

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

FAITH AND DUTY.

What shall I do, lest life in silence pass? And if it do, And never prompt the busy of noisy brass...

IMAGINARY DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Not all the disappointments which men and women note in their lives are disappointments which grow out of their failure to develop excellence of moral character...

Even in less directly selfish lamentations over what seem to be failures in one's past life, a man often looks at the relations between success and failure with eyes blinded by misapprehension...

Indeed, the habit of codding so-called disappointments may grow upon us that we become utterly unable to distinguish between the true and the false...

"I went to see her with the dim idea that I might, perhaps, be able to afford her a little comfort in her affliction, but I soon found from the heights in which she dwelt, that she had already appropriated all the comfort the Lord had to give to such as she...

"Oh, la, Missus, don't you feel sorry. De Lord is mighty good to dis poor cretur."

Certainly there is enough sadness in the world, and in the happiest life, without increasing it by any grief that has no foundation outside of the imaginative faculty.

give way to it. For our mistakes and follies, we may well have a godly repentance, but this is a very different thing from brooding over disappointments.

A HOUSETOP SAINT.

Not long since, by special invitation of Misses Jones and Brainard, who are employed by the Women's Home Missionary Society to labor among the lowly colored people of Columbia, S.C., I accompanied them to visit old Aunt Sally at the poor-house.

As it was "visitor's day," the outside surroundings were visibly clean. On entering, however, I was obliged to call to my aid every particle of will-power that I possessed in order to endure the sight of the complete wretchedness of the place.

"What a neat place heaven will be!" said one poor colored woman to us one day; and so, in that way, we thought of heaven, when we considered the blissful exchange for Aunt Sally.

Can there be such a thing as beauty amid such wretchedness? Yes, out of the depths of that helpless suffering and poverty, in the radiance of Aunt Sally's poor old black face shone the beauty of the Lord.

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"But you are helpless and blind, Aunt Sally."

"No, no, not blind. I sees Jesus. I don't want to see the way you sees."

"Not want to see with your eyes?" said I, quite surprised.

"No, Missus, for if de Lord wanted me to see, he'd not make me blind. De Lord has blessed me with a long bed of fiction."

"Blessed you with affliction?" I said.

"Yes, Missus, blessed me, or he would not give it to me. All he does is a blessing. De will of de Lord must be done. You're so good to me, but la, you can't help yourself; it's de spirit of the Lord. It works just like medicines, 'pears like to me it comes jes like a peach or an apple on a waiter."

"Are you not lonely?" feeling that I must say something.

"Oh, no, not lonesome, Missus, I done got plenty o' company—plenty of company at midnight. I see no time to get lonesome."

"You live so near to the Lord, then, that the devil never comes to trouble you. Does he, Aunt Sally?"

"Oh, la, now, he done tries to get in here every chance he gets. He's roun' dere now, a peekin in de do', but he can't come in here where de Lord is."

"But you have lain on this bed all these years, Aunt Sally; how can you stay so cheerfully?"

"Oh," said she, "I don't want to hear tell of years—if Jesus says 'stay,' I stay. When Jesus says 'come,' all de world can't stop me. I don't want to set de time; but he'll come, he'll come!"

Thus her simple faith in Christ took hold of every thing. We could say nothing. He must say it all.

'mansions;' then we sang the "Sweet By and By," and "We're going home to-morrow." As we finished, she lifted up her poor, crippled hands, while an almost ineffable smile lit up her thin, shriveled face, as she exclaimed, "Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps to-morrow."

And so we left her, waiting for the "sweet chariot to swing low," when the withered hands shall be stretched forth, and the blind eyes behold the King in his glory.—Chicago Standard.

MAN'S BROTHERHOOD.

If any man must fall for me to rise, Then seek I not to climb. Another's pain I choose not for my good. A golden chain.

WORDS FITLY SPOKEN.

One day, during the trying financial trouble through which our country has passed, a New York merchant sat in his counting-room studying how to steer his bark amid the threatening breakers.

An intimate associate of his entered, who was also suffering reversed. He was about forty years of age; possessed of a noble form and great business capacity.

"Wall, I am going to give up; it is no use to struggle any longer. I thought I had got through the worst of it, and had already weathered the point, but the blow has come. My notes have gone to protest; my credit is ruined. I have just left my store for good, and the next you hear of me will be from the morgue."

The merchant was astonished and bewildered at these words spoken by his associate. He sprang up, and forgetting his own troubles for the moment, seized the hand of his desponding friend, and shouted aloud:

"Why, man, what is the matter with you? Are you a coward? Have you forgotten your wife and children? Have you forgotten God? Do you believe that God will permit any thing to come upon his people that he will not give them strength to bear? You—a professing Christian in the prime of life!—how can you turn your back upon wife, children, and God, because you have been disappointed in business?"

He dropped into a vacant chair and sat in silence a few minutes; presently he arose, and with tears, said:

"I thank you. You have saved me. I will never be guilty of this again."

He returned to his business, made a favorable arrangement with his creditors, and was saved.

