

Family Circle.

JESUS LIVES.

Oh, show me not my Saviour dying, As on the cross he bled; Nor in the tomb a captive lying: For he has left the dead. Then bid me not that form extended For my Redeemer own, Who, to the highest heavens ascended, In glory fills the throne.

CONDOR.

THE ORPHAN ASYLUM AT NORFOLK.

"Come and see our Orphan Asylum," said a friend the other day, and so we took our way, through the quiet grass-grown streets of old Norfolk, to the Asylum. It was a lovely day in the end of June, and as we passed the substantial English-looking houses, many of them closed, as though quite uninhabited, our companion told us that this and that mansion had been confiscated by the "Federals," that from this house, there had gone a son to the "Confederacy," and from that one, husband, father and sons had perished in the rebel ranks. The gardens which we passed, were rich in bloom and fragrance. The air was heavy with the scent of jessamine and rose, and tall magnolia trees, with their splendid white blossoms, gleaming like great waxen cups, through the dark, glossy leaves, towered far above the brick walls that surrounded many of the inclosures. The smile of the summer flowers is the only smile of welcome that a stranger from the hated "Yankee" nation, meets in Norfolk. As the Jews upon their Babylonian conquerors, as the Romans, on the vandals of the North, as the Saxon, on the Norman, do the natives of the soil look upon those who wear the uniform of their country, and who love its flag. There is a sort of controlled bitterness, in the looks with which they regard the people who are making Norfolk and Portsmouth cleaner, healthier and better than they ever were before. The ladies remain indoors as much as possible, and when on the street pass rapidly along, with veils down. I heard of one, a few days since, who has not crossed the threshold of her door since the "evacuation," and who declares that she will never voluntarily walk in the streets again, till the "Confederates" come back. The happiest faces here are those of the carefree, contented, laughter-loving colored people, thrice happy now in the possession of their freedom, which so long has been the misty dream of their race. For them the day has dawned, the jubilee has come. Little black children make the streets ring with their jubilant songs, "Jesus loves me," "A beautiful land by faith I see," and the "Battle-cry of Freedom!"

The Presbyterian church (Dr. Armstrong's) is at present closed, but the churches of other denominations are open. St. Paul's Episcopal church, I think the second oldest in the country, has for its rector a truly loyal Christian minister, who came here as delegate of the Christian Commission, and who has been called to the charge of the church, by its members. The Orphan Asylum was founded many years ago, by a union of the various denominations, and has continued in successful operation through the present trying times. I believe the ladies who have it in charge are receiving some assistance from the Government. It contains forty children, most of them girls, who are kept till they reach the age of eighteen, when they are prepared to undertake their own support. One rarely sees brighter, happier faces, anywhere, than those of these children. Not one wore the pale wan look of sickness, but the bright eyes and rosy cheeks, spoke of health and vigor. The ceilings are high, and the rooms well-ventilated; the dormitories are spacious, and perfectly clean; the beds are large and comfortable, and there is one room set apart for the sick, but seldom called into use, however, which is so charming with its neat and pleasant arrangements, and

its windows looking out upon the winding river, that it would seem almost a treat to be sick in it.

Dear children who may read this, did you ever take a serious thought about the word "orphan?" Oh! what a sad word it is! The mother's heart thrills with terror as she thinks of the bare possibility of that word ever being applied to the darlings of her little flock. No father! No mother! Nobody to chide you, as only those who love best can, when you are tempted to do wrong; nobody to praise you, with such hearty, hopeful, honest words of cheer, when you bravely do right! No little corner by father on the sofa! No mother to kneel down by you, when you say your prayers at night! Oh! love and obey your parents while you have them. No asylum, however perfect, can ever be like the "ain fireside."

Some of these orphans were taken up after the dreadful year of the "Fever," here, alone, so literally, that their very names could not be discovered, and others have been given them. Every vestige of their parentage had been swept away by the pestilence that surrounded the city, desolating rich and poor alike.

There is another institution here, sustained by the sisters of charity, for the children of their faith, and a beautiful estate, a little distance from the city, has been taken by the government, for colored orphans. M. E. M.

SOCKS FOR JOHN RANDALL.

The following extract is from a little book just published by the American Tract Society, entitled "Soldiers and Soldiers' Homes." It was a matter of talk that Widow Randall knit so many socks for the soldiers. She was a poor woman and had little to do with, but she must have spent a great deal for yarn, buying so much of the best at war prices. Knitting seemed almost a mania with her. She was sometimes seen knitting before breakfast. No sooner was her house-work done, than out came her knitting, and her needles flew, click, click, faster even than they did when her fingers were young and supple; while her pale, sad face bending above them, made one almost weep to look at her. She was one of those who do not weep, but who ever carry a full fountain of tears sealed up within them.

