

The Family Circle.

THE WATCH AT THE SEPULCHRE.

"From east to west I've march'd beneath the eagles; From Pontus unto Gaul, Kept many a watch, on which, by death surrounded, I've seen each comrade fall.

Fear! I could laugh until these rocks re-echoed, To think that I should fear— Who have met death in every form unshrinking, To watch this dead man here.

In Dacian forests sitting by our watch-fire I've kept the wolves at bay; On Rhetian Alps escaped the ice-hills hurling, Close where our legion lay.

On moonless nights upon the sands of Libya, I've sat with shield firm set, And heard the lion roar; in this forearm The tiger's teeth have met.

I was star-gazing when he stole upon me, Until I felt his breath, And saw his jewel eyes gleam; then he seized me And instant met his death.

My weapon in his thick-vein'd neck I buried, My feet his warm blood dyed; And then I bound my wound and till the morning Lay couch'd upon his side.

Here, though the stars are veild; the peaceful city Lies at our feet asleep, Round us the still more peaceful dead are lying In slumber yet more deep.

A low wind moaning glides among the olives Till every hill-side sighs; But round us here the morning seems to muster And gather where He lies.

And through the barkness faint, pale gleams are flying, That touch the hill alone; Whence these unearthly lights? and whence the shadows, That move upon the stone!

If the Olympian Jove awoke in thunder, His great eyes I could meet; But his, if once again they look'd upon me, Would strike me to his feet.

He look'd as if my brother hung there bleeding, And put my soul to shame; As if my mother with his eyes was pleading, And pity overcame.

But could not save: He who in death was hanging, On the accursed tree, Was he the Son of God? for so in dying He seem'd to die for me.

And all my pitiless deeds came up before me, Gazed at me from his face— What if he rose again, and I should meet him!— How awful is this place!

—Edinburgh Sunday Magazine.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Your sympathies are not with what is termed Christian society. You prefer a greater latitude of thought, speech, and action than Christian society is supposed to tolerate. You love the Christian element in society so far as it is required to secure decency and propriety, but no further: and you feel that a manly carrying out of your convictions of the "supreme claims of Christianity would lead to a sudden or gradual severance from the men whose society you prize the most highly. You cannot bear to incur the suspicion of being "converted," of being thought womanish and weak, an object for charitable contempt. You delight in praise, and the good-will of everybody; and you have friends among all sorts of people. The good people praise you, and feel that they may claim a man of your upright habits and pure life. The bad people praise you, for your life is no condemnation of their own, and you make their position the more respectable by your practical denial of the claims of religion. The last, among whom you find your most congenial friends, are the quiet smiles and contemptuous commiseration rise up in your imagination to shame and scare you when you are almost compelled to yield to your convictions. Alas, that human friendship, so very sweet, so glorifying to life, should so often stand in the way of human weal! A man's life flows along with the current of his friendships, and if he finds that his most congenial associates are men who are negatively or positively irreligious, he need not test further the state of his own heart. If your most intimate friendships are among such, and if you shrink from those whom you know represent to you that religion in which your parents lived holly and died triumphantly, you may be quite sure that you practically hold that religion in very light esteem.

But you are held to your present course by at least another anchor as strong as friendship and congenial society. Business, with all the complicated interests it has introduced into your life, dissuades you from yielding to your convictions. Here you are thrown among men as honorable as yourself and upon whom you are, to a certain extent, dependent, who hold Christianity, and those who profess Christianity, at the cheapest possible rate. The faith which dwelt in your mother is the object of a contempt which you fancy you could not bear to have associated with your own self. Your business associates, when they do not tempt you and accustom your ear to coarse profanity, surround you with the stifling, poisonous atmosphere of sordid, grasping, unmitigated worldliness; and with business thoughts and schemes, which break in upon your domestic quiet and your Sabbath rest, and your present anomalous position renders you specially vulnerable to such damaging influences. Your business associates know that you have never declared yourself on the side of Christianity, and they are not obliged

