



The Family Circle.

SHORTENING THE BABY.

Our baby now is four months old,
A bonnie boy, with hair like gold;
And his long clothes are put away—
For mother shortened him to-day.

He has the loveliest of frocks,
All trimmed with lace, and two pink socks
That father bought, the best by far
And prettiest in the whole bazar.

And now the rogue can kick about;
His little feet go in and out
As though they could not rest, and he
Is just as happy as can be.

Besides, he feels quite proud to-day
With all his long clothes put away,
And dressed so fine! And then, you know,
We praise the boy, and love him so!

His grandmamma must see him soon;
We all will go this afternoon,
And take the pet, and stay for tea,—
And what a riot there will be!

At first, perhaps, she may not know
The baby; he has dwindled so;
But let her guess, and do not say
That mother shortened him to-day!

—J. R. Eastwood, in St. Nicholas.

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

"Would grandmamma mind having the little ones play quietly in her room for an hour or two, while mamma attended a meeting of the Woman's Exchange?"

No, the dear old lady would not mind anything so pleasant, nor consider it a burden. She would keep an eye on the children, and they need not be told to play so very quietly, either. Let them bring their dolls and blocks, their Noah's ark and picture-books, and have a happy time in grandmamma's chamber.

In they came, golden-haired Jessy, blue-eyed Florence, laughing Harold, and a pretty little eight-year-old new neighbor from over the way. Grandmamma's maid arranged a couple of screens so that the little ones were in a play-room of their own, out of sight, but not out of hearing, of the dear lady, who sat in her easy chair, knitting with fine white wools, and making a beautiful pair of socks for the youngest grandchild.

It was just after Easter, and the pleasant room was filled with the fragrance of violets and hyacinths, while the great sunny bay window was glorious with azaleas and palms. From the music-room below there floated upward a strain of melody; for Jessy was at the organ, singing over again some of the beautiful Easter carols. By and by she struck into something very sweet, and the children stopped playing, while grandmamma, on the other side of the screen, dropped her knitting, to listen to the words, which came up as clear as if they had been spoken, just as all words that are sung should be.

"Softly sing the love of Jesus!
For our hearts are full of tears,
As we think how, walking humbly
This low earth for weary years,
Without riches, without dwelling,
Wounded sore by foe and friend,
In the garden, and in dying,
Jesus loved us to the end!

"Gladly sing the love of Jesus!
Let us lean upon his arm,
If he loves us, what can grieve us?
If he keep us, what can harm?
Still he lays his hand in blessing
On each timid little face,
And in heaven the children's angels
Near the throne have always place.

"Ever sing the love of Jesus,
Let the day be dark or clear,
Every pain and every sorrow
Bring him to his own more near.
Death's cold wave need not affright us,
When we know that he has died,
When we see the face of Jesus
Smiling from the other side!"

As the singer ceased, there was silence among her listeners for a moment, when Jessy took up her doll Angelina, and began rocking her to sleep. Presently grandmamma was startled at the question from the little neighbor:

"Jessy, who is Jesus?"

"Why," was Jessy's surprised reply, "don't you know who Jesus is?"

"He's the friend of the little children," said Florence sweetly. "He is the one who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Yes," chimed in Harold;

"Jesus loves me, this I know;
For the Bible tells me so,
Little ones to him belong;
They are weak, but he is strong."

"What is the Bible?" inquired the little neighbor.

Grandmamma moved her chair the very least bit, so that she could see the children through a crack in the joining of the screens. Tableau! Harold, all the laughter out of his face, was sitting up, pale and wide-eyed, chubby hands folded. Jessy's doll had fallen into an unnoticed heap on the floor. Florence was springing to her feet, intending evidently to go at once in search of a Bible. The trio wore expressions of bewilderment as they surveyed their small companion. And no wonder.

Eight years old, the child of rich parents, with a bright, intelligent look, and pretty, graceful little ways, which had so won upon the careful mamma of this carefully taught family that she had invited her in to play with her brood, yet she did not know what a Bible was, and had never heard of Jesus. Not a little Hindoo girl, nor a Chinese, nor a Syrian, but an American girl, whose home was in the shadow of a Christian church.

Grandmamma laid aside her work, and was about to call the little ones around her, that she might tell them the old, old story with a special reference to the child who had inquired about Jesus, when Jessy, speaking earnestly, asked:

"Did you never go to Sunday-school?"

