

On The Sands.

I scrambled down to a Cornish porth
When the tide ebbed low on the golden strand,
And idly dreaming I wandered forth
O'er the level stretch of sand.

And it seemed as I paced the yellow plain
Kissed by the blue Atlantic there,
Like a picture of this world's pleasure and pain
And of man's small journey here:

A page for the print of life's progress, made
By the ageless sea for the sons of men
Who labor and delve like the child with his spade
For the tide to level again.

Here the boy builds castles with ramparts brave,
Daring the storm from his turrets gay,
And the ocean sends him one laughing wave
And washes them all away.

There the youth starts forth and his pride awakes
At the thought of an untrod world to win,
Till he finds that each heedless step he takes
Has trodden its record in.

Then the man cries: "This is a wilderness!"
—See, he searched the sands for some vestige human,
Till he found a footprint whose way was his,
The small, light foot of a woman!

Then look, what a change in their gait and pace,
From a weary trudge to a lightsome spring,
As onward together the smooth sands trace
Their rhythmical journeying.

Here once, it seems, for awhile by theirs—
The tiny feet of a child alit,
But a squall must have caught them unawares
And swept them away with it.

Yet forward ever those footsteps go
O'er furrow and ridge still side by side.
Sometimes faltering, faint and slow,
But always out towards the tide.

Stop! here they severed awhile:—and look
How they tried, with tears, to blot the trace,
In vain:—we can write in the sands' great book,
But only the sea can efface.

And at last the Golden bay is crossed
To the rippling marge of the shadowy deep,
And the footprints of their lives are lost
In the ocean's purple sleep.

Lost? But is there no further shore,
No new found land of our later faith?
Have they walked the waves like Peter of yore
To a life transcending death?

We ask. We have asked through endless years,
And prayed till we fancy our prayer is heard,
But the ocean smiles at our hopes and fears
And answers us never a word.

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

"Gee Up."



It was now four years since Jack Plater had left the mercantile firm which, from necessity, he had entered when very young. During these years he had supplied his little family with his well earned savings, while he threw all his energy and ardor into the study of Art, which, since early boyhood, had been his one ambition.

He was a young man but thirty years of age though looking even younger; tall, with an erect, well knit figure; had dark brown hair, with eyes of a deeper hue; a nose large enough to be manly, and a mouth whose firmness could soften to almost womanly sweetness.

His marriage with Alice Hunter had proved an exceptionally happy one; a rare case of first love on both sides. With contented dispositions, congenial tastes and inclinations, their only difficulty had been their somewhat straightened circumstances, and this was more easily borne as they were people of simple habits.

Alice was universally admired and loved. She had sweet, fresh face, crowned with a glory of golden hair; honest beaming blue eyes, that reflected the soul within, and a charm of manner both irresistible and womanly.

Two children had blessed their union: little Jack, the beautiful three year old miniature of his father, haloed with his mother's golden curls; and baby Gertrude, a bouncing, wholesome yearling.

It was in the city of New York, as a November day was fast drifting into twilight, that Jack sat looking intently, brush and palette in hand, at the canvas in front of him. "Gee Up" was for the great winter art exhibition and upon its success rested, alike, his future reputation and present pecuniary relief. Nearly completed, it portrayed a little boy partially undressed, riding his hobby horse. The neck and arms were bare, showing the dimpled elbows and the baby roundness of figure. As his sturdy limbs bestrode the long stick with its wheels on the floor and head high in the air, there was a pretty display of dainty lace trimmed underwear. With a red velvet jockey cap perched far back on the long

tossed curls, and flourishing a whip in the right hand, while the left clutched the fractious hobby horse, he looked the embodiment of beautiful happy childhood.

Jack Plater's heart was in this work and his brush had lovingly and wonderfully obeyed its dictates. He had finished for the day, and as he dwelt on his task, his cheeks glowed, and he felt a keen, absorbing delight as he realized he had created something beautiful, something almost real. He forgot the growing twilight; the neat little room with its plain carpet, bright hangings and pictures; he did not realize that the fire needed replenishing; he had even forgotten his wee patient model, until a sleepy little voice called.

"Papa dear, is you fru wis me."

He turned a loving gaze to the little fellow, and after a moment's contemplation dropped his palette and brush. Picking up his darling he gave him a "sky flyer" and then another and another.

