

Family Circle.

THE GERMS OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

Scatter the germs of the beautiful. By the wayside let them fall. That the rose may spring by the cottage gate.

Scatter the germs of the beautiful. In the holy shrines of home: Let there, and the fair, and the graceful there.

Scatter the germs of the beautiful. In the temple of our God—The God who star'd the uplifted sky.

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GRADUATIM.

BY J. G. HOLLAND.

Heaven is not reached at a single bound; But we build the ladder by which we rise.

I count this thing to be grandly true, That a noble deed is a step toward God.

We rise by the things that are under feet; By what we have mastered of good and gain.

We hope, we aspire, we resolve, we trust. When the morning-calls us to life and light.

We hope, we resolve, we aspire, we pray. And we think that we mount the air on wings.

Wings for the angels, but feet for the men! We may borrow the wings to find the way.

But our feet must rise, or we will fall again. Only in dreams is a ladder thrown.

Heaven is not reached at a single bound; But we build the ladder by which we rise.

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[FROM ARTHUR'S HOME MAGAZINE.]

A HUNDRED YEARS.

I knew long ago a little girl who used to every night after she had said "Our Father who art in Heaven," and "Now I lay me down to sleep," had slipped its sweet twin couplets through her childish voice.

A little child's prayer, so simple and earnest that the angels it seems to me may have smiled over it, half in love, half in pity.

That long, long path, up through childhood, and out through youth, and across the table-lands of middle life, and down into the chill and dimness of old age, placed Heaven such a very long way off.

And so the prayer interpreted itself as the small petitioner little suspected. She wanted to get to Heaven, but she preferred staying here as long as possible.

And this world was an actual, living, vital thing to the child. Here was the blue sky, and the trees in which the birds sang, and the soft young grass where she searched for the clover and dandelion blossoms.

Dear reader, I think we are many of us like this child—not much wiser—not much clearer in our ideas and feelings.

I do not believe it is safest or wisest to dwell on that other side of death, from which all life must of necessity shrink frightened and appalled.

But that is only one side—the narrow, material one. It is not that death with which we have most to do.

And from my inmost heart I pity the little children who are brought up with no pleasant, ennobling thoughts or associations regarding death—those young

imaginings seize fast hold of and retain all that is gloomy, and chilling, and terrible in the thought.

The path for them from earth to Heaven may be a very short one. Is it wrong to teach them that the great Father, who has covered the earth with joy, and praise and beauty, has doubtless made fairer than new home into which no sin shall ever enter?

Is it not for the little children as well as for our sakes that those blessed words were written—"There shall be no more pain, and all tears shall be wiped away?"

Whether the flowers sing or the waters bloom by the "River of Life" none of us can tell; but if they do, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of their new gladness and their finer glory.

And God has not left himself without witnesses in all nature, which you have no right to neglect; which indeed, you cannot do without harm, oh, father and mother.

Teach your children out of the blessed Bible texts, but teach them also with texts of sprouting grasses, and singing birds, and opening blossoms, and leaping waters.

They are His creation, His gift, His ministers, fulfilling His will.

Tell your children this, and when every night the curtains of the darkness are drawn down across the silver mountains of the twilight, they shall murmur their evening prayer unto that Father in Heaven to whom they shall not feel afraid to go—the heart of a Father stronger and wiser, more tender and pitiful, even than yours.

V. F. T.

THE BIRTHDAY GIFT.

BY GRACE GREENWOOD.

One Sunday evening, Mrs. Lee, the wife of a wealthy country gentleman in the South of England, was reading a chapter from the Bible, to her little daughters, Gertrude and Alice.

Gertrude and Alice greatly resembled one another, and as they were always dressed precisely alike, they looked almost like twins—yet there was two years' difference in their ages; Gertrude was nine, and Alice seven.

That it is more blessed to give than to receive," replied Gertrude, reverently. "Yes, mamma," said Alice, "I suppose the good Apostle Paul was right—he generally was—wasn't he? But I hope we shall have a few nice presents next birthday, for all that—don't you, Gertrude?"

TOM THORNE'S TROUBLES.

"Oh, it's awful hot, I'm more than half dead; this is the hottest place I was ever in!"

This is what Tom Thorne said, one of those hot days nearly two weeks ago, as he burst into the parlor where we were all sitting.

"Yes, mamma," said Alice, "it makes us feel as though everybody we love was glad we were born, and was thankful that God had let us live another year."

"Why, Tom, haven't you been at the post-office?" said Mr. Thorne, starting up and reaching out his hands for the papers.

