

The Family Circle.

(For the American Presbyterian.) THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER.

In every National Cemetery there are hundreds of graves bearing this inscription: "Unknown; U. S. Soldier." In a lonely hillock, where the south wind softly sighs, There, his weary marches over, there the unknown soldier dies; Never more the drum shall wake him, sleeping there beneath the sod; Never till the flesh shall quicken, at the sounding trump of God. When he came, or where enlisted in the army of our land; Where he fought, or where he rested, at the leader's stern command; Where, at last, his warfare ended, these I little know or care. Here I for he died for Freedom, counting not his heart's blood dear. This I know: a mother bore him, loved him with her holy love; Many a night she wakened for him, many a prayer she sent above; It may be she watches sadly for the foot that never more may tread; Never, never shall tread lightly o'er the dear old household floor. Some one—wife, perchance, or sister—but toiled up the dark blue coat, That he wore, so torn and faded, when the cannon's fiery throat Flashed the red, grim death to hundreds, falling as the brave can fall, When they bow at Freedom's altar, grandly giving up their all. Friend, for those dear ones who loved thee, in thy home so far away; For the vacant chair that never shall be filled again for aye; For the flag that waved above thee, in the thickest of the fight, Here I weave my mournful chaplet, gallant soldier of the right. May the winter softly wrap thee in her robe of stainless snow. May the spring with fairy fingers, over thee her daisies throw, Summer roses ever blossom, sweetest here above thy breast, And the richest autumn garland lie upon thy place of rest. Unknown soldier of my country, unknown brother of my heart, Let a nation's love enshrine thee; let a nation's faith have part Ever in thy grave so lowly; for our children's babes shall hear How the land was saved and ransomed by such men as slumber here. M. E. M.

ELSIE FRASIER'S WORK.

FROM HOURS AT HOME.

The family of John Frasier, mariner, lived in one of those dismal courts or closes which open off the High Street of Edinburgh. It was dark, dirty, and dull; bounded on one side by the long, blank wall of a public building, and on the other by a row of tall, rickety houses bearing the repelling marks of squalid poverty, and thronged from garret to basement by the poorest class of workmen, almost every room containing a separate family. Had John Frasier, mariner, been ambitious or saving, he might have lived in a much more respectable locality, for he was as good a sailor as ever trod a deck, and in constant employment at good wages; but his wife Betty, though a Scotch woman, had not a single idea of ambition or economy, and lived with perfect contentment in Shoemaker's Close, enjoying the popularity and consideration which her advantages of fortune and appearance extorted from her less prosperous neighbors. She was, indeed, "a very bonny body," with brilliant red and white complexion, bright blue eyes, and a profusion of reddish-brown hair which curled crisply about her face, up on one side and down on the other, and caught up untidily behind with a comb, which was generally hanging half out of her head. Though forty years of age, she was still very pretty, and as thoughtless as if she had been fifteen. Three sons lived with her, occupying a dark closet off her one room—Charlie and Sandy, aged eighteen and twenty, smart, intelligent lads, who inherited all their mother's cheerful good looks, with much of her easy, pleasure-loving nature, and Dan, a rather sullen, obstinate lad of twelve. The elder boys were apprenticed in a large engineering establishment, conducted by a Mr. Cameron, in whose family Christina Frasier, the eldest of Betty's children, was a housemaid, much liked and trusted, through whose influence the boys had been employed in the works. The youngest of the family was "Wee Elsie," the pride and darling of them all. She was one of those children we sometimes see growing up amid the hard, unlovely surroundings of poor men's homes, as the pure bride lily flourishes in unwholesome marshes. Being small for her age, she appeared much younger than she really was, with the most joyously beautiful face and slender, supple little figure one could imagine. Not a very clever child in the way of doing or saying preternaturally shrewd or impudent things, she possessed a sort of invincible innocence and simplicity, which seemed to render her impervious to the many corrupting influences by which she was surrounded; and her temper was so sweet and cheerful, that Betty Frasier, who, though she did not exert herself much to take care of her family, was never done praising and caressing them, said her only fear for Elsie was, that she was "ower guid to be guid for much."

