

Family Circle.

CHRIST KNOCKING AT THE POOR MAN'S DOOR.

[Jean Ingelow's volume of exquisite poems contain a sermon on knocking at the door, from which we make our brief extract, and only wish we could find room to print the whole.]

There was a poor old man Who sat and listened to the raging sea, And heard it thunder, lunging at the cliffs As like to tear them down. He lay at night, And, "Lord have mercy on the lads!" said he, "That sailed at noon, tho' they be none of mine;

For when the gale gets up, and when the wind Flings at the window, when it beats the roof, And lulls and stops and rouses up again, And cuts the crest clean off the plunging wave, And scatters it like feathers up the fields, Why then I think of my two lads: my lads That would have worked and never let me want, And never let me take the parish pay. No, none of mine; my lads were drowned at sea.

My two before the most of these were born. I know how sharp that cuts, since my poor wife Walked up and down, and still walked up and down.

And I walked after, and one could not hear A word the other said, for wind and sea That raged and beat and thundered in the night—

The sweetest, the longest, lightest night That ever parents had to spend. A moon That shone like daylight on the breaking wave. Ah, me! and other men have lost their lads, And other women wiped their poor dead mouths.

"Ay, I was strong And able-bodied—loved my work; but now I am a useless hulk; 'tis time I sunk; I am in all men's way; I trouble them; I am a trouble to myself, but yet I feel for mariners of stormy nights, And feel for wives that watch ashore. Ay, ay, If I had learning I would pray the Lord To bring them in; but I'm no scholar, no; Book learning is a world too hard for me; But I make bold to say, 'O Lord, good Lord, I am a broken-down poor man, a fool To speak to thee: but in the book 'tis writ, As I hear say from others that can read, How, when Thou comest, Thou didst love the sea,

And live with fisher folk, whereby 'tis said, Thou knowest all the perils they go through, And all their trouble. As for me, good Lord, I have no boat; I am too old, too old— My lads are drowned; I buried my poor wife; My little lasses died so long ago. That makes me forget what they were like. Thou knowest, Lord, they were such little ones.

I know they want to thee, but I forget Their faces, though I missed them sore. "O Lord; I was a strong man—I have drawn good food And made good money out of Thy great sea— But yet I cried for them at night; and now, Although I be so old, I miss my lads. And there be many folk, this stormy night, Heavy with fear for their—Merciful Lord, Comfort them! Save their honest boys, their pride, And let them hear, next ebb, the blessedest Best sound—the boat-keels grating on the sand. But Lord, I am a trouble! and I sit And I am lonesome, and the nights are few That any think to come and draw a chair, And sit in my poor place and talk awhile. Why should they come, forsooth? Only the wind

Knocks at my door, O long and loud it knocks, The only thing God makes that has a mind To enter in."

Yes, thus the old man spake, These were the last words of his aged mouth.— But ONE DID KNOCK. One came to sup with him.

That humble, weak old man! knocked at his door. In the rough paucity of the laboring wind. What he said. In that poor place where he did talk awhile, I cannot tell; but this I am assured, That when the neighbors came the morrow morn,

What time the wind had bated, and the sun Shone on the old man's door, they saw the smile He passed away in, and they said, "He looks As he had woke and seen the face of Christ, And with that rapturous smile held out his arms To come to Him."

Can such an one be here? So old, so weak, so ignorant, so frail, The Lord be good to thee, thou poor old man; It would be hard with thee if heaven were shut To such as have not learning. Nay, nay, nay, He condescends to them of low estate: To such as are despised He cometh down, Stands at the door and knocks.

SITTING ON THE SHORE.

The tide has ebbed away: No more wild dashing 'gainst the adamant rocks, Nor swaying amidst sea-weed false that mocks The hues of garden gay;

No laugh of little wavelets at their play; No lucid pools reflecting heaven's clear brow; Both storm and calm alike are ended now.

The rocks sit gray and lone; The shifting sand is spread so smooth and dry, That not a tide might ever have swept by, Stirring it with rude moan: Only some weedy fragments tidily thrown To rot beneath the sky, tell what has been; But Desolation's self has grown serene.

