Johnny's room.
You see my boy had as nice a room as a
girl's; and just as big a feather bed. You
may have this room while you stay here."

For a few minutes Charlie seemed to
hesitate about abandoning thus early the
wild, adventurous life he was planning, but
he looked with longing on the comforts she
so freely offered, and finally said: "Well,
I'll stay awhile, but there's nobody else I'd
do it fur."

He went out with the chicken feed, and
aunt Trudy bustled around about her kit-
chen work, her hands keeping time to her
busy thoughts, for in her heart she felt a
strange burning, as if she had been divinely
commissioned to snatch a young soul
from the very brink of ruin. She felt that
it would be no easy task, and resolved to
spare neither comfort nor money if she
might win him to noble ambitions. Her
work done and Charlie still out, she
hastened into her closet and shut the door,
that she might ask the Lord's help in the
matter. Returning she listened for Char-
lie, but hearing nothing of him, put a shawl
over her head and started through wind
and snow to the barn. The work had all
been done, but no Charlie could be seen.
She called loudly but there was no answer.
She turned to go away when a rustle in the
haymow was heard, and presently Charlie
called out: "I will give up, aunt Trudy,
and do as you say. I will try once more!"

"Well, now do, that's a good boy;—
what has kept you out so long? I was quite
alarmed about you."

"Why, we boys—there's four of us—has
a—' Pest Club,' we call it (you see we're
treated like pests and we concluded to
be pests!), that has a special meetin'
around to-night; and you see 'f I ain't
they'll call me chicken-hearted. I was
just tryin' to decide the best thing to
do. But I'm decided now, and I give it
up. It's mean, orn'ry business any how."
Aunt Trudy knew the best thing to do just
then was to remind him of his mother,
which she did in a way to stimulate his
honor, as well as to refresh his loving mem-
ory. As they walked to the house, she
knew by his quick, firm step he was mak-
ing good resolutions. The day passed very
pleasantly, for aunt Trudy's home lacked

nothing but inmates, and seemed like a
"heavenly mansion" to the poor out-
cast.

"The hardest of all," said he in the
evening, when telling her why he left his
place, "was at Christmas, when the house
was full of children and company, and the
boys all had such bright wool things—
scarfs and wisters and mittens—like my
mother used to make for me; and they
would make fun of my poor clothes
until I'd stay in my bedroom, or out on
the back porch and shake with the cold,
sooner than stay with them by the fire."

"Are the fellows in your club rough,
swearing boys?"

"Yes, ma'am, they swear awfully."

"I hope you don't do that."

"No, ma'am;—only when a fellow's
with them he's got to a little, or he'll get
called names he don't care about."

"Charlie, you could not bear to hear
them speak of your mother in the vile,
wicked way they speak of God! Is not
our Heavenly Father far dearer to us than
even our mothers? I can not understand
how Christian men can laugh at the daring
oaths of wicked men, as I have seen them
do sometimes, so thoughtlessly. But did
you never go to church?"

"To church! I reckon we rough fellers
would make purty shows there among the
laces and ruffles! Reckon a feller would
feel fine in such a grand place in his ragged
shoes and greasy clothes; and how's he
going to get his things washed and mended,
when he's got no mother?"

This reply brought tears to aunt Trudy's
eyes, so she could not speak, and Charlie
went on: "Believe the fellers would
about as soon go into the fire as to go near
them fine churches!"

"How are we to carry the gospel to that
class of mankind?" aunt Trudy asked her-
self earnestly.

"I'll tell you about one thing that used
to make some of the fellers knock under;
I used to stand it pretty well till I got off
alone, and then I'd bawl like a baby! It
was done at a deep cut a lot of us fellers
was a diggin' out last summer. A little
girl would come out there sometimes and
sit not far from us and sing hymns—just
the sweetest ones—and sometimes she
would give the men books and tracts, and
she had such a pretty face and sweet voice
they couldn't swear at her, though some
couldn't read her books. Lots of 'em
said they learned more Bible from her
than they ever did from preachers."

