

The Family.

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO.

"How would Willie like to go To the land of Thus-and-So? Everything is proper there: All the children comb their hair Smoother than the fur of cats, Or the nap of high silk hats; Every face is clean and white As a lily washed in light; Never vaguest soil or speck Found on forehead, throat, or neck; Every little crippled ear, In and out, as pure and clear As the cherry blossom's blow, In the land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall Down the stairs, or cry at all; Doing nothing to repent, Watchful and obedient; Never hungry, nor in haste, Tidy shoestrings always laced; Never button rudely torn From its fellows all unworn, Nickerbockers always new— Ribbon tie, and collar, too; Little watches, worn like men, Only always half-past ten— Just precisely right, you know, For the land of Thus-and-So.

"And the little babies there Give no one the slightest care— Nurse has not a thing to do But be happy and say 'Boo!' While mamma just nods and knows Nothing but to doze and doze; Never litter round the grate; Never lunch or dinner late; Never any household din, Peals without or rings within— Baby coos nor laughing calls, On the stairs or through the hall— Just great lilies to and fro Face the land of Thus-and-So!

"Oh, the land of Thus-and-So! Isn't it delightful, though?" "Yes," lisped Willie, answering me Somewhat slow and doubtfully— "Must be awful nice—but I Rother wait till by-and-by." "Fore I go there—maybe when I be dead I'll go there then— But—" the troubled little face Closer pressed in my embrace— "Le's don't never ever go To the land of Thus-and-So!"

—James Whitcomb Riley, in Indianapolis Journal.

QUIET LIVES.

It was said in our hearing not long ago, of an excellent and useful Christian woman who had just passed away, that "she lived such a quiet life—she did so much good in a quiet way." She was, indeed, one of those gentle, patient, earnest workers who come and go in their appointed ways like these beings of light who wait upon God's children, but of whom we cannot even hear the rustle of a wing. They speak to our hearts, yet not in words; they touch our lives and guide us by the hand, and yet we hear, we see them not. Yet God knows all the quiet lives that are lived for Him. He marks them with His eye as He marks the sparrow's fall. No kindly deed, nor act of love and charity, is unnoticed by Him who seeth all things, "even the secret and hidden things among the children of men."

For the highest example of a quiet life we have only to look to Him who went up and down among the hills and plains of Judea eighteen centuries ago healing the thronging multitudes, and blessing even those who touched but the hem of His garment. From the manger at Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary, it is all the record of a meek and quiet life. We can never think of our Saviour in any other way than as one whose every word and deed was gentleness itself. We cannot help but think of Him, sometimes as moving in and out among the multitudes, and up and down the streets and byways of the land; so gently and noiselessly that the sound of His footsteps was scarcely heard upon the ground. We know that on more than one occasion He passed out of the midst of a multitude when they knew it not. We know that He walked upon the waves of Galilee, while rash and faithless Peter sank beneath. We know also that when the Scribes and Pharisees tried to draw Him into noisy disputation a few quiet words from Him put their sophistry to flight; and when He was reviled, He reviled not again. And in all His wonderful works Christ never sought publicity. Again and again He charged His disciples and those whom He had healed that they "should tell no man." He taught both by precept and example that "when thou doest alms let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." Jesus was indeed a King, but no heralds went before Him to trumpet His appearance; He was a Conqueror, but no triumphal arches were erected in His honor. He was a "very God," but He never spoke in Sinai thunders, nor transfixed the hearts of men with the bolts of wrath.

The greatest forces in nature are the quiet ones. That mysterious power called gravitation, which links the universe together as with a mighty chain, acts as noiselessly as thought itself. The sunlight falls upon the earth as softly as a dream, and yet it draws the sea into its embrace, and makes the earth throb with life. The atmosphere silently eats its way into the hearts of rocks, and crumbles down temples and pyramids. The most stupendous works of the Almighty swing in their orbits without a jar or tremor. And so with the most wonderful works of human hands. The mighty Corlies engine moves with more apparent ease than the noisy little clock upon the mantel. It is everywhere the quiet things that serve the highest purposes.

