



The Family Circle.

O WONDERFUL STORY.

"O wonderful, wonderful story
In God's blessed book that I read!
How he from his bright throne of glory
Looked down and was touched with our need.
Because he so wanted to save us
He sent his own Son from above;
His treasure most precious he gave us,
To show all the depth of his love.

So Jesus descended in meekness,
And came among sinners to dwell,
Was made like to us in our weakness
Because he just loved us so well;
His lot on this earth was but lowly,
Oft hungry, and weary, and sad;
Tho' he was the High and the Holy
Who came to make mourning hearts glad.

Our sins to the bitter cross nailed him,
For us he was laid in the grave—
But on the third morning they hailed him,
The risen one, "Mighty to save!"
And so we have life thro' his dying,
And so we have peace thro' his blood
And each one on Jesus relying,
Has pardon and favor with God.

O wonderful, wonderful story!
Lord give me a heart full of praise,
And teach me to live to thy glory,
Henceforth to the end of my days."

—Sunday at Home.

HOW FERGUS WENT TO CHURCH.

They were just come. The rooms and passages were strewn with packing-boxes and household goods, chairs were stacked up on the porch, there was a bedstead in the middle of the parlor floor, everything was in confusion. In the midst of it all, there was a resounding knock at the back door.

"I am the only one who can be spared," said Lucy. "I will receive our first visitor."

It was a boy with a big basket on his arm. "Do you want any nice blackberries this morning, miss?"

"Yes, indeed, I do; they will suit exactly for busy people like us."

The bargain was made, and the transfer from his basket to her dish began.

"You are giving me very good measure," said Lucy presently.

"I have to," he responded, glancing up at her from under his hat-brim with a grin, "so long as you are standing there watching me. Maybe if you were to step inside now, it would be different."

"Would it?"

He shook the last stray berries out of the sides of his quart cup, straightened himself up, and looking her fairly in the face, answered, "No, it wouldn't. I've got my mind all made up about that, and made fast so as it will stay. I don't believe in any of your tricky ways of doing business; I believe in good measure. It costs you less in the end; but some folks can't seem to think of that, they forget all about the end till they get there. I believe in looking ahead."

"How far ahead?"

He stared at her doubtfully, and while he hesitated as to how to answer this question, Lucy asked another: "Where do you go to church?"

"Well, nowheres, I suppose."

"Not to any church at all?"

"Not yet. You see, we only moved into this neighborhood about a couple of months ago."

"Eight whole Sundays, that would make, that you have stayed away? After all, you do not give good measure to everybody, do you?"

"You mean"—he paused, then with an upward jerk of the thumb, "to Him?"

"Yes; and are you sure that you really do believe in looking ahead—all the way ahead?"

"Well, you see, this is how it's been. My mother she was sick; and then, of course, there was a time getting things aside; and then everybody was strange to us, so, what with one thing and another, we haven't got started. To be sure," he added honestly, "we did go to one or two

picnics and excursions and things like that. When it's a picnic you can most generally hurry over this, and let the other wait, and manage to get there; but I'll allow that it does seem, somehow, as if all things had to be just so, before folks can see their way to going to church. It ain't right, I suppose."

"Let us make another bargain, you and I," said Lucy. "Promise me that tomorrow at church, when I look for the only face that I know in this town, I shall find it. Will you?"

The boy considered, then picking up his basket, he turned off with a nod. "All right, I'll be there, if nothing happens."

As he pursued his way with his lightened fruit basket, Fergus Collins said to himself: "I guess I've knocked at all the back doors around here in the last two months. I've sold to lots of the high up church people; and they've been mightily set on knowing what the price of berries was, and if they were picked fresh; and maybe after we'd got the business settled up, they'd throw in a little something about the weather. But she's the first that ever talked any religion to me, and she hasn't been in the place two days. She knows how to drive, I guess. I ain't saying but what I'd just as lief she hadn't. Maybe it would have been more comfortable for me if she had done like the rest. But that hasn't got anything to do with it, you know."

Here he was interrupted by a demand for his wares; but the customer having been attended to, his thoughts went back to his promise to Lucy.

