

The Family Circle.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF DECAY.

The following is a translation from an ancient Spanish poem, which says the Edinburgh Review is surpassed by nothing with which we are acquainted in the Spanish language, except the "Ode of Louis de Leon."

O let the soul its slumbers break— Arouse its senses and awake, To see how soon Life, in its glories, glides away, And the stern footsteps of decay Come stealing on.

And while we view the rolling tide, Down which our floating minutes glide— Away so fast, Let us the present hour employ, And deem each future dream a joy Already past.

Let no vain hope deceive the mind— No happier let us hope to find— To-morrow than to-day, Our golden dreams of yore were bright, Like them the present shall delight— Like them decay.

Our lives like hasting streams must be That into one engulfing sea Are doomed to fall— The sea of death, where waves roll on O'er king and kingdom, crown and throne, And swallow all.

Alike the river's lordly tide, Alike the humble rivulets glide To that sad wave, Death levels poverty and pride, And rich and poor sleep side by side Within the grave.

Our birth is but a starting-place— Life is the running of the race, And death the goal; There all our glittering toys are brought— The path alone, of all unsought, Is found of all.

See, then, how poor and little worth All these glittering toys of earth That lure us here! Dreams of a sleep that death must break, Alas! before it bids us wake, We disappear.

Long ere the damp of earth can blight, The cheek's pure glow of red and white Has passed away, Youth smiled, and all was heavenly fair— Age came and laid his finger there, And where are they?

Where is the strength that spurts decay, The step that roved so light and gay, The heart's blithe tone? The strength is gone, the step is slow, And joy grows wearisome, and woe When age comes on!

THE CLOUDED INTELLECT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STORIES FOR STORIES."

(Continued.)

Matt came back under the shelter of the boat and lay down, and drew part of a sail over him, and fell into a sound sleep; perhaps he had slept little during the past night, and now that his gloom and terror were melted away in the sunshine of hope and peace, he could no longer sit waking under the cloudy sky.

The lady sat by him, partly sheltered also by the boat. She looked out over the purple sea, still troubled, heaving and bare, for not a boat rode at anchor near the dangerous rocky beach; not a vessel ventured near enough to be seen from its sandy reaches.

At length the clouds broke, it began to rain hard; and not without a great effort did she succeed in waking the boy. He opened his eyes at last with a smile. The pouring rain and the gloomy sky were nothing to him; the high but warm wind did not trouble him; his thoughts, whatever they may have been, could not be related to his benefactress; he was comforted, but he only showed it by his face and by his tranquil movements.

They reached the cottage. There was trouble and sorrow within; quite enough of both to account for the boy's having been left to wander out by himself on that stormy day. The poor old grandfather was worse; and Mary Goddard, the boy's aunt, came to the door, her eyes red, and her face disfigured with weeping. The lady could not stay then; but in less than a week she came again and inquired after the old man.

"Ah, dear heart! it seems hard to lose poor father!" exclaimed Mary, when her visitor was seated, and had asked a sympathizing question as to the old man's health.

"Is he so very ill that there is no hope?" asked the lady.

"The doctor does not say," replied the daughter, "but when a man is past eighty what can one expect? Would you like to see him, ma'am?"

The visitor assented, and was taken up a ladder into a comfortable room in the roof.

The aged fisherman, with his rugged face and hard hands, lay helplessly on his clean bed; but his eyes were still bright and his voice strong.

"Put a chair, Polly," he said to his daughter. "I take this kind, ma'am. Here I am, you see, a disabled old hulk. I've made a many voyages in my time, when I was in the king's service." Here a fit of coughing forced him to stop.

"When he had ceased to cough, the visitor said, "Yes, you have passed a busy life, my friend; and what a mercy it is that God gives you a few days of quiet and leisure at the end of it, to think of the last voyage,—the entrance, we may hope, into an eternal heaven. Do you think of that last voyage? Do you pray to God to have mercy on you for Christ's sake, and grant you an entrance to that haven of rest?"

