Family Circle.

For the American Presbyterian.

APRIL.

BY JAMES RISTINE.

Hail! glowing month, auspicious hour
Of varying sky and budding flow'r.
Hail! to thy sunshine and thy rain,
Repeopling earth with bloom again.
In thee the storms of winter cease,
And spring usurps a throne for peace,
Her kingdom stretching like a strand,
Where shines the sun, and winds expand
Their fragrant wings, to hover o'er
The flowers on that halcyon shore.
Loud roars the ocean at her feet,
And foaming waves the vision greet,
But all their murmurings fade away,
Where up the banks the roses lay,
And far beyond a grand parterre,
Lies like elysium smiling there.
The sloping fields of freshening green,
Seem like a summer's sea serene,
While from its bosom flies the lark,
Like a fair angel's winged bark.
And there like islands of the blest,
The lilies deck the meadow's breast,
And king-cups meekly look to God—
Like children on the recent sod,
Sorrowing o'er a cherished one,
And musing where her soul had gone—
Scattering round their sweet perfume,
Like incense to the land of bloom,
The balmy essence of their love,
To the gracious King enthroned above.
And yonder neath the sullen thorn,
Where lingering hangs the dew of morn,
The cowslip peeps in bashful love,
At the blue birds on the twigs above,
As here and there, they hovering fly,
And pour their liquid melody,
Ere perching on the cedar sprays,
Or basking in the silver rays.
Ay! month of promise, month of bloom,
I love thy skies, though transient gloom
Should now and then their beauty hide,
When showering clouds along them ride.
I love thy woodlands, bright and green,
Where the gay choristers are seen,
Like spirits risen from the pall,
That fell from heaven over all.
I love to hear their ardent song,
Borne on the sweet south-west along,
And blending with the merry shout,
That the gay streamlet warbles out.
I love to see the silver streak,
That gems the hill as the waters break,
And dash adown from the distant spring—
Where lovely songsters hovering wing—
O'er rocks and many a green cascade,
To form the lakelet in the shade,
And mirror-like a glowing dream,
The skies when all their torches gleam.
Sweet April! when the varying year
Brought thee to make thy journey here,
I saw the lingering streak of snow
Down in the shaded valley low.
I saw no flowers on the lea,
And bleak winds ruffled o'er the sea,
And o'er the heaven's sacred blue,
The croaking sea-gulls swiftly flew,
Oft heralding the snow, the rain,
That robed or lashed the fields again.
But born in tears, in tempest shade,
How bright is now thy blooming glade,
The storms have gone, the winds are still,
Save the south-west skimming o'er the rill,
Or now and then a fairy car,
A cloudlet, dims the evening star,
While as from some magician's wand,
The lovely flowers their leaves expand.
But though from out their silent caves,
Roll o'er the brook the joyous waves,
Though in the wood the aster grows,
And by the fen the brier rose,
Though violet and daisy bloom,
And pour around their sweet perfume,
They all shall evanesce again,
And desolate the smiling glen.
Though o'er the velvet lawn the boy
Trips lightly in his childish joy,
And eager grasps at gaudy flies,
That dalliant hover o'er his eyes,
He roams from morn till evening,
Yet fails to catch the gilded thing.
And when the day has waned away,
And fainter glows the sunset ray,
Alone and tired he plods along,
Lisping the ploughman's homeward song.
So man is lured by pleasure here,
From morning's smile to evening's tear,
Vainly to chase the phantom fly,
That charms yet only cheats the eye.
When strength and life are nearly spent,
Homeward his weary steps are bent,
Toward a lovelier, happier home,
Where day's fair beauties never gloam,
And where the voice of the gone before,
Shall greet him on the sacred shore,
And lift in joy his drooping soul,
Panting to reach the blessed goal.
The fickle joy, the empty dream,
Of hope the ignis fatuus beam,
That onward leads and still allures,
Till many a pang the heart endures.
Are vacant as a bubble toy—
An infant's momentary joy;
And down the vale of life they lead,
O'er many a rock and rugged mead,
Till wearied with the hopeless chase,
And dragging a returning pace,
We sink to earth and breathe a prayer,
Then close our eyes in slumber there—
A slumber that shall break no more,
Though warblers sing or tempests roar,
Save when the holocaust of time
Shall blast fore'er this varying clime,
And the bright spring of dawning heaven
Be rapture's morn and sorrow's even.

