

The Family Circle.

The Slave Singing at Midnight.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.
LOUD he sang the psalm of David
In a staggard and cadence,

In that hour when night is calmest,
Sung he from the Hebrew Psalms,

Songs of triumph and aspirations,
Such as reached the swart Egyptians,

And the voice of his devotion
Filled my soul with strange emotion;

For his tones by turns were glad,
Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Paul and Silas, in their prison,
Sung of Christ, the Lord arisen;

And an earthquake's ark of might
Broke their dungeon gates at night.

But, alas! what holy angel
Brings the slave the glad evangel?

And what earthquake's ark of might
Breaks his dungeon gates at night?

TOO OLD FOR THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.

WALTER BURNS was fifteen years old. He had been blessed with a good home, and though early deprived by death of a mother's love and care, his father had watched over him and given him counsel as only a Christian father can.

Walter had hesitated to adopt the views of his classmates, knowing his father's feelings, and wishing to please him, who had always been one of the kindest of fathers.

Mr. Burns looked in his son's face a moment, and then said, "Walter, there are some things which I have never spoken to you, because there has never yet seemed a reason for it. The time has now come when I ought to speak."

"When you were three years old, you lost a dear mother. You have never known how great is such a loss. Among your dear dead mother's last words was the request that, as soon as you were old enough, I would place you in the Sabbath-school; and she said it was her prayer for her dear little boy, who would soon be motherless, that he might continue a scholar in it till he should learn to love the Saviour, and be prepared, if it became his duty, to be a teacher."

"I need not tell you what my own wishes and prayers, since then, have been in this regard. And now my son says he feels too old to remain longer in the Sabbath-school, though he has not yet found Christ."

Walter saw the tears gathering in his father's eyes, and turned away. Nothing more was said about leaving that class. Walter remembered his mother's dying wish, and the earnest longings of his praying father, and at length he found the Saviour in the Sabbath-school; he was led to the cross, and his heart was filled with the love and peace of a forgiven sinner.

He is a man now, an active Christian, and the beloved superintendent of a large Sabbath-school in one of our cities; and I have seen the eyes of both parents and children glisten with tears as he has told them this story of his boyhood.

"Boys, are any of you beginning to think you are too old to be Sabbath scholars? Remember Walter Burns, and a great multitude of children besides, who have found the matter very seriously before you decide to leave such a place.—Uncle Paul's Stories.

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.

"Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Christ would teach us in these words.

Let He would teach us not to be wasteful. He was not. This was his rule. "That which he loath." The young are apt to be extravagant. They have not learned the cost of things yet. But these proverbs are true. "Waste not, want not." Take care of the pence, and you take care of the pounds."

A little girl picked up a pin, and threw it into the fire. Half an hour after, a lady's carriage drove up to take her a drive. She wanted a pin, and she had no pin, to pin her shawl. How she searched and searched for it!—How she implored everybody to give her a pin! But when while the lady was driving, and drove off; and she lost her drive in the park for that wasted pin!

Two men set out for a ten days' journey across a desert. They each took ten loaves—a loaf for each day. The first day the younger man ate all he could, and then tossed the rest on the sand; but the elder man, having eaten sparingly, brought out two bags into one of which he put all the crumbs, and into the other all the crumbs. Day after day he did the same; and the younger man marvelled and smiled. But on the tenth day they discovered that they were still two days short of their journey's end. And now the younger man had nothing whatever to eat! But now the elder brought out his two well-filled bags; and both of them were very thankful to get the crusts that day, and the crumbs the next.

Depend upon it, if you are wasteful, if you despise this divine direction, "Let nothing be lost," you will sooner or later suffer for it.

Make a conscience of economy,—then you will be able to be generous; but if your pocket has got a hole in it, it is useless to be putting your hand into it,—there will be nothing there for kindness and charity.

"Duly, He would teach us the value of little things,—That nothing be lost."—Nothing, these fragments were trifles, but they served more than anything else to attest the greatness of the miracle. Their testimony could not be gainsaid—there they were, "twelve baskets full, over and above" unto them that

had eaten." The rest (however much it was) had now disappeared—but here were these fragments for everybody to gaze at! And though they were but odds and ends, they could feed our Lord and his disciples for days—they could feed scores of beggars in the villages—they could feed another multitude if it was required.

And so with all our little things—our fragments of time, of money, of talent, of influence, of dress; so with little acts of attention, little courtesies, little words. How much may be done by them! What friends they may make! What pleasures they may give! These golden opinions they may win! These are boys who have acquired an education by improving their spare moments from labour. One of our chief living linguists, and one of our chief living artists, both worked their way to their fame thus. And who will venture to reckon up all the troubles that little smiles and little kisses have lightened?

O value "little things," if you would be one of God's good stewards. Collect everything, put everything to its right use. Say not of anything, "It is naught."—"Let nothing be lost!"

