

OUR HOME CIRCLE

IT IS WELL.

"Is it well with thee, and with thy husband, and with the child?" And she said, "It is well."—2 Kings 4: 26.

Yes; it is well! The evening shadows lengthen; Home's golden gates shine on our ravished sight; And though the tender ties we strove to strengthen Break one by one—at evening-time 'tis light.

'Tis well! The way was often dull and weary; The spirit fainteth oft beneath its load; No sunshine came from skies all gray and dreary; And yet our feet were bound to tread that road.

'Tis well that not again our hearts shall shiver; Beneath old sorrows, once so hard to bear; That not again beside death's dark some river Shall we deplore the good, the loved, the fair.

No more with tears, wrought from deep, inner anguish, Shall we bewail the dear hopes crushed and gone; No more need we in doubt or fear to languish; So for the day is past, the journey done!

As voyagers, by fierce winds beat and broken, Come into port beneath a calm r-sky, So we, still bearing on our brows the token Of tempest past, draw to our haven high.

A sweet air cometh from the shore immortal, Having hallowed at the day's decline; Almost we see where from the open portal Fair torus stand beckoning with their smiles divine.

'Tis well! The earth with all her myriad voices Has lost the power our senses to enthral; We hear, above the tumult and the noise, Soft tones of music, like an angel's call.

'Tis well, O friends! We would not turn—retreating— The long, vain years, nor call our lost youth back; Gladly, with spirits braced, the future facing, We leave behind the dusty, foot-worn track.

"HE TOOK THE CUP."

A COMMUNION THOUGHT.

BY MARGARET E. WINSLOW.

"Did it ever strike you—the force of that word 'took'?"

"Not that I know of. The letter of Scripture never interested me much."

"But this is the spirit, not the letter. Take the cup to signify (as it does) all that Christ endured for us men and our salvation, and His voluntary acceptance of it gave it all its value to us. He took the cup; it was not thrust upon Him by enmity or necessity; He did not merit its punishment; it did not come in His way by chance. Voluntarily, with full understanding of its bitterness, with absolute power to set it aside He took the cup and drained its depths, that He might work out a full salvation for the sinners He loved and fain would save. It is a great help to me in taking my own cup, mingled as it so often is with the bitter herbs of the care, worry, perplexity and sorrow of daily life."

"I don't quite see how. We do not choose our sorrows, vexations and burdens. Our crosses are laid upon us, and we would gladly escape them if we might."

"Yet Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me,' nevertheless, 'He took the cup.' For he said, 'The cup which my Father hath given Me shall I not drink it? His voluntary choice had behind it a constraining force—that of love—love for the Father, love for the erring brothers and sisters. He knew that, mixed by that fatherly hand, it could not contain one bitter ingredient too many. He knew that it was not possible to save humanity, and at the same time leave one bitter drop unconsumed; and so with glad eagerness and voluntary self-sacrifice He took this cup. Brother, do you take yours?"

"But my cup is not like His; it contains no heroism of self-surrender, or self-denying achievement, nay, not even the tragedy of grief."

"What then?"

"Petty duties, distasteful because of their pettiness, depressing failures and disappointments in secular matters, perplexities about decisions scarcely worthy of so much thought, small slights and unkindness, anxieties about the future, uncertainty about to-day."

"But it is bitter to you—causes you sorrow and anxiety? If it were possible, you would have it pass from you?"

"Yes, indeed; I cannot in the sense you give it, 'take the cup.'"

"You can. See in it fellowship with Christ's sufferings, and remember that those who suffer shall also reign with Him. Then think that a Father's hand has mixed it, loving wisdom guiding that Hand. Love selected all the bitter ingredients—love which was free to have omitted them all, had it been possible to do so and yet

work out your highest good. Shall not his choice be your choice? Will you not take the cup?"

"This, then, is the 'hidden manna' with which the recent sacramental season has fed you, friend?"