"If it had been one of those others that asked me, I wouldn't have minded keeping them waiting, seeing that they don't seem to be in any particular hurry at all. Most likely they'd forget all about me as soon as I'd turned the corner, and wouldn't think to see whether I'd disappoint them or not. But she will. I guess she keeps such things on her mind, or else they wouldn't come off of her tongue so handy; and I guess she doesn't remind folks of heaven every once in a while just for fear she won't get there herself if she don't, but because she hates to see 'em running the risk of missing it. Anyway, I passed my word to her that I would go, and I didn't leave a hole of any size to slip out of, and so I'm going."

On the next Sunday morning, no sooner had Lucy taken her seat and glanced about her than she straightway desisted Fergus in a front pew of the gallery. He presented a most demure appearance; his countenance was serious and his hair smooth, almost beyond recognition, and throughout the services his deportment was faultless. As soon as they were over, however, he started home at full speed, and, once arrived there, changed back into his everyday self with all the despatch possible, and then set out for his favorite haunt in the woods. Bareheaded and barefooted, stretched out under the trees, he took his usual Sunday rest, after the labors of the week, which, in this case, he considered to have been unusually severe.

"I wonder what he was talking about," he said to himself, thinking of the preacher. "I forgot to take notice; I was too busy behaving. Well, I kept my promise anyway, but, for my life, I don't see what good it did anybody. She looked around for me first thing, the same as I knew she would. She knows how to work things. She brought that in real neat about not giving good measure to everybody, meaning the Lord, and about not looking ahead all the way, meaning—well, there's one or two things she might have meant by that; she might have meant heaven, or she might have meant the day of judgment, or," he paused, "or else she might have meant," he presently added with emphasis, "looking forward to the time when you'd got all you wanted, and had plenty of it, and knew that was all, that your life was pretty near finished, and nothing was coming of it that would last over any time. That's always the worst of living—it uses up so fast."

He rolled over on the grass, and began to whistle a lively air; but it broke off suddenly.

"And as for giving good measure to everybody, what is good measure for the Lord? When they're preaching, they tell you the whole business belongs to him; but when they're practising, it seems they

get another idea of it. They keep back considerable, the most of them."

Here followed another long pause. This time he did not attempt to whistle, but pursued his meditations with a grave face.

"Maybe they do keep back considerable, but how about myself? I don't see but what I owe the same measure as they do, and how much do I keep back?"

The rustling of leaves and the snapping of fallen boughs gave warning of somebody's approach, and a moment later another boy had thrown himself down beside Fergus.

"Where have you been keeping yourself? It seems you don't feel very sociable to-day. I've looked all over for you. How did you spend your morning?"

"I went to church."

"You did? Had a nice time?"

"Not particular. But I'd promised to go, and I kept my promise."

If Fergus expected an outburst of ridicule, he was disappointed. The newcomer, after chewing the bark from a stick for some minutes without comment, at last said quietly: "Well, I think some of going to church myself sometimes. And then again it doesn't seem hardly worth while to bother with it yet; it seems as if I was safe to wait. The only trouble is that dying comes to people so awful sly sometimes. You can't count on a warning. If you could, why then you could make all the litter you wanted during the day, and begin and clear it out toward evening, and have everything tidy by the time your company came. It would be more convenient, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose so," said Fergus. "But if a fellow could trust to putting off, and going to heaven on the jump that way, last thing, I ain't sure but what he'd be a fool to do it."

His companion stared.

"What are you talking about? Why, man, you could have all you wanted, then, of heaven and earth both."

"I ain't sure," repeated Fergus, rising and brushing the leaves from his clothes. "I don't know if the best of heaven is had by just getting there, and I don't know if the best of earth is had either by walling heaven out of it till the last minute. Maybe you'd miss more both ways than you'd ever catch up with, even if you had for ever and ever to do it in."

All the week Fergus kept away from Lucy, and on Sunday he did not go to church. On Tuesday afternoon his little sister came in search of him among the blackberry bushes, to tell him that "a lady" wanted to see him.

"Of course, I knew she was coming," said Fergus, with rueful admiration. "I'm in for it now. I suppose she will want to know the reason of my staying at home last Sunday. If you drop off asleep anywhere near her, she's bound you shall do it with your eyes open."

But instead of the question he expected, Lucy began by asking abruptly, "Fergus, did you ever hear of Mr. Moody?"

