

Family Circle.

MY ONLY SON!

I cannot withhold my testimony to you and the country's great loss, when Captain Harry Marzatt fell dead on the bloody field of Cold Harbor, Va., June 1st, 1864.

Light of my eyes! in grief for thee beclouded, When shall their rays be calm and clear again?

Ah! had their glances been there for aye enshrouded, With thine, my son, on yonder bloody plain.

Alas! the shaft has stricken the eagle soaring, Disdainful of the humbler wing below, That stooped, in truth, as if the bolt imploring, In frantic effort to avert the blow.

A few short weeks have passed, yet in their flowing They seemed to spread and swell to ponderous years;

While, every moment, on our minds were glowing Thy form, thy looks, reflected in our tears.

For to our mournful eyes, wherever turning, There rests, some precious, handiwork, of thine,

Some touching gem that wakes the bosom's yearning, Some fabricated token, sketch, or line.

A marvel ever were thy busy fingers! In this sad hour we feel its truth the more, As round, above, about us, still there lingers Something of thine that wins us o'er and o'er.

Thus is each busy waking moment bringing Fresh, vivid, warm, nay, startling thoughts of thee, And even when night o'er all her shades are flinging,

Oftimes thy voice and form I hear and see. But when that dream dispelled by morning's breaking,

Or sudden start, that shifts the fragile scene, Leave throbbing pulses and the temples aching, How sinks the soul with thoughts on what has been.

On what has been! Hot tears for thee were gushing Full fast, my son, from many a manly eye, When with thy lifeless form thy comrades rushing,

In "the brief truce," whose moments seemed to fly, From the forefront they sadly, silent, bore thee;

Scopied "in our lines" thy temporary grave; Brief space for forms they had, but bending o'er thee,

Deplored the early fallen, the good, the brave! Asketh thou, why dwell upon a dismal story, Which sadder grows the more 'tis dwelt upon?

'Tis, that my day is dark, my temples hoary, And him I mourn, my first, my only son.

THE GLASS DECANTER.

AN A. L. O. E. STORY.

"There is one thing we have not got," said a newly-married wife, wiping down the shelf of her small, snug closet, which seemed pretty well stocked with necessaries and comforts.

"What is it, Fanny?" asked James, her husband.

"A decanter. We have nothing to put liquor in. We must have, I think, a decanter." A decanter was more of a "must have" than than now; and James drew some change from his pocket, which, on counting over, was not enough for the purchase.

"I would buy a good one," said Fanny, "while I was about it; not this glass that will break easily. A handsome cut-glass one will be cheaper in the end."

James thought he should finish a piece of work by noon, the wages of which would not only buy the decanter, but fill it also; and he went out to his work. It was a neat, new two-story house this young couple lived in, built by James himself, in "odd moments," he said; for James' joinery was in good demand, and he was rarely out of employment. There was a patch of ground round it, with vegetables enough for summer eating, and a few for harvest. They were a well brought up, industrious, happy couple, with half a pew at church, and sometimes a seat at the prayer-meeting, useful and promising, with good prospects before them.

A few nights after, when James came home, he drew out from his jacket the best-looking decanter to be found at Hobbs', he said, and held it up betwixt Fanny and the candle. It was filled. "Let's try it," said James. "Hobbs said it was the very best. Hand me a tumbler, Fanny."

"Oh, no, James," replied his wife, "it is not for us; it is for company or sickness. Let us save it."

"You have had a large washing; a little will do you good, and I should not object to tasting;" so he put two or three spoonfuls of their best sugar into a tumbler, poured out a suitable quantity of Holland gin, and added some hot water from the singing tea-kettle. "Excellent toddy," said James, stirring and offering it to his wife.

"No, James, you drink first," answered she; "I like the leavings best;" and Fanny folded her clothes, while James sipped the smoking beverage. "It seems to me, you have not left much," said Fanny, smiling, and taking her turn at the tumbler, "but it is as much as I want;" and she leisurely finished the remainder.

This was the first glass of toddy from the new decanter; and as James and Fanny sat there by their warm hearth, they did not see the coil of a serpent in

the bottom of the tumbler. Perhaps a microscope was needed to discern it, but it was there.