to respect it in your presence. If every word they speak is a stab to your earliest and most sacred memories, you must endure it. You are recognized by them as of their fraternity, and yet all the while you are trying to make yourself believe that you are a Christian. You, a man too honorable to betray any other cause with which you believed yourself identified, however low it fell in the world's esteem? Meanwhile the greater part of the activities of your nature are given to business responsibilities, which are not so ungenial to your nature as might be supposed, for they offer a field to your ambition, as well as the allurements of wealth. Business, blending with all your waking thoughts, obtruding itself even among your social enjoyments, and in your dreams, has a monopoly of your talents and vitality, and practically fills your soul. You are no longer the man you were. The pursuit of self, however the pursuit is disguised, is beginning to eat away the sunshine and expansiveness of your nature. It is deadening your better self, and shutting out from your heart a blessed guest, compelling Him to "sit and shiver in the ante-room, in the cold society of your slighted convictions."

And thus your life is narrowing, and your heart is hardening, and daily you are more impotent for action in the right direction. Your old friendships and your business associations, have fastened themselves to you by hooks which you are less and less able to tear away. The pure, sunny, generous boy, with aspirations on which an angel might smile, is growing into a man who is no longer shocked by an oath, to whom vulgarity is decreasingly offensive, who can tolerate the ridicule of purity and goodness, who looks with unwholesome leniency, indifference upon the vices of his fellow-men, and who is learning to believe that out of the dry, barren soil of worldliness some pleasant fruit may yet grow; and all the while that your convictions of duty are stronger than you would have them; your heart and life are becoming more estranged from yielding to them. Habits are strengthening as life advances; business, cares increase amidst the fever of competition, and moral conviction is growing weaker under the influence of perpetual insult and disregard. All things are against you. The world which rushes past you, but from which your convictions have done their slightest best to separate you, is a world mad after baubles, taking life carelessly and gaily, content to eat and drink to-day, and die to-morrow; and just because men are born, and die, and the world is not seriously moved by either event, and because men sleep and eat, and love and hate, and indulge their ambition, and display their wealth as if God's earth were really only "a stage, and all the men and women merely players," this life is coming to be to you merely as a drama, unreal, brilliant, insignificant. And men die, and there comes back no voice to tell whether they sleep with the brutes, or wake with the angels.

You are most truly an object for pity—you, loved, praised, prosperous. You feel your fetters, and there are times when the love-linked sacred memories of your youth have power to make you weep. You feel as if the meshes of a huge net were closing round you, as if obstacles were walling you in, and that your own nature is diverging from its early training, and is accommodating itself to the life you lead. Yet you are a man of sensitive honor, a man to whom a mean and unmanly spirit is as repulsive as a mean and unmanly deed. If in the late election you beheld a man who for any reason whatever gave his vote at variance with his life-long political convictions, you despised him! If a man on any great public question fails to plant himself on the side of right, or sacrifices public duty to private interest, you think him an unworthy man. If a man whom you know to be the subject of strong convictions on any public subject pronounces them so feebly that both parties claim him, you think him a mean man. By your own standard you must be judged and condemned. It is mean and unworthy in you, with your strong convictions, which can occupy the human soul, to refuse to stand by and act up to these convictions. It is unmanly in you to refuse to identify yourself with the Christian Church, and to forward the cause of the Christian religion, while you are content to be claimed as a Christian by those whom you know and feel to be in the right. There remains nothing to be done towards shaping the judgment of your head and heart, but while your better nature dictates, your worse nature finches and succumbs to a pitiful expediency and love of ease,—something whispering all the time that there is no room in your present crowded existence for those experiences and those deeds which would accompany the surrender of your life to your convictions.

