

## HOME CIRCLE.

## THOSE WHO NEVER DO WRONG.

'Tis hard to labour from morn till night,  
To plough the furrow and pluck the weeds,  
For those who poorly the task requite,  
And care but little for all our needs;  
But the hardest work is to get along  
With those who never do anything wrong.

You're sure to meet in the course of life  
With men and women who freely state  
Their own opinion, with yours at strife,  
And you may endeavour to set them straight;  
But you'll find it wiser to jog along  
Than argue with those who never do wrong.

They go their way, with a smile, no doubt,  
At us who suffer such pains and aches  
And mental torture, at finding out  
That we've committed some grave mistakes;  
With pride unbroken, erect and strong,  
Are those who never do anything wrong.

You may note their faults and attempt to prove  
Wherein they err, but as well essay  
With a cambric needle that rock to move  
That fills the passage and blocks your way;  
You may talk by the hour with tears in your eyes,  
But they'll never confess nor apologize.

They never come with a tearful face,  
And tender kisses, to make amends  
For wounds inflicted; or say with grace,  
"I'm sorry! forgive me, and let's be friends!"  
But stern and unyielding they move along,  
Convinced they have never done anything wrong.

This is a work-a-day world we're in,  
And toils and troubles their round repeat;  
But out of the tangles some gold we spin;  
And out of the bitter extract some sweet;  
But the hardest work is to get along  
With those who never do anything wrong!

## TENNYSON—MACDONALD—LOWELL.

BY REV. A. M'LEOD, D.D., OF BIRKENHEAD.

A sense of the spiritual realities and chances for doing good, as present and near to us, is a favourite mood with Lowell. It prevades his early and beautiful poem, "Sir Launfal." And as this poem gives me an opportunity of bringing American and English poetry into comparison—at least, at one fair testing-point—I shall dwell for a little over it. The subject is the search for the Holy Grail. This Grail is the cup out of which Jesus drank at the Last Supper. According to the legend, it was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and was kept by his descendants for many generations, until, in the lapse of years, through the infidelity of its keepers, it disappeared. Then it became a favourite enterprise of heroic people—knights of Arthur's Court and the like—to go forth in quest of it. We have three descriptions of this quest—one by Tennyson, one by George MacDonald, and one by Lowell. It is these I mean to compare.

Tennyson's first poem on the theme is "Sir Galahad." And this is what the blameless knight describes:

"Sometimes on lonely mountain meres  
I find a magic bark;  
I leap on board: no helmsman steers—  
I float till all is dark.

"A gentle sound, an awful light—  
Three angels bear the Holy Grail  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail."

He next handles the subject in the "Idyls of the King." And there it is the nun, Percival's sister, who finds it. Coming to her brother one day, her eyes all aglow—

"And, O my brother Percival, she said,  
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail.'"

Then she tells of a heavenly music she had heard at the dead of night:

"And then  
Streamed through my cell a cold and silver beam,  
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail—  
Rose red with beatings in it, as if alive—  
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed  
With rosy colours leaping on the wall."

Now what Tennyson exhibits is the very cup—charged, glorified, and living, it is true—but still the thing itself. Listen now to George MacDonald:

"Through the wood, the sunny day  
Glimmered sweetly sad;  
Through the wood his weary way  
Rode Sir Galahad."

He rode past churches, through forests, through villages  
With human crowds in them, then—

"Galahad was in the night  
When man's hope is dumb.  
Galahad was in the night  
When God's wonders come.  
Wings he heard not floating by,  
Heard not voices fall,  
Yet he started with a cry—  
Saw the San Greal!"

The vision passed. Galahad gave up, and then resumed the quest:

"But at last Sir Galahad  
Found it on a day,

Took the Grail into his hand  
Had the cup of joy,  
Carried it about the land  
Gladsome as a boy."

But what had he found? What did he hide from all  
human seeing in his bosom? What did his friends search  
for when he died?

"When he died, with reverent care,  
Opened they his vest,  
Seeking for the cup he bore,  
Hidden in his breast.  
Nothing found they to their will,  
Nothing found at all;  
In his bosom deeper still  
Lay the San Greal."

