



The Family Circle.

SHUTTING UP HER FOLD.

The fire burns dimly on the hearth,
The light is turned down low,
And wintry winds through bare old trees
In fitful gusts of blow.
The mother pulls the curtains down
To keep away the cold;
Tucks tightly in the children's beds—
She's shutting up her fold.
She covers up the little hand,
Thrown o'er the coverlet;
She wipes the place on baby's cheek
Which one stray tear had wet;
Kisses the little ones who sleep,
And smooths the hair of gold,
Then kneels and "prays the Lord to keep"—
She's shutting up her fold.
O little ones, fenced round secure
With mother's love and care,
What looks of peace and trust and joy
Your sleeping faces wear!
Outside to-night some children, who
Are tall and large and old,
Are wishing they could be once more
Sheltered in mother's fold.

—Susan Teall Perry, in *The Home Maker*.

WHY THEY HADN'T COME BEFORE.

Mrs. Stanton was leader of the Woman's Missionary Society and prayer-meeting in Brownville. The small attendance at these meetings had been a great trial to her, and now that the fall house-cleaning, canning, and sewing had begun, the excuse, "I am too busy to come," was still more common. The addresses heard at the meeting of the Woman's Board had made an impression on Mrs. Stanton. That very week she called on the few regular attendants of the society and had an earnest talk with each; the result of this was that eight ladies pledged themselves to make it a special subject of prayer that the meeting might be blessed, and to do all they could to bring others to attend.

Then Mrs. Stanton began studying geographies, encyclopedias, missionary books, and pamphlets, and asking questions about the Sultan and Porte, until Mr. Stanton said he must buy some cranberries, as they had Turkey three times a day.

The afternoon for the meeting came, and the ladies came—not five or six, but a room full; and still they came, some looking with surprise at seeing others there; some saying, "I didn't expect to find you here!" "How did you happen to come?" "Well, you are the last one I thought I'd see here!"

Instead of beginning the meeting with the usual singing of familiar hymns, two selections from an anthem were beautifully given by a sweet singer from the choir. Then brief selections of Scripture were read by different ladies, each one making a few comments. Short prayers were offered, specially petitioning a blessing on the meeting.

Then Mrs. Stanton announced the subject of the meeting, and introduced a Turkish lady in full native dress, who told the pitiable story of life in a harem. She was asked many questions about the general condition of Turkey and missionary work there. The questions continued so long that the Turkish lady seemed disconcerted, and throwing off her veil, said she would be Mary Halton again, as her stock of information had given out. None except the ladies who gave the first questions knew that they had been carefully prepared beforehand in order to call forth the impromptu questions which followed.

One lady had prepared a large map of Turkey. Upon this she located mission fields, which were then briefly described by different ladies. Another had pictures of Turkish scenes which she had cut from old mission papers, geographies, or prospectus sheets of Bible dictionaries, and had mounted them on cardboard. A letter from a missionary in Turkey was read, and several short items were given. Mrs. Stanton spoke earnestly of the need of mission work in Turkey and of our duty

to help. Fifteen minutes were spent in prayer and in singing familiar hymns.

Then recess was announced, during which grapes and peaches were passed, and the cheerful hum of voices filled the room. Presently Mrs. Stanton called the attention of the ladies and told them of the inspiration she had at the State meeting, and the resolve of herself and others to do more to make the meetings interesting and to try to increase the attendance, and above all to pray more earnestly than ever before that their little society might be a means of doing much good.

"And now," she continued, "I am going to ask each lady present to tell how it was that she came to-day, when heretofore so many of us have been too busy to come."

As she finished speaking smiling glances were exchanged, but no one spoke until, to the surprise of all, the stillness was broken by quiet little Mrs. Perkins, who scarcely ever went anywhere because of "so much to do."

"Last Tuesday," she said, "Mrs. Evans came over and asked me about coming to the meeting to-day. I told her that I had house-cleaning and canning to do, and company coming Saturday. She asked me to let her send her hired girl over to help me part of two days, and she wouldn't let me refuse. It did help me so much. I've enjoyed the meeting so much that I shall try to come after this without having a hired girl lent me."

The ice having been broken, others followed with their stories in quick succession. Mrs. Moore said:

"Mrs. Stanton didn't come to help me about my work or to ask me to be here, but the polite note that she sent inviting me, made me feel that it would be rude to stay at home; so I came as a guest, but now I feel that I am a part of the meeting."

