

The Family.

SMALL BEGINNINGS.

A TRAVELLER through a dusty road strewn acorns on the sea, And one took root and sprouted up, and grew into a tree...

A little spring had lost its way amid the grass and fern, A passing stranger scooped a well, where weary men might turn...

A dreamer dropped a random thought, 'twas old and yet 'twas new; A simple fancy of the brain but strong in being true...

A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged the dairy mart, Let fall a word of hope and love unstudied from the heart...

MY BOY AND HIS SISTER.

"I WISH my husband would not make so decided a difference in his treatment of Robert and Bessie," said an anxious little woman the other day, gazing wistfully at the door which had closed upon father and son...

"If Mr. H.," the mother went on to say, "would be much happier, and it would be far better for Rob. I try to make up for papa's sternness by extra kindness and indulgence on my own part; but, after all, that is not the way it ought to be..."

It is not from lack of affection that this father, with many another, behaves roughly to his boy, repressing all demonstrations of love, except on rare occasions. Rather, the course was adopted, or half unconsciously begun, when the little lad, emerging from the halcyon period of kilts and curls, first developed the natural self-assertiveness of the growing boy...

Yet all the while, if he would but open his Bible, he would be confronted with the Pauline injunction, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," a word in season of equal force and as binding in its obligation as "Children, obey your parents in the Lord..."

It is not alone in the matter of gentle speech and expressed regard that Robert fares less comfortably than his sister; and here, perhaps, his mother is not altogether blameless. Bessie's room is as dainty and pretty as a little white-draped nest. Soft curtains at the windows, looped away with shining ribbons, bright pictures on the walls, books on the shelf, a gay rug before her bureau, her room is a retreat to which she is charmed to invite her young friends...

notes of laughter floating down the stair testify. But Robert's room is the antipodes of Bessie's. It is a refuge for the dingiest furniture in the house, the most worn and threadbare of carpets covers its floor, and it has not an element of comfort nor a trace of beauty...

"Take the boys to my room!" he exclaims, when a certain benevolent auntie makes the suggestion. "No, ma'am. My room is not a place to sit in. Fact is, there isn't any place in our house for a fellow, and he has to go to the street."

"This is so mournfully true, that common is unnecessary. For Robert and for hosts of boys, your David or Johnny, perhaps, gentle reader, among the number, the first step toward making him the gentle, chivalrous, well-mannered, sweet-natured youth you long to see your boy, would be taken, when you should give him a room of his very own, as dainty and comfortable as his sister's. Do not dream that it would be unappreciated, or that he would not take care of its little adornments. Try him. The experiment is worth making."

We are always touched when we observe the evidences of a boy's love for his mother, and she is to be congratulated who keeps her young son at her side, her knight and champion. As fair a sight, pleasing to God and man, is the walk and conversation, to use a Scripture phrase, of a boy with his father, when the two are friends, associates and daily companions. Happy the boy who gets his first idea of the Fatherhood in Heaven from the tenderness of a father on earth.—Mrs. M. E. Sangster in the Interior

DONALD'S LUCK.

THE heather was purpling the braes in the sunshine, and blue forget-me-nots were in bloom in spots glistening with the wash of the swift little stream below. Above was a clear blue summer sky with little floats of white clouds, "like ships," Donald said. But Jessie thought they were more like soft white cushions, and she longed to lie on one and be floated far over the clear blue sea.

For these children, who lived in the humblest sort of a cot, had fancies of their own which they had learned from sky and heather and mountain loch. Donald especially had his own dreams. "One of these days I shall be a dominie," he said. "I like to tell people their duty. But I shall not pound the pulpit cushions as hard as Dominie Graham, and I will never, never have more than 'sixthly' in my sermons."

"But mother can never give ye an education," cried Jessie. "An education is a grand thing, and takes muckle ailler." "Yes, I know," answered Donald, looking far up into the tender blue of the sky; "but my luck's coming. Didn't old Gibbie Sanders tell my fortune? And she said I'd have to preach in my native town, yet."

"Oh, well, Gibbie has been feasting on mother's hot scones, and wanted to please her," said shrewd little Jessie. "Besides, it's nae luck at all, but just Providence, settles things for us."

At this moment there came a faint sound to their ears—a sound that no Highland child can mistake—the low, plaintive bleat of a young lamb—saw a puny little creature huddled up under a thorn-bush, shivering, although the spring air was warm and balmy.

