

## The Family Circle.

### "MORE THAN CONQUERORS."

O poor disciple! sinking, fainting, almost dying,  
Because the unwilling shoulder feels a heavier cross  
Than thou didst choose; and just beyond a path is lying  
Whose pleasant gains thou cravest, heading not the loss.

A little rest! dost cry; a little ease of living,  
In place of all this constant pain of discipline!  
Will thou refuse to know the joy that pain is giving  
To every struggling soul, in pilgrimage like thine?

The table-lands will not be reached while thou art waiting,  
Thy trial-time and strength; thy feet will not be set  
Where conquerors walk, until thy soul the love is tasting  
Which never questions when the Father's will is met.

For O, I know that only tender love is bringing  
Thy feet through all this seething and tempestuous flood,  
I know, I know that only love thy heart is flinging  
Upon the cruel rack which wringeth out thy blood.

Far, far beyond the anguish which thy brow is paling,  
I see the silver, tried by thy Refiner's hand,  
Borne up above the clouds majestic which are sailing  
On oceanic splendors toward the sunset-land!

Beyond, I see that this fair gem, which God is cutting,  
By such a close keen, process here; the while to obtain  
Upon the surface its concentric rays; is putting  
Before the Throne, celestial luster on again.

Beyond, I see the King in all his beauty waiting  
To make his jewels up upon his glorious crown!  
Each one beside its fellow-gem, his hand is raising  
With that divinest touch which knoweth all His own!

MARIE MASON.

### ELSIE FRASIER'S WORK.

FROM HOURS AT HOME.

(Concluded.)

Two years from the time that Elsie had visited Christie at Mrs. Cameron's found the family living in a little cottage very near that beautiful garden, into which she had now permission to come whenever she chose. It was for her sake that the family had moved from Shoemaker's Close—for Christie's dread had grown into a terrible certainty—the fall had injured her spine, and the doctor thought that purer air might help her growth. She was not an inch taller than she was two years before, and her back had grown out, and one shoulder was higher than the other. The poor child's life was full of pain, and fun and frolic were banished from the house, where the rough sailor father had learned to go softly, and the wild brothers to speak low because of her terrible headaches. Betty Frasier was growing very gray, and her fine color had faded as she watched the blighting of her hope and pride in her beautiful child; but she was greatly softer and more thoughtful, and she and Christie had drawn together in their trouble, and perhaps mutually improved each other. Christie's face was not only less sour, but less sad, for the daily sight of Elsie's patience, resignation, and perfect trust in the God who chasteneth his beloved, was awakening a kindred spirit in her.

All the Frasers, too, had learned economy at last. They had nothing to spare, though all the boys earned money now, and each did what he could to help defray the heavy expenses of Elsie's illness, and supply the delicate viands to tempt her sickly appetite, and furnish her with books and simple amusements. Elsie was less saddened than any of the others by her affliction. When not in actual pain, the old bright, glad spirit shone out unconquered, and the disposition, so sweet and amiable by nature, was growing heavenly in the furnace of affliction. To cheer and amuse the others, to make up to them in some degree for the sacrifices they made for her, and to show her sense of their unwearied tenderness, was Elsie's constant thought, and it kept her busy and cheerful in spite of suffering.

Her uncle, Sandy Mackill, came to see her every Sabbath afternoon, and on one of these visits asked Charlie to take a walk with him, as he had something to talk with him about. "Sandy, man," said he, "I have just cam' frae the north, and while I was stopping there I was made acquainted wi' a lame lassie that taught the parish bairns in an infant-school, and kept her auld mither and hersel' very comfortable, and very much respected she is by a' body. Sae it cam' in my mind at ance that this might be a fine thing for Elsie. Ye ken she's quick at her books, and if she get an education she'll be just independent, for the doctor says if she outlive the time o' growth, she may be an auld woman yet for a' that's past and gone."

"Hoot, man," said Charlie, "do you no think we'll aye provide for puir wee Elsie among us without fashin' her about her bite and sup? She shall never need to keep hersel' as lang as I live."

"That may be," replied Sandy dryly, "and it's no likely she'll outlive ye a', though mair unlikely things have happened; but onyway, the mair Elsie kens, the better company she'll be for hersel' and the mair looked up

to by ither folk. Now I ken o' a student in the High street, a clever lad, but puir, who'll come here every night an hour and teach Elsie, for half a crown a week. He says he'd as soon teach three o' ye as ain, and learning's a fine thing, Charlie; ye'd be nain the war yersel' o' a little. If ye and Sandy make up half the fee, I'll pay the rest."

