The Family.

Ode to Christmas.

Christmas! thou 't come again,
With crystal palaces on the window-pane,
Friend of the rich! thou cou'st midst merry rout,
With children's gewgaws circled round about.

Christmas! thou 't come again,
Friend of the poor, worn down with toil and pain!
Let their sad hearts bound high in glad embrace
And see fresh beauty in thy beaming face.

Christmas! thou 't come again
To the lone sailor on the stormy main.
Home faces only haunt his nightly dream;
Prythee, dear Christmas, make it up to him.

Christmas! thou 't come again
To the brave soldier on the unbattled plain.
No only dreams of voices heard before;
Heaves his lone sigh, and turns to sleep once more.

Christmas! let this thy round
Be gay with myrtle and with holly crowned.
Pledges one and all to faith and virtues true,
We bid thee yet another fond adieu.

Halifax, Christmas Night.

The Dying Year.

The dirge of the year will soon be sung,
The knell of his death is already rung!
He lies outstretched on his icy bier,
Around his brow is a chaplet sere,
And Time, the sexton, with hurried trend,
Prepares the turf for his narrow bed.

But now, ere the funeral rites are done,
The mourners are greeting his youthful son,
Forgetting the sire so lately dead,
With garlands they deck the infant's head;
As if in a bridal hall they trod,
Their footsteps trip o'er the new-laid sod.

Yet what hath the old man done that he
Should suffer such gross indignity?
What foul misdeed has his lifetime shown,
For which, in his grave he should thus atone?
Alas! I fear that the reveling throng
Have done to his ashes grievous wrong.

His life was a mingled trade, like ours,
Of sorrow and gladness, sun and showers,
Of the leafless wood and the blooming vale,
The breezes of spring and the winter gale;
Like mist that fled at the dawn of day,
Or the breaking waves—it passed away.

'Tis said that he kept a secret scroll,
A record true of the human soul,
Wherein he [illegible] with impartial pen,
The actions, feelings and thoughts of men;
And few there are but would fain efface
Some lines his hand has been known to trace.

And therefore in idle mirth they tread
The turf that covers his lowly head,
And quaff, with shouts of incessant joy,
Rich goblets filled to the blooming boy;
Just so, when his aged sire was young,
Around his cradle they danced and sung.

But long ere the youth's bright locks are gray,
Or the bloom on his cheek shall pass away,
Hearts joyous now shall be sad with fears,
And eyes now bright shall be dim with tears,
Hopes blighted—affections crost,
Companions severed, and friendship lost.

So let us live that time's onward flow
May leave as it passes no pang of woe:
That whether our lot be dark or bright,
The heart within may be true and light,
And its future records exhibit not
A single line we could wish to blot.

The Snow-storm.

It was a dark December night, wild and stormy. Ever since midday the snow had fallen with unwearying perseverance, and now lay deep on the ground. I had been detained at my office in town latter than usual, and had to cross a dreary moor for some two miles to reach my home. I confess I felt chilled at the prospect of such a walk in such a storm, but wrapping my plaid around me, and staff in hand, I set forward, thinking of the bright little home I should soon reach, and the dear ones who were waiting my return with a loving welcome.

Soon I left the busy town with its many lights behind me, and stepped out into the dismal moor. The snow lay much deeper here on the untrodden footpath, and seemed to fall even more heavily than before, so thick and blinding that I found myself perpetually straying from the proper roadway, and with difficulty retraced my steps; the cold felt keener also and a sharp east wind had risen. At times I grew almost breathless with the struggle, and had to pause for gathering strength ere I faced the storm once more. At length I rejoiced to see the guiding-post, which was placed where three roads met, and against which I was thankful to lean for a few seconds until I had recovered breath. I [illegible] on the point of starting off afresh, when [illegible] sound of human voice caught my ear. [illegible] listened, but all was still. I shaded [illegible] hand, and stared anxiously in[illegible] darkness, but could discern [illegible] blindness of snow, and I was [illegible] imagination had deceived [illegible] the same murmur came floating [illegible] with the guide-post so near I [illegible] my way, I hastened forward in [illegible] of the sound, and soon distinctly heard a child's voice repeating the Lords prayer. It had a strange effect in such a spot, at such a place, and my heart beat high when the gentle "Amen" was said.

