

The Family Circle.

SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Old Time has turned another page  
Of eternity and truth;  
He reads with a warning voice of age,  
And whispers a lesson to youth.  
A year has fled o'er heart and head  
Since last the yule log burnt;  
And we have a task to closely ask,  
What the bosom and brain have learnt?  
Oh! let us hope that our sands have run  
With wisdom's precious grains;  
Oh! may we find that our hands have done  
Some work of glorious pains.  
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year.

While the holly gleams above us;  
With a pardon for the foes who hate,  
And a prayer for those who love us.  
We may have seen some loved ones pass  
To the land of hallowed rest;  
We may miss the glow of an honest brow  
And the warmth of a friendly breast;  
But if we nursed them while on earth,  
With hearts all true and kind,  
Will their spirits blame the sinless mirth  
Of those true hearts left behind?  
No! no! it were not well or wise  
To mourn with endless pain  
There's a better world beyond the skies,  
Where the good shall meet again.  
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year.

While the holly gleams above us;  
With a pardon for the foes who hate,  
And a prayer for those who love us.  
Have our days rolled on serenely free  
From sorrow's dim alloy?  
Do we still possess the gifts that bless  
And fill our souls with joy?  
Are the creatures dead still clinging near?  
Do we hear loved voices come?  
Do we gaze on eyes whose glances shed  
A halo round our home?  
Oh, if we do, let thanks be poured  
To Him who hath spared and given,  
And forgive not o'er the festive board  
The mercies held from Heaven.  
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year.

While the holly gleams above us!  
With a pardon for the foes who hate,  
And a prayer for those who love us.  
—*Eclectic Magazine.*

FOR THE STRICKEN.

O wistful eyes! that will not cease  
From gazing sadly after one  
Who went out in the dark alone,  
Although we say, "He is at peace!"  
O hearts! that will not turn away,  
But questioning stand without the door;  
He passeth through it never more,  
For he hath reached the better day!  
Even when we thought him most our own,  
His crown was nearest to his brow;  
And he redeemed his early vow,  
And passed, with all his armor on.  
He turned to clasp a shadowy hand,  
Unreal to our duller eyes;  
He saw the gleams of Paradise  
Break through the darkness of the land.  
His gain exceedeth all our loss;  
We linger on these barren sands,—  
He is a dweller in the lands  
Bequeathed the soldiers of the cross!  
—*Daily of Battle.*

A TIGER STORY.

Lucy and Fanny were two little girls, who lived with their papa and mamma in London. When Lucy was six and Fanny five years old, their uncle George came home from India. This was a great joy to them; he was so kind, and had so much to tell them about far-away places, and strange people, and animals, and things, such as they had never seen. They never wearied of hearing his stories, and he did not seem to weary of them either.

One day, after dinner, they both climbed on his knees; and Lucy said: "O, uncle, do tell us a tiger story!"  
"We have seen a living tiger in the Zoological Gardens; and what a fierce-looking animal it was! We were afraid to go near the bar of its iron house. Uncle, did you ever see them in India?"

"Yes, indeed, I have, both alive and dead; and very fierce they were."  
"Do tell us about them. Do not the tigers sometimes run away with little children?"

"Yes, if they are very hungry, and can get near them without being seen. I will tell you a story about a tiger and a baby which happened to some friends of my own."

"O, that will be so nice!"

"Well, this gentleman and lady had one sweet little baby, and they had to take a very long journey with the child, through a wild part of India. There were no houses there, and they had to sleep in a tent. This is a kind of house made of cloth, by driving high sticks firmly into the ground, and then drawing curtains all over them. It is very comfortable and cool in a warm country where there is no rain; but then there are no windows or doors to shut, as we do at night, to make all safe. One night they had to sleep in a very wild place, near a thick wood. The lady said, "O, I feel so afraid to-night; I can not tell you how frightened I am, I know there are many tigers and wild animals in the wood; and what if they should come upon us?" Her husband replied, "My dear, we will make the servants light a fire, and keep watch, and you need have no fear; and we must put our trust in God." So the lady kissed her baby, and put the child into the cradle; and then she and her husband knelt down together, and prayed to God to keep them from every danger; and they repeated that pretty verse, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