The old man assented reverently and heartily, and then said, "Mary, the lady has never a chair; I told you to set the chair for her. A good daughter she has always been to me, ma'am? Her poor mother died when

I was in the *Atalante*, Captain Hickey; you've heard of him ma'am? The discipline he maintained! He was the finest captain in the service."

"I never heard of him," replied the visitor.

"He lost his ship in a sea-fog off Halifax harbor. He had despatches aboard; and he made up his mind they should be delivered. He fired a fog-signal gun in hopes it would be answered from the lighthouse on Cape Sambro, but by a sad mischance it happened that the *Barossa*, that was likewise lost in this fog, answered it; and the unfortunate *Atalante* was steered according to that gun. She struck, and in less than a quarter of an hour we were all out of her, every officer, man, and boy, many on us not half clothed; and there wasn't a mast, nor a beam, nor a bit of broken spar, to be seen of her. She filled and heeled over; and almost afore we could cut the pinnace from the boom, she parted in two between the main and mizen masts, and the swell sucked her in, guns, and stores, and all."

"That must have been an awful scene," observed the visitor. "It is a great mercy that you were preserved in such a danger. Shall I read you a chapter in the Bible, now I am here?" "I should take it kind if you would, ma'am, very kind indeed; for Mr. Green said he should not be able to come to-day, and my daughter has no time. I could spell a bit over myself, but my eyes fail, and I feel strange and weak. There was a time when I could 'hand, reef, and steer,' with the best of them. I was rated 'able seaman' in the *Atalante*, and for upwards of two years I was 'captain of the fore-top.'"

The visitor sat down and read several chapters. The old man listened with pleasure; his face, seamed and brown with long exposure to weather, showed no pallor, but there was a look about his eyes that told of a great change,—they were dim, and sometimes wandering.

"I take this visit very kind of you," he repeated, when she had done; "and I like what you read, it did me good; and, ma'am, I'm much obliged to you, and thank you kindly for being so good to my poor boy."

"How do you think he seems, ma'am?" asked Mary Goddard, when they came down together.

"I think he is very much altered, Mary. He does not look to me as if he would live many days."

"Ah, dear heart!" said the daughter, "I was afraid you would say so; and though he be so old, it seems hard to lose him; for a cheerfuller and honest man never walked this world!"

"He seems in a thankful frame of mind now, Mary, and was very attentive when I was reading."

"O yes, he is always pleased with whatever I do for him, and says it is a great mercy he has time to think of his end; he is vastly pleased now when Mr. Green comes to talk to him, though at first he did not seem to care for it."

The visitor went away.

[To be Continued.]

A STORY FOR OLD AND YOUNG.

"Mrs. Ross, may Luther go home with me and stay to-night?" said little Alice Bell to the minister's wife, who was visiting, with her husband and children, among the members of his congregation.

The family, of which Alice was the youngest, made no profession of religion. Mr. Bell was a good man in his way; that is, he was honest and kind; but he had never become a child of God.

Luther went home with Alice, and a pleasant romp they had. At last, the children's bed-time came. Now Luther had been taught to kneel down by his papa's knee, and to repeat his prayer before going to bed. So the artless child, in the absence of his parents, walked confidently up to Mr. Bell and knelt down, folded his little hands, and in a clear voice repeated:

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take, And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen."

So quietly did the child act, that the old man was not aware of his intention until saying "Amen." He arose, and going to each, he kissed them good-night.

Little Alice stood in childish astonishment, wondering what the strange proceeding meant.

When the children were asleep, the family sat long and thoughtfully. Each seemed to be pursuing an absorbing train of thought. At length Mrs. Bell broke the silence, as a tear sparkled on her cheek, saying: "What a sweet child!"

Mr. Bell took no part in the conversation thus started, but leaving the family circle, retired to his bedroom.

He passed a restless night, and to the oft-repeated question of his wife, "if he was ill?" he only replied "no." Morning came, and while breakfast was being prepared, the cheerful "good morning" of the children, and their playfulness, seemed to drive away the singular gloom of kind Mr. Bell. The chairs were placed, and they sat down to breakfast.

