

## The Family Circle.

(For the American Presbyterian.)

## OUR FATHER.

BY REV. EDWIN H. NEVIN.

Is He among the stars, my God, my King?  
From Him do all their light and glory spring?  
Does He uphold and poise their ponderous  
weight,  
And bid them march in such majestic state?

Is He among the clouds and winds and storms;  
Directing, shaping all their wondrous forms?  
Does He command their movements as they fly  
Like frenzied demons through the darkened  
sky?

Is He among the angels, pure and bright,  
Who live above all clouds and storms and  
night?

Does He inspire their souls with love and song,  
And clothe in beauty all the countless throng?

Is He among the waves that dash and roar  
And wildly toss from distant shore to shore;  
Beholding all the conflicts of the deep  
Till He shall bid the angry tempest sleep?

Is He among the myriad groves and flowers  
That grow and bloom 'mid summer's sun and  
showers;  
Painting each leaf, imparting every hue,  
Till Eden seems to burst upon the view?

Yes! He is everywhere o'er earth and sea,  
He knows no bound but vast infinity;  
'Mid burning suns and laughing flowers He  
lives,  
To all things life, and form and beauty gives.

Then He is with me too, His tender love  
Is near to me as living ones above;  
I cannot, should not doubt His watchful care,  
For God is always with me, with me every-  
where.

Trust, then, my soul! give to the winds thy  
feet!

Hope thou in Him for He is ever near;  
He that binds worlds and atoms in one whole,  
Will not neglect the priceless, deathless soul!

## THE GERMAN FAMILY IN LONDON.

FROM GUTHRIE'S SUNDAY MAGAZINE.

One September day there was an open-air missionary meeting in the neighborhood of Barmen, in the lovely Wuppenthal. The friends of missions in the vicinity had flocked together from all quarters. There was scarcely a village within a circuit of ten miles which did not send its minister with his deacons and the better portion of his church members. Men and women, old and young, rich and poor, crowded together, exhibiting that true and wonderful equality and fraternity, which political communism can at best but caricature, and nothing but Christian communion can realize. On a small platform, under the broad foliage of a gigantic beech tree, some of the leaders of the mission were sitting in committee, directing the proceedings of the day. At a distance, amidst the slender stems of tall firs, between which the September sun cast his cheerful rays, long rows of tables and forms were placed to accommodate the numerous guests at dinner-time, when a roll, a bit of meat, and a cup of coffee would refresh them for the work of the afternoon.

Several speakers, famous for their eloquence or their practical knowledge of mission-work, addressed the assembly. Each speech was closed with a hymn, and in the pauses, hymn after hymn was raised by the people themselves, making the forest and the neighboring hills resound with the sweet melodies of the *Deutschen Kirchenlieder*. And when afterward the people were seated at the tables, and the blessing was asked by the chairman, the speeches and the hymns were continued in uninterrupted succession, every one being desirous of expressing the feelings of his heart on this happy day, and of contributing something toward building up the congregation in their faith, hope, and love. And so it went on from hour to hour, till at last the long shadows of the first announced the setting of the sun, and gave the signal for departure. In numerous groups, dotting the roads that crossed the hills in all directions, the people returned to their homes, keeping up the enthusiasm of the day by their evening hymns, which echoed through the valleys.

A little group walked up the steep road leading to the village of Kirchheim. It consisted of Hermann Stahl, the farmer, Peter Vormann, the schoolmaster, with their wives and children, and a few neighbors of the working class. Hermann and Peter were engaged in a lively conversation, to which the rest of the company listened evidently with great interest, the women now and then dropping in a word of affirmation, explanation, or correction. The subject regarded Hermann's plan of emigrating to America in the spring.

