

## The Family Circle.

WRITTEN FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

### SABBATH SUNSET ON LAKE ROSSEAU.

BY WM. H. MURRAY.

Long miles of pearly lake, a softest breath  
That scarce the sleeping waters trembleth,  
Or noiseless stirreth in the poplar bough.  
Curving island shores all mirrored now;  
In dual loveliness the sombre pines,  
The gleaming birchen stem, and tangled vines,  
And slopes of mossy stone. The sun at rest,  
A golden splendor filling all the West,  
And robing mere and bank and lonely height  
With the glory of celestial light.  
Then dreamy crimson shores in purple seas;  
A Sabbath stillness; thoughts of low-bent knees,  
Of men that worship, haloed saints that sing,  
And bruised prophets grandly entering in.

### THE POINT OF VIEW.

#### I.

'There they are, Ephraim! I see Matilda's purple bonnet. How that locomotive does screech! I'm afraid the colts won't stand it. This way, Abigail! Hurry in, Matilda! These colts are restless.'

Ephraim Grant's sisters, Miss Matilda and Miss Abigail, were proceeding to obey the injunctions of their sister-in-law when a lad with a great flourish of whip, and many urgent "get ups" drove up to the little railway station.

'Why, there's Jim!' exclaimed Miss Abigail. 'Now Ephraim we'll go right on home.'

'You can speak for yourself,' said Miss Matilda. 'I'm going to stay at Ephraim's all night. I never was so shaken up in my life; that's a dreadfully rough road we've just come over.'

'Now I was glad of the shaking,' laughed Miss Abigail. 'I had eaten such a hearty dinner, and shaking is good for rheumatism, Matilda.'

'It's very easy to see the silver lining to somebody else's cloud,' retorted Miss Matilda, 'and it's downright irritating in you, Abigail, to be always glad when other folks are sorry. Guess that woman with the sick baby didn't like the rough road much better than I did!'

'Good-bye,' called her sister from the old phaeton. 'Pleasant night to you, Matilda.'

'Pleasant night indeed!' repeated Miss Matilda, who had finally settled herself in the wagon. 'Now if that isn't like Abigail and nobody else! When she knows that my head's aching to split, and that I've got rheumatism so that I can fairly hear my knees squeak when I bend them, and that I'm just done out with all the talking I've lived through this last week! What's the matter with you, Ephraim? You haven't opened your mouth since we got off the train.'

'Oh, I was just waiting for my turn,' replied Ephraim slowly. 'There's nothing I'd like better than to hear about my boy and his family.'

'Well,' began Miss Matilda, 'in the first place, just as I told you before we started, it would have been a great deal better for you and Sarah Jane to have gone there instead of sending Abigail and me to visit them. They don't feel pleasant about it, I'm sure. They said 'twas two years since you had been there.'

'But they know why,' said her brother. 'What with scarlet fever, and measles and every other catching disease last year, and all the trouble I've had getting help on the farm this year, and Sarah Jane so taken up with her sick old mother, and—'

'That isn't a bit like Joe!' interrupted Mrs. Grant indignantly. 'If he does feel so, Lucy must have put him up to it.'

'Likely enough,' replied Miss Matilda.

'Poor Joe! He's got lots of burdens and he used to be such a jolly boy! He looks older, I tell you, and he's getting gray, and wrinkles on the forehead and around the eyes. Lucy—Oh well, you always say

that I look on the dark side. Maybe I do. I hope so, I'm sure.'

'Oh, don't be so aggravating, Matilda!' cried Mrs. Grant.

'Well,' began Miss Matilda again, 'if you will have it nobody can blame me, I'm sure. Lucy's a city woman, with city ways and bringing up, and she's no manager.'

'How is poor Lucy?' inquired Ephraim, kindly. 'I always liked Lucy.'

'Well, that accident to her knee is turning out bad enough. She is lame for life; has to wear a machine to keep the bones in place, and it weighs five pounds. I guess it makes her about sick most of the time. Joe has a helpless wife on his hands for the rest of his life. She can't get about much, and that reminds me of another thing. She stays home from church because she isn't comfortable in the pew, and so Joe has to go alone with the children, and naturally the next thing we'll hear will be that he doesn't go either. And talking of the children, they set the broom on fire in the parlor grate one day and then ran out with it all ablaze and laid it on the sitting-room sofa. If I hadn't been there that whole house would have been in flames. And if you'd believe it, those children weren't punished one bit. Lucy just took them into the bedroom and talked with them a little, and when she told Joe about it she actually laughed! Oh! those children are coming up in a sad way. I must tell you another thing they used to do. The gate-posts are high and hollow, and it was a favorite amusement to climb up and take off the top of the post and then drop the kitten in clear down to the bottom. Then they'd let down a rope for her to come up on, and they really trained that poor beast to be drawn up on that rope. They called it "rescuing the perishing." There was nothing under heaven that they didn't do with that cat, and her tail wasn't its natural size while I was there.'

