

The Family Circle.

BEFORE THE DAWN.

Between the midnight and the breaking
Of the purple dawn's awaking,
Saviour, I think of thee!
While all is still, and dark, and holy,
As the fading stars pale slowly,
Saviour, I think of thee!

In the shadows, ere the dawning
Glorifies the ruddy morning,
Saviour, I think of thee!
In my heart the day is beaming,
Sunrise in my soul is streaming,
With the thought, O Lord, of thee!

For Thou shinest through the sorrow
Of the heart, before its morrow
Rises clear and fair to see;
And when now the spirit's buried
In the night of doubt seems buried,
Saviour, I think of thee!

All thy precious consolation
Cheers the spirit's desolation
With the single thought of thee!
Thus, while still the world is sleeping,
Ere its dawn, my soul is keeping
Its morning, Lord, with thee!

In the hour of calm communion
Thou preparest me for union
In the coming day with thee!
Not alone to feel its sadness,
Not alone to share its gladness,
Saviour, I'll think of thee!

Light of earth! arise in beauty,
Shine upon the path of duty,
Way of love, O Lord, with thee!
Break through all the shades of error,
Ere, in falsehood, wrong and terror
Till the world shall love but thee!

In the darkness, ere the dawning
Of the resurrection morning,
Saviour, I'll sleep in thee!
And my soul, to life awaking,
Where the eternal day is breaking,
Jesus, shall live in thee!

A CHAPTER ON COURTSHIP.

BY MRS. H. M. LINCOLN.

Some time since a request came to me that I would write an article on Courtship for the *Rural*. Though the author of this request is a stranger to me, I send a few thoughts. Should I deal plainly with my subject, be assured it is truthfully so; and while referring to only two or three classes to be met with, those inclined to criticize will remember there are happy exceptions, of which but little need be said.

"In no intercourse between the sexes is there practised so much hypocrisy as in the companionship of those who entertain a view to marriage." Whoever has studied closely, or even casually, could not fail to discover this; and while only observation has made it evident in some instances, experience has confirmed it in many. Anna Dickinson insists that most girls are trained for just one thing—to get married. It is talked of in the nursery, the parlor, the school-room—indeed, everywhere, until at last the young lady thinks of nothing more than this. Consequently, should the gentleman paying his regards be called a "desirable match," every thought, word and action is suited to this end—securing a husband.

Young ladies seldom appear themselves in gentlemen's company; hence they appear to disadvantage. The charming simplicity of home life is laid aside; the first sentence you hear them utter confirms this. It is what people call politely spoken—so politely, indeed, as hardly to be understood. Let them just step into the kitchen and give orders for tea to their weary mother. Would you recognize the voice as belonging to her who, only a moment ago, spoke so softly and so sweetly to you? To be sure, this companionship of lovers calls forth the sunniest, sweetest traits of character; then why need simplicity be thrown aside? Why need the young lady be so generous and gentle, so noble and forbearing, and yet, out of your presence, be so selfish and exacting? Why study your taste and torture herself to suit it? Why read your favorite books, and yet detest them? Why admire what you admire so devotedly; why idolize your pets, and yet secretly abuse them? Why never, from the beginning to the end of courtship, appear her simple self?

No wonder the lover experiences pleasure in contemplating this, to him, most perfect of women so "nobly planned," to whom he offers the wealth of his noble heart. She comes to him fresh and fair, neatly and charmingly attired, and he pictures a home, O, so pleasant, so perfect; but, ah, me, did he ever catch a glimpse of her room? Does she frequently mention economy as a virtue she practises, and yet nearly distract her father by her extravagance? Does she insist that another will kill herself with care and devotion to her family, and yet never, no never, seek to lighten her burden, or relieve her of care, in so much as attending to her own wardrobe? Is not her constancy and devotion to you charming; but is she not just as devoted to others in your absence? Many a noble young man has been the victim of such deception, and wed, as he thought, one with whom he was thoroughly acquainted, and found, indeed, a stranger. Happy for them it might have been, had not the heart of such an one partaken largely of the general tendency among ladies at the present time—namely, to be in dress, manners and appearance, more false than true.

