

## FRIENDLY GREETINGS.

ties on sins and trifles is madness. Avarice, as well as wild extravagance, is madness.

As slaves of vice or of intellectual pride; as worldlings, digging in the earth for happiness; as God-forgetting ones, who dream of perfect independence, we are not in our right minds. We may be sound as to some things; but as to these other things, these greatest things, these spiritual and divine things, we are not sound.

And now mark how the wandering of the prodigal from himself began. It began with wandering from his father. The mad, degrading career of the profligate commenced by his shaking off the control of home government, seeking independence. In seeking to be a king he became a slave. When we cast off God we lose ourselves. Far from Him we are beside ourselves; for He is our light, and we are dark without Him; He is our law, and we are lawless without Him; He is our guide, and we wander without Him.

The coming to oneself in this life is very different. There is in it much of painfulness, but there is in it more of mercy. The prodigal had forsaken God, but he has not been forsaken by Him; no, not even in that far land; for all the misery which has fallen on him there was indeed an expression of God's anger against sin, but at the same time of His love to the sinner. He hedges up his way with thorns that he may not find his path. He makes his sin bitter to him that he may forsake it. In this way God pursues His fugitives, summoning them back to Himself in that only language which now they will understand. He allows the world to make its bondage hard to them, that those whom He is about to deliver may at last cry to Him by reason of their bitter bondage.

And then comes the vow, "I will arise." Why tarry any longer in thy wretchedness and thy rage, while there is promise of a Father's mercy? Why tarry in the far country, at a distance from Him, when every moment's tarrying is a moment added to thy misery? Why tarry, since to do so adds sin to sin? It is the resolve at once of faith and hope, of duty and of wisdom, "I will arise, and go to my father."

The reception of the humbled sinner is like that of the prodigal. He is clothed in the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, made partaker of the Spirit of adoption, prepared by peace of conscience and Gospel grace to walk in the ways of holiness, and feasted with Divine consolations; while the whole family of God rejoices at his being restored as a child to his Father's house, and recovered from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. His heavenly Father puts him in full possession of all the blessings of His salvation, seals him with the Spirit of adoption, comforts him beyond his largest hopes. He is encouraged and even constrained by redeeming love to walk with pleasure in the ways of holy obedience.

"Return, O wanderer, return,  
And seek an injured Father's face:  
Those warm desires that in thee burn  
Were kindled by reclaiming grace.

Return, O wanderer, return,  
And seek a Father's melting heart;  
Whose pitying eyes thy grief discern,  
Whose hand can heal thy inward smart.

Return, O wanderer, return,  
He heard thy deep, repentant sigh;  
He saw thy softened spirit mourn,  
When no intruding ear was nigh.

Return, O wanderer, return,  
Thy Saviour bids thy spirit live:  
Go to His bleeding feet, and learn  
How freely Jesus can forgive.

Return, O wanderer, return,  
And wipe away the falling tear;  
'Tis God who says—No longer mourn;  
'Tis Mercy's voice invites thee near.

## A BRAVE GIRL.

"H, daddy!" called a clear, girlish voice.  
"Yes, Lindy; what's wanted?"

"Mother wants to know how long it'll be 'fore you're ready."

"Oh, tell her I'll be at the door by the time she gets her things on. Be sure you have the butter and eggs all ready to put into the waggon. We're makin' too late a start to town."

Butter and eggs, indeed! As if Lindy needed a reminder other than the new dress for which they were to be exchanged.

"Elmer and I can go to town next time, can't we, mother?" she asked, entering the house.

"Yes, Lindy, I hope so," was the reply. "But don't bother me now; your father is coming already, and I haven't my shawl on yet. Yes, Wilbur, I'm here. Just put this butter in, Lindy; I'll carry the eggs in my lap. Now, Lindy, don't let Elmer play with the fire or run away."

And in a moment more the heavy lumber waggon rattled away from the door, and the children stood gazing after it for awhile in a half-forlorn manner. Then Lindy went in to do her work, Elmer resumed his play, and soon everything was moving along as cheerfully as ever.

After dinner Elmer went to sleep, and Lindy, feeling rather lonely again, went out of doors for a change. It was a warm autumnal day, almost the perfect counterpart of a dozen or more which had preceded it. The sun shone brightly, and the hot winds that swept through the tall grass made that and all else it touched so dry that the prairie seemed like a vast tinder-box. Though her parents had but lately moved to this place, Lindy was accustomed to the prairies. She had been born on them, and her eyes were familiar with nothing else; yet as she stood to-day with that brown, unbroken expanse rolling away before her until it reached the pale bluish-grey of the sky, the indescribable feeling of awe and terrible solitude which such a scene often inspires in one not familiar with it stole gradually over her. But Lindy was far too practical to remain long under such an influence. The chickens were "peeping" loudly and she remembered that they were still without their dinner.