By-and-by a baby was born in the house. Happy father and mother, with their plump little one, who filled their hearts with a new joy. Fanny was happy; only as the months went by, once in a while a fear took hold of her, a strange fear, that made her shudder. What was it? Had she caught a glimpse of the serpent? Ah, among all the increasing wants of the little household, there was nothing which oftener needed filling than the glass decanter!

One day, on hearing her husband's step outside, she arose with baby sleeping in her arms, tip-toed into the store-closet, and snatching the decanter from the shelf, thrust it into a small cupboard below, and turned the key. Back she went with a trembling heart. James soon after came in. First he played with baby, then he went to the store-closet, and Fanny heard the closet door creak. "What will James think?" thought Fanny, anxiously and much afraid. She laid baby down, and tried to busy herself with dinner. Presently her husband passed through the kitchen without speaking. Dinner ready, she rang the bell. James came in and took a seat by the fire. Baby crept towards him, but he took no notice of it.

"Are you sick, James?" asked Fanny. "Not very," answered he, sulkily.

"You have taken cold," she said, with affectionate earnestness: "it is very raw. Let me make you a bowl of sage-tea."

"Sage-tea!" growled her husband, angrily. "I don't want any old woman's nostrums." He rested his elbows on his knees, and put his head between his hands. Fanny pitied him.

"What will you have, James?" asked Fanny. "Shall I get ready something hot?"

"Is there anything in the house?" he asked, eagerly turning his face towards her, with an asking look. "I think it would make me feel better."

"Well, poor James is sick," thought Fanny, trying hard to feel there was no harm in unlocking the little cupboard, and offering that cup to her husband's lips which a few moments before she was so anxious to save him from. Poor Fanny wanted firmness. The contents of the decanter were soon emptied, and James took it away to be refilled. It did not come back the next day, or the next, or the next. The tumblers were clean and dry, and through the livelong week showed no marks of sugar, gin, or toddy. "James sees his danger, and he has put the decanter away," thought Fanny, with a thankful heart. A heavy weight seemed lifted from her, and again she slept about the house.

James had a small poultry-yard, which not only kept a supply of eggs for his family, but made an occasional trade for the neighbors. One day about this time Fanny went to the barn to get a newly-laid egg for James' favorite pudding. She and the little boy loved to hunt for eggs. Among the hay she found a new hole, which, quite likely, led to a new nest. Down she thrust her hand and grasped at something. Fanny started and turned pale, and shrank back trembling. It was not a hen, or chicken, or egg she touched, but something that took her strength away, and she felt like lying down to die. A serpent? It was the glass decanter which she had pulled out, hid away there half filled—with what? Rum! Fanny forgot her eggs, her pudding, her child, as she sat there and cried as if her heart would break.

We must now pass over several years of Fanny's life; sorrowful years they grew to be. Many children were born to the Farmers. The two oldest died, and the mother wept bitter tears. But greater sorrow was in store for her; as her husband went, step by step, down, down, until he lost his fine, manly look, neglected his work, was no longer seen at church, and everything within and without his house showed the mournful tokens of a ruined home.

So things went on till Silas, the second son, was twelve years old. A fine lad was he. Two years before, Silas went to live in a gentleman's family; when, the gentleman dying, he came home to seek other employment. It was not long before Hobbs had his eye on him—Hobbs the dram-seller, whose little shop at the corner had manufactured more hard drinkers than any shop in the county, making its owner rich on other men's sins. "A smart little fellow," said Hobbs, with his eye on Silas, "and I can get him for nothing," chuckling over the long account run up against the Farmer estate. He concluded to go over and talk with his mother about it.

"A fine lad that Silas of yours," said Hobbs, seating himself in a chair which his custom-work had made rickety. "Silas is a good boy," replied his mother, sadly—"a good boy."

"Well," proceeded Hobbs, with a little creditable embarrassment, "perhaps you know there is an account against your husband, which, maybe, you will like Silas to help wipe off."

"I did not know there were any honest debts there," said Fanny, a faint color mounted into her pale face as she thought of the wicked enticements he used to keep his victims.

"Your husband can remember, I suppose!" exclaimed Hobbs, angrily, "and if I am not paid soon, you must take the consequences."