Gentlemen, though not trained so exclusively to this idea of getting married, are nevertheless just as deceptive. They seek to hide every fault. They cloak their sins with

greater caution than ladies, yet are not so hypocritical generally—at least so they all declare; but I confess I think, it is their conceited opinion of themselves. How many can approach a lady and not use cloves, cardamom seed, etc., to drive away the alcoholic perfume of their breath? The lingering odors of rum, gin, brandy, etc., are certainly poor recommendations for any gentleman. This may be the first step in the way of deception; and O, how many successive ones are taken ere the trusting, truthful heart is won! They denounce drinking, smoking and chewing; gambling and everything pertaining to it they assure the lady is too debasing for decent men to engage in; they admire only pure and elevating pursuits; they design to live always most strictly moral and virtuous; to be, in a word, all their dear Fanny can desire. Doubtless with many all these things are truthfully uttered; but where is the determination to carry them out?

Again, they are gentle and courteous. Nothing irritates them; not even when others exclaim "How provoking!" are they disturbed. And such things as oaths, why, they are as far from their thoughts as heaven! So attentive they are; they bring such beautiful bouquets, such splendid novels, such loves of pictures—and no wonder the fair lady is in ecstasy over this most perfect of men. But could she follow this her ideal as he joins his companions—hear him pronounce her name with an oath—see him drink glass after glass of brandy—stake sum after sum at the gaming table—or, farther even, watch him as he enters yonder house of infamy, where, think you, her ideal would be? Deception—if you find it not in such a class as this, where would you find it? Victims there are, however, who sacrifice all at such shrines. The pure and innocent and trusting are sought by the representatives of deception—not those deserving of such a future as awaits them.

One might go on enumerating the various ways in which the true character of lovers is marked, but it would occupy too much space. If "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," until changed by the Holy Spirit, can we look for unblemished truth in those untaught by Christ? Since courtship is designed to bring into close and intimate companionship those who wed, should not every hindrance to thorough acquaintance be put aside? We look for pleasing courtesies and nameless attentions between lovers; and who could object were they continued after a brief honeymoon? If the husband were still courteous and attentive—still careful not to do things he would have scorned once to do—still denounced in practice and principle what he once professed to despise—still remembered one-half the delicate courtesies he once proffered; if the wife still retained her gentleness—still studied her husband's tastes and preferences, and made herself the same agreeable companion as of yore—still dressed neatly and carefully—in fact, if she tried one-half as hard to please this, her husband, now, as when a lover, things would go more smoothly.

Such is the strict intimacy of married life, that deception is impossible. The mask so long worn, innocently perhaps, must be removed, and the true character be discovered. How useless, then, the brief, hasty, artificial method of courtship. It is when all the pleasing attentions, all the nameless nothings (and yet so great we can't define them) are laid aside—when all the unfavorable points of character are discovered—that the foundation of unhappiness is being laid. With all the frankness hearts can offer, a long term of courtship will discover little enough of what there is to be learned; and if, then, having lived without seeing each other only in the "smooth walks, peaceful bowers and quiet skies" of courtship, and even then artificially, (though the judgment may have suggested unfitness and un congeniality for each other,) how will the trials of domestic life be met? Better, far better to heed the faithful voice of judgment before it is too late to escape the evils of ill-suited companionship.

Those who have assumed least as lovers, find their domestic life more nearly what they fancied it would be; not free from perplexities and stern realities, to be sure, but free from the sad reflections occasioned by concealing from each other their real character.—*Rural New Yorker*.

NOT TOO COLD.

Very cold drinks, and especially iced water, weaken the digestive powers, and lay the drinkers open to the assaults of cholera and many forms of illness. As to the quenching of thirst, which alone justifies the drinking even of water, everybody knows that iced water is not at all useful, but that warm water is. One cup of tea, taken as warm as you can swallow it, will remove thirst, while a pint of iced water increases it. The American habit of swallowing quarts of iced water daily is a sort of dram-drinking, and ought not to be kept up. Why should a rational being make an ice-house of his insides, when nature plainly indicates that they are to be kept in a warm—not to say a hot—

state? But an American never denies himself anything, particularly anything which is injurious to him. We are all like Lord Muskerry, who, on his dying bed, said he died perfectly content, for he had never denied himself anything he could get.—*Boston Traveller*.