Luther, wondering why they did not have worship, looked from one to the other as they began to eat without the "grace" they always had at home. Thinking, no doubt, that they forgot,

he turned his eyes to Mr. Bell, and said, almost in a whisper, "We didn't pray." It was too much. The old man left the table. Going to his room, he fell upon his knees and wept and prayed.

Mr. Bell and most of his family now stand at the Lord's table with their neighbors, showing how God "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath perfected praise." Luther did what many sermons and exhortations failed to do, and now he and Alice may both repeat their little prayers by Mr. Bell's knee, while, with his hands upon their heads, he smiles and echoes heartily the amen; and the family altar is erected and loved.

"Feed my lambs," said Christ, and it may be that the tender lamb may lead the straying sheep into the fold.—*Lutheran Observer.*

IT TAKES LITTLE STICKS TO MAKE A FIRE.

I once went to visit a newly married couple in a country village. The bride was a beautiful and intelligent girl, fond of dress, music, painting, and all other graceful things, and what is far more rare, she understood her own house work; and meant to do it. I knew this, and so went to rest in the fresh new bed with a happy confidence in a good night's sleep and a comfortable breakfast in the morning. Sleep soon came, and daylight followed in due time, but the breakfast was very long in coming. At last the welcome bell was heard; all was right in the drawing-room but the hour hand of the clock, which would persist in pointing at an hour which made the pretty hostess blush, and over the delicious coffee she told me the cause of the trouble. It was no fault of hers; when we once looked at her, we were sure of that. It was simply owing to the fact that her husband had not provided kindling wood, and she had spent a full hour in the attempt to light a fire. After the meal was over, and a capital one it was—she took us to the wood-house, full of large dry sticks, hard and sound, without a chip or shaving, or a bit of charcoal anywhere to be found. There was no axe or hatchet on the premises, and in order to warm the heart of these ungainly blocks of wood, the young wife had only her bright eyes, a box of matches, and the morning paper. Instead of marvelling at the time it took, we were only surprised that the fire had been lighted at all. But when a pair of strong hands with an axe in their hands was quickly changed to a score of little ones, it was worth a second breakfast to see her look of content.

Now, children, you know it is love that makes the fireside warm. The house is always cold and cheerless where the people are unkind to each other. And in kindling this house-fire that warms the hearts, you, children, are the little sticks. That is what you are good for. Look at the baby in the cradle! He cannot earn his own living; he does not know how to wait upon himself; and yet he is sometimes the most useful member of the family. He makes everybody love him, whether they are willing or not, and his little heart is brimful of love for them in return. Most people are fond of pets, and like to keep a bird, a dog, a pony, something to love and let love, if they can afford it; but of all pets a child is at once the dearest and cheapest. Many families cannot afford any other, but in the very poorest houses you see little white heads around the hearth. They are the little sticks that make it warm.—*Springfield Republican.*

"WHAT CUTS ME MOST."

A middle aged man was convicted of sin; his soul was troubled. His distress was so great that he could neither eat nor sleep. He went and prayed, and experienced no relief. To those who conversed with him, he would answer, "Oh, I have been such a sinner—you don't know anything about me, God alone knows how awfully wicked I have been; and I don't see how I can ever be forgiven."

Two nights he had not slept, and his Christian companion, almost despairing of his conversion, entreated one of her friends, a lady of strong faith, to see him. The lady found him despondent. He thought there were some who were never to be forgiven, and that he, perhaps, was one of that unhappy number.

She told him that Christ called all to come unto him; that he was calling him at that very moment, because he was weary and heavy laden, and in consequence of Mary, who was the eldest daughter, suffering from spine complaint, the whole management of the house had fallen on the gentle Bessie.

Presently the sick girl put a small book into her sister's hand, saying, "Now, Bessie, let us have our quiet morning reading out of the Book of Life, and I am sure both of us will get a lesson from it: you, how to perform the day's duties; I, how to bear the trial of prolonged illness. Neither of us can do these in our own strength; but, like St. Paul, we can say, 'We can do all things through Christ strengthening us.' What a precious book the Bible is, and what an all-sufficient Saviour it reveals! Are we weighed down with cares and perplexities? We may cast all our care on Him, for He careth for us. Are we ill? He maketh all our bed in our sickness; and even

in death we need fear no evil, if He be our friend, but we shall be able in faith to say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Now, dearest, begin; and may the Holy Spirit bless to us the reading of the word."