Philadelphia, April 5th, 1860.

HAPPY DEATH OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

I knew a little boy, not two years old, who looked at his father, and said, "By-by, pa: baby is going to sleep;" and he shut his eyes, and never opened them any more. And I knew another, three years old, who was just sinking in death, and said to his father, who was near his side, "Father, there is beyond the sky a heaven of joy and love."

There was another, who was a blind boy, who looked up, as he was dying, and said, "I see a light; it is heaven." And a little girl who was motherless, when lying upon her back, and thought to be dead—all at once opened her eyes, reached out her arms, and cried, "My mother!" and then died. There was a little boy who, when taken sick, was at first afraid to die, and said: "Mother, the valley of death is very dark; will you not go with me?" His mother could only burst into tears: the little boy then put his face towards the wall and prayed, and then, turning to his mother with a sweet look, said: "Mother, the valley is not so dark now, for Jesus is with me. I can go now."

FUN AT HOME.

Don't be afraid of a little fun at home, good people! Don't shut up your houses lest the sun should fade your carpets and your hearts, lest a hearty laugh should shake down some of the musty old cob-webs there! If you want to ruin your sons, let them think that all mirth and social enjoyment must be left on the threshold without, when they come home at night. When once a home is regarded only as a place to eat, drink and sleep in, the work is begun that ends in gambling houses and reckless degradation.

Young people must have fun and relaxation somewhere; if they do not find it at their hearthstones, it will be sought in other, and perhaps less profitable places. Therefore, let the fire burn brightly at night, and make the home-nest delightful with all those little hearts that parents so perfectly understand. Don't repress the buoyant spirits of your children; half an hour of merriment round the lamp and fire-light of home blots out the remembrance of many a care and annoyance during the day, and the best safeguard they can take with them into the world is the unseen influence of a bright little domestic sanctum.

Selected.

TALK WITH THE BOYS.

It was the afternoon before examination in a country school. A half a dozen boys, who had volunteered their services to procure evergreens and spruce boughs to decorate the school room, were in the yard trimming the boughs and turning the evergreens for the use of the girls, who assisted by their teacher, were fastening them to the walls within.

Presently a boy, wearing the air of a would-be gentleman, came swaggering up to the fence. His left hand was thrust into the bosom of his close jacket, while between the fore fingers of his right was a cigar, which he had just taken from his lips to accost the boys.

He had evidently succeeded in making himself think that he was almost a man, and might possibly have made the same impression on the others, had not the teacher just then come to the door for a fresh supply of the trimming. On seeing her, Tom Benton—the boy with the cigar—who knew her opinions on the tobacco question, dropped the hand which held the cigar behind him and went down the street with a much less majestic tread than before, when the following conversation ensued:

"Well, boys how many of you think that this before pure air is improved by that cigar?"

"I like it well enough," said James, whose father smoked, "I'm used to it."

"I don't think the birds on yonder tree would say so, if they could speak; and you don't look as if you enjoyed it very much, George," said the teacher.

"No ma'am, I don't; I think people have no more right to poison the air than our food or drink, and they shouldn't, if I made the laws."

"*Poison*, did you say, George?" asked James.

"Yes. Isn't tobacco poison, teacher? father says it is."

"Yes, one of the most deadly. A small quantity has been known to cause immediate death. A drop or two of the oil placed on the tongue of a cat will produce convulsions and death in the space of a minute. A little boy in Bangor died from using a pipe to blow soap-bubbles with. He was poisoned by the essential oil of tobacco imbibed from the pipe."

