

## The Family Circle.

### AT HAME AMANG HER AIN FOLK.

Written on reading the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new parish church of Crathie by the Queen.

At hame amang her ain folk  
'Mong Crathie's mountains high,  
Wi' faithfu', leal, an' fa' folk  
Wha' joy when she is nigh,  
Oh, never seemed our Sovereign  
So royal as she's now,  
And never seemed the diadem  
So graceful on her brow.

At hame amang her ain folk,  
Nae armed horsemen neal,  
Nae noisy clang of trumpets,  
Nor glare of glittering spear,  
But plain and good men gather  
'Round her that owns the throne,  
To name her friend and neighbor,  
And claim her as their own.

At hame amang her ain folk,  
Where oft in bygone days,  
She joined the prayers holy,  
The simple Psalms of praise;  
Gratefully glad to mingle  
With that small, faithful band,  
For dear to her the "Auld Kirk"  
O' our lo'd Cov'nant land.

At hame amang her ain folk,  
An' hamely can she be  
Wha's name is loved and cherished  
O'er every land and sea,  
And will through coming ages,  
Unsullied and serene,  
Be trac'd on history's pages  
As monarch's ne'er hath been.

At hame amang her ain folk,  
Then may a' g'ud attend,  
May faithfu', leal and kind folk  
Surround her till the end;  
Still shielded and still sheltered  
'Neath shadow of His wings,  
Who is the God of nations,  
Who is the King of kings.

### AN UNSUNG HERO.

The long weary years of waiting were over. Happiness was at last within the reach of Stephen Ramsay—that happiness for which he had toiled and waited so long. And as he looked over the contents of his savings bank book that night the prospects of the bright future in store for him seemed to take at least five years from his age. Even that prospect could not eliminate the grey streaks which appeared here and there among his locks, or fill out the hollows in his cheeks, but it had smoothed away some of the wrinkles on his brow, and given to his eyes a brightness which they had not known for years.

It was a comparatively small sum he had saved after all—but a hundred pounds in all; yet how much it represented to him. Every shilling of that little store meant some luxury foregone, some selfish desire nipped in the bud, some much-needed holiday or rest done without. It represented the savings of fifteen years. It meant not only having done without the luxuries, but at times without the absolute necessities of life as well. But that time was past, and the future loomed ahead of him bright with promise, for in that future Mary Laing, his promised wife, was to play a very important part. Not another day should she trudge through the dreary streets to her long day's toil in the close, heated atmosphere of an underground workroom—a life eminently unsuited to her frail, delicate constitution. For it was only a few months ago that she had been positively warned by the doctor whom she had consulted, more to satisfy her lover's fears than to please herself, that life for her under these circumstances must cease or he could not answer for the consequences. Idle words these—the kind hearted man had thought so even when he uttered them. With poor Mary, like many more, it was only a case of work or starve, and he had merely slipped back into her hand the fee she had held out to him, saying she must come again and let him know how the tonic he had ordered suited her. But the girl had struggled bravely on, for it was only for a few months now, and the light of hope enabled her to defy the chill winds and blighting fogs of the early spring.

And now the time had come when Stephen could take her into his own keeping for ever. He would see her to-morrow, he thought, and let her know that their weary waiting was over.

There was but one thing which intruded itself to check this rapturous flow of thought. It was his brother Julian. It was ten years now since his stepmother had died, leaving him as a last charge the care of her only son, then a lad of nineteen years. And he had cheerfully undertaken the task, though his heart misgave him at times as he saw in the gay, handsome youth unmistakable signs of the tendencies which had brought his father to a drunkard's and a gambler's grave. Moreover, he had not as Stephen had had, before him as a constant warning the sight of that broken-down, bleary-eyed prematurely old figure as Stephen remembered it last. For a time it seemed as if his worst fears for Julian would be realised, but that time was past now, and the young man was doing well and fast gaining for himself a position in a stock-broker's office in the town. So that latterly Stephen's mind had been much more at ease on the subject of his brother's doings.