Bessie bent over her sister's couch, and read of that land where pain and sorrow cannot enter, and where sin shall be unknown; of that land where the Lamb of God shall lead His redeemed ones by the river of water of life, and from which they shall go no more out. Then, shutting the book, she knelt down; and together they poured out their hearts in prayer. I sent my beams darting into the room to brighten all around; and as they played on the golden hair of the kneeling girl, her head seemed surrounded by a crown of glory—such as, I doubt not, is awaiting both of them in the bright land of which they have been reading.

LOVE'S MINISTRY.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.—*Psalm xix.* I heard the wavellet kiss the shore, Ere lost within the sea, And the ripple of the silvery tide Seemed as a psalm to me: Contented with God's holy will, Its feeble voice to raise, To hymn his glory and be lost, Not thirst for human praise. Lord, make me like the ocean's voice, Obdient to thy will. Thy purposes work faithfully, And at thy voice be still. A breeze that filled a drooping sail, Bore to one sorrowing breast A promise from the Lord of life, And sank again to rest. Brief was its service, few the words It wafted to the shore, But they nestled in a mourner's heart, And the west wind's task was o'er. I, like the sea-breeze swift and true, Thy messenger would be, And bear, Lord, to some hardened soul, A word of peace from thee.

I marked the soft dew silently Descend o'er plain and hill; On each parched herb and drooping flower The heavenly cloud disill. As useless work the sun's first beams It vanished with the day, But the waving fields told where it fell When the dew had passed away. Lord, make me like the gentle dew, That other hearts may prove, E'en through thy feeblest messenger, Thy ministry of love.—*Anna Shipston.*

THE INVALID.

[FROM "JOTTINGS FROM THE DIARY OF THE SWY."]

July 16.—My attention was directed this morning to a pleasantly situated farmhouse in one of the western counties of Scotland.

Very pleasant it looked. The house stood at the foot of a thickly-wooded hill: its white-washed walls contrasted well with the dark foliage of the fir-trees; whilst the sloping garden in front (at the foot of which ran a little stream) gave a cheerful aspect to the scene.

In the garden stood a girl, who might be about fifteen summers old. In her one hand she held a nosegay of bright-colored flowers, and in the other a branch of the pure white Ayrshire rose, that covered the front of the house. The girl was dressed in deep mourning; and round a pretty face, with soft blue eyes, the golden hair hung in loose wavy braids. She stood for a few minutes, as if drinking in with enjoyment the fresh morning air, then lightly tripped into the house.

The window of one of the rooms stood open, and peeping in, I discovered, lying on a couch, a girl some years older than the one I had seen. She looked ill, very ill, so pale and thin; but the expression of her face was peaceful and sweet.

Presently my friend of the garden entered, flower in hand, and going up to the couch, threw her arms round the invalid's neck, saying, "Here, Mary, are some of your favorite flowers, to cheer you after your night of pain. Are they not pretty? I pulled them while they were sparkling with dew. Look at this branch of roses; they are still bathed in it, as if they spent the night in weeping."

"Thank you, Bessie dear," said the sick girl; "how beautiful they are! How good it is in God to make them! I often think of what Miss Montgomery told me the good Willberforce said—'that flowers were God's smiles in a sick-room.'"

"So they are," said Bessie; "don't you remember your favorite hymn?"—and in a clear silvery tone she sang some lines, ending with the words— "To comfort man and whisper hope, Whene'er his faith is dim; For God, who careth for the flowers, Will much more care for him."

I listened for some time to the conversation of the sisters, and discovered from it that they had, a short time before, lost their mother; and in consequence of Mary, who was the eldest daughter, suffering from spine complaint, the whole management of the house had fallen on the gentle Bessie.