"In the middle of the night the lady started up with a loud cry, "O, my baby! my baby! I dreamed just now that a tiger had crept below the curtains, and run away with my child!" And when she looked into the cradle, the baby was not there! O, you may think how dreadful was their distress! They ran out of the tent, and there in

the moonlight they saw a great animal moving toward the wood, with something white in his mouth. They wakened all the servants, and got loaded guns, and all went after it into the woods. They went as fast, and yet as quietly as they could, and very soon they came to a place where they saw through the trees that the tiger had lain down and was playing with the baby, just as pussy does with a mouse before she kills it. The baby was not crying, and did not seem hurt. The poor father and mother could only pray to the Lord for help; and when one of the men took up his gun, the lady cried, "O! you will kill my child!" But the man raised the gun and fired at once, and God made him do it well. The tiger gave a loud howl, and jumped up, and then fell down again, shot quite dead. Then they all rushed forward, and there was the dear baby, quite safe and smiling, as if it were not at all afraid.

"O, uncle what a delightful story! And did the baby really live!"

"Yes; the poor lady was very ill afterward, but the baby not at all. I have seen the child often since then."

"O, have you really seen a baby that has been in a tiger's mouth?"

"Yes, I have, and you too."

"We, uncle! When have we seen it?"

"You may see him just now."

The children looked all round the room, and then back to uncle George, and something in his eyes made Lucy exclaim, "Uncle, could it have been yourself?"

"Just myself!"

"Is it true that you were once in a tiger's mouth? But you do not remember about it?"

"Certainly not; but my father and mother have often told me the story. You may be sure that often, when they looked at their child afterward, they gave thanks to God. It was he who made the mother dream, and awake just at the right minute, and made the tiger hold the baby by the clothes, so as not to inflict any hurt, and the man fire so as to shoot the tiger and not hurt the child. But now good-night, my dear girls; and before you go to bed, pray to God to keep you safe, as my friends did that night in the tent."

"But, uncle, we do not live in tents; our nursery door shuts quite close, and there are no tigers going about here. The man in the gardens told us that his one was quite safe locked up."

"Yes, my love, but there are many kinds of danger in this world, and we need God to take care of us here quite as much as in India. Good night, and learn by heart my mother's favorite verse, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'"

MOTHERS:

THE PRAYING AND THE PRAYERLESS.

A group of young and interesting girls were gathered in one of our institutions to listen to the words of eternal life. In the stillness of that Sabbath hour, the theme of the soul's necessities, and the great relief, were unfolded to their view; their hearts were touched, the Spirit of the Lord was there. The unbidden tear, the earnest, reverent expression, the bowed head, severally gave token of the varied emotions agitating this youthful circle. For many months had prayer and yearning desire looked towards this hour. Seed sown with faltering hand and trembling faith seemed bursting into radiant life. Angel bands were hovering in that hallowed room with rapt emotion; the book of life was opened, the recording angel waited to write the new names in the life-blood of the crucified. The valley of decision was reached, "the one was taken and the other left." At the close of that solemn hour divergent pathways opened before those youthful feet, seemingly near at the outset, but more and more widely diverging with every passing hour. A minor group went with faltering tread may be, yet growing ever more surely firm as each footfall rested in the footprint of Him who "walked before," each vision fixed upon the city of glorious foundations.

The other band of bright-immortal spirits, just as lovely and as hopeful an hour since, beguiled by the fascinations of their pathway, crushed the fearful soul-struggle, stilled the motions of conscience, and went forth on life's voyage without rudder or compass. To-day the light of Heaven is beaming brightly in the eye of the former group, and they are growing more and more into the image of Him whose signet is on their foreheads. Their life will win many on this coast to see beauty in the Son of God; will draw many from the vortex of sin and eternal death. They will be the light of their homes in the hours of joy; in sorrow they will be ministering angels; in the hour of extremity they will lead the dying sufferer into the very presence of Him to whom they have consecrated their lives.

