

Family Circle.

THE PAINTER AND THE MONK—II.

LEONARDO DA VINCI PORTIZES TO THE DUKE IN HIS OWN DEFENCE.

Padre Bandelli, then, complains of me because, forsooth, I have not drawn a line upon the Saviour's head; perhaps, then, he could without trouble paint that head divine. But think, oh Signor Duca, what's the face? The pure perfection of our Saviour's face—What sorrowing majesty, what noble grace, At that dread moment when He broke the bread.

And those submissive words of pathos said, "By one among you I shall be betrayed,"—And say it 'tis an easy task to find, Even among the best that walk this earth, The fitting type of that divinest word, That has its image solely in the mind. Vainly my pencil struggles to express The sorrowing grandeur of such holiness, In patient thought, in ever seeking prayer, I strive to shape that glorious face within, But the soul's mirror, dulled and dimmed by sin,

Reflects not yet the perfect image there. Can the hand do before the soul has wrought? Is not our art the servant of our thoughts? And Judas, too,—the basest face I see Will not contain his utter infamy; Among the dregs and offal of mankind, Vainly I seek an utter wretch to find. He who for thirty silver coins could sell His Lord, must be the Devil's miracle. Padre Bandelli thinks it easy to find To find the type of him who with a kiss Betrayed his Lord. Well, what I can I'll do; And if it please his reverence and you, For Judas' face I'm willing to paint his.

Padre Bandelli is a sort of man looking apart, whose little round of thought is like his life, the measure of a span. He knows and does the duties he is taught—Prays, preaches, eats, and sleeps in dull content; Does the day's work, and deems it excellent; Says he's a sinner, but we're sinners all, And puts his own sin down to Adam's fall. Christ, at the last day, others may reject,—Poor painters, or great dukes with their state careers!

But that, with all his masses, fasts and prayers, A convent's prior should not be elect, Padre Bandelli has not half a doubt, 'Twere a strange heaven, indeed, with him left out. Him the imagination does not tease— With hungry cravings, restless impulses; Him no despairing days the Purities bring, No torturing doubts, no anxious questioning; But day by day he orders time to spend, In doing over the same things again. How should he know the artist's inward strain, His vexing and fastidious discontent? Art he considers as a sort of trade, Like laying bricks: if one can lay a yard In one good hour, how can it be so hard In two good hours, that two yards should be laid?

But, Signor Duca, you can apprehend The artist's soul—how there is ne'er an end Of climbing fancies, longings, and desires, That burn within him like consuming fires; How, beaten to and fro by joy and pain, He grasps at shadows he can ne'er retain. How sweet at first, the dream of a vision gleams! How dull and base the painted copy seems! We are like Danaus' daughters—all in vain We strive to fill our vases. Human art Through myriad leaks lets out the spirit's part, And nothing but the earthy dregs remain.

* * * * * W. W. S.

MATCHES.

BY THE MESSRS WARNER, AUTHORS OF THE "WIDE, WIDE WORLD," "OLD HELMET," &c. NO. 1.

If I tell you some true things that happened in the life of a real little boy, you must not suppose that these are all the things which ever happened to him. Some, perhaps, would not interest you, and some would do you no good, and many, many others I do not know; so that these articles may be called a part of a true story. And as it is only a part, and not the whole, I shall not call the boy by his real name—as if I were pretending to write an exact account of his life—but shall call him what he called himself once, before he had learned to tell the truth.

Nearly ten years ago,—before some of you little children were born, and while others of you were rocked in soft cradles and tended by kind hands,—there lived a certain man in New York who had three little boys. Many men think it a great thing to have even one son, and can never do enough for him; but this man had three, and cared nothing for them all. That was not the children's fault. They would have been just as pleasant looking as many of the little velvet-clad boys of Fifth Avenue, had their faces only been washed and their hair combed and their clothes clean and whole; and by nature their hearts were not a bit worse. The Lord Jesus had died for them as for others, and without his help not the richest little boy in all New York could go to heaven. But their father never told them anything of all this, nor indeed of anything good,—there was but one thing in the world for which he cared much, and that was strong-drink; and so you will not wonder to hear that he and his little children were wretchedly poor. Of course, loving brandy and gin so well, he did not love work; and thus although he was a builder by trade, and could earn very good wages when he chose, yet he only took a job now and then, when all other means of getting brandy failed. The place where he lived was dirty and miserable—I dare say you never saw such a one; and yet it was

both larger and better than many a dwelling place of poor people. That is, the room itself; but so long as this man could get drink, he never seemed to care whether his children had either food or fire or clothes. Long ago he had lived in England; and there he had a pleasant garden in front of his house, and roses climbing up the walls, and a smooth gravel walk, and a fine white and black cat. Then the mother of the eldest of these three boys was alive, and took care of him, and sent him to the infant school. But now she was dead, and Johnny's father had married a woman as bad as himself; and three more little children had opened their eyes upon this world of sin and sorrow, and saw nothing but sin and sorrow all the day long.

