



### The Family Circle.

#### A CHILD OF GOD.

What is it ringing in my ear  
When doubts and fears assail?  
"My child! My child! dost thou not hear,  
When did I ever fail?"

"Have I not given thee strength to bear?  
Courage to wait for Me?  
Have I not answered every prayer  
Poured out in faith by thee?"

"Have I not turned thy faltering feet  
From dark ways into light?  
Have I not made thy trials sweet  
Bright day from clouded night?"

"Have I not filled thine awe-struck heart  
With wonder at My love?  
Have I not promised thee a part  
With me—in Heaven above?"

"No grief too small for Me to hear,  
No pain I do not see—  
My child! My child! Why wilt thou fear?  
Thy Father loveth thee."

Ring on! Ring on! O blissful words!  
Transcendent in your power—  
"A child of God!"—Be ye still heard,  
Unto my life's last hour.

—Churchman.

#### A WORD PICTURE.

BY MRS. J. K. BARNEY.

I should like to sketch for you the scene. I wish I was able to place bits of the story on canvas; but failing that, I will try my hand at a word-picture.

Let me see; it shall be divided. Scene I, with five figures. How shall I introduce them? Look! Figure 1: A large, burly young fellow, muscular and pugilistic in appearance, coarsely dressed, leans against an old building. Figure 2: A man perhaps sixty, bleary-eyed, pinched and haggard face, trembling limbs, dilapidated hat, tattered garments, and a "gone-to-pieces" look every way. There was evidently a row.

"Now you get out o' here double-quick, you miserable, drunken, sneakin' thing, or I'll thrash you! Am half a mind to do it now. The idea of your beggin' lunch from that chit of a young 'un! Bet you took it away from him; and if you did, I will break every bone in your old carcass."

The 3rd figure—and such a figure! A mite of a boy, unwashed, scantily dressed, hair all lengths, his age difficult to calculate, with such a deformed body and wizened face.

"No, I give it to 'm. Let him 'lone, Bill; he hain't hurt nothin'."

"And you—you—" and the great fellow seized the misshapen atom and held him out at arm's length.

"Don't, Bill! Come, now, let the young 'un alone," and the half-drunken figure came up straight and reached out one hand with an imploring gesture.

"What you got to say 'bout it any way? What is't to you what I do?" and the other hand fell with weight upon the shoulder of the man; and as he dragged him forward, he made as though he would thump the two forms together.

Just then, "in the nick of time," the 4th figure arrived, from where she only knew, and her voice and words: "Friends, O friends, what's the matter?" caused a quick cessation of hostilities, and three quizzical faces looked into the motherly one bent on them, while a gloved hand was laid on the young fellow's arm. She looked pleasantly from one to the other.

"Guess it was only fun, but somehow I was afraid there was trouble," and then with a smile to the burly fellow: "But you wouldn't hurt this sick man or the poor child!"

"Sick! he's drunk, and a thief too, I half b'lieve."

A flush spread over the poor, old face, giving a hint of the better days, away back in the past, and he pulled together his coat and pushed up his hat, as though to add to his respectability.

The child spoke up: "Him and me was a' eatin', and Bill some'ow was mad."

"Oh, well, never mind; it is all over

now. It is Sunday afternoon, and none of us in a hurry. Could you give me a seat, and let us have a little talk?" looking around rather dubiously. "If you could manage it, for I have had quite a long walk, and am tired."

All of them sprang to her help, and a long, rough log outside the shed was quickly rolled in.

"Now that will do first-rate for you three, if you can give me a place in front, where I can look into your faces."

The faces were a study. They had evidently lost sight of their differences, in the wonder and interest evoked by their visitor. A foot log was set up on end, and the child said, "Can't ye put yer jacket on it, Bill, for the lady?"

"Now hear him, the monkey is settin' up for a gint'aman; but while saying it, he spread the jacket and stepped back."

"There, now, that is splendid, thank you. Now let us all sit down, and as you are wondering who I am, you ask me some questions first, and then I shall feel free to ask you some."

The young fellow grinned and looked foolish; the older man put on a look which was meant to be superior to curiosity; but the boy said eagerly:—

"Where did you come from?"

"From the almshouse," was the reply.

"And be ye kind o' perlice?"

"Yes, that's what I am, a kind of police."

The interest increased.

"And what do you have to 'tend to mostly?" half sneered the young man.