Hermann Stahl was a man in the prime of life, with a robust appearance, broad shoulders, and a manly face. On his little farm, which he cultivated with the ability of a well-taught husbandman, he had brought up a family of six children, who possessed in his wife a most kind and tender-hearted mother. With the exception of the eldest, a girl of eighteen, the children were boys, of whom the eldest was sixteen and the youngest six. They were a happy family, living in the midst of charming scenery, secluded from the din and bustle of the world, and enjoying the privileges and blessings of a truly Christian society, such as the little village of Kirchheim was blessed with. The minister of the place—for there was only one church at Kirchheim—was a pious man, a good preacher, and a still better pastor. Peter Vormann, the schoolmaster, was his friend; and everybody knows that when, in a

small village, the pastor and the teacher agree, the whole population is in their hands, for good or for evil. Happily, in this case it was for good, for Peter spoke to the children at school of no other way of salvation than his friend the minister recommended to their parents at church. The people having thus, from time immemorial, been accustomed to meet as children in one and the same school, and as adults in one and the same church, it could not be any matter of wonder that the whole population of Kirchheim looked like one family, of which the minister was the father and the schoolmaster the eldest brother. Kirchheim was one of those happy villages, of which the remote hilly districts of Rhenish Prussia have always possessed a considerable number. The various changes in theological systems have found as little access to them as the shifting caprices of fashion, and consequently, the old faith of the Reformers is there maintained intact, as well as the simplicity of patriarchal life. In those villages the pattern of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem, the members of which "were of one heart and of one soul, having all things in common," is preserved as far as it is possible in our day. The people go in and out of each other's houses with as much freedom as though they were their own; and no wonder, for they were wont to do so as children, and the time for dropping the good custom has not, in their opinion, come round. They call each other, and each other's wives, by their Christian names, as familiarly as if they were brothers and sisters. They are often seen in summer time sitting in rows of six or eight on the benches near the front doors of the cottages, cheerfully chatting till the setting sun, or the chiming of the evening bell, calls them to their homes. In winter, they spend their evenings in small companies, assembling in the houses by rotation, when many a good book is read, and many an interesting subject discussed. At these gatherings either the minister or the schoolmaster is generally present, and he usually gives such a tone to the conversation as promotes the religious knowledge and edification of the people. Pauperism or destitution is impossible in those places, unless some general calamity, such as a failure of the crops or an inundation, throws the whole of the population into distress. The people know each other too well not to know each other's wants, and they love one another too well not to try to help where help is possible.

Now Hermann Stahl was a member of one of these happy communities. Nor was he an insignificant member. He was an elder of the church, and was held in high esteem on account of his pious and respectable conduct. It would have been difficult to point to a man, in his position in life, who found himself in happier circumstances. His farm, though not very large, was yet sufficient for the support of himself and his family. He had attained the highest honors within the reach of an inhabitant of Kirchheim. He was everywhere received with cordial affection; all houses were open to him, and many hearts likewise, and into them he knew how to pour the consolations of the Gospel. No wonder, then, that the population was smitten with surprise when it was rumored that Hermann contemplated emigrating to America. Everybody was put about by the news, for Hermann was always thought to be the most unlikely to need to have recourse to such a measure. The minister, the schoolmaster, and the elders of the church took the highest interest in the matter, for nobody desired to miss such a good man from the Kirchheim society. And besides, people thought, if he set the example, it was likely that more would follow, and what would then become of good old Kirchheim? So the first few days after the report had gone forth, Hermann's house was besieged by people inquiring whether it was really true, and trying to dissuade him from such an "absurd plan." In fact, he could scarcely show himself in the village street, without being accosted by friends, some of whom besought him with tears in their eyes to consider well before it was too late.

Now, the reasons which induced Hermann to think of such a plan as exchanging the dearly beloved "fatherland" for a new and unknown world, were perhaps not so urgent as he thought, but neither were they so absurd as his friends and neighbors tried to make them appear. His first and chief reason was that he had little or no prospect of seeing his children established in circumstances similar to his own. Had they all been girls he might have cherished the hope of seeing them one day married to respectable farmers or tradesmen. But they were boys, as I have said, with the exception of Hannah, the eldest, and there was no opportunity in the village of training them up for anything but farming. Now, it was as clear as day that only one of them could get his father's farm after his death, and it was equally clear that the other brothers would have to hire themselves out as servants, without any prospect of becoming masters and owners of farms of their own. In America, on the contrary, they would have the world, as it were, before them. His brother Dietrich, of Hildesheim, had emigrated to Wisconsin six years be-