I called out, "Whose voice is that?" but there was no reply. I called again more loudly than before, and then the little answer came. "Johnnie's," and a few steps brought me to a boy some eight years old, standing shivering in the snow.

"My poor little man," I said, "are you all alone?"

"No," he replied; "Nelley is here, but she grew so cold and tired I could not get her on, and now she is fast asleep. I felt sleepy, too, but thought I would say my prayers first," and then as I stooped down to the bundle of snow he had indicated as being "Nelly," he whispered softly, "Has Jesus sent you?"

"Surely he has," I answered; "had you not said your prayers, Johnny, you might both have perished. But how came you here, my boy?"

"We went into town this morning to see Granny; it was not snowing then when we left home."

"And where is your home?" I asked; "and who is your father?"

"Father, Rutland," he replied; "we live at the High Farm."

High Farm happened to lie on the road to my own house, so I told Johnnie we would all go home together. He rejoiced when he heard my name, and remarked to himself, "How well it was I said my prayers."

I found [illegible] indeed fast asleep, wrapped in a heavy cloak which the devoted little fellow had doubtless thought of in his endeavour to keep her warm. Nor could I induce him to put it on until he saw me raise Nelley tenderly in my arms, and wrapping her in my great plaid, gather her closely to my bosom, prepared to carry her.

"Now Johnnie," I said, "you keep hold of the skirt of my coat, and we shall soon be at High Farm."

The cold seemed to have become more intense, the falling snow more dense than ever. Manfully the little fellow kept up by my side, though the snow by this time reached above his knees. I tried to cheer him as we trudged along, but I felt the drag upon my coat becoming greater, and it was evident his strength and heart were failing him; then a suppressed sob broke from him, and he clung more closely to me as I bent down, trying to soothe and comfort him.

"You are a brave little man," I said; "we will soon reach the farm now. Think of the bright fire there, the nice warm milk and bread, and mother's loving kiss, all waiting for you."

"I cannot walk further," he sobbed. "O, take Nelle home, but let me lie down here. I will say my prayers again, and perhaps Jesus will send some one else to help me."

"No, no," I answered cheerily, "I cannot leave you behind, Johnnie; you must just make a horse of me and mount my back. There you are now, hold me fast round the neck, and whip hard to make me go better."

And again I started forward, endeavoring to keep him awake with questions and little sallies; but I felt the additional burden in such a storm was becoming beyond my already exhausted strength, when suddenly a wavering speck of light shot out of the darkness, then vanished, then appeared once more, becoming nearer and brighter. I hallooed loudly, and my shout was answered, and Johnnie called out in a faint glad voice, "O, that's Dad!" And happily so it was; the poor father becoming alarmed at the lengthened absence of his children, had started, with his two men and a lantern in search of them, and tears of thankfulness fell from his eyes when he beheld his loved ones. Johnnie was at once taken into his loving arms, and a quarter of an hour's walk brought us to the farm, where the anxious mother received us. Nelly was soon roused by the warmth and light of the great fire, little or none the worse for the night's adventure, but poor Johnnie was sadly frostbitten, and it was long before he recovered.

Deep was the gratitude of the honest couple for the aid I had afforded their beloved children, who doubtless, overpowered with sleep, would have been hidden in the snow are their father had reached them, and most inevitably have perished but for the prayer which Johnnie's trusting, simple heart had prompted, and which had been the means, with God's blessing, of my saving them.—*Family Treasury.*

Be Careful about Accusing.

Parents should be very cautious about accusing a little child of falsehood, unless the clearest evidence exists of offence. The assertions of domestics are not always to be relied on, as many an unprincipled girl will criminate a defenceless child in order to screen herself from reproof.

I took up a favorite pen from my desk one morning and found the case all covered with little dents like teeth marks. It had evidently been crushed, and an effort made to repair it. A pair of little hands sometimes meddled with writing materials, and were at once suspected.

"Has Eddie been meddling with mamma's pen?"

