

Family Circle.

TO MY CLOSET.

I am weary of this turmoil, din and str / I am weary of earth's jostling, selfish way; / I am weary of my sinning, of my groaning, / of my life: / Open, closet, still and holy, / Open, closet, bending lowly / Let me enter; I would pray. / O, to enter but with Jesus where 'tis still, / There to pour out unreprieved my pent-up / tears; / In that hush to list His praying—"Righteous / Father, keep from ill!" / Open, closet, still and holy, / Open, closet, bending lowly, / Take me where the Father hears. / 'Tis "the Holiest of Holies" shuts me in, / The Shechinah of God's presence drawing / near, / And like incense clouds to wrap me is the / Comforter within. / Open, closet, still and holy, / Open, closet, bending lowly / Take me—peace doth wait me here. / O, the nearness, O, the sweetness of the place! / Here with Jesus only lingering I stay: / 'Tis so near I grasp His loving hand, 'e'en al- / most see His face. / Open, closet, still and holy, / Open, closet, bending lowly, / Let me enter; I must pray / Here I cannot choose but grasp His offered / hand; / 'Tis so near, and taking, keep it all the day; / O, so strong, it stays me sweetly, in His hold- / ing I must stand. / Blessed closet, still and holy, / Open, quickly, bending lowly / Let me enter; I must pray.

"Who murmurs that in these dark days / His lot is cast? / God's hand within the shadow lays / The stones whereon his gates of praise / Shall rise at last. / Turn and return, O, outstretched hand, / Nor slink, nor stay— / The years have never dropped their sand / On mortal issues vast and grand / As ours to day. / Already on the sable ground / Of men's despair, / Is Freedom's glorious picture found, / With all its dusky hands unbound, / Upraised in prayer. / Oh, small shall seem all sacrifice, / And grief, and loss, / When God shall wipe the weeping eyes, / For suffering give the Victor's prize, / The Crown—for Cross!"

LOOKING BACK.

James Brainard Taylor says in his journal, that we may regard it a bad sign when we find ourselves looking back to past Christian experience for evidences of piety. Truly it is one of Satan's most effectual devices.

In the early ardor of a Christian hope, in the full energy and enthusiasm of youth, we may seem to accomplish much in the service of Christ. But when that youthful ardor has abated, and enthusiasm has become tamed by defeat, when worldlines has crept over the soul, slumbering on some lap of ease, and has shorn its strength, we awake to take up the lamentation "Where is the blessedness I knew When first I saw the Lord."

Then the danger is that we shall not return at once to our first love, and devotedness to the service of Christ, but shall be content with an indolent purpose to do so, which day after day remains unfulfilled. Then self-examination becomes a dark task from which we shrink. We avoid such present, and personal questions as "Have I to-day prayed as much and earnestly as I ought? Have I to-day set a holy example before my family and the world? Have I to-day tried to lead any soul to Christ? How much easier for such an one to think and speak of what he has done, or means to do, than of what he did to-day.

I have heard people tell what they were enabled to do for Christ twenty-five years ago, till their hearts seemed to grow warm in the recital, but they spoke no word of what they had done for Christ that day.

Oh there is no more fearful crisis in the soul's history, than that in which it stands, while it can only look back for evidence of a living faith in Christ.

MARA ARRELL.

SELECTIONS.

"I HEARD SINGING TONIGHT."

"I'll tell you what, I heard singi- / tonight that made me wish I was in / heaven, or good enough to go there," / said an old backwoodsman to his wife, / as, entering their log hut, he sat down / to his evening meal. "Where did you / hear it?" she asked. "At our neigh- / bor's, up yonder. They must feel / something I don't know about, or they / couldn't sing so." "When they first / came here," said the wife, "I thought / they were proud and stiff; but they are / real good neighbors; and I heard they / were good folks, too." "Well," said / he, "I mean to go to church, to-mor- / row, and see if I can't hear some singi- / like that."

The singer knew that her neighbors / were ignorant, rough, and unbelieving, / nearing the decline of life, and unwilling / to be approached on the subject of reli- / gion. The old wife especially was so / nearly a heathen, that she would never / enter a church, never allow the visit of / a minister, nor listen to the reading of / God's word or even to the singing of a / hymn. The man was a poor but honest / day-laborer, who had ruined his worldly / affairs by indulgence in strong drink, / but had been lifted out of the pit, and / been sober for many years. Still he / was a rough, swearing man, and his / heart unsoftened by any religious influ- / ences. / One glorious summer evening as the