All the family lived in one room. In one corner stood a bedstead covered with a warm feather bed (until this was sold for brandy); and near by was a carpenter's bench, and three chairs, and a table, and two wooden seats of some sort. In another corner was the children's bedstead, but this had only a bed of chaff. There all the five young ones slept together, stowed away just like little herrings in a box—one with his head one way, and the next with his head the other; and covered with such comfort as an old ragged quilt could bestow. You would not have thought them very comfortable, had you looked in there some night; and yet they were far better off than when awake. For then they could not hear the bad words spoken around them, and then they were never told to do anything wrong. You children who fret a little some times because your mother says this is not right, or your father thinks that will not do, learn if you can what a great, great blessing it is to have such a careful father and mother. For these poor little ones were never forbidden to do wrong,—ah they were often ordered to do it! It is almost too dreadful to tell, but this man used to send his boys out to get what he wanted,—not to buy it, nor even to beg it, but to steal it: and very much of the coal and wood and vegetables that came into the house were got in this way. Do you say they should have refused to do such wicked work? ah, little children, no one had ever taught them anything right since their mother died. They never saw a Bible now; they never heard the name of the Lord, unless spoken in some dreadful oath. And if they were not successful in their stealing, if they did not bring home as much as their father expected, he would beat them dreadfully. If you had seen these poor little creatures wandering about the streets,—here catching up a cabbage or two potatoes from the open barrel at a grocer's door, and there filling an old basket with coal from the heap on some rich man's sidewalk,—you would have felt angry at first, maybe, if you had been the child of the grocer or the rich man; but if you could have looked into the ignorant, sad, little hearts that beat warm and full beneath the ragged jackets, you would have felt very sad too. I have looked on with great wonder, in a candy shop, when I have seen some of the rich customers eat a sugar plum from this tray and a morsel of candy from that; a rose drop from this open jar and a burnt almond from the next, while waiting for their parcels. To be sure, the shop-women saw it as well as I, but she said nothing, because the lady wore a velvet cloak and the boy and girl came out of a grand carriage. Yet if to steal be to take what does not belong to you, I for one see little difference whether the thing be candy or cabbages. I know if one of these poor little boys had walked into the shop and taken a burnt almond, he would have been called a thief in no time. And the eighth commandment does not say Thou shalt not steal much, but simply, "Thou shalt not steal."

The boys could not always fill their pockets and baskets, watch as well and run as fast as they might. Often the coalman was too quick for them, or the grocer's man ran faster than they, and so brought back the cabbage, leaving a good cuff instead. Once as they passed a rag-picker's cart they saw his bag of broken victuals and made off with it; but the rag-picker let loose his dogs on them, and then the boys had to run for their life—the dogs nearly hunted them down. But all this was nothing to the blows they had if they went home empty handed. Sometimes, indeed, when it had been a bad day, the elder boys dared not go home at all, but slept in boxes and carts and all sorts of places. And when they got more than usual, especially if any money made part of it, even then affairs did not mend, for their father only got the more brandy and drank the harder. And then that brought on what the children called 'brandy fits,'—when he seemed out of his senses, and nearly frightened them out of theirs. For at such times he was perfectly wild; driving them from the house, threatening to kill them, and even trying to do it.

It happened one day, that as Johnny, the eldest, was roaming about the streets, loitering round wharves, and peeping into alleys to see what he could pick up, he espied a good piece of board lying all by itself.

"That will make splendid stuff for the stove," thought Johnny, "and no-body's looking on."

So coming cautiously round the pile of lumber he caught up the board and made off with it. Now the owner of the board had been watching all this while to see who it was that carried

off his stuff; and the minute Johnny began to run the man ran too. And Johnny was lame, and the lumberman had full use of both his feet and of both his hands too, as Johnny soon found to his cost; for the man gave him such a beating, that Johnny went home and declared to his father that he would not pick up wood any more. And then, as his father was very angry, Johnny told him that he would be a match boy, and try and make a living in that way; if he could only have twenty-five cents to begin with.

