

Family Circle.

CLARIBEL'S PRAYERS.

BY LYNDY PALMER.

The day with cold, gray feet clung shivering to the hills. While over the valley still night's rain-tinged curtains fell; But waking Blue Eyes smiled, 'Tis ever as God will; He knoweth best, and he it rain or shine, 'tis well. Praise God! cried always little Claribel.

THE CHASTENING ROD.

"Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."—Ps. lxxvii. 19. I asked for grace to lift me high Above the world's depressing cares; God sent me sorrows,—with a sigh I said, He has not heard my prayers.

THE DUTY THAT LIES NEAREST.

Alice Sprague sat in the shadow of the crimson curtains, that swept from ceiling to floor in her father's library. The light was gradually fading, and she had left her seat by the table to gather herself up into the great bay window, so that she might not relinquish her book until it was absolutely impossible to see.

dear Miss Agnes, don't take it away; light the gas," pleaded Alice. Miss Agnes smiled, but nevertheless drew the book quite away and laid it on the table. Then seating herself by Alice, she tenderly put her arm around her waist and drew her head down so that it rested on her shoulder. "What have you been reading about, darling?" "Oh, about Margaret Wilson, the fair young girl who was tied to a stake on the sands, in a place where the sea came in, and left there for the waves to creep slowly up, with their cruel, cold fingers, to kill her by degrees, and, Miss Agnes, she could have had her life if she would have denied her religion, but she was 'faithful unto death.' Miss Agnes, it was worth while to be a Christian in those days—the days of the brave old martyrs. What hum-drum times these are!"

heart as she thought of the many hours her poor mother spent there in that one room, and of how little she did to lighten them. Bye and bye perhaps she would have no mother. It flashed on her as she came in that her mother was paler and thinner and weaker lately than she used to be. "Mother," she said, "Kate said you wanted me." "Yes, daughter, I was looking over these letters, and I want to give some of them in your charge, and some of them I wish you to burn. This package is for you to read by and bye. They are journals of a happy girlhood, but, Alice, I don't want you to imitate all my youthful life, for often I was a dreamer, not a doer. My child, I want you to learn to do whatever your hand finds to do, with your might."

to the company with flushed faces and their breath giving sad evidence against them. Certainly they did not leave the house to procure strong drink, and then return to the company of ladies. When I receive an explanation of their conduct you shall hear it. * * * We have had some damp and rainy days lately, which fact accounts for my unusual mode of spending time, namely, reading; that is, unusual since I came to this city. Aunt Helen and I were in the library during one of these evenings, both occupied with an interesting book, when, to my surprise, the waiter ushered in Mr. B.—. Perhaps my countenance said more than I intended, as Mr. B., after greeting us, excused himself for thwarting my plans in such an unceremonious manner. But I was satisfied with the change, as, since I was at Miss D.—'s wedding, annoying questions have been recurring, thereby disturbing my thoughts. Mr. B.— regretted that he had not been able to attend, having had a previous engagement, and then made some inquiries as to the number of persons and the opinions I formed of weddings in Philadelphia. I made all the favorable comments that I could, and then mentioned that one fact threw a shadow around that occasion for me. I had observed more than once while attending parties in this city, a marked change in the deportment of some of the young gentlemen as the evening advanced, and had been surprised at the fact. But now the mystery was in a measure solved, as there were some of the gentlemen at the wedding party of which we were speaking whose flushed faces and excited manner gave sad evidence against them. And in my judgment they were unfitted for the society of ladies. Could it be that these young men left the house to obtain stimulants? Mr. B.— replied promptly: "Miss Evans, you have touched upon a painful subject; one that is tacitly avoided by most persons, yet one that must be brought into the light and freely spoken of, if we would counteract its evil results. The young men to whom you refer did not leave the house to obtain the liquors they preferred; they merely went to the room set apart for this purpose. A custom that has been some time in maturing, has now reached a point that demands prompt action. The whole system of our large social gatherings is wrong, unmistakably so. This one is the most repulsive, and yet is one of the established usages of the present day. When I say this, Miss Evans, I do not mean that such a resort is always found in the arrangements for a large party, as there are a few whose strict principles on the subject of temperance would not permit such an abuse of hospitality. And these families are consequently stigmatized as mean and narrow in their views, by the young men who, with the previous knowledge of the fact, accept their invitations."

