

The Family.

STRAYED FROM THE FLOCK.

THE wind goes sobbing
Over the moor;
Far is the fold, and shut its door;
White and still, beyond terror and shock,
Lies the foolish lamb that strayed from the flock,
While overhead, from its frozen branch,
With a tender pity, true and staunch,
Thus sings the robin.

The wind howls, heavy
With death and sorrow,
To-day it is there, may be I to-morrow;
Yet I'll sing one tune o'er the silent world,
For the little lamb that never grew old,
Never lived long winters to see,
Chanting from empty boughs like me,
Bought once so leafy.

The snowflakes cover
The moorland dune;
My song thrills freely, but I sing on,
Why did God make me a brave bird soul
Under warm feathers, red as a coal,
To keep my feet cheery and bright
To the very last twinkling of wintry light
Whistling thine is all over?

Why was I given
Bold, strong wings
To bear me away from hurtful things,
While thy poor feet were so tender and weakly,
And thy faint heart gave up all so meekly,
Till it yielded at length to a safe hand
That laid thee like down, nor try to stand?
Was it hand of heaven?

The wind goes sobbing
(Thus sang the bird,
Or else in a dream it's voice I heard);
Nothing I know, and nothing I can,
Wisdom is not for me, but man,
Yet some snow pure, snow soft, not snow cold,
May be singing for lambs strayed from fold,
Beside the peo or robin.

—Dinah Mulock Craik.

A FAMILY GRACE.

A FEW years ago a little poem was printed in a somewhat obscure newspaper, which at once began to be copied far and wide. Evidently it had touched some common heart-experience and thus won immediate and wide-spread recognition, yet it was the narration in verse of a very simple little story. The opening verses represented the farmer's wife wearily contemplating the toils and cares of the day that lay before her, and the refrain of each verse was:

"'Tis a wonder girls will wed."

But evening came and with it the farmer, who, as he prepares for supper, praises his wife's neat kitchen and the savory meal she has in readiness for him, and then he says that no other farmer in all the country round has such a smart, good wife as he, and that all the neighbours know it and envy him his happy home; all of which so changes the feelings of the farmer's wife that she forgets her complaints and weariness in rejoicing that she has such a good, kind husband, and the conclusion she finally expresses is:

"'Tis no wonder girls will wed."

All of which conveys simply and beautifully the lesson that there is no sweeter of daily toil like a loving appreciativeness. It is a grace of the spirit that is especially valuable and uplifting in the home, and that should be carefully cultivated and frequently permitted expression. Every one knows by experience the effect, even upon the physical strength, of words of appreciation and encouragement. The story is familiar of the fireman who was attempting to scale a perilous ladder in order to save a human life jeopardized in a burning building. He seemed to waver and be almost ready to abandon his attempt when some one in the crowd below cried, "Cheer him!" The crowd caught at the suggestion and sent up cheer after cheer which so reinvigorated the almost exhausted man that he redoubled his efforts and energy and the jeopardized life was saved. There is scarcely any human being who is not susceptible to the effect of words of encouragement and appreciation. Few advance so far in any path of success that they are beyond caring for such words, and scarcely any are so callous through ignorance or oppression that they cannot be inspired to effort by words of kindness and encouragement. But it is in the home especially that the grace of appreciativeness is most valuable and beautiful. Much of the work pertaining to home life is monotonous and wearing, and this is true of the work both of wife and husband. Unless loving appreciation sweetens and elevates daily toil, married life is in great danger of degenerating into a humdrum, prosaic, depressing routine of care and work. The husband is apt to make everything subservient to his getting to business in the morning, and in the evening he comes home with exhausted vitality and wishes only for an opportunity to rest. But if he have an appreciative heart of love for the wife who has all day "stayed by the stuff," he can easily brighten all the atmosphere of the home by a few words that will show that he can forget himself to think of her and her cares and toils. He can let her know how glad he is to reach the haven of home after the day's turmoil, he can take notice of the pleasant, orderly house and the well-appointed table, and give his wife credit for these good results of her labour. Or if she has been prevented from accomplishing all that might be desirable in these respects he can lighten her anxiety and comfort her heart by refraining from fault finding, and by words of palliation for whatever may be unaccomplished. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox with strife," said the inspired writer, and no fact of home or married life is more apparent than that loving appreciation and sympathy will lighten and alleviate all domestic trials and difficulties and heighten all domestic joys.