We should not, then, complain because our lives must needs move in quiet channels. It is not the roaring, dashing, impetuous streams, but the deep and silent rivers that bear the ships to the sea. It has been said that the quiet power of a serene and holy life is the greatest power in the world, next to the might of God. Who has not known, and been blessed by knowing, some of those gentle souls whose very presence seems a balm to wounded hearts, whose voices fall upon the ear like a benediction from Heaven, and whose hands, laid upon an aching brow, seem to woo to themselves the pain. It was of one of these gentle, loving natures that Whittier thus writes:

"The blessing of her quiet life Fell on us like the dew; And good thoughts, where her footsteps passed, Like fairy blossoms grew.

"Sweet promptings unto kindly deeds Were in her very look; We read her face as one who reads A true and holy book.

"And half we deemed she needed not The changing of her sphere; To go to Heaven, a shining one, Who walked an angel here."

—The Christian at Work.

PATSY'S CHANCE.

PATSY GOLDEN, at your service. Eleven years old, with a fair, freckled face; blue eyes, a laughing mouth, and the reddest hair you ever saw. A frank, merry boy, always at everybody's beck and call; I do not think, go where you may, you will find anywhere a fellow of Patsy's age who can do more errands, take more steps, and carry more messages in a day than little Patsy. And as for girls' work, why, Patsy always helps his mother with her ironing. His mother is a laundress, and takes in fine washing, besides working for the great hotel on the square by the fountain; and Patsy carries home the clothes, and boils the tea-kettle, and rocks the baby, and takes father's dinner to the moulding-shop—does everything, in fact, except go to school, which he is just wild to do. "But it's of no use trying to think that," his mother says; "Patsy cannot be spared."

At least, that was what she said last week, and the week before, and the week before that. Patsy, on his part, did the best he could. He devoured his Sunday School library book; he wrote copies on pieces of smooth brown wrapping-paper—the hotel guests often sending parcels beautifully tied up, which came in nicely for the purpose, and father set copies to a good, round hand. Patsy learned also to do many things which boys seldom learn, but which will be of use to him when he shall grow up; for no useful knowledge about the right way to do things ever comes amiss. And, as he could not go to school, he resolved to be as contented at home as possible. Perhaps the mother would consent to his going to evening school after a while.

But three days ago something happened, and that's why I am writing this story; for I know you will all be as glad as I am that Patsy had his chance.

The Golden live near the railroad, and their little house is between the track and the entrance to a deserted coal-mine, which has long been a favorite playground for children far and near. One day a number of workmen, with trucks and horses, pickaxes and spades, appeared on the scene, and began operations. Patsy's father, when he came home at night, said that the debris, or rubbish around the mine, was to be cleared away; that the place was to be filled up and put in order. He warned Patsy to keep out of the neighbourhood as much as he could. There would be blasting, and boys were always in the way where they could not be of use.

Patsy obeyed, and though his eyes wandered often in the direction of the busy men, his feet kept at home, and he persuaded his little friends to play elsewhere. But when there was to be a blast for the life of him he could not help the eager interest. The watching while the men prepared the rock, and laid the slow-match, and then the breathless moment when everybody was warned away, the still waiting, the explosion, and all the air dark for one instant with flying fragments! Patsy was not sorry to be at home from school in these days; I am afraid he preferred it while so much was going on.

One night, when the family were in bed, Mr. Golden suddenly awakened Patsy. "Get up, son," he said; "hurry on some clothes, and come to your Aunt Sally's. Mother and the baby have gone there."

"Is the house on fire?" exclaimed practical Patsy, wide awake in a second, and ready for any emergency.

"Worse, I'm afraid," said his father. "I fear it's going to cave in. Them men have been that careless with their blasting; they've cut the ground from under us, and I fear we'll have no house by morning. Hurry, Patsy, my man!"

Away they went to Aunt Sally's, in the black, black night. Not a star peeped through the thick blanket of clouds; the wind blew cold and shrill, and it felt as though snow were in the air.

