

OUR HOME CIRCLE.

SUNSET WITH CLOUDS.

The earth grows dark about me,
But heaven shines clear above,
As daylight slowly melts away
With the crimson light I love;
And clouds, like floating shadows,
Of every form and hue,
Hover around its lying couch,
And blush a bright red hue.

Like fiery forms of angels,
They throng around the sun—
Courtiers that on their monarch wait,
Until his countenance is run;
From him they take their glory;
His honor they uphold;
And trail their flowing garments forth,
Of purple, green, and gold.

Oh, bliss to gaze upon them
From this commanding hill,
And drink the glory of the host,
While all around is still;
While distant skies are opening,
And stretching far away,
A sunbeams escape dipped in gold,
Where happier spirits stray.

I feel myself immortal,
As in your robe of light
The glorious hills and vales of Heaven
Are dawning on the night;
I seem to hear the murmur
Of some celestial stream;
And catch the glimmer of its course
Beneath the sacred beam.

And such, methinks with rapture,
Is my eternal home—
More lovely than this passing glimpse—
To which my footsteps roam;
There something yet more glorious
Success this life of pain;
And, strengthened with a mightier hope,
I face the world again.

—Gerrard Lewis, in Temple Bar.

THE MISSIONARY HORSE.

The following is from the Memoir of Stephen Paxson, for many years a most successful agent of the American Sunday School Union:

While his labors as a missionary were becoming more and more effective, the state of financial affairs at home was by no means prosperous. Much labor had been necessary to reduce the stumpy ground to agricultural order, while the money to hire necessary help was lacking. It was absolutely necessary that he should have a stronger horse for his travels; no money was in the purse wherewith to purchase one; yet he never allowed his anxious cares to overcloud the family, but carried them all to Him whom he trusted as a sympathizing brother. Though he knew not from whence the necessary means would come, he had faith that, in his own way, the Lord would provide, and that the needed horse would be secured in time for his next long journey. So he gathered the children in his arms, and sang for them the old Scotch song he loved so well, or joined them in a mad game of blind man's buff with all the joyous abandon of the children themselves.

And the horse came, as if in obedience to the call of faith abiding in this man's heart. He received a message from Rev. Wm. Carter, pastor of the Congregational Church of Pittsfield, to appear before his people one Sabbath morning to deliver an address on his work, as they were all desirous to hear how he was succeeding in his Sunday-school efforts. He went, and at the conclusion of his remarks a collection was taken up, which Mr. Carter proposed should be expended in the purchase of a missionary horse, as a testimonial of their appreciation of the work he was accomplishing, and as the best method they could adopt to assist him in carrying it forward. To his surprise and joy the money was placed in his hands, with the suggestion that he might now turn his old horse out to grass.

A grateful letter was sent to his wife, containing a message to the children that they should watch for his return upon a certain evening, and they would see a man weighing two hundred pounds come riding on a sheep. Great was the excitement and various the speculations as to what this curious message could mean. The older ones guessed at once that he meant a small horse, possibly a pony, but they were non-committal to the younger.

At last he came riding upon a small horse, and a shout of joy and admiration hailed the arrival. All gathered about to hear the horse named; and he tossed his mane as if in satisfaction when "Robert Raikes" was selected as the most appropriate name a Sunday-school horse could have.

No one guessed, as he was led in triumph to the stable, what a work lay before him, what a history he would achieve; how he would help or organize more Sunday-schools than any other horse in the world—over seven hundred in number—how he would travel a distance nearly as great as thrice around the world in carrying his master about his chosen

work; that he would become so familiar to the children of several states, as to be known by them as "dear old Bob," and would be the means of distributing among them thousands of books and papers. Finally, that he would become known not only in the west, but also at the north and south, and in the far east; that in such great cities as Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, his history would be appreciated and his picture recognized and prized; that at last, after twenty-five years of labor he would die, and the newspapers and Sunday-school circulars of the land would publish this letter containing an account of his death, which sorrowful eyes in every state in the Union would read:

ILLINOIS, Oct. 18, 1868.

