

The Family Circle.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

"BUY THE TRUTH."

BY REV. EDWARD ASTON.

When Passion's voice doth tempt the soul,
And sinful pleasures are the goal
Of giddy youth and these seem real,
Then in his ear may thunder peal,
May this clear voice be ne'er forgot,
"Oh! buy the truth and sell it not."

When thirst for power doth manhood try,
And men with wealth would all good buy,
Amidst the throng and press of life,
Above the din in all the strife,
May this clear voice be ne'er forgot,
"Oh! buy the truth and sell it not."

When weary age doth crave release
From conflicts stern and cry for peace,
May waning fires e'en then burn bright
Tho' failing eyes might fear the night,
May this clear voice be ne'er forgot,
"Oh! buy the truth and sell it not."
Merrickville, Ont.

DEAR LAND AYONT THE SEA.

I stand upon a foreign shore
And gaze across the sea,
Fond memories bridge the waters o'er,
Sweet home-thoughts come to me;
Once more I see the bonnie hills,
Feel glad some young and free,
My heart with loyal rapture thrills—
Dear land ayont the sea.

I see once more the gowans fair,
And scent the hawthorn bloom,
I feel the pure sweet mountain air
Blown fresh from heather bloom;
I hear glad voices as of yore
Sing songs of love to me,
Oh! shall I ever see thee more,
Dear land ayont the sea!

May heaven grant me this request,
Before the day I die,
To see the land I love the best,
My birthplace o'er the sea;
And oh! methinks I would be blest,
When soars my spirit free,
To know my body yet would rest
At home ayont the sea.

—John Imrie.

A DAY AT AUNT HARRIET'S.

'Children, come here.'

"Children," meant my cousin Polly, who was visiting us, and myself. We both ran at the sound of mother's voice.

'Do you want to go on an errand up to Aunt Harriet's?'

'Yes'm.'

'No'm.'

'Yes'm. Let's, Emily.'

'I don't like to go there,' I grumbled.

'You wouldn't, Polly, if you lived as near Aunt Harriet as I do.'

'Emily,' said my mother, in a reproving tone. 'Your Aunt Harriet is a very good kind woman, and I am surprised to hear you talk so.'

Aunt Harriet was, and is, as I have good reason to know as I have grown older. But in those days I must confess I did not like her very well—probably because I fancied she did not like me. For which—also, probably—she was not at all to be blamed, for as I look back upon my mischievous days I can well imagine I must have been a terror to one not at all accustomed to children and their ways. I yielded so far as to say:

'Well, I'll go if Polly wants to.'

'And do you want to stay all day?' asked mother. 'Because, if you do I will say so in the note I am writing to Aunt Harriet.'

'Yes,' again said Polly.

'I wonder if the pony is there yet,' I said.

'I think he is. Your aunt wishes to sell him, but I hadn't heard of her doing so yet.'

'I think its real mean of her to sell him,' I whimpered. 'I think she ought to keep him for us children when we go there.'

'Aunt Harriet needs the money she would get for the pony,' said mother. 'Now take this basket, and don't loiter too long on the way.'

The road to Aunt Harriet's was so delightful that mother's caution was by no means unnecessary. Our house was in a small town, but Aunt Harriet's farm was

a mile out in the country. She had taken charge of it herself since my uncle's death some time before keeping a man and a maid and hiring such other help as she needed. Our way lay at first along a little creek whose banks were gay with wild flowers, and in whose shallow ripples we always looked for fish—never, however, finding them until we got into the quieter places in the shade of the woods. Along here, too, were berries in the season. We scratched our hands in reaching into the thorny blackberry bushes, tearing also a few small holes in our dresses. We took off our shoes and stockings and waded in the cool water. It was late in the morning when we reached Aunt Harriet's. Hulda, the maid, always greeted me with a smile; Aunt Harriet with a look as if she was wondering what I might do before I left for home. As I watched her read the note from mother, I thought I fancied a little cloud coming over her face and felt sure it was because we were to spend the day. This was a mistake as I learned afterwards. Mother had told her of the death of an old friend. But I jumped to my silly conclusion at once, and my heart was filled with a spirit of opposition to Aunt Harriet.

'I don't care if she don't want us. I don't care whether I am a good girl or not.'