"Then that was what made you so sick last winter, boys, when you tried smoking and chewing," said James, to the three other boys, who seemed interested listeners, though they did not speak.

The teacher looked inquiringly at the three boys, and James, who was very talkative, said, "When Tom Benton first came here to the academy he somehow contrived to make us boys think that he was something more than common. Charles, Frank, and Jo there, thought, I suppose, that they would try to be like him; so they got some pieces of cigar and tobacco, and took their first lesson. It was just before school, and the teacher rang the bell for us to go in before long. After prayers, Frank asked to go out. The teacher looked at him, and then went towards him and said, in a tone of alarm, "Why, what is the matter, Frank? and you, too, Joseph and Charles, what has happened?"

"The boys said nothing, but looked dreadfully; so white and so sick, and he asked us if we knew what ailed them.

"When we told him, he said, 'You have been led to do a very foolish thing boys, and though I am sorry to prolong your sufferings, I believe I must keep you from the fresh air till I think you will get the lesson you are learning so thoroughly that you will not forget it.'

"In a little while he let them go out, and I guess they have never touched tobacco since."

The three boys had continued very busily at work without looking up during James narration, and their teacher turned to them and said, "Do you think you ever shall, Charles?"

"No, ma'am, I think, as Ben Franklin says, you have to pay too dear for your whistle."

"And what do you think, Joseph?"

"It don't make Tom Benton sick, and he says *we* should get used to it if we begin using a little at a time."

"Why should you wish to get used to it?"

"I don't know, I never thought much about it. My father smokes, and so do a great many of the men in the shop where he works, and I have always thought that when I got to be a man, of course I should use tobacco, just as I should carry a cane, or wear a silk hat, or do anything else that men do."

"That's what I always thought," said Frank.

"And I too," said James; "but if it is poison, that alters the matter, and I don't want to have anything to do with it."

"I never would have anything to do with it, boys. Physicians all over the country declare it to be destructive to health. It makes people nervous, irritable and uneasy. It destroys their relish for such wholesome food, fruit in its natural state, &c., as our heavenly Father has provided for us and 'given us richly to enjoy,' and creates a desire for highly seasoned dishes or stimulating drinks, that leads its users, more than any other class of people, to become drunkards. It makes them disagreeable to every lover of cleanliness, both at home and abroad, and last, but not least, it makes its victims such slaves, that when they become conscious that it is injuring them and even endangering their lives, they have no power to throw it away.

"I have seen young men growing prematurely gray, and trembling in every nerve from the use of tobacco, and older ones who have been told that they must give it up or die; and after a few feeble attempts to do so they would acknowledge by their practice that it was too strong for them, and become its slaves again, to be led into death by it. Now is it not foolish, boys, to form a habit which makes one disagreeable to others, injures the health, costs every year several dollars, which might do good spent for other purposes, leads men to other sinful and destructive habits, and gives one appetites which he can neither control nor overcome, *only just because we see others do it?*"

Zion's Herald.

WHAT IS DUE TO WOMAN.

Let man learn to be grateful to woman for this unbounded achievement of her sex, that she, far more than he, and too often in despite of him, has kept Christendom from lapsing back into barbarism; kept mercy and truth from being utterly overborne by those two greedy monsters, money and war. Let him be grateful for this, that almost every great soul that has led forward or lifted up the race has been furnished for each noble deed, and inspired with each patriotic and holy inspiration, by the retiring fortitude of some Spartan, or more than Spartan—some Christian mother. Moses, the deliverer of his people, drawn out of the Nile by the king's daughter, some one has hinted, is only a symbol of the way that woman's better instincts always outwit the tyrannical diplomacy of man. Let him carefully remember, that though the sinewy sex achieves enterprise on public theatres, it is the nerve and sensibility of the other that arm the mind and inflame the soul in secret. "A man discovered America, but a woman equipped the voyage." So everywhere; man executes the performance, but woman trains the man. Every effectual person, leaving his mark on the world, is but another Columbus, for whose furnishing some Isabella, in the form of his mother, lays down her jewelry, her vanities, and her comfort.