After the mountains rise, And the broad expanse widens out, All sunshine; wheedling round and round about Seaward, a white bird flies; A bird? Nay, seems it rather to these eyes

A spirit, or Eternity's dim sea Calling—"Come thou where all we glad souls be."

Oh! life! O silent shore! Where we sit patient: O great sea, beyond, To which we turn with solemn hope and fond, But sorrowful no more!

But little while and then we too shall soar Like white-winged sea-birds in the Infinite Deep; Till then, O Father, wilt our spirits keep.—Miss Mulock.

DON'T WRITE THERE.

"Don't write there," said one to a lad who was writing with a diamond pin on a pane of glass in the window of a hotel. "Why?" said he.

"Because you can't rub it out." There are other things which men should not do, because they cannot rub them out. A heart is aching for sympathy, and a cold, perhaps heartless word is spoken. The impression may be more durable than that of the diamond upon the glass. The inscription on the glass may be destroyed by the fracture of the glass, but the impression on the heart may last forever.

On many a mind and many a heart, there are sad inscriptions, deeply engraved, which no effort can erase. We should be careful what we write on the minds of others.—Merry's Museum.

MATCHES.

By the Misses Warner, Authors of the "Wide World," "Old Helmet," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Look at any little match boy, as he stands in the street, and it will never come into your mind that he is going to be anything great. How can he? No friends, no money, no education; not even a jacket that is not patched, and often no shoes to his feet. Many people think he is not fit even to sell matches, they do not like to buy such a looking boy—hardly to speak to him: they never think of giving him a helping hand. Something great? certainly he does not look as if that were possible for him. But remember, the things that are impossible with men, the Lord is accomplishing every day, and promotion cometh neither from the North, nor from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is the Judge.

If I should say it came into Johnny's head that he would be something great, I should say wrong. It came into his heart; and he resolved to be a preacher. I suppose he never even dreamed that he could be a preacher in one of the great city churches, from which came such crowds of gay ladies and gentlemen every Sunday; but into his heart, where the love of Christ had taken sweet possession, came the thought that he might go and preach to those wretched and forlorn people among whom he had once lived. Who needed to know the love of Jesus if they did not? Who could speak of its power so well as he? Yes, he would be a missionary to these poor defiled ones. He would be an ambassador from the King of kings to the poor outcasts of New York. He would be a light bearer in that thick darkness. Those sweet Bible words which he had learned to love so well, with them he would go, "holding forth the word of life." But in the mean time, he was only a little boy; and until he was old enough to be a real minister, he must read and study and learn a great deal, and prepare himself for the work; and he must earn money too, and pay his way in the world.

In what used to be the upper part of the city, though streets and houses have run far beyond it now, there is a large building called the Union Theological Seminary. Here go many young men who intend to be ministers; here they live and study for several years, till they can go out into the world and preach. At the time of which I write, the superintendent of Johnny's Sunday-school was one of these students; preparing himself to go as a missionary to some far-distant heathen country. And when he found out what desire was in Johnny's heart, instead of laughing at poor little "Matches" for wanting to be a minister, he did everything he could to help him on. There was another student already in his room at the Seminary, but the two found a place in one corner for a little bed that was just large enough for Johnny; and there the little boy came to live, that he might have more time for his studies, and better help in them than he could at the Lodging House. You may guess how glad he was. They were but poor themselves, these students; they had to work hard, many of them, to pay their own way; but what they had to give Johnny, they gave freely: room, and counsel, and kindness. And Johnny on his part grew very fond of them all, they were "so kind and unselfish," he said,—and seemed to understand one so well. But they could not support him; that he must do for himself; so the little match basket was almost as busy as ever.

And this was the fashion of Johnny's new way of life. From nine in the morning till three in the afternoon he went to school. From three to four he went to the rounds with his basket, selling matches and books and steel pens and other trifles; from four until half-past six he studied his lessons, then had his supper, went round once more with his basket, took one more time of reading, and went to bed. The two grown up students in that room were very kind to their little comrade, and helped him in every way they could; and when he went about among the rest with his basket, he met a ready welcome from all; for he had a happy little face that everybody liked to see. The students bought his wares; helped him in his studies, and when they had time debated with him all sorts of knotty questions; for this last was Johnny's delight.

