



The Family Circle.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

(A Little Rhymed Story.)

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

The wind was blowing over the moors,
And the sun shone bright upon heather and
whin,

On the grave-stones hoary and gray with age
Which stand about Hazworth vicarage,
And it streamed through a window in.

There, by herself, in a lonely room—
A lonely room which once held three—
Sat a woman at work with a busy pen,
'Twas the woman all England praised just then.
But what for its praise cared she?

Fame cannot dazzle or flattery charm
One who goes lonely day by day
On the lonely moors, where the plovers cry,
And the sobbing wind as it hurries by
Has no comforting word to say.

So, famous and lonely and sad she sat,
And steadily wrote the morning through;
Then, at stroke of twelve, laid her task aside
And out to the kitchen swiftly hied,
Now what was she going to do?

Why, Tabby, the servant, was "past her work,"
And her eyes had failed as her strength ran
low,

And the toils, once easy, had one by one
Become too hard, or were left half-done
By the aged hands and slow.

So, every day, without saying a word,
Her famous mistress laid down the pen,
Re-kenched the bread, or silently stole
The potatoes away in their wooden bowl,
And pared them all over again.

She did not say, as she might have done,
"The less to the larger must give way."
These things are little, while I am great;
And the world will not always stand and wait
For the words that I have to say."

No; the clever fingers that wrought so well,
And the eyes that would pierce to the heart's
intent,
She lent to the humble task and small;
Nor counted the time as lost at all
So Tabby were but content!

Ah, genius burns like a blazing star,
And Fame has a honeyed urn to fill;
But the good deed done for love, not fame,
Like the water-cup in the Master's name,
Is something more precious still.
—St. Nicholas.

AUNTY PARSONS' STORY.

I told Hezekiah—that's my man. People mostly call him Deacon Parsons, but he never gets any deaconing from me. We were married—"Hezekiah and Amariah"—that's going on forty years ago, and he's jest Hezekiah to me, and nothin' more.

Well, as I was saying, says I; "Hezekiah, we aren't right. I am sure of it." And he said; "Of course not. We are poor sinners, Amy; all poor sinners." And I said; "Hezekiah, this 'poor sinner' talk has gone on long enough. I suppose we are poor sinners, but I don't see any use of being mean sinners; and there's one thing I think is real mean."

It was just after breakfast; and, as he felt poorly, he hedn't gone to the shop yet; and so I had this little talk with him to sort o' chirk him up. He knew what I was comin' to, for we hed had the subject up before, It was our little church. He always said; "The poor people, and what should we ever do?" And I always said; "We never shall do nothin' unless we try." And so when I brought the matter up in this way, he just began bitin' his toothpick, and said: "What's up now? Who's mean? Amariah, we oughtn't to speak evil one of another." Hezekiah always says "poor sinners" and doesn't seem to mind it, but when I occasionally say "mean sinners" he somehow gets on easy. But I was started, and I meant to free my mind.

So I said, says I: "I was goin' to confess our sins. Dan'l confessed for all his people, and I was confessin' for all our little church."

"Truth is," says I, "ours is allus called one of the 'feeble churches,' and I am tried' about it. I've raised seven children,

and at fourteen months old every boy and girl of 'em could run alone. And our church is fourteen years old, says I, "and it can't take a step yet without somebody to hold on by. The Board helps us and General Jones, good man, he helps us—helps too much, I think—and so we live along, but we don't seem to get strong. Our people draw their rations every year as the Indians do up at the agency; and it doesn't seem sometimes as if they ever thought of doing anything else.

"They take it so easy," I said. "That's what worries me. I don't suppose we could pay all expenses, but we might act as if we wanted to, and as if we meant to do all we can.

"I read," says I, "last week about the debt of the Board, and this week, as I understand," says I, "our application is going in for another year, and no particular effort to do any better, and it frets me. I can't sleep nights, and I can't take comfort Sundays. I've got to feelin' as if we were a kind of perpetual paupers. And that was what I meant when I said: 'It is real mean!' I suppose I said it a little sharp," says I, "but I'd rather be sharp than flat any day, and if we don't begin to stir ourselves we shall be flat enough before long, and shall deserve to be. It grows on me. It has jest been 'Board, Board, Board,' for fourteen years, and I'm tired of it. I never did like boardin'," says I; "and, even if we were poor, I believe we might do something toward settin' up house-keepin' for ourselves.

"Well, there's not many of us; about a hundred, I believe, and some of these is women folks, and some is jest girls' and boys. And we all have to work hard and live close; but," says I, "let us show a disposition if nothin' more. Hezekiah, if there's any spirit left in us, let us show some sort of a disposition.