Lastly, He would teach us to prize especially whatever He provides for us. In a sense, He provides us with everything, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being"; but there are some things, such as salvation through Christ, the Holy Spirit, our Bibles and Sabbath-days, which, like this miraculous food, are most precious. They seem to come to us immediately from God. Every fragment of them is precious. We should lose "nothing" of them. How guilty shall we be if we do! How shall we be able to stand before him? "I thought these things for you with my blood; I gave them to you to treasure up as your diamonds or pearls, and yet you slighted them!"

Let this, then, also be one of our life-lessons—gather up the fragments of God's love, that nothing of that be lost.—Life-Lessons.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE CHILD.

A PHILOSOPHER once asked a little girl if she had a soul. She looked up into his face with an air of astonishment and offended dignity, and replied,—"To be sure I have."

"What makes you think you have?" "Because I have," she promptly replied. "But how do you know you have a soul?" "Because I do know," she answered again. "It was a child's reason; but the philosopher could hardly have given a better. "Well, then," said he, after a moment's consideration, "if you know you have a soul, can you tell me what your soul is?" "Why," said she, "I am six years old, and don't you suppose that I know what my soul is?" "Perhaps you do. If you will tell me, I shall find out whether you do or not." "Then you think I don't know," she replied, "but I do; it is my mind." "Your mind!" said the philosopher, astonished in his turn; "who told you so?" "Nobody. I should be ashamed if I did not know that, without being told." The philosopher had puzzled his brain a great deal about the soul, but he could not have given a better definition of it in so few words.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ADVENTURE WITH A MAD DOG.

There's a courage are by no means peculiar to the battle field. To brave physical danger the soldier is trained, but often when least looked for, amid the quietest scenes of home-born enjoyment, may circumstances arise, so illustrative of this virtue, as not easily to be forgotten.

The following, which may be regarded as of this sort, is mentioned in a letter written by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton to his wife, who at that time was absent from home.

"As you must have heard the story of our dog Prince, I may as well tell it you. On Thursday morning, when I got on my horse at St. Hoar's, David told me that there was something the matter with Prince; that he had killed the cat, and almost killed the new dog, and bit at him and Elizabeth. I ordered him to be tied up and taken care of, and then rode off to town. When I got into Hampstead, I saw Prince covered with mud, and running furiously, and biting at every thing. He bit at least a dozen dogs, two boys and a man."

"Of course, I was exceedingly alarmed, being persuaded he was mad. I tried my effort to stop him or kill him, or to drive him into some out-house, but in vain. At last he sprang up at a boy, and seized him by the breast; happily I was near him, and knocked him off with my whip. He then set out towards London, and I rode by his side, waiting for some opportunity to stop him. I continually spoke to him, but he paid no regard to coaxing or scolding. You may suppose I was in a great deal of a hurry, and the mischief he might do, having seen him do so much in the few preceding minutes. I was terrified at the idea of his getting into Camden Town and London, and at length considering that, if ever there was an occasion which justified a risk of life, this was it, I determined to catch him myself. Happily he ran up to Pryor's gate, and I threw myself from my horse upon him, and caught him by the neck. He bit at me and struggled, but I held him fast, and succeeded in securing him without his biting me. He died yesterday, raving mad."

"When I seized the dog," he writes, more particularly "his struggles were so desperate that it seemed at first almost impossible to hold him; still I lifted him up in the air, when he was more easily managed, and I contrived to ring the bell. I was afraid that the foam, which was pouring from his mouth, in his furious efforts to bite me, might get into some scratch and do me injury; so with great difficulty, I held him with one hand, while I put the other into my pocket and forced on my glove; then I did the same with my other hand, and at last the gardener opened the door, saying, 'What do you want?' 'I've brought you a mad dog,' replied I; and telling him to get a strong chain, I walked into the yard, carrying the dog by the neck. I was determined not to kill him, as I thought if he proved not to be mad, it would be such a satisfaction to the persons whom he had bitten. I made the gardener (who was in a terrible fright) secure the collar round his neck and fix the other end of the chain to a tree, and then walking to its further range, with all my force, which was nearly exhausted by his frantic struggles, I flung him away from me, and sprang back. He made a desperate bound after me, but finding himself hindered, he uttered the most fearful yell I ever heard of. All that day he did nothing but rush to and fro, champing the foam that gushed from his jaws, and threw him madly, and he snatched at it with fury, but instantly dropped it again."

"The next day I went to see him. I thought the chain seemed worn, so I pinned it to the ground between the prongs of a pitchfork, and then fixed a much larger chain round his neck; when I pulled at the fork, he sprang up and made a dash at me, which snatched the old chain in two. He died in forty-eight hours from the time he went mad."—Life of Buxton.

THE NEWSPAPER.

The unexampled extent of newspaper issues in the United States has often excited the astonishment of intelligent observers; but it is doubtful whether the whole of the enormous truth could have been fully appreciated without the actual figures which reveal it. According to the preliminary report of the 8th census, 1860, recently published by the Hon. J. C. Kennedy, the superintendent, it appears that the annual circulation of newspapers and periodicals is no less than 927,951,548, or at the rate of 34.36 for every white man, woman, and child of our population. The annual value of all the printing done in the United States, for that year, is stated at a fraction less than thirty nine and three quarters millions of dollars.