"I had a note, too, asking me to pray for a fuller attendance at the meeting. I have always felt that all my work and care of keeping boarders, and mother too feeble to be left alone, was excuse enough for me not to come; but I found I couldn't pray for a fuller attendance without trying hard to answer the prayer so far as my own self would count one to attend. I've been getting up earlier and planning my work this week, and I found I could come."

"You know I have no one to leave the children with, and I can't take them with me. Yesterday Mrs. Scott came over and got me to promise to come to-day and let her Fanny stay with my children. I feel safe about them, and am glad to be here."

"I can scarcely ever get a horse to drive this time of year, for all the teams are kept busy. To-day Mrs. Moore came around for me almost a mile out of her way."

"Nobody ever asked me to come to this meeting until this week. I never had hard feeling about it, though, for I thought it wasn't for the likes of me," said Mrs. Brunner, the washerwoman. "I have got wonderfully rested sitting still here; and I've found that I'm lots better off than the poor heathen women you're talking about."

"I promised Mrs. Norton I would come, but when she came along to-day she found me with such a headache that I had given up coming. She took the mending out of my hands, rubbed my head, and gave me her headache cure, and at last, in spite of my opposition, she got me here, and I admit that the fresh air and the walk did help me; and this meeting is better for headache than the mending would have been."

"My husband wanted to take me riding, and I must say I felt almost out of patience that I had promised Mrs. Edwards to come here to-day. When she found out about it, she offered me her horse after meeting is over; so George wouldn't be disappointed, and I am sure he will like to hear about the meeting, for he has an uncle who is a missionary."

"I had intended going to the florist's. The gardener sent word that this was his only free afternoon to see about my plants. At first I thought this an excuse from meeting; the note I received showed me how wrong I have been to neglect the meeting. It is my earnest desire to be more faithful in all ways."

"I had a caller, Mrs. Harris, here, whom most of you have met. She came at about time for meeting. When I mustered courage to invite her to come here

with me, she said she would gladly do so, as she always attends such meetings of her church at home."

"I was invited out to tea and declined on account of the meeting; and my hostess said she was glad, for since inviting me she had received a note inviting her here, and she wanted to come, but didn't feel free to postpone my visit; so we are both here to-day."

"To-day was the only time for ten days that my dressmaker could make the basque of my new fall suit. I am glad I gave it up and came."

Those who were best acquainted with Mrs. Ray understood that giving up the dress was a sacrifice.

"I am so afraid to ride that it is a trial to drive down here; but I have prayed specially this week that I might be less nervous to-day; I am sure the prayer was answered, and thoughts of the meeting will stop me thinking of the horse as I return."

"Well, Sisters," said Mother Poulter, as she polished her spectacles, "three or four years ago I decided to put my mantle on daughter Jane, so far as attending this meeting was concerned. 'I'm getting too old,' I says to her. Well, when Jane told me about her note from Mrs. Stanton, I happened to be reading about Anna the prophetess preaching in Jerusalem when she was four score years and four. I'm going to attend meetings more, though I can't help much."

"I am sure you are all surprised to see me here," said Mrs. Thomas, "for I've always said that this meeting and its money ought to be used for the poor people among us; and that's what I told Mrs. Lewis when she asked me to come here to-day. 'I'm sure,' she said, 'it would be a good plan to have such an aid society as you suggest. Why don't you start one?' That set me thinking, and I went around trying to organize it; and the truth is that the only ones who gave me much encouragement were the regular members of this Foreign Missionary Society. Mrs. Stanton was the first one who encouraged me. She said, 'It is all one work for the Lord, whether it is home-missions or foreign missions or work for the poor among us; I will gladly help you all I can.' So I am here to help her in this meeting and thus work all I can."

"I have not felt opposed to foreign missions like Mrs. Thomas," said Miss Bentley, "but I thought my mission Sunday-school class and boys' evening school were enough to excuse me from this society; but I couldn't find it in my heart to pray, as requested, for a fuller attendance here, and then stay away myself. Duties do not conflict, and I am sure that it is my duty to help this society and that I need to get help from it."