'Oh dear!' sighed Mrs. Grant. 'It is really dreadful to think of the children running wild like that, and allowed to be cruel too!'

'Lucy means well,' continued Matilda, 'but she's queer, not a bit like our folks. Now she doesn't manage right, she keeps two girls.'

'Two girls!' interrupted her sister-in-law.

'Yes, two girls. Of course being lame and in the city she'd naturally have one. But instead of doing the plain sewing and mending she keeps a girl to help with the room-work and children and do that sewing, while she sits dabbling with paints. She said something once about selling the pictures, but our Lucinda Harris paints far better, and you know Lucinda tried to sell hers and couldn't. And I know Joe's business worries him sometimes, and that he has hard work to make both ends meet.'

'Dear me!' sighed Mrs. Grant. 'I'm afraid things are in a bad way there, Ephraim. I guess we'll just have to go there and see for ourselves.'

'Not to-night,' replied Mr. Grant, calmly.

'Here we are at last. Hullo, Frank! Bring a lantern!'

'I'm going straight to bed,' said Miss Matilda, as soon as she entered the house. 'I'm actually too tired to speak. I hope I haven't said anything to worry you. Very likely you haven't taken it as I meant it. I'd rather not have said a word, but you would have it.'

Ephraim Grant and his wife retired late that evening, and poor Mrs. Grant had a restless, uncomfortable night. She arose the next morning feeling still more distressed in mind, and firmly resolved to take the first opportunity to visit the disordered household of her son.

'I've had a dreadful night, Ephraim,' she said, almost crying. 'I dreamed that all the cats on Joe's place (and there were dozens of them too) had broken their knees and were all going about like kangaroos, and Lucy had jammed both children into

the gate-post, and put the top on tight, and then set fire to it.'

'When we get the chores done up we'll drive over to see Abigail,' said her husband. 'You'll find things aren't as bad as you think. Matilda's going to spend the day with Jane Loomis, so we'll have Abigail to ourselves.'

'Things may not be so bad, but Matilda never made that all up, Ephraim. There couldn't be so much smoke without some fire.'

But Ephraim only whistled softly and went out to feed the calves.

#### II.

There was an odd smile on Miss Abigail's face when her brother Ephraim and his wife entered her kitchen that morning.

'So glad to see you!' she cried. 'Somehow I was expecting you. So Matilda has gone to see Jane, has she? Take off your things and sit down by the stove. I suppose Matilda has told you all about her visit, and perhaps I shall be "bringing coals to Newcastle" if I tell my story, but I had such a lovely time that I'm afraid I can't keep still. It's such a happy home, Ephraim! 'Twould do you and Sarah Jane good to see it, and I do wish you could go. And they wish so, too; they sent a thousand loving messages to you both, I've been in some places where the folks seemed to turn all their blessings into worries, but it seems as if a trouble couldn't be a trouble long after it got into Joe's house, for before it knows what has happened, it has become a blessing instead.'

'Now that's good!' said her brother, heartily.

'But Matilda says Joe isn't jolly any more, and that he is growing old. She says he is gray and wrinkled too,' said Mrs. Grant.

'Ephraim was as gray as a rat when he was thirty (yes, he was Sarah Jane), and Joe's thirty-five. And Ephraim and Joe both have the same trick of smiling up to their eye brows and making wrinkles doing it. As for his being jolly, he is something better now, Sarah Jane.'

'Matilda says he carries some heavy burdens,' continued Mrs. Grant, in a despondent tone.

'Most of us do if we live long enough, and don't insist on slipping them off our own back onto somebody else's,' replied Miss Abigail.

'He's got a helpless wife,' said Mrs. Grant mournfully. 'She's of no use whatever in the family that I can see.'