In these remarks there is no attempt to convince you of anything, or even to deepen your convictions—these convictions which are still striving to gain the control of your life. The lapse of every day renders it less probable that you will ultimately yield to them, and helps to debase and deform that fine

nature which God gave you. Religious teachers may urge you to the same course; by such religious motives they think appropriate to your case, but from a solely moral standpoint another may urge you to be true to your better nature, to hear the voice which speaks from within, to withdraw from that miserable fancied neutral ground which is exposed to the full sweep of the Divine contempt and indignation—to be a Christian man, and to take a consistent, manly, uncompromising stand on the side which you believe to be right. Apart from all that creeds teach concerning the doctrine of "total depravity," we know that it is not natural for us to lead religious lives and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. The fascinations of the visible are felt—the attractions of the invisible are only believed, and it is with but "lame hands of faith" that the best among us practically grasp the truth that the things which are not seen are eternal. It is hard to be swayed by the unseen, hard to change the motive, the aims, and the direction of your life, even with the advantage of your strong convictions. It is cowardly and wrong for a man of your convictions not to be a Christian; but if it had been easy to be one, God knows you would have been one long ago; and hard as it is, it is becoming harder every day. It is easy for a man to talk of the ease and pleasantness of the path of life, as if the strong, antagonistic will could be readily subdued, but the Spirit of God speaks differently. There is no ease about the Christian life. It is a life of self-denial, sacrifice, heroism, fighting, of ignoble defeats and partial victories, of stumbling well nigh unto falling; but it is the only way into God's kingdom; and it is certain that He so aids human weakness with Divine strength that none shall utterly fail. With your convictions it is unmanly and cowardly to shrink from the struggle. Rest assured that the day, which sees you make the manly decision as to whom you will serve, will be worth all the days that have gone before it; and that the things, which in that day you for Christ's sake shall count as loss, shall be exchanged for glory, honor, and immortality, and the enduring crown of righteousness in the great day of His appearing.—Dr. Guthrie's Magazine.

TRUE HONESTY.

Some ten or more years ago I was employed to examine the title of a parcel of land in Massachusetts. In making my investigation, I found that one of the prior grantors, through whom my client derived his title, had possessed only an estate for life, and could not, therefore, legally convey any greater estate. He had supposed, however, that he possessed an estate in fee, which is in law, a larger estate. Acting on this supposition, he attempted to convey it as such to his grantee. This transaction had occurred when the value of the land was only some few hundred dollars. At the time of my examination, however, a large manufacturing town had been built up around the land, and had greatly increased its value.

After discovering this fatal defect in my client's title, it became very desirable to know in whom the legal title to the land rested. After many and careful inquiries, I found that a young man in Peterboro, N. H., was the legal owner. I also ascertained that the young man did not know that he was the legal owner of the land.

After consultation with my client, I went to Peterboro to do the best for him that I could. I soon became acquainted with the young man, and after carefully observing him, and reflecting on all the circumstances of the case, I felt convinced that I could best promote the interest of my client by unfolding the whole matter to the young man, and leaving it to him to act as he should think proper. I accordingly stated the whole case to him. "Well, what do you want me to do?" I replied that Mr. T., my client, would like a quit-claim deed of the land from him. "Have you such a deed made out for me to sign?" he asked. "Yes," I answered, and produced it. He read it carefully through, then said, "Let us go over to —, a justice of the peace." "We did so. There he executed the deed, acknowledged it before the justice, and delivered it to me. "Now," said he, "tell me what the present value of the land is. I would not make this inquiry before I signed the deed, lest I should be hindered from doing what was right; but now I should like to know the value of the property I have parted with." I told him it was estimated at from fourteen to twenty thousand dollars. He said that he hoped that it would have made no difference with him in signing the deed, whatever the value of the land might have been, but that he did not wish to inquire till he had placed himself beyond the reach of temptation, for he wanted to do what was right.—Christian Register.

TOO OFTEN SO.—Let the inmate of a family be too sick to come to the table, an anxiety is felt for him; but let him for years not come to the communion table, and no concern is expressed. Let his spirit desert his body, and the family put on mourning; but let him be as dead to divine things as if his spirit was deserted by the Holy Spirit, and there is no lamentation.

THE OLD MAN ENTERTAINED.

The day was bitter cold, piercing winds rushed furiously, the surges of the earth was covered with ice, and the scene was one of cheerless desolation. In the sweet country, where roses and verdure had filled the air of summer with fragrance, winter had jostled summer away, and with his chilling breath had frozen every beautiful thing.

