

The Family.

BLESSSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN.

Oh, deem not that earth's crowning bliss
Is found in joy alone,
For sorrow, bitter though it be,
Hath blessings all its own.
From lips divine, like healing balm,
To hearts oppressed and torn,
The heavenly consolation fell—
Blessed are they that mourn!"

As blossoms smitten by the rain
Their sweetest odours yield,
As where the ploughshare deepest strikes
Rich harvests crown the field,
So, to the hopes by sorrow crushed,
A nobler faith succeeds;
And life, by trials furrowed, bears
The fruit of loving deeds.

William H. Burleigh.

A STRANGER FROM JAPAN.

"I wish I could only see them once and not merely read about them," said Mary as she was looking at the picture of a Japanese family.

"If you would like to have me, I will invite Mr. Kamio to tea remarked her brother Philip. "and you can ask him about his people. May I mother?"

"Certainly, your friends are always welcome," was the answer.

"Ask Mr. Kamio to tea," cried Mary with astonishment. "What? The little Japanese student?" asked Emma. "I don't know at all how I ought to behave. I shall surely talk too loud, as I always do when strangers come."

"Perhaps he will not accept an invitation," suggested Julia.

"He will not refuse it," said Philip; "he is a very courteous man."

"Of course he is, if he is your friend," said Emma.

"Shall I invite him to come to-morrow evening?" asked Philip.

"So soon?" cried the girls. "I must make some imperial cake, that they surely don't have in Japan," said Mary.

"He will remain here only a short time longer. In a few days he will take his doctor's degree, and without doubt will return home at once," remarked Philip. "Then I must bake the cake to-day," said Mary. "And I will try not to talk too loud," said Emma, laughing.

"Is he a Christian?" asked Julia.

"I don't know," answered Philip with some embarrassment. "I ought to know more about him."

"He will not be long in our Christian land," remarked his mother.

So it was decided to invite Mr. Kamio on the evening of the following day. Meanwhile Julia had her own thoughts. A short time before she had determined to neglect no opportunity of making a confession of Jesus. This young stranger would come and go away again. But what could she say to him? She did not want him to come.

The evening came and Mr. Kamio appeared at tea. All were attracted by his gentlemanly demeanor and intelligent conversation. He, on his side, had every reason to be satisfied with the hospitality of the family. After tea, Mary found courage to show him the picture of the Japanese family. This appeared to be very agreeable to him. He noticed every detail of the picture, and explained the writing which Mary had called hieroglyphics. He seemed to know just what the people in the picture were doing—yes, even what they were talking about. Mary felt as if she had been introduced into a Japanese family.

"You are very kind to let me tell you about my home," said the Japanese. "Certainly you cannot wish to hear any more."

"You cannot tell us too much," said Mary. So she spoke in a very interesting way of the distant country in the East, which has only recently had intercourse with other nations. He told about the mountains and valleys, the fruits and flowers, and the beauty of the scenery of his native land. Of the missionary work he said nothing. Perhaps Julia was the only one who noticed this. No, Philip, too, noticed this omission, and became conscious that he himself had been somewhat remiss in his intercourse with this young foreigner, and he remarked that he also intended to make the journey to Japan when he should finish his studies.

"It will give me much pleasure if you will then make me a visit," said Mr. Kamio.

"More than a mere visit," replied Philip. "I hope to spend my life in Japan."

Kamio ventured to ask if he intended to be a teacher in a Government school. "No," was the answer. "I mean to go as a servant of the Gospel."

"Ah, as a missionary to my people," said Kamio with a polite bow. "You call us heathen and bring to us your Bible." Emma was surprised that he did not say "the Bible," or "our Bible."

Julia had now the answer to her question whether he was a Christian or not. When Kamio took leave he had for each one a pleasant word and some memento of Japan. Julia had also something for him. It was a little book with the title "Come to Jesus."

She gave it to him and said timidly, "Won't you read it and accept its invitation?" He said, "I thank you. Do you believe in it?" by which he meant, Do you believe in the name of Jesus?