Little Jack looked forward to these delightful romps after his patient sitting and he was always rewarded. Baby Gertrude toddled in too, and mother often followed, she was the delighted audience, and during the din and clamour, the bursts of laughter and shouts of joy, babies rolled and bounced and kissed, she considered it altogether a delightful and entertaining performance; nor did she seem to tire of its nightly occurrence.

This evening she examined the painting with pride and delight. She felt it to be a most marvelous representation of her little son, and wondered how they would bring themselves to part with it, for after its recognition by the Art Society, it was Jack's desire to sell it.

Turning to her, Jack said, "It is almost finished, wifey, and I feel as happy as the day I married you. Let us hope that our first great effort for public recognition will be successful. I could not bear the drudge of the store, and I feel that my years of study and your patient forbearance will be rewarded. It has been hard for my dear faithful girl, but now I shall be able to give you all the comforts I long for you to have."

"Dear Jack, your wife is more than contented. I wish every woman had as much to fill her heart with delight—the best of husbands, and the dearest of babies. The only wish I have is to see you take your place in the front rank of artists; to see your paintings admired, and your genius acknowledged and appreciated."

"Well Alice if you were the public, I should, no doubt, ride on a tidal wave of success, but, now, as you are not, I must simply take a car for a trip down town, as I need some colors early in the morning. I will be home in an hour for dinner." Alice helped Jack with his coat, and taking his hat he whistled a merry tune, as he went down the stairs two steps at a time—and an hour later he wondered if he should even whistle or feel light hearted again.

Alice piled high the sleepy fire for the nights were cold; lighted the cheerful lamp, and after assisting to prepare the evening meal, tidied up the room, and in closing the blinds gave a shiver at the rising wind outside. The streets were scarcely lighted there, and turning from the cold bleak scene without she drew the curtain, gazing lovingly at the cheerful prettiness within. The bright fire flickered as the children ran in front of it making Jack's curls shine like spun gold. She caught him, with a sudden tightening at her heart, and holding him close, while his chubby arms stole round her neck for a "bear hug," she vaguely wondered what life would be without him. She could scarcely bear to let him go.

"Why 'Muzzer' dear, you got cries in your eyes," and Jack's little fist essayed to rub them dry. "I sink" poking up her lids in no gentle fashion, "Your eyes are bufible as my new marbles," quietly deciding he had hit the proper thing.

Alice smiled at this and half forgot her tears on any fancied cause. With another kiss she dropped the little fellow for he was getting heavy, and found plenty for her willing hands to do. First baby Gertrude was undressed while Jack talked about good old Santa Claus and wondered if the chimney were large enough for both him and the doggie he wanted so much.

The kitchen clock struck six, and a savory odor reminded Alice that one of Jack's favorite dishes would be spoiled if he did not soon return, but as the last sound of the clock was dying away the fire bells pealed out their quick staccato tones and all thoughts of dinner were hastily banished. In a trice the unhappy tale was echoed in the streets below—"fire! fire!" Alice and Jack ran to the window, flinging open the blinds, and a brilliant glow filled the room. The quiet and darkness of a half hour ago were changed into a scene of motion, light and noise. They saw the large, handsome frame dwelling next them all ablaze; heard the excited cries of the people; and watched in a fascinated way the fire department rapidly answering the summons to the rescue. The fine, well trained animals dashed madly round the corner, seeming to understand the scene of terror and their duty and part in it.

Alice's heart beat fast as she realized their danger and pulling spell bound little Jack from the window she ran to the kitchen, calling.

"Maggie, Maggie come quickly, Judge Maddox's house is afire and we are in great danger."

Rolling the baby in the crib blanket she handed her to Maggie, and remembering the cold night hastily slipped on Jack's warm black velvet coat, the birthday gift of his two Aunties, and the red jockey cap, which lay on the floor. Not thinking of herself, but picking up Jack, she ran down the two flights of stairs, Maggie following her closely.

They made their way across the street, Alice thinking with sinking heart of the painting above, Jack's work of months, his labor of love and genius. She had been so happy about it too, that she would make a desperate effort to save it. Large as it was she felt more than equal to the task. Finding a place of safety she bade Maggie stand there and hold the baby tight.

"She needs both hands for Gertrude, Jack, so catch her dress as tight as you can."

(To be Continued.)

Our Weekly Sermons
By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

Losing Faith in Christianity.