I felt it as Aunt Harriet explained that she had been very busy in the hot kitchen all the morning and was now going to take a little rest. She told Hulda to bring us some cool milk and ginger-bread, and told us to amuse ourselves in any way we liked.

'The pony is out in the meadow,' she said. 'I suppose you will like to ride him. You will have to be contented with riding for the cart is broken.'

'Oh dear! I wanted to drive,' I said.

'Too bad, dear.'

We rode the gentle little creature, taking turns, until we were tired of it. 'I do wish we had the cart,' I said. 'It's a great deal more fun when we can ride together. I'm going to see how it is broken. I know just where they keep it.'

We went to the carriage-house.

'It looks all right to me,' I said. 'See, Polly, I'm sure it would do just to ride 'round the meadow. We won't go out in the road. Here's the harness. I've hitched Bob up lots of times.'

'I don't believe we'd better,' said Polly, doubtfully.

'It won't do a bit of harm. See, the cart runs just right.'

I drew it out and we soon had Bob harnessed to it. The carriage house was so situated that there was no view of it from the kitchen. The hired man was away in the fields so there was no one to interfere with us. We climbed into the cart and turned into the meadow. 'Now, isn't this nice?' I began. 'Didn't I tell you, Polly—'

Polly never disputed me, for at this moment she gave a scream, in which I joined. The cart went over, throwing us both out. Bob, good little fellow that he was, made no fuss, but stood quietly, only looking round as if to ask: 'What are you girls up to now?'

Hulda heard us and came out.

'Oh, I hope Aunt Harriet hasn't heard, Hulda,' I sobbed, as she took us in and bathed our bumped heads. She had not, and before long Polly and I were looking for some new amusement. Very soon we found it. Wandering around the house we came upon a little shelf outside a window in the woodshed.

'O, Polly—look here,' I exclaimed.

'Blackberry jelly. Doesn't the sun shine through it beautifully!'

'How good it looks.'

'That's what Aunt Harriet was so busy about this morning.'

'I'd like a taste.'

Polly said nothing, but I knew that if she had said anything it would have been: 'So would I.'

'Polly, those glasses are so full—most running over. It wouldn't do a bit of harm for us to take just a little taste.' Polly looked doubtful.

'I should think Aunt Harriet might have given us a little,' I went on, trying hard to build up a reason why we should help ourselves. I stole into the kitchen and got a spoon. Then I stood on a peck measure so that I could reach the jelly, and we took spoonfuls turn about.

'That's enough,' said Polly, at length.

'No,' I said, 'we must even them all down.'

'But they'll know, I'm sure,' said Polly, in distress.

'No,' I repeated. 'They'll think it's shrunken. Jelly always shrinks. I've heard mother say so.'

'I'm afraid it isn't right,' said Polly, who evidently was not enjoying the repast.

'Nonsense,' I said. 'What does Aunt Harriet want of such a lot of jelly, anyway? Just for herself and Hulda and Reuben.'

'Now let's go,' urged Polly.

'Wait,' I said, 'there's just one more. We must take some out of that or they'll surely know.'

I leaned over towards the back of the shelf. I did not know that it was simply a board laid on two supports. I pushed against it and—crash. Down it went, and jelly, mixed with broken glass, lay on the ground. Aunt Harriet heard this time. She and Hulda came out to gaze with dismay at the wreck. Hulda scolded.

'All that jelly you've been workin' so hard over, ma'am, a makin' for them poor little orphans over to the 'sylum.'

Aunt Harriet did not scold. She looked at us two naughty, woe-begone little culprits, splashed with jelly from head to foot, in sore perplexity.

'There's only one thing to do, Hulda,' she presently said. 'You must put their dresses right into a tub of water. This hot sun will dry them in an hour and then you must iron them. I'll go and make some starch.'

Three hours later, as, very meek and subdued, we were ready for our walk home, Aunt Harriet gave me the basket saying:

'Here are a few fresh eggs and a note for your mother.' The mention of the note sent a chill to my heart.

'Polly,' I said, as we walked home. 'I know it's to tell mother how naughty we've been.'

'I s'pose so,' said Polly, with a sigh.

'Say, Polly—s'pose we don't give it to her.'

'Oh—but we ought to,' said Polly, a little startled at the idea. We talked about it nearly all the way, and the end of it was as we crossed the bridge over the creek I held it high over the water and let it fall. A moment later I said:

'I wish I hadn't.'

'We can get it again.'