'Did Matilda say that?' inquired Miss Abigail. 'Now, see here, Sarah Jane, Joe's your only son. When he was a youngster you thought he ought to have everything he wanted, and as far as you could, you gave it to him, and you kept right on that way as long as you had him at home. It is natural enough that you shouldn't want anything to cross him now, but, bless you! if Joe is going to have the joys and comforts of married life he is bound to have the cares and burdens too. I suppose you would like to cover his path with roses, but if you did there'd be some thorns among them, and Joe would prick his toes. Mrs. Ames, Lucy's mother, feels just the same about Lucy.'

'I'm heart-sorry for poor Lucy,' said Ephraim.

'You needn't pity Lucy,' replied Miss Abigail. 'She's a happy woman, with a husband who adores her, and those loving children. Yes, I know there is a little grave under the old elm tree, but Joe and Lucy say it has brought heaven nearer. They have had sickness, but there are worse troubles than that. Money is a little short sometimes, but they manage to live very comfortably. Joe going to give up his religion and stop going to church! Joe says Lucy's life is the best sermon he ever had, and besides Lucy is going to church herself next Sunday for the first time. She will go right along now, I presume.'

'I'm sure I'm wonderfully relieved that you look at everything this way,' said Mrs.

Grant, 'but why does Lucy keep two girls and amuse herself with painting instead of doing her sewing?'

'Lucy found it was much cheaper to keep the girl than to do the work herself,' said Miss Abigail. 'Lucy sets a good price for her pictures, sells all she can do to one store-keeper there. She paints all sorts of things, calendars, dinner-cards, china, and so on. She wants to tell Matilda all about it, but Matilda was downright spiteful, got mad any time she heard or saw painting, and she hurt Lucy's feelings very much. Then Lucy helps Joe a great deal with his accounts.'

'Matilda doesn't seem very much pleased with the children,' said Ephraim.

'Those children are the dearest, brightest little things I ever knew!' cried Miss Abigail.

'Dreadfully mischievous, I should say,' remarked Mrs. Grant, 'and not well brought up.'

'Ephraim,' said Miss Abigail, bursting into a hearty laugh, 'do you remember the time we were having protracted meetings, and there was a neighborhood prayer-meeting at your house, and Joe sawed the fore-legs off the two easy-chairs, and then fitted them neatly together? Deacon Potter sat down first in one of them. He was a quiet, steady little man, and the chair held up all right. Then Mrs. Bond came in (she weighed a hundred and seventy-five pounds) and sat down puffing and panting, with a kind of bounce, in the other armchair. Down she came, and Deacon Potter gave a great start, and down he came too, and being a thin little creature he broke his collar bone, and you had to pay all the doctors' bills. Ephraim, for he was a sort of skinflint and insisted on it. I suppose Matilda told about the broom. Well, those children really had a notion of helping by brushing down the soot, and they were hurrying out to the kitchen with the broom when Matilda tripped at them and scared them so that they dropped it on the sofa and ran.'

'Well, Sarah Jane,' said her husband slowly, rising from his chair, 'I rather guess we've not what we came for, and we might as well be starting for home.'

Sarah Jane sat very silent on the way to the old farmhouse, and Ephraim felt encouraged to talk a little himself.

'It all depends on what they call the point of view,' he said thoughtfully. 'Now, here's our place. In the summer when I take the front road I think there was never anything neater and prettier than the old farmhouse with its coat of white and green. What with the orchard on the upside and the orchard on the down side, and the trees on each side of the house, and your high trellises all covered with grape vines, I can't see more than a glimmer of the barn back of the house. The grass in front looks so fresh and green, and the posy beds are so cheerful, and the vines over the porch make everything seem so cool and shady, that I think there never was such a place. But when I take the back road there isn't one old shed that I can't see way up the road, and while I try to keep things up as tidy as I can, there's no denying that the view is nowhere near as handsome. Abigail always takes the front road when she comes here, and she's always talking about your geranium, or your vines, or some fixing or other. Now Matilda takes to that back road as natural as a duck to water. If she has control of the reins she always comes driving in at our back gate, and she's sure to find out that the chicken-house needs painting, or the pig-sty smells, or the glass is broken in the barn windows, or the milk pails out on the bench are getting rusty. It's all my place, front and back, but most things in life have the two sides to 'em, and why on earth don't folks choose the point where they'll get the prettiest view?'—*Susan Curtis Redfield, in The Interior.*

A cablegram announces the death in Africa of Dr. George Steel, one of the medical missionaries of the Free Church in the Dark continent, after five years' labour.