The gusts of wind caused the blinds to creak and loose boards to swing, when a lady opened her front door to see what would be the result of the mighty tempest. She looked out, she hardly knew why, but the sight she saw transfixed her gaze.

There in the street before her door stood an old man, with his silvery hair streaming in the wind, his clothes thin and old, while by the aid of a cane he was struggling to stand on the smooth ice with that fearful wind sweeping against him. As the lady opened her door, he turned towards her and endeavored to step that way. She watched him a moment as he tried to speak to her and to come towards her.

"He is certainly intoxicated," the lady thought; and suddenly closing her door, she went back into her warm sitting-room. When she reached the window, she saw that he had stopped, and was looking at the closed door, in despair. No anger was in his thin face, but a look of suffering and of disappointment. Putting his cane upon the hard ice again, he turned back to the road.

The lady watched his uncertain steps, and soon she pitied him. His frame shook with the cold, and his benumbed hands could scarcely grasp his heavy staff. It was more than a quarter of a mile to the next house, and every step of the way was "glare ice." How could he ever get there? The lady grew ashamed. "Of what am I afraid?" she asked herself. "Of a poor old man who is so feeble he can scarcely stand?"

"But," something whispered, perhaps he is not so feeble as he pretends. He may be intoxicated; that is why he is on this retired road on a day like this. If you take him in and warm him, he may prove to be ugly." The evil counsel prevailed, and the lady watched him till she saw him nearly fall. Then her pity spoke again, "Poor old man, he can never walk to the next house, he will surely perish, and I shall be responsible for his death. I must not leave him to die and go into eternity unprepared."

Again she opened the door, and again the old man turned towards her. He tried to walk, but the ice and the wind were against him. The lady's pity grew strong, and flying down her path, she offered him her hand. He took it, and she was shocked at his benumbed situation. Tenderly she led him into the house and placed him in a chair before the warm fire. Then she removed his cap and thin mittens, and sat down beside him, watching to see whether he was really intoxicated, as she had imagined.

"I thank you, lady," he said, in a gentle voice. "I thought I was about to perish, but the Lord has provided for me. The Lord brought me to your door that you might help me." How the lady's heart rebuked her. Instead of being a drunkard, he was one of the Lord's chosen ones. What if she had permitted him to die? She shuddered at the thought. "It is too cold for you to be out to-day," she said. "I know it, madam, but I have come a long way, to see an old friend. The stage left me at the corner back here, and I have walked the rest of the way. I suppose I have nearly reached my friend's house. He is old, like me, and for many years I have not seen him."

"What is your friend's name?" "William Smith," he said. "William Smith!" echoed the lady. "Why, he lives in the very next house. He is a dear, good old man." "Yes," answered the visitor, "he was always good. Perhaps you have heard him speak of me. My name is Jacob Snow."

The lady held her breath. "Jacob Snow!" she repeated. "Are you the former benefactor of John Towle, my husband's father?" "Yes," the old man replied, "I knew John Towle; but I could not befriend any one now; for I have lost my property, and I am too old to get more."

"Stay with us then," said the lady, overwhelmed at the thought that she had been tempted to let the good man perish. Soon her husband came in, and the next day, when the old man went to visit his friend, he was carried in a nice sleigh, and loving hands administered to his wants. His gratitude, his fervent piety and deep humility were a rich reward for the lady's kindness. She loved to listen to his holy conversation, and felt that she had indeed entertained "an angel unawares."

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days," said the old man. "Little did I think when I saved the farm of John Towle, in the time of his distress, that his children would nourish me in my old age." "Never close your doors upon wayfarers," the lady often observed to her friends, "nor judge them too harshly, for by your kindness to them a great blessing may come to you, as there has to me. The blessing of the Lord's poor is better than gold."—Messenger.

GRANDPA'S STORY.

We gathered around the good man's chair, as he leaned back in his easy chair, and Charley and Robby and Will McNair, Annie and Gracie and Nell were there, with Jessie, the pet of the curling party. Who climbed upon grandpa's knee.

"Tell us a story, please, grandpa, do," said Annie, behind his chair. "Something wonderful, something new, and I'll braid your hair in a Chinese queue," "But let the story be all, all true," said Charley and Will McNair.