And Hezekiah held his toothpick in his teeth, and looked down at his boots and rubbed his chin, as he always does when he's goin' to say somethin'. "I think there's some of us that shows a disposition."

Of course I understood that hit, but I kep' still. I kep' right on with my argument, and I said, "Yes, and a pretty bad disposition it is. It's a disposition to let ourselves be helped when we ought to be helping ourselves. It's a dispositic to lie still and let somebody carry us. And we are growin' up cripples only we don't know."

"Kiah," says I, "Do you hear me?" Sometimes when I want to talk a little he jest shets his eyes, and begins to rock himself back and forth in the old armchair, he was doin' that now. So I said: "Kiah, do you hear?" And he said; "Some!" and then I went on. "I've got a proposition," says I. And he sort o' looked up, and said: "Hev you? Well, between a disposition and a proposition I guess the proposition might be better."

He's awful sarcostic, sometimes. But I wasn't goin' to get riled, nor thrown off the track; so I jest said: "Yes; do you and I git two shillin's worth a piece a week out o' that blessed little church of oun, do you think?" says I. "Cos, if we do, I want to give two shillin's a week to keep it goin', and I thought maybe you could do as much." So he said he guessed we could stand that, and I said: "That's my proposition; and I mean to see if we can't find somebody else that'll do the same. It'll show disposition, anyway."

"Well, I suppose you'll hev your own way," says he; "you most always do." And I said: "Isn't it most allers a good way?" Then I brought out my subscription paper. I had it all ready. I didn't jest know how to shape it, but I knew it was something about "the sums set opposite our names," and so I drewed it up, and took my chances. "You must head it," says I, "Because you're the oldest deacon, and I must go on next, because I am the deacon's wife, and then I'll see some of the rest of the folks."

So Kiah sot down, and put on his specs, and took his pen, but did not write. "What's the matter?" says I. And he said: "I'm sort o' 'shamed to subscribe two shillin's. I never signed so little as that for anything. I used to give that to the circus when I was nothin' but a boy, and I ought to do more than that to support the gospel. Two shillin' a week! Why, it's only a shillin' a sermon, and all the prayer-meetin's throwed in. I can't go less than fifty cents, I am sure." So

down he went for fifty cents, and then I signed for a quarter, and then my sunbonnet went onto my head pretty lively; and says I; "Hezekiah, there's some cold potatoes in the pantry, and you know where to find the salt; so, if I am not back by dinner-time, don't be bashful, help yourself." And I started.

I called on the Smith family first. I felt sure of them. And they were just happy. Mr. Smith signed, and so did Mrs. Smith; and long John, he came in while we were talkin', and put his name down; and then old grandma Smith, she didn't want to be left out; so there was four of 'em. Next, I called on the Joslyns, and, next on the Chapins, and then on Widdio Chadwick, and so I kept on.

I met a little trouble once or twice, but not much. There was Fussy Furber, and bein' trustee he thought I was out of my spear, he said; and he wanted it understood that such work belonged to the trustees. "To be sure," says I, "I'm glad I've found it out. I wish the trustees had discovered that a leetle sooner." Then there was sister Puffy, that's got the asthma. She thought we ought to be lookin' after "the sperritocalties." She said we must go down before the Lord. She didn't think churches could be run on money. But I told her I guessed we should be jest as spiritual to look into our pocketbooks a little, and I said it was a shame to be 'tarnally beggin' so of the Board.

She looked dredful solemn when I said that, and I almost felt as if I'd been committin' profane language. But I hope the Lord will forgive me if I took anything in vain. I did not take my call in vain, I tell you. Mrs. Puffy is good, only she allus wants to talk so pious; and she put down her two shillin's, and then hove a sigh. Then I found the boys at the cooper shop and got seven names there at one lick; and when the list began to grow people seemed ashamed to say no, and I kept gainin' till I had jest an even hundred, and then I went home.

Well, it was pretty well towards candle-light when I got back, and I was that tired. I didn't know much of anything. I've washed, and I've scrubbed, and I've baked and I've cleaned house, and I've biled soap, and I've moved; and I 'low that a' most any one of that sort of thing is a little exhaustin'. But put your bakin' and movin' and bilin' soap all together, and it won't work out as much genuine tired soul and body as one day with a subscription paper to support the gospel. So when I sort o' dropped into the chair, and Hezekiah said, "Well?" I was past speakin' and I put my check apron up to my face as I hadn't done since I was a young, foolish girl, and cried. I don't know what I felt so bad about, I don't know as I did feel bad, but I felt cry, and I cried. And Kiah, seein' how it was, felt kind o' sorry for me, and set some tea a steepin', and when I had had my drink with weepin', I felt better.