"This and much more; for to reserve holy thoughts and holy emotions for sacred seasons alone, savor of the ages of superstition, or, worse still, of paganism itself, I would carry every fresh spiritual impulse down into the arena of daily life and make of it a weapon wherewith to come off victorious in the hand-to-hand conflict with 'the world, the flesh, and the devil.'"

"And how do that in this case?"

"Every-day life presents a cup to our lips, a sacramental cup just mixed for us by our loving Father's hands. It is not all bitter, but its bitterness consists in the fact that it is bitter medicine to our taste, although exactly adapted to our spiritual disease. We may resist it with rebellious will, thus making it a very 'cup of devils,' or it may be to us the 'cup of the Lord,' as we take it, with our whole will melted into union with His, and this groveling life thus becomes to us a perpetual sacrament."

"Does this thought of yours connect itself with the ancient legend of the Holy Grail?"

"Yes; our fathers were but children, and groped, often blindly, for the kernel of truth which they felt was hidden within the externals which mainly engrossed their attention. The Holy Grail disappeared from sight as the idea of merit in human suffering, borrowed from heathenism, became incorporated in the Christian Church; but it was not wholly forgotten. Earnest souls were ever on the search for it, and from time to time one and another, who through the mists of superstition sought to see 'Jesus only,' clasped it in their longing arms and folded it lovingly to their breasts. In proportion as the darkness of that so-called 'age of faith' has been dispelled, and religion has come to be a thing not of the priesthood and cloister, but of the individual soul and daily life, it has come nearer and nearer, within reach of all who care to find it; and the poet—albeit he, too, was, it may be, still grasping the chalice rather than its contents—was not so far wrong when he made his travel-soiled knight discover the object of his long quest in the common bowl filled with water to relieve the necessities of the loathsome beggar at his gate."

"Do you think, then, that you and I have to-day touched the quest of the centuries—the San Graal of history and song?"

"Even so, O brother! And so long as in loving, truthful obedience, with wills that are at one with God's will because we love Him, we choose whatever of sorrow, care or perplexity that wise Will may lay upon us, we shall hold fast that precious cup which is only holy because the Holy One 'took it.'—Zion's Herald.

"MAY I KISS THAT BABY?"

To a soldier far away from home, there is no more touching sight than that of a baby in its mother's arms. While on their way to Gettysburg, our troops were marching by night through a village, over whose gateways hung lighted lanterns, while young girls shed tears as they watched the brother of other women march on to possible death. A scene of the march is thus described by the author of "Bullet and Shell."

Stopping for a moment at the gate of a dwelling, I noticed a young mother leaning over it with a chubby child in her arms. Above the woman's head swung a couple of stable lanterns, their light falling full upon her face. The child was crowing with delight at the strange pageant, as it watched the armed host pass on.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said Jim Manners, one of my men, as he dropped the butt of his musket on the ground, and peered wistfully into the faces of the mother and her child.

"I beg pardon, but may I kiss that baby of yours? I've got one just like him at home; at least he was when I last seen him, two years ago."

The mother, a sympathetic tear rolling down her blooming cheek, silently held out the child, Jim pressed his unshaven face to its innocent smiling lips for a moment, and then walked on, saying: "God bless you, ma'am, for that!"

Poor Jim Manners! He never saw his boy again in life. A bullet had him low the next day, as we made our first charge.

POLITE MANNERS.

Says Mrs. Grey to Mr. Grey: "Our son must manners learn; And so he went to dancing school; Was taught to bow and scrape by rule, And many a figure turn."

He learned to stand up very straight And turn his toes well out; But one thing, it is sad to say, With all his father had to pay, They never thought about.

They failed in time to caution him Against the drunkard's sin; So when he stayed away at night, Lured by the bar-room's evil light, They found his toes turned in—

In toward the place where manners are Of no account at all; Where dimes and dollars buy the staff That makes a gentleman a rough, And fills his heart with gall.