The latter group will float on in the sunshine, attractive and beautiful, whiling away the tedium of the hour with many a gay device. The brilliant ball-room, the opera, the theatre will count them their most ardent votaries. They have chosen their destiny; their influence is on the wrong side of life; no one is made purer and holier from their contact; their young lives are even now a failure. In the hour of temptation and darkness the light of their life will be extinguished; no outstretched arm will upstay them then;

no guiding star will save them from destruction. Who is responsible? A careful inquiry has shown each to have been the child of a prayerless mother. No fervent supplication was arising in that hour of decision, for that precious immortal soul entrusted to her care; a lent treasure, for which strict inquisition will be made. No baptismal waters had bathed those pure white foreheads. They had been sent forth with no covenant blessing upon them, no prayer that they might be kept "unspotted from the world" had enfolded them in its impervious armor. In the day of conviction their souls were stirred apparently to the same depths as were the others; but there was no memory of a mother's pleading voice to add its wondrous impetus toward a right decision.

In the case of those who gave their hearts to the Saviour, each felt the impelling power of a mother's prayer. Their early memories are of Sabbath teachings and daily pleadings at the throne of grace; they wore the armor of the covenant of the children of God! —*The Pacific.*

FACTS UPON EARLY CONVERSIONS.

I was stopping at a house in the country where four or five children were met for play. Everything had been done to make them happy. One of the group, a girl about twelve years old, was thoughtful, and would not enter into their sports. All the incentives used by the rest to engage her in their sports failed. She would sit and silently look at them. After an hour had passed in this way the child withdrew quietly and unobserved. When her absence was discovered, search was made by her playmates. They called her, but she did not answer. Searching longer, they went to the barn, when they were attracted by her voice. Listening, they heard her praying, "Oh, my heavenly Father, I am a great sinner; have mercy upon me." This, with other similar sentences, was uttered repeatedly in a most reverent, supplicant, penitent manner. It is hardly necessary to say that this child has since professed faith in Christ.

I another place I was spending the night with a certain family. A little boy, always fond of music, brought his book and desired me to sing; but he wanted to find the pieces himself. He sat beside me and turned to one after another, all of them songs of awakening, such as, "Salvation, O the joyful sound," "Come to Jesus," "I want to be like Jesus." Afterward he wished to know how small a boy could be a Christian. It was strange that while he did all this, I did not think the little fellow was anxious for his own soul. But at evening devotions the whole truth was made plain; for during prayer, when God was besought to bless "little Johnny," he could no longer contain his feelings, but sobbed aloud. When prayer was ended, he immediately left the room, and was seen no more that night. For a long time in his little room I heard crying and words, but could not distinguish them. In the morning he appeared very dejected, and during the prayer whisperings were heard. But, sad to say, parental anxiety, to call it by no severer name, "quenched the smoking flax," and little Johnny is not a Christian.

One more instance. One of the clearest cases of conversion I have known in a long time, occurred on the 7th of August last, in the village of Bowmanville. We had a children's meeting, in which several children were converted. In reply to a communication from me, one of these little ones wrote as follows:

"BOWMANVILLE, Aug. 15, 1864.  
"Dear Friend: It is with pleasure that I take my pen to answer your kind letter which I received last Friday. I did not go to school to-day, but Millie has gone, and Auntie and Lucinda went to Clarence, and I have been alone most all day. But I have not felt as though I was alone; I have felt as though Jesus was with me. I feel as though he was with me wherever I go. And I am glad to say that I feel as though my sins are all forgiven. How much better I feel than I did two weeks ago! I now feel happy. The first Monday after you was here I felt so happy that I did not know what to do; and that night I was so happy that I could not go to sleep, but lay awake a long time, thinking what Jesus had done for me. I love to be by myself now. I want to be all alone, and have my Bible with me; it is the only book I want. I am glad to tell you that Rosa has repented of her sins. She now feels as I did, that she is a great sinner. I have so much to tell you about Jesus, that I cannot tell it all on paper. You must come and see us again as soon as you can, and stay longer than you did before. Pray for me, my Christian friend, that I may ever be found faithful, and that I may ever do my heavenly Father's will, and meet you at last in Heaven."

