



The Family Circle.

LITTLE FRED.

BY MARY E. ATKINSON.

In his crib at night
Fred awoke,
Half in trust, half fright,
Softly spoke:
" 'Tis a black dark night;
Fred won't cry;
God will make it light
By-and-by,
Nestling down to sleep
Safe he lay,
Wrapped in slumber deep,
Until day.

I, who lay awake
Full of care,
And could hardly take
Rest in prayer,
Heard the child-voice dear,
And I thought,
"Out of nights as drear
God has brought
Mornings full of gladness;
Hush, my heart!
Soon this night of sadness
Will depart."

So I prayed and slept
Upon my bed,
By Fred's words heart-kept,
Comforted.
When the morning broke,
Full of joy
Little Fred awoke,
Darling boy!
Through the window streamed
Rosy rays;
Little Fred's face beamed
Love and praise.

"God is love! he made
This sunlight;
Fred was half afraid
In the night."
It was spoken low,
But I heard,
And my heart made echo
To each word.
Oh, I gave the boy
Fond caressing;
He had brought me joy,
Peace and blessing.

—*Ill. Chris. Weekly.*

"HAVING SOME FUN."

"Now, boys, I will tell you how we can have some fun," said Charlie to his companions, who had assembled one bright moonlight evening for sliding, snow-balling, and fun generally.

"What is it?" asked several at once.

"You shall see," replied Charlie. "Who's got a wood-saw?"

"I have." "So have I," replied three of the boys.

"Get them, and you and Freddy and Nathan each get an axe, and I will get a shovel. Let's be back in fifteen minutes."

The boys separated to go on their several errands, each wondering of what use wood-saws and axes and shovels could be in the play. But Charlie was a favorite with all, and they fully believed in his promises, and were soon assembled again.

"Now," said he, "Widow Maude, in yonder cottage, has gone to a neighbor's to sit up with a sick child. A man hauled her some wood to-day, and I heard her tell him that unless she got some one to saw it to-night she would not have anything to make a fire of in the morning. Now we could saw and split that pile of wood just as easy as we could make a snow-man on her door-step, and when Mrs. Maude comes home she will be most agreeably surprised."

One or two of the boys objected, but the majority began to appreciate his fun, and to experience the inward satisfaction and joy that always results from well-doing.

It was not a long and wearisome job for seven robust and healthy boys to saw, split, and pile up the widow's half-cord of wood, and to shovel a good path. And when they had done this, so great was their pleasure and satisfaction, that one of them, who objected at first, proposed that they should go to a neighboring carpenter's shop, where plenty of shavings could be had for the carrying away, and each bring an armful. The proposition was readily acceded to, and this done, they repaired to their several homes, more than satisfied with the "fun of the evening." And the next morning, when the weary widow re-

turned from watching by the sick bed and saw what was done, she was pleasantly surprised; and afterwards, when a neighbor (who had, unobserved, witnessed the labors of the boys) told her how it was done, her fervent invocation, "God bless the boys!" was of itself, if they could have heard it, abundant reward for their labors.—*Churchman.*

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND THE APPLE ORCHARD.

"No, I don't want no Sabbath-school there, and what's more, I don't propose to have one if I can help it," said Mr. Simpkins. "It's all that big dog of mine can do now to watch that apple orchard and keep them boys away on week-days, and I don't believe half-a-dozen of them could do it on a Sunday, when they've not much else to do but steal. No, sir. I'll be at that committee meetin' to-night and just squelch all that talk about Sunday-schools."

These words were spoken to Mr. White, the grocer, in the little town of Owanto, a new settlement in one of our Western States. The occasion of it was this: None of the people of the town were yet able to build a church, so the Baptists used a hall over Mr. Smith's store for preaching service twice a month, when the minister from the next town came to give them a sermon, the Methodists occupying the room on the alternate Sabbaths. The town had built a plain, good school-house, and the question arose, Why cannot we have a Sabbath-school in the school-house, and gather all the children together on Sunday? Most of the villagers were anxious to have the school and willing to give something toward a library and papers, but Mr. Simpkins, who had given more to the school-house than any other man, and who was the owner of the largest farm and biggest apple-orchard, was, as he expressed it, "dead set agin it."

The committee met in the evening, and notwithstanding the fierce way in which Mr. Simpkins talked, the majority of all those present voted to have the Sunday-school, Mr. Smith saying that if it were necessary he would pay for two extra dogs to look after the apple orchard, and he would not ask Mr. Simpkins for any contribution toward the school until he saw whether it was going to make him trouble.

So a few days after, the children were all told in school that the next Sunday at two o'clock in the afternoon, they must all come bright and clean to the Sunday-school, and that there would be some nice papers for them, and, after a few Sundays, some good books.