Children have no idea how many people live by selling matches. And in the first place, many people live by making them. Some families are even supported by making the little paper boxes in which the matches are put. A single one of the great match factories in New York has a hundred branch establishments, from each of which very great quantities of matches are sold to stores in the city and at a distance. Besides this, a great many are bought by poor people who take only a few boxes at a time, and then peddle them round the streets, from house to house. To just one of these establishments fifty men and women, and as many boys and girls, went regularly for matches at the time of which I speak, and had no other means of support than the street sales of the same, and the small profit they could make on each box. And now Johnny came to add his little self to the number.

Up to the great factory he went, with his little capital of twenty-five cents—lent him by his father—and bought two packs of matches at twelve cents a pack; with the twenty-fifth cent he bought some cord to tie them up; then seated himself on a doorstep to arrange his stock. In each pack were thirty-six boxes; and as the boxes were very full, Johnny took a few out of each and so made twenty-five new bunches. This gave him ninety-seven bunches in all, and as each bunch sold for one cent, Johnny had ninety-seven cents at the end of his first day's work. Beside this some kind person made him a present of five cents; and just as the sun was setting Johnny set out for home with a dollar and two cents in his pocket. Perhaps the child was hungry—perhaps he thought so much of the day's earnings fairly belonged to him; but at all events he stopped at a baker's by the way, and bought two cents worth of cake, then carried the dollar home to his father.

This seems like an easy sort of work—a dollar a day, and nothing to do for it but walk the streets and ring at door bells and ask people to buy matches: but little feet get sooner weary on the hard pavements than they do on the fresh green grass, and little people get very hungry in the course of a long day, and grown up people will not always buy matches. How many times do you suppose Johnny had the door slammed in his face, without even a civil answer? How many gentlemen pushed him out of the way? How many ladies looked at him with disgust? To be sure, they could not all buy from his basket—and doubtless he was sometimes in the way—yet that is a good old heathen proverb worth importing to Christian lands: "If you cannot go yourself to one in trouble, send a kind word." Do not look only at the dirty hands and ragged clothes of these forlorn ones; look at their poor little thin faces so pale; so lost in shadow. I saw a little girl's face in the streets once which half broke my heart. I did not know enough then to question her and find out her distress; and so she stayed shivering there at the corner, and I went sobbing down Broadway.

It often happened that Johnny got little but cross words; some days it seemed as if everybody had matches; and then if he went home at night with light gains, the words and blows which he had to encounter were neither light nor few. The gay, well-dressed people who parade up and down the streets in the daytime, little guessed that at night a poor little match boy sometimes trotted up and down those same pavements nearly the whole night long; afraid to lie down on the steps lest the police should take him off to the station house, afraid to go home lest his father should beat him. One night when Johnny was too tired to walk any longer, he marched into an oyster saloon and hired a bed for twenty-five cents. It was Saturday night, and as the oyster man never took down his shutters again till Monday morning; poor weary little Johnny slept right on, all through Sunday, nor ever roused up till the first day of the week was passed. "I thought," he said afterwards, "that I had had a pretty good twenty-five cents' worth of sleep!"

As I stepped upon the platform of the Cleveland depot, a hand was laid upon my arm, and a voice said, "Norman! is this you?" I turned and looked at the speaker. It was an old classmate, Richard, with whom I had agreed to pass a few weeks, and whom I had not seen for years before. After we had pushed our way through the noisy crowd and were seated in his carriage, I looked at him again and exclaimed, "Richard! how you have altered! how different now from the wild youth of old!" "Yes, Norman, there have been many changes with me since we parted, but the greatest has been here," said he, smiling, and gently touching his breast. "Humph!" was my ejaculation, which elicited no reply.

That evening, as he, his wife, and myself were walking in the conservatory, and I was admiring some jasmines, he said to me, "Norman, I have yet a little treasure to show you, and although it is small, it is great—greater than all these—almost the greatest one I have. Can you guess?"

When we went back to the drawing-room he showed her to me—his beautiful little girl, his only child, his little Bessie. I was not fond of children, at least I thought so, but strangely did that little maiden win her way to my heart—my old bachelor heart. Eight cloudless summers of her sunny life had passed, and had each one, as it gently glided by, left with her all its charms, she could not have been more beautiful.

That evening, sweet in memory to me, we became firm friends. She loved me because, when she asked papa, he said he did. She sat with me a little while, and I told her an old fairy story, which most strangely came to my remembrance; and then, after she, her papa, and myself had had a frolic, she went to bed.

