



### The Family Circle.

#### CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"The Master has come over Jordan,"  
Said Hannah, the mother, one day;  
"He is healing the people who throng him,  
With a touch of his finger, they say."

"And now I shall carry the children,—  
Little Rachael, and Samuel, and John;  
I shall carry the baby Esther,  
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,  
But he shook his head and smiled:  
"Now, who but a doting mother  
Would think of a thing so wild?"

"If the children were tortured by demons,  
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;  
Or had they the taint of the leper,  
Like many in Israel."

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan;  
I feel such a burden of care;  
If I carry it to the Master,  
Perhaps I shall leave it there."

"If he lay his hand on the children,  
My heart will be lighter, I know;  
For a blessing for ever and ever  
Will follow them as they go."

So over the hills of Judah,  
Along the vine-rows green,  
With Esther asleep on her bosom,  
And Rachael her brothers between.

"Among the people who hung on his teaching,  
Or waited his touch, or his word,  
Through the row of proud Pharisees listen-  
ing,  
She pressed to the feet of her Lord."

"Now why should'st thou hinder the Mas-  
ter?"  
Said Peter, "with children like these?  
Seest not how, from morning to evening,  
He teacheth, and healeth diseases?"

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children!  
Permit them to come unto me."  
And he took in his arms little Esther,  
And Rachael he set on his knee.

And the heavy heart of the mother  
Was lifted all earth-care above,  
As he laid his hands on the brothers,  
And blessed them with tenderest love;

As he said of the babes in His bosom,  
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven,"  
And strength for all duty and trial  
That hour to her spirit was given.  
—Leaflet.

#### THE TRUE HISTORY OF A BAG OF BUTTONS.

In the year 18—, when the fever for California gold-hunting first struck our Eastern seaboard cities, a young man named George Van Dyke was walking the streets of New York looking for employment. Homeless and alone, with no tie left to bind him to his native city, he became an easy prey to the brilliant inducements held forth by the agents of a company for improving and mining the Washington Gulch, and with the hopes held out to him by the agent, of a brilliant, speedy, and miraculous fortune to be surely attained in California with the smallest expenditure of time and capital, he left New York. After a successful voyage and a romantic journey by land through gigantic forests and over magnificent mountains, whose scenery was highly inspiring to the imagination of an enthusiastic young man, and could not fail to raise in him highest hopes of a glorious future to be wrested from the strong heart of mountain and stream, he reached the gold diggings.

A poor hut, scanty fare, and above all the rough character and bad or careless habits of his companions among the miners, soon stripped the situation of any charms with which the glowing pictures of the agent, aided by the powers of his own youthful imagination, had invested it, and George found that hard, persevering work was the

substantial and only means by which fortune could be won from hard circumstance, in California as well as in New York. Regretting the resolve which had led to his finding himself in a situation so unfavorable to the mental and moral growth of a young man, he yet made the best of his plight, and by setting to work with a will soon gathered enough by the proceeds of his toil to pay for his return by way of San Francisco to his native State.

He left the diggings with high spirits. But alas! his troubles had just begun. A rough man, who had borne him some ill will on account of his gentlemanly habits, followed him, and before ten miles of his journey were accomplished our hero was felled from behind, and with no chance of self-defence was soon laid unconscious on the ground. His sensations on recovering from his stupor were those of intense despair. His hard-earned savings were gone, and the wretch who had so wronged him left marks and bruises upon his victim that required immediate care.

George Van Dyke, in his loneliness and poverty, with the great rocks and trees of the mountain forest as his only companions, weakened by the exposures of his mining life, and still bleeding from his recent wounds, might well bitterly regret the day when adverse circumstances and bad advice induced him to quit a life of civilization for which his entire habits and education had fitted him. But although only 20 years old, George possessed an unusual force of character, which his adventurous and independent life for the last few months had developed. Adverse circumstances only served with him as a spur to fresher action, and he soon overcame his despairing lethargy sufficiently to bind up his wounds and proceed on his journey. A few roots and berries from the woods, with occasional help from a friendly traveller, supported life, and in the hope of reaching San Francisco and begging or working his passage home, he persevered in his difficult undertaking, until at last he reached a suburban town but a few miles from San Francisco. On the outskirts of the town, just as the dusk was falling, poor George, overcome with continued efforts and by a deadly malarial fever contracted in the unhealthy camp life of the mines, gave up his struggle and sank helplessly by the roadside.