Dear Father.—I sit down this pleasant afternoon to tell you of the death of your faithful old servant "Robert Raikes." He had been declining gradually for the last six months. We have not harnessed him more than once all summer. He ate two ears of corn on Friday last, and on Saturday night died in the clover lot. If, as some believe, horses have souls "old Bob" will certainly occupy some better fields in the green pastures than those of the common herd.

While looking at the remains of this faithful creature, I could not but ask myself this question, and I as faithful to my heavenly Master as he has been to his earthly one?

Your affectionate daughter,
MARY.

"How sad I felt" said Mr. Paxson, "when I heard that dear old Bob was dead. I felt as though I had lost a member of my family and found the big tears rolling down my face. His quarter of a century in the Sunday-school work has left its mark upon the religious interests of a wide region. He was always faithful and obedient. When I bade him come he came, when I bade him go he went, and cheerfully, too. He never held back except when he met a child; then he would always stop, and would never pass a church or school-house without trying to go up to it."

Once a young man borrowed Bob to take a young lady out riding. He moved along in good style till he met the children coming home from school, then he stopped. The driver told him to "get up," but Bob would not move a peg. The young man flourished a whip, but Bob was evidently going to be obstinate. The children gathered around, much to the young man's discomfort, but all at once he suspected what Bob was waiting for, so he made a little speech to the children, bade them "good evening," shook the lines, and passed on.

"In that day," says Zechariah, "shall there be, upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD;" surely this might have been inscribed on old Bob's harness, for he was worn out carrying the Gospel.

The following incident is given here as connected with the career of "Robert Raikes." It was written originally by Mr. Paxson to a Sunday-school in an eastern city, and was published in the N. Y. Independent and other leading religious papers.

A SCENE IN A BLACKSMITH'S SHOP.

"I drove up to a blacksmith's shop a few days since to get my horse shod. The blacksmith walked up to the horse and looked him square in the face, then turning to the people about said, 'I have shod hundreds of horses, and have seen thousands, but there, pointing to my horse, 'is the best countenance and best shaped head I ever saw!'"

"While he was shoeing him I made some inquiries concerning a Sabbath-school, and told him my horse and myself were both missionaries. He immediately dropped the horse's foot, and seating himself on the ground, said: 'Stranger, let me give you a little of my history. I was an orphan boy, bound out to learn the blacksmith's trade. My master would not send me to school, but kept me hammering hot iron day and night until I was nineteen years old. About that time a Sunday-school man came to the settlement, and went round, telling the people to come out and he would start a Sunday-school. So I got my day's work done and went to hear him. He told me a heap of good things, and among others that he himself first went to Sunday-school when about thirty years old, and how much he learned and what a blessing it was to him. 'Now, thinks I,' continued the blacksmith, 'that's just my fix, and if he starts a school I'll go.' A school was started, and I went for two years. I soon learn-

ed to read my Bible, and the very day I was twenty-one I joined the church of Christ. For seven years I have been trying to serve Him. Last Sunday I was made the superintendent of a school here.'

"I asked him where the school was, in which he learned to read and was converted to Christ. 'Oh! more than a hundred miles from here,' he replied. 'He gave me the name and all the particulars of his organization. I then asked him if he would know the man who organized that school. He did not know as he would, it had been so long ago, but recollected that he was large, almost as large as myself. I then informed him that I was the person, and that that horse was along too. He sprang to his feet, exclaiming, 'Blessed father!' is it possible.

"While my hand rested in his tears rolled down his cheeks like rain. 'He said: 'All that I am I owe under God to that school. There I learned to read and love my blessed Saviour.' He took me to his house and introduced me to his wife, a good Christian woman, the mother of two children.

"When offered to pay him, he said, 'No; never a cent for shoeing the missionary horse! I will shoe him all his life for nothing, if you will bring him to me.' 'To you this may not be particularly interesting, but to me it was one of the most pleasing incidents in my life. I felt that the starting of that one school was worth a lifetime of toil.'

DON'T TAKE IT TO HEART.

There's many a trouble
Would break like a bubble,
And into the waters of Lethe depart,
Did we not rehearse it,
And tenderly nurse it,
And give it permanent place in the heart.