"Whatever my Chief sets me about, He is very particular in giving orders, and I mean to be very faithful in obeying."

"Be the orders all easy, marm?"

"No, not all."

"Spouse you cut sometimes when he ain't round an' there ain't anybody to tell?"

The lady's eyes filled, and it was her turn to flush. Her audience almost chuckled, as she said slowly with a tremor in her voice, "I'm afraid, friends, I have done just that sometimes; but I am more sorry than I can tell you; and if he will help me, I will never do it again."

"Help you, marm? Reckon he'd help you fast 'nuf if he caught you shirkin'."

"No," she said quietly, "he would only look grieved, and that would break my heart."

"That's c'us you're a woman. If 'twas a man, he'd knock him out quick 'nuf."

"Oh, no, not my Chief. Let me tell you, and you can see. A long, long time ago, some men worked for him, and he had given them a better chance than many had to know him—took them round with him, trusted them, and promised them a splendid place when they got through service; then when one time some bad folks fell upon the Chief and treated him dreadfully, so it was evident they meant to kill him, what did those men do, whom he had called 'friends?' They all forsook him and fled."

"The wretches!" said the young man, with a fist doubled up and pounding down upon the log. "I hope he got away and licked every one of them."

The boy was listening with eyes, ears and open-mouthed wonder. A glance at the old man showed that he had dropped his eyes, and there was coming a dignity hitherto unseen in his face.

"Toll some more," said the child.

"I cannot tell you all now; but there was one man who pretended to love him more than all the rest; he just swore he never worked under the Chief, and so got off; but just as he was sneaking away, he caught a look from the face of his Chief, which seemed to say that what he had done was harder to bear than all his enemies were doing. Do you wonder that he felt so bad that, strong man though he was, he just cried as hard as ever he could?"

"Cried?" said the young fellow; "why didn't he pitch right in and clean 'em out?"

"Oh, he could not do that; there were so many of them."

"Did he get off? Tell us that, marm, tell quick!"

"Well, I'll not tell you just now how awfully they used him, or how he got away at last, but after some time he was clear of them, and one of the first things he did, was to send a kind word to the man I told you about."

"Did he take him back?"

"Yes, and promoted him."

"You don't mean it, marm? 'Twan't

likely he'd do that, and I can't swallow it nohow."

"You think that is wonderful. I can tell you something quite beyond that;" and then came the story of Calvary, told as simply as possible.

The 5th Character had been on the scene all the time, but only the spirit-eyes of the narrator beheld Him. The old man drew his coat sleeve across his eyes, and his hat had slipped down, shielding his face.

"Oh, my! oh, dear?" the child ejaculated, and the great brawny fellow had moved nearer the lady, until, in his self-forgetfulness, he actually knelt at her feet. After a little, the old man dropped his face into his hands, and more than once groaned aloud.

"Now, my dear friends, this is my Chief, and His name is the Lord Jesus Christ; and He sent me to you to-day to see if you did not want to work for Him, He has had His eyes upon you, and He wants you."

"Wants us! Well, that is a little too steep, you know."

Then came the pleading, and with it the tears fell.

"Don't do that; 'tain't nothin' to you; you've done your part and no shirkin' this time, nuther. 'Tis pooty, but not likely He'd care for me; I ain't His sort anyhow."

The elder man straightened up, and reaching out his hand to Bill, he said, "Tis true, every word of it. I used to know Him, worked for Him once, and He's tried to look after me time and time again. Oh! oh!" And the man fairly wrung his hands.

"Do as tother man did," said the child; "go back and git taken up agin."

"Oh, I wish I could! I do wish I could."

Then another was on her knees, and the sweet words of prayer were going up to God. The young man and child had never heard a prayer before, but they seemed to understand that the 5th Figure was somewhere, and they both looked up and then around them. The old man and child had clasped hands, and the big fellow had his hands on both, as when the scene opened, but with such a changed expression and mien.

The hour was over, and the lady must go. Rising, she drew a promise from each, took their names, and promised to send reading and helps. She had taken off her glove, and no one of that little company will ever forget the hand-clasp, as she thanked them for the rest they had given her, and begged them to meet her in heaven.

Showing them the little "white ribbon," she told of the prayers going up all over the country for the tempted and tried, and then standing before them, again committed them to the care of Him who is "not willing that any should perish."

Scene II. To be given at the last great day. We shall all be there!—*Zion's Herald*.