Patsy enjoyed it, though. "I almost believe it felt like what some people would call 'a lark' to be hurried out of bed in the middle of the night, and go off down the road with father, tramp, tramp, tugging to keep up with the man's long stride, and holding the big hand! I don't know when Patsy has held his father's hand before; but it was a great comfort to be small enough to do it now."

Arrived at Aunt Sally's, they found the mother wrapped in a thick shawl; sitting by the fire, much too excited to sleep. Patsy decided that he would sit up with her, while father, wearied with his day's work, threw himself on an old lounge, and was presently snoring. Mother and son, both blue-eyed, red-haired, and wiry, were too much alike, and too busy in wondering what would become of them, if the house should tumble down, to think of so commonplace a thing as sleep. But at last Patsy's eyes grew heavy. The lids shut fast over them, and he was in the land of dreams.

Several hours passed swiftly. Early in the morning, his father laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Come, Patsy, my man," he said. "We'll go and take a look."

Take a look they did. There had been, as Mr. Golden feared, a cave in of the earth, and there was a great yawning hole near their house, but the old house stood firm.

"God be praised!" said Patsy's father, baring his gray head. "I'll go back for mother; and you, Patsy, make the fire, and get her a cup of tea. It's the hard night she's had!"

Patsy, flourishing the key—for, in all his panic the night before, Mr. Golden had remembered to lock the door and secure the key—ran home, feeling more like a man than ever. The old cat, sitting puzzled on the doorstep, rubbed herself against the little legs, and purred in the friendliest fashion; by way of welcome. She blinked approvingly when she saw Patsy take the pail from the shelf behind the closet door. That proceeding she understood as part of the usual routine in the preparation of breakfast.

Patsy, running on with the pail, stood horror-stricken; for clear across the railroad track, breaking the even line of the ties, there stretched a deep, dark chasm. Young as he was, he knew

perfectly what that meant. There was no train due until eight o'clock, however, and there would be time to warn the railroad people at the station. Father would know what to do. Like all boys, Patsy felt unbounded confidence in father.

But Patsy! Surely it is the whistle of a train. That low rumble, growing into a rattle, can be nothing else. The little fellow strains his eyes, makes out a black speck in the distance, knows it for a freight train, rushing fast to destruction, unless he, Patsy Golden, can stop it in time.

Run, Patsy, run, as if your feet were wings! Run, as you never ran before; around yonder curve, if you can, and then wave pail, hat, jacket, and scream with all your might! God grant you may save them yet! On, in front of the engine, my boy! It was a brave thing—a quick-witted, ready thing—for a little man only eleven. But Patsy did it.

The engineer saw him just in time, and the train slowed up and paused. With faces pale through grime and soot, the brakemen, and the crew of labourers on their way to a distant station, crowded around the child, who, at the peril of his own life and limb, had faced the locomotive thundering along, and saved them from death.

The company heard of it, and soon after the postman brought a broad official letter, sealed with a broad red seal, and in it was a cheque which made Patsy's mother feel very rich. In it, too, were words of gratitude which made Patsy's father very, very proud.

It was more money, indeed, than the Golden had ever had in their hands at one time before; so much that now Patsy will be sent to school, and he will have his chance with the best.

At last, that is what his mother says. But I prefer to believe that there is no such thing as chance; that God arranges every part of our lives, and that nothing comes to any one of us by accident. Patsy behaved with pluck and promptness, and did the duty that was before him without flinching. And God has given him an opportunity. —Mrs. Sangster, in S. S. Times.

THE CLEAN NEWSPAPER.