"Deil a fear o' her," said Charlie, "she's just like yersel," very bonny and very guid-naured, and she shall go to the school and learn a' things; there's no saying but our Elsie may be a leddie yet. I ken nae leddie that's half sae like ane." Elsie's father went long voyages, often being absent for a year at a time. From the time his ship sailed out of port, John Frasier became a total abstainer from beer and spirits; but when he came on shore again at the port of Leith, had seen his family, and transacted his necessary business, he gave full license to his appetite for strong liquors, and was seldom quite sober until again under sail. He happened to be at home when Elsie's tenth birthday came round, and Betty, who had never lost a pretext for fun and frolic, determined to celebrate the day with becoming mirth. The room was swept and garnished with unusual care; all unnecessary furniture was packed into the boys' closet; the bed shoved into a corner, and benches and chairs borrowed from Mrs. Macintosh, her next door neighbor and particular crony, who eagerly assisted in the preparations. When the supper had been discussed, and the dancing and drinking of the abundance of ale and toddy which Betty had provided commenced, "the mirth and fun grew fast and furious," reaching its height when the heroine of the night, "Wee Elsie," danced a "Heeland fling," to the delight and admiration of all the company. No prima donna ever received more rapturous applause than was bestowed on Elsie when Betty Frasier, radiant with maternal vanity, cried out, as the little one stopped, tired with her exertions, "Come, now, my bonny bairn, dinna sit down till ye've sang yer fether the hymns they taught at the Sunday-school." And Elsie struck up, in a small sweet voice, to a simple air, the beautiful hymn, "Jesus, I my cross have taken," singing it very prettily from the beginning to the end. When she had finished, Mrs. Macintosh kissed her rapturously, declaring her voice was "like a mavis." Charlie, who was a good deal affected by the toddy, rapped his glass till it broke under his applauding strokes; and her father stroked her golden curls and gave her a great sea luge as she ran past him to welcome a new comer who had entered while she was singing the hymn. This was Christina, who sat down on the end of a bench near the door; and, being scandalized at the manner in which the hymn had been introduced and received, she looked both sad and sour as she took Elsie in her arms, and "glowered" round on her mother's company. Christina was very respectable-looking in her plain but good dress, scrupulously neat and befitting her station; but she was the only one of Betty Frasier's family who had no pretensions to good looks. She was hard-featured and red-haired, and, though scarcely twenty-two, might have passed for thirty. Differing from the rest as much in temper as in person, she had never been able to "get on" with her mother even when a child, and it was with a sort of effect, and in an apologetic tone, that Betty cried out: "Come awa, Christie, woman, come forward till I get ye some supper. Ye ken this is Elsie's birthday, and we're a' ower fond o' her to grudge her a bit o' play." John Frasier, as he shook hands with his daughter, seemed to become vaguely conscious that he was tipsy, and straightening himself in his chair, composed his features into an expression of drunken gravity. Charlie cried out, defiantly, "Gie our sister a dram, Sandy, man; ye see I ha' had a misfortune," and he pointed to his broken glass, and winked at Sandy; while Christie looked angrily at them without making any reply. "When is my father to sail?" asked Christie, looking over her shoulder at John, who had laid his head on the table, and was now fast asleep. "I dinna ken," replied Betty in an offended tone; "I'm no wanting him to sail, pair man, nor any o' his bairns, unless it's yersel, Christie." Dan, in whose mind was ranking the memory of a thrashing which Christie had given him on her last visit home when she had found him assisting at the hanging of a stray dog in the close, when he should have been at school, cried out: "Hear her, the besom! She wants to, turn my fether out o' his ain house," and Charlie, who was ready for any mischief, clapped his hands and cried out, "For shame, Christie, do ye no ken the commandments, and ye sae guid?" "I do," replied Christie, in rising wrath, "and sair's my heart that his ain house is just the place it's no to his honor to be seen in, thanks to my mither and ye ne'er-do-weel lads." But here Betty Frasier, who, though good-natured in general, was by no means with power or will to take her own part, broke out at the top of her voice, and Charlie, Sandy, and Dan at the same moment, and with one accord, shouting in his own defense, or abuse of Christie, the noise became so great that, fortunately perhaps, not a sentence was distinguishable. They all shouted together and by turns, until Christie, out of breath and crying with rage, ran out of the room and down stairs, in her haste almost overturning Mrs. Macintosh, who had been moralizing just outside the door, and now stepped in to condole with Betty Frasier, who sat wiping her red face and panting with her past exertions. At the foot of the stairs Christie met her uncle Sandy Mackill, who occupied the room below the Frasers.