Not a society box in all the country near was sent to the soldiers, that did not contain a pair of Widow Randall's socks; and box after box from the Sanitary Commission carried her contributions. Always welcome they were, so soft, so warm, so nice, were her socks; none softer, nor warmer, nor nicer were found among the gifts of the loving women of the North to the cherished, half-worshipped heroes on the Southern battle-grounds. The appreciative could not help unrolling them, feeling their softness, and giving them their praise; and always carefully stitched within them they found a letter. Sometimes it was only "To my dear son, John Randall, from his ever loving mother;" sometimes it told of her love and hope, and earnest prayer: sometimes it implored him to write to her and tell her of his welfare if he lived.

It was a long time that Widow Randall knit on untiringly, scattering her gifts as widely as she might, that so, by chance some one might reach the lost loved one. Knit, knit, knit; the longer she knit the faster, for the more must be done, since the chances were growing fewer, the field growing wider. How many soldiers were thus blessed through her love for one! How many felt a glow of thanks as they drew her comforting socks over their benumbed feet, and dropped a tear upon her tender letter to the son who might then be uncared for, unknowing how a mother's love had sought for him, labored for him, prayed for him unceasingly.

A pair of "socks for John Randall" once fell into the hands of a poor motherless English boy. His lone, yearning, orphan heart responded to the maternal tenderness which he had missed and mourned for in his own life; and with the instincts of a son he wrote the widowed mother a letter of love and thanks in the name of all the absent and wandering sons, and sent her gold, and offered to be to her a son, if God had bereaved her of her own.

An old soldier, a rough, hard, swearing man, was given a pair of "John Randall's socks," and carelessly drawing them upon his travel-stained feet, he felt the mother's letter in them. He drew them off with an oath, and read, "To my well beloved John." Was it to him? His name was John. So his mother had addressed him once; but he had no mother now. She had been long dead and no one would write him now; no one cared for him; and he tried to think he cared for no one, cared for naught. But the roughest had a tender, human spot in them; he cared for the dead, and could not help shedding a tear over the words "son" and "mother." For they had come to him so inspired by a mother's love and devotion, that they carried him back to his own mother, his boyhood, his home, his early hope of heaven. He sat with uncovered feet, looking through his tears at the socks before him, turning them, admiring them.

"They looked like mother's knitting," he said at last.

"I didn't know you ever had a mother; you don't seem like it," exclaimed a comrade still rougher than himself.

"None o' that," replied the veteran; "none o' that joking with me. I had a mother like an angel, and it's for her sake I never see a woman wronged, as you well know I won't." The rude listeners were hushed, for there was strength and sacredness in the old soldier's utterance, and he still looked at "John Randall's socks," and said again they were just like his mother's knitting; and read the note again; and it might have been long before he could have had the heart to put the socks to common use, had not the drum sounded and hurried him to the review.

A pair of "John Randall's socks" worked their way into a Kentucky regiment at the West. There another rough man got possession of them, and found the note within them, and read it aloud to the silent group around him. In that group was a lone youth who had come a stranger into the regiment, and who never spoke of his home or friends, though one could easily have told that his birthplace was in the Eastern States. No one listened to the note so intently as he, and it was strange to see how his color came and went as he listened. Then the tears rolled fast down his cheeks. "Give me the letter," he said; "it is from my mother. The letter and the socks are mine."

"Yours! Is your name John Randall?"

"Yes."

A hearty laugh. "Randall! You can't come that game so easy, Boy George." "Boy George," as the youth was familiarly called, colored deeper than before, but persisted. "My real name is John Randall, and the letter and socks are mine."

"Yours when you get 'em, and not much before," answered the man who had them.

"If you've changed your name once, you may change it a dozen times, but that won't give you my socks."

"Boy George" said no more about the socks, but again asked for and received the letter.

He sought a quiet place, and read it, and read it again. "My dearest son, dear beyond all expression, if you are still living, write to me and tell me so; if you love me still, be a good boy, and try to meet me in heaven."

