



The Family Circle.

THE CHILD JESUS.

Jesus! whom thy sad mother sought
And in the temple found, who taught
The aged in thy youth;
How blest are they who keep aright,
Or find, when lost, the living light
Of Thine eternal truth!

—F. W. Faber.

O Holy Lord, content to dwell
In a poor home a lowly child,
With meet obediences noting well
Each bidding of thy mother mild.

Lead every child that bears thy name
To walk in thy pure, upright way;
To shun the paths of sin and shame,
And humbly, like thyself, obey.

So shall they, waiting here below,
Like thee, their Lord, a little span,
In wisdom and in stature grow,
And favor, both with God and man.
—From "Hymns Ancient and Modern."

To do our "Father's business" here,
In humble reverence and in fear;
Meekly upon His will to wait,
In little things as well as great;
Contented in our lot to rest—
'Tis thus the Christian serves Him best.

Whether our path of duty be
In public or in privacy,
To teach or to be taught the truth,
Submit to age or bear with youth,
We must be wisest in the school
And gentlest under parent's rule.

Like Christ in all things, we must prove
His life our model, and His love
The only pure, unfailling spring
Of holiness in everything;
The only law by which we'er
Can do our "Father's business" here.
—(1867) Rev. John S. B. Monsell, LL. D.

CHARLEY BOBBITT'S STORY.

BY ROMELIA L. CLAPP.

I shall be sixteen years old in a few days, and I head the last half of the ten olive plants which surround my father's table.

As the family has increased, my parents, in the struggle to feed and clothe their little flock, have not found the time to bestow upon those of us lower down in the list the excessive training with which they began. Consequently, having been left much to myself, I am a dreamy, thoughtful boy; timid and reserved, yet determined and persevering.

My favorite spot for study is in my father's library, and I love dearly to listen to his discussions on the various topics of the day with the gentlemen who drop in to see him.

My father, I forgot to tell you, is the Rev. Augustus Bobbitt, and he writes his sermons and receives his parishioners in a small room on the first floor of our modest dwelling. It is fitted up with book-cases and writing-tables, and "we children" esteem it the greatest of privileges to be admitted to a place in "father's sanctum."

One bright spring morning, as I lay curled up like a kitten in "father's thinking chair," looking over my lessons before school, I heard Mr. Sylvester Armstrong, one of the trustees of the church, talking with my father about the church debt, and various plans for retrenchment in the expenses, all of which did not particularly interest me, so I proceeded to climb the principal mountains in Europe, and trace the course of its rivers, until I heard my father say as the gentleman prepared to leave, "Business good now, Brother Armstrong?" "Oh yes, pretty good," was the reply. "I made a capital sale yesterday, of some bones sent me by Shegber & Co. I paid two dollars a barrel for them, and sold them without touching them, for three dollars and fifty cents, a clear profit of fifteen hundred dollars."

My father shook hands with him and congratulated him heartily, but I saw a slight shade cloud his smile. This sum was as much as two-thirds of his yearly salary, and yet how hard he had to work for his money!

The thought darted into my mind that here was an opportunity for me to help him, and I was out of my chair in an instant, and standing before Mr. Armstrong I asked him eagerly what kind of bones he meant.

"Why, where did you come from, my little man?" said he, putting his fingers under my chin, and looking down into my face, with a smiling indifference, which ill accorded with my earnestness. I am afraid it was with quite

an impatient tone that I replied, "But, sir, won't you tell me about the bones, and what you do with them?" "Oh yes, Charley," he said, "beef bones, mutton bones, all sorts of bones; both large and small, are sold to manufacturers, who make of them bobbins, buttons, knife-handles, and many other useful articles." "All right," said I. "I will get a barrel full and sell them."

My father and Mr. Armstrong looked at each other and smiled, and then resumed their conversation, while I strapped up my books and started for school, my mind full of the new idea, and revolving my plans as I went along.

As I crossed the Eighth Avenue, I spied a splendid bone lying in the gutter, and I picked it up. It was too large to put it into my pocket, and I had no paper in which to wrap it. As I stood considering what I should do with it, a small, dirty boy stood also watching me. At last he called out, "Hey, old man, what are you going to do with that bone?" I said nothing, but walked on with it in my hand. I was in a sea of perplexity as to what I should do with it. I could not well take it with me, and I was very loth to leave it behind.

My one tormentor had now reinforced himself, and I was followed by four or five boys who shouted at the top of their lungs, "Bones, Bones," which made me unpleasantly conspicuous.

In a fit of vexation I flung my first windfall into their midst, and went on my way, while they disappeared around the corner, tossing their prize from one to another with shouts of glee, which to me seemed almost fiendish.

As soon as I was dismissed from school, I hurried home, looking carefully along the streets, but no bone rewarded my search.

One of my preliminary arrangements was an effort to induce Bridget to be my friend and ally.