"Moody?" repeated Fergus, reflectively. "Do you mean one of those Sunday-school singing-book men?"

"Yes, he is a preacher; he has gone all over the country, and preached to thousands and thousands of people. Well, when he was a young man he picked out a certain pew in the church that he went to, and set his mind to keeping it full every Sunday—full of his guests, that he had invited and brought there himself. I remembered that the week before last, when I saw you sitting up there in the gallery all alone, I thought how much nicer a whole row of you would look. And last Sunday—"

"You thought it harder still, I suppose," interrupted Fergus.

"Yes. Don't you know any people about here who do not go to church?"

"Lots of them," was the concise reply.

"Don't you suppose that you could persuade a few full to go with you, if you really tried?"

"Perhaps I might. A person would have to tackle them a plenty though, and then begin and tackle them all over again likely, before they'd get there. You know how that is," he ended with a laugh.

"Yes; but then it would be such a splendid thing to think that there were four or five boys at church, every Sunday, who would not have been there if you had not brought them. And you know you like good measure."

The idea recommended itself to the boy's enterprising mind, and with all the skill and persistence of which he was capable he carried on the undertaking. In the winter, when Fergus wished to join the church, and the pastor asked him what had turned his mind to such things, he said,—

"Well, I suppose it was sitting up there in the gallery alongside of those fellows that I'd coaxed to come in with me. It wasn't long before I saw that there was more work in it than I could do alone—that I couldn't carry on my business the way it ought to be without a Partner."

THE FRIENDLESS GIRL.

"I don't mean by this the girl who is alone in the world, but I mean the girl who thinks that she cannot make friends, and who has become morbid and unhappy about it. In the first place, friends are not blocked out like caramels; you may have no end of acquaintances—pleasant ones—but friends come with years. The two weeks' acquaintance is not the one with whom it is wise to be confidential, nor should you count upon her eternal fidelity. My dear girl, in this busy world so many people have so much to do that they cannot form many close friendships, and they choose the people they prefer. If you are absolutely friendless, in the sense that I mean, the fault must lie a little with you. Probably you are a wee bit selfish, and selfishness and friendship, like oil and water, do not mingle well. You claim that you love everybody. Now love is too precious a thing to give to everyone. Suppose I tell you a little story: There were once two beautiful fox-terriers; when a stranger came to the house where they lived one of them rushed to meet the visitor, lavished caresses upon her, and quickly coiled itself into a most comfortable position on her lap. The other dog stood quietly by; if it were asked for a paw, it gave it, but always retreated and sat down beside its master. Somebody said one day speaking of the first: "How different this dog is from the other one; it's so much more affectionate!" "Oh, no," said their master, "you are very much mistaken; the dog who is so affectionate with you, gives its affection to every stranger it meets; the other one waits until it knows you well and then from that time on it is your friend, and is ready to greet you and show signs of its friendship. When I was ill, the dog that you call the affectionate one preferred to stay with strangers; the other one rested at the foot of my bed and refused to stir. When my sister sat there crying because of some trouble that had come to her, the dog that loved everybody went into another room, but the other dog went up to her, licked the tear-stained hands, looked up in her face with his soft brown eyes as if he were trying to say 'I'm your friend, don't worry.'" This points a little bit of moral, and it means that while you can have plenty of pleasant acquaintances you will find that a few friends are best worth having; and that—I must repeat it—if you are friendless, there must be a fault in you that is the cause.—Ruth Ashmore in Ladies' Home Journal.

DANGEROUS PRAYERS.

"I want you to spend fifteen minutes every day praying for Foreign Missions," said the pastor to some young people in his congregation. "But beware how you pray, for I warn you that it is a very costly experiment."

"Costly?" they asked in surprise.

"Ay, costly," he cried. "When Carey began to pray for the conversion of the world, it cost him himself, and it cost those who prayed with him very much. Brainerd prayed for the dark-skinned savages, and, after two years of blessed work, it cost him his life. Two students in Mr. Moody's summer school began to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more servants into his harvest; and lo! it is going to cost our country five thousand young men and women who have, in answer to this prayer, pledged themselves to the work. Be sure it is a dangerous thing to pray in earnest for this work; you will find that you cannot pray and withhold your labor, or pray and withhold your money; nay, that your very life will no longer be your own, when your prayers begin to be answered."