He had heard the domestic storm, and was waiting to accompany her home, knowing that none of her brothers were likely to do so, though her home was at a distance and the hour late. "Christie, woman," said he, "what for do ye kick up sae dusts? Ye ken it does nae guid." "I canna stand it, man," replied Christie. "Wi' my fether's guid way they might a' be living sae respectable; and to see them consorting wi' riraf, and just going the broad road as hard as they can drive." And she told him of the irreverent manner in which Elsie had been made to sing the hymn. "What guid is the Sabbath-school to do her wi' sic teaching at home?" Her uncle shook his head. "There's no one o' them costs me as muckle thought as wee Elsie; her face is ower bonny for a poor man's child, and she's ower easy coaxed and persuaded, I fear, to be very clever at taking care o' hersel; and then our mither's a worthless Heeland woman, no fit to bring up sic a bairn. Od, I'm awfy feard for Elsie; if she was mair like yersel, she'd be far safer." Christie broke out in angry desperation: "Bode na ill o' wee Elsie; man Sandy; I canna bear it. I'll work my fingers to the bone but I'll tak' care o' her. I maun hae her out o' that land some way or other." "I canna see how ye're to do it, Christie," said her uncle. "I've warrant ye hae no a penny to the fore, and ye maun first hae siller, and then our parents' consent, if ye think to put her out anywhere. I would help if ye hit on any guid plan, like setting her to learn a trade wi' decent people; but that canna be done for some time, and if it's ever to be done, ye maun lend yer siller to yer mither." "I canna well refuse it when the tear's in her een, uncle, and they hae never a penny to the fore when sick-ness and trouble comes upon them. But I'll do it for Elsie's sake," she said resolutely. "That's right," replied Sandy Mackill; "if they will waste just aince let them want, it will maybe do them guid; for yer mither's a worthless Heeland woman, as I said, and she's ruining the lads. It's talked o' already that Charlie's no steady, and I think Sandy far war, though he's slyer wi' it, and ye ken if it come to Mr. Cameron's ears it would just be their ruin." "I hae lost a' hope o' thae lads," said Christie, and I canna keep my temper wi' them, but I'll save Elsie some gate." But it pleased God to save "wee Elsie" from all the evils which they apprehended for her, and to turn even "thae ne'er-do-well lads from the error of their ways" without the help of Christie or her uncle. (To be Continued.)

THEATRICALS AND OPERAS. Theatres and operas, as they are, are satanic and soul-destroying. Why? Not in their essence, but in their inevitable concomitants. Let me briefly mention four items:— 1. Every theatre is surrounded by brothels and grogeries. They flock round a theatre the moment one is built, as their choice ground of success. What does that prove? Does it argue for a healthy atmosphere? Does it show the theatre to be a fit place for a Christian? A sensitive Christian should shrink from such a region as he would from the gates of hell. 2. The profession of the stage is notoriously immoral. The actors and actresses who come before the audience, and are by them applauded, are men and women living daily in defiance of the laws of decency and morality, and using this very profession as a means to such a wild and wicked life. The exceptions to this are so few, that they cease universal surprise. 3. The plays are generally themselves immoral. Low innuendo and double entendre abound in them. The name of God is blasphemously used, religion is ridiculed, and vice is white-washed. These immoralities are found more or less in every play brought upon the stage. 4. The ballet, which is an appurtenance to every theatre, is so disgustingly vicious, that I will here only name it. Here are four arguments against the theatre, any one of which ought to crimson a Christian's cheek at the thought of countenancing so vile an institution. Now, in regard to the opera, the first and fourth objections do not always obtain; but the second and third remain in full force. The operatic profession is generally immoral. The incidents of the life tend to develop immorality. These are a roaming irregularity, and sudden intimacies which have a downward slide; and the very acting of a woman before a promiscuous multitude is itself a rapid poison to her soul. Some may withstand all this, and remain pure and upright; but who would dream of going to an opera corps to find a zealous, happy Christian? And then, as to the operas themselves, you can count on your fingers all of them that are not immoral; and even these have many doubtful parts. But the favorite operas, those that draw the most crowded houses, are such as "Don Giovanni," full of filth, to which Christian ladies go, forsooth, that they may hear the delicious music. Satan's bait has taken.—Rev. Howard Crosby, D.D.