EXTRAVAGANCE OF OUR PEOPLE. The following is from an able exhibition of the effect of the war upon the course of business and the scale of living, especially in New York city, in the July number of Harper's Monthly: The old proverb says: "That which comes easy goes easy." The suddenly enriched contractors, speculators and stock jobbers illustrate its truth. They are spending money with a profusion never before witnessed in our country, at no time remarkable for its frugality. Our great houses are not big enough for them; they pull them down and build greater. They like the proud and wanton Caligula, construct stables of marble at a fabulous cost, in which their horses are stabled (some, doubtless, to be fed on gilded oats), with a luxury never hitherto indulged in by the most opulent of our fellow-citizens. Even the manure heaps lie upon more resplendent floors than are swept by the silken trains of our proudest dames. So magnificent are these structures that their proprietors have not hesitated to assemble within them "the best society" they could command of fine gentlemen and finer ladies, to hold a carnival of pleasure. The playing of Comedies, it is said, was a part of the programme, as if the presence of the beau monde, seeking pleasure in a stable, was not in itself a sufficiently sorry farce. What was acted we know not; but we can testify that "High Life Below Stairs" was the chief performance. The very horses must have neighed in applause of the appropriateness of the piece, and life-like action of the players. A horse-laugh was surely the well-merited reward. These Sybarites of "shoddy" buy finer furniture than was ever bought before, and dress in costlier cloths and silks than have been hitherto imported. No foreign luxury, even at the present enormous prices, is too dear for their exorbitant desires and swollen pockets. The importations of the country have arisen to the large amount of thirty millions of dollars a month, chiefly to satisfy the increased appetite for luxurious expense. The ordinary sources of expenditure seem to have been exhausted, and these ingenious prodigals have invented new ones. The men button their waistcoats with diamonds of the first water, and the women powder their hair with gold and silver dust.* As excess, overflowing the natural channels of enjoyment, is always sure to take an irregular and perverted course for the indulgence of its unchecked vagaries, it is not surprising to find the boundless extravagance of the times assuming forms at variance with propriety and taste. Paris, provoked to excessive folly and wild extravagance by an Imperial court willing to enervate the people by debauchery that they may become too languid for resistance to tyranny, has, among other forms of dissipation, invented a grotesque kind of fancy ball. In this the guests represent things instead of persons. For example, one presents herself as a kitchen, with her person hung all over with pots and kettles, wearing a saucepan for a helmet, like Sancho Panza, brandishing a shovel and tongs, and playing the part of a kitchen wench with probably a dish cloth hanging to her tail. Another of a more sentimental turn is a flower garden, festooned with roses and bearing a spade and rake. A third is a pack of playing-cards, bedizened all over with clubs, diamonds and hearts, and so on with every possible transformation of the human spiritual being (supposed to be rational) into the senseless, material thing. This absurdity has been imported by our wealthy New Yorkers, together with other Parisian extravagances. Last winter, during which high carnival was held by our nouveaux riches, a dame who, has traveled, and had the honor of fainting in the arms, it is said, of Imperial Majesty, in the course of which embrace she probably imbibed her high appreciation of imperial folly, got up one of these grotesque fancy balls. She herself appeared on the occasion as music, and bore upon her head an illuminated lyre supplied with genuine gas, from a reservoir and fixtures concealed somewhere under her clothes. "We don't feel this way," they say. "We believe them. Nothing, we fear, while they are stupefying themselves in this whirl of absurd folly would bring them to their senses short of a shower of Greek fire. If this extravagance and wantonness were confined to the fools of fortune we might leave them to the exhaustion that must come from this waste of means and perversion of the faculties of mind and body. Their ruin would be hardly felt or regretted. But, unfortunately, our people are so imitative that when one simpleton, provided he be rich, leads the way, all follow. Every man and woman thinks he must do as his wealthy neighbor does. The consequence is already shown in the general prevalence of extravagance and dissipation. The shops of the dry-goods man, the jeweler, the dealer in carpets and cabinet-ware, and the gilded establishments of the restaurateur were never so crowded. The tradesman hardly shows any but his most expensive wares, which his greedy customer snatches up without solicitation. Thus camel's-hair shawls, at fifteen hundred dollars or more, go off trippingly at that price; rivers of diamonds (riviere de diamants) flow unchecked by any regard for cost. Aubusson and tapestry carpets of fabulous expense are bought unhesitatingly and recklessly trod upon, and dinners are eaten and wine drunk at Delmonico's and the Maison Doree at a price per head, in a single sitting, which would support a soldier and his family for a good portion of the year. Who knows but that our wives and daughters may all take to powdering their hair with gold and silver dust at fifteen dollars per head, or transforming themselves into gas fixtures? What is to hinder our young dandies of the counting-house and shop—for haven't they an old fool of the Stock Exchange to show them the example—from buttoning their waistcoats with diamonds?"