There can be no question that this is a clear advance on Tennyson's treatment of the subject. Tennyson's is literal, MacDonald's spiritual. The San Greal with the latter is that Word of God, which the young man in the Psalm, finding, hides in his bosom, that he may, in the power of it, cleanse his way. Let us now turn to the ethical treatment of the theme. Sir Launfal has long vowed to find the Grail. On a bright day in June he dreams that he is still young, and setting forth from his castle to fulfil his vow:

"It was morning on hill, and stream, and tree,  
And morning in the young knight's heart."

But as he stepped out of the gloom of his gateway into the light—

"He was 'ware of a leper crouched by the same,  
Who begged with his hand, and moaned as he sat;  
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came,  
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill.  
The flesh 'neath his armour did shrink and crawl.  
And midway its leap, his heart stood still  
Like a frozen waterfall.

For this man so foul, so bent of stature,  
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,  
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,  
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn."

In Sir Launfal's vision long years of toil and suffering go past. At length, one Christmas, he returns from what has been a bootless search. Winter is on all the land. It is winter also with himself. He is old. A usurper has seized his castle in his absence, and he is turned away from his own gate. But standing there, musing sadly on the past, in the presence of the gate that will not open for him more, he hears a long-forgotten voice. It is the voice of the same miserable leper who sickened him years before when he was setting out, and who now again begs, for Christ's sweet sake, an alms. But Sir Launfal is of another spirit now, and divides his one remaining crust with the sufferer, and breaks the ice at the streamlet near by, that he may bring him a drink, saying as he did so:

"I behold in thee  
An image of him who died on the tree:  
Thy also hast had thy crown of thorns,  
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorn:  
And to thy life were not denied  
The wounds in the hands and side.  
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me—  
Behold, thro' Him, I give to thee."

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes, and the past came back to Sir Launfal, and he remembered with shame how he had loathed this poor object before. But as he mused, a light shone round about the place:

"The leper no longer crouched at his side,  
But stood before him glorified,  
Shining, and tall, and fair, and straight,  
As the pillar that stood at the Beautiful Gate;  
Himself the Gate, whereby men can  
Enter the temple of God in man."

And listening to him, lo! the voice becomes the voice of Christ, and this is what he says:

"Lo, it is I, be not afraid!  
In many climes without avail,  
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;  
Behold, it is here, this cup which thou  
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;  
This Crust is My Body broken for thee,  
This water His blood that died on the tree;  
The Holy Supper is kept indeed,  
In what we share with a brother's need.  
Not that which we give, but that which we share—  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who bestows himself, with his alms feeds three—  
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me!"

Then Sir Launfal awoke from his dream. He had found the Grail at his very door, in his very hand. He acted out the teaching of his dream. His castle became the refuge of the children of sorrow. He shared all he had with the poor.

"And there's no poor man in the north countrie,  
But is Lord of the Earldom as much as he."

Do I require to say that we have here a handling of the old legend, higher than either of the other two?

## THE NEW ENGLAND QUAKERS.

Mr. John Fiske in "Harper's Monthly" for December shows why the Puritans of New England were so strongly opposed to the Quakers of that region:

"The Puritan laid no claim to the possession of any peculiar inspiration or divine light whereby he might be aided in ascertaining the meaning of the sacred text; but he used his reason just as he would in any matter of business, and he sought to convince, and expected to be convinced, by rational argument, and by nothing else. It followed, from this denial of any peculiar inspiration, that there was no room in the Puritan commonwealth for anything like a priestly

class, and that every individual must hold his own opinion at his own personal risk.