Dear grandpa's brow had the amber glow of Indian summer time. His eyes, like the sun in the glass, ran low; the darkness comes with the winter snow, or glad ear catches the murmur low, That tells of a brighter clime.

He told the tale that all hearts should move, Of the Lord of life and light; How he left his shining home above To save the lost by his wondrous love; How the Spirit came as a holy dove, With her wings of spotless white.

Of prayers that hallowed Mount Olivet; How the storm wind lashed the surge, And plowed the barque, with her torn sails wet, The wretched breast of Gennesaret, And stars of hope in the heart had set, While the wild winds shrieked a dirge:

Of the Form that walked the waves at will, As erst 'neath the olive shade; Till the gentle whisper, "Peace, be still!" Sends sudden joy, yet of fear, a thrill, And Jesus' accents the rapt soul fill— "It is I; be not afraid!"

He told how the worn feet paused at last On Calvary's awful brow; Of self and jeer, at the sinless cast; How heaven and earth looked on aghast, How that gleaming night o'er the vision passed That gladdens our spirit now.

A solemn hush o'er our young hearts fell As the death scene rose to view; We lingered long 'neath the hallowed spell— For the dear Lord's sake who loved so well, Dear children, trust that the tale I tell Is a truth— He died for you."

YOUR SISTERS.

Boys, whether large or small, ought to be very kind to their sisters, especially if the sister is younger than they are. Girls are not so strong as boys, and they have more gentle dispositions, and so they should be treated tenderly.

If a boy and his little sister are coming into the room together, is it right for the boy to run forward and get the best seat? No, no. He should go forward and offer it to his sister. If a new picture-book comes into the house, is it right for the boy to seize it first, because he is the largest and strongest, and make his sister wait until he has seen it as much as he wishes to before he gives it to her? Surely not. If his sister is out in the yard playing with him, and she's afraid of the dog, is it right for him to make believe set the dog on her on purpose to tease her? No, no. Such conduct is very thoughtless and cruel. He should take her by the hand, and show her how pleased Rover is to be patted on the head.

Boys should always be very considerate of their little sisters. They should wait for them, and help them, and speak kindly to them, and remember that God has made them stronger in order to be their protectors.—Child's Paper.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not covet," said all the boys in a breath; and then each one repeated it from beginning to end. "That means you mustn't wish for things that don't belong to you," said Frank.

"I don't see how you can help it," exclaimed Sam. "I see heaps of things every day that I want." "There are two ways of wishing," exclaimed the teacher. "We may wish for things which we cannot get, but in an improper and dishonest way, or we may wish for things which we can ask for, or buy, or earn. One way is wrong, and the other right. One way will make us industrious and careful, in order to obtain what we want, and the other will lead to dishonesty and crime. I will tell you a story to explain this."

When I was teaching school up north, one afternoon I put some money into my desk. "There was a bill, and a silver five-cent piece. At recess the scholars played touch-and-run in the room. My desk was a little way open, and the boys, as they ran past it, could see that little piece of money, which was new and bright. One boy, named Waldo, stopped and looked at it. That made him want it, I suppose; for after he had run past the desk three or four times, I saw him put in his handsly, and take it out, and slip it into his pocket. What commandments had he broken so far, boys?"

"He coveted, and broke the tenth; and stole, and broke the eighth," said Sam. "I had seen him take the money; but I wanted to give him a chance to be sorry, and confess his fault; and so, before school was done, I told the scholars of the money I had lost, and talked to them of the great sin of stealing. And then I told them that I would wait after school, that the child who had done the wicked act might come to me and own it, and return the five-cent piece. But Waldo did not come. He made his bow, put on his cap, and walked off just like the others. Did he break any commandment then?"

"The ninth," said Frank; "But he did not speak a word." "Never mind; he lied though."