"It'll may be take up Elsie's time and keep her frae thinkin' lang," said Charlie. "We'll ask hersel'!"

Elsie's delight at the proposal was so evident, that Charlie walked into town with his uncle that night to see the student and conclude the bargain—Sandy Mackill advancing the money to buy the necessary books.

John Frasier returning home some months after, was much astonished at his family's studious habits. Charlie and Sandy had begun the pursuit of knowledge simply on Elsie's account, and with very little will for the work; but both had good abilities, and the teacher proving clever and conscientious, they were soon deeply interested in their studies. Her father happened to come home at the close of one of Elsie's "bad days." She was unable to join the class, but lay in her father's arms listening to the boys, and seeming interested in the lessons. Next morning she told him all about the fine plans Sandy Mackill had started for her, and informed him that she had begun her work already by teaching Dan "whiles."

Elsie's beginning had been sufficiently discouraging, Dan being neither apt nor willing; nevertheless she had done something with that sulky lad, into whom no schoolmaster had been able to thrash so much as the rudiments, and she persuaded him to say the multiplication table for his father.

Poor Dan was the dunce of the family, and both father and brothers were accustomed to speak in very disparaging terms of his natural gifts; but Elsie seemed so proud and pleased with his performance, that John Frasier expressed the surprise she so evidently expected at her pupil's progress; and Dan, to whose ears the language of praise was a strange sound, took to his books more kindly from that day. John Frasier went to Leith about the middle of the next day, and before going he kissed Elsie, and asked her what he should bring her from town. Elsie put her arm around his neck and stroked his weather-beaten face with her soft little hand, as she whispered, "Dinna tak' over mony drams, but come hame early and I'll sing ye 'The Flowers of the Forest.' I would like ye to talk to me. I'm aye feared, ye ken," she said with a weary little sigh, "that ye'll cum' hame frae some voyage and find me awa, and sae I'm fain to look at ye, and talk to ye as much as I can."

"Lord bless and keep ye, my puir wee lassie," replied John piously, though he was a reckless man at times; "dinna think o' sic dismal things."

"It's no dismal," she replied softly. "It would be a fine thing for an object like me to be done wi' suffering and sighing, and go in at the golden gate where Christ shall wipe the tears from all eyes, if ye were na' sae guid and kind to me that I whiles think I'd no be happy in heaven until I got yer faces a' about me again. Come hame and nurse me this evening, if ye can."

John came home sober, and his little daughter sang and smiled and coaxed him; and though he may have been a little "disguised in drink" during his stay on shore, he came home regularly every evening; the change in his habits being so great as to excite the astonishment of his companions. The home was not an unpleasant place after all, though he often wiped his brown face as he sat with Elsie in his arms. She seemed so happy and contented herself, that he felt more sad in thinking of than in looking at her.

Three years more. There was no longer a doubt of Elsie's fate; she could not survive the period of growth.

Her deformity had increased terribly, and a speedy termination of her sufferings was certain. John Frasier came home from one of his long voyages and found his child entering that cold, dark river which sweeps away the outward-bound far into the unknown, but buoyed up no returning bark. All that money or skill could do had been done, for the pecuniary affairs of the family were in a most flourishing condition. Charlie's time was out, his talents acknowledged, and his success in business beyond his wildest hopes—Mr. Cameron pronouncing him likely to be one of the first engineers of the day. The other boys were doing well, and Christie lived at home with her mother, who needed her assistance. Elsie was attacked by spasms, impossible to relieve and terrible for those who loved her to witness, and every one of which seemed likely to end her life.

She had suffered more than usual one summer day, and lay in Christie's arms, faint and exhausted, while her father stood at the foot of the bed, his face hidden in the curtains, and her mother and brothers stood around her weeping silently, and waiting for the end; when Betty Frasier's self-control, never very great, failed her utterly, and she broke out into a wild, bitter cry, "O, my bairn, my bonny bairn! what hae I done, my innocent lamb, that ye should be afflicted sae, and mony a worthless hizzie strong and

straight and tall. Dinna bid me hold my peace, Christie, I canna bear it; there's neither justice nor mercy in it, say what ye will. O! John, man, mind her tenth birthday in the auld land, when she danced like a fairy, and sang her bit hymn, and a' tell me what a bonny woman she would mak' and a proud mother I would be. And after her trouble came, how she bore it like a saint and no like ony mortal bairn, and strove at her books till a' body wondered mair at her wisdom than they had at her beauty; and now it's a' at an end—and the beauty blasted, and the goodness and wisdom going down to the cauld grave. I canna bear it, I canna be still and watch my hope and pride gasping out her blameless life in agony. Would God I could dee for her, my bairn, my dear bairn!"—and she sobbed aloud in her wild grief.

