

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

TO-MORROW.

WHO says "To-morrow still is mine?"
As if his eye could peer
Through the thick mists of future time,
And trace out life's career.
To-morrow! stranger, it may be
A phantom never grasped by thee.

How can'st thou tell To-morrow's sun
Shall shine around thy path?
Thy mortal work may then be done,
And thou may'st sleep in death.
O! say not then, "To-morrow's mine—"
The present hour alone is thine.

Hast thou not seen the eager child
The butterfly pursue!
He almost grasped it—as he smiled,
It vanished from his view.
And O! has not To-morrow seemed,
To some, as near—yet never beamed?

Where is To-morrow! hidden deep
From human ear or eye,
And, who shall smile, or who shall weep,
No mortal may descry,
And he that lives upon To-morrow,
Shall often drink the cup of sorrow.

But should To-morrow never rise,
What other scenes would meet thee?
Were earth to vanish from thine eyes
Would heaven's bright splendors greet thee?
O! then, it matters not to thee,
Ev'n should "To-morrow" never be.

THOUGHTS FOR THE NINTH SUNDAY
AFTER TRINITY.

(Written for the Church Guardian)

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We may listen unmoved to the Apostle's mention of the sins of the children of Israel who tempted God in the desert, and if we apply it to ourselves at all, it may be with the reflection that had we been of the multitude, who "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink," we "should not have lusted after evil things" or committed those gross sins against a merciful and gracious God as did some of them. But the Apostle goes on to say that the awful punishments which overtook those ungrateful and rebellious children were written for our admonition. "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" The pillar of fire by night, the cloud by day, which told them that God was with them, spoke in vain; the memory of the wonders in Egypt could not keep alive their gratitude and adoration, and they fell victims to their lusts. And have we no temptations to forget our God and all the "mighty works" which He has done for us? Are we so strong that we can afford to dispense with the warnings, the admonitions, which have been written for our learning? Do we think that we stand so firmly in our uprightness that we cannot fall? "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,*" says the Apostle, and we are liable to fall a prey to each of these temptations if we do not seek for strength from our faithful God. The strongest in His own sight is most prone to weakness, and he that thinketh he standeth ever the nearest to a fall. Temptations must meet us in this world of probation, yet our God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; He will supply the strength to resist, "the way to escape," if we confess that only by His strength we stand. Ah, how far better to feel beneath us the everlasting arms, to cast ourselves in our weakness upon Him, crying: "Lord, of myself I can do nothing, save me even from

myself." How far better this than the self-righteousness which thinks that it is superior to the common weaknesses of humanity, that looks contemptuously at the sins of others, and can only learn by bitter humiliation its own helplessness in the face of temptations. O that most excellent gift of humility, of which we have a perfect pattern in Christ, how earnestly should we covet it, how earnestly pray for it to Him from whom all good things do come!

THE BOTTOMLESS JUG.

I SAW it hanging up in the kitchen of a thrifty, healthful, sturdy farmer in Oxford county, Maine—a bottomless jug!—The host saw that the curious thing had caught my eye and he smiled.

"You are wondering why that jug is hanging up there with its bottom knocked out?" he said. "My wife, perhaps, could tell you the story better than I can, but she is bashful and I am not, so I'll tell it."

"My father, as you are probably aware, owned this farm before me. He lived to a good old age, worked all his life, never squandered money, was a shrewd, careful trader and a good cultivator; and, as men were accustomed in his day and generation, he was a temperate man. I was the youngest boy; and when the old man was ready to go—and he knew it—the other boys agreed that, since I had stayed at home and taken care of the old folks, the farm should be mine, and to me it was willed. I had been married three years.

"Well, father died—mother had gone three years before—and left the farm to me, with a mortgage of \$2,000; I'd never thought so much of it before; but I thought of it now. I said to Molly—my wife—"Molly," said I, "look here! Here's father had this farm in its strength of soil, with all its magnificent timber; and had six boys, as they grew up, equal to so many men, to help him; and he has worked hard, worked early and late, and yet look at it! A mortgage of \$2,000! What can I do?"—And I went to that old jug—it had the bottom in it then—and took a stiff drink of Medford rum from it.

"I noticed a curious look on the face of my wife just then, and I asked her what she thought of it; for I supposed, of course, she was thinking of what I'd been talking about. And so she was. Says she:—

"Charles, I've thought of this a good deal; and I have thought of a way in which I believe we can clear the mortgage off before five more years are ended."

