



The Family Circle.

THE MYSTICAL BALL OF YARN.*

A story is told, as quaint and strange
As some tale of fairy-lore;
A lesson it has for you and me,
So I tell it to you once more,
It may not be new
As a story to you,
Yet patiently listen because it is true.

To a distant land far over the sea
A herald of Christ was sent,
The Gospel-standard of Light to raise
On a darkened continent.
The labor was sweet
And the recompense meet:
Soul-captives made free, at the dear Lord's feet.

They earnestly labored, this man good and true
And his helper so patient and fair;
For they knew in the home-land far away
Were many an Aaron and Hur,
Who faithfully prayed
And their weak hands upstayed
While the battle waxed fierce; so they were not afraid.

And with message of love came often a gift,
Their brave hearts to gladden and cheer;
And 'tis here that the story strange begins,
Of a gift so wondrous queer,
That they pondered and thought,
And wondered and wrought,
O'er a ball of yarn with mystery fraught.

Its colors were scarlet, and purple, and brown;
All shades intermingled, and tints,
A medley chaotic—no purpose or plan—
And the letter gave only these hints:
"Knit this yarn, patient friend,
From beginning to end,
And carefully follow the rule which I send.

"Of stitches, the first on the needle, and last,
Must ever and always be white;
Let the other hues come as they may—in the end
You will see that the knitting is right;
And that rose-tint and grey
Each falls its own way;
And the task when completed your toil will repay."

So the mother began, and patiently wrought;
And the children came often to ask
(As in her deft fingers the needles fast flow)
If the meaning she saw of her task?
Though the answer was "Nay!"
Yet faithful to-day,
With hope for the morrow, she kept on her way.

The days passed to weeks; and true to her task
The work in her hands grew apace;
And the good-man would come from his study
and books
Some meaning, or purpose, to trace;
Whom lo! in surprise,
Their glad waiting eyes,
Saw a pattern of beauty from chaos arise.

Perhaps they who sent this strange ball of yarn,
A lesson of trust would convey:
Tost these toilers, because of the long weary road,
Discouraged, should faint by the way.
Of them it was true,
As it may be of you,
"They builded," for God, "better far than they know."

So to us who are knitting the strange threat of
life,
Full of tangles, and sullied with care,
Let us patiently work, though we see no design;
Heeding only the white stitch of prayer.
May we never forget
That the end is not yet;
And the task is the one that our Father has set.

It may be that when the dark river is crossed,
And our faith shall have bloomed into sight,
The work which here caused us but sorrow and
tears,
Will then fill our souls with delight;
As each color in place,
We joyfully trace
The pattern complete, through God's mercy and
grace.

MRS. JOSEPHINE C. GOODALE.
*An incident in the life of the late Dr. William
G. Schaeffler, of Constantinople.

GOOD-BYE is the contraction of "God be
with you." When you say good-by you
always say "God be with you."

EVERY great and commanding movement
in the annals of the world is the product of
enthusiasm.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

The other day I heard a story of unusual
presence of mind. It was told by one who
had himself received it from an officer of
one of the greatest railways that cross the
Allegheny Mountains.

"There," said the officer to my informant,
as both were going about a great
central station, where cars and locomotives
were made, repaired and kept, "there is
the very man. If he wants any favor of
the road, he has only to ask for it. The
rest of us come and go; but he stays, and
may stay, service or no service, till death
removes him. The road is grateful to him,
and will always hold him, in honor."

Many years have elapsed since the inci-
dent happened; many more since the tell-
ing of the tale to my friend. The details
of the coloring vary somewhat as they pass
from mouth to mouth. No doubt, when
you have finished the story, you will say,
"Why, that was the very thing I would
have done myself." But would you have
done it? Here is the story:

Puff! puff! puff! It was hard work;
for the grade was steep and the train long
and heavy. The engine panted as if its
strength were failing, and no wonder. For
miles and miles up the slopes of the Allegheny
Mountains it had been tugging its
precious burden, and there were many
miles more before it should reach the sum-
mit and tarry awhile to regain its strength.

Much of the way was little more than a
shelf cut into the mountain sides with ris-
ing walls of rock on the one hand, and
deep ravines on the other. And far up
among the mountains, often on the opposite
sides of huge and gloomy chasms, the ob-
servant traveller would catch glimpses of
what seemed to be the curves and embank-
ments of another road. Later he would
be himself borne over these very chasms,
and whirled around these curves.

These changing scenes kept the passen-
gers in a tremor of half-joyful, half-anxious
excitement.