"Both to get help and give help, as Mandy, my colored girl says," said Mrs. Stanton, smiling. "Can we not each one say, 'This is my meeting; I will pray and plan to make it more and more helpful in its work?'" —*Advance*.

NICOTINE AND THE CLERGY.

The New York *Herald* has long been famous for journalistic enterprise, and we are glad to see it in quest of truth concerning moral issues. It has been asking the opinion of eminent ministers as to the use of tobacco, and lately published their replies. These devout men unanimously agree that the proper use of tobacco is not to daze the human brain, or scent the human breath.

Rev. Wm. R. Alger, of Boston, says: Smoking is a vice, because it is master of labor, time and health; intoxicating liquor and tobacco are the chief enemies of the human race, therefore no clergyman can be held guiltless who does not set a personal example in opposition to both.

Canon Farrar's reply is characteristic: It seems to me that when man has so many natural wants, it is not desirable to add to them another want, which can only be regarded as artificial.

Good Chaplain McCabe asks: How can a man reprove boys for smoking if he does it himself? No, save us from clergymen who smoke! I am glad the Methodist Church has decided not to admit young men to her ministry who are addicted to the practice.

Dr. Cuyler says he never smoked a cigar in his life, and never expects to, and

assures the inquiring *Herald* he "fears that some valuable lives have ended in smoke; and there are times when a cigar in a minister's mouth does not help the gospel that comes out of it, and is not a wholesome 'ensample to the flock.'"

Joseph Cook's answer reveals his fine sense of equity, and also his courage in fastening guilt where it belongs, although the guilty one be "reverend."

More than one important religious denomination, notably the Methodist, now regularly makes inquiry of candidates for the ministry as to their habits concerning the use of tobacco. A large number of conferences refuse to accept habitual smokers as preachers. I believe there should be a reform in this matter of smoking among young men, but nothing prevents it so much as the practice of a few distinguished preachers, whose habits in other respects are exemplary, but who in regard to smoking, set a bad example to the young.

Edward Beecher denounces the use of tobacco as an unqualified sin:

My deepest feeling is excited by the great extent to which ministers of the Gospel are involved in the sin of using tobacco. It not only injures them physically but mentally. Against unanswerable evidence of the widespread evils—physical, intellectual and moral—they subject themselves to a habit of ruinous self-indulgence, and do all that example can do to induce others to do the same. Then of what avail is it for them to preach to men to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust? While ministers of the Gospel oppose one with vivid eloquence, they advocate the other by example, and are a rampart to defend it against all assaults.

Newman Hall, the great friend and teacher of the London workingmen, gives his opinion of the weed, and his experience with it in his own quaint style:

I began to smoke at eight years of age, and left off the same day. The cane cut from the hedge made me sick, and all my experience since has made me more sick of what I regard a dirty, costly, tyrannical and unhealthy habit. The practice should be especially avoided by ministers. There are in every church some who will be injured by following it. It often leads to drinking, wastes time and costs money which is needed for better objects.

Lyman Abbott's reply is argumentative and exhaustive, we can only quote it fragmentarily, at its strongest points, as they appear to us:

The physical evils that result from the tobacco habit are notorious. The moral evils appear to me also serious.

Whatever may be the imagined benefit of smoking to overworked men (and women? If it is a sedative, who need it more than the wives and mothers?), it is by substantially universal consent an injury to the young. And yet not only the young men in our stores and colleges, but the boys in their teens are inveterate smokers.

The minister should teach by his life; he should set an example which he is willing his congregation should follow; he should walk in the paths in which he desires that the boys and young men who look up to him should walk. As I personally do not wish to see the boys in my Sunday-schools, nor the young men in my church and congregation smoking, I do not propose to set them the example of the smoker. And I cannot but think that, on the one hand, if all ministers were of this opinion, and set a universal example against the cigar, it would count for something; and on the other hand, that there is a certain incongruity in a smoking clergyman preaching a sermon on crucifying the lusts of the flesh or denying ourselves for the sake of our neighbors.

The venerable Dr. McCosh, believing with all consistent Presbyterians that woman's influence is mighty and to be feared, declares that,

Smoking will be put down when young ladies declare that they will not look with favor on a young man who smokes, and when congregations declare that they will not take a minister who smokes. —*Union Signal*.

PARDON cannot be bought either with money or work. It is a free gift and always on the ground of repentance and faith.