"Yes," was her answer; "what would become of me if I did not; on whom else could I believe?"

"I believe in God," answered he warmly, "but you are the first in this Christian land who has asked me this question. I did not know whether the people really at heart believed what they say in the churches. I will read this book and will seek for Him in your Bible."

"It is your Bible as well as ours," said Julia, and wondered at her own courage. When Kamio had gone, she thanked the Lord, who had given her strength for a difficult duty.—*Mission Dayspring.*

AMY'S LANTERN.

"FATHER, what does God send the storm for?" asked Amy of John Gilmore, the rough handed fisherman.

He started back. He could hear, without alarm, the howling of the big storm that had broken loose out of the northeast, but that word "God" startled him. It had not been so always, but of late years he had suffered the cares of his life to crowd the thought of God out of his soul. Conscience was uneasy.

"Father, what does God let it storm for?" insisted his child.

She was looking out of the window of the little house in which lived the fisherman. The sea, as far as it could be seen, was one wild rout of waves beaten back from the rocky shore, broken and splashed with foam. In a few hours the sea would advance again. The tide would rise, and what huge, roaring billows would crash upon Stony Beach, and try to flow over and drown everything! Would God send that tide, and for what? The fisherman paid no attention to the repeated question of his daughter, but turned to his wife bending over a cradle in the corner by the kitchen stove.

"Prissy," he said, "I don't want to be fussy, but this next high tide is going to do mischief all along the beach. Of course, you did not notice, perhaps, at the last high tide."

"Yes, I did, John. Baby and I were at the window, and we could see. It went higher than any time I have seen it for a year."

"Well, I've got to go down the shore. Don't worry when the tide comes."

"I will try not to, John."

"It won't reach us, Prissy; won't trouble the house, I mean. It may come a little way up the stairs."

These stairs led from the beach up the slope of the hummock that carried on its broad back the fisherman's house.

"Oh, I shan't be frightened," said Prissy, the fisherman's wife. "Amy will keep me company, won't you dear?"

"Yes, mother."

"And what, dear?" said her mother, detecting a whisper from Amy.

"God will, too," whispered the child again.

"Just think, John!" said his wife, laying a detaining hand on her husband as he was hurriedly passing.

"What is it, Prissy?"

"What do you think that child said?" she asked in a low tone.

"Don't know."

"She said 'God will'—will keep me company," whispered the mother in the husband's ear.

The remark, though, did not seem to put the fisherman at ease. He left the room without saying a word.

The great tide came at the appointed time, rising higher and higher as the shadows deepened above the sea. It flowed farther and farther all along the beach, swept over the long sandy slope, and washed even the lowest step in the stairway leading up to the fisherman's house. From the window Amy and her mother watched the rising waters.

"It is going to climb right up those stairs, mother," insisted Amy, shrinking closer and closer to her mother's side.

"Oh, no it won't, dear. You forget who you said would keep mother company."

"Yes, He is here, isn't He?"

"And He is out-doors?"

She was thinking of her father who had not come home yet.

"Yes, and may He keep father?"

"May?" That did not sound just right to Amy.

"Won't He keep father?" she asked.

"Yes, dear, I think so."

Her faith, though, was tried, the night was growing so dark, the sea was so great and stormy, that tide was crashing nearer and nearer, and the wind was pressing angrily against the small, old-fashioned panes of glass.

"Perhaps, Amy, you would be willing to light father's lantern and hang it out at the door; the baby needs me all the time?"

"Yes, mother."

She had often done it on nights dark and stormy, when her father was away. But when she hung it there this wild night something said to her, "Couldn't you take it just a little way along the path to the fish-house?" The fish-house was close by.

Beyond the fish-house was a brook that ran through the flat, far-reaching marshes, and when the tide was in, then the sea water poured up through the marshes in a cold, blue current. As it was a short distance from the home to the brook, on the other side of the rude building where the fisherman cleaned and salted his fish, Amy trotted out to the corner of this structure and looked down.