"No, mamma."

"Just look, Eddie, see how the case is injured; are you very sure Eddie has not touched it?"

This time the denial was made with more hesitation, and the fearful suspicion crossed my mind that the dear boy was telling an untruth. There seemed no other way of accounting for the mischief, and Eddie was urged very seriously to tell mamma the whole truth. He still persisted in the denial, and yet was so much disturbed that it seemed almost a proof of his guilt.

"Will Eddie go away in his little play-room and kneel down and ask God that he may be helped to tell mamma the truth about this?" He was greatly grieved, but went away and came back with the same assertion, given with still greater hesitation. Our hearts were all heavy, but he was sent out to his play with the exhortation to think it over. The understanding was clear in his mind that the thing expected of him was to say he did meddle with the pen. What temptation to lying had been put in the dear child's way!

"Do you know anything of my pen being injured so?" I asked carelessly of a little colored girl who came into the room in the course of the forenoon. I had no expectation of learning anything about it from her, but asked, as I thought, by mere accident, though it proved to be providential.

"Why, yes'm," she said, "Mary brushed it off the desk and stepped on it, and then she tried to make it round again with her teeth."

I felt as if a mountain was removed from my own heart, and I did not wait many minutes before I took the load off from poor Eddie's spirits. With a face and heart all sunshine he went to his play again, but mother could not help call him back for one more kiss. As I look at those little dents in this case I hold I think of that unhappy morning when I almost pressed my little boy into telling a lie.—*Mother's Magazine.*

Mind Your Stops.

Riding in a railway car, not long since, our eyes chanced to light upon a little book, in the hand of one of the passengers, which he seemed to be intently studying. As he lifted it somewhat nearer to his face we saw the title, "*Mind Your Stops,*" stamped in large letters upon the cover. It was, doubtless, a small treatise on punctuation; a most needful, much neglected art. But the title to us was suggestive of other things. It might be introduced not unwisely, we thought, into practical morals; and as we sped swiftly on, we hasied ourselves in thinking of the classes and persons in whose ears, if we could we would touch the words, "*Mind Your Stops.*"

Weighty words of warning are they, especially to young men. Setting out as you are, young brother, on the great highway of life, we say earnestly and emphatically, "*Mind Your Stops.*"

Do not "stop at the bar-room. Merry laughter may ring out from it as you pass by, and voices of friends and companions may call you to enter. Within it may shine brightly with light thrown back from polished mirrors, and gleams from crystal bottles, and the voices of mirth and gayety may be heard there; but "stop" not; there is danger in its brightness. Those gleaming bottles contain potions that may lead to poverty, dishonor, and death. The merriment there is the laughter of fools, and may end in the horrible laughter of the madhouse. 'Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

Do not "stop" at the gambling house. Those closed windows conceal temptation and destruction. Men who may find yourself are weak to resist. There are silken hearts there, whose delight it will be to lure your feet into nets from which you cannot escape. They may be fair to your eye, when covered by a fair address, but the mother mistrusts is not more hard, or the serpent more crafty. Keep far from the clutches of these destroyers. Risk no money upon their tables. The money is little worth indeed, but you may be playing with honor, with your soul's life. The stake is too high; the gains are too insignificant.

Do not "stop" at the theatre. It is the school of morals, say they who love it. We add, it is the school of bad morals. Before the footlights and behind them, corruption reigns. It is the mart of the shameless representations of vices, and the shameful caricatures of goodness. Virtue owes it nothing, and religion disdains and opposes it. "Stop" not, as it opens its doors. You may enter to have your souls defiled, and your heart tainted; you may slink from its "pit" to a lower depth, [illegible]

"*Stop,*" not, [illegible] conscience forbids or temptation [illegible] "Turn not to the right or left." "Let your eyes look on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." There are many places to which you by their fascinations. Take care lest you pause in them. They are bright antechambers of the dark prison-house; gilded gateways to hell. Watch your thoughts. Take care of your associations. "*Mind Your Stops.*"

The Child's Pocket Etiquette.