With a house still over her head, Fanny had contrived to get along. She feared at no distant day it might be

drunk away, and she might well dread a creditor like Hobbs. The poor mother was cowed.

"I will talk with Silas about it," she said, humbly. "What would you allow him?"

"Oh, I sha'n't be hard," said the hard old man; "send the boy to me;" and Hobbs was not sorry to leave. He could meet the frightful oaths and reeling idiocy of the wretched man who frequented his bar, but the presence of a stricken woman alarmed his conscience. When Silas came home his mother told him.

"Never, mother, never!" exclaimed Silas; "never will I go and deal rum to my father, or anybody's father. No liquor shall pass through my hands. Why, mother, I am a soldier in the cold water army."

"If father gives you the decanter, you'd have to go and buy some," said his brother.

"Never!" repeated Silas. "Then father would beat you," said little Fanny, shrinking.

"I would be lickered to death rather than break my pledge," said Silas.

"Obey your parents," said his mother; for the mother's spirit was altogether crushed, and she was ready to counsel and compromise rather than rouse the brutal rage of the husband and father. Silas did not believe in compromising with wickedness, but he said nothing.

That evening James Farmer came home, and told Silas to run down to Hobbs' and bring home the decanter. His mother trembled, but Silas took his cap and walked away. He entered the shop as the old man was filling it.

"You are Silas Farmer, I suppose. Well, I want you in my shop," said Hobbs, in a tone which he meant to be pleasant.

"I came for the decanter," said the boy.

"And I want you in my shop," cried the old man, testily, putting it on the counter.

"I cannot come, sir," replied Silas, firmly. "I am a soldier in the cold water army, and I cannot serve in the shop where my father was made a drunkard."

Without stopping further, Silas seized the decanter and went off, not homeward, no, no, for he was a soldier in the cold water army. He ran to a neighboring well. On the green grass which grew around it—for everything looks fresh and green where pure water is—he poured out the destroying liquor. Drawing up a bucket of water, he carefully rinsed the decanter; then filling it with water, fresh and sparkling, he bottled it up and went home.

"Father," said the brave boy, entering the bedroom where his enfeebled parent was about undressing. "I have brought you some good, wholesome drink, such as God made; and it is all I could bring you, because I am a soldier in the cold water army."

"A soldier in what?" asked the father, looking around with his bleared eye.

"In the cold water army, father. We are fighting against wicked King Drunkenness; and O father, do come and join our ranks; do, father."

There was something in the almost agonizing earnestness of his son that touched James Farmer's heart. "Do, father," rang in his ears the livelong night. True, he gruffly motioned the boy away; but there were other things that he could not motion away so easily. His mind was alert, and he had nothing to stultify it—nothing to moisten his parched lips and burning tongue—nothing to quench his craving thirst but the pure water in his well-filled decanter. The first object he described in the grey early dawn was his decanter. He grasped it with his trembling hand. No hot liquor fumes quickened his senses. How he longed for a "drink!" Again he looked at the decanter. No hope there; it was only water, water, water. He glared round the room. How changed everything was in that once happy room!—everything else but the glass decanter. And what a long train of misery had it uncorked in his family! As he looked at it, vipers and serpents, hissing and stinging, seemed crawling from it, mocking him with cruel mockings. That dreadful delirium, the curse of the drunkard, was creeping over the fine, strong frame of James Farmer. He shouted aloud, "Drink, drink, drink!"

For days and nights did Fanny and her son watch by his bed, and bathe his hot brow and cool his burning tongue with cold water. "Do, father," came first to his mind when it began to clear up. "O, my God, help me!" cried the sick man. "Almighty Saviour, help me to keep it!" prayed he, as Silas, true to his soldier duty, brought the cold water pledge to his father's bedside. In large, sprawling letters, James wrote his name, and the family knelt down, while the minister prayed for forgiving mercy, and grace to strengthen him in days to come.

"Here, father," said Silas, going to the closet when the solemn service was over, "here is the decanter, filled with fresh cold water; will you not seal your pledge to total abstinence by a glass of this wholesome drink?"

"Oh, let us smash that decanter," cried little Fanny.

"And bury the pieces," added Freddy.

"From our sight for ever," said Fanny, the mother.