"No," said the other. "Papa takes us to the park on Sundays."

"Well, doesn't your mamma tell you Bible stories?"

"I don't think she knows any. Are they fairy stories? Is it a fairy book?"

"Hush! hush!" said Jessy, quite distressed. "You wouldn't speak so if you knew. It isn't a fairy book; it's God's book, which he made good men write for all the earth. It took hundreds of years to write it, and it was once so costly that it was worth as much as a great house and farm. They chained it up in the church then, and people used to stand around in crowds, and wait for their turn to read a teenty-tonty bit of it. But now there are thousands and thousands of Bibles in the world, and everybody can have one, and they are full, just full, of the dearest, sweetest things, the best stories—much better than fairy stories, dear," and Jessy paused for breath.

"Bless her six years!" ejaculated grandmamma.

"I will ask papa why we haven't a Bible in our house, and beg him to buy me one for my birthday," observed the little neighbor.

"Yes, do!" said Florence, approvingly. Jessy proceeded:

"I am surprised you never heard of Jesus, God's dear son. He lived up in heaven with God, but he saw, when he looked down from the golden walls, that this world was full of trouble—bad people killing each other, people telling lies and quarrelling, people sick and sorrowful. So he told his Father that he would come here, and live among us, and make us better. He did come. He came to a place called Bethlehem. In the night the angels knew he was coming, so they flew down, and sang, and sang; but everybody was fast asleep, 'cept some shepherds on a hill, watching their lambs. They heard. There was a great big shining star, and it walked slowly along in the sky and stood still."

"Over the place where the young child lay," Florence added here.

"Yes, and some kings saw that—three kings from the East; I forget their names, the Bible does not give them, p'r'aps because they're too hard; and the kings and the shepherds all went to Bethlehem, and there they found Jesus, a dear little baby lying in his beautiful mother's arms. There wasn't any house for him, dear, and he was born in a stable, with oxen looking at him and wondering. His mother took care of him, and when he was a big boy, bigger than Harold, he minded her, and never was naughty. His name was Jesus; and the angels said so, because he came to save people from

their sins. Bye-bye, when he was a man, he went everywhere, doing kind things, making sick people well, and giving blind people sight. I couldn't begin to tell you how many wonderful things he did. Why, he once fed five thousand hungry people with only five little loaves and two little fishes; and three times he spoke to people who were dead, and they came to life again."

Jessy paused. Harold and Florence were now looking over a picture-book, but the little neighbor still listened.

"And yet," the child's voice grew very soft and solemn, "the wicked people didn't love him, after all. The priests and scribes and Pharisees, who were awful stuck-up creatures, just hated the Son of God, and they coaxed the Romans to kill him. They nailed him to a cross, and there he hung till he died, with crowds of people looking on. That is why we keep Good Friday, to remember his death. But in three days he came to life, and rose from the dead; and that is why we keep Easter."

"Where is Jesus now?"

"He lives in heaven again," said Jessy; "but he is here too, even in this room, although we cannot see him. He loves every one, but little children most of all. Mamma can tell you lots about him. He helps us to be good. It hurts him when we are bad. He will take us to stay with him forever when we die."

There was a knock at the door. A nurse had come for the little neighbor, who said good-bye, and went away to her home. Poor child! the home where there was nobody who loved Jesus.

But two Sundays ago she came to our school, and I saw her in church, sitting in the pew between Jessy and Florence. And she looked very happy. I do believe Jessy will take care of this little lamb.—S. S. Times.

SADIE ARNOLD'S POWER.

BY KATE S. GATES.

"I wonder if that girl has any idea of the power she might be if she only would," said Miss Laurence to herself, as she stood looking out of the window, watching her niece, Sadie Arnold, and Tom Evans, who stood talking by the gate.

There was a certain reckless, don't care look in Tom's boyish face that pained Miss Laurence, and there was a flippant, self-satisfied air about him that was anything but manly, so she thought. But to all appearances Sadie did not disapprove of him nor share her disparaging thoughts. Presently they separated, and Sadie came into the parlor.

"I don't like Tom Evans' looks, Sadie," said her aunt, abruptly. "I don't believe he is doing very well; is he?"

"I don't really know; but I am afraid not, auntie."

"Mrs. Ames told me the other day that he was with the Rogers boys and the Deanes most of the time, and your father says that they are low, worthless fellows; his being with them speaks badly for him."

