

Family Circle.

THE VAUDOIS TRACER.

"The manner in which the Vaudois and heretics discriminated their principles among the Catholic people, was by carrying with them a box of trinkets, or articles of dress. Having entered the houses of the gentry, and disposed of their goods, they cautiously indicated that they had something to offer to the gentry. The gentry, in return, would show them if they could be protected from the clergy. They would then give the purchaser a Bible or Testament, and thereby many were deluded into heresy."—R. Seck.

"O, lady fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare. The richest web of the Indian loom, which beauty's queen might wear; And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck, with whose radiant light she glows; I have thought with me a weary way: will my gentle lady say?"

And the lady smiled on the worn old man through the dark and clustering curls Which veiled her brow as she bent to view his silks and glittering pearls; And she placed the price in the old man's hand, and lightly turned away. But she passed as the wanderer's earnest call—"My gentle lady, stay!"

"Oh, lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre than the diamond flash of the jeweled crown on the lofty brow of kings; A wonderful piece of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay; Whose light shall be as a spell to thee, and a blessing on thy way!"

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel where her form of grace was seen; Where her eye shone clear and her dark locks moved in wavy ringlets between; "Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth, thou traveler, for my great need; And name the price of thy precious gem, and my pearl shall count thy gold."

The cloud went from the pilgrim's brow, as a small and meager book, Unbound with gold or gem of cost, from his folding robe he took; "Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price; may I prove as such to thee? Nay—keep thy gold—I ask it not; for the word of God is free!"

The hoary traveler went his way, but the gift he left behind Hath had its pure and perfect work on that high-born maiden's mind; And she hath turned from the pride of sin to the lowliness of truth; And given her human heart to God in its beautiful life!"

J. G. WATKINS.

THE FORGOTTEN PROMISE.

"No, no—don't ask me for anything, woman—I'm pestered to death no—I tell you, no!" These words I repeated harshly, unkindly, because the woman lingered. I can see her now—the thin cheeks, the eyes almost wild with their longing looks—the parted lips, the pallor of disease. I turned away from the door, but she had better have said a few words to me—she had better have extended toward the latch—the scant shawl falling closely over the clinging dress—awa, poor soul!

She turned wearily—her eyelids fell—her lip quivered, and all over her countenance looked utterly dejected. I turned to her, and she said, "I turned to my desk as the door was shut, and took up my ledger again. No use—trouble with the first column, the second, the third—over and over I went, unwearying, I had better have spent the time listening to the story of the poor woman. For there she stood, so pale and so palpably in my spirit's vision as she had in reality, her mournful eyes reproaching me."

"You were wrong," whispered conscience. "But my head was so full of things, my heart so full of things, I have heard of misery all the morning; mendicants abound—tears rain—troubles come like hail, and I'm tired of giving. Here's a letter from a sick woman—wants me to take her son—who is going to die—he is everything, and I cannot help her in that way. I have taken the care on my mind; however—will try and get him a place—has written. Another letter from a sailor—has fallen from the mast of one of my vessels—must look to me, and a clerk badly crushed in the dock. A telegraph announcing the loss of my entire cargo in the wreck of the *Antelope* lies on my desk—I have sickness at home—am not well—ought I not to be excused for my impatience?"

"But it would not do, this striving for a quiet conscience; I had given it a blow, and it writhed and smarted; I had said, perhaps, to one of God's poor, 'Go, uncomplaining,' and my soul was uneasy. In vain I attempted to continue my accounts—I sat on the sofa to rest, but my head ached, and I had to rise, and I counted wretchedly, until that pale face—that face of judgment—that witness of my unfaithfulness."

At last, I turned from my office, and sought the street. Unconsciously I peered up and along the sidewalk, and saw a man with a white beard, a poor old bonnet, and a thin, bent figure. I was searching for the woman, repeating—but my search was in vain. I returned to my home, and hurrying to the sick-chamber, found my little one improved, the fever-flush and the deadly white of disease gone, and in its stead the soft rose-bud of coming health. Perhaps that poor woman bent above a sick child; what did she say? What could she say? Why did she haunt me so?

"I could scarcely touch my dinner, and determined feelingly to walk, to remain at home, to afternoon, and rest; so I took me to a lounge in the parlor, as it was darker there, and lay down, vainly striving to sleep. My wife, taking advantage of the fine day and our child's improved condition, had decided to walk with me, and I had my eyes, I heard the rustling of silks—and my daughter stood before me. I had never taken much notice of dress, but at that moment the beauty and comfort of their attire struck me painfully. What soft harmonies of color—what richness of material! How rare and pure seemed the silks and the velvet folds, the costly fur, the delicate draperies! They who had never wanted for one little hour stood before me—but who could read the future. There, there, close beside us all, was the poor faded shawl, and in the distance, the wild imploring eyes."

"Good-by, Robert," said my wife, as she took the hand-bag for which she had entered—"don't go out again, your hand burns, and you look feverish." "I'm sure you are not well." "I won't go out," I said, "unless I feel better," and so they left me."

Again and again I strove to sleep—but the gentle minister of rest to the weary would not come to me. "Every thing about me seemed endowed with mysterious vitality. I saw the pictures, hanging in their massive frames; 'don't you remember how much we cost, and how can you turn away?' 'Look at my robes, my glorious colors,' cried the carpet—"no pauper's floor has pressed my yielding surface"—"nor has the bogger lustrated in a faded carpet, or sorrowful faces, reflected their care or their sorrow in our shining depths," said the mirrors."