The next day we all went out for a drive, and a delightful one we had. Little Bessie was as bright and beautiful as the day, but sometimes there was a strange thoughtfulness of expression upon her face which troubled me as being beyond her years. As I was talking to her father I said something jeeringly about him who had led the only pure life upon earth. Richard said not a word in reply, but motioned me to look at little Bessie. She was gazing into my face with a look of mingled horror and surprise, an expression such as I never saw before or since, and which I shall never forget. She gazed so for a moment. No one spoke. Never had anything before been able to make me feel that religion was above my scoffing remarks; so as I glanced at that little face, so earnestly endeavoring to read mine, and saw the little maid burst into uncontrollable tears, I felt a certain shame that in the presence of one so pure I should have spoken what perhaps she had never heard before. Then she looked at me in a sort of a pitying way and said, "I thought you loved my Jesus! O how could you say that of him?" During the rest of the drive she lay upon her father's bosom in perfect silence—no one spoke.

The next day I was alone in my room, thinking of all that had occurred, and a strange and unaccountable feeling of seriousness was creeping over me, a sort of longing to be like her, when suddenly the little maid was at my side. I started as I saw her and met the tender gaze of love and pity which she bent upon me. Her little hand was laid upon my arm, and for a moment both were silent.—Then the silence was broken by the words, "Won't you love my Jesus?" and she was gone. I could not ridicule that lovely spirit, and yet some demon within me tempted my soul to do so. The next morning, and the next, and the next, the little maiden came in the same way, said the same words, and disappeared. I never answered her, and at no other time did she allude to the subject, but she never failed to come at that morning hour. One morning I said to her, almost unconsciously "Tell me how, Bessie?" She looked at me a moment, and the next was seated on my knee. And the words that flowed—those simple, childish words in which she told the story of Christ's love! Never, never shall I forget them. My eyes were far from dry when she went away, and there was less of sorrow on her face than usual. And morning after morning she came, and seemed never weary of telling the sweet tale.

But one morning she did not come. I waited a long time but in vain. No little feet came pattering along the hall. No little hand was clasped in mine. No words of instruction were whispered in my ear. Presently there came a hurried knock at my door. It was opened without waiting for permission, and her father was with me. "Norman," said he, "she has just waked from a long and heavy sleep, and is fearfully ill. Will you come? Tell me if you know what it is." I went. There lay the little one, with eyes closed and in a sort of stupor. I knew at a glance. It was scarlet fever. How I told those two aching hearts I know not, but they were wonderfully calm in their anguish. The doctor soon confirmed my statement, but there was so painfully little to be done for the dear sufferer that these two days almost passed by in silence as we three watched over the precious form.

We knew from the first that she was no longer of the earth, and indeed it was a heavy burden for us to bear, to think that she would no longer be the light of our hearts. I say we, for though I was perhaps mistaken, the little one had so taken possession of my heart, that it seemed to me that she could not be dearer to those who had the first earthly claim upon her affections.

At the end of the second day her life seemed partially to return; and she opened her large beautiful eyes, and smiling a little said, "Dear mamma—dear papa!" and then looking around, "Dear uncle Norman, won't you love my Jesus? Mamma loves Him! Papa loves Him! And I am going to Him, and I want to tell Him that you love Him. Won't you love Him?" "Bessie! little Bessie!" said I, "tell Him my heart and life are His for evermore, and may my soul some day be as pure and undefiled as hers who bears the message to Him!" "Mamma! Papa! O my Jesus! I am so happy now! Now I have all I want! Now I come, come! Even so, come Lord Jesus!" And the little

spirit, so pure, so holy, returned whence it came. God's little messenger had fulfilled her mission to the earth, and had turned a soul to righteousness, and was called home.

Dear reader, have not some of "God's little messengers" visited your household and spoken to your heart, ere they plumed their golden wings for the upper and better land? How have you responded to the gentle call?

Is Christ still saying of you, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?" If no little messenger has been permitted to nestle in your bosom, and tell you, in the sweet accents of innocent childhood, of the love of Jesus, let O let this little one speak to you as she did to Norman, and woo you to the Saviour. Let her pleading words, "Say won't you love my Jesus?—he loves you," find lodgment in your heart, and lead you to the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world;" that it may be truly said of her, "By it, she being dead, yet speaketh."

See her walking the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, refreshing herself by the river of the water of life, tuning her golden harp to the praise of redeeming love, and casting her crown at the Saviour's feet! Hear her, as she speaks to you from her home in glory, saying, "Come up hither," and tell me will you go? O! will you go?—Drops of Truth.

THE TWO NESTS.