Long after aunt Trudy retired she stud-
ied and planned how to tame her little
Arab, now that she had caught him. She
resolved to give him a Christmas yet, and
invite a few of the nicest boys of her ac-
quaintance to spend it with him. There
wasn't time now to knit scarfs and mittens,
but there were just as pretty ones at the
stores, so early the next morning she took
her basket and went to market, leaving
Charlie in charge of the house and chores.
She was afraid he might leave in her
absence, but could not arrange otherwise.
The suit and many other things were pur-
chased on condition that they could be re-
turned if he did not stay. She also se-
cured a good place for him in the store of
a friend, where she was assured he would
receive good treatment as well as good
wages. Greatly to her relief she saw him
hurry out to help her with her bundles
as the hackman let her out at the gate.
Poor Charlie was just child enough to cry
over his good fortune, when she told him
about the situation and that he could board
with her free of charge if he would do the
chores in bad weather. He tried to ex-
press his thankfulness for the gifts and the
"Christmas" promised by declaring he
would take care of her as long as she
lived.

After putting away her purchases aunt
Trudy sat down to run over the news in
the morning paper, reading items aloud;
among others an account of the arrest of
three burglars, who had broken into a
store, when she was startled by an excla-
mation from Charlie, and noticed his face
was pale as ashes: "That's what you've
saved me from, aunt Trudy! That was
our special meetin'!"—*Morning Star.*

No Boy is prepared to leave school
whose mind is swayed by the hallucination
that the only thing worth thinking of in
this life is business success.—*N. Y. Tri-
bune.*

OLD MATTIE'S CONFESSION.

"I'm too old now to make promises.
What good would they be? Long ago in
old England, the minister wanted me to
join his class and stand up for Christ.
Then I was too young, I thought, and since
that no convenient time has ever come,"
said old Mattie.

"It has come now," answered the minis-
ter. "Now is the accepted time, now is
the day of salvation. I will not take any
excuses. You repent and believe. What
hinders you from saying so in church?"

"I'm so old. God will take me as I am."
"Not without a public confession of faith
when the opportunity is offered to you.
Jesus said very plainly, 'Whosoever will
deny me before men, him will I deny be-
fore God. Whosoever will confess me be-
fore men, him will I confess before the
angels of God.' Just think of it! You
believe, you are sorry for your sins, you
are in love and charity with your neighbors,
but you deny your Saviour who died for
you."

"No, oh, no. Don't say that."
"Yes, I must say it. You deny Him
when you will not come out boldly and con-
fess Him."

"I never thought of that," and old Mat-
tie covered her face and wept.

"Jesus wants your confession. He
wants it to-morrow night when his people
will meet to hear many confess their faith
in Jesus. You will come; I know you
will."

"Yes, yes; I must," sobbed Mattie.
"You put it before me so plain. But I
feel ashamed to go now. I am nearly
seventy years old."

"Too old to put it off, but young enough
to do a good work for Jesus yet."

"What can I do?"

"You can bear witness, if nothing more,
but God may have work in store for you
yet. Now let us pray for grace, and then
I'll leave you, as I have many more to visit
and urge to come forward now."

So the minister and old Mattie knelt to-
gether for a few moments. Then he left
her bewildered, but happy in her late de-
cision. Soon she remembered she had
many preparations to make, and the time
was short.

The minister called for Mattie the next
evening, and led her to a seat in front,
from which it would be easy for her to
come forward to make her confession.
The church was crowded. During the
singing of that very solemn hymn—

"Just as I am, without one plea,"
the new disciples arose, and went forward
to enroll themselves in the army of witness-
bearers, the great company of those who
had made their calling and election sure by
confessing Jesus before men. Old Mattie
was between a young girl of sixteen and a
lad of fifteen. Her eyes were filled with
tears and her heart with peace as she turned
her steps homeward. At last she had
taken her stand for Jesus, and she knew
He would confess her before the throne of
God.—*Christian at Work.*

"HIS CARE."

[The following beautiful poem has been
widely published and erroneously credited.
The Rev. John Parker, of the New York
East Conference, wrote it several years ago
to comfort a beloved friend in trouble.]

God holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if He trusted it to me,
I might be sad.

What if to-morrow's cares were here
Without its rest!
I had rather He unlock the day,
And as the hours swing open say,
"My will is best."

The very dimness of my sight
Makes me secure,
For groping in my misty way,
I feel his hand—I hear him say,
"My help is sure."

I cannot read his future plan,
But this I know,
I have the smiling of his face,
And all the refuge of his grace,
While here below.

Enough; this covers all my want,
And so I rest;
For what I cannot he can see,
And in his care I sure shall be,
Forever blest.