My heart began to ache harder; I felt guilty before God, and the words seemed to ring in my ears. "I'm not very well doing." "As I half sat, half-reclined, I lost myself for one little moment. I was in a spacious church, and the mass of God was just pronouncing the benediction. I am sorry to say that unconscious rustling that precedes the amen, as if all the people were ready for a rush, the very second the service is ended,

was vividly repeated in my dream, and I was one of the hundreds crowding towards the door. So, solemnly, gloriously, the noble strains of the mighty organ floated up and around us, and reached the vestibule—I felt a touch upon my hand—a touch of cold fingers. I turned—it was a faded face, a faded bonnet, a pale, thin form—it was a stooping figure—the whole aspect touched me.

"Mr. L," murmured a weak voice, my poor son is not the worst of it; he is unprepared to die, and he will not hear of a minister. He regards only a very few people as his friends, sir, and he was once in your employ—he remembers you very well, and he would like to see you. I was a Christian. O, sir, it has come over me that you can do him good—if I might ask such a great favor—if you would condescend to come to my poor home—oh I, Jack, sir—Jack—"

"The doctor says he can't hold on long, sir, but gives me hopes of two or three days. O, sir, that may be true enough—it may be! I don't want to break down, but I'll tell you—there's the great tears of anguish hanging on her hot eyelids—the poor, thin lips trembling with uncontrollable emotion—the poor, thin hands clasped in an iron grasp."

"I will certainly come, if I can be of the least use," I replied. "Give me your name, and I will try and see you to-morrow—is he very near death?"

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ungrateful, or when I am cross or out of temper, I almost always feel good-humored again, if I only look upon my book."

"I wonder what sort of things you put down," said Mrs. Wade asked me to spend the whole day at her house, and made me very happy indeed."

"Old Martha Pugh asked after me every day, while I was ill."

"Why do you put father and mother at the head of every page?" asked Cecilia.

"Oh, they show me so much kindness that I cannot put it all down, so I just write their names to remind myself of the great debt of love. I know that I can never pay it. And see what I have put at the beginning of my book: 'Every good gift is from above'; this is to make me remember that all the kind friends whom I have met, are gifts from the Lord, and that, while I am grateful to them, I should, first of all, be thankful to him."

"I think that such of my readers as have ability and time, would find it a capital plan to keep a book of thanks; and may not so cannot write them down, keep a book of remembrance of past kindness in their hearts."

"How to render family worship pleasant and profitable."

We could hardly have a more important subject before us, reader, short of personal salvation. Does your family belong to the families that call not on the name of the Lord? Then seek to draw your family around the family altar, because you are the head of the Church? Remember that one of your first duties is to show piety at home. The usefulness and beauty of family worship is acknowledged by all, but the trouble is in making that duty pleasant and profitable. Now here is the plan and the directions. Consider them as you are the head of a family; and if family devotions have heretofore been languid and irksome to the household, you may sometimes be discouraged from constant observance. This is a common mistake. Why should this be? What is in itself more appropriate and interesting for a family, than the united worship of the Great Giver of all our blessings? When they have all received presents from some distant friend, or have been enlisted in the giving of thanks. Who would not the same be true in the united expression of gratitude to the great and constant Benefactor? Let not the answer be too confidently made—"Because they have wicked hearts." This is true, but there may be other truths to be thought of in connection with it.

When the hour of family worship is not a pleasant hour, it is important for the parent to inquire whether there is not something wrong in his mode of conducting the exercises. He should not too hastily impute to depravity all the aversion which his household may manifest. There are many means of making that delightful season even to their children. There are also ways of rendering it an irksome hour, not only to the children, but to all present.

If no effort is made by the parent to secure that variety which is essential to interesting and perpetuating an interest, if he rigidly confines upon the exercises as a mere ceremony, or a task to be hurried through with as quickly as possible; if he alone reads the Bible, and that in a monotonous or careless way; if his prayers are always one and the same, no matter how the circumstances of the family differ, and consist invariably of the same set phrases recurring in the same order, till every child knows them all by heart so as to be able to anticipate them all, and to calculate at any instant precisely how soon the wretched-for "Amen" will come; if there is no regular time for worship, and no sacred music ever to be heard; if the exercises are not to be expected that the exercise will interest or benefit the family. Both old and young must be very differently constituted to take delight in such performances.

On the other hand, let the father have an appointed time for family devotions, and that the time when his own mind and the minds of his family are most free and elastic; let him put a Bible into the hands of every individual in the household, and let each one be held to it, with correct emphasis, with agreeable tones, and with varieties in them as the sense requires; let him in the course of his reading make occasional remarks to explain what may not be understood; to call attention to peculiarly impressive or striking passages, and perhaps even stop and relate a fact which is connected with the passage; let the portion of Scripture they are reading; let each member of the family be called on to read in his turn, so as to feel that he has some part in the performance; let the singing of some appropriate hymns, and let each one be held to it, with correct emphasis, with agreeable tones, and with varieties in them as the sense requires; let him in the course of his reading make occasional remarks to explain what may not be understood; 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