Above all, let not man practise upon woman the perpetual and shameless falsehood of pretending admiration, and acting contempt. Let not men exhaust their kindness in adorning her person, and ask in return the humiliation of her soul. Let them not assent to her every high opinion, as if she were not strong enough to maintain it against opposition; nor yet manufacture opinion for her, and force it on her lips by dictation. Let them not crucify her emotions, nor ridicule her frailty, nor crush her individuality, nor insult her independence, nor play off mean jests upon her honor in convivial companies, nor bandy unclean doubts about her as a wretched substitute for wit; nor whisper vulgar suspicions of her purity, which, as compared with their own, is like the immaculate whiteness of angels. Let them multiply her social advantages, enhance her dignity, minister to her intelligence, and by manly gentleness, be the patrons of her genius, the friends of her fortune, and the equals, if they can, of her heart.

Rev. F. D. Huntington.

A YES OR NO.

A simple "yes," or an emphatic "no," may cost you a fortune—may cost you a troop of friends—may cost you a political promotion—may cost you your character—may cost you your soul! How many a public man has had his whole career decided by his course in some trying emergency, or on some one great question of right. He is led up into the mount of temptation, where some gigantic iniquity bids him bow down and worship it, and promises in return, "all the world and the glory thereof." From that mount of trial, he comes down a hero or a fool. The die is cast. If he has honored justice and truth, then justice and truth will honor him; if not, his bones will be left bleaching on the road to a promotion he can never reach.

Cuyler.

Miscellaneous.

RAILWAY EXPERIENCE.

There is an old saying, that the friendship of a dog is better than his ill-will, and for many years in my capacity as a railroad conductor, I have found the above to be true to a letter—but mind, I am not saying that I have no enemies. I undoubtedly have a few, but I don't think there is a man that lives but has more or less. A little kindness now and then to the many needy ones a conductor will find, almost every day over his road, will not be lost; and he will, in many cases, find, from his "bread cast upon the waters" a return four-fold. Yet he must use a great deal of judgment in bestowing his charity upon even those he thinks entirely worthy of such bestowal. I will, in connection, relate a little incident by which a little kindness saved my life, and the lives of all the passengers on board my train.

The western division of our road runs through a very mountainous part of Virginia, and the stations were few and far between. About three miles from one of these stations, the road runs through a deep gorge of the Blue Ridge, and near the centre is a small valley, and there, hemmed in by the everlasting hills, stood a small, one-and-a half story cabin. The few acres that surrounded it were well cultivated as a garden, and upon the fruits thereof lived a widow named Graff. They were, indeed, untutored in the cold charities of an outside world. I doubt much if they ever saw the sun shine beyond their native hills. In the summer time the children brought berries to the nearest station to sell, and with the money they earned they bought a few of the necessaries of the outside refinement.

The oldest of these children I should judge to be about twelve years, and the youngest about seven. They were all girls, and looked nice and clean, and the healthful appearance and natural delicacy gave them a ready welcome. They appeared as if they had been brought up to fear God, and love their humble home and mother. I had often stopped my train and let them get off at their home, having found them at the station, three miles from home, after disposing of their berries.

I had children at home, and I knew their little feet would be tired in walking three miles, and therefore felt that it would be the same with those fatherless little ones. They seemed so pleased to ride, and thanked me with such hearty thanks, after letting them off near home. They frequently offered me nice, tempting baskets of fruit for my kindness, yet I never accepted anything without paying their full value.

Now, if you remember, the winter of 1854 was very cold in that part of the State, and the snow was nearly three feet deep upon the mountains.