THE PETRIFIED FERN. Thoughts suggested while spending an hour among the fossils in the Agassiz's Museum, Cambridge, Mass. In a valley centuries ago, Grew a little fern-leaf, green and slender, Veining delicate and fibres tender, Waving when the wind crept down so low:— Rushes tall, and grass and moss grew round it, Playful anemones darted in and found it, Drops of dew stole down by night and crowned it. But no foot of man e'er came that way, Earth was young and keeping holiday. Monster fishes swam the silent main, Stately forests wafted their giant branches, Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches, Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain:— Nature revelled in grand mysteries. But the little fern was not like these, Did not number with the hills and trees, Only grew and waved its sweet white way, No one came to note it day by day. Earth one time put on a frolic mood, Heaved the rocks and changed the mighty motion Of the strong dread currents of the ocean, Moved the hills and shook the haughty wood, Crushed the little fern in soft moist clay, Covered it and hid it safe away,— O, the long, long centuries since that day! O, the changes; O, life's bitter cost! Since the little useless fern was lost! Useless? lost? There came a thoughtful man Searching nature's secrets far and deep,— He with a fissure in a rocky steep He with a stone o'er which there ran Fairy pencillings of quaint design, Leafage, veining, fibres, clear and fine, And the fern's life lay in every line:— So I think God hides some lives away, Sweetly to surprise us the last day. —Mary L. Bolles.

LEARNING FROM A DOG. You think that would be rather hard, perhaps. Let us see. There are many kinds of dogs. There seems to be as great a variety of disposition among them as among boys and girls. Some of them are very disagreeable. It may be that you have one in mind just now, belonging to a neighbor—a noisy, snappish, ill-natured animal—that delights in rushing out and barking at passers-by; frightening ladies and timid children; worrying horses and cattle and cats, and dogs too, if they happen to be smaller than itself, for such dogs are usually cowardly. And you have often wished that somebody would put that brute out of the way. Not much may be learned from such a dog, it's true. There is one thing, however, you can learn—that it is easy for a child or a man, as well as a dog, to make himself uncomfortable and hateful to everybody by being surly and quarrelsome. But I want to tell you of a good lesson to be learned from a dog; for there are many from which such a lesson might be learned. This is the lesson: Do the very best you can. Boys' and girls' "best" is much better than that of the wisest dog; but, when I have heard of things that have been done by faithful dogs, I have felt that we, who are human, ought to learn something from them. I have seen a large Newfoundland dog that belonged to a shipmaster. The dog was the pet of the family and of his owner. At one time, a ship which his master commanded was wrecked. She had struck upon either a reef or a sand-bar, not far from the shore. The sea was breaking over her; it was too rough for any small boat to live; so that the crew could not leave the ship, nor could help be sent to them from the shore. They were all in great peril. This dog was there. At a word from his master, the noble fellow took a small line in his mouth, plunged into the sea, and, though sorely beaten and tossed about by the waves, safely reached the shore. By means of that line, a large rope was drawn from the ship to the shore by those who were waiting there; and thus the whole ship's crew were saved. Do you wonder that the dog was thought a great deal of afterward? I read in *The British Workman* of a remarkable dog named "Chum." He is very wise and very useful. In the morning, he will take a bell from the kitchen-table, holding it in his mouth by the leather thong attached to it, and go to the chamber-door of each of his master's apprentices, ringing the bell, and thus calling them up. When anything has been placed in Chum's care, no matter what, even if it be a bit of food of a kind most inviting to a dog, he will neither touch it himself nor let another touch it. If his master say "Mine," as he lays a piece of beefsteak under Chum's nose, that beef is safe. But let the master say "Yours," and he knows what to do with it. At family worship, he seems to understand the necessity of decorous behavior, and always sits quietly under a chair till that exercise is over. He goes on errands, with a basket in his mouth containing the article or the message sent; and if told to "make haste back," he never loiters. And though Chum is very ready to show a set of white teeth if interfered with while in the discharge of his duty, yet, when off duty, he is a jolly, playful companion, and delights in children. They are always glad to have him join them in their sports. Chum is only a dog; but who will doubt that he does the best he can? All that the kindness and patience of wiser friends have taught him he is willing and faithfully does. He, and other dogs like him, make themselves useful, and happy too, we may believe, by doing their best. Boys and girls can do better. There is much for you to learn that will make you wiser and happier and more useful. God has given you these powers of yours, so much superior to