Presently the sick girl put a small book into her sister's hand, saying, "Now, Bessie, let us have our quiet morning reading out of the Book of Life, and I am sure both of us will get a lesson from it: you, how to perform the day's duties; I, how to bear the trial of prolonged illness. Neither of us can do these in our own strength; but, like St. Paul, we can say, 'We can do all things through Christ strengthening us.' What a precious book the Bible is, and what an all-sufficient Saviour it reveals! Are we weighed down with cares and perplexities? We may cast all our care on Him, for He careth for us. Are we ill? He maketh all our bed in our sickness; and even

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I sent my beams darting into the room to brighten all around; and as they played on the golden hair of the kneeling girl, her head seemed surrounded by a crown of glory—such as, I doubt not, is awaiting both of them in the bright land of which they have been reading.

I withdrew with regret from the farmhouse; but I knew that the sisters were seeking a brighter light than mine, even the light of the Sun of Righteousness; and casting a glance on the ministering girl, I turned to other scenes. And, as many a sight of deceit and sin met my eye that day, the thought arose, would these things be so were God's word daily read, and His protection sought, as it had been by the sisters in the quiet farmhouse?—*Christian Treasury.*

A BIBLE-READING IRISHMAN.

An Irishman had taken to reading the Bible. The priest came and told him he had heard that he was reading the Bible. "And indeed it is true, and a blessed book it is." "But," said the priest, "you are an ignorant man, and ought not to read the Bible." "Well," said Pat, "but your reverence must prove that, before I'll give up reading my Bible." And so the priest turned to the place where it reads, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word."

"There," said the priest, "you are a babe, and you ought to go to somebody who can tell you what the sincere milk of the word is." Pat was a milkman, and he replied, "Your reverence, I was ill, and employed a man to carry my milk, and he cheated me—he put water in it; and how do I know (saving your reverence) but the priest may do the same?" The priest was discomfited, and said, "Well, Pat, I see you are not quite so much of a babe as I thought you were. You may read your Bible, but don't show it to your neighbors." "Indeed, your reverence," says Pat, "I've one cow that I know gives good milk, and while my neighbor has none, sure I'll give him part of it, whether your reverence likes it or not."

EMMA AND THE LITTLE BOY.

Emma Grey, on her way to school, passed a little boy whose hand was through the railing of a gentleman's front yard, trying to pick off a beautiful spring flower. "O, little boy," said Emma, kindly, "are you not taking that without leave?" "Nobody sees me," answered the little boy, looking up. "Somebody sees you from the blue sky, little boy," said Emma. "God says we must not take what does not belong to us without leave, and you will grieve Him if you do so."

The little boy looked up into her face as she spoke. "Shall I?" said he; "then I won't." He drew back his hand, and went away. Was it not thoughtful and kind in Emma? I think so.

One way of doing good is to prevent others from doing wrong. A gentle word of reproof or persuasion would save many a one from sin.

THE POWER TO SAY "NO."

The purity of moral habits is, I am afraid, of very little use to a man, unless it is accompanied by that degree of firmness which enables him to act up to what he may think right in spite of solicitations to the contrary. Very few young men have the power of negation in any great degree at first. It increases with the increase of confidence, and with the experience of those inconveniences which result from the absence of this virtue. Every young man must be exposed to temptation; he cannot learn the ways of men without being witness to their vices. If you attempt to preserve him from danger by keeping him out of the way of it, you render him quite unfit for any style of life in which he may be placed. The great point is, not to turn him out too soon, but to give him a pilot at first.—*Sydney Smith.*

DEVOTION OF A BIRD TO HER YOUNG.

A singular instance of bird affection transpired in Bath, Steuben county, N. Y., last week. A robin had built her nest in one of the shade trees, directly in front of the dwelling of ex-Sheriff Seymour. While the house was in flames, the robin was noticed to fly from its nest, and, in the most persuasive bird language, endeavor to call her little brood, who were lying unconscious of danger in the nest, and unable to fly. The bird flew back and forth for a few moments, then finding her efforts unavailing, calmly took her place upon the nest, where mother and little ones perished in the flames.