"Oh, oh, oh!" that was all she said. She heard the water raging through the brook at a furious rate.

"You can go across when the tide is out," thought Amy.

Yes, a board was laid from bank to bank, and a passage could safely be made. No chance for passing to-night. That great tide had swept the little foot-bridge away.

But look, Amy.

Yes, how she looked, as she stood higher up, in a safe place, her bright, shining lantern in her hand. So intently did she look. And what did the rays of the child's light fall upon?

A man's face, white, struggling with the waves trying to cover it?

And what did she hear? A man's voice, calling out, pitifully?

She could not say.

She only knew that she must stay there faithfully watching, steadfastly holding the lantern there by that sheltering corner of the old fish-house, for something, she could not say just what, was needing her lantern and in a few minutes the something crawled out of the water, the something took her hand, and led her into the house.

"Why, John!" exclaimed his wife, as she saw her husband's dripping form.

"If it you?"

"Yes, wife, I went down the beach to secure some property for the neighbors, and when I got back to the brook the plank was gone, and I tried foolishly to get across, and was having a horrible time when Amy's lantern came to the brink, and didn't I say what I haven't said before for many a day, 'thank God!' Yes, and perhaps that is why, in part, God sent this storm to reach me, and I want to say 'thank God' on my knees too, and say it now!"

Down they all fell on their knees, and there amid the noises of the storm, the fisherman's voice went up in thanks-giving, and God's presence came down in blessing, filling the room with a new sense of safety and peace.—*Rev. E. A. Rand, in N. Y. Observer.*

WALTER LYMAN'S LESSON IN POLITENESS.

"Why can't that horrid old woman do her calling in the day time?" exclaimed Walter Lyman as he looked up from the interesting story he was reading.

"I don't want to go way 'round to Twelfth street with her."

Mrs. Lyman stood by her son's chair, and she touched him gently on the shoulder. "My son, would you allow that poor old woman to go home alone to night? What if it were your mother?"

"I couldn't imagine such a transformation, mother. You'll never be like her. She's as ugly as—well so ugly that there is no danger of any one's running off with her."

Here and Twelfth street," and Walter laughed in derision.

"It is very icy, Walter, and just think how terrible it would be for her to slip down and hurt herself, it might be the cause of her death. She was very anxious to see your father, and she cannot see him any time but in the evening, you know."

Walter was just going to say "Why doesn't father go home with her?" but he remembered that his father was always quite tired at night for his work through the day was very arduous. Walter got his cap, but he was not in a pleasant mood, and it did not make him feel any pleasanter to hear his younger brother say as he went out of the door, "If it was only a pretty girl, Walt, that you had to go home with, you wouldn't have any objections to make, would you?"

"Now, Walter," said his mother, as he waited in the hall for Mrs. Hawkins to finish her conversation with his father, "I want you to be very kind to the poor old lady, and give her your arm so she won't fall. She isn't the most agreeable person, I know; but she has had a great many sorrows. She is all alone in the world. She had a boy like you, but he died just when he was able to be of some help to her. The Lord took her boy, and now in her old age He expects other mothers' boys will care for her."

Walter was touched by his mother's words, for he was a tender, kind-hearted boy, and he really was very polite and thoughtful on the way home. He listened attentively to all Mrs. Hawkins' grievances, which she poured out in a confidential manner to him. He began to feel a sort of championship of the poor old body.

When they got to the one room in the tenement house that Mrs. Hawkins called her home, she said, "Well, now, you're a good sort of a boy to be so kind to an old body like me. Most boys don't want to bother with old folks. Come in and rest you awhile."

Walter had left his story in a place where his hero was in great danger of being lost at sea, but his heart was so touched by the old lady's evident pleasure at the attention he had shown her, that he went in for a few moments. She showed him all her treasures: the geranium in the window that had its first blossom just coming out; she unlocked the bureau drawer, and brought out the old daguerotypes, and told Walter that this one was her husband's picture and that one her boy's, and although he had been dead over forty years, she dropped a tear on the glass over the picture. Once Walter would have laughed at the quaint manner in which the boy was dressed, but it was too sacred a thing to make fun of.