In a cheery little mansion in a not unfashionable street of San Francisco a young wife somewhat anxiously awaited the return of her husband, a rich trader, who had gone on business to a neighboring village. Life and property were in constant danger in those palmy days of California vagabondage, and Mrs. Goldthwaite, as she waited, recalled unpleasant stories of the insecurity of the lives of those who had gone out with money, as her husband had this day, many of whom had lost both money and life. With a prayer for his safety she took up some work as a safeguard against useless worry, but cast it down as a waggon stopped at the door, and a quick ring followed. "What is it, Henry?" she cried, for her husband paused not for his usual greeting. With grave looks he told her of a sick and homeless young man he had found senseless on his way, and who by his moans he judged to be in a critical and suffering condition. The quick response from his young wife to his appeal for her aid in nursing and caring for the unfortunate lad thus thrown upon their sympathy, confirmed him in his generous resolve, and together they tended the sick stranger through weeks and days of delirium and fever, during which they gathered from fragments of his confused talk some slight insight into his former sufferings.

When George Van Dyke, after days of pain and danger, returned slowly to life and to some degree of health, he found himself in the home of loving friends. No brother and sister could have been kinder in their loving efforts to remove all sense of obligation from the grateful young man. They urged him to remain with them until his health was completely restored, but his independence prevented his accepting their hospitality longer than was absolutely needful. So, as soon as he was at all able, George left his kind friends who had grown attached to him, and were loth to part from him, with many protestations of lifelong gratitude. Mr. Goldthwaite having arranged for his doing some light work in compensation for his passage, he embarked for New York.

Before leaving, Mrs. Goldthwaite presented him with a few sewing materials for use

on the voyage, and as he would not receive a cent of money from them, the kind young matron sewed up in a large bag of buttons \$20, distributed throughout the contents of the bag in the shape of ten cents pieces, dreading the consequences of his arrival perfectly penniless in a large city.

A year passed and no word came of the young man, save the news of his safe arrival in New York. Meantime misfortune came upon his kind benefactors, Mr. Goldthwaite's health failed, and his business suffered from being left in the hands of a careless partner. In two years Mrs. Goldthwaite found herself a widow, with one child, and scarcely any means of support. Such small moneys as she possessed sufficed to carry her to some Eastern friends, where she was put in the way of earning a scanty livelihood by means of sewing. Meantime our friend George had prospered. Not forgetting his kind friends, he yet waited before claiming their friendship until he should be in a position to return some of their favors. Arriving in New York without a cent, the idea occurred to him of selling his few possessions, in order to secure food and lodging. Opening his bag of buttons, which he supposed to be useless in this emergency, a ten-cent piece attracted his notice, and his search was continued until \$20 were found. Taking this as his capital, with steady energy and perseverance, he went to work and gradually rose from one position of trust to another until in the course of five years he found himself in a position of comparative affluence. During all this time he had heard nothing of the protectors who had befriended him in time of need. After frequent enquiries and search for them he gave up the quest, having only learned that Mr. Goldthwaite was dead and that his wife and child had left San Francisco. He then deeply regretted his former resolve, not to communicate with his friends until he could present himself in the aspect of a prosperous man. In the course of his search he revisited California but could hear nothing of his friends, although the fear that they might be in want, led him to make every effort.

He had put aside a sum equivalent to the \$20 found in the bag among the buttons given him by Mrs. Goldthwaite so long ago. This sum he held in trust, and a special blessing seemed to rest upon it. By happy investments and fortunate chances, it had grown in ten years to the sum of \$5,000; but still George Van Dyke could hear no tidings of his old friend.

One very cold winter's night just about dusk, while crossing a crowded street, he observed just in front of him a little girl, carefully threading her way among the crowds of vehicles. She was neatly but poorly clad, and carried a large bundle under her arm. The child attracted his attention, and he kept his eye on the unconscious little one until, just as she neared the sidewalk, her foot slipped, and falling she would undoubtedly have been crushed under a heavy waggon, had not the watchful man behind her seized the horses' heads, and lifted the child to a place of safety. In all her fright the girl found time to thank her protector, and the gentleman, more and more interested, learned that her name was Goldthwaite. For tidings of that name he had long been on the alert, and a few enquiries left him in no doubt that he had at last found his much sought friends. The artless little one told him all—her father's name, his own romantic history, which she had heard as a kind of family tradition; this made the matter certain. They were very poor, the little one said, and she was taking home the work her mother had finished. Concealing his feelings the gentleman accompanied the little girl to the door of her home, and left her, promising to come soon and see her mother.

