



The Family Circle.

"TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW."

BY MARIA A. WEST.

"The Christian should be like a little bird that sits on its twig and sings, and lets God think for it."—Luther.

Like Luther's bird, I sit and sing,
Not knowing what the day may bring;
Nor have I any need to know,
My Father doth protect me so.

I do the work he gives to me,
Not heeding what or where it be;
And more my Father will not ask,
Than that I do my daily task.

He sees, he knows, my every need,
Then why should I take careful heed?
He bids me cast on him my care,
And every burden he will bear.

If trouble comes, to him I fly,
Who will my every want supply;
Each day will bring some new surprise,
Some token of his watchful eyes.

Who, then, so free and glad as I,
With such a Friend for ever nigh?
Beneath his shadow I may hide,
And, peaceful, in his love abide.

And so I calmly sit and sing,
Content with what each day may bring.
My Father orders what is best,
And in his will I find my rest.
—American Messenger.

WHY IT WAS BROKEN.

BY FLORENCE B. HALLOWELL.

Miss Lydia Darrow was not at all fond of travelling, and she had a comfortable, pleasant home and plenty to occupy her time; but she made a point of paying her sister, Mrs. Edgeworth, a visit of two weeks every fall.

"I don't want the children to forget the only aunt they have," she would say, as she packed her trunk for her annual pilgrimage.

Mr. Edgeworth was a wealthy man, and lived in a large and flourishing town, where his wife was considered one of the leaders of society. There were two children, a son and a daughter, the latter Miss Lydia's favorite. It was therefore with much concern that the aunt heard, just before starting on her journey one autumn, that her only niece was engaged to be married. She could think of little else as the cars bore her toward her sister's home, and she felt very glad that she was so soon to see the one on whom Mildred's choice had fallen. She was drawing a mental picture of her niece's betrothed, imagining him all a man ought to be, when her reverie was disturbed by two gentlemen who took the seat directly in front of her. Their conversation, which was carried on in a very loud key, was at first of no interest at all to Miss Lydia, being merely an interchange of expressions of surprise that they should have met so far from home, and she paid no attention to it.

But presently the sound of a familiar name fell on her ears.

"I hear Edgeworth's daughter is to be married," said the elder of the two men.

"Yes, to young Hilton," said his companion. "Well, it's a good match for her."

"I suppose so. Hilton's a first rate fellow, but rather fond of his glass."

"Oh, yes; but that never has any weight with a girl."

"Perhaps she don't know of it."

"You may depend she does. He makes no secret of his love of liquor. But she would marry him if he drunk a gallon a day, I suppose. A girl always imagines she will act the part of a guardian angel to her husband, and the more people try to convince her to the contrary, the closer she will cling to the fellow. A warning has no effect except to make her more determined to have her own way. Women are all alike

in that respect," and the speaker laughed.

The conversation drifted to other subjects, and nothing more was said about Mildred Edgeworth; but Miss Lydia had heard enough to make her feel exceedingly grave. The words, "rather fond of his glass," were ominous to her, for she knew how much they meant. For years she had been an indefatigable worker in the cause of temperance, and many and sad had been the scenes she had witnessed in houses where the husband was "rather fond of his glass."

Her first thought was that she would tell Mildred what she had heard. But the longer she considered this plan, the stronger grew the feeling that this would not be wise. The girl would probably tell her lover of the conversation, and he would find it easy to convince her that it amounted to nothing. And she, loving him, would be only too anxious to believe his asseverations that he was in no danger and was "quite able to take care of himself in that respect."

And Miss Lydia knew that an appeal to Mr. Edgeworth to save his daughter from a marriage with a man of Mr. Hilton's principles would be worse than useless, for her brother-in-law was a man who considered an occasional glass of wine almost a necessity to existence, and he had often laughed at Miss Lydia for the strictness of her views in this respect.

"I must think out some plan to save Mildred without letting her suspect what I am trying to do," she thought. "Oh, if she could only see what I have seen she would never have thought for a moment of marrying a man cursed with a taste for liquor."

So the wise aunt controlled her desire to utter a warning, and listened very quietly to Mildred's praises of her betrothed.

"I am considered very fortunate by the girls of my set," said the girl, with a gay laugh, "and am the the object of a great deal of envy, Aunt Lydia. In appearance, wealth and position Howard is the superior of every other gentleman of my acquaintance."