fore, with his wife and nine children, and had not only found himself in the most prosperous circumstances, but four of his sons were already owners of farms as thriving and productive as his own. In every letter his brother urged him to follow his example and cross the Atlantic. He wrote that there were "hundreds and thousands of acres of the most splendid arable land in the neighborhood to be had for a mere trifle." Hermann would only have to come across and take possession, and within a few years he would see himself and his sons living like independent princes on their own estates.

On this Peter Vormann, the schoolmaster, would remark that it was all very plausible and alluring to read about in brother Dietrich's letter, but that it might turn out very different in reality. He remembered many who, with similar sanguine expectations, had emigrated to America only to die in poverty and destitution. He always repeated those beautiful words of the Psalmist in the 37th Psalm:—"Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It was true that he (Peter) could not show Hermann how his four sons were to be provided with farms ten or fifteen years hence. But it appeared to him that Hermann might safely leave that matter in the hand of the Lord, who ten or fifteen years hence would prove the same faithful, wise, and mighty God and Helper that he had always proved before. If there were some urgent cause which imperatively necessitated his departure; if, for instance, it was shown that from year to year he was going backward in his domestic and monetary affairs, then Peter would be inclined to regard brother Dietrich's letters as so many voices from Heaven calling him from Germany to America, in the same way that Abraham had been called from Ur, or Israel out of Egypt, to emigrate to the land which the Lord had destined for them to dwell in. But since no such urgent cause existed, he thought it would be reckless imprudence and a presumptuous anticipation of God's dealings if he broke up his farm, and undertook such a long, perilous and uncertain voyage wholly of his own accord. He would be afraid lest the Lord might turn his antagonist, and withhold from him all those favors, without which the most prosperous country becomes a desert, and the happiest home an abode of misery.

Hermann felt that there was much truth in this reasoning, although he could not quite share his friend's gloomy fears as to the possible consequences of his emigration. He could not see how the Lord could become an antagonist to a man who tried to improve his condition, since the desire for improvement was an instinct which had been implanted by God himself. It was true that as yet there was no urgent reason for removing, and he might quietly leave it to God to answer the question how to provide for his sons when they would come of age. But, thought he, Peter must admit that that sort of passive waiting upon the Lord might be dictated not only by pious humility, but also by easy-going selfishness, inasmuch as it was less trouble to him to leave matters as they were, and to tell his sons to care for themselves than to travel to a distant country, and provide them with farms in time. He could not help remembering that text of Scripture, where the Apostle says that the children ought not to care for their parents, but the parents for their children. In his opinion, it was now the time to strike the iron. His sons were all of them young, and at the age when one easily learns a foreign language, and without much trouble adapts oneself to the national character, the habits and customs of a foreign people. And as to the breaking up of his farm, he believed that he would have to do that even apart from the emigration plan, owing to a railway which was to be made through the district. He saw no reason why, in that case, he should not go to America, where the largest farms were to be got at scarcely one-half the price of his own.

The next afternoon, the minister stepped into Hermann's room. He found Frau Stahl alone, and engaged in mending clothes. Hannah was in the dairy, and Hermann was away with the two eldest boys in the fields, plowing up a piece of land. The schoolmaster had taken the other boys out for a walk to the top of the Brunenberg, which commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding district. The sun was now about setting, so that it was likely the father and the schoolmaster and the boys would be home shortly.

"Do you come to take coffee with us to-night, Herr Pastor?" asked Frau Stahl, rising with a smile, and throwing the clothes on a chair in the corner. "Of course you do. Hermann will be back soon, and so will the master with the boys."

"Well, it was not exactly my intention to stay," answered the minister, in a cordial tone; "but since you are bent on detaining me for a couple of hours, I suppose I must submit. But then, you know, I must go and fetch my wife, for she would be sure to lecture me if I left her alone at home."