That evening, after little Elsie had forgotten her troubles, and her adventure in bed, and Mrs. Goldthwaite, wondering how both ends could be made to meet, was counting over her week's scanty earnings, a knock came to the door, and a stranger entered, buttoned up to his eyes in a great coat. Into her hand he put a bag, and, seeing her astonishment, he emptied the glittering contents into her lap. The gold dazzled her, and in her wonder it was some time before she could ask the stranger what it all meant, and where the money came from. What puzzled her still more, on the bag was a written label "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." "It is money owing to you, returned," said the

man, in answer to her enquiries; but the poor woman knew that no money was owing to her; that, on the contrary, she herself was in debt for the necessaries of life to various tradesmen in her vicinity. Her expression grew more and more puzzled, until suddenly recognizing the bag as the button-bag she had given to George Van Dyke ten years before, and connecting this remembrance with a certain gleam in the stranger's eyes, the truth dawned upon her. With delight she welcomed the long lost friend, to whom she had been so kind in his time of greatest need. But surprises were not over for the good woman. Elsie being called, a member of her family whom she supposed George had never seen, the little one quietly welcomed the stranger as an old friend, supposing it quite a natural thing that her deliverer should have come to pay his promised visit; and then the mother learned who it was that had saved her child. It was more than a common visit. The old friends recognized the hand of Providence in the circumstances of their reunion.

George Van Dyke had no relatives, and before long his friendship and gratitude toward the widow had ripened into a lasting love, and his hitherto homeless life was made happy by her consent to share it. Elsie made no objection to her new father and the changed circumstances; and as in her new warm clothes she danced along to school with her hand fast locked in his, her grasp would tighten as she passed the spot where in her loneliness and trouble she had first received his kind protection and thus had been the unconscious means of restoring to her mother an old and cherished friend. And the new father never allowed the little one to forget the old father whom she had never known, but sought to repay in his affection for the child some part of that debt of gratitude which he could never repay her real father, the good Samaritan of his youth.—N. Y. Witness.

#### VICTOR,—A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.

BY M. H. M.

He was a little fellow about seven years of age, bright and active, "the only son of his mother, and she a widow." His home consisted of a room and bedroom, five pairs of stairs up, in a crowded tenement house; for Mrs. Rhoades was a poor woman, obliged to stitch, stitch, from early morning until far into the night, that she might procure the necessaries of life for herself and her little son.

One Friday afternoon Victor ran home from school at the usual hour, three o'clock. He was very happy, for he had been pronounced the best boy in the class, and he held his good ticket tightly in his hand. "Oh, mother," he exclaimed, bursting into the room; then he stopped suddenly, for his mother's accustomed seat in front of the sewing machine was vacant, and in her stead sat Mrs. Malone, a neighbor.

"Vicky," she said, "yer ma is taken down with one of her bad turns, and is very sick. I have been with her all forenoon, but I have washing that must be done and taken home to-morrow; so I am going to send for yer aunt to come and mind her. Yer ma says you have been there, and can find yer way after you get out of the cars, so I will let my Mary go and put you in, and she will tell the conductor where to let you out. You must not stay a minute, mind, for yer ma will feel worried. Just tell yer aunt, mother is sick and wants her; then come straight home."

"May I see mamma before I go?" asked Victor.

"No, she is asleep, and you mustn't wake her."

Victor's aunt lived out at service up town, a long distance from his home; but as his mother had said, he knew the way when once he had left the cars.

Mary saw him safely in the car, paid his fare, leaving a five-cent piece in his hand with which to return, and gave the conductor the name of the street where he was to get out.

Very proud and important Victor felt when he found himself riding alone up town. Aunt Lizzie was surprised to see him, and feared her sister must be very ill, to allow such a little fellow to come so far. She promised to be with them in a couple of hours, and Victor, after eating a large piece of cake which she gave him, started for home.

The car in which he found himself was crowded and he was quite hidden by the tall