I. Always say Yes, sir. No, sir. Yes, papa. No, papa. Thank you. No, thank you. Good night. Good morning. Never say How, or Which, for What. Use no slang terms. Remember that good spelling, reading, writing, and grammer are the base of all true education.

II. Clean faces, clean clothes, clean shoes, and clean finger-nails indicate good breeding. Never leave your clothes about the room. Have a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.

III. Rap before entering a room, and never leave it with your back to the company. Never enter a private room or public place with your cap on.

IV. Always offer your seat to a lady or old gentleman. Let your companions enter the carriage or room first.

V. At table eat with your fork; sit up straight; never use your tooth pick (although Europeans do), and when leaving ask to be excused.

VI. Never put your feet on cushions, chairs or table.

VII. Never overlook any one when reading or writing, nor talk or read aloud while others are reading. When conversing listen attentively, and do not interrupt or reply till the other is finished.

VIII. Never talk or whisper aloud at public places, and especially in a private room where any one is singing or playing the piano.

IX. Loud coughing, hawking, yawning, sneezing and blowing are ill-mannered. In every case cover your mouth with your handkerchief *(which never examine—nothing is more vulgar, except spitting on the floor.)*

X. Treat all with respect, especially the poor. Be careful to injure no one's feelings by unkind remarks. Never tell tales, make faces, call names, ridicule the lame, mimic the unfortunate, or be cruel to insects, birds or animals.

About Order.

Put things right back in their place when done with. Never leave them all about helter-skelter, topsy-turvy. When you use any article, hoe, shovel, rake, pitchfork, axe, hammer, tongs, boots or shoes, books, slates, pencils, writing apparatus, pins, thimbles, pincushions, needles, workbaskets, kitchen furniture, every article of housewifery or husbandry, no matter what it is, the very moment you have done using it, return it to its proper place. Be sure to have a special place for everything, and everything in its place. Order, perfect order is the watchword, heaven's first law. How much precious time is saved (aside from vexation) by observing order, systematic regularity! And little folks should begin early to preserve order in everything. Form habits of order. These loose, slipshod, slatternly habits are formed in childhood, and habits once formed are apt to cling for life. Young friends, begin early to keep things in their proper places; study neatness, order, economy, sobriety; in everything be just, honest, pure, lovely, and you will have a good report.

A Handsome Soul.

One day last winter, a boy from the South who was on a visit to the city, was taking his first lesson in the art of "sliding down hill," when he suddenly found his feet in rather to close contact with a lady's rich silk dress. Surprised, mortified, and confused, he sprang from his sled, and, cap in hand, commenced an earnest apology.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; I am very sorry."

"Never mind," exclaimed the lady, "there is no great harm done, and you feel worse about it than I do."

"But, dear madam," said the boy as his eyes filled with tears, "your dress is ruined. I thought you would be very angry with me for being so careless."

"No, no," replied the lady, "better have a soiled dress than a ruffled temper."

"Oh! isn't she a beauty," exclaimed the lad as the lady passed on.

A Beautiful Illustration.

At one of the anniversaries of a Sabbath-school in London, two little girls presented themselves to receive the prize, one of whom had recited one verse more than the other, both having learned several thousand verses of Scripture. The gentleman who presided inquired, "And could you not have learned one verse more, and thus have kept up with Martha?"

"Yes, sir," the blushing child replied; "but I loved Martha, and *kept back on purpose.*"

"And was there any one of all the verses you have learned," again inquired the President, "that taught you this lesson?"

"There was, sir," she answered, blushing still more deeply, "In honor preferring one another."

Early on the Right Track.

"Mother thinks I'm too young to take the temperance pledge," said Johnny; "but I don't think so, because, you see, the younger I take the right stand, the better; and isn't it always best to start right?"

I think so. Boys understand what the pledge is, and in a thousand cases it is better, in these times of evil associates and early temptations, for a body to stand thus *committed for the right.* His ground is already taken, and he will not easily be driven from it.

A WIT ANSWER.—A gentleman was dining one day with a party of the highest position in life. A young English nobleman was offered to the guest instead of wine, and on being asked his reason for doing so, replied, "There is drunkenness enough in a young man's blood, without adding fuel to it."

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