



The Family Circle.

THE SWEET OLD STORY.

Tell me about the Master!
I am weary and worn to-night,
The day lies behind me in shadow,
And only the evening is light!—
Light with a radiant glory
That lingers about the west.
My poor heart is weary, weary,
And longs, like a child, for rest.

Tell me about the Master!
Of the hills He in loneliness trod,
When the tears and blood of his anguish
Dropped down on Judea's sod.
For to me life's seventy mile-stones
But a sorrowful journey mark;
Rough lies the hill country before me,
The mountains behind me are dark.

Tell me about the Master!
Of the wrongs He freely forgave,
Of his love and tender compassion,
Of his love that was mighty to save;
For my heart is weary, weary,
Of the woes and temptations of life,
Of the error that stalks in the noonday,
Of falsehood and malice and strife.

Yet I know that whatever of sorrow,
Of pain or temptation befall,
The Infinite Master hath suffered,
And knoweth and pitieth all.
So tell me the sweet old story,
That falls on each wound like a balm,
And my heart that was bruised and broken
Shall grow patient and strong and calm.
—Herald of Mercy.

GRANDMA'S LESSON.

BY MRS. HARRIET A. CHEEVER.

Dear Grandma Vance, with her white puffs of hair, her dainty cap and placid smile, sat dreamily gazing at a figure in the carpet as she rocked slowly to and fro.

The needles, which rarely were quiet when held in grandma's industrious fingers, now lay at rest in her lap, and only a slight creaking under the rocker was heard in the silent dining-room.

Everybody in the house loved Grandma Vance, and nearly every room contained a comfortable rocking-chair, with a view to having her able to pause in whatever place she liked, and find an easy-chair awaiting her.

So it happened that grandma was sitting in the dining-room, as it was very warm there on the cold winter morning, and the furnace heat had not penetrated to the upper rooms as yet with quite such a genial warmth as was felt there.

Things had not gone quite as smoothly that morning in her son's family as usual; there seemed to be some little friction between the children, and Julia, her son's wife, found the family sewing accumulating faster than her busy fingers could meet the pressing demand.

Then Jane had "given notice," and within the week another girl must be found to reign as queen of the kitchen; and what with one thing and another of an untoward nature, young Mrs. Vance was tired and discouraged.

"I declare," she said to herself, "I don't see how Frank's mother can always be as bright and cheerful as she is. It seems to me as if I was old as she is, the noise and contention of the children would drive me nearly distracted. Then when Baby unraveled that long piece of knitting yesterday she had put so much time and work into, she was just as undisturbed and patient about it as could be. I have a great mind to ask how she manages to find so much comfort in life."

There was baking to do, and a pile of mending to be attended to; but all at once, grandma, still dreaming away with her eyes fixed on the carpet, was roused from her day dream by the entrance of her daughter-in-law.

In her hand young Mrs. Vance held her work-basket, with a pile of stockings heaped high on top.

"There, mother," she began, "I've got everything to do to-day, it seems to me, but I made up my mind to darn a few stockings first, and at the same time have a little chat with you. Everything appears to come so easy to you; now, I've been wondering if you ever used to feel tired and perplexed

in your younger days, when family cares bore hard and troubles used to come all in a bunch, as I suppose they do to every one some time in life."

"Dear child," grandma began, "you little know how much of toil, effort, and oftentimes how much of discouragement I waded through while bringing up my large family."

"To begin with, there were no 'modern improvements' in my day, making work comparatively light, and after rising with the dawn, kneading bread, churning butter, and attending to various wearing duties connected with a farm and dairy, I would be obliged to sit up half of the night with a sick child, then be up and about my household cares again early in the morning."

"I think that, naturally, my disposition was a happy one, but gradually I began to let my incessant duties worry me. I know my voice was not always tender as a mother's should be in addressing her children, and then I know, too, my brow began to be clouded much of the time."

"I thought my work was more constant than that of any of my neighbors, and although poor father—we always called Frank's father 'father,' the whole of us—although he did all he possibly could, I somehow felt as though I was leading a hard, severe life, which in some ways he might make lighter if he chose."

"Well, my dear, I sometimes think that when we have enough, and try the Almighty up to a certain point, it is a glimpse of what he could do to punish us for our repining, were it not for his loving kindness and unwillingness to grieve his children."

"I remember one winter—very much such a time as this, only in the country the cold seems very much more severe than it ever does in the city—there were four boys then, claiming my constant care, and from morning till night I was at it, baking, brewing, churning, sweeping, cutting, mending and fretting."