This was written by a girl about fourteen years old, and is given precisely like the original, excepting punctuation and capital letters. Did any one ever hear better testimony? What a blessed state of mind is that, "I lay awake a long time, thinking what Jesus had done for me." With David she can say, "my meditation of Him shall be sweet."

Oh, shall we not, as teachers and leaders of the young, awake to the fact that they are ready, anxious to come to Jesus, and are only waiting for us to extend the hand and lead the way? God give us grace to begin now, in this day of grace, our neglected duty in this regard. —*S. S. Times.*

BREAD FOR A SONG.

I want to tell a story to the little pouting, scowling, crying children who are never satisfied with their breakfast, dinner or supper. What! you may say, do the sweet little faces of the children actually put on such looks when the thousand and one good things do not please them? Yes, indeed, strange as it may seem, I have seen a boy throw away his pie and scream for fruit cake. I have seen a little girl put all the bread and pie crusts under her plate, and then pout and refuse to eat her dinner because she could not have jelly enough for half a dozen. Now all you plump rosy-cheeked children, who have nice fresh bread and sweet milk, with more cake, pudding and pie, than is good for you, listen to this little story. It was one of those cold, chilly days of November, when all seems so dull and dreary. The sky and every thing else looked lifeless and cold, and the wind blew around the corners in a fierce way, as though it would whirl you away, if it could, and every now and then a wee little snowflake, that looked as though it fell before it was half ready, came hither and thither in an uncertain way, just as the wind pleased, you know. But we were safe within doors, and the room was warm as June, and we were chatting merrily around the dinner-table, when there came a timid ring of the door-bell. Now there is something peculiar in the ringing even of a door-bell. Did you ever think of it? Sometimes it is the firm, strong ring of the solid business man, who has all the world on his shoulders, and knows how to carry it; sometimes it is the sharp quick ring of the postman as he goes his rounds. Ah! how many learn to listen eagerly for the signal, or wait his coming with dread. Now it is the professional ring of the doctor, who would not disturb a feeble moaning patient; then the dainty touch of a fashionable lady out making calls; or the noisy repeated peals of the children just coming home from school. But this was unlike all I have named; it sounded as though whoever touched the bell was but half assured of a right to do so, and so it was. A little child, a boy, perhaps six years old, was waiting with his bare feet on the cold stone steps, and the wind blowing through his torn cap. He wanted to "sing a song for a piece of bread!" "Let him have the bread," said one, "never mind the song."

"No," said another, "let us have the song." So he came into the hall, and down in the dining room we listened. In a moment a clear sweet voice began singing, "Who'll care for mother now?" "I cannot begin to tell you how sweet it was, as it came ringing and floating down, and yet, it seemed to me so pitiful, as though it was full of tears. Poor little wanderer, scarce old enough to leave his mother's knee, who cared for him?"

No living hand bathed his thin face with fragrant water when the golden sun came up and he left his wretched bed; no gentle fingers smoothed his tangled curls, or mended the rents in his miserable clothes, no pleasant breakfast table waited for him with silver cup and spoon and nourishing food. So he wandered about like the child Luther away over in Germany, singing songs for bits of bread. When his song was ended, his little cold hands were filled with food which he eagerly took and eat, and then he went out into the world again. Alas, little wanderer; what will become of him in the bitter cold days and nights that are coming,—who will give to him "bread that shall never perish?" And yet, he is only one of a city full, and the world is, oh, so great, and there are so many cities! Children, pity the poor wanderers blown like the snow flakes hither and thither, with no home and loved ones, and when at night you are tucked tenderly away in your soft white beds, and a dear good mother leaves you with a good night kiss on your lips, sometimes pray for the poor neglected boy who sung a song for a piece of bread. —*Boston Recorder.*

GRANDMA'S FORTUNE-TELLING.

"Now what mischief?" said grandma, smiling, as she entered the room and found the children huddled together by the book-case, evidently trying to cover up what they were about.

"Lizzie's telling fortunes," said little black-eyed Nell, looking up brightly. "Ah! that's it, is it?" said grandma, taking out the big knitting pegs, and a huge soft ball of crimson wool which seemed to grow fast under her fingers, into a warm, gay tippet for some of the little folks. "Well, come and sit around the fire, and let grandma tell fortunes for you. She's a master hand at it."