On the night of the 26th of December of that year it turned round warm, and the rain fell in torrents. Upon that night my train was winding its way, at its usual speed, around the hills and through the valleys, and as the road was all solid rock, I had no fear of the banks giving out. The night was intensely dark, and the wind moaned piteously through the deep gorges of the mountains. Some of my passengers were trying to sleep, others were talking in a low voice, to relieve the monotony of the scene. Mothers had their children upon their knees as if to shield them from some unknown danger without.

It was near midnight, when a sharp whistle from the engine brought me to my feet. I knew there was danger by that whistle, and sprang to the brakes at once, but the brakes-men were all at their posts, and soon brought the train to a stop. I seized my lantern, and found my way forward as soon as possible, when, what a sight met my gaze! A bright fire of pine logs illuminated the track for some distance, and not over forty rods ahead of our train a horrible gulf had opened its maw to receive us.

The snow, together with the rain, had torn the side of the bank out, and eternity itself seemed spread out before us. The widow Graff and her children had found it out, and had brought light brush from their home below, and built large fires to warn us of our danger. They had been there more than two hours, watching beside that beacon of safety. As I went up where that old lady and children stood, drenched through by the rain and sleet, she grasped me by the arm, and cried:

"Thank God! Mr. Sherburn, we stopped you in time. I would have lost my life before one hair of your head should have been hurt. O, I prayed to Heaven that we might stop the train, and my God, I thank thee!"

The children were crying for joy. I confess, I don't very often pray, but I did then and there. I kneeled down by the side of that good old woman, and offered up thanks to an All-Wise Being for a safe deliverance from a most terrible death, and called down blessings without number upon that good old woman and her children. Near by stood the engineer, fireman, and brakesmen, the tears falling down their bronzed cheeks.

I immediately prevailed upon Mrs. Graff and the children to go back into the cars out of the storm and cold. After reaching the cars I related our hair-breadth escape, and to whom we were indebted for our lives, and begged the men passengers to go forward and see for themselves. They needed no further urging, and a great many ladies also went, regardless of the storm. They soon returned, and their pale faces gave evidence of the frightful death we had escaped. The ladies and gentlemen vied with each other in their thanks and heartfelt gratitude towards Mrs. Graff and her children, and assured her that they would never, never forget her, and before the widow left the train she was presented with a purse of four hundred and sixty dollars, the offering of a whole train of grateful passengers. She refused the proffered gift for some time, and said she had only done her duty, and the knowledge of having done so was all the reward she asked. However, she accepted the money, and said it should go to the education of her children.

The railroad company built her a new house, gave her and her children a life-pass over the road, and ordered all trains to stop and let her off at home when she wished. But the employees needed no such orders, they can appreciate all such kindness—more so than the directors themselves.

The old lady frequently visits my home at H——, and she is at all times a welcome visitor at my fireside. The two children are attending school at the same place.

So you may see a little kindness cost me nothing, and saved many lives.

THE VALUE AND USEFULNESS OF RAILROADS.

Mr. Milner, in his late report survey, exemplifies the value and usefulness of railroads as follows:

"In 1837, I was engaged on the Georgia State Railroad, just then commenced. I there became acquainted with the people along the road, their habits and their means. Beyond their actual wants of food, they raised nothing at all. The men moped around, and shot at a mark. The women seemed to do but little, whilst their children, poorly cared for, sauntered about from place to place, as if their largest thoughts were bent on catching rabbits, opossum, or some such small game. What was the use of working, when it would cost them two dollars per bushel to get their wheat to market, and then get only one?

"In 1857, I went back again, and what a change! The rivers were the same—the Kenesaw Mountain had not changed—the "Crooked Spoon" still rolled along—the men and women that once I knew were there—the boys had grown to men, and the girls to women; but their mien was changed. The old men stood erect, as with conscious pride they looked upon the waving fields of grain. The matrons busied themselves about their dairies and their looms; whilst the sturdy boys were grappling with the plow.