You can imagine him—the little lame boy, going up the long stairs and through the gas-lit halls; just at the end of some winter's day, with his basket. Here is a customer's door, and Johnny knocks. "Come in!"

"Mr. Smith, I've got some better pens to-day, warranted not to sputter." Mr. Smith looks at the pens.

"I wouldn't warrant them, Johnny, if I were you."

"But won't you try 'em, sir? Then if you say they're good I can warrant 'em afterwards."

"And if they're not good, I suppose you refund the cents, eh, Johnny?"

"Couldn't afford that, sir."

"Well how can I afford to throw away sixpence on steel pens that may sputter?" says Mr. Smith. "However, here goes. That's a good sixpence, Johnny. I wish your pens looked half as promising."

"Thank you, sir. Maybe they'll be better than their words."

"What are you so happy about to-day?" says the student, glancing at the little face that shone so pleasantly.

"O I'm happy every day," answers the little boy.

"I know you are. But what is it to-day?"

"O to-day, sir, it's just those words, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" And Johnny makes his bow and shuts the door softly, and goes limping along the hall, humming to himself—

"The soul that to Jesus hath fled for repose I will not, I will not, desert to his foes." Another door and another knock.

"Come in, Johnny, I know that is you. And so you've no fear of being deserted?"

"No sir, not a bit."

"Why not?" says the student, leaning back in his chair and looking at Johnny.

"I couldn't be, sir. God has promised."

"Does the devil never tempt you to doubt his word?"

"O yes, sir, very often. He did to-day. And then I just gave him a knock with Heb. 13, 5. Tell you what, sir, it was too much for him; he ran right off and I haven't seen him since."

"Well, Johnny, 'hold fast that which thou hast received.' The devil will not be able to try us long; we shall not long have to strive with sin. A little while, and then the Lord will say 'Down crosses, and down sin, and down sorrow; and up glory, up joy, for evermore.'"

Johnny folded his hands with a quiet sigh of satisfaction.

"Mr. Fearing, I don't think anybody but me knows how good the Lord is."

"A good many people have felt enough of his loving kindness to know something about it, Johnny."

"Yes, sir; but they don't know what it is to be a street boy and have Jesus pick you up!"

"When you and I get to be ministers, Johnny, we'll try and have a 'street boy' church."

"Yes indeed," answers Johnny, seizing his basket, "and I must hurry and learn, and get money just as fast as I can. Maybe I'll have enough to build the church myself. What'll you buy to-day, Mr. Fearing?"

Only some shoe-strings, Johnny, if you have them good."

"First rate, sir." And Johnny limps along to the next door, singing softly and joyfully.

"Oh how merciful! Oh how pitiful! Oh how merciful! The Lord has been to me!"

He does not knock here, but opens the door very gently and looks in.

"Mr. Elton, ain't your matches gone?"

"Come in, my boy—why no, how could they be? I bought a box only three days ago."

"Sometimes you use them up very fast, Mr. Elton."

"Yes, when I drop the whole box in the fire. But that is too expensive carelessness to be repeated. Johnny, don't you want some dinner?"

"I guess it is near dinner time," says Johnny, hesitating a little. "But it's not far to my room, sir, and I've most gone the rounds."

"Have you? then you must be hungry. Put your basket down, and yourself in that chair, and I'll see what I've got."

Nothing in the room promised much and even the dress of the young student was very thin and threadbare,—a rich man might have given him untold comforts by the gift of ten dollars! Yet Johnny liked Mr. Elton the best of all his customers, and now watched him with loving eyes as he went to the closet and brought out a plate of crackers and a small jar.

"Some kind lady sent me a jar of marmalade yesterday, Johnny," he said, "so we can have a royal dinner." And the thanks given first over the slender meal, were full and deep and true.

"Well, Mr. Elton," said Johnny, "if you give me the dinner I guess I'll stand the desert!" And with that Johnny dived down into the corner of his basket, and brought out two red-checked apples, the last there, which he laid on the table.

"Apples seem to have found a good market to-day," said Mr. Elton, looking at the basket.

"Yes, sir, pretty good; I hadn't so many to begin with, though. But there's days when everybody wants apples."