"I think I must go now," he said, when the pictures were put away.

"You make me think of my boy," she said, as she followed him to the door. "Won't you come round sometimes of an evening and cheer me up a little?"

Walter promised he would, and he did not forget his promise either. It became his particular missionary work to look after poor old Mrs. Hawkins. The school boys laughed about it and joked him a great deal, but they soon learned to respect him for the work he had chosen to do. It was old Mrs. Hawkins' last few miles of the journey on earth. She soon went home to be with those loved ones who went away from her so many years before.

Walter received her dying blessing and her little Bible, soiled and worn with so many years of using. He keeps it as a reminder of his lesson in true Christian politeness, and he says he will always pay his first attentions to the wants of the aged, who have travelled so long on the way, and are worn and feeble from the cares and sorrows they have had.—*Susan Tall Perry, in New York Evangelist.*

TOO MUCH FICTION.

It is hardly too much to say that modern society and life are suffering greatly from what may be fairly described as a debauch of fiction. We do not now refer to the "dime novel," with its blood and thunder machinery, its boundless gush of silly sentimentalism, and its array of mock heroes. The serious mischief wrought by this vile stuff on the impressionable minds of boys and girls has often been pointed out in these columns. Almost every daily paper contains shocking accounts of lads who have been enticed, by Wild West and other stories, to run away from home for an Indian hunt, or to kindle incendiary fires, or to form thieving companies of self-styled brigands. These evils are readily seen and felt by intelligent and elderly people. But it does not seem to occur to the intelligent and mature people themselves that they, too, are frittering away a deal of time and energy, under the fascination of the latest popular novel. The effort to keep up in ability to understand the fictitious characters and situations that other people are continually talking about, amounts with certain persons to a craze. They neglect history, biography, scientific discussions, and almost everything else, that they may rush at race-horse speed through new worlds of exciting imagination, and gabble in a superficial way about their contents. This habit is not simply a nervous strain, and a waste of nervous force. It involves positive and perilously injurious mental dissipation. There is no room in it for careful and painstaking thought, no deliberate sifting of thoughts, and wise adjustment of their real and just relationships. The mind hurries on in an agitated and slovenly mood, to see how the plot will terminate, and then the book is tossed aside for the next comer awaiting a similar fate. The judgment of the inveterate novel-reader is notoriously worthless. He has read himself into imbecility, and now he staggers through a maze of delusions and realities, unable to detect the difference between the two. The wretched sophistries of Robert Elsmere are accepted as good logic, and its sham tournaments of reason as actual battles. Again, how sadly the wholesale fiction reader forfeits his opportunities. While he is wading through the endless volumes of novels good and bad without learning anything in particular, he could become acquainted, through biographies, with the careers of many of the greatest, noblest benefactors of mankind, and find himself stimulated to high thoughts and helpful deeds. At the same time the pleasure of biographical and historical reading—when once the habit of such reading is formed—is far greater than that of novel reading. For there is a genuine satisfaction in realizing that one is dealing, not with a tale-writer's idle fancies, but with truth, and with life and human nature as they have actually displayed themselves. History is said to be the teacher of wisdom by the lessons of experience. And by a little care our children can be taught to find a charm and delight, as well as instruction in history. Higginson's History of the United States, Motley's Dutch Republic, Prescott's Mexico and Peru, Green's England, McMaster's account of our country, and many others that might be mentioned, are as interesting as imaginative stories, and infinitely more wholesome in their influence over our intellectual and moral processes. We wish that the lightning presses running night and day in the frantic endeavour to multiply frantic illusions by the millions, would just give us—a rest!—*Christian at Work.*

MANNERS FOR BOYS.

In the street. If lifted when saying "Good-bye," or "How do you do?" Also when offering a lady a seat, or acknowledging a favour.