"I know, auntie; but they say that all young fellows must 'sow their wild oats.' He may come out all right yet."

"My child, that is one of the most false and dangerous of sayings. No man or woman ought to sow anything but good seed in his life; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Oh, it is a pitiful, pitiful sight to see how recklessly and thoughtlessly you young folks sow seeds that will surely yield the bitter harvest of unavailing regret and remorse. Don't you see or think what you are doing, or don't you care?"

"Aunt Sarah, what do you mean?" asked Sadie, her face flushing with surprise and indignation. "I am sure I cannot see how I am to blame in the least for Tom Evans' doings."

"There is another old saying beside the one that you have quoted, which I would like you to remember, Sadie: 'Power to its least particle is duty.' You girls, with your pretty faces and bright ways, have a world of power in your hands, and you know it; but how are you using it? Do you make your gentleman friends feel that they must be good, pure and true, if they would win your favor and smiles; or do they feel that all you care about is a good time, and will not question if their lips and hearts are pure or otherwise? I tell you, Sadie, God will call you to account for the use of the power entrusted to you. You are accountable to Him for your use of it, and, more than all that, if you do not use it

to its utmost limit. Power to its least particle is duty."

Sadie's merry face grew sad and earnest. It startled her, this way of looking at it. Was she accountable in the least for Tom's doings? He was not doing well; she felt it, if she did not actually know it. She remembered several things that had happened of late. She had not approved of them; but she had laughed and talked with him just the same. There were others of the boys, too. Will Norcross, in particular. Could it be that she was in any way responsible?

"Have your good times, child; but remember always that you hold a great power in your hands. Strive in every way to be true and earnest yourself, and make them feel that they must be so also if they would win your favor."

"God help me," prayed Sadie, earnestly and humbly.

They were busy getting up charades for the sociable, and met the next morning in the church parlors to prepare for them. Tom and Sadie, with one or two others, were fixing the curtains. Tom was over in the corner by himself, as he supposed, when accidentally his hammer came down with full force on his thumb, and, without thinking, he uttered an oath half audibly. When he moved the curtain a second later he saw Sadie standing there with flushed face and eyes brimming with tears. Tom's face colored with vexation.

"I beg your pardon, Sadie; I did not know that you were there."

"But it was wrong, all the same, Tom, if I was not here. God heard it, and that is worst of all."

The others came up just then, and there was not a chance for Tom to say anything more.

When they broke up to go home, he presented himself as usual at Sadie's side, but, to his surprise, she drew back.

"Not to-night, Tom, after that," she said, sadly.

"Well," said Tom to himself, as he walked slowly and thoughtfully home alone, "if she was so shocked at just that, what would she say if she knew all. I declare I never felt so mean in my life; she looked so shocked and sorry. I supposed that a good time was all that the girls cared about; but if Sadie really does care, I will be worthy of her favor."

Tom was young, his feet had only begun to stray into the by-paths of sin and danger; it was not so hard for him to change his course as it would have been later. And whenever he was tempted, the memory of that shocked, grieved look of Sadie's came to him and held him back, turning him to seek divine help for the battle of life.

"I don't know what there is about Sadie Arnold," said Will Norcross once, "but whenever I am with her I feel ashamed of my real self, and resolve that I will never think or do a mean thing again."

Girls, dear girls, how are you using the power in your hands? Are you seeking to lead your companions up? Are you trying to influence them to be purer and better? Are you holding up a high standard to them?

God grant you are.

YOUTH.—Life, like the fountain of Ammon, overflows only at dawn and early morning. As it gets older, it has still pleasures, but they are sober and staid, tinged with a darker green or autumn brown. Spring leaves have a tint we miss in July or October; their freshness and soft transparency pass; the brook sings as it runs; the river glides quickly, and the sea moans. Poets always paint the gods young, and half our heaven is the thought of our youth returning. Everything young is happy; God gives all nature so many days' grace before its troubles begin. There is a universal morning gladness before the heat of the day. We spend boyhood and youth in an enchanted world, with fountains of joy scattering rainbows; it is a delight simply to live in those years. As we get older, happiness gets daintier, and needs more catering; but in our spring-time it laughs, and thrives on the poorest fare. Youth is the greatest alchemist—it and the light, that turns hill-tops to amethyst, and the rough earth to gold. It transfigures everything to its own brightness, and, like the sun, makes a pavilion of its own beams.—Dr. Cunningham Geikie