"Even you," said his friend.

"Yes, sir," said Johnny. "Sometimes I do, but not the same days other folks do. I don't eat 'em very often. I don't eat nigh so many apples as I did once. But it's a wonderful deal better to sell 'em than to steal 'em." Mr. Elton, which is the biggest sin—lying or stealing?"

"That Jesus has 'all power in heaven and earth?"

"How do they look now?" said his friend.

"I don't seem to see 'em so much now, Mr. Elton, it made me so miserable to look at 'em—and then I took to looking at Jesus, and when you see 'im, you know sir, you can't see much else."

"No indeed," said Mr. Elton, "it is a happy thing to lose sight of ourselves in that way."

"Yes, sir, I used to go round the streets thinking, 'O who's like Johnny More? so wicked and so ignorant.' But now as I go along I'm all the time thinking, 'O who's like Jesus?'"

And beating his hands softly together, Johnny sung:

"O who's like Jesus? He died on the tree! O he died for you, And he died for me, He died to set poor sinners free. O who's like Jesus?"

SELECTIONS.

FAMILY WORSHIP.

Not a few Christians who desire, above all things, that their children should serve the Lord, neglect the best means to secure that result. They pray for them, are careful to have them attend Sunday-school and public worship, and occasionally exhort them to seek the Lord. What more can they do? They can maintain a Christian atmosphere at home. The experience of the Church proves that no influence equals home religion in converting children to Christ. And the most fit and potent expression of family religion is in family worship every day. The reading of the Bible and prayer daily, when children are growing up, is like the perpetual sunlight, changing and renewing the hearts by gradual, silent progress.

Let parents read and kneel before the Lord, have all the children kneel, from smallest to greatest, and they acquire a reverence and love for the Saviour, that will make them feel that a household without prayer is heathen, vulgar, intolerable. They love their parents, and reverse their superior wisdom, and when, from early childhood, they see them bow and pray, they come to regard prayer as an essential part of daily life.

But in order to do this, the worship must be regular and devout, and the whole family engage in it. Some families are not careful to have the children present when they worship. This is very wrong. The children, above all others, are benefitted, and should always be present. Some do not teach the children to kneel during prayer, and hence, they awkwardly sit in their seats while the parents kneel. This is a sad mistake. If they do not kneel, they naturally suppose that they have no part nor lot in the devotions, and soon feel that it is wrong for them to bow before the Lord. We have seen many cases where grown-up sons and daughters had never bent the knee before the Lord, and thought it wrong to kneel until they were Christians. In this way they were made more shy and stubborn, and felt that there was an impassable barrier between them and Christ. This feeling is wrong and unnecessary. If family worship had been rightly observed they would have felt that they were very near the Saviour, and would easily be inclined to give their hearts to him. Indeed children thus trained seldom grow to maturity without becoming practically Christians.—Morning Star.

THE BOY WHO CONQUERED.

Some few years ago, a lad who was left without father or mother, of good natural abilities, went to New York, alone and friendless, to get a situation in a store as errand boy, or otherwise, until he could command a higher position; but this boy had been in bad company, and had got into the habit of calling for his "bitfers" occasionally, because he thought it looked manly. He smoked cheap cigars, also.

He had a pretty good education, and on looking over the papers, he noticed that a merchant in Pearl street wanted a lad of his age, and he called there and made his business known.

"Walk into the office, my lad," said the merchant. "I'll attend to you soon."

When he had waited on his customer, he took a seat near the lad, and espied a cigar in his hat. This was enough.

"My boy," said he, "I want a smart, honest, faithful lad; but I see that you smoke cigars, and in my experience of many years, I have ever found cigar-smoking in lads to be connected with various other evil habits; and if I am not mistaken, your breath is an evidence that you are not an exception. You can leave; you will not suit me."

John (this was his name) held down his head and left the store; and as he walked along the street, a stranger and friendless, the counsel of his poor mother came forcibly to his mind, who, upon her death-bed, called him to her side, and placing her emaciated hand on his head, said, "Johnny, my dear boy, I'm going to leave you. You will know what disgrace and misery your father brought on us before his death, and I want you to promise me before I die that you will never taste one drop of the accursed poison that killed your father. Promise me this, and be a good boy, Johnny, and I shall die in peace."