Rural Economy.

PHILADELPHIA RASPBERRY.

By invitation of our friend, William Parry, we recently paid a visit to his fruit farm near Cape May, New Jersey, with the object especially of seeing in their full season the celebrated Philadelphia raspberry, and we must say, the vigor of the plants and their productiveness, exceed anything we had before seen. The quantity of the ground occupied in raspberry-culture alone is about eight acres, most of them with the Philadelphia variety. Other varieties had been extensively planted for market and ploughed up, and there were some still growing and on trial, to test which was the most profitable for general culture. Growing side by side with the Philadelphia, and subjected to precisely the same treatment, the contrast in favor of the latter was most striking. W. P. intends also ploughing them up, and confining himself entirely to the one kind. He had, just previous to our visit, engaged for next fall to two gentlemen \$1,000 worth of the plants; but it was very evident that it is much more profit for him to plant out all his spare plants for fruit than to sell them, as each hill was averaging, at the time of our visit, three quarts each, and selling at the wholesale price of forty cents per quart. Six hundred quarts, for several days last week, were sent to Philadelphia market. On two days, 2,000 quarts were picked and sold. Being planted three feet apart, in rows, and the rows six feet apart, gives over 2000 hills to the acre; and calling it only \$1 per hill, instead of \$1.20 which was then being obtained, would make a product of over \$2,000 to each acre.

The Philadelphia raspberry, (original plant,) was accidentally found growing wild in a wood near Philadelphia, about twenty-five years ago, was cultivated for fifteen years, and so highly prized that no plants were spared except to particular friends.

Its productiveness attracted such attention that a horticultural gentleman paid \$100 for a few plants to cultivate from.

It appeared to us, in looking at William Parry's raspberry plantation, that either for general market-culture or for private gardens, the Philadelphia is the raspberry. Some of the canes were pressed down with the weight of fruit. Pomological conventions classify fruits under the heads of "on trial," "promising well," and "recommended for general cultivation." The Philadelphia clearly now comes under the latter class for several reasons.

1st. It is very hardy, and does not require the slightest protection in the coldest winter.

2d. It is a very productive bearer, and a good, though not a very strong grower.

3d. It does not throw up many suckers, which are a great nuisance with the common Antwerp and some other kinds. It will be well to recollect also that this will be a sufficient reason why a demand for the plants may for some years keep ahead of the supply.

4. The fruit is of a good color, (purplish red), rather darker than the Antwerp, rich and juicy in quality, and is of firm flesh, so as to carry to market well.

5. The canes are strong and firm, and do not require stakes. For these reasons, and because seeing is believing, we have no hesitation in recommending the Philadelphia as the best raspberry now known.—*Philadelphia Rural Advertiser.*

GERMAN ECONOMY.

German thrift is proverbial. The Germans in Pennsylvania generally manage to lay by far more than their American neighbors, and the following paragraph from a European letter will show that they inherit these frugal traits:

Each German has his house, his orchard, his roadside trees so laden with fruit that did he not carefully prop them up, tie them together, and in many places hold the boughs together by wooden clamps, they would be torn asunder by their own weight. He has his own corn plot, his plot for mangle wurzel or hay, for hemp, etc. He is his own master, and therefore he and his family have the strongest motives for exertion. In Germany nothing is lost. The produce of the trees and the cows is carried to market. Much fruit is dried for winter use. You see wooden trays of plums, cherries and sliced apples in the sun to dry. You see strings of them hanging from the windows in the sun. The cows are kept up the greater part of the year, and every green thing is collected for them. Every little nook where the grass grows by the roadside, river and brook, is carefully cut by the sickle, and carried home on the heads of the women and children in baskets, or tied in large cloths. Nothing of the kind is lost that can possibly be made of any use. Weeds, nettles, may, the very goose-grass that covers the waste places, are cut up and taken for the cows. You see little children standing in the streets of the village, and in the streams which generally run down them, busy washing these weeds before they are given to the cattle. They carefully collect the leaves of the grass, and even if other things fail, gather green leaves from the woodlands.