Says Mr. Grey to Mrs. Grey: "Our shame is now complete; You'll own it is a better plan To train the mind and make the man, Than educate the feet."—Y. T. Banner.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

Sir John seemed never to be happier than when speaking of his former voyages, and he encouraged me to converse freely with him as we strolled over the grounds together or rode out into the country. He had a complete and most perfect and elaborate chart of the Arctic regions, so far as they had then been explored, upon which his own explorations and those of Captains Parry and Ross and other Arctic explorers were distinctly marked out; and it was his greatest pleasure of an evening to display these charts and point out the spots he had visited; also tracing the courses he would endeavor to pursue if it should ever be his "good fortune," as he expressed himself, again to be employed in what was the great hobby of his life. There was not a point he had discovered nor a spot he had visited respecting which he had not some anecdote to tell or some narrow escape to relate. And to me it was delightful to listen to these anecdotes from the lips of a man who had bravely dared and overcome the perils of which he spoke, and who had already rendered his name famous as one of the bold-est and most energetic and persevering of Arctic discoverers. Besides, I confess that it was flattering to my pride to hear a post-Captain and a Lieutenant-Governor conversing thus freely with a young midshipman, and encouraging me to express my own opinions, and listening to them kindly and attentively. I spent a pleasant visit at the Penns, and was sorry to return to the ship. While we lay in port an emigrant ship and a female convict ship arrived—the latter one of the last, if not the last convict ship that left the shores of England—and Sir John and Lady Franklin visited them both immediately on their arrival. It was her ladyship's chief pleasure, and she seemed to regard it as a duty, to exert herself to the utmost for the benefit of the younger female emigrants, and also for such female convicts as had conducted themselves well during the voyage, and whose offenses against the laws of their country were such as afforded hope that, removed from the temptations of vice and poverty, they might yet redeem their characters, and prove useful members of society. It must be recollected that in those days, when there was a scarcity of females in the Australian colonies, young women were often transported for offenses which would nowadays be punished by a few months' or even weeks' imprisonment.—Chamber's Journal.

WHICH WORLD.

One evening, as I was returning from our usual gathering, I overtook two young ladies walking along the way, and heard one of them say to the other, "Well, its no use, I cannot give up the world."

"Do you say so?" was the reply.

"No," she replied, "I mean it; I really cannot."

"If that is the case," I said, "you had better not come to the meeting any more. I should advise you to go back to Bath. There you will see a great many flaming bills in all colors, announcing concerts and theatricals. Why not go to such places of amusement and make up your mind to be as happy as you can in this world, for it is all the heaven you will ever have?" I went on to say that a pity it was that people should lose both worlds by being undecided. I told her that I once knew a gentleman who was a great man and exceedingly rich; he was the possessor of houses, and mines of untold wealth. I

was informed that when he came of age he made a speech in which he said in the hearing and with the applause of his friends (such as they were!) that he intended to be a rich man if he went to hell for it. God heard him and let him have his choice to the full. He not only granted him abundant riches, but let him live beyond the span of man's life, to the age of seventy-five. Then he died full of years and opulence, but he had a dreadful death. I do not think bright angels came from glory to take his soul home with them—far otherwise! If you will not, or cannot, give up the world, then decide to keep it and make the most of it."

I spoke in this strain till we reached the gate which the young lady was about to enter. Taking out a packet of tracts from my pocket, I found one entitled, "Making a Road to Hell." "Here," I said, "this is just the one for you; you will not take the road which God has made to heaven, therefore you must make one for yourself to the other place."

She took the tract in silence and went in.

The next day her mother was very angry because her child was so unhappy. In the evening she said "child" came again to the meeting, though I had told her to stay away; and she was there on the following day also.

The third evening she waited behind, and asked me if I thought God had heard what she said about giving up the world. I replied, "Most certainly he did."

Then she burst into tears and sat down as though in despair. "Do you think then, God will never forgive me?"

I replied, "Shall we ask him?" She said, "Oh, yes, do—please do." She prayed most earnestly for forgiveness, and gave her heart without reserve to God.