"That is all which is left of our first house-keeping, Fanny. Let it stand always filled with water, a witness of my

reform, as it was the companion of my fall," said the penitent father.

So there it stands, an abiding memorial of sad days bettered and brightened.

ROBIN AND JAMIE.

It was Christmas time. The weather was cold, and Robin was wrapped in furs and mufflers for a long ride. She was very comfortable for the first few miles, and then her father told her that she would find something at home waiting for her that would surprise her very much.

"What is it?" cried Robin. "A Christmas Goose," said her father. "Oh!" said Robin, "I don't care for geese at all!"

When she got home, she found a round, rosy little baby. Her father had called him a Christmas Goose, because he was born on Christmas Day.

I will not pretend that he was then very handsome, or that Robin admired him then quite as much as she afterwards did. But he had been fixed up for the occasion of her return. His dress was as white and as smooth as dress could be upon such a round little ball as he was, and his few hairs were brushed straight up on the top of his head, so as to show to the best advantage possible. Even then he was a very great wonder. And to those who watched him lovingly, he began to improve every day. Soon he learnt to find the way to his mouth with his hands. Then came all sorts of accidents. He was always getting the wrong things into it.

Once his mother, by mistake, dropped a penny into her lap. Baby was lying there, staring at the light, and waving his little fat arms about in the air. Presently he began to choke and grow red in the face. His mother caught him up in the greatest haste, and commenced patting his back; then she thrust her fingers into his mouth, and succeeded in pulling out the penny, just in time to save it from going down his throat.

If anybody left a pin or a needle sticking out of their dress, Baby was sure to find it, and slip it into that little mouth of his. He never lost an opportunity, either, of tucking into it any bit of ribbon or lace that came in his way.

These little baby tricks, and many more, Robin told me; her love for him, and her interest in him, making her not to think that multitudes of other babies had done the same before him. But you see it was all new to her. She had never been acquainted with a baby before.

"The way I heard about it was this: When Robin and I were walking together the other day, through the merry green woods, I saw her suddenly stoop down and pick up a great yellow dandelion. Then she kissed it. I smiled a little as I saw her do it, and was going to make a lively remark about it, when I saw her eyes full of tears.

"Don't laugh at me, Cousin Rosa," she said, "I do it because it seems almost like seeing Jamie." Jamie was her little brother's name. "He used to run across all our flower-beds at home, to go over into the grass beyond, where the dandelions grew. And if we were walking or playing together, he always stopped at each one; either to pick it, or at least to touch it with his fingers. He loved them so! And now that I cannot see him do it any more, I love the flowers for his sake."

"My dear little Robin," I said, "I could not laugh at anything so tender and sacred. Though I never saw Jamie, I love him for your sake, and also because he is now a happy, blessed angel in heaven."

Little Jamie never grew old enough to get over his habit of stuffing things into his mouth. Even when he was large enough to walk about, and even to travel up and down stairs, he used to contrive so as to get some bad thing into it. In his play-room there was a long, wide crack in the wall, and often when he thought that no one was looking, he would get up from his basket of toys on the floor, and run over to that crack, and pick out a mouthful of the dry plaster with his busy little fingers. Once in a while he would turn quietly around from his mischievous work, to see if any one happened to be noticing him.

Then, in the last summer of his life—he never saw but two—he became very much interested in all sorts of animals. Horses were his great delight, but he was fond, too, of all kinds of bugs and insects. Kittens were his special play-fellows. He would treat one very kindly for a while, till he got tired of it, holding it as carefully and stroking it as softly as he knew how; then, all of a sudden, he would think of something else to do, jump up and throw Kitty away, and if she tried to follow him, chase her into a corner, and try to stand on one wee foot and kick her. Of course, he was too small to know it hurt poor pussy.

One day Jamie was very fretful and thirsty all day. He had been dressed and bathed as usual, but he did not seem to want to play. By and by he climbed upon his bed, and lay there very quietly, not sleeping, his bright eyes open, but as though he was very tired. Nobody felt frightened about him, and Robin, who always liked to be near him, sat in the room all the morning. She was just learning to sew, and she was just then busy, making a cunning little night-gown for her darling brother. As the day passed on, Jamie no longer lay quietly. His cheeks burned with fever,

and "drink, drink!" was the only thing he seemed to know.