ADVICE TO HOUSEKEEPERS. If you are subject to uninvited company, and your means do not allow you to set before your guests as good a table as they keep at home, do not distress yourself or them with apologies. If they are real friends, they will cheerfully sit down with you to such a table as is appropriate to your circumstances, and would be uncomfortable for an effort on your part to provide a better one than you can afford. If your resources are ample, live in such a way that an unexpected visitor shall occasion no difference. The less alteration made in family arrangements on account of visitors, the happier for them as well as you. Never treat the subject of having company as if it were a great affair. Your doing this will excite your domestics, and lead them to imagine the addition to their usual work much greater than it is; your own cares, too, will be greatly magnified. A calm and quiet way of meeting all sorts of domestic vicissitudes, and of doing the work of each day, be it more or less, equalizes the pressure of care and prevents it becoming oppressive. Be composed when accidents happen to your furniture. The most careful hand is sometimes unsteady. Angry words will not mend broken glass, or china, but they will teach your domestics to conceal such occurrences from you, and the only explanation given you will be that they came apart. Encourage every one whom you employ to come immediately and tell you, when they have been so unfortunate as to break or injure anything belonging to you. The cases are very rare, in which it is best to deduct the value from their wages. In the best regulated families there will be some laborious, perplexing days. Adverse and inconvenient circumstances will cluster together. At those times guard against two things—discouragement and irritability. If others look on the dark side, find something cheering to say; if they fret, sympathize in their share of the trial, while you set them the example of bearing your part in it well. IDLE GIRLS. The number of idle, useless girls in all of our large cities seems to be steadily increasing. They lounge or sleep through the mornings, parade the streets during the afternoon, and assemble in frivolous companies of their own and the other sex to pass away their evenings. What a store of unhappiness for themselves and others are they laying up for the coming time, when real duties and high responsibilities shall be thoughtlessly assumed! They are skilled in no domestic duty—may, they despise them; have no habits of industry, nor taste for the useful. What will they be as wives and mothers? Alas, for the husbands and children, and alas for themselves! Who can wonder if domestic unhappiness or domestic ruin follow? It is one of the world's oldest maxims, that idleness is the nursing mother of all evil and wretchedness. How sadly strange is it that so many parents—mothers especially—forget this, and bring up their children in dainty idleness. They are but sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind. ELEVATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES. "I have no sympathy whatever with those who would grudge our workmen and our common people, the very highest acquisition which their taste, or their time, or their inclinations, would lead them to realize; for, next to the salvation of their souls, I certainly say that the object of my fondest aspirations is the moral and intellectual, and, as a sure consequence of this the economical, advancement of the working classes—the one object which, of others in the wide range of political speculation, is the one which should be the dearest to the heart of every philanthropist and every true patriot."—Chalmers. COAL! COAL! 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