I handed him the subscription paper, and he looked it over as if he didn't expect anything; but soon he began saying, "I never! I never!" And I said, "Of course you didn't; you never tried. How much is it?" "Why, don't you know?" says he. "No," I said, "I ain't quick in figures, and I hadn't time to foot it up. I hope it will make us out this year three hundred dollars or so."

"Amy," says he, "you're a prodigy—a prodical, I may say—and you don't know it. A hundred names at two shillin' each gives us \$25 a Sunday. Some of 'em may fail, but most of 'em is good; and then there is ten, eleven, thirteen, that sign fifty cents. That'll make up what fails. That paper of yourn'll give us thirteen hundred dollars a year!" I jumped up like I was shot. "Yes," he says, "we shan't need anything this year from the Board. This church, for this year at any rate, is self-supporting."

We both sot down and kep' still a minute when I said kind o' softly; "Hezekiah," says I, "isn't it about time for prayers?" I was just chokin' but, as he took down the Bible he said; "I guess we'd better sing somethin'." I nodded like, and he just struck in. We often sing at prayers in the morning; but now it seemed like the Scriptur that says; "He giveth songs in the night." Kiah generally likes the solemn tunes, too; and we sing "Show pity, Lord," a great deal; and this mornin' we had sung "Hark! from

the tombs a doleful sound," 'cause 'Kiah was not feelin' very well, and we wanted to chirk up a little.

So I just waited to see what meter he'd strike to-night; and would you believe it? I didn't know that he knew any sech tune, but off he started on "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." I tried to catch on, but he went off, lickerty-switch, like a steam engine, and I couldn't keep up. I was partly laughin' to see 'Kiah go it, and partly crying again, my heart was so full; so I doubled up some of the notes and jumped over the others, and so we safely reached the end.

But, I tell you, Hezekiah prayed. He allers prays well, but this was a bran' new prayer, exactly suited to the occasion. And when Sunday come, and the minister got up and told what had been done, and said; "It is all the work of one good woman and done in one day," I just got scared and wanted to run. And when some of the folks shook hands with me, after meetin' and said, with tears in their eyes, how I'd saved the church, and all that, I came awful nigh gettin' proud. But, as Hezekiah says, "we're all poor sinners," and so I choked it back. But I am glad I did it; and I don't believe our church will ever go boardin' any more.—*Presbyterian Journal.*

CARRYING A PISTOL.

There are those who think it looks brave to carry a pistol. Now, I will undertake to say that any man who lives in a well-defended city and is afraid to go out and come in without firearms, has not the courage of a sheep. If called to go out on the borders of civilization, or as an officer of the law to explore the haunts of a great city, deadly weapons may be an appropriate accompaniment; but he who in peaceful times and in well-governed neighborhoods carries dirk or pistol has the spirit of murder, whether or not he commit the crime. In all the history of the world slander was never baffled, nor was honor vindicated by taking the life of another. Do not think that by violence you can adjust anything. Keep your heart right and your life right, and you are independent of the world's bombardment. Snap your sword-cane and throw your derringer into the river. What a chicken-liver instead of a heart you must have that you must be armed to walk the streets. If you are afraid to go down the road unarmed, better get your grandmother to go along and defend you with her knitting-needles. There is a certain kind of man who ought never to have a pistol in his pocket or under his pillow, or anywhere in the house, from garret to cellar, and that is the young man; or old, who has a violent temper. To say nothing of a revolver, it is dangerous for you to have so much as a percussion-cap or a ramrod. You carry a pistol when suddenly, in a moment of insane fury, you may do something you may be sorry for through time and through eternity. With such a temper as you have, to carry a weapon of death is as unwise as to put gunpowder and lucifer matches in the same box. The orderly citizen in our orderly neighborhoods in the next hundred years, will need no firearms. Ten lives are lost every year through the accidental discharge of firearms where there is one life saved by being armed. This complete puppyism that cannot live without being armed with deadly weapons ought to be spanked and put to bed before sundown.—*Palmage.*

THE SAINTLY SELF.

Self dies hard. Perhaps the subtlest self of all is the saintly self—the self that asserts itself, and fosters a subtle, spiritual pride in the emphatic profession of humility. I meet with dear Christian souls who seem calmly to take it for granted that they are living on a higher plane than their less enlightened fellow-Christians; "We are living the higher Christian life, and we have such wonderful times up here on the mountain-top; we are so sorry for your poor dear half-enlightened souls, who are still on the wilderness side of Jordan, and have not yet entered the promised land, with which we are now quite familiar." There is a deal of dying to be done still by those who cherish these lofty thoughts of their own attainments. The holiest man will ever be the man who thinks least of his own holiness.—*Rev. W. H. Aiken.*