BUILDING FOR ETERNITY.

It was a pleasant group of children that were gathered in the play-ground one bright Saturday in May. School was over for the week, lessons were all recited, and now one merry game they must have before starting for home. The play was over, and weary with their exercises, one party of boys and girls had sat down to rest beneath the old elm tree that stood in the centre of their play-ground. They were busily talking—for when did happy hearts ever meet without the sound of merry voices?

"Have you seen Mr. White's new house?" said Frank Leslie to William Green, who stood beside him. "O, yes; is it not handsome? so large; and then such beautiful trees all around it. I think it the finest in the village."

"How I would like to build a house for myself!" exclaimed James Norton, one of the older boys.

"Well, Jamie, how would you build it?" said his sister Kate.

"O, it should be a great deal handsomer than Mr. White's. I would have it all of stone, with handsome carving in front, a wide hall running through it, and a conservatory at the end, filled with most beautiful flowers. Then I would have a garden; a pond filled with gold fish; and summer houses, with grape vines running over them."

"And a long drive up to the house," said Frank "with great elm trees each side."

"And a porter's lodge," added William, "where there should live an old woman, and some pretty children to open the gate."

"Well," said Kate, "that would not be my choice. No, indeed! I do not want to live in the country all my days. I should build an elegant house in the city, like those I saw in the city last winter."

"But what would you like, Mary?" she added, turning to a more thoughtful-looking girl beside her, who was her constant companion and friend.

"I?" said Mary Green, "I think I should like to live in one of those old castles on the Rhine we were studying about. I would not build anything new, only make the place look pretty, and train ivy everywhere."

"And what would Bella like?" said Kate, as she bent to kiss a little girl who sat on the grass at her feet. Little Bella May was the pet of them all, and each waited to hear her answer. "I would build me a little white cottage, and have roses growing all over it. There should be a group of cottages together; and I would give one to you, Katie, and one to Mary, and have nobody live in them except those I love."

At this moment Bella's mother joined the children, (she was walking home, and stopped at the play-ground,) and to her they all appealed to know who had made the best choice.

"Would you not like my cottage, mother?" said Bella. Mrs. May smoothed back the curls from the bright face turned towards her as she answered, "Yes, my child; and it would be pleasant, no doubt, if you were sure of always having those dear friends near you. I see you would all like to build houses for yourselves, if you could, would you not?"

"Oh, yes, yes indeed." "But, dear children, did you ever think you are all builders now?"

"What do you mean, mother?" cried Bella.

"Yes, you are each of you building a house for eternity; and every day you add something to it."

"Why, Mrs. May, we are children; how can we build houses?"

"It is really so, my little Katie; and I will see if I can explain to you what I mean. Bella, what verse did you learn last Sunday?"

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you," was reverently repeated by the child.

"Well, dear children, if you all love the precious Saviour, who spoke those words, you will have one of those mansions in Heaven. Jesus Christ has laid the foundation; he has made it firm and sure, and you are to build upon it. Every good thing you do adds an ornament to your house. Every gentle word, every obedient act, every effort to do right, makes the mansion more beautiful. You are building every day, and you may make the house in Heaven a glorious one. Do you not think it is better to build for eternity, than build here? The pleasantest home, whether it be a quiet cottage, an old castle, or a city palace can be yours for only a little while. But if you build a mansion in Heaven, having the dear Saviour who died for you your corner-stone, you have a home which you shall enjoy forever. William, do you remember where the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as the foundation on which we are to build?"

"Is it not that text, 'Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ?'"

"Yes; and then you know, it says, 'Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest.' Now, Mary, how may we build our Heavenly house of gold, silver, precious stones?"

"Do you not mean that we do so when trying to be good every day, to please our parents and our Heavenly Father?"