"Of course, of course, Herr Pastor; and I will send Hannah round to the

Fallmings and the Mullers, that they also may come with their wives, and we'll have a nice evening together, with God's blessing."

An hour later a happy company of friends was gathered round Frau Stahl's white-scoured tea-table, which was bending under the weight of the bread and butter, and other dainties, which were all produced on Hermann's own farm, and made by the skill of his wife and daughter. While the guests enjoyed their neighbor's hospitality, the conversation chiefly concerned the missionary meeting of the preceding day. Portions of the speeches which had been delivered were recalled to memory, and incidents from the various missionary reports which had been read to the congregation were rehearsed with great sympathy. It was again observed that the difficulties and dangers which the faithful messengers of the Gospel had to encounter in the midst of uncivilized and often savage nations, and in unhealthy and inhospitable quarters of the globe, were very great; and at the close of the meal, the minister gave out a missionary hymn, after which he and two or three other friends engaged in prayer, for the Divine protection to the Gospel-preachers in heathen countries, and for the spread of the knowledge of Christ among those ignorant peoples.

Coffee over, the men took their pipes and the women their knitting-work, and opportunity was given for general conversation on interesting questions of the day. Usually, on such occasions, the host read a portion of the Bible or a page of some other religious book by way of suggesting a subject. This time Hermann, who was anxious to hear the opinions of his friends about his plan of emigration, read the first chapter of the book of Ruth, which tells of the emigration of Elimelech with his wife and sons to the country of Moab. This story, he said, clearly showed that emigration, though often attended with many trials and difficulties, might yet be a good thing, inasmuch as it might proceed from a justifiable motive, and be productive of excellent effects, both spiritual and temporal. That Elimelech's motive in emigration from a land of starvation to a land of abundance was quite justifiable, nobody could reasonably deny. And that great blessings had been the consequence of his emigration was equally clear, since in the hand of Jehovah it was instrumental in restoring Naomi to honor and peace, and in bringing Ruth to the service of the only true and living God.

To this Fallmings, the shoemaker, replied that the blessings which his friend pointed to were certainly consequences of Elimelech's emigration; but he held it was equally true that those blessings were brought about by Naomi's return. In his opinion, a man who could find no bread in his own country was perfectly justifiable in stepping over into another country, where he might find bread; but as, by God's blessing, matters were not yet at that pass in Germany, he did not see how his dear friend and brother Hermann could, with any show of reason, point to his position as being a parallel to that of Elimelech. Thank God, famine was unknown in the good country of the Ruhr and the Wupper. There was plenty of bread, both wheat and rye, and carrots in summer, and sour-croût in winter, and therefore he could not see why people should go all the way to America to seek for provisions, which they could find in their own country quite as well.

In this view of the matter Frau Fallmings perfectly agreed with her husband. Besides, she would have her dear friend Hermann observe that, whatever may have been the blessings which accrued to others from Elimelech's emigration, no blessings flowed from it to himself. He died, and so did his sons, and it might be that these fatal calamities were chastisements from God, showing his displeasure at the step the family had taken. It would be a fearful thing even to suppose that Hermann and his sons might die in America in the same way, and that dear Frau Stahl and Hannah should come back, like Naomi and Ruth, clad in mourning and bathed in tears.

Tears filled the eyes of the good Frau, and the other female portion of the company were likewise moved; handkerchiefs soon covered their faces, and there was a solemn pause for a minute or two. Human faces, however, are very changeable in their expressions, as are human passions. The tears soon gave way to smiles, and even to scarcely-suppressed laughter, when Johann, Hermann's eldest son, a boy of sixteen, observed, with much simplicity, that, as it was not told in the chapter that they died from God's displeasure, it was much more natural to suppose that Elimelech and his sons having come from a famine-stricken land to a country abounding with provisions, might have over-eaten themselves, and died from want of due self-restraint. Therefore, to guard against such a temptation, he thought it would be wise not to delay emigration till famine came into the land, but to start in such circumstances as would enable one to enter the new country with a full stomach.