The next day she was rejoicing with us, and from that time became a very downright and earnest Christian. She forsook the world, having something better to cling to, and amongst other things she gave up singing the foolish love-songs she used to indulge in for better music. On one occasion she was ordered by her mother to go to a musical party, and was dragged to the piano to sing. After a little hesitation she commenced, and sang with great feeling, "Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now." Her voice and tone carried such meaning with them that the company were moved to tears. At this her mother was exceedingly angry, and declared that she would never take her out again.—W. Haslam, in the Christian.

WHAT INGERSOLL DID FOR ONE FAMILY.

A TRUE STORY.

Henry LaMar was a young civil engineer of gentle parentage, handsome appearance, of noble bearing, well educated, refined, attractive in manner and generous to a fault. Was it any wonder that the love of his young wife amounted almost to worship for him? She, too, was gifted, and fully appreciated all his noble qualities and was in full sympathy with all his fine tastes. They were both professing Christians, and they dearly loved their bright and happy home and their two lovely children. Our young engineer was employed in a railway office, and his rare talents and unusually fine work commanded a liberal salary. He was an ardent lover of science, especially of natural history in all its branches, and much of his spare time he spent in researches which resulted in valuable contributions to science. In short, he bade fair to become a splendid success in every respect.

But there came a change. The good old honest, slow going Col. M., president of the railroad company, with his good honest associates, sold out to a company from a distant city. Our friend remained in the office however, where he soon made the discovery that nearly all of his new comrades were disciples of Bob Ingersoll. At first he was horribly shocked at the blasphemy he heard on all occasions from his "liberal" friends, for he had always been accustomed to reverence holy things. But they were men of wealth and culture and they flattered him by many little attentions, inviting him out often and in many ways gaining an influence over him till at last he laid aside his scruples sufficiently to accept some of their looks—"out of courtesy," he said, when his wife remonstrated with him."

"They'll never hurt me, I know my own mind too well." And she, too, thinking him infallible, started East on a journey. During her absence he was induced to listen to several lectures given by Bob Ingersoll and from that his ruin dated. By the time his wife returned home he was an avowed skeptic, and never was there so fearful a change wrought in so short a time. He became first morose and gloomy, then neglectful and indifferent toward his family, and soon he was revealing in his very soul would have abhorred only a short time before. The pleadings of his broken-hearted wife were in vain. The frequent wine cup led to worse degradation. He lost his position in the office and in society and never regained either. His home was broken up and soon dissipation completed the work of destruction by the sudden and total breakdown of his health, and about two years after he adopted those sentiments that so many boast of as harmless and liberal he was laid in the grave, long before he reached the noon of life—the victim of those pernicious and infamous doctrines. He whose life's morning dawned with such bright hopes of the future, whose gifts, moral mental and physical, might have attained for him the noblest Christian manhood, wrecked all that this life could bring worth living for, upon the dark and dismal sea of unbelief.

THE THOUGHTLESS WORD.

Swift through the fragrant air it fell, A single word; The wound it made no word may tell— For no one heard.

Save one sweet heart, whose very life Is love and truth! This heart the word pierced like a knife, No pulse of ruth

Thrilled him who aimed the cruel word, He willed and spoke. A fair face quivered, soft lips stirred, A fond heart broke.

Mary Clemmer

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

A SERMON FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."—Prov. xx. 11.

It is a great thing to be a child! Many men would like to go back to their childhood, and live again the days and years that have passed away. Out of boys and girls men and women are made. And men and women are the most important things upon the earth. Each one is accountable to God for what he thinks, believes, says and does. Beginning once to live our real lifetime continues forever.

Pluck off a little bud from your mother's rosebush. Cut it into pieces with your pen knife. Put it under your microscope. Do you see the scores of tiny red leaves, and how tightly they are pressed together? Your papa could not pack them so nicely, if he were to put them under his letter-press for many days. But if you had left the bud on the plant a few days longer, it would have burst open into a most beautiful and fragrant rose.

A bright-eyed, sunny-faced, happy-hearted school-boy, tripping along the way with his book-bag thrown across his shoulder, will soon be a strong, able-bodied man doing business. He may be building houses, or selling goods, or making shoes, or farming land. He is now like the rosebud, packed full of sensible things; after a while he will be like the open flower.