Correspondingly the same kind of considerate appreciativeness is due from the wife to the husband. Men are not so dependent as women on the strength that comes from the love and cheer of home, because they have the constant stimulus of outward circumstance and the ambitions and competitions of business to inspire them. Yet few men are indifferent to or incapable of being cheered and better fitted to meet the daily anxieties and confining toil which business life imposes, by words of loving appreciation from wife and children. Conjugal love is doubtless a hardy plant, but too often its root, strong and vital though it be, is kept buried out of sight and the blossoms and beauty it might develop in a bright sunshine and atmosphere, are almost wholly missed out of the home.

But there is a two-fold truth in regard to appreciation and sympathy and their expression that needs to be carefully recognized, that is that they must not be too constantly drawn upon, and they must meet with instant responsiveness when they flow. Many a husband returning from his own day's toil and finding his wife burdened and weary with the care of house and family would be glad to speak words of cheer and sympathy, but they go unsaid because his wife is "in a temper." She has already such a high appreciation of her own trials that his mention of them tends only to aggravate her, and cause her to repulse as of no value or importance his expressions of appreciation. No more blighting atmosphere is possible to the buds and flowers of domestic love than this atmosphere of temper. The fountain of human sympathy has a tendency to stop flowing when drawn upon too imperiously or too frequently. Words of appreciation and love should come frequently in the home and they should always meet with instant response.—Mrs. H. E. Starr, in *The Interior*.

THE SIDEWALK ARTIST.

"There is only one real failure in life possible; and that is, not to be true to the best one knows."

"Perhaps you don't believe that, sir," said a voice.

I looked up from the smooth flag-stones where the sentence was written, and saw a tall, thin man, the famous sidewalk artist of Euston Road, London. "Famous," I mean, since his death; few appreciated his work while he lived.

"Yes," I answered. "I do believe it most heartily, because I think when Canon Farrar wrote it, he wrote it out of real experience."

"Most men, though, think success is measured by what they get in this world, isn't that so, sir?"

"I'm afraid it is. But how is it with you? Don't you believe real success ought to be measured by something we can see or feel?"

"By what we can feel,—yes, sir," he answered, quickly.

This was my first talk with the sidewalk artist, and it interested me so much that I had many other chats with him. He was always cheerful, modest, uncomplaining.

Early in the morning he began his work on the sidewalk, first sweeping the great, smooth, flat stones clean with a small brush. Then he would mark out a number of panels, about two feet square, close up against the wall. Each one of these panels he filled with a sketch in coloured chalks, working with a skill and rapidity truly wonderful.

Sometimes it would be a series of marine views, sometimes portraits of political celebrities, oftener still quiet landscapes, green fields and blossoming meadows.

On public holidays he would be at his work by three o'clock in the morning, and on one of these days, I remember, he had covered forty feet of sidewalk with his pictures, some of them showing genuine talent. Ten minutes after he had finished this task it began to rain as it can rain only in London, and in two minutes the work of six hours was completely washed away.

By noon the sun came out, the stones dried off, and he was at work again. The first thing he did was to write out his favourite sentence, which I afterwards learned was his daily motto.

"There is only one real failure in life possible, and that is, not to be true to the best one knows."

One panel was always reserved for these words, which were written plainly in white chalk.

One day I asked him why he did not try to get work as a draughtsman, or look for a place as a teacher of free-hand drawing.

"Oh, I'm no good off the stones, sir. When I take a pencil in my hand I can't do anything. You see, this is my place. I was born to this work. When I was a small boy, my mother used to set me in Tottenham Court Road and I would draw on a blackboard. You see, sir, this is the best I know, and while some people may think my life is a failure, I try to think it is worth something because I try to live up to the best I know."