This was all; but it was enough for the heart of that undutiful and suffering son. His mother lived; he had thought her dead. And she loved him the same as ever, notwithstanding his long absence, his follies, and his sins. What a mother she was! What a heart she had to seek for him so, to try to minister unto him, even when she knew not where he was! How came she to send socks for him away out into that Western regiment? John Randall—for "Boy George" was indeed he—kissed his mother's letter, and folding it carefully laid it in his bosom, his first letter since he had been in the war, the only treasure he now had. Others had their letters and tokens, and his heart had melted to see their joy in them. Alas, he thought there was no one to send him aught, no one to remember or care for him. He had left a mother when he went to the war, but he had heard that she was dead, and he feared that he had broken her heart. Thank God that in his mercy this bitterness was spared from his cup. His mother still lived, still loved him as of old. He would write to her—would tell her all, all his sins, all his sorrow,—would ask her forgiveness, her blessing. He took the letter from his bosom and read it again, then lifted up his heart to God, the first time for long years. He would pray that God would spare his life—would spare his mother's life, that they might meet again. He sought the soldier to whom had fallen his mother's socks, offering his own and money in exchange for them.

"Then it was your mother that knit them, was it?" questioned the rough soldier when he had heard the strong desire of "Boy George" to obtain them. "Well you shall have them." The exchange was made.

"Now tell me how it is that our 'Boy George' and John Randall are one and the same?" The explanation was given. The wild, adventurous boy, failing to obtain his mother's consent, had gone to the war without it, changing his name and enlisting in the regiment of a distant State. He had taken care that none of his early friends should know where he was, and he knew little of them. He had in some way heard that his mother was dead, and he feared that his own misconduct had caused her death, at least had hastened it. The poor youth was wretched at the thought. Army life had grown distasteful and wearisome to him; and his yearnings for home and love, his regrets and remorse, were at times almost unendurable.

What a startle did he feel when "John Randall" was read from the letter in the Sanitary socks. It was so long since the name had fallen on his ear, the name by which he had so often been tenderly called by loving lips. "John Randall!" who else bore that name? Who besides him? He crowded forward to hear. He heard the letter. It was his. He knew it; he knew his mother's expression; knew her love, recognized her act. Her gift was for him, her own son; and he claimed it.

How precious these socks seemed to him. Every stitch wrought by his mother's kind hand; and with every stitch a sigh heaved, or a prayer breathed.

He seemed to hear the sighs and prayers; he held the socks in his hand and dropped tear after tear upon them, until his heart was moved, so softened, that he fell upon his knees as he had not done since a child, and prayed, "God forgive me!"

It was broad daylight and no work to be done in the house, when Widow Randall dropped her knitting work just as she was binding off the heel, never taking care to fasten her needles, and letting her ball roll neglected on the floor. For one of her neighbors had brought her a letter which he said "had come from the war," and he "mistrusted that it might be from John, or might tell her something about him." No wonder then that the mother dropped her needles quickly and forgot her ball. News from John! John alive!

She read: "dear mother, how shall I write you? I am alive, but I shall never see you again, never hear you speak my forgiveness. I am mortally wounded, and have not long to live. The socks with your note in them came just before the battle. They broke me all up, and sent me to my knees before God. Bless you, mother, that you never forgot to pray for me; and it is your prayers that have led me to pray at last. God forgive me all my sins for the sake of Him who came and died to save sinners. How I have mourned for you, mother? I heard you were dead, and feared it was my unkindness that caused your death. May God and you both forgive your repentant and dying son!"

The full fountain so long sealed is at last opened. The eyes that have not wept for many a year weep now. Joy, grief—which is uppermost? which is strongest? Widow Randall knows that she is childless, but she knows that her son died repentant and prayerful. She knows too that her labor has not been in vain in the Lord; not in vain the bread cast on the wide waters; nor in vain her hope and patience and prayer. Never, never is prayer in vain when prompted by love and winged by faith.

EXTRACTS FROM A PASTOR'S DIARY.

Many of our clerical, and perhaps some of our lay readers, will keenly appreciate in the following article the skillful treatment of a delicate subject. While few pastors' diaries would afford experiences exactly similar, still the evil so happily touched upon (although with some exaggeration) is one with which the Christian public throughout the land is more or less familiar. With slight variations, this "Diary" of a Methodist clergyman would find an appropriate place in many parishes.—Exchange.

A new light has appeared in our midst. I was preparing for church last Sunday morning, when I heard the door-bell ring, and immediately after Hetty came in search of me. "Who has come?" I questioned her. "One of those strolling good folks, papa."

Hetty, as well as her mother, has a particular dislike to entertaining religious strollers, and she seems to recognize a member of the class intuitively. "What makes you think so?" I asked. "O, he is so sociable, and he looks hungry, and—and he wears a white cravat. He's come to stay, I guess."

Hetty's black eyes danced roguishly. "Well, tell him I will be down directly." I found that Hetty had guessed very correctly in regard to our visitor. It is impossible to give an idea of the condescending cordiality with which he received me. My natural reserve, which often repels the advances of strangers, did not affect him in the least. He was quite at home, and seemed amiably desirous to make me so.

