

# Around the Fireside

Choice Selections of Poetry and Prose Gleaned from Our Neighbors

## Dat Little Brack Sheep.

P O' lil' brack sheep what strayed erway  
Done los' in de win' an' de rain;  
An' de Shepherd, He say: "O hirelin',  
Go fin' my sheep ergain."  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
Dat sheep it brack an' bad,"  
But de Shepherd He smile laik dat lil' brack  
It de onlies' lam' He had. [sheep]

An' He say: "O hirelin', hasten!  
For de win' an' de rain am col',  
An' dat lil' brack sheep be lonesome  
Out dere, so far fum de fol'.  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
Dat sheep it weak an' po'.  
But de Shepherd, He smile laik dat lil' brack  
He lub it des' all de mo'. [sheep]

An' He say: "O hirelin', hasten!  
For de frost am bitin' keen,  
An' dat lil' brack sheep des' shiv'rin',  
De storm an' de blas' between."  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
Dat sheep it ol' an' gray."  
But de Shepherd, He smile laik dat lil' brack  
Wuz fair ez de break ob day. [sheep]

An' He say: "O hirelin', hasten!  
For de winter it a'mos' here,  
An' dat lil' brack sheep you shear it  
'Tell its po' skin a'mos' clear."  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
Dat sheep am a wuthless thing."  
But de Shepherd, He smile laik dat lil' brack  
It fair ez a princely king. [sheep]

An' He say: "O hirelin', hasten!  
Lo, here dey ninety an' nine,  
But dere, way off fum de sheepfol',  
Dat lil' brack sheep ob mine."  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
De rest ob de sheep am here."  
But de Shepherd, He smile laik dat lil' brack  
He hol' it de mos'es' dear. [sheep]

An' He wander out dere in de darkness,  
W're de night wuz col' an' bleak,  
An' dat lil' brack sheep, He fin' it,  
An' lay it ergains' His cheek.  
An' de hirelin' frown: "O Shepherd,  
Dat sheep come back ter me!"  
But de Shepherd, He smile laik de Lord He  
An' dat lil' brack sheep am me! [wuz,  
—Ethel Maude Colson, in *The Independent*.

## Spurgeon's Deafness.

W HILE Spurgeon was still a boy preacher, he was warned about a certain virago, and told that she intended to give him a tongue-lashing. "All right," he replied, "but that's a game at which two can play." Not long after, as he was passing her gate one morning, she assailed him with a flood of billingsgate. He

smiled and said, "Yes, thank you, I am quite well; I hope you are the same."

Then came another burst of vituperation, pitched in a still higher key, to which he replied, still smiling, "Yes, it does look rather as if it is going to rain; I think I had better be getting on!" "Bless the man," she exclaimed, "he's as deaf as a post; what's the use of storming at him?" And so her ravings ceased, and were never again attempted.

## The "Bread and Butter" Psalm.

L ACK of employment is one of the most common causes of ill-nature, and this story, related by Lida M. Keck in the *Western Christian Advocate*, may bring a suggestion to some one who has no real need to be so afflicted:

A young woman was far from home in a strange city. She was in poor health, and compelled to call frequently upon a physician. This physician was a most devoted Christian. Once she went to him and said:

"Doctor, do you ever have the 'blues'? I am so lonely, homesick, and discouraged that I have a dreadful attack of them."

The doctor kindly replied: "I used to have them very frequently before I became a Christian, but now I am happy all day long."

"Well, doctor, can you prescribe a remedy for this very troublesome malady?"

"Yes," he answered, "take your Bible, go down to number — on — street and there you will find a man who is very sick. Go in and read to him the hundred-and-third psalm, which I always call the 'bread-and-butter' psalm. Then, before you leave, drop a quarter into his hand, for he is very poor."

The young woman, in utter amazement, said: "Why, the man would think I was very rude to come into his house and do such a thing as that. I really can't do it."

She left the office, leaving the impression that she would not go. But something led her on. By and by she found herself in a bare room, almost devoid of furniture and utterly destitute of common comforts. On the bed lay an invalid, face and hands emaciated, but with a countenance as bright as the sun. He was resting in the love of God. She approached the bed, and commenced to read the psalm as directed. At first she read mechanically, but soon the truth and beauty of the psalm burst upon her, and she read with her whole heart.

While she was reading a woman came in, and ere the psalm was finished the woman was in tears. Then she told the visitor that she was a stranger in the city, a dressmaker by trade, and that she knew no one and could get no work, so