On Sunday they gathered there, and Mr. Smith acted as superintendent, and nice singing books were distributed and the children taught several good songs. Then Mr. Smith told them one of the beautiful Bible stories, asked them some questions about it, and interested them wonderfully. Then another gentleman, Mr. Waller, talked to them about Sunday, and how they should act on that day, telling them he wanted that to be the best-behaved Sunday-school that could be found anywhere around the country.

He said: "Now, boys, some folks have told me that you would have a great romping time as you go through the streets, and that some of you will jump over the fence into Mr. Simpkins' orchard and steal apples, and that others will play ball on the way home, and do other noisy things, but I just told them they would be disappointed, that they'd find you would all walk home quietly, and never think of romping, or stealing, or ball-playing. We'll show them who was right, won't we, boys? and they'll find out that you know how to act on Sunday as well as boys that never have been to Sunday-school before. Mr. Simpkins told me that he was going to stay around his orchard to-day himself, but he supposed he'd have to have two dogs now to watch you on Sundays. But I think he'll soon find that he won't need any on Sundays or week-days."

Complimenting the boys in this way, and letting them feel that he knew how they could be little gentlemen, pleased them, and as they disappeared after school, no one was more surprised than "grouty old Simpkins," as the boys called him, who from over a high fence eyed them as they left for their homes. They walked along talking merrily, and telling what a nice time they had at Sunday-school, humming over some of the songs they sang, and seeming very happy. Mr. Simpkins could hardly believe his eyes. He was prepared to have a real tussel with them, expected to fight them out of the orchard, set the dog on them, and altogether have quite a lively time. His surprise showed itself in the way he kept talking to himself.

"I'm just beat," said he. "Who'd 'a ever thought, now, that a-go-in' to Sunday-school just onct would make them 'ere boys so different like? Why old Jim Squires, even, the worst of them all, acts like a gentleman. I declare, I never seen the likes of it, and can't 'count for it no ways. I just wonder if Smith

didn't bribe 'em for to-day. Like as not he did, thinking I was 'round. I'll be a-lookin' out for a dog, but I guess I won't buy him till after another Sunday."

But the next Sunday, after a slight hint from Mr. Waller that they must keep up their reputation, the boys behaved equally well, and after four successive Sabbaths, watched each day by old Simpkins, they got into the habit of going home quietly and in a gentlemanly way, and the thought of robbing the orchard, or committing any depredation, never occurred to them. And what was still more wonderful to the owner of the orchard was this, as he expressed it to Mr. Smith one day at the grocery:

"Well you was all right about that Sabbath-school business. I haven't lost an apple on a Sunday, and what's more these last two weeks not a boy even has been over the fence on a week-day. They're so good on Sundays that it kind o' lasts 'em through the week. I'll give it up that you were all right, and instead of buying two dogs, as I supposed I would have to, here's the fifty dollars, which you can have for some books in the library you talk about. I'm a-comin' in to see the school myself, next Sunday."

The next Sunday the boys had their surprise, when Mr. Simpkins came walking into the school with two or three other grown men, all of whom became members of the school, starting an adult class, which good Deacon Smith, the best Bible student in the country, they said, used to teach. Before the year was over there was such an interest in the class that a subscription was started toward the building of a church, to which Mr. Simpkins, whom the boys called "Old Grouty" no longer, gave the largest sum.

"For," said he, "if this Sunday-school has done such a heap of good in the town and made the grown folks, as well as the children, so much better, there's no telling what a church will do for us, if we can have a minister here all the time."

Having a Sabbath-school near an apple orchard did far more good than harm in that little town, and I think it would be hard to find a place anywhere in which a Sabbath-school made boys worse.—*The Standard.*

CASTING BREAD UPON THE WATERS.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

When Beulah Stedman was a little girl a clergyman from Boston preached one Sunday in the village church, and was entertained at her father's house.

"What did you mean by 'casting bread upon the waters'?" asked little Beulah, going shyly to the gentleman's side after dinner, when the company were all chatting over their dessert.

"Don't trouble Mr. Winkly, Beulah," said her mother reprovingly.

"She could not trouble me, madam," remarked the gentleman pleasantly, lifting the child to his knee, and helping her to fruit and nuts from his own plate. Then in language and with apt illustrations, which the bright little girl could easily comprehend, he explained his morning's text.

"Even little folks," he said, "may cast their bread upon the water, by doing every kind, pleasant, and helpful thing that they have an opportunity to do. Now, your papa being a doctor, you have a great many rides with him, I presume, and can get acquainted with all the boys and girls who live in the little brown houses nestled here and there among the hills. I noticed in my drive with your papa and you yesterday, that this house is the nicest and largest house in town. You must be thankful that you have such a beautiful home, and when these children whom you have met in your drives come to the village, you can invite them in to see your pretty things. You can take them through the flower-garden, and present them with seeds, slips, and roots, and you can give them a taste of the fine fruits in your orchard. I dare say, too, you have books; you could lend them. If you have nothing else to give people, you can always bestow a smile and a pleasant word."