But there is something else to be thought of besides growing up into manhood and womanhood. There is something greater than getting larger eyes and hands and feet. That something we call "character." By that we mean the kind of men and women they will be. This forming of character begins when we are young.

It is this that makes childhood such an interesting and beautiful thing. Much depends upon very little things. So it is that "even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right." Every thing tells upon the after life.

There is a barn upon the Alleghany Mountains so built that the rain which falls upon it separates in such a manner that that which falls upon one side of the roof runs into a little stream which flows into the Susquehanna, and thence into the Chesapeake Bay, and on into the Atlantic Ocean; and that which falls on the other side is carried into the Alleghany River, thence into the Ohio, and onward to the Gulf of Mexico. The point where the

water divides is very small. But how different the course of these waters. So it happens with people. A very little thing changes the channel of their lives. Much depends upon the kind of tempers we have. If we are sour and ill-tempered, no one will love us. If we are kind and cheerful, we shall have friends wherever we go. Much depends upon the way in which we improve our school days. Much depends upon the kind of comrades we have, much upon the kind of habits we form. If we would have the right kind of life, we must watch the little things. We must see how one little thing affects another thing, how one little act takes in many others.

CAPTURING A SHARK.

Shark fishing is a pursuit that would appear to be much more dangerous than amusing. At any rate, in a recent encounter between a huge fish, 13 feet 8 inches long, and 11 feet round at the thickest part, and a couple of Australian fishermen, it was for a considerable time doubtful with which side the victory would rest. The hook was baited with a small shark, and when the ugly monster came up to it he turned on his side and a harpoon was sent into him. The weapon held well, its ears opened as soon as a strain was on the line. Finding himself wounded, the shark struck the boat with his nose, and sounded, running out nearly fifty fathoms of line. The fishermen then tried to haul in, when he suddenly rose to the surface, made for the bow of the boat, which he seized and shook, like a dog shaking a rat, tearing off big splinters; meanwhile one of them lanced him, the other pushing the paddle into the shark's mouth. Letting go the boat he held on to the paddle, waving it like a feather, but finally dropping it. He again started off just below the surface, towing the boat along at a rapid rate, the fishermen having to pay out the line as fast as they could to prevent the boat from dipping under. He next sounded, but rising once more, made for the boat, when the lance was sent into him two or three times. Though he was now done for, it took the men an hour to get him quiet enough to tow into port, which was only accomplished after two hours' pulling, and with the help of another boat which had been dispatched to their assistance.

HOW TO MANAGE.

"I wouldn't mind being left to take care of the little ones," said Fannie the other day, "if they would only mind me. But when mamma is away they think they may do just as they please, and they behave like little witches."

Molly manages the nursery splendidly," said Kittie; "the children are quite angelic under her, but I have not her magic. I seem to stir up the naughtiness, and the more I tell them to be good, the worse they act."

Now, Fannie and Kittie and other worried elder sisters, let me tell you the trouble with your management. When you can find the key to a problem in arithmetic, the rest is easy work. I think I can whisper in your ear the name of a certain key to your home problem, when the small brothers and sisters say, as they sometimes do, "You are not my mamma, you are only Fannie; I want to make a noise, and you must not bother me."

The key is a word of four letters—TACT. It is a golden key, and is warranted to fit any lock. You can not get along very well in life without it, I am very sure Molly possesses this shining key.

A writer in the Youth's Companion gives an amusing account of the way babies are vaccinated in France. It is never done at home, but a day is fixed for the operation, and the doctor sends a note of invitation to all the mothers who have previously given him notice. On reaching the physician's house a live cow is seen being dragged over the stairs, by two peasants, into a waiting room. Its feet are tied up in rags to prevent them from scratching the floor, and the poor beast is laid down on her back and held by peasants, while the doctor takes the virus from sores on her stomach. The babies are then vaccinated in turn, and when their cries are added to the bellowing of the cow, the scene is funny enough.

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