How much may be accomplished by a few brave words from one who cherishes an unshaken trust in God's overruling providence! The beneficial results are twofold—an unconscious deliverance from our own depression, and the rescue of others from a similar condition, possibly from suicide itself.

Never go gloomily, man, with a mind! Hope is a better companion than fear; Providence, ever benignant and kind, gives with a smile what we take with a tear.

WORN OUT.

I was proud of my wax-flowers. My English teacher praised them—she who had practiced on flowers for twenty years, and whose tiny rose-bud with its perfect stem and graceful curves commanded a higher price than great vases full of crude wax flowers often set up for ornament! But her brow clouded as she examined my bright autumn leaf.

"I want my Lily to have a pleasant childhood," Mrs. Mar used to say, "for there's trouble enough in after life." Her nursery was filled with toys, and her costly baby house shone like a fairy palace.

the house with the earnest enquiry "Who is going to amuse me?" Across the way she could see a poorly dressed but merry little girl busy with her one rag doll, caressing and talking to it from morning to night, and thought how stupid a life she must lead.

"How little doctors know after all," said Mrs. Mar, when he had gone. "Why, if I did not fix up new dainties to tempt her uncertain appetite, Lily would starve. As to her going out at all times, it would be the death of her. With all my bundling her up in fine weather, she forever takes cold. If she had some mothers she would not be alive."

Tom Smith was admitted to be at the head of all the classes. He had gained his position by the closest application; and had paid his bills by constant industry.

"But isn't our friend undertaking too much?" asked a thoughtful hearer, who had before spurred Tom on in his career, but saw that his face was now too pale.

"Better wear out than rust out," returned the farmer. "Tom is tough." But the test was coming. There was a contest for the valedictory, and Tom redoubled his exertions, neglecting both sleep and proper nourishment.

He dropped into a vacant chair and sat in silence a few minutes; presently he arose, and with tears, said:

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MOONLIGHT.

"As some people," says a writer, "seem to scout the idea of baneful effects from the rays of the moon, allow me to state a few facts known to me: In the year 1853, when running in a barque between San Francisco and Humbolt Bay, our provisions consisted on the down trip, in most cases, of elk meat purchased at Humbolt Bay, and invariably hung up in the rigging, covered with canvas."

"Upon two occasions, when two hind quarters from the same animal were hung up side by side, the crew some time in the night uncovered one of them, to cut off some pieces for bait for the numerous fishes that follow in our wake, and neglected to replace the canvas covering. In the morning the cook noticed that the meat had a slimy appearance, but not suspecting anything, cut off sundry slices to cook for breakfast. The result was that the whole ship's company were made sick, myself included, which the captain, on inspecting the quarter of the meat, decided was owing to the effect of the moon's rays, and ordered it to be thrown overboard; but the mate, ridiculing this idea, directed the steward to slice off more of the same for his dinner, and at the same time two of the crew ate the tainted meat."

"The result was that all three were made extremely sick, with symptoms resembling those of cholera—viz., vomiting, cramps, etc. The rest of the crew, who ate from the other leg, were not affected, and we ate from the one that

remained until our arrival in San Francisco. I have seen in China seas two or three instances of men who have slept on deck exposed to the rays of the full moon being attacked with 'moon blindness,' that is, unable to see in the night, although perfectly able to see in the day time. These attacks after a time wore off. Although not superstitious, I fully believe in the baneful effects of the moon's rays. I think that these effects are more prevalent in the tropical waters, especially in the Pacific and Indian oceans and only under cloudless skies."

ADELAIDE PROCTOR.

One day Charles Dickens, as he sat in the office of 'All the Year Round,' making his way through the mass of papers that lay on the table, was attracted and surprised by the singular merit of some lines which had been sent him. Such a discovery is always a refreshment to an editor, as he wades among the slough of manuscripts which surrounds him, and he glanced eagerly at the name with which the verses were signed. It was 'Mary Berwick.' Dickens had never before, to his knowledge, either heard this name or seen it in print, but there was the ring of true poetry in Mary Berwick's lines, he she whom she might, and so they were inserted in the next number of the magazine.

Months went on, and 'All the Year Round' had frequent contributions of Miss Mary Berwick among its contents. Dickens however, knew simply nothing about her, except that she wrote a legible hand, that he always by her own wish, addressed all communications to her to a certain circulating library in the west of London, and that when he sent her a check, she acknowledged it promptly, but in a very short, matter of fact way. At length, one winter evening, when Dickens went to dine with the Proctors, he happened to put in his pocket, to show them, the Christmas number of 'All the Year Round,' which was just coming out. He called their attention especially to what he said was a very pretty poem by Miss Mary Berwick. The author of 'Pickwick' remarked, to his astonishment, that those simple words of his were received by the whole family with much suppressed merriment. He could not in the least make out what was in the wind, but he took it good-naturedly, supposing it to be some home Christmas joke, and asked no questions. Next day the mystery of the unaccountable mirth of last night was cleared up in a letter from Barry Cornwall to Dickens. Mary Berwick was Adelaide Proctor. And from that time forward, Miss Proctor took an acknowledged place among English poetesses.—The Argosy.