My mother is an invalid, and as we can afford to keep but one servant, Bridget has to be maid of all work, and I suppose she does get tired, and it is not strange that she is sometimes cross. She was ironing when I went into the kitchen to secure her co-operation, and the flounces of sister Maria's white dress wouldn't come right. It was no wonder that her brow was ruffled, and her temper too, but I could not relinquish my ambitious projects, because she had her trials, so I began at once, and without diplomacy. "Bridget," I asked, "what do you do with all the bones that come in the meat?" She set the iron down with a crack on the stand, and with her arms akimbo gazed at me in wrath. "Charley Bobbitt," she roared, "git out of me kitchen this blessed minit. Shure your mother bothers me sufficient wid her askin' after the cold mate, widout your comin' down here tormentin' me about the bones," and she brought out the last word with such a contemptuous accent, that I must confess, for a moment my heart failed me. But the thoughts of the money I was going to make reassured me, and I said soothingly, "Biddy, let me tell you something. I want you to save every single bone and give it to me; when I get a good many, I shall sell them and get lots of money, and I shall be a real rich man, and help father and mother, and buy nice clothes for myself, and take Maria, and Minnie, and Katie, and baby Hannah to Europe, and Niagara Falls. Now if you will help me, I'll buy you a nice new dress when I am rich enough."

"Why bless my heart," said Bridget, her anger fading at the brilliant prospect, "I never can say no, when ye spake like that." So she left her ironing, and went down cellar with me at once, and appropriated me a barrel in one corner; then she went to the refrigerator and cut the bone out of a piece of corned beef. "There," said she, handing it to me, "take that, and good luck to ye."

I think the sound of that solitary bone as it echoed from the bottom of the barrel was as sweet as any that ever fell on my ear. It was the beginning of my fortune, and as I peered over the edge, and saw it lying there in state, I built several castles on the spot, and spent my prospective profits many times over.

My store increased but slowly, and my patience was subjected to many a trial. I never realized before that a barrel could hold so much. But I persevered. In my search, I hung around the markets, and looked surreptitiously into ash-barrels, and when I did find a bone, I had no small trouble to get it home.

You have no idea, unless you have tried it, what awkward things they are to carry. I have often heard people wish for a quiet spot in which to lay their bones, but I doubt if any one ever had a harder time to get them into a reserved place than I had.

Once, when my barrel was about half full, my mother feeling better than usual, had a fit of cleaning up, and going down into the cellar found my secret hoard, which she ordered to be thrown out. But the faithful Biddy directed her attention to something else, and in the sick spell which always followed a day of unusual labor, it was quite forgotten by her

One evening my sister Minnie was playing on the piano, and my brother George accompanied her with a pair of castanets; after listening to the really good performance, I asked George where he bought his castanets. "Oh!" he replied, with a laugh that somehow made me shiver. "I made them myself, out of some old bones I found in the cellar." "Any more there?" said Willie, who had been looking longingly at George's exploits. "Yes indeed," he replied, "a barrel half full," and away flew all the boys, pell-mell to the cellar. This was too much, and I ran after them to protect my property, which only made the boys more determined to help themselves. After a few days, however, they forgot all about it, and my treasure was not further disturbed.

At last the barrel was full, and I began to think of putting my stock in the market.

Arranging for the transportation of my wares and finding a purchaser was a matter not so easy to accomplish as you might think.

I had all along settled it in my own mind that Mr. Armstrong would be glad to buy them of me. He was such a rich man, so devout in the church, and so friendly with my father. I loved to imagine the pleased surprise with which he would greet me, and how he would praise my industry, pay me liberally, and perhaps add a dollar or two by way of encouragement. But, when I enquired for him at his office, he was not in, and while I waited a dreary hour for him, some of the clerks chaffed and joked me as to my business. This was fun for them, but made me miserable indeed. I had a grim sort of pleasure, however, in imagining their mortification when they should witness the cordial greeting which their employer would bestow upon the boy whom they had been treating so ungraciously. At last he came. But he passed me without the slightest notice, and went directly into his private office and shut the door. One of the clerks, kinder than the rest, took my name in to the great man, and I was admitted. Scarcely looking at me, he said, "Well, young man, what do you wish?" While stating my business he was adding up a column of figures, apparently paying no attention to me. When I had finished he said, very shortly, "Bones are not in demand—market over-stocked, deliver here, and I will give you a dollar, but do not care for them at any price." That was all, not a word of encouragement from his pastor's son, and only a dollar! I went out of his presence abashed and disappointed. How strange it all seemed! Mr. Armstrong in his office was so different from the Mr. Armstrong my father knew. I wondered if I had better try other houses, but I concluded not to risk similar discouragements from strangers, but to accept his offer.

Not long after this, I mounted on a seat beside an express-man, with my venture in the wagon behind us, delivered my bones to Mr. Armstrong—received my dollar—paid the express-man twenty-five cents (which was half price for friendship's sake), and went home with seventy-five cents in my pocket, trying to feel rich, but a little weak in the knees when I thought of all my hard work. After all the diligence of those three months, how indistinctly did the star of fortune shine on me! How long, at this rate, before I could take my sisters to Europe? They would be married and gone before I could be rich, and I shed tears of bitter disappointment at my prospects.

I soon, however, rallied my spirits, and looked about for some other money-making employment.

Reading, one day, in a city paper, that "a great many little urchins were collecting large quantities of peach meats and selling them to the druggists," I determined to join their ranks.