By night he was quiet again. His restless little hands lay still, and his hot cheeks were white and cool. Robin thought he was better, and at bed-time went into her room grateful and happy. She had not kissed Jamie "good-night," for fear of waking him; but in the middle of the night, while she was sleeping peacefully, her mother's voice called her.

In half a moment she was by her side. She was sitting up close by Jamie. His head was raised up a little from his pillow, his bright curls moist and tangled. "Robin, Robin," he whispered.

"A drink! A kiss for a drink." This was his way of asking for anything he wanted very much.

Robin's feet sped quickly to the table, where stood the cup from which he always drank. As she turned back to put it to his lips, Jamie's head had fallen back upon his pillow. The blue eyes no longer saw anything around him. The precious breath fluttered unevenly from his lips. Before morning came, Jamie's earthly life had ended.

No doubt some blessed angel had taken away his little soul to a heavenly home. No doubt Robin has a Heavenly Father there, too, who teaches her heart through this pain and grief to be trustful, humble and obedient. So then, after her own life is finished here, He may take her to the same happy home, where Jamie and she shall be parted no more.—Family Treasure.

THE SIN AND FOLLY OF SCOLDING.

"Fret not thyself in any way to do evil."—Pa. xxxviii. 2

1. It is a sin against God. It is an evil and only evil, and that continually. David understood both human nature and the law of God. He says, "fret not thyself in any way to do evil." That is, never fret or scold, for it is always a sin. If you cannot speak without fretting and scolding, keep silence.

2. It destroys affection. No one ever did, ever can, or ever will love an habitual fretter, fault-finder or scolder. Husbands, wives, children, relatives, or domestics, have no affection for peevish, fretful fault-finders. Few tears are shed over the graves of such. Persons of high moral principle may tolerate them; may bear with them. But they cannot love them more than the sting of nettles, or the noise of mosquitoes. Many a man has been driven to the tavern, and to dissipation, by a peevish, fretful wife. Many a wife has been made miserable by a peevish, fretful husband.

3. It is the bane of domestic happiness. A fretful, peevish, fault-finder in a family, is like the continual chafing of an inflamed sore. Woe to the man, woman, or child, who is exposed to the influence of such a temper in another. Nine-tenths of all domestic trials and unhappiness spring from this source. Mrs. D. is of this temperament. She wonders her husband is not more fond of her company. That her children give her so much trouble. That domestics do not like to work for her. That she cannot secure the good will of young people. The truth is, she is peevish and fretful. Children fear her, but do not love her. She never yet gained the affection of young people, nor never will till she leaves off fretting.

4. It defeats the end of family government. Good family government is the blending of authority with affection, so as to secure respect and love. Indeed, this is the great secret of managing young people. Now your fretters may inspire fear, but they always make two faults where they correct one. Scolding at a child, fretting at a child, sneering at a child, taunting a child, treating the child as though it had no feelings, inspires dread and dislike, and fosters those very dispositions, from which many of the faults of childhood proceed. Mr. F. and Mrs. F. are of this class. Their children are made to mind; but how? Mrs. F. frets and scolds her children. She is severe enough upon their faults. She seems to watch them in order to find fault. She seldom gives a command without a threat, and a long-running, fault-finding commentary. When she chides, it is not done in a dignified manner. She raises her voice, puts on a cross look, threatens, strikes them, pinches their ears, snaps their heads, etc. The children cry, pout, sulk, and poor Mrs. F. has to do her work over pretty often. Then she will find fault with her husband, because he will not fall in with her ways, or chime with her as chorus.

5. Fretting and scolding make hypocrites. As a fretter never receives confidence and affection, so no one likes to tell them anything disagreeable, and thus procure for themselves a fretting. Now children conceal as much as they can from such persons. They cannot make up their minds to be frank and open-hearted. So husbands conceal from their wives, and wives from their husbands. For a man may brave a lion, but he likes not to come in contact with nettles and mosquitoes.