There's many a sorrow
Would vanish to-morrow,
Eyes bright as a cherry,
So sadly intruding,
And quietly brooding,
It hatches out all sorts of horrible things.

How welcome the seeming,
Of looks that are beaming,
Whether one's wealthy or whether one's poor;
Eyes bright as a berry,
Checks red as a cherry,
The groans and the curse and headache can cure.

Resolved to be merry,
All wroth to be fery,
Across the tamed waters that bid us forget,
And no longer fearful,
But happy and cheerful,
We feel life has much that's worth living for yet.

—Tinsley's Magazine.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CONVERTED.

It is very difficult to approach Roman Catholics on the subject of religion. They are so sure that they are right, they are so afraid of hearing anything of a religious nature from heretics, and as members of the "only true church" they are so confident of safety, that many persons seem to think it is useless to attempt to do anything with them. But they may be reached, if approached in a proper way, and in dependence on the aid of the Holy Spirit. But as a general thing it is not wise to enter into controversy with them; but rather to bring the plain truths of the Bible before them and thus reach them with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. To illustrate this mode and its results, I give the following case.

A London city missionary visits the Marylebone workhouse, where there are some seven hundred sick persons in the Infirmary. One day the missionary saw a new patient in a bed, and learned that he was a Roman Catholic; but he took no notice of this fact and just approached this patient as he would any other. He spoke kindly to him, inquired about his affliction, which at that time was slight, spoke of Jesus as the friend of all those who are in trouble and difficulty, and especially as the Saviour of sinners, and of the need for repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and then he passed on.

This young man became much interested in the visits of the missionary, and in the religious services held in the ward, and joined heartily in the singing, and soon received the truths of the gospel for himself. One day he told the missionary that he had been thinking a great deal about what he had said to him, and added, "I see it all now, and I see that it is Jesus only. And I want to tell you that I don't trust in any forms, or in any church; I trust alone in Jesus Christ." Instead of recovering, as was expected, this young man grew worse, but he grew in grace, and trusted confidently in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and while his earthly expectations were blighted, he looked forward

with joy. A few days before he died the missionary was with him, and at his suggestion joined in singing the hymn "Over there." The sick man in a whisper attempted to put in the bass. "Over there," and at the close said, "Yes, I'll soon be at home over there." Such a case is an encouragement to prudent and hopeful efforts in cases which would otherwise be discouraging.—Watchman.

A WOMAN'S WIT.

Many of the first settlers of Illinois were rude in speech and rough in manner. Money was scarce with them, and service was paid for in produce. Governor B— used to illustrate these incidents of frontier life by the following anecdote:

One day there came to his office a young man accompanied by a young woman.

"Be you the Squire?" asked the manly youth.

"Yes, sir."

"Can you tie the knot for us, right away?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much do you charge?"

"One dollar is the legal fee, sir."

"Will you take your fee in beeswax?"

"Yes, if you can't pay cash."

"Well go ahead and tie the knot, and I'll fetch in the wax."

"No," said the Squire, thinking there was a good chance for a little fun; "bring in the beeswax first, and then I'll marry you."

Reluctantly the youth went out to where was hitched the horse, upon which, Darby and Joan fashion, they had ridden, and brought the wax in a sack. On being weighed, its value was found to be only sixty cents.

"Wall," said the anxious groom, "tie the knot, and I'll fetch more wax next week."

"No, sir, I don't trust; that is against the rules of this office."

Slowly the disappointed youth turned to go out, saying, "Come, Sall, let's go."

"I say, mister," answered Sall, with a woman's wit, "can't you marry us as far as the wax will go?"

"Yes, I can, and will," replied the Squire laughing; and he did.

"THANK YOU" AND "PLEASE."

I went to a little mission chapel in New York, and the speakers, of whom there were many, were allowed only a minute each. One woman said in that minute what thrilled me through and through. "The love of Jesus has made my husband and myself manly. We used to swear at one another, and now we say, 'Thank ye' and 'Please.'" I tell you, the preaching of infidelity and of all the scientists can not produce an effect like that in one hundred years.—John B. Gough.