This very night, however, as he sat wrapped in happy contemplation of his future prospects, Julian came to him, ghastly, haggard, with despair in his face, and thoughts of madness and suicide in his brain. His story was, alas! only too common a one. The gambling mania had got hold of him. He had been exceptionally lucky, had won time after time until it had seemed to him as if he could not lose. From one heavy stake to another he had gone on, until one day he had taken from his employer's desk what he fondly believed was but a loan—had literally robbed him of a hundred pounds. He had lost heavily, and had no means of refunding the money, so that unless Stephen could help nothing stared him in the face but ruin and disgrace.

It was some time before Stephen fully realised what it was that was required of him. The sum of a hundred pounds—just, in short, the sum that had taken him fifteen years of unremitting care and toil to gather together. It was to take the savings of a lifetime to redeem that one act of madness and folly that his brother had been guilty of. It meant to him the giving up of all hope of future earthly happiness, and involved the happiness of another one dearer than himself as well. It was this thought that was uppermost in his mind. That he should suffer could have been borne, perhaps; but poor, delicate Mary, whose pinched, pallid face as he had last seen it rose up before him now—that she should suffer, too! Her very life, he knew well, depended upon her being removed from that toil which was undermining her health to an extent that meant death if persisted in. And he could have saved her had this sacrifice not been required of him. Surely such a sacrifice could not be required of any human being! On the other hand, there was disgrace, imprisonment, and ruin to the man whom he had promised to guard and care for, and everlasting remorse to himself. The thought that he could have saved him and did not would never leave him. Happiness could never be his at such a price. The sacrifice must be made; through the chaos of his thoughts that alone stood out clear and distinct. He scarcely heard the thanks of his brother or the blessings that he heaped upon his head. Neither did he say anything to his repeated assertions of how he would never indulge in gambling again, or associate with those who did so. Stephen only smiled sadly. These promises had been made before, and as repeatedly broken. He said nothing; one thought alone possessed his mind—how to break the news to Mary. He would write to her that night, he thought; he dared not risk a personal interview yet.

That letter was little short of a death-blow to the girl who received it next day. The hope that had kept her working on in spite of weakness and failing health was

gone. She could fight no longer against the dread disease that was fast claiming her for its own. She was sinking. Even Stephen, try as he might to account for her weakness in the trying weather they were having, knew well in his heart that it was the shadow of approaching death that lay on Mary's face. And as he went about from day to day with that broken, aged look which he had worn ever since the night of that costly sacrifice he had made, his brother would eye him with a strange, shrinking look, though he said nothing. He knew not what to say. He who by his mad folly had blighted the lives of two of God's creatures could best show his sympathy by silence. What was done could not be undone now.

But one dark, wet night in the early autumn, when a wild, northerly wind was howling through the streets, Stephen had come in with a look on his face that haunted his brother ever afterwards. It was the look of a man who has lost hold of all hopes of earthly happiness for ever. It was the look you will sometimes see in the face of a hunted animal—dogged, desperate. Without looking up, he had gone with that look of fixed anguish on his face and shut himself up with his breaking heart alone. And then Julian knew that Mary was gone. But the thought of the havoc and desolation he had brought on these two lives wrought like madness in his brain, and he fled from the house, desperate, heedless, longing only for oblivion—for any escape from the pangs of remorse which consumed him. But the fresh wind and the exercise cooled his fevered brain, and he paused but for a moment on the embankment whither his steps had led him—paused long enough, however, for saner thoughts and truer conceptions of life to find their way into his heart. Of what use were it now to throw away his life, steeped in selfishness as it had been? It would only add one more burden to the already overweighed heart of his brother. And he saw his conduct that night in a light he had never seen it in before. A great change was taking place in his heart; new thoughts of life, of its meaning, its responsibilities, came to him, and he went home filled with a resolve to make his life henceforth something that would bring credit and not disgrace on those around him.