Muller, the grocer, hereupon observed that there was sense in what the lad said. If emigration was inevitable, it was far better to carry it out in affluent than in straitened cir-

cumstances. But it was not certain that affluence at the beginning always secured affluence in the end. Many a well-to-do family, who set out with a nice sum of money, lost the whole of it on the other side of the ocean. He could not help referring to the case of Henry Prizel, who went to London a few years before, with five hundred gold English sovereigns in his pocket, and set up a turner's shop, which, however, proved a complete failure, so that he died in utter misery, leaving his son Daniel in the workhouse.

To this Hermann observed that he knew Henry's case very well, since he was a far-off cousin of his own; but Henry's history could not justly be quoted as a specimen of wise emigration. His case entirely differed from that. To settle down in a European town as a tradesman was one thing, and to emigrate to America to become a farmer there was another. The two things, in fact, admitted of no comparison. As to Daniel, he was happy to be able to tell tolerably satisfactory news, for he had recently received a letter from him. He was not in the workhouse, but employed in a sugar-house near the Thames, where he earned a sovereign a week. It was hard work, and he was afraid his health would not be able to stand it. But he hoped that his cousin Hermann might find some employment for him in Germany, since he had not yet altogether forgotten the German language.

"How old was he when he left this country?" asked the minister.

"Twelve or thirteen, I think," answered Muller. "He cannot have been older than that."

"So he must be about twenty now," said the minister. "Why, Hermann, if your mind is made up to travel to America, you could easily take him along with you."

"No, no. You shall not go—you must not go," cried several voices; and again the conversation as to whether it was according to God's word to leave one's country without urgent necessity, took a fresh start. The minister now expressed his opinion, and so did the schoolmaster. Many texts were quoted, and many sayings of wise, godly men, who had expressed themselves against what they called the emigration-fever, were called to remembrance.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## THE LITTLE STRANGER.

Though a man of very strict principles, no man ever enjoyed a joke more than Dr. Bryon; he had a vast fund of humor, and very ready wit, and with children, particularly, he loved to chat familiarly and draw them out. As he was one day passing into the house, he was accosted by a very little boy, who asked him if he wanted any sauce, meaning vegetables. The Doctor inquired if such a tiny thing was a market man. "No, sir; my father is," was the prompt answer.

The Doctor said, "Bring me in some squashes," and passed into the house, squashing the change. In a few moments the child returned, bringing back part of the change. The Doctor looked at the squashes, and examined the boy attentively; he was evidently poor, his jacket was pieced and patched with every kind of cloth, and his trousers darned with so many colors that it was difficult to tell the original fabric, but scrupulously neat and clean withal. The boy very quietly endured the scrutiny of the Doctor, while holding him at arm's length, and examining his face. At last he said:—"You seem a nice little boy; won't you come and live with me and be a doctor?"

"Yes, sir," said the child.

"Spoke like a man," said the Doctor, patting his head as he dismissed him. A few weeks passed on, when one day Jim came to say there was a little boy with a bundle down stairs, waiting to see the Doctor, and would not tell his business to any one else.

"Send him up," was the answer; and in a few moments he recognized the boy of the squashes—but no squashes himself, as we shall see; he was dressed in a new, though coarse suit of clothes, and his hair very nicely combed, his shoes brushed up, and a little bundle tied in a homespun checked handkerchief, on his arm. Deliberately taking off his hat, and laying it down with his bundle, he walked up to the Doctor, saying: "I have come, sir."

"Come for what, my child?"

"To live with you and be a doctor," said the child, with the utmost naivete. The first impulse of the Doctor was to laugh immoderately; but the imperturbable gravity of the little thing rather sobered him, as he recalled, too, his former conversation, and he vowed he never felt so perplexed in his life. At the time, he felt he needed no addition to his family.

"Did your father consent to your coming?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"What did he say?"

"I told him that you wanted me to come and live with you and be a doctor; and he said you were a very good man, and I might come as soon as my clothes were ready."

"And your mother, what did she say?"