ANNIE ERSKINE'S SECRET.

"A penny for your thoughts, dear," said Mrs. Benton one evening to a young girl who had been sitting in the opposite corner for some time without speaking. "I was just wondering how Annie Erskine manages to be so good. I am sure she can not find it half such hard work as I do. We all love Annie—that is most of us do—and every one speaks well of her, except a few who are jealous of her; and I am sure it must be very pleasant to be praised by our teachers and everybody. But I can't be like her much as I would like to be. I don't believe Annie would be a bit better if she were in my place."

"I fear, my child," replied Mrs. Benton, "that you begin at the wrong end of the work. Perhaps if you knew Annie a little better, you would find being good cost her as much effort, and more, perhaps, than it would you. I think if you should inquire of her, she would say, 'I never would do right if left to myself. But God has promised to give us all needful grace. It is beginning at the wrong end, to be good only for others to see, and trusting to one's own strength.'"

PAVED WITH EXTINCT STARS.

In a recent scientific paper Sir John Lubbock says: "Like the sands of the sea, the stars of heaven have ever been used as effective symbols of number, and the improvements in our methods of observation have added fresh force to our original impressions. We now know that our earth is but a fraction of one out of at least 75,000,000 worlds. But this is not

in addition to the luminous heavenly bodies, we cannot doubt that there are countless others, invisible to us from their great distance, smaller size, or feebler light; indeed we know that there are many dark bodies which now emit no light or comparatively little. Thus in the case of Procyon, the existence of an invisible body is proved by the movement of the visible star. Again, I may refer to the curious phenomena presented by Algol, a bright star in the head of Medusa. This star shines without change for two days and thirteen hours; then, in three hours and a half, dwindles from a star of the second to one of the fourth magnitude, and then, in another three and a half hours re-assumes its original brilliancy. These changes seem certainly to indicate the presence of an opaque body which intercepts at regular intervals part of the light emitted by Algol. Thus the floor of Heaven is not only thick laid with patines of bright gold, but studded also with extinct stars—once probably as brilliant as our own sun, but now dead cold, as Humboldt tells us that our sun itself will be some seventeen millions of years hence."

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

MOTHER'S GIFT OF A BIBLE.

Remember, love, who gave thee this,
When other days are come:
When she who had thy earliest kiss
Sleeps in her narrow home:
Remember 't was a mother gave
The gift to one she'd die to save.

That mother sought a pledge of love,
The holiest for her son,
And from the gifts of God above
She chose a goodly one:
She chose for her beloved boy
The source of light, and life, and joy,

And bade him keep the gift, that when
The parting hour should come,
They might have hope to meet again
In an eternal home:
She said his faith in that would be
Sweet incense to her memory.

And should the scoffer in his pride
Laugh that fond faith to scorn,
And bid him cast the pledge aside,
That he from youth had borne,
She bade him pause, and ask his breast,
If he, or she, had loved him best!

A parent's blessing on her son
Goes with this holy thing;
The love that would retain the one
Must to the other cling.
Remember 't is no idle toy,
A mother's gift. Remember, boy!

FRENCH CHILDREN.

Politeness with the French is a matter of education as well as nature. The French child is taught the lesson from the beginning of its existence, and it is made a part of its life. It is the one thing that is never forgotten, and lack of it is never forgiven. The shipwrecked Frenchman who could not get into a boat, as he was disappearing under the waves raised his hat and, with such a bow as he could make under the circumstances, said, "Adieu, Mesdames; adieu, Messieurs," and went to the fishes. I doubt not that it really occurred, for I have seen ladies splashed by a cab on a rainy day smile politely at the driver. A race that has women of that degree of politeness can never be anything but polite. When such exasperation as splashed skirts and stockings will not ruffle them, nothing will.

The children are delightful in this particular. French children do not get about clamoring for the best places and sulking if they do not get them and talking in a rude, boisterous way. They do not take favors and attentions as a matter of course and unacknowledged. The slightest attention shown them is acknowledged by the sweetest kind of a bow—not the dancing-master's bow, but a genuine one—and the invariable "Merci, Monsieur!" or "Madame," or "Mademoiselle," as the case may be.