those of the brute. He has given you a mind and an immortal soul. He expects us all to do the best we can; and we can do very much that is good and kind and noble, if we ask His help. He invites us to ask His help; He is ready to grant it always. We shall have to tell Him one day how we have lived and what we have done; and knowing as we do that we are sure to fail of doing the best we can without asking Him, for Christ's sake, to make us strong and brave for all that is worthy of an immortal soul, let us not forget to ask Him every day. Thus this lesson from one of His humble creatures will not be lost.—Child at Home.

BE SURE YOU ARE RIGHT.

Two young men, while resting from a game of ball, were talking together. "Would that be wrong, John?" said one. "I don't know," was the answer. "What do you think?" "I don't know," was the answer again. "Well, I don't believe it would be, and I mean to do it." A friend coming up at the moment, inquired, "What is it, boys?" Both were silent. "I do not care to know what you do not wish to tell," said he; "but whatever it is, boys, if there is doubt about its being right, don't dare to do it. Run no risk in such a matter. If you are not certain that you are on right ground, you may be certain that you ought to leave it. Keep yourself safe from wrong, whatever else you do. It is only the weak and foolish who will venture on uncertain ground. Learn a lesson from this story, which I heard long years ago. A gentleman who wished to test the character of some men who had applied to him for employment as coachmen, took them to a narrow road which bordered on a high precipice, and inquired how near to the verge they could drive without danger. One named a few inches, another named still fewer. The gentleman shook his head. They tempted danger instead of seeking safety. He could not risk his life with them. At last, one was shown the precipice, who, in answer to the question, 'How near this verge can you drive with safety?' drew back, and answered, 'I should drive as far from it as possible; it is dangerous. I should avoid it altogether, if I could.' He was employed. He could be trusted, for he valued safety, and was too wise to encounter needless peril. Have you learned the lesson to keep as far away from wrong as you can—to shun the precipice of wrong? Do nothing which may be wrong—nothing which you are not sure is right. This is the only safe course. Many young Christians are led far from Christ and a consistent Christian life, just by consenting to do things that seem only a little wrong.—Young Reaper.

THE FUTURE PRESIDENT.