These numbers are sufficiently astounding; but the rate of increase since 1850, is, if possible, even more so. In that year, says Mr. Kennedy, the whole circulation amounted to 426,400,978 copies; and the rate of increase for the decade is 117.61 per cent, while the increase of the white population during the same period was only 38.12 per cent. If the circulation should continue to grow in the same proportion for the next ten years, the number of newspapers and periodicals issued in 1870 will be a little over two billions.

In addition to these domestic publications, no inconsiderable number of foreign journals are introduced into the United States. The British Almanac and Companion for 1862 states the number in 1860 to have been as follows: From Great Britain, 1,567,688; from France, 270,655; from Bremen, 41,171; from Prussia, 88,349. The figures comprehend only the foreign newspapers, and not the periodicals, some of which are republished in the United States.

Persons competent to form a correct judgment, do not hesitate to say that the number of newspapers taken in this country, exceeds that in all the world besides. It is not only that in general annual circulation, but the amount of reading matter, voluntarily sought for and consumed by the people, at a cost of so many millions of dollars, is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the present age of wonders, and proves the avidity with which information is received, as well as the incalculable influence which the press must have on the public mind. The popular newspapers, issued in immense numbers, is in truth everywhere an American institution. No where else could be found, capable of reading, be found sufficiently numerous to absorb the issues of our learning press. It is an offspring and indispensable accompaniment of universal education, and popular representative government. These could scarcely be maintained without it. Everywhere in Europe, except perhaps in England, Italy and Switzerland, the press is little more than an engine of the government, used chiefly, or only, for its own political purposes. Here it enjoys absolute freedom, being responsible only to the laws for any abuse of its high privilege.

The newspaper performs the work of thousands of messengers, and saves countless hours of labor to the whole community in which it circulates. In some sense, every man is brought nearer to every other. Each hears the innumerable voices which address him, and is able to distinguish the individual message which each one has sent.

It is difficult to estimate the value of this simple agency in its social aspect. Its material saving to the most cursory thought; but its higher influence, in binding society together and making it homogeneous, if not equally apparent, is at least quite indispensable. Civilization is the direct result of bringing mankind into co-operation and combined effort, so that the whole power of mind and body of whole communities is brought to bear in union for the accomplishment of social ends. Therefore, as a mere instrument of intercommunication, rendering more direct and intimate the relations of individuals, and promoting ease, celebrity, and harmony in their combined movements, the power of the press is prodigious and invaluable. But when this power is extended beyond the bounds of mere material interests and the relations of ordinary business,—when it appeals to the intellect and enters the domain of art, literature, science, and philosophy, embracing politics, morality, and all the highest interests of mankind, its capacity for good would seem to be limitless.

In future ages, these innumerable sheets, which float so lightly on the surface of our civilization, will form imperishable records of the manners, habits, occupations, and the whole intellectual and moral progress of the people. They are so numerous that no accident can destroy them all, and they will present to the eye of the future student of history the most lively, natural, and perfect picture—the very moving panorama—of the busy and teeming life of the present generation. No hieroglyphic inscriptions upon ancient monuments, with whatever skill and genius deciphered, nor even any labored transcript of passing ages, which may have survived the ravages of time, will be equal to these memorials of their power to recall the daily work, the amusements, the business, and, in short, the whole material, intellectual, and social being of our people.—F. P. Stanton.

THE LATE GOVERNOR BRIGGS.

GOVERNOR BRIGGS was known through all his public life as an ardent and consistent "old-world" man. When a young man, finding himself pressed to observe the common practice of taking brandy and water before dinner, he once resolved to be the slave of no such indulgence, and from that moment renounced for ever all use of intoxicating drinks, and stood forth an open advocate of total abstinence. Nor did he shrink from carrying his principles into public life at a time when to do so was to set himself in opposition to the practices around him, and often to bring upon him ridicule and reproach. When a member of Congress, he was one of the executive committee of the Congressional Temperance Society, and very often spoke and lectured in behalf of the cause. It is said that on one occasion, when he and another gentleman were invited to dine with the President of the United States, the two agreed beforehand that they would not take wine at the table. When, however, it was offered, his friend had not the courage to refuse; but Mr. Briggs stood firm, politely declining the honor. His practice was, when the servants attempted to pour the wine, to place his open

hand over the glass, prevent it. On being questioned why he did so, he replied, "Oh, I only made believe." On another occasion, when questioned by a gentleman who was strictly teetotal, he said, "I just put the glass to my lips, and then set it down without drinking the wine." "But," replied the teetotaler, "I decline it." "I do not," said the gentleman, "and then set it down without drinking the wine." "But," replied the teetotaler, "I decline it." "I do not," said the gentleman, "and then set it down without drinking the wine."

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