"How beautiful that wooded slope!"
"Shall we ever get to the top of the
ridge?"

"Down here among the trees! See this
silvery cascade!"

"Ah! here we go through a tunnel."

"That great boulder looks as if the
slightest jar would bring it down upon us!"

"What if the roadbed should give way
here like an avalanche!"

"Oh, here comes some trestle-work!
How frail it looks! And what a dizzy
height! If it should break under us—oh,
dear!"

Just then a quick sharp, whistle was
heard. To those that understood it, it said
imperatively, "Down brakes, and be quick
about it, too! Instantly the brakemen
were straining at their posts as if every life
were threatened. Indeed, it was their
duty, on these hard, treacherous grades, to
stand by the brakes, and use them at a
moment's warning. People thrust their
heads out of the car windows, and some
hurried to the platforms, and there was a
deal of nervous questioning. What was
the matter? Had an accident happened?
Was there any danger? Nobody seemed
to know. Not even the brakemen were
informed. And it was the gift of blessed
Providence that the cause was not reveal-
ed, else that moment of uncertainty and
subdued alarm would have been one of
anguish and disaster.

Far up the road the engineer had caught
a glimpse of an awful peril. It was a train
of runaway freight cars. For a moment it
was in plain sight, dashing around a curve,
then it was lost in the woods. No engine
accompanied it; there were no brakemen
visible; there was no sign of life anywhere
about it. Nowhere on the grade at that
time was a down train due. The cars were
without control; there was no doubt of it,
and there was nothing to check their de-
scent. Already they were running furious-
ly, and every second their speed was in-
creasing. A collision seemed inevitable.
The destruction of life would be frightful.

What should the engineer do? To stop
his train would not mend the situation.
To reverse the train and go the other way
—there was hardly time for that. Besides,
it would only postpone the certain result,
and make it more dreadful because of the
increased headway of the runaway cars.

The engineer viewed the situation on
every side. Plan after plan rose before
him; plan after plan was dropped. But it

was all done with that wonderful speed
which the mind shows when under the
stress of swiftly nearing danger. In that
brief time the engineer lived hours. Sud-
denly there was a ray of hope, a possible
plan of safety. "Down brakes!" he whis-
tled. This was the signal to which we have
already called attention; the one that sent
the tremor through the hundreds on the
train.

"Free the engine from the train!" he
shouted to the fireman. The engine was
uncoupled, and the train was left lagging
behind. "Now jump for your life."
There was no time for parley. The fire-
man leaped, fell, and scrambled to his feet
again. Then the engine put on full steam.
Freed from its burden of coaches, the
locomotive responded at once.

"Now fight the battle for us!" exclaim-
ed the engineer, as he sprang from the
steps. His quick eye had chosen a favor-
able spot on which to alight. Though
thrown headlong with some force, he was
on his feet promptly enough to see his
train roll by at lessening speed, under the
full control of the faithful brakemen.

That something serious had happened or
was about to occur began to be clear to the
passengers. One or two had seen the fire-
man jump, two or three, the engineer; and
large numbers from the car-windows had
caught snatches of men that, soiled and
bruised and dazed, were trying to rise to
their feet by the side of the track. All
was excitement and tumult. So began
to leap from the cars. Fortunately there
was little danger now, for the motion of
the train had nearly ceased.

Up the track, meanwhile, went the iron
monster to meet the foe alone. Down the
track, into full sight, came wild freight
cars with a speed so great that they almost
rose from the rail as they rounded the
curves. Nearer and nearer, the speed of
each increasing. Then they flew at each
other in a mighty, tiger-like rage, as if it
were blood to be shed and nerves to be
torn asunder.

The crash shook the hills. A great, roar-
ing cloud of steam burst into the air, while
another of dust and debris boiled up and
mingled confusedly with it. Then the
shattered ends of the cars shot out here
and there from the smoke, and a grinding,
crackling mass rose up. Quivering in the
air a moment, it reeled, and then went
crashing down the embankment into the
ravine below. When the steam and dust
cleared away, there were the deep, ugly
furrows in the roadbed, and the splintered
ties, and the bent and broken rails, and the
nameless fragments of an utter wreck, to
mark the scene of the fierce encounter.

The gallant engine was a hopeless ruin;
but it had done a noble service. It had
fought a battle in which hundreds of lives
and untold interests were at stake, and it
had won it. Not a life of that precious
company was lost, not a member of it hurt
by so much as a scratch. Before they saw
their peril, they were rescued from it; and
yet their rescue had hardly been completed
before the full and awful nature of that
peril burst upon them, and stirred them in
their inmost being.