'But it would be all wet. That would be just as bad.'

'Why, dears, how nicely you have kept yourselves,' said mother, as we went in in our clean dresses. 'I'm sure you've been good girls.'

We were both so quiet and said so little that mother, thinking we must be tired, sent us to bed early. And there I had to face the full ugliness of my ill-doing. I didn't mind much about anything except the deception, but with every moment in which I restlessly tossed it grew darker and darker to me. Mother trusted me—Aunt Harriet trusted me. Neither of them would have suspected it of me. There was such meanness add to the sin of it. And as the shadows of the summer night grew deeper the thought of the Eye that sees through all darkness and all concealment grew intolerable to me. How light in comparison would have been any punishment which I could have received. How wistfully I recalled the triumphant, light hearted sense of its being done-and-over-with-and-not-half-so-bad-after-all, which had always followed one of mother's light punishments. I bore my burden of unconfessed wrong-doing for two weeks, and then carried it to mother.

'I know what you'll say,' I said. 'I must go and tell Aunt Harriet.'

'You can't do that for a while,' said mother. 'She has been sent for to go down to Virginia to a sick sister, and must not be bothered now. Oh, my little girl, I hope you will think well before you again do a thing which you may be tempted to conceal. A concealment means a lie—for it is a covering of the truth. We will wait until you can tell her yourself.'

I expected Aunt Harriet to look dignified and severe when I told her about the note. But she did not. She looked only earnest and grave and kind as she said:

'We all of us do wrong, dear child, but it is not all of us that have the courage to confess our misdoings, even to our God. Don't ever forget that that is the sure and only way to atone for a sin. Let me see,' she added, after a moment's thought. 'What did I write in the note? Oh, it was to tell your mother that I couldn't sell the pony till the fall, and that if she wished I would let you little girls have him through the summer. If I did not hear from her the next day I should conclude that your father did not want him about, so I would let Robbie Hays have him. Which I did.'

Ever since I have had an ache at my heart thinking how Polly and I would have enjoyed the pony that summer.—*Sydney Dayre in the Interior.*

A GOOD STORY OF ARCHIBALD FORBES.

Archibald Forbes, the war-correspondent, once "got ahead" of a party of brother journalists in an ingenious way. By this coup he secured for the *Daily News* the exclusive narrative of the survivors of the emigrant ship *Cospatrick*, which was burned on its way to New Zealand in 1874. The story is told in *Chamber's Journal* by the author of "The Humors of Newspaper Enterprise." The survivors of the *Cospatrick* were three in number—Macdonald (the second mate) and two ordinary seamen—who had been adrift on a raft for weeks, and had sustained life only by a recourse to cannibalism. The men were sent home by the mail steamer *Nyanza*, and about thirty journalists assembled at Plymouth; but he informed his editor that he had no hope of beating his competitors, as, after all sorts of scheming, it was finally unanimously decided by all the journalists present that the best course was for all to board the *Nyanza* together in the mail tug, and get Macdonald to tell his story for the common good. The editor of the *Daily News* did not like this arrangement at all. So he sent for Mr. Forbes—who had earned great prestige for the paper, not only by his brilliant services during the Franco-Prussian War, but by two thrilling stories of wrecks at sea which he had written shortly before the *Cospatrick* disaster—and told him the situation. That evening Mr. Forbes went down to Plymouth, and put up at an obscure inn in a suburb. Through the agency of a local shipbroker, whom he knew, he chartered a tug, the *Volunteer*, and ordered the skipper to be in readiness, with steam up, at an unfrequented jetty on the farther side of the harbor. At three o'clock on the last day of the year 1874 news arrived that the *Nyanza* had passed the Lizard Light, about 25 miles out of Plymouth. Mr. Forbes went to the railway station, and engaged a whole first-class compartment in the train that was to leave for London at midnight. Then at dusk he went out in the *Volunteer* to board the *Nyanza* in advance of the tug which would bring out the thirty journalists. This he only succeeded in doing at the risk of his life. He jumped from the bridge of the tug as it rose on the top of a big wave, and just succeeded in catching the mizzen chains of the mail steamer, whence he was pulled by the collar on to the deck.

'Where can I find Macdonald, the mate of the *Cospatrick*? Quick!' was his breathless exclamation, as he regained his feet.

He found the man below; but not a word would he utter till he had made a bargain.