"And what about his principles, my dear? I hope they are good; for your happiness will depend more on them than on the color of his eyes or the state of his bank account."

"That sounds just like you, aunty," laughed Mildred. "But I am glad to say that Howard is a perfect gentleman, kind, generous and amiable."

"Is he strictly temperate, my dear?"

The color rushed into Mildred's face.

"No, I believe not," she answered, "but of course he never drinks more than is good for him. You know we don't think quite so highly of the virtues of temperance as you do, aunty."

"I know that, my dear," sighed Miss Lydia.

"And I feel sure Howard will never give me any cause for uneasiness," continued Mildred. "I can trust him, I know."

"I am very glad you feel so," said Miss Lydia, "and sincerely hope your trust is well founded."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Edgeworth, and was not renewed at any future time. But Miss Lydia was as earnest as ever in her desire to save her niece from a marriage with Mr. Hilton, and had laid a plan by which she hoped to succeed. When about to return home she asked as a special favor that Mildred should accompany her for a stay of a few weeks.

"You have never paid me a visit, you know," she said to the girl, "and I would like to have you all to myself for a little while before you are married."

Mildred was not proof against such persuasion, and so, a few days later, she found herself in the pleasant, old-fashioned house which had been the home of her aunt for nearly fifty years.

"I want you to go with me to make some calls, Mildred," said Miss Lydia, the morning after her return. "I have received notice that an Irish family in my district is in need of help."

Mildred, full of health and happiness, was ready for anything.

"I will go out with you every day," she said. "I will even assist you in the distribution of temperance tracts, and attend meetings of the Band of Hope."

Miss Lydia smiled.

"You will see and hear a great deal that will make you think very seriously on the subject of temperance," she said. "You can depend on that."

The house occupied by the Irish family

was a dilapidated, weather-beaten structure, situated in a low quarter of the town, and the woman who answered Miss Lydia's knock was in keeping with her home. She was arrayed in a torn and dirty gown, and her hair looked as if it had never been combed.

"Your name was sent to me last night as that of a person needing assistance," said Miss Lydia, as she entered the house and seated herself upon a broken wooden chair, "and I have called to see what I can do for you."

"It's everything I want, sure," said the woman, beginning to cry at once, "an' yester night Mike made this on me head wid a chair," pushing the hair from her temple to disclose a ragged wound. "It was mad wid the drink he was."

"And you have seven children?"

"Yes 'em, there they be in the garden, bless 'em," and she nodded toward the rear of the house.

"How long has your husband been addicted to drink?" asked Miss Lydia.

"These foive years, ma'am. He used to be a good sort of a man, was Mike, but he got to takin' a glass o' beer, an' thin a glass o' whiskey, an' now it's drunk he is every day in the week."

At this moment the door in the rear was pushed open, and a little boy of about ten years of age came in on crutches.

"Here's a pace o' Mike's work, too," said the mother. "Pat was as strong a little lad as ever walked till one night his fayther knocked him over wid a slat o' the bed. He's been like that iver since."

"How terrible!" exclaimed Mildred, to whose tender heart the white, wan face of the child had appealed strongly. "Can't you induce your husband to stop drinking, Mrs. Ryan? Why don't you talk to him?"

"More'n me has talked to him, Miss," answered the woman. "But he won't stop for nobody, now he's got a taste for the stuff."

"I will see what can be done for your relief," said Miss Lydia, rising. "I think some of my friends can find work for you by the day. Meanwhile, make use of this to give your children something to eat," and she took a two dollar bill from her purse.

The next house at which Miss Lydia stopped was large and handsome. It stood some distance back from the street, and was surrounded by shrubbery and flowers.

"This is certainly a happy home," thought Mildred, as she followed her aunt into an elegantly furnished parlor. "What a contrast to Mrs. Ryan's."

Two ladies rose at their entrance, who were introduced to Mildred as Mrs. Yost and Mrs. Ferris, mother and daughter. The conversation turned on the subject of temperance almost immediately, and Mildred became deeply interested in the account Mrs. Yost gave of her experience in establishing a coffee-house in the lower part of the town, where a great many sailors and boatmen lived. Mrs. Ferris was very quiet, and made only one or two remarks; but Mildred saw that she listened intently to all that her mother said.

"We are going to start out this afternoon to raise money to keep the establishment up," said Mrs. Yost, as the visitors rose to go. "Mary will take one part of the town and I another. It isn't pleasant work to beg, but I think we will wake people up to take an interest in the coffee-house."