"Why, grandma," said the children, coming forward, "we were afraid you would think it was not right."  
"Well, I do not approve of common fortune-telling, but my kind will do no harm. It does not require a tea-cup, nor do I need to look into your hands. Still, I saw the directions in print once. To begin with Lizzie:—If a little girl with blue eyes, auburn hair, a quick mind, and nimble little feet and fingers, will use her eyes and mind well in getting a good education, and employ her feet and fingers in useful work, such as helping mother about the house, and taking plenty of exercise out of doors with little brothers and sisters; if she keeps her rosy lips

from ever pouting, and strives to love and obey God every day, she will be very likely to have a long, healthful life, to make a great many happy by it, to be good-looking in everybody's eyes, and beloved and respected everywhere as a sensible woman. How could anybody make out a better fortune than that for my little granddaughter? Every word of it is true, too; while most fortune-telling is only falsehoods put together.

"Now, Georgie, if a boy with black hair and eyes will learn to master his temper well, so that ever so great a provocation cannot make him angry, he will gain a greater victory than General Grant did at Vicksburg even. If he will study his books hard, and learn to be very accommodating at home when he is asked to do anything, everybody will look on him as a sensible boy, and love him for his obliging ways. It is the polite, civil people who make their way best in the world. Try, and see if you do not find it so."

"Now, if a little black-eyed four year old, like Nelly here, will run to grandma's room, and bring me the black silk work-bag which hangs on the chair-back, I should not wonder if she, or her grandmother, could find enough almonds and strawberry candy in it to treat all this little company."

Very merry were the children over grandma's fortune-telling, and little Nelly insisted that hers was best of all. It had this particularity, that it applied just as well to other children whose eyes and hair were of any other color. So can you apply it, dear children, if you will; and I know you will it come true.

THE SERVICE OF SONG.

The ministry of the service of Song, as a medium for the communication of "Heart Cheer for Home Sorrow," is, we fear, too generally lost sight of; and yet we could scarcely over-estimate its value and importance.

Even in extreme cases, the efficiency of this ministry has often been strikingly evidenced. A pastor who for two long years sought in vain to alleviate the bitter sorrow of one of his afflicted people, tells us that eventually God was graciously pleased to open the heart that seemed hermetically sealed to all comfort by the unexpected hearing of the simple melody of a familiar hymn.

We believe many similar instances might be adduced. Those who move amongst the sons and daughters of sorrow know well the interest which is awakened by the mere repetition of some words of sacred song, such a hymn, for example, as that written by Dr. Bonar:—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say," etc. Accompanied by the melody of sweet sounds, it would seem impossible for any sufferer to resist the soothing, melting influence of this inimitable hymn.

But if the ministry of the Service of Song possesses so remarkable a power in cases of extreme affliction, ought it not to be more diligently cultivated than it is as a ministry of Heart Cheer for the ordinary, every-day trials and sorrows of Home life? Ought not Family Prayer always to be preceded or followed by Family Praise?—loved and loving ones delight to "speak together," after the example of the primitive Christians, "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord."

Words of counsel cannot, we are persuaded, be needed to commend this medium of Heart Cheer to our readers, but we transcribe as an illustration of its advantages (though in this instance the singing was not confined to the home-hearth) a passage which we gleaned from the recently published Memoir of the late Dr. Leifchild, written by his son.

"My father's habit of hymn-singing," writes his biographer and son, "was perhaps partly hereditary; for his own father's relief also from exertion, and his resource in anxiety, was to raise a solemn tune. When in peril from a highwayman on Finchley Common, my grandfather sought to encourage himself and his son by encouraging 'Now, child, let us sing Otford,' and the tune of Otford was sung after a fashion of fear and trembling! It required some faith in the charm of hymn-singing to practice it almost at the pistol's mouth, and, of course, under happier circumstances, the same inspiring habit was more freely indulged.

"What contributed to foster and confirm the habit in my father was the like inclination on the part of my mother, who confessedly had a charming voice, admirably adapted to harmonise with that of her husband. These two sang through life together, and their whole life was a song in many parts, and with many variations.