Peaches were plenty, and I could pick up my fortune as I went along the streets. True, my mother complained because I bulged out at my pantaloons pockets, that my jacket pockets were all out of shape, and that I littered up the yard when I cracked my peach stones; but one must persevere in spite of difficulties.

After I had collected a pint of peach meats, I put them in a glass jar, and tied a nice white paper over the top. They looked so clean and sound, that I was certain that I could set my own price, and that my customer would urge me to bring more; and it was with a sunshiny smile that I made application to our neighbor druggist on the corner. But he gazed at me stonily over the tops of his glass and said, "No sir, I buy at wholesale, never less than twenty pounds." He never looked so at me before, when I had gone in to buy Brandreth's pills or Bronchial Troches! I walked out without saying another word, and stood a moment on the door step to recover myself, for I was rather stunned at being let down so suddenly.

I tried again and again to dispose of my wares, but with no better success; at last I asked a man in one of the stores, if he knew where I could find a purchaser. Putting his finger by the side of his nose, in an apparently thoughtful attitude, but which I remembered

with misgiving all too late, he said quite cheerfully, "Yes I do, there is a druggist at No. 1 Battery Place, who will buy all you take him, and pay you a dollar a hundred for them." I thanked him over and over again, and with a lightened heart, and with feelings of intense gratitude toward this kind, friendly man, I hailed a South Ferry stage without delay. After riding nearly an hour I reached the place, which was not a drug store at all, and it slowly dawned upon me that I was the victim of a mean practical joke. Crestfallen I began my long walk up Broadway, for I had spent my last ten cents for my fare down. I passed several handsome drug stores on the way, but after the faithlessness of that honest-looking up-town pharmacist, I looked upon all with suspicion. Becoming somewhat misty about the eyes, at the obstinacy of fortune, I slipped in crossing a street, and while striving to regain my footing, the jar fell from my hand to the pavement, and, like Almaschar, the barber's fifth brother, I beheld my hopes of making a fortune shivered among the fragments of glass under my feet.

I had lived so long in my airy castle, that I felt dejected now, and homeless, as I walked among the ruins.

My next venture was the collection of defaced postage stamps. "Why, Charley," said Harry Ross to me one day as we walked home from school, "you can get twenty dollars for a million of them." I resolved to commence at once, and get my twenty dollars, and after that I could make money with my money.

"What are you doing, Charley?" said my father to me that afternoon, as I rummaged in his waste paper basket. "I am cutting off the stamps," I replied. "What are you going to do with them?" enquired my brother George, who had been watching me in silence. "I am going to sell them," I replied boldly, "and get twenty dollars for them." "Is that so? Well I guess I'll try too," said he, "give me some of those envelopes," but I refused, and we hotly argued the point until my father, who had forgotten us in his pre-occupations waked up as the argument grew warmer to a sense of something unpleasant. "Boys," said he, "if you continue to quarrel, you must leave my study," then he resumed his writing. George said no more, but a look in his eyes made me quake for the future, and truth compels me to say that before night I was soundly punished, but I did not mind it much,—younger brothers have to get used to such things—but I never could get used to sharing my plans and hopes with the rest of the family, and it tried my feelings more than you can imagine, unless you have a shrinking nature, and have been brought up with five boisterous brothers, to have George ask me one evening at the dinner-table how I was getting on with my postage stamps. This of course aroused the curiosity of the family at once, and while I blushed to the roots of my hair, George told them that I was going to collect a million of postage stamps and make my fortune. All eyes turned now in concert on me. I know you will think me extremely silly when I tell you that human eyes have a very strange effect on me. I always seem to see the soul which sits behind them, looking out at me with a ghost-like glance, but the concentrated gaze of the assembled family absolutely vanquishes me, and I quail before the invisible something.

For some time after this, the boys were all postage-stamp-mad. My father often made it appear my duty to share mine with some of the younger ones. So I made progress slowly.

Being careful and exact in my habits, the boys nick-named me the judge, the deacon, often the old maid, but I went steadily on with my work. I made arrangements with several lawyers and business friends of my father's to save me their cast-off envelopes, which I called for afterwards, on my way home from school; and which on Saturdays I would count and tie in packages. Gradually, as my brothers tired of them, I secured their collections, and I must say in justice to them, that at last I was left to pursue in peace my absurd enterprise.

But the end was nearer than I thought. One afternoon as I came up the street from school, feeling weary and exhausted, for I had not had a real good day for a long time, I spied little Johnny sitting on the though he tried to assume a penitential air, "I've been fixing up all your postages, but they pitched all over the floor. I'm awful sorry," continued the little fellow, the penitence at last, drawing all the mischief out of his eyes, and filling them with tears instead. Iron fence in front of the house, kicking his little legs impatiently against the rails. He was looking for me. As soon as he spied me, he clambered down and ran to meet me: "Oh Charley," he said, looking very mischievous.

This was too much for me to bear. I rushed by him speechless, and in an agony of suspense. Upon reaching my room I found the floor covered with the tiny bits of paper. Johnny had climbed up to my closet shelf, and armed with a pair of mother's scissors, he had cut the confining strings of all my packages,