John Frasier hurried out of the room, and even Christie joined in the burst of weeping around Elsie's bed; for what Betty had spoken was more or less in the hearts of all. Why had this child been made so beautiful and lovable and saintly, only that the frail, fairy-like form might be racked with torture, and the hearts of those who loved her be filled with anguish? This child's life seemed a cruel mistake to many besides her mother, who thought she had better never have been born, or have died in infancy, than live as she had lived.

But Elsie opened her eyes and said: "Gie me the restorative, Christie, and call my fether back; I hae something to say to ye a' before I am past saying it." And when he had returned, she laid her hand in his and said: "I want to tell ye that there was a time when I thought something like my mither has said, and I used to lie awake through the lang nights, thinking what I could do for ye each and a' if God would gie me health and strength, and prayed with tears that my back might be straightened and my life spared. When I saw that this could never be, I was grieved, and thought myself hardly dealt with, that I must be a burden a' my life; and need never hope to be a help to ye that I was sae fain to serve; but that is over now, and I see my work is done, though not in my ain way. Through mony a wakeful night I hae thought o' that night in the auld land, and in thinking it over I came to understand some things I did not see at the time. Nain o' us were in a guid way that night, pleasant as it was. Mrs. Macintosh and her friends were na guid company for my mither, and the lads and lasses were bad companions for my brothers and myself. It was well for us a' to come out o' that place, and I doubt if we would ever have come, but for Elsie's ill-health, which made my dear mither gie up dancing and visiting and sit in the house, that she might nurse me and save money to supply my many wants. And Charlie and Sandy, what drew ye frae the play-house and frolics ye were sae fond of, and kept ye in our ain house, but that ye might save money to pay my doctoring? Then ye began the night-school for my amusement, and it has made scholars o' ye both. Fether, were ye not drawn frae the bottle and the dram-shop by your wish to please your puir crippled bairn? Do ye no see, mither dear, that I might, hae grown up tall and straight and bonny, and no hae been half the use to ony o' ye, though I hae cost ye sae mony tears? It was for love o' me that ye gave up your own pleasures, and worked and saved that I might want nothing, and ye owe mny o' ye're present fair fortune to the sacrifices ye made for puir Elsie's sake; so I did not suffer in vain. To be the means o' drawing ye on thus far has been my work; and call ye this nothing?"

Her face was lit with something of the old brilliant, joyful look which had been her natural expression in happy childhood, as she cried: "O! praise the Lord wi' me, and let us magnify his name together, for he has led us by paths we knew not; from off the broad road that leadeth to destruction into the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life. As for me," she continued solemnly, "the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day. Bury me in a pleasant place, fether; and after I am gone, when God has been good to ye and ye're proud of your well-doing sons, come where I lie and ask yourself if mine has been a wasted life, and if wee Elsie was no an instrument of guid in the hand o' the Lord, who will reward your kindness to his suffering creature. Blessing, he has blessed ye; and in your sorrow he will comfort ye."

"Here is Uncle Sandy," she added, "and he will gie ye a prayer; not for me, uncle, but for my puir fether and mother, for I am nearly home, but they hae grief still waiting them when it shall be well with their child."

"Are ye then sae happy, Elsie?" asked her uncle; "hae ye nae fears?"

"No doubts, no fears," smiled Elsie, who was now so much exhausted; and closing her eyes, she murmured slowly:—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Stand dressed in living green."

patience might be granted her, seemed answered in the offering.

A few more hours, and Elsie was gone; no more pain, no more anguish seemed to visit her, but she passed away without a struggle and with scarce a sigh—and was buried as she directed, in a pleasant place, where the children of Charlie Frasier (a wealthy and respectable man now) are brought, from time to time, and told of their Aunt Elsie, who lived in this world for fifteen years, and then returned to God, by whom she had been lent to do a good work; for the well-doing sons, of whom the father is so justly proud, delight to call their respectability and prosperity "Puir Wee Elsie's Work."