"My luck!" cried Donald; "what did I say? I never found anything in my life before," and he raised the little thing in his arms tenderly. "But it belongs to some one," said blue-eyed Jessie, wistfully eyeing the little thing which she would have been glad to have for a pet.

"It must have belonged to the great herds which were driven through yesterday," cried Donald. They'll never come back for a sickly thing like this. It's mine, and I'll call it "My Luck."

So the lamb was carried home and tended carefully. It proved to have come of a fine breed; for its wool was white and wavy and shining as silk. When shearing time came the children scarcely liked to have its beautiful coat taken off; but then the money bought Donald a coat for himself, and that was something.

So the time went on, and Donald kept his dreams, and bought an old Latin grammar with some of the "Luck" money, as he called it, and studied at odd moments. But one afternoon—Luck was missing, and the boy grew very anxious.

"Perhaps he has gone to that flock in Birkenhead Brae," said Jessie. "Poor Luck, he must have been very lonesome, without even one lamb to play with. You know we are not just the same, because he cannot say a word to us that we'd understand."

Donald hurried out to look for his lamb, fearful of the worst. No, it had not been seen at Birkenhead Brae. Then he took a narrow path along the steep, rocky sides of a precipice. Only to look down made him giddy; yet he knew that sheep can often climb where human feet dare not follow. And, indeed, as he peered down he thought he discerned a white spot among the dark rocks. A sick feeling came over him as he looked. Could it be that his Luck was gone? If so, he must try to save it. But how?

He dared not take a step down the slippery way. He looked about in despair. In another moment his Luck might be dashed to its death on the rocks. Just then a friendly shepherd came by with a coil of rope in his hand. Donald cried out to him for help.

The man looked down somewhat stolidly. "Such a bother about one lamb!" he said. "But it's all—my Luck!" cried Donald, frantically; and at last the man was wrought upon by the boy's earnestness. The rope was placed in Donald's hand, and by its help he climbed carefully down. His brain reeled as he hung over the abyss. For a moment it seemed as if he must drop into it. The next, a faint bleat came to him. Surely that was Luck's voice, for Donald imagined that his lamb had a peculiar bleat. Yes, it was indeed Luck; and the boy seized him with delight, and with some difficulty threw him over his shoulder. Then he began to climb rather painfully up again, but his heart beat with triumph.

"Surely he ought to bring ye luck, my boy," said the shepherd, as Donald gained the top, his face flushed and every vein standing out with the great strain.

There was some one else coming, near as the boy gained the height, and he saw in a moment that it was no other than Dominie Graham. "What, my boy—seeking the lost sheep? Does it know your voice? You remember what Jesus says: 'My sheep know My voice? I hope you know the voice of that blessed Shepherd, Donald; I hope you are not a wandering sheep, who does not love the fold. What's this I hear of your studying the Latin grammar?'"

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So Donald, in the excitement of the moment, told the good old man of his plans and hopes, and the dominie took a fancy to him on the spot, and from that moment helped him on with his education.

So Donald persisted in saying that the lamb was well named "Luck," but in his own heart he thanked God for His goodness. And the day came when he stood up in the pulpit in his native town and preached to other wandering sheep.—I.A.

A THOUGHT FOR MOTHERS.

TALKING the other day with one of the most sensible women I know, one whose large family is so well ordered that there never seems to be a particle of friction in its management, I was pleased with something she said about children, and I determined to repeat it to a wider audience than the one my friend had at the moment.

"I never fret about little faults of manner, nor even about transient irritability, in my children," said the lady. "Children, as they are growing up, go through many temporary conditions, which, if apparently unnoticed, pass away. In fact, there are little moral disturbances to be expected, like whooping-cough and measles in the physical life, and if the general home atmosphere be wholesome and the trend right, I do not think it worth while to be too much distressed over occasional naughtiness."

Is there not comfort here for you, dear friend, who cannot understand why John, carefully trained as he is, sometimes, in the eager heat of play, bursts into the room like a tornado, or forgets to put cap on nail, and books on shelf, as an orderly boy ought? And if Sarah is not so patient as she should be with the younger ones, sometimes has mysterious fits of depression, or is hysterically gay with no cause that you can see, summon your own gentle self-possession to the front; remember that the period between childhood and youth, like all transition periods, is very trying, and while you pray, a great deal for your darling, do not worry about her or talk to her too much. Above all, do not suffer yourself to be censuring a sensitive boy or girl, to whom judicious praise now and then will be a tonic.