"Fine morning, sir. Happy to meet you. This is a very pleasant location. How long have you been here, may I ask?"

"Seven or eight months." "Your first year, then. Well, in many respects the first year's residence of the itinerant in a place must be the pleasantest. Moving-time is so far distant that you scarcely dread it. How many inhabitants are there in this village?"

"I do not know." "In passing up the street this morning I was exceedingly pleased with the order and thrift manifested. So neat and tasteful a factory village is a rarity. Many foreigners?"

"No sir." "Ah, that accounts for it. How many churches are there?" "Seven." "And which is the largest denomination?" "The Baptist and Methodist number nearly the same, and are the most numerous."

"That is gratifying, very. I like to see all churches prosper, but the two churches you have mentioned lie nearest my heart. I was brought up a Baptist, but I became a Methodist after my conversion. I began to preach among the Methodists, and that brings them still nearer; and since I have been a traveling evangelist I have always found a home in the houses of my brethren in the ministry."

I made no reply to this appeal to my hospitality, and he went on: "I have been laboring during the autumn among my Baptist brethren in New Hampshire, and have not only been flattered by the intense interest manifested by them in my labors, but gratified by seeing the rich fruits of my ministry."

Another pause, during which he at-

tempted to caress Mrs. Dean's cat, which lay sleeping on the window-sill, and got scratched for his pains.

"I am preaching now in various places," he recommenced, "to aid the Bible cause. My health is poor, and I find that travelling suits me. I pursue a regular method in my labors, and so far the results have been most satisfactory. I sell tracts and Testaments at prices that do not pay the cost of printing."

I was still silent, and Mary, who began to fidget over my unusual want of courtesy, asked pleasantly: "What is your method?"

He turned with alacrity to reply to her.

"Well, madam, I first introduce myself to the acquaintance of the people by preaching to them, as I hope your husband will permit me to do to-day. Then I spend a week or two, or more, visiting them in their homes, talking to them, praying with them, and disposing of religious reading suited to the different cases I find."

"I thought all that was the work of their regular pastor," remarked Mary, quietly.

"Yes; I only co-operate with him. After a week or two I commence extra meetings, and when the preacher in charge cordially works with me, and I see the usual fruits, these extra means are continued indefinitely."

"Indeed!" "I am but a poor, humble servant of the Lord, madam, but he deigns to use me in promoting his work. I suppose sir, turning to me, 'you will not object to my preaching for you to-day.'"

"Have you any papers to show that you are regularly authorized to preach the Gospel?"

"No, sir. I get my commission from a higher authority than man. I am called of God to the work."

"Nevertheless, as you come a stranger to us, I have no means of judging of your heavenly calling, and shall decidedly decline your help in my pulpit and parish. As it is nearly time for our morning service, excuse me for wishing you good morning."

I had scarcely entered the pulpit when brother Lester came tiptoeing up the aisle to inform me that there was a clergyman in the house—in brother Lee's pew. Glancing in that direction, I was not surprised to see my morning visitor; but I must own that the peculiar sanctimonious look which he had put on for the occasion was truly amazing. I told brother Lester that I had already seen him, and considered him a humbug.

I think I did not have my usual liberty in preaching. I felt a little harassed by the incident of the morning, and also by the presence of my unwelcome guest. His frequent responses to my remarks were anything but animating to me. They came with a suddenness and sharpness that startled me.

I soon found that he was attracting more attention than myself. The young people exchanged amused smiles and expressive looks, while some of the children giggled outright, and got a wholesome shaking from their parents in consequence. Those who were disposed to listen to the sermon were not able to do so, and the entire service appeared to be a barren and profitless occasion to all concerned. When he joined his deep, nasal bass to the music of the choir, a little dog who was curled up in the broad aisle by his master's pew, started up and howled terrifically.

In the afternoon it was worse yet, with this difference, that he grew devout and noisy just in proportion to the coldness and insensibility that crept over me. There were large additions to the audience from the young people of the other churches, who, according to Hetty came to see the fun. It was any thing but sport to me. I was conscious that my effort to preach was a failure, and that I was totally eclipsed by the new light.

In the evening prayer-meeting he availed himself of the liberty of speech accorded to all Christians, and succeeded in introducing both himself and his mission. I had been undergoing a hardening process all day, and could have borne this new success on his part with equanimity, but the eager interest taken in him by many of the church members puzzled and confounded me. "Surely," I thought, "they cannot help knowing that his whole course is a studied insult to their pastor." It humbled me in the dust to know that they were capable of encouraging him. Not that they intended anything of the sort—let me do them justice—but their childish delight in the novelty of the affair rendered them absolutely blind to its inconsistencies.