"We can now see what it was that made the Puritans so intolerant of the Quakers. The followers of George Fox did lay claim to the possession of some sort of peculiar or personal inspiration. They claimed the right to speak and act as 'the spirit moved them,' and they sometimes sought to exercise this alleged right to an extent that, in the eyes of the Puritans, threatened the dissolution of all human society. Nor were these obnoxious claims confined to the decorum of written or spoken discussion. The Quakers, who so aroused the wrath of Boston in the seventeenth century, were not at all like the quiet and respectable Quakers whom one meets to-day in Rhode Island or in Pennsylvania. Many of them were very turbulent and ill-mannered, to say the least. They were in the habit of denouncing all earthly magistrates and princes, and would hoot at the Governor as he passed along the street. They would allude to the Bible as the 'Word of the Devil,' and would rush into church on Sundays and interrupt the sermon with untimely and unseemly remarks. A certain Thomas Newhouse once came into one of the meeting-houses in Boston with a glass bottle in each hand, and, holding them up before the congregation, knocked them together and smashed them, with the discourteous remark, 'Thus will the Lord break you all in pieces!' At another time a woman named Brewster came to church with her face smeared with lamp-black. And Hutchinson and Cotton Mather relate several instances of Quaker women running about the streets and coming into town-meeting in the primitive costume of Eve before the fall. Such proceedings were called 'testifying before the Lord'; but one can well imagine how they must have been regarded by our grave and dignified ancestors, who could not have forgotten, moreover, the odious scenes enacted at Munster by the German Anabaptists of the preceding century. It is not strange that the Puritans of Boston should have made up their minds that such things should not be permitted in the new community which they had endured so much to establish. Several of the Quakers were publicly whipped, or stood in the pillory. They were forbidden to enter the colony under the penalty of death; and at last three of their number, who had twice been dismissed from the colony with words of warning, and had twice been 'moved by the spirit' to return and 'testify,' were hanged on Boston Common.

The persecution of witches by the Puritans has been magnified most unduly, and their treatment of the Quakers has been greatly misrepresented. The researches of the historian are doing much to relieve their memory from the odium that has been heaped upon it in many ways by those who have sought in this way to bring discredit upon their religious character.

## THE EDITOR AND THE COBBLER.

One day an editor hard at work, trying to devise a plan to make his delinquent subscribers pay their dues, was called upon by a shoemaker who dropped in to give the editor some hints on running a newspaper. The editor, pleased at the opportunity, gave the man his best cane-seat chair, honoured him with a cigar, and listened attentively to what he had to say. Quoth the shoemaker, as he lit the weed—"Your paper needs a hundred improved features; you do not grasp the topics of the day by the right handle; you don't set the locals in the right type; your telegraph news is too thin, even the paper itself is poorly manufactured, not thick enough, and of too chalky white; you don't run enough matter, and what you do run ain't of the right sort; your idea on Disestablishment is wrong, and in regard to 'We Colin' you stand bad. I tell you these things because I want to see you succeed. I tell you as a friend. I don't take your paper myself, but I see it once in a while; and as a paper is a public affair, I suppose I have as good a right to criticize it as anybody. If a man wants to give me advice, I let him; I'm glad to have him, in fact."

"That's exactly it," said the editor, kindly; "I always had a dim idea of my short-comings, but never had them so clearly and convincingly set forth as by you. It is impossible to express my gratitude for the trouble you have taken, not only to find out these facts, but point them out also. Some people, knowing all these things, perhaps nearly as well as you, are mean enough to keep them to themselves. Your suggestions come in a most appropriate time. I have wanted some one to lean on, as it were, for some weeks. Keep your eye on the paper, and when you see a weak spot, come up." The shoemaker left, happy to know that his suggestions had been received with such a Christian spirit.

Next day, just as he was finishing a boot, the editor came in, and picking up the mate, remarked: "I want to tell you how that boot strikes me. In the first place, the leather is poor; the stitches in the sole are wide apart, and in the uppers too near the edge. These uppers will go to pieces in two weeks. It's all wrong, my friend, putting poor leather in the heels, and smoothing it over with grease and lamp-black. Everybody complains of your boots; they don't last, the legs are too short, the toes too narrow, and the instep too high. How you can have the 'gall' to charge 22s. for such boots beats me. Now, I tell you this because I like to see you succeed. Of course I don't know any more about shoemaking than you do about a newspaper, but still I take an interest in you because you was so well disposed towards me. In fact I—" Here the exasperated cobbler grabbed a lapstone, and the editor gained the street, followed by old knives, pincers, hammers, and awls, sent after him by the wrathful cobbler.

## SPEAK TO INDIVIDUALS SINGLY.

In an address recently given by H. L. Hastings of Boston, he says: "It will be well for us to learn to speak to individuals singly. 'A congregation of one' may be large enough to call forth all our powers in proclaiming the great news of salvation. Often we may save sinners one by one. If you had a bushel of bottles, and wanted to fill them with water, you would not think the quickest way would be to get a fire engine and hose and play over the heap—especially if the corks were all in—but you would be likely to take a