The scalding tears trickled down Johnny's cheeks, and he promised ever to remember the dying words of his

mother, and never to drink any spirituous liquors; but he soon forgot his promise, and when he received the rebuke from the merchant he remembered what his mother said, and what he had promised her, and he cried aloud, and people gazed at him as he passed along and boys railed at him. He went to his lodgings, and throwing himself upon his bed, gave vent to his feelings in sobs that were heard all over the house.

But John had moral courage. He had energy and determination, and ere an hour had passed he had made up his mind never to taste another drop of liquor, nor smoke another cigar as long as he lived. He went straight back to the merchant. Said he, "Sir, you very properly sent me away this morning for habits that I have been guilty of; but, sir, I have neither father nor mother, and though I have occasionally done what I ought not to do, and have not followed the good advice of my poor mother on her death-bed, nor done as I promised her I would do, yet I have now made a solemn vow never to drink another drop of liquor; nor to smoke another cigar; and if you, sir, will only try me, it is all I ask."

The merchant was struck with the decision and energy of the boy, and at once employed him. At the expiration of five years this lad was a partner in the business, and is now worth ten thousand dollars. He has faithfully kept his pledge, to which he owes his elevation.

Boys, think of this circumstance as you enter upon the duties of life, and remember upon what points of character your destiny for good or for evil depends.—Northern Farmer.

THE HARP IN HEAVEN.

One of the sweetest recollections of my girlhood is a beautiful reply my mother once made me, when my heart was swelling with childish grief.

I had just returned from the house of a wealthy neighbor, who had kindly given me the use of their piano for a few hours every day, to gratify my extreme love for music. Our own cottage looked so plain in contrast with the one I had just left, and no piano within its walls, that I laid my head upon the table and gave vent to my overflowing heart. I felt grieved and perhaps a little angry, that we were unable to afford the one thing I desired above all others—a piano—and expressed my feelings to my mother.

Never shall I forget her sweet, gentle tone, as she simply replied, "Never mind, daughter, if you cannot have a piano on earth you can have a harp in heaven." Instantly the whole current of my feelings was changed. Earthly things dwindled into insignificance, and the "harp in heaven" with its golden strings, became the object of my desire. I felt reprieved for my repinings against the Providence that had placed me in an humble home, and from that moment the enjoyments of heaven seemed far to outweigh all the pleasures of earth. That beautiful reply has followed me all my life, or rather, has gone before me like a bright guiding star—lifting my thoughts above this transient life, and opening to my spirit's vision the glorious scenes in that "land of life and light." I have a "piano on earth" now, but its charm is gone. Its music no longer gladdens my heart as it once did; for the ears that loved best to listen to its sweet tones, are now enraptured with the grand harmonies of heaven. The dear fingers that so often touched its keys now sweep the golden harp strings. O, that "harp in heaven!" How my soul longs for one breath of its rich melody!

As I look upon the dear baby fingers in the cradle near me, I think it matters little whether my child be poor or rich—whether her path be strewn with thorns or flowers—if she may only have a "harp in heaven."—Exchange.

A GOOD PROVIDER.

Sarah was a poor, sick girl. She had a bent spine, and was confined to her bed, sometimes suffering the greatest pain. But she was a child of God, and I want to show you how sweet she found it to trust her Father in heaven.

Winter was coming, her last food was eaten, and every cent was gone. She was destitute of clothing, bedding, fire, and light. "What is to be done now?" "The Lord will provide," said Sarah.

"The comfort I then enjoyed, of being entirely destitute and in my Father's hands was more than I could express," she said afterwards. "I never before knew the fullness of promises." "The Lord will provide" was a feast. While I was praying and meditating a knock was heard at the door, and a package of clothing, left with money enough to pay all my needful expenses." This was indeed being fed and clothed by faith.

She wrote to her aunt, "My ever dear aunt, I have learned not to make my wants known to any earthly friends, but to cast them all upon my heavenly Father, who careth for me, and to wait his time and way of supply. I have the same kind hand to provide for me that the prophet had, who was fed by the ravens. I shall never suffer want. My Father gives me more than I ask for, or I feel I need."