"Yes, I confess it with regret even now, I was fast becoming a nervous, fretful wife and mother, while still in my early prime."

"Well, one cold morning, father proposed taking the boys, all of them, and going over to a piece of woods about two miles away, to see if some timber there was fit for cutting. I bustled about and got their breakfast early; then father said something about taking a lunch as they might be detained, but I objected, impatiently declaring it would only amount to my getting a dinner for them all, besides fussing to put up lunches. Your husband, I remember, spoke up cheerily and said comfortingly—'Frank always was just as good-natured as he is now—'

"'Never mind, mother,' he says, 'if we do get a little hungry, it won't hurt us any.'"

"And off they started, my precious husband and four darling boys."

"In two hours there was one of the wildest storms raging I ever saw in my life. Snow, rain and sleet were terrible enough, but oh, the wind! It was simply awful."

"By noon I would have given anything I possessed had I only put up that lunch. But in the middle of the afternoon I heard the bridge between our township and the next one where they had all gone, was floating down the river with four or five persons on it."

"Well, my dear, I won't distress you with a long description of my sufferings; all I can say is, I spent hours on my knees during that long night of anguish, and the vows and promises I made have never been forgotten either by me or my Maker."

"In the morning my loved ones were restored to my arms. Not a mouthful of food had they tasted since their breakfast of the day before, but the way I feasted them for the next week, father declared it was almost enough to kill them."

"But after imagining myself a widow and bereft of my four boys through all one long winter night, I was cured of fretting and thinking my lot a hard one, forever."

"And it was astonishing when once I resolved that things were best for me just as they were, how much lighter my duties seemed to grow. In fact, the time soon came when I thought I was to be envied with my kind husband and four sturdy boys. There is a good deal to look back upon and feel thankful for, but I think that terrible lesson did wonders for me."

"Grandma's eyes took on their dreamy look again as her voice hushed and only the light creak of the rockers was heard."

But young Mrs. Vance gathered up her work, saying softly,

"Well, now I'm going about my baking, and oh, how thankful I am I have my dear little family to bake for! Thank you for your story, dear grandma."—Exchange.

MRS. TERRY'S VELVET CLOAK.

BY MRS. HARRIET A. CHEEVER.

Mrs. William Terry often thought when allusions were made to her fine figure, and when viewing herself in the mirror, that if her figure had not been quite so fine, or at least quite so tall, it would have been rather easier robing it to her satisfaction. She was a person of decidedly lady-like taste, and would go without a needed article of dress a long time, if necessary, but when at last she did purchase anything, she wanted only the best. And as the best are almost invariably the most serviceable fabrics, it followed that Mrs. Terry was always a well-dressed lady. She might have been always elegantly dressed but for certain characteristics which prevented extreme elegance of costume on her part. To begin with, she was not naturally selfish, so felt it her bounden duty to give to several benevolent objects, as well as to lay aside some missionary money every month. Then Mr. Terry was not a rich man, and his wife was far too sensible and good a wife ever to distress or hamper him about the matter of her wardrobe.

But now Mrs. Terry had worn her winter cloak four seasons; that is, counting the winter when this was written, and as expensive materials could generally be bought at a reduced rate in the middle of the season, Mrs. Terry had set her heart on purchasing velvet for a grand new cloak, and had been laying by little sums of money toward that object ever since early in the fall. As the garment was to be a long one, it was somewhat appalling when the dressmaker's measurement disclosed the number of yards of cloaking velvet which would be needed to meet the required dimensions. For, as usual, Mrs. Terry would have only the best of velvet; the service it would give would make it ultimately the cheapest.

At length the money was forthcoming, having been accumulated without drafting heavily on her husband at any time, or in any way curtailing home comforts or her usual charitable contributions.

Mr. Terry was pleased when one morning his wife informed him that she was going to purchase velvet for a handsome new cloak that day. He was proud of his stately wife, gratified at what he considered her prudent management and excellent taste.

Mrs. Terry was dressed for shopping, and was just emerging from her room when the door-bell rang, and pausing at the head of the stairs, she heard some one—it was a lady's voice—inquire if she was at home.

In the parlor she found a lady whom she had never seen before. She was fair-haired, fair-faced, young, and dressed in deep mourning. Her errand was a singular one.

She was a widow in almost destitute circumstances, but she was also the mother of one child, a little suffering girl, whom she was anxious to place for treatment in the hospital of that city. But unfortunately the institution was not a free one; it would cost fifty dollars for a bed for her little girl to remain as long as she would be obliged to in order to have her peculiar ailment suitably treated.