With tears of joy and gratitude they
blessed the engineer whose quick wit and
daring plan and instant execution had saved
them from a fate that at one moment seem-
ed beyond human power to avert. And to
the poor locomotive that lay dismembered
and useless on the rocks below, there went
out a kind and tender feeling, as if, in giv-
ing its life to save others, it had shown
something akin to the love and bravery and
sacrifice of a noble human soul.—*Congrega-
tionalist.*

MORAL SUASION OR PROHIBITION.

A young man once advised me to advo-
cate pure moral suasion. At a meeting
where this young man was present I said
to the audience, pointing to him, "Some
say we ought to advocate moral suasion ex-
clusively. Now I will give you a fact.
Thirteen miles from this place there lived
a woman who was a good wife, a good
mother, a good woman." I then related
her story as she told it:

My husband is a drunkard; I have
worked, and hoped, and prayed, but I al-
most gave up in despair. He went away
and was gone ten days. He came back ill
with the small-pox. Two of the children
took it, and both of them died. I nursed

my husband through his long sickness—
watched over him night and day, feeling
that he could not drink again nor ever again
abuse me. I thought he would remember
all this terrible experience. Mr. Leonard
kept a liquor-shop about three doors from
my house, and soon after my husband was
well enough to get out, Mr. Leonard in-
vited him in and gave him some drink.
He was then worse than ever. He now
beats me, and bruises me. I went into
Mr. Leonard's shop one day, nerved al-
most to madness, and said, "Mr. Leonard,
I wish you would not sell my husband any
more drink."

"Get out of this," said he, "away with
you! This is no place for a woman; clear
out."

"But I don't want you to sell him any
more drink."

"Get out, will you? If you wasn't a
woman, I would knock you into the middle
of the street."

"But, Mr. Leonard, please don't sell my
husband any more drink."

"Mind your own business, I say."

"But my husband's business is mine,"
she pleaded.

"Get out! If you don't, I'll put you
out."

I ran out and the man was very angry.
Three days after, a neighbor came in and
said, "Mrs. Truttle, your Ned's just been
sent out of Leonard's shop so drunk that he
can hardly stand!"

"What! my child, who is only ten years
old?"

"Yes."

The child was picked up in the street and
brought home, and it was four days before
he got about again. I then went into Leo-
nard's shop and said, "You gave my boy,
Ned, drink."

"Get out of this, I tell you," said the
man.

I said, "I don't want you to give my
boy drink any more. You have ruined my
husband: for God's sake spare my child,"
and I went down upon my knees, and
tears ran down my cheeks. He then took
me by the shoulders and kicked me out of
doors.

"Then," said I, pointing directly to my
friend, "Young man, you talk of moral
suasion? Suppose that woman was your
mother, what would you do to the man that
kicked her?" He jumped right off his seat
and said, "I'd kill him! That's moral su-
asion, is it? Yes, I'd kill him, just as I'd
kill a woodchuck that had eaten my beans."

Now, we do not go as far as that; we do
not believe in killing or persecution, but
we believe in prevention and prohibition.
—*John B. Gough.*

AN OLD CLOCK'S ADVICE.

A correspondent says that in his great-
grand father's house, as he has heard his
mother tell, there was a clock on which was
the following inscription:

"Here I stand both day and night,
To tell the time with all my might;
Do thou example take by me,
And serve thy God as I serve thee."

The old clock remained in the family for
many years, but the time of which it told
so faithfully at last conquered it, as it con-
quers all things on earth.—*Exchange.*

A PET THEORY of those who are unwill-
ing to accept total abstinence as the truest
temperance, in the line of liquor drinking,
is that pure wines and ciders are compar-
atively harmless, in contrast with adulter-
ated liquors. Yet there is no form of drunk-
enness which has more of brutality in it
than that which is a result of cider-drink-
ing; and from the days of Noah to the
present day, a man who has been made
drunken by home-made wine is likely to be
as disgracefully drunken as if it were strych-
nine whiskey which had brought him down.
Only a few days ago a silk-weaver in He-
bron, Connecticut, murdered his wife and
two children, and set fire to his house.
He was a Swiss immigrant, and believed in
home-made liquors. The telegraph report
reads: "He had half a dozen barrels of
home-made wine and cider in his cellar,
and drinking from these made him crazy,
and promoted the murder." If the blood-
stained ashes of his household show the
sort of home made by home-made wine and
cider, total abstinence from those liquors
would seem to be the truest temperance.—
Sunday-school Times.