A few weeks ago this man died in an obscure alley near Drury Lane. To the best of my knowledge, he died of "intermittent starvation," like thousands of the London poor. I was curious to know something more about him, and after much questioning, I found the wretched hovel where he had lived. An old woman who had been with him in his last moments told me what I had partly suspected.

"He gave away most of 'is earnings, sir. 'E wa'n't like the rest of us 'ere. I've know'd 'im to give 'is last penny to a 'ungry little girl wen 'e 'adn't anything to heat 'imself 'all day."

Poor sidewalk artist! He lies buried in the desolate spot where the London poor have their final resting-place. But the time will come when Christ shall reward him with the reward which belongs to one who believed in "being true to the best one knows."—Robert Chevalier.

THE OLD PASTOR.

"Yes, things in the church are dull—at a standstill. Parson Miles ought to spur a little."

John and I were sitting in the front porch on Sabbath afternoon. I said to him:

"Well, I must say I'm getting tired of the same old thing. Now, when I was at Spencerville, where they've just got a new minister, there was so much going on and everything so lively! There were all the ladies fixing up the parsonage, and everybody calling there, and presents, and the house-warming; dear me! It all seemed to make so much good feeling."

"That's it," said John. "There's no feeling at all here. Parson Miles is a good enough man, but he's slow—yes, rather slow. It sometimes comes over me, Maria, that pr'aps we need a change, though I wouldn't be the one to start the idea."

"No, indeed," I said; "but still he's been here a long time."

"Yes, and getting a little old. A younger man, now, would liven things up. We could pay him a better salary, and a good setting out. The church is well able to do it."

"There's no fault to be found with Bro. Miles, though," I said, for I couldn't find it in my heart to hear him run down.

"Not a bit. It's only that—well—only that, pr'aps his usefulness here is at an end. What do you say, Maria, to driving over to hear Parson Tuttle this evening, just for variety? He's more my style—beats and whacks away, and wakes folks up."

"What!" said I, "clear over to Radnor?" It was ten miles and more.

"Yes," he said; "I'll hitch up Prancer, and we can make it in an hour."

I saw he was rather restless, and rather liked the idea of a ride behind the colt, so I made no objection. As we got near Radnor there were lots of folks on the way to church.

"Great many out for evening worship," I said, "our folks don't turn out so well."

"Parson Tuttle's a man that draws," said John; "keeps up the interest, you see."

There was quite a crowd in the entry, and, as we were waiting for some one to show us to a seat, we overheard a man say:

"You'll hear something worth hearing to-night. Mr. (I couldn't get hold of the name, though I tried) is going to preach."

I was afraid John had set his heart on hearing Mr. Tuttle, but as far as I was concerned, I didn't mind hearing a stranger.

"He's a strong speaker, yes, strong—that's just the word. We're always glad when we get him as an exchange. Wonder is a man like him's let stay so long in a country living. None of your hop-and-jump sort—don't waste any force hammering out sparks, but goes at it and drives in the truth square and solid, and then clinches it—yes, sir, he just clinches it—that's the very word."

I could see the folks were expecting something a little more than common by the way they looked as they settled into their seats. I was looking about a little, trying to see if anybody I knew was there, and didn't look toward the pulpit at all till I heard the minister's voice, and then I almost jumped from my seat. Then I turned and stared at John, and he stared at me. It was Parson Miles as sure as you live!

If it hadn't been in church I should 'a laughed right out to see John's blank look. But I sobered down, and then I couldn't help seeing how those people listened. It was plain, they considered Parson Miles no such small doings; and it set me to noticing him myself a good deal sharper than I'd been of late.

Then I noticed the sprinkling of grey in his hair and beard, and somehow the tears would come into my eyes as I began thinking over the long years he'd been among us. My heart was warmed as I remembered the tender way in which he used to hold out little ones as he baptized them. I couldn't think of a time of trouble or of joy when his face had not been good to see. I couldn't remember a time of sickness when he hadn't brought strength and comfort, and I could almost hear how often his voice had seemed to bring down a beam of hope and faith as we stood by an open grave.