Keep step with any one you walk with. Always precede a lady upstairs, but ask if you shall precede her in going through a crowd or public place.

At the street door. If at the moment you step into a private hall or office.

Let a lady pass first always, unless she asks you to precede her.

In the parlour. Stand till every lady in the room, also older people, are seated.

Rise if a lady enters the room after you are seated, and stand till she takes a seat.

Look people straight in the face when they are speaking to you.

Let ladies pass through a door first, standing aside for them.

In the dining-room. Take your seat after ladies and elders.

Never play with your knife, ring or spoon.

Do not take your napkin up in a bunch in your hand.

Eat as fast or as slow as others and finish the course when they do.

Do not ask to be excused before the others unless the reason is imperative.

Rise when the ladies leave the room, and stand till they are out.

If all go together, the gentlemen stand by the door till the ladies pass.

Special rules for the mouth. Smacking the lips and all noise should be avoided.

If obliged to take anything from the mouth, cover it with your hand or napkin.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

CONSOATION.

Willy Molly came home from the party to-night—
The party was out at nine—
There were traces of tears in her bright blue eyes
That looked mournfully up to mine.

For someone had said, she whispered to me,
With her face on my shoulder hid,
Someone had said (there were sobbs in her voice)
That they didn't like something she did.

So I took my little girl up on my knee—
I am old and exceedingly wise,
And I said "My dear, now listen to me;
Just listen and dry your eyes."

"This world is a difficult world, indeed,
And people are hard to suit
And the man who plays on the violin
Is a bore to the man with the flute."

"And I myself have often thought,
How very much better 'twould be
If every one of the folks that I know
Would only agree with me."

"But since they will not, the very best way
To make this world look bright,
Is never to mind what people say
But to do what you think is right."

—*St. Nicholas for March.*

JUST RIGHT.

A LADY who has gone to teach the Indians tells us about one of them who has learned that our Lord looks not so much at what we do as how we do it. She says, "One of our young men begged as a great favour that he might ring the chapel bell every Sunday. I was very glad to have him relieve me, and he is trying to learn to ring it just right, so God will be pleased."

"Ah, dear little white men, if you can only ring a bell for Jesus, learn to ring it just right."—*Sunbeam.*

HOME HAPPINESS.

DEAR boys and girls, you can add very much to home happiness, especially if you have a mother who is not very strong, or a grandpa or grandma who is aged and feeble, by being thoughtful and mannerly. There is a right way to open and shut the door; a right way to move from one part of the room to the other, a right way to sit down, to rise, to hold a book—a right way to do every thing that is worth doing at all. And yet we have known children to give their parents sad hearts by the neglect of these little home duties. It is more easy to do these things right than to do them wrong.

One very ugly habit some young people have is that of calling aloud the name of a brother or sister, or even of a father or mother, who may be in another room, or upstairs, or in the yard. A polite person will always go to the one whose attention is required and speak in a low and modest tone of voice. The home might be far more pleasant by a strict observance of many of these little matters.—*Our Little People.*

A BRAVE BOY.

A BOY about nine years old was bathing one day, when, by some mischance, he got into deep water and began to sink. His elder brother saw him and ran to save him, but, lacking strength or skill, he also sank to the bottom of the river. As the two drowning brothers rose to the surface for the last time, they saw a brother, the youngest of the family, running down the bank for the purpose of trying to save them. Then it was that the dying nine-year-old boy acted the part of a hero. Struggling as he was with death, he gathered all his strength, and cried to his brother on shore, "Don't come in, or father will lose all his boys at once!" Noble little fellow! Though dying, he forgot himself and thought only of his father's grief. He was a genuine hero. His brother obeyed his dying command, and was spared to comfort his father, when his two dead sons were taken from the river clasped in each other's arms. Boys, you are not called to be heroes in this way, but you are called to consider the feeling of your parents, and to study how to avoid giving them pain. Blessed are those children whose words and deeds make sweet music in their parents' souls.—*Exchange.*

Our Story.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF McNEIL.

