

THE HOME CIRCLE.

YOU CAN NEVER TELL.

BY ELIA WHICKLER WILCOX.

You can never tell when you send a word—
Like an arrow shot from a bow
By an archer blind—be it cruel or kind,
Just where it will chance to go.
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm:
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You never can tell when you do an act,
Just what the result will be;
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though its harvest you may not see—
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped
In God's productive soil;
Though you may not know, yet the tree shall grow,
And shelter the brows that toil.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do
In bringing you hate or love;
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the universe—
Each thing must create its kind;
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.

HUNGRY FOR A HANDSHAKE.

He was sitting in a park. He looked down-hearted and despondent. His clothes were dusty, but not ragged. There was a look of despair on his boyish face, almost a look of desperation.

Some one, noticing his despondent look, sat down by him, saying, "I judge you are a stranger in the city; I want to shake hands with you."

Only a word, you see, but a bright look came into the young man's face, and he eagerly held out his hand. "O," he said, "I am hungry for a handshake. I left my home about a week ago with the prayers and best wishes of my friends."

"Times were hard, and it seemed necessary for me to go into the world to make a living for myself. I supposed there was lots of work for me in this city, but I don't think there is anything, and I am discouraged." He bit his lip hard as he said this, and his mouth quivered. "I will try again," he went on to say, "since some one cares enough for me to shake hands with me."

That hand shake was the beginning of his success. Downhearted and discouraged before, feeling that there was no one who cared for him in a great city, his heart was made glad by that simple thing, a hand shake, and he took courage and soon found employment.

There are people on every side of us, perhaps not in these exact circumstances, but who are discouraged and depressed, who need a hand shake, a friendly word, a kindly interest. As servants of that Christ who went about doing good, shall we give it?—*Union Gospel News.*

THE POWER OF LOVE.

A little girl was standing one day at a railway station, holding her father's hand. It was a busy scene, some hurrying for tickets, some looking after their luggage, and everybody too much taken up with their own affairs to pay much attention to other people.

But there was one man there whom nobody could fail to notice, for he was a prisoner handcuffed between two policemen, who were keeping a firm hold upon him. I do not know what crime he had been guilty of, but he had been sentenced to twenty years penal servitude, and was now on his way to the place of his imprisonment. He was a dark, desperate-looking man, with the wickedness with which he had spent his life stamped upon his face. If ever a man were beyond the power of love, you would have said he was. Ah! we none of us know what love can do.

The little girl I have mentioned caught sight of the prisoner; a wide gap you might have thought between her life and his, yet was there something that could bridge it over. She let go her father's hand, tripped across the platform, and looked up into the man's face. "Man, I'm so sorry for you," she said, and ran back again with her eyes full of tears. The criminal made

no answer, nor gave any sign that the love of this childish heart had touched him; he seemed to look even darker than before.

A minute passed, and then the little girl was at his side again, with another look and another word for him. "Man," she repeated, "Jesus Christ is sorry for you." Then the train came up, the passengers all got in, and the man and the child met no more.

But was it all over? Oh, no. The prisoner had been so violent and troublesome that notice had been sent to the warden where he was going that he would have a hard task to keep him in order. But, instead of that, he found that he gave no trouble whatever. He was quiet and subdued, showed no signs of ferocity, and was often seen of an evening reading his Bible. It seems very unaccountable, and the warden at last sought an explanation. Ah! have you guessed? It was the loving sympathy of the little child which broke his heart, though he was too proud to show it outwardly at the time. God, by His Spirit, had sent those simple words to wake up the memory of a buried mother—of long past days.

It was years since anybody had spoken to him like that. It brought back to him all that she used to teach him when he was a child at her knee. "And oh, sir," he said, in broken accents, "I could not rest till I had found my mother's God; and now, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm saved, I'm saved."

We think it a beautiful picture—a young heart in its simplicity pitying one so depraved and outcast. But her love was but a drop out of an overflowing fountain. The love of Jesus is that fountain; let it lead us to think about that. There is no earthly love like His. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."—*Cottager and Artisan.*

GOSSIPING.

The confirmed gossip is always either malicious or ignorant. The one variety needs a change of heart and the other a change of pasture. Gossip is always a personal confession either of malice or imbecility, and the young should not only shun it, but, by most thorough culture, relieve themselves from all temptation to indulge in it. It is a low, frivolous, and, too often, a dirty business. There are neighborhoods in which it rages like a pest. Churches are split in pieces by it. Neighbors are made enemies by it for life. In many persons it degenerates into a chronic, incurable disease. Let the young cure it while they may.

The only effectual cure is the Gospel panacea, the divine law of love. We don't gossip about the members of our own family, our parents, our children, our brothers and sisters. Nay, we resent tale-bearing in regard to them as a personal offense and insult. But all men and women are our kindred, in the brotherhood of humanity, and if we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, instead of gossiping about them, we will regard such gossip as a sin against ourselves, and we will stop the tongue of every tale-bearer as promptly as we would if he came to us slandering our mother, or our sister. But, alas, too many who profess to be Christians have never learned to bridle their tongues!

THE LAW OF LOVE.

Charles McKay thinks that it is broader than philanthropy—that it is all-embracing. And he is right. God feeds the sparrows and paints the lilies. His tender mercies are over all His works. If we are His children we will have and manifest His spirit, and say with the poet,

You love your fellow-creatures? So do I—
But underneath the wide paternal sky
Are there no fellow-creatures in your ken
That you can love except your fellow-men?
Are not the grass, the flowers, the trees, the birds
The faithful beasts, true-hearted, without words,
Your fellows also, however small?
He's the best lover who can love them all.

Yes, we ought to love everything, as well as everybody. But above all we ought to love God, Who is not only infinitely lovely in Himself, but the Giver of every good and perfect gift.