"Let me give my subscription now," said Mildred, taking a five-dollar bill from her purse, "and I hope you will let me go with you sometime when you visit the coffee-house. I should like very much to see how it works."

"It will give me great pleasure to have you go with us at any time," said Mrs. Yost. "We have three good workers down there—sturdy German women, who have had good reason to take an interest in the cause. But my daughter and I go down to advise and direct two or three times a week. All we need to make the thing a perfect success is money. How I wish the rich men, who give so much to colleges already liberally endowed, would turn their attention to temperance, and see how greatly it is in need of pecuniary assistance. But we must be patient, I suppose."

"Mrs. Ferris is one of the prettiest women I have ever seen," said Mildred to Miss Lydia as they left the house, "but what a sad face!"

"It is little wonder to those who know her history that her face is sad," said Miss Lydia.

"Has she been unhappy?" How is it possible, in such a beautiful home as that!"

"She left that beautiful home ten years ago to become the wife of a young lawyer who was rather fond of his glass," Mildred. "She thought her influence over him was so great that he would never do evil so long as she was near; but shesoon saw her mistake. He drank more deeply every year, in spite of her prayers and entreaties. He grew to love whiskey better than wife or child; his practice decreased, and he finally shot himself while laboring under an attack of delirium tremens. It was a blessed release for poor Mary, and she came home at once to live with her mother. She never mentions the name of her husband, but she has never recovered from the shock of his terrible death."

"But her child? That must be a great comfort to her, Aunt Lydia."

Miss Lydia was silent a moment, then said in a low voice:

"Her child is in an asylum—a hopeless idiot. His father in a moment of drunken rage struck him a terrible blow on the head. He was ill for many weeks, and when he grew strong again it was found that his reason had fled."

Mildred was too much shocked to speak, but her white, pained face showed how deeply she was affected. She was very grave during the rest of the day, and she seemed to be absorbed in thought. Miss Lydia made no remark upon her niece's mood, for she felt sure that already the medicine she was administering was taking effect, and that the result would be all that she could wish. Mrs. Yost was as good as her word, and called a day or two later to take Mildred to the coffee-house. And after spending several hours there, Mildred came home full of joy of the new project. She could talk of nothing else.

"I had no idea temperance was so interesting, Aunt Lydia," she said, "or that there was so much work about it. I think, if you care to have me, I will stay four weeks instead of two. I want to help Mrs. Ferris a little."

"My dear, you certainly know how glad I would be to have you stay any length of time," said Miss Lydia, "and it gratifies me very much to have you take so deep an interest in the cause which lies so close to my heart. I felt sure that your indifference rose from a want of knowledge only."

That evening a young lady called on Miss Lydia; a Mrs. Laughton, to whom Mildred took an immediate fancy, and with whom she became very intimate.

Ada Laughton was not happy in her marriage, and seldom referred to her husband; but she was too proud to lay her heart bare to even her best friend, and Mildred was of far too delicate a mind to ever ask the cause of her occasional melancholy. She did not learn in what the skeleton of Ada Laughton's house consisted until the day previous to that on which she had decided to return home, when she went to bid her friend good-bye. The front door of Mrs. Laughton's house was ajar, and the servant was cleaning the steps.

"I suppose I may go in?" said Mildred. "Yes, I think Mrs. Laughton is at home," said the girl. "She is sitting up-stairs in her own room, I believe."

Taking the privilege of an intimate friend Mildred ran up to Ada's room and knocked. There was no answer and she pushed open the door and looked in. She started back with an exclamation of horror. There on the floor lay Herbert Laughton drunk. His red face, heavy breathing and the foul fumes of whiskey which filled the room told the terrible story only too plainly. Mildred had seen him frequently when calling at the house, and had been very much pleased with his appearance and manner, never having had the faintest suspicion that he was ever intoxicated. This revelation was therefore both surprising and terrible.

Ada sat by the window gazing out on the street, her face wearing a look of stony despair. Mildred approached her and touched her on the shoulder. She turned with a wild start.

"Mildred!" she exclaimed. "Oh, why did you come?" and then throwing her arms about her friend she burst into tears, the most agonizing sobs tearing their way from her overcharged breast.

"You have seen my skeleton at last," she said, when at length she grew calmer. "I hoped you never would. There lies the man who promised at God's altar only three years ago to love, cherish, and protect me;