THERE is a growing feeling, in healthy communities, against journals which make it their special object to minister to a perverted taste by seeking out and serving in a seductive form, disgusting and licentious revelations. There is good reason to believe that the clean newspaper is more highly prized today than it was four or five years ago. It is also safe to predict, that, as people in all ranks of life who protect their own, at least, from contamination, because more conscious of the pernicious influence of a certain class of journals, called enterprising because they are ambitious to serve up dirty scandals, they will be careful to see that the journals they permit to be read in the family circle are the class that never forget the proprieties of life. All ready men and women of refinement and healthy morals have had their attention called to the pernicious influence of bad literature, and have made commendable efforts to counteract the same, by causing sound literature to be published and sold at popular prices. These efforts are working a silent but sure revolution, and the best authors are more generally read to-day than at any previous date. The sickly sentimental story paper, and the wild ringer and pirate story books are slowly but surely yielding the field to worthier claimants. To the praise of the decent newspaper, it may be said, that where it has a place in the family, and has been read for years by young as well as old, it has developed such a healthy tone and such a discriminating taste that the life-nature of the slums has no admirers. Fortunately, the number of such families is increasing in the land, and as they increase the journal that devotes itself to sickening revelations of immorality will be compelled to find its supporters only among those classes who practice vice and crime, or are ambitious to learn to follow such ways.—Printer's Circular.

CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

THE Rev. B. Margeson, in the St. Louis Observer, in an article on the "Conversion of Children," says well, what applies to the conversion of many grown-up children:

There are many who insist upon every child having a deep and pungent conviction for sin, followed by a shouting, happy conversion, before they will allow him to claim a living faith in the living Christ. These people want to feel the house shake in which they are assembled before they will pronounce it a "genuine revival." They must hear "a sound as of a rushing mighty wind," and see "the cloven tongues as of fire" before they will admit that it is a work of the Holy Spirit. Hence, when a child of Christian parents, and of Sabbath School instruction, professes religion, they must first find out whether that child has been, like Paul, who was "three days and neither did eat nor drink." Then it must be known whether that child got up from the anxious seat "leaping and praising God." If the child is deficient in this kind of demonstrativeness, these well-meaning people tell us, with significant emphasis, that they do not believe in "so many STILL-BORN children."

But sorrow in conviction, and joy in conversion, are not, after all, the essential features of a real conversion. But a living faith in the living Christ will result in conversion that is real and scriptural, no matter whether we hear a sound "as of a rushing, mighty wind," or whether we recognize the presence of God in forgiving love by a "still, small voice." There are differences of administration, but the same Spirit.

Hundreds of our best Christians date their conversion from their childhood. Let this fact settle the question as to the possibility of children getting converted. And one of the most sublime utterances of the Son of God, is that in which he says: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." —Mark x., 15.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.—Mr. Joseph Cook announces that, after a careful survey of events and tendencies in the social, commercial, and political world; he takes new ground against the traffic in strong drink. He will fight it tooth and nail, accepting no compromise. Nothing but "unconditional surrender" will satisfy him; and to this motto he means to adhere, no matter how long or how hard the struggle may be.—Christian Leader.

—What do you think would be the result if every member of the Church increased his subscription to the Missions Scheme by ten cents?

NOTES BY "PHILO." LIBERTY OF OPINION.

THERE seems to be a tendency in ecclesiastical as well as other circles, to look on any new idea as having an impetuous and even rebellious air. And there seems in the slow and stately march from precedent to precedent, in the path of an unchanging routinism, to be an air of sacredness. So that it comes to pass that any one who proposes a new route, or ventures a new idea, is a very unwelcome person who e monotony and stagnation have reigned. And such a one is made to feel that his freedom of expression is founded within very narrow limits. There is, indeed, liberty to think and speak as the majority do, or as the men of influence do, but when one is in the minority, or is not a person of influence, the liberty is not so apparent. Hence there is no department of church work that is thrown fairly open to candid and kindly criticism. It is natural that men, long familiar with our system of work, and sitting with good-natured imperialism at the helm of the little business they direct, should imagine their system of administration perfect. And the brother who respectfully suggests that it is far from perfect, is too much regarded as an enemy and a rebel. This ought not so to be. It is only by candid and kindly criticism that abuses can be prevented from growing up under the best systems. And the brother who has a new idea is so rare an apparition, that he ought rather to be welcomed with approbation than subjected, as he often is, to a refined process of boycotting. We boast of our tolerant spirit in this age. But even yet toleration is very far from being practised by many Christian people. Even men of learning and intelligence, for the two do not by any means always go together, are found ready to ostracize the brother who will not vote and think as they do. Let us cultivate a larger freedom of opinion. Let us be tolerant of him who refuses to bow at the will of a mere majority. Akin to this subject is that of the

AUTHORITY OF NAMES.