In a corner of a graveyard a few days later two young men met each other unexpectedly. Both had come on the same errand unknown to each other. And Julian, half ashamed of being caught there by his brother, whom he had scarcely dared to look in the face for some time past, would have shrunk away without placing on Mary's grave the wreath of *immortelles* he had brought for it had not Stephen bade him stay. And Stephen, as he looked on his brother's face with that new and softened expression upon it, realised that the supreme sacrifice of his life had not been made altogether in vain.—*I. H. R., in Christian Leader.*

### MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

There is a racy character sketch of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in the London *Echo* in the course of which the writer says:—To use a hackneyed phrase, Mr. Chamberlain is the architect of his own political fortune. Neither birth nor fine connections helped him to the lowest rung of the ladder of fame. When he placed his foot upon the lowest rung it was as a Tory. When men began to talk of him he had passed from Toryism to Republicanism. He was one of the *bourgeoisie*—the son of a *bourgeois* father, the working head of a *bourgeois* manufactory. He came to London out of the obscurity of a country mayoralty—an alderman in a Midland corporation. He spoke English with an uncultivated accent. His associates with one exception, Sir Charles Dilke, were obscure persons. Yet he entertained the Prince of Wales while the pages of the magazine that contained his friendly essay upon the

virtues of a mob governed State were yet damp, and the Prince was delighted with his host's elegance, his courtliness, his wit, and his shrewd good taste. When he entered Parliament the squires looked with a shudder for a truculent fighter, and found a sprucely-dressed gentleman, as full of repose as the oldest Parliamentary hand there, and wearing that trinklet of effeminacy an eye glass. Yet in that eyeglass Mr. Chamberlain found the cicerone to the interest and attention of the House of Commons. Contrast his elert and bustling energy with the lethargy of Ministers and their rivals. Note the habitual depression of the Leader of the House, the languorous pallor and the bent head of the Leader of the Opposition, as if warped in "philosophic doubt." Arrest for a moment the Minister for Education, or the Secretary for Ireland, or the Minister for War, or the Secretary for Scotland. They might have been rudely awakened and evicted from an opium den. How sadly melancholy is Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; how moribund the bearing of Mr. Goschen; what a worn-out fabric of a man we have in ex-Secretary Matthews. These statesmen, past and present, occupied and unoccupied; fight shy of the society of their followers. They seem to exist in a terror lest someone speak to them, ask them for something. Mr. Morley will turn upon you with the startled flush of a man who expects the hand of a policeman about to execute a warrant or the grip of a seedy friend in want of a £5 note. Mr. Chamberlain, on the other hand, will go down into that place of torments—the Lobby—his hat cast aside, and "do business" with the verve of a pushing stockbroker, button-holing his Higgins, and never allowing that eminent Q.C. to escape until he has plighted his troth at the altar of Unionism.

### THE DOMINIE'S PRAYER.

Miss Molly Elliot Seawell relates the following anecdote in the course of a sketch of John Paul Jones, in the *Century* for April:

The landing on St. Mary's Isle thoroughly alarmed the coasts, and the name and character of the vessel and her commander were well known. The *Ranger* being seen beating up the Solway toward the "lang town o' Kirkcaldy," the frightened people assembled on the shore, and presently down came their "meenister," the Rev. Mr. Shirra, lugging a huge arm-chair, which he flung down on the shore, and then plumped himself violently into it. He was short of breath, and very angry with the Deity for permitting such doings as Paul Jones; and puffing and blowing, he made the following prayer, which tradition has preserved:

Now, Lord, dinna ye think it is a shame for ye to send this vile pirate to rob our folk o' Kirkcaldy? For ye ken they are pair enough already, and hae naething to spare. They are all fairly guid, and it wad be a pity to serve them in sic a way. The way the wind blows, he'll be here in a jiffy, and wha kens what he may do? He is nae too guid for anything. Muckle's the mischief he has done already. Ony pocket gear ther hae gathered thegither, he will gang wi' the whole o't, and maybe burn their houses, tak' their cla'es, and strip them to their sarks! And wae's me! Wha kens but the bluidy villain may tak' their lives. The pair women are maist frightened out o' their wits, and the bairns skreeking after them. I canna tho'll it! I canna tho'll it! I hae been long a faithfu' servant to ye, Lord; but gin ye dinna turn the wind about, and blow the scoundrel out o' our gate, I'll nae stir a foot, but just sit here until the tide comes in and drowns me. *Sae tak' your will o't, Lord!*

The prayer appears to have been effective, for at that very moment the wind changed, and blew "the scoundrel out o' our gate."