Persons who had never manifested the least concern for the prosperity of the church since my coming among them, engaged readily in the prayers and exhortations, and in warm and fluent language told of their longing to see a "good old-fashioned revival." Even brother Luton, who had neglected the class-room and the Lord's Supper for years because of Tom Blair, became so animated that he arose and gave the always-faithful, patient old church-members a rousing exhortation to shake off their slothful habits, and do a little for the Master before it was too late. "Your opportunities for usefulness are fast slipping by," he said earnestly. "They will soon be gone forever. There is no such thing as recalling the past; but O, brethren, remember that there is no chance to work for God in the grave to which you are hastening."

I rubbed my eyes and looked at speaker. There was no mistake: it was brother Luton. It was quite a relief after the meeting closed to see brethren crowding round the stranger, shaking hands, and pressing upon acceptance the hospitalities of the homes. "He's booked for a long stay," Mary, as she hung her cloak on a rack after arriving at home. February 10th.—For some time after writing last, I felt that my trust in good providence of God was being severely tried. Mr. Sharpley continued to usurp my place, and I heard of objection to the new arrangement. I attended a prayer-meeting or church meeting, he was there before me, and often did not deem it necessary to avail himself of my coming to commence the exercises. If I called on the sick I was told by brother Sharpley's blessed ministrations by the bedside. He crossed my path everywhere. In church, on the Sabbath he sat in the altar beneath the pulpit with the resigned air of a martyr ready for the stake. "Ready for a stake," punned Hetty, who still thought he looked hungrier than Mary, after her first outbreak, maintained an obstinate silence on the subject, lest, as she now says, she should express the thoughts that fairly frightened herself. So I struggled without sympathy from any quarter. I last Sunday evening. During the prayer-meeting I reached the limit of human endurance, and made up my mind to give up my pastoral charge and leave the place. I was utterly disgraced. We were leaving the vestry, and I opened to be near Mr. Sharpley, who suddenly pulled my sleeve. "See there, Ernest." I followed her glance, and had the privilege of seeing Mr. Sharpley taken into custody by two police detectives from New York. They had been in the meeting, and, though I occupied a shaded corner by the stage, I had observed their interest in strange proceedings. "Sorry to take him away," said one of the men in reply to some remonstrances of brother Lester. "Fear it will break up your revival." Both the men laughed aloud. "There must be some mistake," said brother Lester. "No mistake at all. He knows better than that. He's a keen one. He has been working up his case month after month, and should have missed him if Bill here had not remembered the was a Millerite preacher once. So he took up that thread and followed it here he is." "But what has he done?" asked several voices in chorus. "He's troubled with a short memory that's all. Forgot all about his dear wife and her children, till she called him a call while he was snugly keeping house with his second love. One of the finest young ladies going. Rich as a king. Brother Luton, who had stood by as culprit, as in duty bound, considered that he was soon expecting to reappear into his family as a son-in-law, suddenly turned away, and seizing his daughter by the arm, marched her toward home with great speed, as if he feared she might become the third Sharpley unawares. The officers conducted the prisoner to the hotel, after giving him an opportunity to take leave of his friends, which he did not improve. I did not see Mary's expressions of triumph, but she did not, as I ought, try to temper her warmth. For once I have had the satisfaction of seeing the Mifflomites thoroughly ashamed of themselves. I hope it will last, for "before honor is humility."

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AN INCURABLE DISEASE. The pious John Newton closes a letter to a friend in the following instructive language: "You kindly enquire after my health; myself perfectly well; yet healthy as I labor under a growing disorder which there is no cure—I mean old I am not sorry it is a mortal ailment from which no one recovers; for would live always in such a world this, who has a scriptural hope of inheritance in a world of light? I am now in my seventy-second year, seem to have lived long enough for evil. I have known something of the evils of life, and have had a large of the good. I know what the can do; it can neither give nor away that peace of God, which is all understanding; it cannot soothe wounded conscience, nor enable me to meet death with comfort. That my dear sir, may have an abiding abounding experience that the good a catholicism, adapted to all our and all our feelings, and a suitable when every other help fails, is the core and ardent prayer of your affectionate friend."

Essex, who co-manned the arm of the Parliament at the outbreak of great civil war, was an accomplished soldier and a Parliamentarian; but strank from civil war—he was through it all for an accommodation to the King, and "new to a great defeated a great victory." Under a leader the war could never prosper it was soon found necessary to rejoin him by Hampden, who carried into the field the boldness and courage he show in politics, and who had sagacity to see from the outset "in war of all kinds, moderation is duty."