How blessed to be a little child of our heavenly Father, stretching out our hand to him to lead and guide us.

"Jasper was an only child, and an only child is apt to be spoiled. His mother was a poor widow, and oftentimes

Jasper felt very much for his poor sick mother, and he tried to help her every way he could. He did not think she must wait upon him, as some boys do; but he made it his pleasure to wait upon her. Sometimes he made her bed, cooked her breakfast, swept her room. Then he did errands for the neighbors, and in this way earned many pennies.

One day a gentleman gave Jasper his old fishing-rod. This pleased the little boy. He said he should be a fisherman; and the next day he went down on Long-wharf and caught guppies, a fine little fish for frying. These he knew he could sell; but he did not forget the gentleman who gave him the rod. "Sir," said Jasper, finding Mr. Lane in his piazza, "I brought you some cunners."

"How much do you ask?" "Oh, nothing, sir," said Jasper; "I brought them for thanks." "For thanks!" cried the gentleman; "you need not thank me."

"Well I have thanked God," said the little boy.

"And you can't give him anything," said Mr. Lane.

"Yes, sir," answered Jasper, "I can give myself to him. 'Tis all I can do, 'the hymn says.'"

"And do you suppose he'd take the gift of you?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said Jasper humbly, "because he said when he was upon the earth, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.'"

Mr. Lane found the little boy had the best of it, so he took the cunners and said no more.

That night he sent Jasper's mother a five-dollar bill.

You see how a good boy can be a praise and blessing to his mother.—Child's Paper.

I AM SO GLAD FOR I AM A BAD CHILD.

A few years ago a Christian (who is now with the Lord, whom he loved and served here) was, one Lord's day, speaking of the great love of Jesus to the children of a little school not many miles from London.

During his address he asked them this question: "What sort of children does Jesus love?" Instantly one and another answered, "Good children! Good children!" The teacher was silent; the children began to see, from the expression of his countenance, that they had not given the answer he wanted; but what other they could give they did not know, and they were much perplexed.

Presently he said, "Jesus loves bad children." They seemed surprised at hearing this, and one little girl asked, anxiously, whether it was really true, thinking, I suppose, that it was too good to be true. On being again assured that it was quite true, because Jesus said, "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," she burst into tears and said, "I am so glad, then; for I am a bad child." That teacher was right. Jesus really loves bad children, not for being bad, mark you, but because their souls are precious, and he wishes to wash their sins away in his own blood. Now, if a bad child will not let Jesus do this, but will stick to his sins, then Jesus will cast him off, and let him have his evil way and perish in his sins.—Well Spring.

CAST ALL ON CHRIST.

Bring them hither to Me, Matt. xiv. 18. Our compassionate Lord was surrounded by a starving, fainting multitude: His disciples had only five small, coarse loaves, and two little fishes, and yet He had bidden them to feed the company. The commands of Jesus are often intended to try our faith, and bring us as children to His feet. He says, "Bring them to me." Things are not what they appear, but what Jesus makes them. His blessing produces a wonderful change. He bids you bring everything to Him. Have you a family? He says, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not?" Have you trials? Take them to Him; His blessing sweetens and lessens trials. Are you in poverty? carry your poverty to Him; He can increase your little, and bless it with a peculiar flavor. Whatever troubles you this day, or any day, think that you hear Jesus saying, "Bring it hither to Me." Carry all things to Him, small things as well as great ones; it is only by so doing, that you can surmount trials; conquer foes; glory in tribulation; and joy in God.

The privilege I greatly prize, Of casting all my care on Him, The mighty God, the only wise, Who reigns in heaven and earth supreme, How sweet to be allowed to call, The God whom heaven adores my friend; To tell my thoughts, to tell Him all; And then to know my prayers ascend.—Green Pastures.

A GENTLEMAN visiting an institution for the deaf and dumb, asked one of the children, "Who created the world?" The child, wrote in reply, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "Who redeemed mankind?" "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son that the world through him might be saved." "And who formed you deaf and dumb?" The child became agitated and burst into tears; at length recovering himself, he wrote, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Living.—He who tells a lie, is sensible how great a task he undertakes for he must be forced to invent more to maintain that one.—Po