Robby Rover rushed into his mother's presence one afternoon, his bright eyes sparkling with delight, and shouted—as only little boys can—"Look here mother, see what I've found; a bird's nest—a real, live bird's nest!" (Robby had found discarded nests before, in the currant bushes, so he called this a live one, in contradistinction to them.)

"Well, child, you need not scream loud enough to make me deaf about it, and see there," she said in a tone of vexation, "you have tracked clear across the floor with your dirty wet feet. You just be off with yourself and see that you don't break those nasty eggs on your clothes; if you do, you will be sorry for it."

Robby, somewhat abashed, retreated out of doors with his prize, which he carefully placed in an old box his father had given him to keep his playthings in. There was a curious medley of things in it—balls, tops, marbles, sticks, twine, a button "buzz," and countless other things very precious to the eyes of little boys. But Robby thought there was nothing there so beautiful as that little, round nest, with those four pale blue eggs in it, so he viewed it o'er and o'er, with a confused notion in his head that little boys should never "bawl;" never have wet feet, and never soil their clothes with broken bird's eggs, but without one thought of the cruel wrong he had thoughtlessly done, in taking that pretty nest from the bush where the cunning architects had with such delicate skill woven it. Ah! who can tell what far-extending waves of desolation may circle from one childish act of wrong, which that mother "careful in many things," had suffered to pass unrebuked.

Robby grew up a careless, cruel man, giving the deepest sorrow to his parents. Turn we now to another home: Across that floor, there were marks of little feet leading to an outer door, where stood a little boy, holding a nest in his hand—hisrosy face all glowing with excitement. "See here, mother," he cried, "what I found in the hazel bushes; one, two, three little birdies."

The mother turned with a smile at the call of her darling, but the moment she saw what he held, her countenance fell. "Why, Willie, how could you take that away from the old birds; how sad they will feel when they come home by-and-by, and find their nest and little birdies all gone?"

"It was so pretty," said the child in a subdued voice, "but I am sorry I took it; if it was naughty."

"It was very wrong, although perhaps you did not think how sad the old birds would feel. See," she continued, "there is the mother bird now; she has missed her darlings, and how distressed she is." Willie's lips quivered, and the tears sprang to his eyes, and handing the nest to his mother, he cried, "Put it back, mother. I don't want it any more."

ACCESS TO GOD.

However early in the morning you seek the gate of access, you find it already open; and however deep the midnight moment when you find yourself in the sudden arms of death, the winged prayer can bring an instant Saviour near, and this wherever you are. It needs not that you ascend a special Pisgah or Moriah; it needs not that you should enter some awful shrine, or put off your shoes on some holy ground. Could a memento be reared on every spot from which an acceptable prayer has passed away, and on which a prompt answer has come down, we should find Jehovah-shammah, "The Lord hath been here," inscribed on many a cottage hearth and many a dungeon floor. We should find it, not only in Jerusalem's proud temple, David's cedar galleries, but in the fisherman's cottage by the brink in Genesaret, and in the upper chamber where Pentecost began. And whether it be the field where Isaac went to meditate, or the rocky knoll on which Jacob lay down to sleep, or the brook where Israel wrestled, or the den where Daniel gazed on the hungry lions and the lions gazed on him, or the hill-sides where the Man of Sorrows prayed all night, we should still discern the prints of the ladder's feet let down from heaven, the landing place of mercies because the starting-point of prayer.—Hamilton.

BUT ONE SABBATH IN THE WEEK.

A person being invited to go on an excursion for pleasure on the holy Sabbath, replied, "I should like an excursion very well; but I have but one Sabbath in the week and I can't spare that."

This expresses an important truth in an impressive manner. When we have but one day in the week exclusively devoted to the concerns of eternity, while six are devoted to the affairs of time, can we spare that one day for pleasure? It is the best day of the seven. It is worth more than all the rest. If rightly employed, it will bring us a richer return. What we can earn in six days is perishable; but the fruits of a well-spent Sabbath will endure forever. The Sabbath, when properly spent, is the day for the highest kind of employment or rather enjoyment. If, therefore, you would seek mere earthly pleasure, you can better afford to take any other day in the week for it than to take the holy Sabbath.

USELESS YOUNG LADIES.

A contemporary thus seriously speaks of that very large class of useless young ladies who glory in being above useful employment:

The number of idle, useless girls in our large cities seems to be steadily increasing. They lounge or sleep through their 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 duties—nay, 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 and domestic ruin follow?

—British Workman.

We must not walk by example, but by rule.