When he came to his text, John gave me a little poke, for if you'll believe me, it was the same we'd heard in the morning. But I had to confess to myself I hadn't listened much; for I'd got into the way of thinking "Brother Miles' sermons didn't edify me any longer. I thought to myself, though, that if I hadn't listened then, I would now, and when I saw the man we'd heard in the entry give a little nod to the other man once in a while, as much as to say, "Didn't I tell you so? That's one of his clinchers." I actually began to feel a little bit scared; wondering whether some of these Radnor folks mightn't take a notion to give our pastor a call.

I think John, as well as I, was a little proud to have folks know he was our minister when the hand-shaking came, when meeting was out. And when some one congratulated him at hearing such preaching all the time, he took it just exactly as if he'd always considered Mr. Miles the greatest preacher going.

We didn't speak a word for more than half the way home, and then John said:

"I say, Maria, there is such a thing as going farther and farther worse."

"Well," said I, "if that's what you mean, we've been faring just about the same."

"No," said he, "that isn't what I mean; and after a while he said:

"Maria, how much bigger salary ought we to raise for a preacher?"

I was right up and down discouraged to hear him go back to that, for I'd been all the time hoping he'd been thinking pretty much as I had. But I didn't say anything. He went on:

"Yes, it ought to be done. Things need a stirring up, and I'm going to stir 'em. He jerked the lines too, so that Prancer gave a jump. "That old parsonage wants lots of repairing. I'll talk to the men about it, and then couldn't some of you women folks see about new carpets, and papering and things?"

I said "Yes," although there was a choking in my throat as I thought of doing it for folks I didn't care for; and it came face to face, before me the idea of our pastor going to seek a home among strangers. I had a longing in my heart to do better by him and his than ever I'd done yet, and a feeling that he could do more for us now that he was getting a little older than he could do as a young man. But I didn't say anything; indeed, John didn't give me a chance, for he kept right on:

"Yes, Maria, we'll set things humming. We won't stop till we've done the thing up right, and then we'll wind up with a rousing big house-warming—but it shall be for the old parson, Maria—and we'll let him know before we get through that he's worth ten times more to us than all the young ones that ever lived. Get up, Prancer!"—*South-Western Presbyterian*.

ALWAYS NIPPING.

A JUDICIOUS wife is always nipping off from her husband's moral nature little twigs that are growing in wrong directions. She keeps him in shape by continued pruning. If you say anything silly she will affectionately tell you so. If you declare that you will do some absurd thing, she finds some means of preventing you from doing it. And by far the chief part of all the common sense there is in the world belongs unquestionably to women. The wisest things a man commonly does are those which his wife counsels him to do. A wife is a grand welder of the moral pruning-knife. If Johnson's wife had lived there would have been no hoarding up of orange peel, no touching all the posts in walking along the streets, no eating and drinking with a disgusting voracity. If Oliver Goldsmith had been married he never would have worn that memorable and ridiculous coat. Whenever you find a man whom you know little about, oddly dressed, or talking absurdly, or exhibiting eccentricity of manner, you may be sure that he is not a married man, for the corners are rounded off, the little shoots pared away,—in married men. Wives have generally much more sense than their husbands, even though they be clever men. The wife's advice is like the ballast: it keeps the ship steady.—*Ruskin*.

THE PULPIT.

THE LABOURER'S CLAIMS.*

BY T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D. D.

THE outrageous behaviour of a multitude of labourers towards their employers during the last three months—behaviour infamous and worthy of most condign punishment—may have induced some employers to neglect the real Christian duties that they owe to those whom they employ. Therefore I want to say to those to whom these words may come, that all shipowners, all capitalists, all commercial firms, all master builders, all housewives, are bound to be interested in the entire welfare of their subordinates. Years ago some one gave three precepts for becoming a millionaire: First, spend your life in getting and keeping the earnings of other people; secondly, have no anxiety about the worments, the losses, the disappointments of others; thirdly, do not mind the fact that your vast wealth implies the poverty of a great many people.