#### AFRAID OF A SHADOW.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

We were spending Sunday in Torquay, the pretty Devonshire port which stretches so gracefully along the curves of Tor Bay. We found ourselves in a comfortable and substantial house of worship, filled with a quiet and orderly congregation. The regular minister was absent, and in his place officiated a young Scotch clergyman, who gave us one of the most delightful sermons I ever heard preached in a foreign land.

His manner was simplicity itself; but he had a vivid and dramatic way of putting things that made each listener feel as if he was singling him out and addressing himself specially to him. His text was the twenty-third Psalm, of which he gave a fine running commentary. When he came to the verse, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he abruptly paused and said, "I am a Scotchman; let me tell you a little incident that occurred not long ago in the Scottish parish where I was laboring."

He leaned from the pulpit and, with the sweetest of Scotch accents began, in a low, tender voice:

"I was sitting in my study one Saturday evening, when a message came to me that one of the godliest among the shepherds who tended their flocks upon the slopes of our Highland hills was dying, and wanted to see the minister. Without loss of time I crossed the wide heath to his comfortable

little cottage. When I entered the low room I found the old shepherd propped up with pillows and breathing with such difficulty that it was apparent he was near his end.

"Jean," he said to his wife, 'gie the minister a stool and leave us for a bit, for I wad see the minister alane.'

"As soon as the door had closed he turned the most pathetic pair of gray eyes upon me I had ever looked into and said, in a voice shaken with emotion, 'Minister, I'm dying, and—and—I'm afraid!'

"I began at once to repeat the strongest promises with which God's Word furnishes us; but in the midst of them he stopped me—

"'I ken them a', he said mournfully, 'I ken them a'; but somehow they dinna gie me comfort.'

"Do you not believe them?"

"'Wi' a' my heart!' he replied earnestly.

"Where, then, is there any room for fear, with such a saving faith?"

"'For a' that, Minister, I'm afraid—I'm afraid!'

"I took up the well-worn Bible which lay on his bed and turned to the psalm which I have read to you to-day. 'You remember the twenty-third Psalm?' I began.

"'Remember it?' he said vehemently. 'I kened it lang afore ye were born; ye need na' read it; I've conned it a thousand times on the hillside.'

"But there is one verse which you have not taken in."

"He turned upon me with a half reproachful and even stern look. 'Did I na' tell ye I kened it every word lang afore ye were born?'

"I slowly repeated the verse, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.'

"'You have been a shepherd all your life, and you have watched the heavy shadows pass over the valleys and over the hills, hiding for a little while all the light of the sun. Did these shadows ever frighten you?'

"'Frighten me?' he said quickly, 'Na; na! Davie Donaldson has Covenanter's bluid in his veins; neither shadow nor substance could weel frighten him.'

"'But did these shadows never make you believe that you would not see the sun again,—that it was gone forever?'

"'Na na, I couldna be sic a simpleton as that.'

"'Nevertheless, that is just what you are doing now.' He looked at me with incredulous eyes.

"'Yes,' I continued, 'the shadow of death is over you, and it hides for a little the Sun of Righteousness, who shines all the same behind it; but it's only a shadow; remember, that's what the Psalmist calls it; a shadow that will pass, and when it has passed, before you will be the everlasting hills in their unclouded glory.'

"The old shepherd covered his face with his trembling hands, and for a few minutes maintained an unbroken silence; then, letting them fall straight before him on the coverlet, he said, as if musing to himself, 'Aweel, aweel! I hae conned that verse a thousand times among the heather, and I never understood it so afore—afraid of a shadow! afraid of a shadow!'

Then, turning upon me a face now bright with an almost supernatural radiance, he exclaimed, lifting his hands reverently to heaven, 'Aye, aye, I see it a' now! Death is only a shadow—a shadow with Christ behind it—a shadow that will pass—na, na, I'm afraid nae mair!'

It is not possible that any words of mine should have power to reproduce to the eye or mind of the reader the tone, the attitude and the vivid rendering of this little incident. But as the people wended their way home that Sunday through the streets of Torquay, not a few, I am sure, repented to themselves the words of the old shepherd, and gathered comfort therefrom: "Na, na, I'm afraid nae mair!"—*Christian Intelligencer*.

If within thy narrow border  
Many bitter herbs are set,  
Duly trained and kept in order  
They may recompense thee yet:

Use the bitter and the sweet  
As thy medicine and thy meat.

—*The Dove on the Cross.*