Would Mrs. Terry help her? She could not apply anywhere, to any one; some strong instinct had directed her to ask aid of her, although she had not the slightest claim upon her charities other than one Christian woman had upon another.

Mrs. Terry at once suspected some underhanded game. The idea of any well-dressed, able-bodied woman, calling upon another lady not known to be very rich, and soliciting aid to the amount of fifty dollars for a sick child! She was considering how she could most speedily rid herself of her presuming visitor, when the lady spoke again:

"You may perhaps think me an impostor, but I am not. Amasa Payton, of the National bank of this city, is my own uncle; if necessary, I will go with you to the bank for identification."

"Then why does not Mr. Payton help you in this matter?" Mrs. Terry asked quickly.

"He does not think the treatment would do my child any good; but oh, Mrs. Terry, do help me if you can; I assure you I will never forget it. I am a stranger here and can apply to no one else. My uncle told me sarcastically that Christian women ought to help me, if they believed what they pro-

fessed, and mentioned your name among others as one who could assist me."

"I will go with you to see your child, then to see Mr. Payton, if you wish me to," said Mrs. Terry, moved with sudden compassion at the young mother's suffering tones.

In a small, neat room a child four years old was lying alone on her little bed. Her spine was so painful she made not the slightest movement of her little body as the two ladies entered the room, only her wan little face brightened at sight of her mother.

They did not remain long, but a few moments later entered the private office of Mr. Payton, president of the bank.

"I called," said Mrs. Terry, feeling a little confused, "to see if you did not feel willing to assist your niece in the case of her little sick girl—"

But Mr. Payton interrupted her: "No, madam! I've told my niece over and over again I would do nothing for her. She lived with me once, in fact I brought her up, but she married against my wishes; and now I don't believe anything can be done for the child, and don't wish to waste money in that way."

"Very well," said Mrs. Terry, rising to her full height, "if you won't assist a poor young mother in such extremity, I will, although I can hardly afford to do so. I hope, sir, you will never need what all will refuse to give," she added mildly.

It cost a real struggle, but here was a fair young mother, her whole life bound up in her wee sick darling, appealing to her for the help she could give; and Mrs. Terry was a mother herself. She would have proposed asking some friends to help the object, but she knew the sensitive mother would shrink painfully from having her do so.

At dinner Mrs. Terry informed her husband, that it was so late in the season, she had decided not to have a new cloak made, and he replied that what she called her old cloak still looked excellently well.

The next day the little sick girl was carried to the hospital, and the fair, sweet mother presented herself again at Mrs. Terry's, declaring she would sew for her a certain portion of each day. Mrs. Terry was forced to allow her to do so, finding she really would be happier in being allowed to.

Two days afterwards Mr. Terry came home to dinner with satisfaction written all over his face.

"Wife, what do you think!" he said as they seated themselves at the table. "Claverly has paid me that two hundred dollars I thought I'd never see a cent of, and I'm going to give you half of it. Guess you'd better get your cloak, dear, after all."

And the cloak was bought and Mrs. Terry looked truly regal in its rich enveloping folds.

The little slender child at the hospital slowly bettered, and somehow Mr. Payton must have grown ashamed of his churlishness, for one day the little widow informed Mrs. Terry that "uncle" was going to forgive her and take her back to his home to live; and another day Mrs. Terry received a check for fifty dollars from the National Bank, with a brief note from the president, informing her that he couldn't allow her to pay for the hospital care of his niece's little child. But Mrs. Terry regarded the whole affair as a little trial of her faith, and used every penny of the returned money in charitable purposes, never regretting that when a loud call came she had not withheld her hand.—Golden Rule.

THERE is the story told of a man in the ninth century that came up to attack a king with a large army. When the king heard that he had only 500 men and he had an army of 30,000 men, he sent a message to the young general, saying that if he would surrender he would be very merciful to him and spare his life. The young general listened to the messenger until he was through, then he said to one of his privates: "Go leap over into yonder chasm," and over he went. Then he called another and handed him a dagger, and said: "Drive it into your heart," and he did. Turning to the messenger, he said: "Go tell your king I have five hundred such." When the king heard it, that five hundred such men were before him, his army got demoralized and fled. The young general said to the messenger: "Tell your king I will have him chained to my dogs in twenty-four hours," and he did. Oh, that the church had this enthusiasm. One shall chase a thousand; and two shall put ten thousand to flight. The case is quite different—the majority is on our side, the victory the easier.