"There's Tom Lawson digging into his old newspaper," said Bill Dickson as he strolled down the street, with the stump of a cigar in his mouth, talking with two or three companions as worthless as himself. Thomas was sitting on the pleasant portico of his home, hastening to finish a newspaper article before the daylight faded. "Now, don't he look as if he was reading for a wager?" continued Bill, with a sneer. "Let's ask him how much his father pays him for sitting out there and looking so knowing. The old man sets up for the legislature, you know; but my father says he'll know it when he gets there. Goes in for 'no license,' 'Maine laws,' and all them things that take away the poor man's rights and comforts. Hallo, Tom! can you tell if the price of whiskey has risen since the last accounts?" Tom looked up with a little surprise, but he answered Bill good-naturedly:—"I cannot inform you, as I never feel interest enough to look." Then he quietly left his seat and walked into the house, finishing his reading by the sunset window. Thomas was not a boy to parley with evil associates when he could help it. The other lads lounged along down the street, laughing and jeering at poor stay-at-home Tom. "Now I don't suppose that fellow dares to go out after dark—unless he is sent," said Dave West. "I wouldn't be tied up so, I can tell you. It's not many nights I am in before eleven, and mother has learned better than to make a fuss about it; I soon let her know that I was my own man." And the bold, bad boy rounded his sentence with a fearful oath. They presently halted before a low saloon, and after quarrelling over the few coppers they could muster amongst them, went in to get a drink. You need not think Tom envied their liberty as he observed the direction their steps had taken. At a suggestion from his mother, he promptly laid aside his paper, and walked out to cut up the kindlings for morning. There was a manliness in his step, and an energy in the very swing of his arm as he wielded his axe, quite different from the lounging, slovenly air of the boys who had just passed. Even chopping wood can indicate character. His work was not mere drudgery to him, for his mind was full of profitable thoughts and high hopes

THE INTERPRETATION OF A TEAR.

At the General Assembly at St. Louis, the venerable Dr. McCosh, of Belfast, preached in the Congregational church, of which Dr. Post is pastor. The services were closing with a hymn, and the congregation were standing. I noticed that Dr. McCosh was deeply affected. His eyes filled with tears, and he evidently labored to suppress some strong emotion that struggled within. The tall form and whitened locks of the stranger from beyond the sea, his fine, brilliant eye bathed in tears, was itself a touching spectacle. A few days before he had stood with the Assembly among the lightning-shivered rocks of Pilot Knob, and with head uncovered, and in simple, earnest words of prayer, he had borne our hearts up to Him whose is "the strength of the hills." His soul was evidently in sympathy with the works of God, as found in that rocky solitude, untouched by art or human improvement. You might observe this as he plucked a leaf from some stunted shrub, and enquired the name, or sought a fern, to him an exotic, in a cleft of the tree rocks. From what source sprung the tears which now moistened the cheek of this venerable ambassador of God? Why was he in the presence of this great congregation, as one who would seek a place to weep? There was, perhaps, some hidden association linked with other years, with other assemblies, and other scenes. Perhaps the name of child, or wife, or friend, touched his heart with invisible power, like the rod of Moses, when it smote the rock at Horeb. Or they may be tears of sorrow for those to whom his message might prove a "savor of death unto death," for that morning he had presented Christ as the "Way, the Truth and the Life." Or was the closing hymn the key which had unlocked the treasure of tears? The choir had selected "Dundee's mild warbling measures." This bore him back in a moment to his native Scotland, to her heather and highlands, over which he had wandered on foot; to her glens and lakes, recalling her history and her honored names. No wonder that a gush of feeling swept over him, like the tide that swells up the friths of his native land, when he heard the songs that were associated with the days and scenes of his childhood sung by strangers, in a strange land. A tear is a mystery. Who can interpret it? It may be the language of compassion or anger, of sympathy or joy, of affection or grief. What emotions will thrill the souls of the redeemed when the great anthem swells from the innumerable assembly, "the General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which are written in heaven." That will be when the cause of weeping shall have been removed; when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Cor. Christian Herald.

HUSBAND.

The English term "husband" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *hus* and *band*, which signify "the bond of the house," and it was anciently spelt *house-bond*, and continued to be so spelt in some editions of the Bible, after the introduction of the art of printing. A husband, then, is a house-bond—the bond of a house—that which engirdles a family into the union of strength and the oneness of love. Wife and children, "strangers within the gates," all their interests and all their happiness are enrobed in the *house-bond's* embrace, the objects of his protection and of his special care. What a fine picture is this of a husband's duty and a family's privilege!