"Yes, my dear; and now will you not all remember this when you are tempted to do wrong; to speak unkindly, to act unkindly; will you not stop and ask yourselves if this will not prevent your house in Heaven from growing more beautiful; and will you not resolve so to live that your mansion above shall be all glorious within?"—*Child's Companion*.

OBEY THE BEST THOUGHTS.

Sometimes we are prompted to little acts of kindness, to our friends and neighbors, that are wholly unselfish. Perhaps, when we retire at night, we say: "That poor woman is in trouble, and I must go and see her to-morrow," or, "I must inquire if the B.'s are not in a suffering condition, and if they are, I will help them."

To-morrow comes with its cares, and our good resolves are forgotten, or put aside for a more convenient time. I was deeply impressed, a few days ago, in a conversation with an old man, one who had dandled me on his knee in my infancy, who had left this place and not returned till more than twenty years had elapsed. He staid a week with us, and that was one of the best weeks we ever lived. It has done us good ever since. There is scarcely a day passes in which we do not meditate on some of the good things which Mr. Gwinn told us. He told me if I was ever prompted to do a kind, unselfish deed, not to put aside the still, sweet voice, but rise up and do it; that it was the prompting of the Holy Spirit—that, perhaps in answer to some pleading prayer of the broken-hearted, or the sorrowing, he was granting that prayer, and making us the instrument in accomplishing it.

We had never thought of this before. Christ and the blessed angels making even us instrumental in working for them.

It was not long after this until a young man employed on a freight train, by a misstep, in the gray dawn of the morning, fell between the cars, and was cut to pieces. A telegram was sent to his parents. We were neighbors, though not intimate, and when the sad news reached us, I sat down horror-stricken, leaning my head on my hand. I thought of his lonely old parents—he was his old mother's darling and pride. She was left desolate, crushed, felled to the earth by the dreadful blow.

Instantly there was a tugging at my heart. I was drawn toward her as if by main force. I said, "To-morrow I will go there—it would be intrusive now, to look upon her sorrow—tears will alleviate the keenness of her distress." Stronger and stronger was I drawn toward her. Something said, "To-morrow a crowd will be around her, curiosity will be excited, people will be wondering how they will bear it, and go and stand, and stare, and look on—she needs you now."

I put on my cloak and hood, saying I would go across the woodland and meadow, and reach there about the same time the man who bore the telegram would, and ride round the windmill road. I was just crossing the brook, perhaps forty rods below the house, when the blow fell. I heard the shriek—the piercing, heart-rending shriek that almost froze the blood in my veins!

The first words from her pallid lips were—"Oh, I am so thankful that you have come!" Then, while she clung to my neck and moaned out her sorrow on my bosom, it was mine to weep with her in sympathy. There is no comfort for one so utterly bereft; in the first tumult of their grief, tears are their best solace.

I felt glad that, perhaps, the good angel had put the desire into my heart to go there then. Another time I had been thinking all the morning of a poor woman who lived beyond the village, and after the work was all done up, I thought perhaps she was in need, or wanting to see me, so persistently did thoughts of her cling to me. In a neighborly way, just as all the people do in country neighborhoods, I filled a little basket with things that are good in all families, and went over to see Eunice. When I rapped there was no response, and I opened the door quietly and looked in. The poor woman was leaning her head on a table, and taking a real good comfortable cry. Her husband was absent on a drunken spree, and they were left in that winter weather without provisions or wood. The two babies were cross and half sick, and Eunice's poor head was bursting with pain, while a worse pain, was breaking her heart.

As soon as she saw me, up went both hands—poor, cold, glad hands, ready to clasp me, and the first words were, "Oh, I am not ashamed before you! I have been praying all this morning to see you!"

I could sit all day and tell of instances like these. I do believe God uses humble means often to aid in

bringing about His wishes, and in answering pleading prayers put up in faith. I am glad to believe that it is so. If it is a delusion, it does me good to be thus deluded.—*Home Magazine*.

GOING HOME.