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God."—PSA. 14, 1.

I find in coming into personal contact with that element which forms the floating material of our congregations, a good deal of intellectual antagonism to christianity as that term is understood. That opposition is increasing especially amongst our young people and those who are in touch with what is called modern thought. Such persons are beginning to doubt whether the christian religion is all that their fathers and mothers understood it to be. They ask is not christianity relaxing its hold upon the modern mind, is not the cross losing its attractive power, is not the star of Bethlehem beginning to wane. As the modern mind sweeps the christian firmament with its telescope of critical inquiry, are there not spots perceived upon the surface of the Sun of Righteousness Himself. And when I attempt to analyse this feeling of doubt or distrust which seems to be projecting its baleful shadow over so many minds, I find that it is something which after all concerns itself more with the forms of religious life and the formulas of doctrine which men have devised than with the essential elements of christianity itself. In fact there is scarcely a form of infidelity which ever assailed christianity which did not confound those two things. People said that Voltaire was opposing christianity when he levelled all his rhetorical and logical artillery upon the Vatican at Rome and the religion of France, but it was only a very corrupt and spurious form of the religion of Christ which he assailed. It was Catholicism more than christianity which the brilliant Frenchman bombarded.

Carlyle refused to subscribe to the creed of his forefathers and is said to have thrown christianity overboard as a worn out faith or effete religion, but I say he did not. It was ultra-Calvinism he threw overboard, and not christianity essentially considered.

Thomas Paine was the most vulgar and vehement assailant of the bible and yet if you examine his tirades and thunder denunciations of this Book you will find that it was not so much the vital principles of christianity which he assailed as it was the theories and theologies which were afloat in his day, and to some extent still, concerning the teachings of this Book.

Infidelity has for the most part failed to discriminate between the letter and the spirit, the outward form and the inward soul or substance, the human organization and the divine principle, or between those divine truths imbedded in the gospel narratives and the human theories which have been devised concerning the same.

Now I am prepared to take strong ground here. I say that infidelity cannot object to christianity when considered in its inner essence and life. Show me christianity embodied and I will show you that which makes infidelity impossible.

Christianity vitally considered is not a record or creed or litany or ritual or human organization of any kind. It is a life. It is the life of Christ in the soul. By the life of Christ I mean a supreme love of goodness dominating the whole man and controlling the whole life. Can any form of infidelity take exception to that. You may find fault with the christian in his failures and miserable attempts to realize this divine ideal, but you cannot find fault with that ideal itself.

I believe in churches, creeds, forms of worship and in human instrumentalities, so far as they are useful in developing this life of Jesus in the soul, but I would not confound these human agencies with the divine life which they thus seek to unfold within. To do so would be to confound the brush and palette of the artist with the picture which he had just painted on the canvas, or it would be to confound the mallet chisel and trowel of the mason with the piece of masonry which he has erected.

A notable infidel has said that the essence of the Old Testament is the moral law, and the essence of the New Testament is the sermon on the mount. The moral law as given by Moses was the platform of the old dispensation. The sermon on the mount as delivered by Christ, is the platform of the new.

Now looking at the ten commandments as they came from the lips of Jehovah on Sinai and at the beatitudes or sermon which fell from the lips of Christ on Olivet, which form the essence of the old and new testament, I ask is there anything there to which modern criticism can object.

Infidelity can object to certain historical details in this Book, may object to the science of the bible and even to the morality of some of the Old Testament heroes. It may not believe in the story of Jonah and the whale or that the solar system stood still at the instance of Joshua. It may not believe that every word in the bible is inerrant and that every letter and punctuation mark is the result of a divine inspiration. To these things infidelity may object but show me the infidel on earth who can fairly object to the morality or spirituality of the ten commandments or the sermon on the mount. Reduce the Old Testament to its essential elements and what are they?

It prohibits idolatry, profanity, disrespect to parents, murder, adultery, theft, slander and covetousness. There is the quintessence of the Old Testament for you. Can infidelity find any ethical flaw in such prohibitions.

Condense in like manner the New Testament into its smallest compass, and what have you? All the teachings of the New Testament gravitate round a three-fold centre, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the immortality of the soul. What has infidelity to say against that? The teachings of Christ contain the essence of christianity and what were these? They were humility of heart, meekness of disposition, spiritual aspiration, the duty