Line upon line, precept upon precept, we must have at home. But we must also have serenity, peace, and the absence of petty fault-finding, if home is to be a nursery fit for heaven growing plants.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

MR. MOODY ON PUBLIC SPEAKING.

MR. D. L. MOODY is very fond of talking to the boys of the schools near his home, sometimes on Bible subjects and sometimes on other topics. Addressing a class once on public speaking he made the following points:

- 1. Don't talk too much. 2. Don't talk unless you are posted [prepared]. 3. Give the best you have. 4. Don't talk when people are asleep. Wake some one man and you will hold the rest. 5. Don't try to show off your learning. 6. Get hold of the most stupid man and you'll hold the rest. 7. Don't try, but don't be afraid, to make people laugh. Milk that slops one way will the other. 8. Be natural; don't try to be some one else. 9. Avoid cant and pulpit tones. 10. Don't talk too long. A man in London, who preached until the people all left, said he thought it was a pity to stop when there was anybody to hear. 11. Don't hesitate to repeat what God uses. 12. Don't keep on talking just because you are holding the audience. Send them away hungry. 13. While people are gathering use the time with song. 14. Shoot where people stand. As the old Quaker said to the burglar: "Friend, I am going to shoot where they stand. They had better get out of the way." 15. Don't gesture and move about too much, and don't talk with your hands in your pockets.

NEWSPAPER LYING.

THE New York Evening Post has the following confession to make on behalf of the daily press:—"There is in the worst newspaper lying—that is, lying about the private lives and character of individuals—so much money that it is almost asking too much of newspaper proprietors to ask them to refuse to indulge in it. One of the most melancholy social phenomena of the day is the appetite of a large portion of the community for odds and ends of gossip, no matter how dirty or how ghastly. The vendors of it find that it does not, as far as the returns are concerned, make the slightest difference whether it is true or false. In fact, they find that corrections or contradictions of amusing or thrilling stories only bore their readers, and therefore they do not make them. The more of such stuff a journal publishes the "newer" it is considered. This is, in fact, so much the case that the word "news" has ceased in the journalistic vocabulary to connote truthfulness. It means something which, no matter how big a lie it may be, the reader has not seen before, and which is likely to entertain him for two or three minutes. The condition of mental vacuity and vapidity, not to say imbecility, to which a very large portion of the youth of the great cities is being reduced by dawdling over this stuff every day, as their only intellectual food, is something which moralists may well contemplate with concern, for the appetite is stimulated by the food. The more of it a man swallows the more he wants and the less interested he becomes in the serious things of life, in the real affairs of the nation, in the great events of the day, in the doings and sayings of leading men, and the progress of great movements, and the ups and downs of his own race. A person who spends twenty minutes of his morning reading a minute account of the suicide of a drunken washerwoman, without caring in the least whether it ever occurred, and greatly enjoys it, is in no mood, even if he had any time left, for the discussion of any topic, no matter how grave, which does not touch his bank account."

THE Japanese say "A man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink and then the drink takes the man."

ALCOHOL is the most dangerous luxury on the rich man's table and the most important factor in the poor man's abject want.

LORD NAMPUR of Magda's states that of 18,000 cases of crime in the army of India which he had caused to be investigated not one had been committed by a total abstainer.

NOTES BY "PHILO."

A WRONG PRINCIPLE.

ANYONE who has had any experience of Church affairs, must often have been witness to the application in these affairs of a principle nowhere else acted on, namely, the providing of a place for a man at the expense of the interests of the Church, instead of endeavouring to secure a man suited for the place. For example a clerk for a presbytery is wanted, and some brother is put into the office because he needs the small remuneration attached to the office, and not because he is at all competent to discharge the duties of it. This is simply by way of illustration. No such case is at present known to us, or here referred to.

But in connection with this new professorship in Knox College, it is quite evident from the tone of some correspondence industriously circulated through the Church, that certain parties have determined to place Dr. Proudfoot in that chair, no matter what other name might be brought before the Church. Anyone who opposes Dr. P. is stigmatized in that correspondence in very severe terms. His claims are set forth as beyond anything that could be said on behalf of any other. And it is very plainly stated that those who oppose him are actuated by sinister motives. Of course if the Church chooses to take the view of its duty, that Dr. P. must be provided with a professorship no matter what benefits might arise from the appointment of a new man, then this is the chair he should get.