Where are you going so fast, old man,
Where are you going so fast?
There's a valley to cross, and a river to ford,
There's a clasp of the hand and a parting word,
And a tremulous sigh for the past, old man,
The beautiful vanished past.

The road has been rugged and rough, old man,
To your feet it's rugged and rough,
But you see a dear being with gentle eyes,
Has shared in your labor and sacrifice,
Ah! that has been snatched enough, old man,
For you and me, sunshine enough.

How long since you passed o'er the hill, old man,
Of life o'er the top of the hill?
Were there beautiful valleys on 'tother side?
Were there flowers and trees with their branches wide,
To shut out the heat of the sun, old man,
The heat of the fervid sun?

And how did you cross the waves, old man,
Of sorrow, the fearful waves?
Did you lay your dear treasures by, one by one,
With an aching heart and "God's will be done,"
Under the wayside dust, old man,
In the grave 'neath the wayside dust?

There is sorrow and labor for all, old man,
Alas! there is sorrow for all,
And you, peradventure, have had your share,
For forty long winters have whitened your hair,
And they've whitened your heart as well, old man,
Thank God, your heart as well.

You're now at the foot of the hill, old man,
At last at the foot of the hill;
The sun has gone down in a golden glow,
And the heavenly city lies just below,
Go in through the pearly gate, old man,
The beautiful pearly gate.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S FIRST CASE.

Ebenezer Webster, father of Daniel, was a farmer. The vegetables in his garden suffered considerably from the depredations of a woodchuck, whose hole and habitation was near the premises. Daniel, some ten or twelve years old, and his brother Ezekiel had set a steel trap, and at last succeeded in capturing the trespasser. Ezekiel proposed to kill the animal, and end at once all further trouble with him; but Daniel looked with compassion upon this meek, dumb captive, and offered to let him go. The boys could not agree, and each appealed to their father to decide the case.

"Well, my boys," said the old gentleman, "I will be judge. There is the prisoner," pointing to the woodchuck, "and you shall be the counsel, and plead the case for and against his life and liberty."

Ezekiel opened the case with a strong argument, urging the mischievous nature of the criminal, the great harm he had already done; said that much time and labor had been spent in his capture, and now, if he was suffered to live and go at large, he would renew his depredations, and be cunning enough not to suffer himself to be caught again, and that he ought now to be put to death; that his skin was of some value, and that, make the most of him they could, it would not repay half the damage he had already done. His argument was ready, practical, and to the point, and of much greater length than our limits will allow us to occupy in relating the story.

The father looked with pride upon his son, who became a distinguished jurist in his manhood.

"Now, Daniel, it's your turn; I'll hear what you've got to say."

It was his first case. Daniel saw that the plea of his brother had sensibly affected his father, the judge, and as his large, brilliant, black eyes looked upon the soft, timid expression of the animal, and he saw it tremble with fear in its narrow prison-house, his heart swelled with pity, and he appealed with eloquent words that the captive might again go free. God, he said, had made the woodchuck; He made him to live, to enjoy the bright sunshine, the pure air, the free field and woods. God has not made him or anything in vain; the woodchuck had as much right to live as any other living thing; he was not a destructive animal, as the fox or wolf was; he simply ate a few common vegetables, of which they had plenty, and could well spare a part; he destroyed nothing except the little food he needed to sustain his humble life; and that little food was as sweet to him, and as necessary to his existence, as was to them the food on their mother's table. God furnished their own food; he gave them all they possessed; and would they not spare a little for the dumb creature, who really had as much right to his small share of God's bounty as they themselves had to their portion? "Yes, more; the animal had never violated the laws of his nature or the laws of God, as man often did; but strictly followed the simple instincts he had received from the hands of the Creator of all things. Created by God's hands, he had a right, from God, to life, to food, to liberty, and they had no right to deprive him of either. He alluded to the mute but earnest pleadings of the animal for that life, as dear to him as was their own to them; and the just judgment they might expect, if, in selfish cruelty and cold-heartedness, they took the life they could not restore again.