I was in a compartment with a little French boy of twelve, the precise age at which American children, as a rule, deserve killing for their rudeness and general disagreeableness. He was dressed faultlessly, but his clothes were not the chief charm. I sat between him and the window, and he was eating pears. Now, an American boy of that age would either have dropped the cores upon the floor or tossed them out of the window without a word to anybody. But this small gentleman every time, with a "Permit me, Monsieur," said in the most pleasant way, rose and came to the window and dropped them out, and then, "Merci, Monsieur," as he quietly took his seat. It was a delight. I am sorry to say that such small boys do not travel on American railroads to any alarming extent. Would they were more frequent.

And when in his seat, if an elderly person or any one else came in, he was the very first to rise and offer his place if it were

in the slightest degree more comfortable than the one vacant, and the good nature with which he insisted upon the new-comer taking it was something altogether too sweet for anything," as the fero barkeeper would say.

And this boy was no exception. He was not a show-boy out-posing before the great American Republic or such of it as happened to be in France at the time; but he was a simple, a type of the regulation French child. I have seen just as much politeness in the ragged waifs in Fairbourg St. Antoine, where a child never saw the blue sky more than the little patches that could be seen over the tops of seven-storyed houses, as I ever did in the Champs Elysees. One Sunday at St. Cloud, where the ragged children of poverty are taken by their mothers for air and light, it was a delight to fill the pockets with sweets to give them. They had no money to buy, and the little human rats looked longingly at the riches of the candy stands, and a son's worth made the difference between perfect happiness and half pleasure. You gave them the son's worth and what a glad smile came to the lips, and accompanied with it was the delicious half-bow and half-courtesy and invariably, "Merci, Monsieur." One little tot who could not speak filled her mouth with the unheard of delicacies she had received and, too young to say "Merci," put up her lips to be kissed.—Nabby's Letter Abroad, in Toledo Blade.

JUST AS FOOLISH.

There was a ridiculous story in the paper the other day, which I should hardly think could be true. It said that a man was walking along the street not very far from the place where a great building was burning, and a big cinder fell on his hat. Another man just behind him saw it fall, and hastened to knock it off. I suppose you think the man whose hat was in danger of burning up turned around and thanked the one who took the cinder off. But no! Here is the ridiculous part of the story; He turned around angrily and spoke very severely to the man, who, he said, had no business to touch his hat. Now, I should not have been able to believe that story if I had not seen people quite as foolish. Young people upon whom a disagreeable little habit has fallen which will make them appear more absurd than a man with a burned hat, or no hat at all, will sometimes be very much vexed with one who tries by a kind word of admonition to brush the habit off. Some of you bite your finger-nails, make unnecessary and offensive noises with your mouth or your nose—never mind mentioning them now—most of you do something which is an offence to those about you. When some one speaks to you about it, are you ready with some vexed reply? or can you pleasantly say, "Thank you; I will try and improve in that direction?" To be sure, the cinder may be knocked off with needless roughness, and you may find the word of the rebuke not altogether agreeable, yet you can make it so by your gracious way of receiving it and your cheerful determination to get rid of the cinder.—Christian Union.

JOHNNY'S REASON.

A circus came to town, and everybody knows how the music and the grand tents and horses set all the boys agog. Quarters and shillings are in great demand; and many a choice bit of money have the circus-riders carried away which was meant for better purposes.

A little boy was seen looking around the premises with a great deal of curiosity. "Halloo, Johnny," said a man who knew him, "going to the circus?" "No, sir," answered Johnny, "father don't like 'em."

"Oh, well, I'll give you the money to go, Johnny," said the man. "Father don't approve of them," answered Johnny. "Well, go in for once, and I'll pay for you."

"No, sir," said Johnny, "my father would give me the money if he thought 'twere best: besides I've got twenty-five cents in my strong box—twice enough to go." "I'd go, Johnny, for once: it's wonderful, the way the horses do," said the man. "Your father needn't know it."