There is a tendency on the part of many in every community to follow any loudly expressed opinion, or any public man who has got himself to be spoken about to a considerable extent. These easily-moved people seem to think that one whose name is much before the public must be a superior person—one whose opinion must be of greater weight than that of men less known. And in our church courts, men of learning and men of the world, from whom one would expect greater independence, are often seen supporting what is intrinsically foolish, simply because of the person who proposes it. Individual independence of thought is, in ecclesiastical, as in political matters, too much given up in deference to some so-called leader. This has come to such a pass in ecclesiastical circles in Scotland that, in the General Assemblies and other church courts there, the great mass of ministers simply follow their leaders with the docility of well-trained disciples. Only at rare intervals does anyone venture on an independent course, and then he is given to understand, in very effective ways, that even in so-called Free Churches there may be very little freedom. And to some extent this is coming to be the case in our own Church. There is a tendency to look askance at anyone who has the audacity to question the wisdom of those who suppose themselves to be leaders. It is very much to be hoped that our ministers will not give countenance to this state of things. We have imported much that is valuable from the fatherland, let us not import such follies as that above referred to. Even there, the men that work their way to places of leadership are sometimes neither the wisest nor ablest men in the Church. Some men understand the art of advertising themselves, and the art of putting themselves forward better than others. It is a well-known fact that some ministers think it well for the sake of the Church to let the world know where and when they preach, whenever they go from home. They regard it as a matter of public importance that their movements should be well advertised. Hence they gain a certain notoriety. And those who do not think for themselves readily believe that this notoriety indicates something great. Intelligent people understand the matter differently. However this may be, the less of what we call leadership we have in the Church the better. The freer our discussion of all departments of church work, the wider the interest that will be felt in that work. And in our Church Courts let the sense and candour and fairness be exhibited to those whose opinion prevails. Were this day come we would get the benefit of many new views. Akin to this subject is that of which we hear so much at present, namely,

BOYCOTTING.

It is strange that it is only within recent years that this word has been invented to describe a course of conduct as old as the human race. For it is a mistake to think that boycotting is the product of later years, or that it is found only among the lower ranks in Ireland. The idea of punishing a man because he does not think with you is an old and familiar one. And the idea of doing so, by making him suffer in his person and worldly estate is equally familiar. When, for example, a minister is kept out of a certain vacancy by those in authority because he is a man of independent mind, is not that a form of boycotting as base as any known to the ignorant Irish peasant? And is not such a case sometimes happening in the Church? Or if a minister's name is purposely omitted from a public report, or his remarks unnoticed while those of his associates are made conspicuous, or if he is kept off committees, or denied opportunities of being heard in preaching, are not these forms of boycotting known to happen in the Church? Unfortunately they are; at the same time they are, we trust, exceptional cases. Our ministers, as a rule, we should suppose, are far above being capable of conduct so unworthy. And not only so, but our people are far from having sympathy with such conduct. Hence the power of those who try this method of punishing those who differ from them is comparatively limited. Still, it may be very injurious as far as it goes; and, moreover, it is seldom attempted except against those who have some independence of mind, and who are not afraid to express their opinions. Hence the Church is deprived of the labour of those who could be of greatest service. This revival of persecution, this attempt to crush liberty of thought and speech, indicates the presence of the same ignorance of, and estrangement from, the spirit of Christ, which marked the conduct of the persecutors of old. Where the spirit of Christ is there is liberty; and this is what is needed, both in the case of individuals and in the case of the Church at large—that man should be less regarded; and Christ, the King and Head of the Church, be the only authority obeyed and feared.