"What had brought this change about? Listen for a while, and soon you will hear the iron horse come snorting along. He stops at a station for fuel and water—a man gets off the train. He is a Charleston man, or perhaps the agent of the Montgomery Mills. The cars go on, and he goes to the house. He meets the farmer—they have met before. His business is to buy his grain. Strange, but true, that the demand for wheat should be so great as to induce the merchant to buy at the farmer's door. He offers one dollar and a half per bushel, cash, for the entire crop, and furnish the sacks to put it in. That won't do. Savannah was here yesterday, and Columbus the day before, and they offered more. Here is the key to this great mystery. The great State road—the iron horse—the dollar and a half per bushel, cash, tells the tale. This is literally true, as any one can ascertain, by inquiring of the man that knows."

AMERICAN HYGIENE.

There are certain anomalous habits and arrangements which intelligent persons notice with regret and wonder, as prevalent in this country, which account, in a measure, for the disease and mortality which are so out of proportion to the population, where so many favorable circumstances exist. Some of our Atlantic cities, most largely representing the average health and habits of the country, afford the most striking examples of these perversities, of which we can allude to but a few. The injudicious use of furnace heat in dwellings, by depriving the air of moisture, and keeping the body at a high temperature, is the prolific source of catarrhal and pulmonary affections, and in conjunction with the extreme cold out of doors, occasions many diseases of the eyes. The persistent use of some kinds of burning fluid causes innumerable deaths annually; the indiscriminate crowding of railway cars and omnibusses, is a primary cause of the spread of infectious diseases; the habit of eating enormous meals with great rapidity to save time; keeping late hours, and retiring to bed with a large supper to digest; constant over-excitement of the brain; and frequent recourse to stimulants, are adequate reasons to account for the prevalence of indigestion and bilious diseases, in our large cities.

But it is not only in the unhealthy habits of body and mind that we must look for the invalidism of our people. Even those who conscientiously try to preserve their health often make fearful practical mistakes. People liable to severe congestions tamper therewith by relying on medicines which alleviate symptoms, but do not relieve the overcharged vessels. Frequent use of narcotics vitiates the blood and disorganizes the nervous system; hence the frequency of what are called disease of the heart, dropsy and paralysis. Great reliance is placed on exercise, but this must be of a kind adapted to the individual. It is injurious to a delicately organized person, whose great need is *nervous power*, to fatigue himself to exhaustion at a gymnasium, under the idea that muscular development necessarily secures health.

Abundance of fresh air, moderate walking, appropriate diet, adequate sleep and a quiet mind, will often do more for such an invalid than all the crossbars and ropes in existence. Horseback-riding is by no means good for everybody; those who suffer from cerebral or vascular difficulties should take medical advice before they indulge much in this agreeable exercise. What we need as a people is more repose and simplicity in our habits of life, and less recklessness in our economical arrangements.—*Boston Transcript.*

A WOMAN must be very insensible who is not moved to come upon a higher plane of being herself, by seeing how undoubtingly she is insphered in the heart of a good and noble man. A good man's faith in you, fair lady, if you ever have it, will make you better and nobler, even before you know it.—*Mrs. Stowe.*

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN AND GENESEE EVANGELIST,

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ASSOCIATED WITH
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THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN was commenced three years ago by a company of benevolent and pious men, who loved the Church and desired to promote its interests. One year later, at the mutual consent of the friends of both papers, and by the publicly expressed concurrence and endorsement of the Genesee Synod, the *Genesee Evangelist*, for ten years published at Rochester, N. Y., was united with and merged in the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, published at Philadelphia. The union of these papers has contributed greatly to the circulation influence, and usefulness of the UNITED PAPER. Measures have been taken to improve the paper, elevate its religious tone and character, and render it every way worthy of its increased and rapidly increasing circulation and usefulness.

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