6. It destroys one's peace of mind. The more one frets, the more he may. A fretter will always have enough to fret at. Especially if he or she has the bump of order and neatness largely developed. Something will always be out of place. There will always be some dirt somewhere. Others will not eat right, look right, sit right, talk right; they will not do these things so as to please them. And fretters are generally so selfish as to have no regard for any one's comfort but their own.

PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

It is pleasant and encouraging to observe the progressive action of the General Assembly at its late meeting in Dayton, O., inasmuch as they "recommend to the Pastors that they adapt whenever practicable, the second discourse of every Sabbath particularly to the young of their flock, thus affording to this, the most susceptible and hopeful portion of their fields, at least one half of their time and labor, and giving their children distinctly to feel that they have a place no less in the sanctuary than the Sabbath school, both for worship and instruction."

This involves nothing less than an important revolution in the Sabbath Church services, and if faithfully carried out will also revolutionize the studies and habits of pastors, and it will, we doubt not, result in a great refreshment and blessing to the Churches.

The Gospel rule is "rightly to divide the Word of Truth and give to each one their portion in due season." This plan secures the children's portion—they are to be no longer ignored. All this involves a great work upon the preachers, for many of them, having never learned how to preach to children, must needs go into a course of preparation for this service. The language of children—pure and simple; the thoughts of children—often very beautiful; and the imagination and sympathies of children must be grasped in order that the preaching be adapted and may reach the children. All this is to be studied and learned.

Then again, a vast amount of material just adapted must be gathered for this work, for much of the accumulation in thoughts, words, and illustrations for older ones will be of but little, if any, account here; but on the contrary all the good plain thoughts, clear pure words, and short forcible illustrations for children, will be welcomed with great joy by the older ones of the congregations.

Thus the preacher, the parents, and children will all be blessed in the carrying out of this most excellent recommendation. If it is true, as has been stated in the old maxim, that "no greater injury can be done to the mind of a child than to teach it the truths of the Christian religion in such a manner as to produce a sense of weariness," then indeed no pains should be spared to make this preaching to children interesting as well as profitable, because so perfectly adapted. Let pastors but perfect themselves in this high and holy art, and we can do away with that part of lay talking to children which is now foolish and weak and pointless, and we can secure henceforth, both from preachers and laymen, sound Scriptural instruction to our children, and at the same time it can be more perfectly adapted and joyous than the mere wordy entertainment, or heavy theological disquisitions, which so often reproach the children's Sabbath exercises now. In every aspect methinks lovers of children and lovers of Christ's cause generally will rejoice in the opportune action of the General Assembly.—Evangelist. R. G. P.

FIRST SABBATH SCHOOL SCHOLAR IN AMERICA.

Children, did you ever wonder if the first Sabbath School scholar in America was living? Well, he is, and is now a hale, hearty old man. His name is N. G. B. Dexter, and he is now living in Pawtucket, in the State of Rhode Island. He was born June 25, 1781, and he was, consequently, seventy-seven years old the 25th of last June. The first Sabbath School that was established in America was commenced in Pawtucket, R. I., September 15, 1799, and Mr. Dexter was the first scholar who went into the school. His class consisted of seven boys, all of whom, excepting himself, are now dead. He has always been to some Sabbath School ever since he first commenced going, and for the past nineteen years he has missed but one Sunday, and then he was so sick he could not leave his house. He has never used tobacco, and has never even tasted intoxicating liquors. He says he is almost as smart now as ever he was, and the writer of this has a letter from him, lately written, which shows that his mental and physical faculties are wonderfully preserved.—S. S. Missionary.

ANECDOTE OF GENERAL GRANT.

The correspondent of the Press tells the following good story, one not without its moral:

A few days since a General was walking around the docks at City Point, when he stopped to see some negroes roll a barrel of bacon on board of a boat. The negroes were unable to move it, when a crusty lieutenant, who stood near, dressed in his fine blue clothes, shouted, "You niggers, push harder or go get another man to help you!" Without saying a word, Gen. Grant pulled up his sleeves and helped the negroes roll the barrel on the boat; then he drew his silk handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his hands, then moved quickly away. You may imagine how that second lieutenant felt when he was told that the stevedore was no less than the Commander-in-Chief of the United States army. The General was dressed in coarse home-spun, with his hat drawn over his eyes, and one of the most unpretending-looking personages one could imagine.