During this appeal, tears had started to the old man's eyes, and were fast running down his sunburnt cheeks. Every feeling of a father's heart was stirred within him; he saw the future

greatness of his son before his eyes, and he felt that God had blessed him and his children beyond the lot of common men. His pity and sympathy were awakened by the eloquent words of compassion and the strong appeal for mercy; and forgetting the judge in the man and the father, he sprang from his chair, (while Daniel was in the midst of his argument, without thinking that he had already won his case,) and turning to his elder son, dashing the tears from his eyes, he exclaimed: "Take, take, you let that woodchuck go!"

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

Jesus is the Saviour of the little ones; they can feel their need of a pardon, and they can love and trust the Redeemer. Innumerable instances are occurring, where, for the encouragement of parents and Sabbath-school teachers, childlike faith in Christ is manifested, in life and in death. A speaker in a recent Sabbath-school convention related an incident occurring in England—that of a little girl, seven years of age, who, having been taken sick, was carried to the hospital to die. "The last night," said the speaker, "nothing was heard to break the silence, but the ticking of the great clock in the hall, as the pendulum swung backward and forward. Then it would strike the hours, e-l-e-v-e-n, t-w-e-l-v-e, o-n-e o'clock, when there came from the couch of the little sufferer, a voice of sweet melody. It was one verse of a Sunday-school hymn—

"Jesus the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all our guilty fears,
And turns our hell to heaven."

Then all was silent again, and nothing was heard but the ticking of the great clock in the hall, until she broke out after a while, in another verse:

"Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but speak His name;
Preach Him to all, and sing in death
Behold! behold the Lamb!"

The nurse then hastened to the bedside of the little sufferer, but she was too late. The angels had been there before her, and carried that little Sabbath-school girl from beholding the Lamb on earth, to His bosom in the sanctuary above.

SPEECHES BY AN OLD SMOKER.

No, madam, I don't call that young lady plain. I never use middle terms to express extremes. Would you term a bull-dog plain, for example?

The gorilla is not plain, but very far from plain. So, on the other hand, is your daughter. On the other hand, I say, ma'am. No compliment; only an illustration.

Indeed, the fact is, that a plain girl is generally more eligible than a pretty one. Beauty is nothing when you're used to it; which is very soon. It is gone in a year or two, and leaves behind it—what? Generally what men go to clubs to escape from, ma'am.

A plain wife has no beauty to lose—and with it all her husband's liking. Plainness washes and wears—and does not paint, ma'am. Plain good looks, resulting from mental qualities, will last a lifetime. A middle-aged lady, once a plain girl, is commonly no less handsome than most other middle-aged ladies, and often handsomer. She may still look as well as ever she did, when the belle of former ball-rooms may have shrunk into a Sycorax, or swollen into a grampus.

A plain woman and a plain joint; both well dressed in their way. None of your French kickshaws and toys. That is what I say to my nephew, ma'am.

I also say that when a man marries a plain woman with his eyes open, he cannot be deluded by appearances into marrying a fool.—*Punch*.

CHRIST TAKES NO SILENT PARTNERS.

A minister in Brooklyn was recently called upon by a business man, who said:—

"I come, sir, to inquire if Jesus Christ will take me into the concern as a silent partner?"

"Why do you ask?" said the minister.

"Because I wish to be a member of the firm, and do not wish anybody to know it," said the man.

The reply was, "Christ takes no silent partners! The firm must be 'Jesus Christ & Co.,' and the names of the 'Co.' though they may occupy a subordinate place, must all be written out on the sign-board."

Reader, are you trying to be a secret Christian? Jesus Christ takes no silent partners!—*Congregationalist*.

"HE NEVER TOLD A LIE."

Mungo Park, the traveler, relates that when he was in Africa, a party of armed Moors made an attack on the flocks of a village where he was stopping. A youth of the place was mortally wounded in the affray. The natives placed him on horseback, and conducted him home, while his mother went before, proclaiming all the good qualities of her boy; and by her clasped hands and streaming eyes showed how she suffered. "He never," said she, with affectionate earnestness, "he never, never told a lie!"