"Says I, 'Molly, tell me how you'll do it?'"

"She thought a little while, and then she said, with a funny twinkle in her blue eyes, says she, 'Charles, you must promise me solemnly and sacredly. Promise me that you will never again bring home, for the purpose of drinking for a beverage, at any one time, more spirits of any kind than you can bring in that old jug—that jug that your father has used ever since I knew him, and which you have used ever since he has done with it.'

"Well, I knew that my father used once in a while, especially in haying time, and in the winter when we were at work in the woods, to get an old gallon jug filled, so I thought it over; and after a while told her that I would agree to it. 'Now, mind,' said she, 'you are never to bring home for a common beverage more spirits than you can bring in that identical jug.' And I gave her the promise.

"And before I went to bed that night, I took the last pull at that jug. As I was turning it about for a sort of a night cap, Molly looked up, and said she, 'Charlie, have you got a drop left?' I told her there was just about a drop. We'd have to get it filled on the morrow. And then she said if I had no objections she would drink that last drop with me. I never shall forget how she brought it out—that last drop! However, I tipped the old jug bottom up, and got about a spoonful, and Molly said that was enough. She took the tumbler and poured a few drops of hot water into it, and a bit of sugar, and then she tinkled

her glass against mine, just as she'd seen us boys do when we'd been drinking good luck, and says she, 'Here's to the old brown jug.'

"Sakes alive! I thought to myself, that poor Molly had been drinking more of the rum than was good for her; and I tell you it kind o' cut me to the heart. I forgot about how many times she'd seen me when my tongue was thicker than it ought to be, and my legs not quite as steady as good legs should be; but I said nothing, I drank the sentiment—"To the old brown jug"—and let it go.

"Well, I went out after that and did chores and went to bed; and the last thing I said before leaving the Kitchen, the very room where we now sit in, 'we'll have the old brown jug filled to-morrow.' And then I went off to bed. And I have remembered ever since that I went to bed that night, as I had done hundreds of times before, with a buzzing in my head that a healthy man ought not to have. I didn't think of it then, nor had I ever thought of it before; but I've thought of it a good many times since, and have thought of it with wonder and with awe.

"Well, I got up the next morning and did some work about the barn, then came in and ate breakfast, not with such an appetite as a farmer ought to have and I could think even then that my appetite had begun to fail me. However, I ate breakfast and went out and hitched up the old mare; for, to tell the plain truth, I was feeling the need of a glass of spirits, and I hadn't a drop in the house. I was in a hurry to get to the village. I got hitched up, and then came in for the jug. I went for it in the old cupboard, and took it out, and—

"Did you ever break through the thin ice, on a nipping cold day, and find yourself, in an instant, over your head in the freezing water? The jug was there but the bottom was gone!

"Molly had been and taken a sharp chisel and a hammer, and with a skill that might have done credit to a master workman, she had clipped the bottom clean out, without even breaking the edges or the side! I looked at the jug and then I looked at Molly. And then she burst out. She spoke—Oh! I have never heard anything like it since. Said she:—

"Charles there's where the mortgage on this farm came from! It was brought home in that jug—two quarts at a time!—and there's where all the debt has been! And there's where your white clear skin, and your clear, pretty eyes are going! And in that jug, my husband, your appetite is going also! Let it be as it is, dear heart! and remember your promise to me!"

"And she threw her arms around my neck and burst into tears. She couldn't speak more.

"And there was no need. My eyes were opened as though by magic. In a single minute the whole scene passed before me. I saw all the mortgages, on all the farms in our neighborhood; and I thought where the money had gone. The very last mortgage father had ever made, had been to pay a bill held against him by the man who had filled his jug for years! Yes, I saw it all, as it passed before me—a fitting picture of rum!—rum!—rum!—debt!—debt!—and, in the end—death! And I returned my Molly's kiss, and said I:—

"I'll keep the promise? I will—so help me heaven!

"And I have kept it. In less than five years, as Molly had said, the mortgage was cleared off; my appetite came back to me; and now, we've got a few thousand dollars out at interest. There hangs the old jug, just as we hung it up on that day; and from that time there hasn't a drop of spirits been brought into this house, for a beverage, which the bottomless jug wouldn't have held!

"Dear old jug! We mean to keep it; and to hand it down to our children, for the lesson it can give them—a lesson of life—of a life happy, peaceful and blessed!"

And as he ceased speaking, his wife, with an arm drawn tenderly around the neck of her youngest boy, murmured a fervent "Amen!"