"Mr. Winkly," cried the doctor's wife, laughing, "you have no idea what material you are working upon; Beulah will have the township on her hands, and will think it her duty to make ladies and gentlemen of all the people."

"A child's mind is always active, my dear madam," replied the clergyman; "if you give them something good to ponder upon, bad thoughts will have less opportunity to steal in."

Mr. Winkly went back to the city next day, but he left little Beulah with a great many new ideas. One afternoon, a few weeks afterwards, the stage brought her a little package, which proved to be a book in a red morocco binding, with gilt-edge leaves, and the title, "Cast thy bread upon the waters," in bright, golden letters upon the cover. The book was one of Beulah's treasures, and became, as good Mr. Winkly intended it should, an ever-present

reminder of the work he had pointed out to her.

Dr. Stedman was a skilful and conscientious physician, and had a large country practice. His residence was beautifully situated upon an eminence overlooking the river. He maintained a large establishment and lived in fine style. Mrs. Stedman was a refined and cultivated lady, with nothing whatever in common with the commonplace countryfolk. She kept up her city friendships and connections, and depended for society upon the different visitors who were always staying in the house.

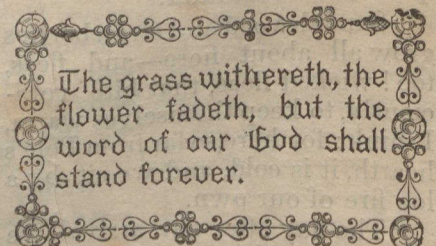
The doctor and Beulah, however, knew everybody in the locality. As Beulah grew older she never forgot her childish mission, and scattered smiles, kind words, and practical suggestions, as assiduously as she did flowers and seeds and good books and papers. There was not a house in the township, however lowly or isolated, where she had not been, or where there was not some trace of her presence. She never lost the opportunity to cast her bread even if it was the merest crumbs. Her individuality was so strong, that she drew others to her own level; thus her very presence was a refining influence. It was not all giving out on her part, however, for she learned a thousand things of the country children, that only country children knew—all the beautiful mysteries which nature hides and reveals of animals and birds, of mosses and wild flowers, of berries and nuts, of running streams, shining pebbles, glancing fishes and crisp water-cresses, of forest-trees, gay rocks and shady hills. She came home from their long rides, often driving the fleet horses with her own little hands, with rosy cheeks and busy brain.

Soon the matter of sending her away to school began to be discussed. Beulah asked a great many questions as to expense, and astonished the doctor one morning by saying, "Papa, I think it would be wrong for you to send me away to be educated. How much better it would be to take the money you would have to pay out and use it toward having a school in town, where all the young people could benefit by it as well as your own little girl."

Beulah's kind heart and pretty little practical head got so full of this idea, and she talked it so persistently to all the various people with whom she came in contact, that in good time there was actually money enough donated for the purpose, and the "Golden Rule Academy," as it was called, was built. They were so fortunate as to secure Mr. Winkly's services as a teacher, and the school flourished wonderfully. It eventually became quite noted, has received several handsome donations from different individuals, and is still a power for good. It has changed the tone of the town entirely. There is a large, growing, well-patronized public library connected with it, and the uncultivated, "commonplace people" have developed into an exceedingly refined and intelligent community. There are many residences now, finer than the doctor's even, and many households as cultured as his used to be.

Miss Beulah never married—she did not have time. She kept up her interest in her townspeople, and used every effort for their spiritual and intellectual advancement. She gave her services as teacher of music and drawing for years at the academy, and is still a weekly visitor.

Misfortune fell upon the doctor's family. After many years the active, useful old gentleman died, and his wife soon followed him. The estate proved to be involved, and poor Miss Beulah was left homeless and penniless. Now the bread which the good lady had been all her life casting upon the waters, returned to her. The old mansion, with all its furniture, was purchased by a company composed of individuals who had been benefited by Miss Beulah's kindness. A life-lease was given to her, and she makes it her home, and is the nominal mistress of the house, which is used as a boarding-hall for the teachers and students of the academy. It is a pleasant household, and Miss Beulah, now a beautiful, sweet old lady, still makes herself active and useful, never forgetting to cast her bread upon the waters, even if, as in her childhood, it consists only of a smile and a kind word. And it comes back to her a hundredfold each day, in the loving appreciation and devotion of her townspeople.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*



The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.

ISA. 40: 8.