sun was going down, the lady seated / herself at the door, and involuntarily / turned her voice to Mrs. Heman's sweet / vesper song, "Come to the nearest tree." / She felt the spirit of the heavenly words, / and sang with fervor. When near the / close of the hymn, she cast her eyes to / the field where her neighbor was at / work, and saw that he was listening in- / tently. Instantly the thought flashed / into her mind, "Oh, if I could raise / that poor man to think of heaven." / She closed her refrain and then com- / menced, "On Jordan's stormy banks I / stand," singing it "with the spirit and / the understanding also." The firma- / ment above her foreshadowed the glo- / ries of that state described by the hymn, / and the beauty of the green earth / reminded her of the pastures above / where the redeemed are walking by the / river of life. And as she sang, the old / man listened, almost spell-bound. The / singer did not wish to call admiration / of her full toned voice; she wished to / glorify God by leading one of his crea- / tures to think of him. "I will sing to / God's praise whenever he can hear me, / and perhaps he may be led to praise / the Lord himself," was her mental re- / solve. / The next Sabbath the old man was at / church. This cheered the lady, and / she said, "I will sing whenever he / comes." Ere another week was closed / he was at work again. This time she / sang: / "Just as I am, without one plea, / But that thy blood was shed for me," / Slowly, distinctly, she sang, that he / might take in the full meaning of the / words, and feeling their sweet pathos in / her inmost soul, she poured out all the / hymn. The listener shook his head, / and rubbed his hand quickly over his / eyes. / The next Sabbath evening he was / among the praying people of God, ear- / nestly inquiring for the way of salvation. / The singer had sowed, and earnestly / asked the Lord to make him one of his / own children. It may be that other / influences led him to the house of God / and to think of his soul, but certainly / God has blessed the voice of music as / one of his instruments. / Seeking further to do good, the lady / encouraged his poor ignorant wife in / many friendly ways, and one day in- / vited her into the parlor to hear her piano. / She had never seen nor heard such an / instrument, and was wonderstruck. / The lady called her daughters to her / side, and all joined in singing, "All hail / the power of Jesus' name," in old Cora- / tion. / "Do you like that?" said the lady. / "Oh, it's nice. I b'l'v'e I heard that / tune somewhere when I was a gal, but / I've forgot."

"Probably you heard it at church. / It is often sung there. We cannot sing / the praises of Jesus too often, for he / came to save us, poor sinners." Then / they all sang, "Come humble sinner, in / whose breast," &c. The woman rose / and said she must go, and was invited / to "come again." "Oh, I'll come / often, if I can hear you sing."

"Mother, you take a strange way to / win souls; do you think you will suc- / ceed?" / "Why not, my daughter? Has not / God commanded that whatsoever we do / should be done to his glory? And if / he has given us voices to sing, should / we not use them in his service? There / are many ears who will listen to a hymn / for the sake of the tune, who will not / hear a word from the Bible. Our voi- / ces and our musical instruments should / all be employed in winning lost souls."

SCATTER BLESSINGS.

BY MINNIE W. MAY.

Parson Gillette said in his sermon last / evening, we must scatter blessings, and / Amy Woodford went home thoughtful. / She was the wife of a year—a happy, be- / loved wife. Her home a perfect gem, / everything new and nice about it; a / strong, handy Scotch girl to do the / hard work, and Amy only had the par- / lours and her own room to put in order, / and an occasional choice dish to prepare / for her husband, to look after things a / little, and then she read and sang, and / dallied over her sewing as she pleased. / A quiet, happy life she led, but through / it crept a shadow of dissatisfaction, for / she was doing so little to promote any / good, and just seeking her own enjoy- / ment. / The sermon had set her to thinking. / Perhaps the work she might do went / straying through her dreams, for she had / not forgotten when Monday morning / dawned the good resolutions of the night / before, and after Mr. Woodford had gone / to his office, she stood by the parlor / window, idly scraping the frost from the / pane with her slender fingers, and then / she walked up to the fire and held the / small, soft palm of her chilled hands to / catch the refreshing warmth. "We must / scatter blessings." Well, and what / can I do, in my little humble sphere? / There are no prisons into which I can / carry the cheering light of human kind- / ness, and with the finger of faith point / the poor, doomed criminal to that world, / where, through the mercies of a forgiv- / ing Saviour, he may one day be free: / no hospitals, where I can soothe and / cheer the brave, noble men who have / given their lives a sacrifice upon the altar / of liberty; not cases of real, abject / poverty which I can relieve, for I know / every one in this quiet village; so what / can I do?

"Never mind; you may keep it all." / The child turned the bank note over / and over in his hand, smoothed it affec- / tionately, and looked up, with his eyes / brimful of astonishment and joy. "I / do not believe I ever had so much money / in all my life before. It will help / along so much." / "Is your mother very poor, little / boy?" / "Oh, not dreadful. We are pretty / comfortable when father has work; but / lately there isn't much doing, and some / weeks he does not get hardly anything, / and then we have to live on potatoes / and salt, and a little corn bread, and / I thought if I could just get a little / butter with my half dollar, it would be / so nice."

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