If you desire to do your whole duty to the men and women in your service, first of all, then, pay as large wages as are reasonable and as your business will afford. Not necessarily what others pay, certainly not what your hired help say you must pay, for that is tyranny on the part of labour unbearable. The right of a labourer to tell his employer what he must pay, implies the right of an employer to compel a man into a service whether he will or not, and either of these ideas is deplorable. When any employer allows a labourer to say what he must do, or have his business ruined, and the employer submits to it, he does every business man in the United States a wrong, and yields to a principle which, carried out, would dissolve society. Look over your affairs, and put yourselves in imagination in your labourer's place, and then pay him what before God and your own conscience you think you ought to pay him.

Do not be too ready to cut down wages. As far as possible pay all and pay promptly. There is a great deal of Bible teaching on this subject. Malachi: "I will be a swift witness against all sorcerers, and against all adulterers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages." Leviticus: "Thou shalt not keep the wages of the hireling all night unto the morning." Colossians: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." So you see it is not a question between you and your employe so much as it is a question between you and God.

Do not say to your employe: "Now, if you don't like this place get another," when you know they cannot get another. As far as possible once a year visit at their homes your clerks and your workmen. That is the only way you can become acquainted with their wants. You will find how much depends on the wages you pay or withhold.

Moreover, it is your duty as employer, as far as possible, to mould the welfare of the employe. You ought to advise him about investments, about life insurance, about savings banks. You ought to give him the benefit of your experience. There are hundreds and thousands of employers in this country and England, I am glad to say, who are settling in the very best possible way the destiny of their employes. Such men as Marshall, of Leeds, Lister, of Bradford, Akroyd, of Halifax, and men so near at home it might offend their modesty if I mentioned their names. These men have built reading-rooms, libraries, concert halls, afforded croquet lawns, cricket grounds, gymnasiums, choral societies for their employes, and they have not merely paid the wages on Saturday night, but through the contentment and the thrift and the good-morals of their employes, they are paying wages from generation to generation for ever.

Again, I counsel all employers to look well after the physical health of their subordinates. Do not put on them any unnecessary fatigue. I never could understand why the drivers on our city cars must stand all day when they might just as well sit down and drive! It seems to me most unrighteous that so many of the female clerks in our stores should be compelled to stand all day, and through those hours when there are but few or no customers. These people have aches and annoyances and weariness enough without putting upon them additional fatigue. Unless those female clerks must go up and down on the business of the store, let them sit down.

Then, I would have you carry out this sanitary idea, and put into as few hours as possible the work of the day. Some time ago—whether it has been changed I know not—there were one thousand grocer clerks in Brooklyn who went to business at five o'clock in the morning and continued until ten o'clock at night. Now, that is inhuman. It seems to me all the merchants in all departments ought, by simultaneous movement, to come out in behalf of the early closing theory. These young men ought to have an opportunity of going to the Mercantile Library, to the reading rooms, to the concert hall, to the gymnasium, to the church. They have nerves, they have brains, they have intellectual aspirations, they have immortal spirits. If they can do a good round day's work in the ten or eleven hours, you have no right to keep them harnessed for seventeen.

But, above all, I charge you, O employers! that you look after the moral and spiritual welfare of your employes. First, know where they spend their evenings. That decides everything. You do not want around your money drawer a young man who went last night to see *Jack Sheppard*. A man that comes into the store in the morning gaily with midnight revelry is not the man for your store. The young man who spends his evenings in the society of refined women, or in musical or artistic circles, or in literary improvement, is the young man for your store.

But you are not only to be kind to those who are under you—Christianly kind—but you are also to see that your boss workman, and your head clerks, and your agents, and your overseers in stores are kind to those under them.

And, then, I charge you not to put unnecessary temptation in the way of your young men. Do not keep large sums of money lying around unguarded. Know how much money there is in the till. Do not have the account books loosely kept. There are temptations inevitable to young men, and enough of them, without your putting any unnecessary temptations in their way.

If in moving among your young men you see one with an ominous pallor of cheek, or you hear him coughing behind the counter, say to him "Stay home a day or two and rest, or go out and breathe the breath of the hills." If his mother die, do not demand that on the day after the funeral, he be in the store. Give him at least a week to get over that which he will never get over.

* From "Shots at Sandy Targets," E. H. Treat, New York, 1886.