BY AMELIA E. BARE,

Author of "Jan Volder's Wife," "The Daughter of Five," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.—HER OWN WAY.

Better a little child than a great deal of heart-break.

By Love the young and tender will be turned to folly.

First, then, a woman will, or won't depend on't.

For if she will, do't she will, and thine's an end on't.

We must do good against evil.

Shakespeare.

The afternoon was a brilliant one: indeed, the day had been so sultry and sunny that Helen had hoped a thunder-storm might prevent Grizelda leaving the house. But Nature often seems hostile to our best desires; every one has experienced this opposition of the elements. About three o'clock a fresh breeze sprang up. It made the fervid air deliciously cool, shook the scents out of the drowsy flowers, and called the birds from their green hiding-places. Broods of gurgling grouse with their "cheep," "cheep," "cheep," began to whirr about. The whinchats again darted noiselessly across among the gorse, the wheatears among the grey stone walls; and through the sentinel rushes of the mountain tarns, the summer snipe went wailing.

The hour was full of the glory and sweetness of summer: Nature herself seemed to be dreaming idly, and Grizelda's heart, beating to sweet imaginations, was responsive to it. She arrayed herself in a dress of exquisitely fine muslin. Its pearly white, tinted with a wandering vine, gave an ethereal beauty to her dazzling complexion. A floating gauze scarf was across her shoulders; a little straw bonnet on her head, trimmed with cornflowers and a few ears of wheat.

Never had Helen seen her look more lovely, more full of life, more certainly happy. She went with her to the door leading into the garden, and put her hand in Grizelda's. "Are you quite sure you are doing right, dear?" she asked.

"I am quite sure I am doing what will make me happy."

"Zelda bear with me a moment. If this love is necessary to your happiness, then, dear, I will speak to father, he is so good, so self-denying where our welfare is concerned, that I am sure he will be quite reasonable about Lord Maxwell. Write to Lord Maxwell now, and ask him to call here. I will send a servant with the note. Is not our drawing-room better for an interview than the public moor? Think of what people will say."

"Very few people cross the moor. If I see any one coming, I shall retreat among the pines."

"You mean that you will hide yourself. Oh, Zelda! Does not that very necessity show you that there is something wrong?"

"Not at all. Many things are innocent that are not to be talked about. And how is it possible for Lord Maxwell to come here? Father would get into one of his passions, and order him out of the house."

"Father is not unreasonable. Lord Maxwell has only to offer an apology—any man would do that under the circumstances. I will be on your side, Zelda. Write a few lines, dear, and let your maid take them. Do not go to your lover—let him come to you. That is only maidenly modesty."

"Helen, you are never on my side. Any other sister would take some interest in such a love affair as mine; and I do not want every thing straight-forward and agreeable just yet. A secret tryst is the only romantic one, and I do not thank you at all for interfering with mine. Even this talk about it has robbed me of some of its charm."

"If you mean to marry Lord Maxwell, it can never be done in this way."

"I mean to marry him, and I know better than you do how to succeed. If my father had said 'Yes,' and the door was set open for him, he might not want the 'yes' or the open door. But it is different where there is anger and opposition; love is stronger for it—yes, and sweeter too!"

"Then, to gain your own desire, you would give all your family the annoyance of anger and opposition. And think, Zelda, how cruelly you place me. What shall I do?"

"If your conscience troubles you, tell father. That is what you mean to do, of course. Or you might set Colin to watch me, Maxwell would enjoy that, only, you may depend upon it that I should be true to my love though all the world was against me."

"The world cares nothing about you and Maxwell. No one is specially against you. I only want Maxwell to come openly to the castle and woo you as a lady should be wooed."

"With father and a couple of lawyers between us, and you to play propriety I prefer a little romance. Let me go, Helen. You are only making things worse."

She drew her hand away with the words, and went swiftly down the garden. Helen watched her until she passed into the pine wood. There the girl slackened her pace and stood still a moment to regain her mental poise and serenity, for her breath came quick, and she was in a flurry of emotion.