PRAYER.

Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right. Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray.

Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay; Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.

Far is the time remote from human sight, When war and discord on the earth shall cease, Yet every prayer for universal peace Avail the blessed time to expedite.

Whatever is good to wish, ask that of Heaven, Though it be what thou canst not hope to see; Pray to be perfect, though material heaven Forbid the spirit so on earth to be.

But if for any wish thou dar'st not pray, Then pray to God to cast that wish away. —Hartley Coleridge.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

BONES IN THE BIBLE.

BY MRS. A. A. PRESTON.

"There's a new girl in No. 6," exclaimed Mary Stevens, running unceremoniously, as was her wont, into the room of her very dear friend and class-mate, Flora Williams, at "Glen-cove Seminary."

"A new girl in No. 6, do you hear, my love? and her name is 'Azy,' Azy Phillips. Did you ever hear, or read, or think of the like of such a Christian name?"

"It is a Bible name," said Flora, smiling and pushing back her exercise book. "Let me hear you spell it." "A-z-y, of course, or possibly, A-x-i-o. What other combination of elementaries could give the unique whole?"

You are mistaken, dear. It is A-c-h-s-a-h. Don't you remember the pretty little story of Achsh, the daughter of Caleb, and her wedding present? It is given in Joshua, and also in the recapitulation of that book in the first chapter of Judges. Achsh signifies ankle. There is but one person of this name mentioned in the Scriptures, and only in the connection I indicated, I think."

"Oh, dear me," said Mary, "what a queer girl you are to know so much about the Bible! I have never read it much, and what little I have read didn't do me any good. I'm afraid, for I was all the time

coming upon something that I did not understand. So I gave it up, thinking I would wait until I came to be older before I tried to read it."

"I have read it through five times," said Flora, "and that isn't much for a girl of eighteen, when you consider that if you read two chapters every morning and seven extra chapters every Sabbath, you will have the Bible read through in less than a year."

"This year I am reading my Bible by 'topics.' Father gave me a teacher's Bible with maps, proper names, chronologies, concordance, etc., in a beautiful binding for a New Year's present last vacation. By the help of the concordance I am looking out all the passages about Hope, Faith, etc. I find it very interesting. Next year I hope to take up the different characters in the Bible. I wish I could have the Bible on my tongue's end, as they say."

"Yes, it would be nice," replied Mary. "I have heard some one say, or read it somewhere, that any person who possesses a thorough knowledge of the Bible may be truthfully called 'cultivated.' But I am afraid I shall never possess that kind of culture, because, you see, were I to begin to read the Bible through by course, I should come plump upon some puzzling thing in the very first chapter that I couldn't think out, and that would discourage me utterly."

"I used to be troubled that way," said Flora, "and one day I said something about it to grandmother. What she then told me helped me bravely in the difficulty. She told me that when she was a school girl she heard an old minister, who was fond of making homely, practical illustrations, say that reading the Bible was like eating fish. That when he came to a hard place he left it and called it a bone. When he read the Bible in that way, he found plenty of good, nourishing meat, and never had occasion to choke over the bones. That the older he grew, the less bones he found, until, when he came to be an old man, with silvery hair, the book that he used to find as full of bones as a Connecticut river shad, was like a halibut, with only the one big bone in it of God's incomprehensibility, and that was in such plain sight that no one could stumble over it, and grandly served its purpose as a strong frame-work to keep the sweet, white, nutritious meat in place."

"Thank you," said Mary, stooping to kiss the radiant face of her friend. "I will go back to my room now and dust my pretty red Bible that my mother gave me when I left home, and begin to read it on the old minister's principle. I shall stick to it this time, you see if I don't!"

THE YOUNG MERCHANTS.

Two country lads came at an early hour to a market-town, and arranging their little stands, waited for customers. The market hours passed along, and each little merchant saw, with pleasure, his stores steadily decreasing, and an equivalent in silver shining in his little money-cup. The last melon lay on Harry's stand, when a gentleman came by and placing his hand upon it, said:

"What a fine melon! What do you ask for it, my boy?"

"The melon is the last I have, sir; and though it looks very fair there is an unsound spot in it," said the boy, turning it over.

"So there is," said the man; "I think I will not take it. But," he added, looking into the boy's open countenance, "is it very business like to point out the defects of your fruit to customers?"

"It is better than being dishonest," said the boy modestly.

"You are right, little fellow; always remember that principle, and you will find favor with God and man also. I shall remember your little stand in the future."

"Are those lobsters fresh," he continued turning to Ben Williams.

"Yes, sir; fresh this morning; I caught them myself," was the reply, and a purchase being made, the gentleman went away.

"Harry," what a fool you were to show the gentleman that spot in the melon. Now you can take it home for your pains, or throw it away. How much wiser is he about those lobsters I caught yesterday? Sold them for the same price I did the fresh ones! He never would have looked at the melon until he had gone away."

"Ben, I wouldn't tell a lie, or act one either, for twice what I have earned this morning. Besides I shall be better off in the end; for I have gained a customer, and you have lost one."

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