"Notwithstanding the solicitudes of domestic affairs, and all the cares that came upon them from unexpected quarters, as well as the unavoidable adversities of ordinary humanity, never was there a more tuneful pair in sacred song. In the earlier years of wedded life their delight was to resort to some rural spot, and there, humbly seated on the river's bank, or on a rough seat, to sing favorite hymns to favorite tunes. I also in due time added my childish, and then my boyish voice.

The duet then enlarged into a trio, and to my latest day I shall call to mind the places which became vocal to our family exercises, and where we poured forth such gushes of holy and artless song as we were skilled to raise.

"Once the pair were singing in happy freedom on the banks of a large river—I think the Thames, near Maidenhead, the well-known hymn beginning—

"There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

"There everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers;  
Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
That heavenly land from ours.

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand dressed in living green;  
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,  
While Jordan rolled between."

"Though singing in an unfrequented spot, the singers were overheard by the tenant of a neighboring residence, who, passing that way, had listened with delight. When the singers had ceased, the gentleman politely addressed them, and requested a copy of the verses which he presumed had been composed for that spot—so aptly did the richly green meadows on the other side of the river correspond to the 'sweet fields dressed in living green' of the poet.

"Often after the exhausting services of the sanctuary, in the peaceful parlor of their own house, when they reached it on Sunday night, with the younger members of the family, they would unite in singing the closing hymn—

"Oh, if there be an hour that brings  
The breath of heaven upon its wings,  
To light the heart, to glad the eye,  
With glimpses of eternity:  
It is the hour of mid-day,  
The sunset of the holy day.

"For then to earth a light is given,  
Fresh flowing from the gates of heaven;  
And then on every breeze we hear  
Angelic voices whispering near,  
Through veiling shades gleam seraph eyes  
One step—and all are paradise!"  
—*From Our Own Fireside.*

THE EARNEST LISTENER.

A pious clergyman had a careless and idle son, who left his home, went on board a vessel, and sailed to a foreign land. His sorrowful parents could only pray for him, and send him good advice when they wrote to him. The ship which contained their boy reached a distant port, and was there waiting to take in a fresh cargo, when the sailors went on shore and brought back with them a little native boy, who could play some curious kinds of music. He amused them for a long time, but at last said, "You must now take me on shore." The sailors told him he must not go yet. "O, indeed I cannot stay any longer," replied the boy, "and I will tell you why. A kind Christian missionary has come near the village where I live. From him I learned all I know about Jesus-Christ, in whom I wish to believe. This is about the hour when he meets us, under the shade of a tree, to tell us more. I want to go to hear him. The sailors were quite overcome by the boy's cries, and at once rowed him ashore.

The clergyman's thoughtless son was struck with the words of the little heathen boy. He felt condemned by them. "Here am I," he said to himself, "the son of a minister in England, knowing far more about Jesus Christ than that boy, and yet caring far less about him. That little fellow is now earnestly listening to the word of life, while I am living quite careless about it!" In great distress of mind, he retired that night to his hammock; but his pious father's instructions came back to his thoughts and reminded him how he might see and find that salvation which he so much needed. He became a real Christian, and great was the joy in his English home when the happy tidings reached his parents.

THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN.

Rev. Rowland Hill once visited a poor silly man, and on conversing with him, said, "Well, Richard, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?"  
"To be sure I do; don't you?"  
"Heaven is a long way off," said the minister, "and the journey is difficult."

"Do you think so? I think heaven is very near."  
"Most people think it is a very difficult matter to get to heaven."

"I think heaven is very near," said Richard again, "and the way to it is very short, there are only three steps there."

"Mr. Hill replied, "Only three steps?"  
Richard repeated, "Only three steps?"  
"And pray," said the pastor, "what do you consider those three steps to be?"

"Those three steps are, out of self, unto Christ, into glory."

RANDOM EXPRESSIONS.

"I'm tired to death." So you have said very often, and are still alive and in very good health.

"I had not a wink of sleep last night." And yet your bed-fellow heard you snore several times.

"I would not do it for the world." And yet you have done many things equally bad for a trifle.

"We were up to our knees in mud." You know very well the mud was not over your shoes.