"I thought I would go then to his mother's, and tell her about it; for I felt very sorry for Waldo, and was afraid he would go on to steal more and more. I found her in great trouble. It was an hour after school, and the child had not got home yet, and said

she, "It is my rule for him to come straight home from school, and he knows it." "Boys had broken any other of God's commandments?" "The fifth," answered all the boys. "Yes, he had disobeyed his mother. Pretty soon he came in, his face and hands all daubed with molasses candy. 'Where you get candy?' asked his mother. 'John Smith gave it to me,' said Waldo. 'It is not so, my child, I am sure,' said the sorry mother. 'I believe you, bought it with the five-cent piece you took out of your teacher's desk this afternoon.'"

"He broke the ninth commandment over again," said Sam. "Certainly. Waldo looked at his mother and then at me, and burst out crying. 'Poor child! how sorry I felt for him, that he should have been led into so many sins! And dear boys, remember this story. If you break the tenth commandment you will be sure to break others. A good man once said we must never wish for anything which we could not kneel down and pray for. If we do this, it will be sure to keep us from using any wicked means to obtain it.'—Freedman.

THE FAIRY PERSIE.

There was once a youth who, with several of his companions, was about to go on a long and difficult journey, at the end of which they expected high honors as a reward of their toil. Knowing the dangers and obstacles in their way, before they set forth they invoked the aid of the Queen of Fairies. She hearing their invocations, appeared and listened to their requests for assistance. Calling to her servants to appear, she said, "I will give unto each of you an attendant, who, though invisible, will always be at hand, and will render such assistance as may be within her appropriate sphere. Choose you, therefore, as may seem to you best." The youth who was to be leader of the band, chose the fairy Persie.

One of his comrades chose the fairy Gilda, who was capable of showering gold on those whom she served; another chose Couragia; and so on, each choosing as pleased him best. When they had all chosen, wishing them good luck, the Queen and her attendants became once more invisible, and the youth and his comrades went on their way pleased with their good fortune. They traveled bravely on for a few days. The woods echoed with their merry songs, or rung with their joyous shouts. But the novelty of the scenery now failed to please them, and the way became more difficult. Then he who had chosen Gilda received the benefit of his choice. His purse was overfilled with gold, and when weary he hired some peasant to carry them on their way; if hungry, food was always forthcoming for the glittering coin. But at last he became weary of the journey, and, aided by Gilda, he built him a splendid palace by the wayside.

He who chose Couragia soon became tired of this monotonous life, and joined a company of soldiers who were going to the seat of war. Thus one by one they gave up the journey and at last he who had chosen Persie was left plodding on his way alone. He alone, after conquering the difficulties and dangers of that long and weary way, arrived safely at his destination and attained the high honors he struggled for so perseveringly.

Now, my young readers, would you like to know who the fairy was who helped him? I should like to tell you more of the way she did so, in all the perils he encountered, so you might guess. That fairy was Perseverance, and her aid we must have in all our undertakings, or fail. By persevering, General Grant, conquered Lee. "I will fight it out on this line," he said, and fight it out he did, till Lee surrendered his army, which others less persevering had failed to conquer. Whatever you undertake, persevere, and sooner or later success will crown your efforts.—Christian Mirror.

THE EARNEST USE OF LIFE.

Let us think how little we use life thoroughly, how little we really live our life, how seldom we are in the humor to carry out life's great and solemn purposes, how we let its opportunities fly by us, like thistledown on the wind. Why are we not always denying ourselves, taking up the cross and following Christ? Why are we not always on the watch for every occasion in which a word may be said, or a deed done, or a thought thought, that shall be a protest for Christ, in this vain and sinful world? Why is God's love but a rare wintry gleam, and never a steady summer in our soul? Think, for instance, of such things as prayer: what a wonderful and beautiful thing it is! To kneel, an atom in creation, at the throne of the Almighty; to be able to bare our hearts to Him, and to feel sure that the least throb, as well as the greatest spasm, is perfectly appreciated, felt, understood, sympathized with by that awful yet loving being.

And yet how wintry our hearts are in our prayers! how seldom they burst into cheerful praises! how constantly the sky above us seems pale and heavy, and dull and impenetrable, and our hearts beneath abiding in their winter sleep! Or if a snowdrop here and there wanders out, and now and then a pinched primrose, there are not flowers enough to fashion into even the poorest garland.