"Oh yes, sir; I had to wade through the dust knee-deep to get there; it was just like hot ashes. I never saw such a place," said Tom, handing out papers and letters.

"Now, do be patient, will you, and let me see who has one? Here Kate, of course you have—I never saw anybody get so many letters; and mother, here's one from Harry; and Sue, here, that's Fred's writing, isn't it?—no, it isn't either—well it's for you, at any rate."

"So, having emptied his mail-bag, Tom threw himself on the floor, panting and puffing like a large dog. As the rest were all busy with the letters and papers, he addressed himself to Annie and me, and went on somewhat in the same style.

"I declare, I never saw such a wretched place—no rain for a fortnight—you can't stir without getting perfectly covered with dust—there's nothing but sand in the place, and the thermometer at 90. I wish—"

"Tom," said his mother, "stop talking so; I'm ashamed of you. Whom are you complaining of?"

Here Mr. Thorne's voice was heard: "Grant's rapid progress—attack on Petersburg, thirteen cannon and three hundred prisoners taken—bravery of negro troops—precarious position of Richmond—our troops much exhausted but eager to push forward."

"There," said little Annie, "I should think you'd better think of the soldiers, Brother Tom, before you talk about the hot weather here."

"Why, yes, my son, a great many times; it is certainly very warm, but does it make you feel one bit more comfortable to be all the time talking about it, worrying and fretting in such a way as to make everybody around you uneasy?"

"Tom looked up with a sort of twinkle in his eyes. "Well, mother, I know you're equal to almost anything—no doubt of that; but if you can so lift yourself out of the body as to forget that this is an awfully hot day, I'll give up—you're the greatest woman I ever saw."

"No," fairly shouted Tom. "I'll make no promise about it to-day; wait until to-morrow; I know what you're going to say well enough."

"Well," said his sister, "to-morrow then will you promise to say nothing about the weather any way, either to explain or scold—simply to say nothing about it, and to find something to do that will make you think of something besides yourself?"

"Tom's answer was unheard, for at that moment little Annie's words, "What's the matter with Cousin Sue," made us all look across the room, where sat the poor girl, her face perfectly white, her eyes fixed in a sort of stare at the letter she held.

"Oh dear, what's happened to Fred!" asked Tom, in a frightened voice. His mother glanced at the writing, and handed it to her husband, who read as follows:

"MY DEAR SISTER:—We had another sharp fight Thursday. My leg is off below the knee. Many a poor fellow is worse off than I am. I am doing well. Don't worry. I have good care; but it is very warm, and I suppose I'd better not use my strength writing any more."

Is there need of describing the scene that followed? Alas, how many know too well the grief and sorrow that such letters bring to hundreds of families! We tried to comfort poor Susie, the orphan, whose only brother is made a cripple. She has a brave heart, and is ready to make sacrifices in our great cause; but she staggered under the thought that the very hot weather might so reduce her brother's strength that he could not survive the amputation.

"Why, my son, do you think you can go alone? Hadn't I better go?" said Mr. Thorne.

Then came questioning about the time trains left, etc., and Tom used such strong arguments in favor of his going instead of his father that at last it was decided that he should start that night. Tom is a great stout boy of seventeen—fully competent to journey alone to Washington, and much further than that in his own estimation.

At six o'clock he was off, his manly face wearing a look of responsibility, and we all felt that, after all, a kinder or more generous heart could not be sent to that helpless young soldier, tortured with pain and heat in—Hospital.

Three days after, came this dispatch from Tom: "Fred is doing well. I shall stay with him. I do not suffer with the heat."

WORDS.

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ONE OF UNCLE SAM'S BOYS.

The following story has got into the papers, without any indication of its source, so far as we have been able to discover. As nobody undertakes to be responsible for its truth, we give it as simply "very good, if true."

A sergeant stepped out of our rifle pits, and moved towards the enemy, waving a late paper, regardless of the probability that he would at any moment be shot.

"Why, yes, my son, a great many times; it is certainly very warm, but does it make you feel one bit more comfortable to be all the time talking about it, worrying and fretting in such a way as to make everybody around you uneasy?"

"Well, then if you haint got nothing, why, here's the paper anyway, and if you can get one from Richmond this afternoon, you can send it over. You'll find my name thar on that."

"Well, I don't know but what you can do it!" said the lieutenant, turning on his heel, and re-entering, his rifle pits; "meanwhile, my man, you had better go back."

"The astonished officer could only repeat his command. "Go back, you rascal, or I'll take you a prisoner. I tell you we have nothing to exchange, and we don't want anything to do with you Yankees."

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