"She said Dr. Bryon would do just what he said he would, and God had provided for me. And," said he, "I have on a new suit of clothes," surveying himself, "and here is another in the bundle," undoing the handkerchief and displaying them, with two shirts, white as snow, and a couple of neat checked aprons, so carefully folded it was plain none but a mother would have done it. The sensibilities of the Doctor were awakened to see the fearless, the undoubting trust with which the poor couple had bestowed their child upon him, and such a child. His cogitations were not long; he thought of Moses in the bulrushes, abandoned to Providence; and above all, he thought of the child that was carried into Egypt, and that the Divine Saviour had said, "Blessed be little children," and he called for the wife of his bosom, saying, "Susan, dear, I think we pray in church that God will have mercy upon all young children."

"To be sure we do," said the wondering wife, "and what then?"

"And the Saviour said, 'Whoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me,' take this child in His name and take care of him," and from that hour this good couple received him to their hearts and home. It did not then occur to them that one of the most eminent physicians and best men of the age stood before them in the person of that child; it did not occur to them that this little creature, thus thrown upon their charity, was destined to be their staff and stay in declining age—a protector and more than son to themselves; all this was then unrevealed; but they cheerfully received the child they believed Providence had committed to their care; and if ever beneficence was rewarded, it was in this instance.—*Family Circle*.

## SUMMER VACATIONS.

We read that Jesus was wont at times to go apart into a "desert place." Probably he went to such localities, not for the desert, but for the quiet and seclusion which it afforded, and where He might find opportunities for uninterrupted religious thought. In this respect it is not to be supposed that His disciples should exactly copy His example, and give up every hour of their summer vacation to pious meditation and prayer; yet they are very much at fault who undertake to reverse His practice, and who consume the time generally allotted by society at this season to rest, in following the pursuits of pleasure with a giddiness and hilarity which mark no other part of the year. This is at least a gross violation of all the rules of physiology, which teach us that the summer vacation should be substantially a season of quiet and repose. Still, the most superficial observer must have noticed how little the dictates of a sound philosophy are observed at the various summer resorts. With far too large a proportion of the visitors, there is a general neglect of the laws of health. In more fashionable circles, the time is often spent in a ceaseless round of gaiety. The chief efforts are made to dress, to see, and to be seen. Miss Starch and Madam Coupon are in the ascendant, while all bow at the shrine of worldliness and folly.—*Episcopalian*.

## WAS IT INSTINCT OR PROVIDENCE?

The following circumstance is related by Dr. Dwight, as having occurred at the great bridge in the town of Great Barrington, Mass.: "A Mr. Van Rensselaer, from Albany, came one evening to an inn at the eastern end of the bridge. The innkeeper, Mr. Root, asked him where he had crossed the river. He answered, 'On the bridge.' Mr. Root replied that was impossible, because it had been raised that very day, and that not a plank had been laid upon it. Mr. Van Rensselaer said that his horse had come over without any reluctance or difficulty, that the night was so dark as to prevent him from seeing anything distinctly. Neither believed the story of the other. In the morning both went to the bridge, and Mr. Van Rensselaer, looking at the naked frame with astonishment, fainted."

We all very often go near death's door without being aware of it.

## CHICKEN IN THE HAT.

Nat is very poor, rather light-fingered, and, it is said, not so bright as his parents could wish. The other day, while passing a neighbor's, Nat saw a brood of chickens, and immediately caught one to carry home. He had not gone far, however, before he saw the owner coming up the road, and not knowing what to do with the chicken to conceal it, at last succeeded in crowding it into his hat, which he again placed upon his head. But the chicken, having a long neck, and being also pressed for air, managed to thrust its head through an opening in Nat's old straw hat. Nat was presently accosted with—

"What have you got in your hat?"

"Nothing but my head," said Nat. "But I see a chicken's head sticking through the top of it."

Nat taking off his hat, and looking at it in feigned astonishment, exclaimed:

"Wal, how do you 'spose that critter came in there? He must have crawled up my trousers' leg."