But it is rather a farce to pretend to give presbyteries liberty to nominate, while at the same time a few doctors of divinity and others have beforehand determined that the professor shall be Dr. P. and no other; and while these said friends of Dr. P. know very well that what they have determined on, they can get the Assembly to carry out. For, as has been before stated in these "Notes," it is quite an easy thing for those who are permanent members of the Assembly to get the business of it so under their control, that they can carry anything they please. The knowledge of this predetermination to provide a place for Dr. Proudfoot will no doubt lead not a few to take very little interest in the work of nomination. Whatever be the issue, the discussion that has arisen is calculated to deepen the interest felt in college matters. And it has also a tendency to raise the question in the minds of the pastorate whether the Church exists for the colleges, or the colleges for the Church? And also the question whether it is not time that the pastorate should be allowed a larger place in directing the affairs of the Church than they have been permitted to occupy for some years back. We don't need a new professor in the General Assembly.

POLICY.

Of course it would be wrong to hint that the need of a new professor in Knox College and the need of securing a comfortable situation for Dr. P. appear in a suspicious simultaneousness before the college authorities, and before the Church. But there are minds in the church which will see something like policy in this interesting conjuncture. Ecclesiastics are not, in the judgment of intelligent observers, wholly above suspicion in this respect. There does, unhappily, sometimes appear in ecclesiastical proceedings, very manifest indications of policy as the guiding motive of action, rather than principle. In fact many honest men abstain from attending church courts for this very reason, and many find attending them a very painful and unprofitable duty on this account.

The ecclesiastical politician is not generally a character that gives a high tone to proceedings. And many have felt that the prominence of church politics in our courts has had a very unhappy influence on their deliberations and findings. It will be a happy day for the Church when the "welfare of Zion" will be put first in the consideration of every question and every appointment to office.

PRESBYTERIANISM ELASTIC.

Presbyterians boast a good deal of their system of Church government, and perhaps justly. But many fail to recognize that its main excellence as a system is in its adaptability to the circumstances of the Church of Christ, whatever these may be. Even learned doctors lose sight of this, and act as if Presbyterianism meant "the way in which we think the Church should act." That really is the definition of it in many minds. Hence it appears often narrow and slow and obstructive in its methods. It has fallen into the hands of those who don't know how to use it—the fact being that Presbyterianism is the carrying forward of the work of God, under the guidance of certain general principles. Many appear to think it is fully unfolded and all its possibilities are measured and defined in our little Book of Forms. As a consequence we often see it acted before the people in the observing of certain forms—the form seeming to be regarded as the controlling principle rather than the Living Spirit. The great question being, "Are we right according to the Book of Forms?" and if so then never mind the consequences. How often is the spirit and life neglected in the eager pursuit of some antiquated form, as if it were the sacred essence of our work! And how many services are spoiled because ministers think that "as it has been in the beginning," and is now, so must it be for ever and at all times! Hence dead and cold monotony of proceedings, when a little novelty, quite allowable, would throw some freshness into the proceedings. It would be well if ministers would give scope a little more to their common sense. Then the great aim of all proceedings being, kept in view, and the Book of Forms placed under the Bible, Presbyterianism would not appear so often as it does, a system out of keeping with the times, a system whose forms tend rather to hinder life than promote it, to weary rather than to edify.

TO KEEP WARM—An old-fashioned evangelist used to say to his converts, "Now we have dragged you into the life-boat, take an oar each of you, and pull and help us to save others. That is the best way for you who were drowning just now and are yet wet and cold to get warm and dry."

WHY—But why does Heaven rejoice especially over the penitent sinner? Why not rather over the Christian's growth in grace, over the gathering of a great congregation to hear the Word, over the eloquent sermon of some earnest preacher, over the organization of some benevolent society, over liberal donations to the cause of Christ? It is because God and the angels see as we cannot, that repentance is the turning point of character and destiny. Repentance is the stopping of an immortal soul on the downward way, is its turning heavenward and beginning to climb upward to where it shall shine as the sun for ever and ever.—Interior.