### DAVID'S WISH FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." How beautiful a vigorous plant looks, welcoming the morning light, no weeds choking its growth, but full of healthy sap, from the tiny rootlet to the blossom; greeting each returning year with some new form of beauty, and bringing forth its fruit in season!

Boys, the Psalmist prays that you may be like that. Like a plant, too, "grown up in its youth." The grace of youth with the strength of manhood. There are some plants weak and sickly, whose life the slightest thing will take away; but others grow up so vigorous and strong, that storms beat upon them, the snow clothes them with its white, cold pall, and the frost pierces the ground around them, yet they live and thrive.

My dear boys, that is just the strength and life you need. God gives to you in life, rough, strong work; you will have to go into its business and dangers like the woodman who carries his axe into the unfelled forest. A thousand winds will threaten your life, as the cold winds or the hot sun threaten the young plant. But God will give you strength. There is one little sentence our Saviour uttered that you may read together with the wish of the Psalmist:—"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and in I him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Ah, that is the secret—drawing our life and strength from Christ, for without him we must droop and die.

But, we must not forget the Psalmist's wish for girls. "That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." How pleasing to see these corner-stones in Eastern buildings, their rich, deep coloring, polished so brilliantly, that, like a mirror, they reflected each passing object, not with a showy, gaudy glare, but with the quiet beauty of something doing its own quiet work; yet shining brightly all the while. Dear girls, picture to yourselves and try if you cannot understand the Psalmist's prayer on your behalf.

The work that God has given to the boys in the world, fits them to exhibit a manly strength in encountering life's dangers; but God has given you another place to exhibit the "beauties of holiness." In all the charms which can make beautiful a sister's gentle service, a daughter's loving obedience, or the sweet counsels of womanly friendship, the religion of the Saviour can be commended and honored.

Ah, happy homes, where the sons are as the grown-up plants, strong and vigorous, and the daughters in the living graces of piety as "polished corner-stones."

### A NEW IDEA.

A correspondent relates a story told by a Cunard steamer captain concerning Lord Robert Grosvenor, who was among his passengers some days since. This nobleman is the oldest son, heir of the Marquis of Westminster, whose fortune is enormous, and said to produce the immense income of £350,000 per annum. He is highly intelligent, and the variety and depth of his information would be considered great even for a commoner. He has travelled extensively in all parts of the world, and it is not long since he returned from a long tour in the United States. While at the West, he was one day waiting at a country station for a tardy train, when one of the farmers of the neighborhood entered into conversation with him.

"Bin about these parts considerable, stranger?"

"Yes, for some length of time."

"Like 'em putty well, eh?"

"Yes, pretty well."

"How long hev yer ben here?"

"A few weeks."

"What's yer business?"

"I have no business."

"What are yer travelin' for, then?"

"Only for my pleasure."

"Don't yer do any business? How do yer get yer livin', then?"

"It isn't necessary for me to work for my support. My father is a man of property, and gives me allowance sufficient for my wants."

"But 'spose the old man should die?"

"In that case, I dare say, he'd leave me enough to live upon."

"But 'spose he should bust up?"

Here the conversation ended and Lord Grosvenor walked away, evidently struck by a new idea, and one which had never been forcibly presented to him until then.

### "THE WORDS OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOREVER."

Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,  
Deceitfully goes forth the morn;  
Not seldom evening in the west  
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,  
To the confiding bark untrue;  
And, if she trust the stars above,  
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous oak, in pomp and spread,  
Full oft, when storms the welkin read,  
Draws lightning down upon the head  
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,  
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die,  
Thy smile is sure, Thy plighted word  
No change can falsify.

I bent before Thy gracious throne,  
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;  
And peace was given, nor peace alone,  
But faith sublimed to ecstasy!  
—William Wordsworth.

### A WELL-SPOKEN ADMONITION.

It was about thirty years ago or more, when stage-coaches still ran, that an excellent old clergyman, who had a keen observation of the world, was travelling on the top of the coach from Norwich to London. It was a cold winter night, and the coachman, as he drove his horses over Newmarket heath, poured forth such a volley of oaths and foul language, as to shock all the passengers. The old clergyman, who was sitting close to him, said nothing, but fixed his piercing blue eyes upon him with a look of extreme wonder and astonishment. At last the coachman became uneasy, and turning round to him, said, "What makes you look at me, sir, in that way?"

The clergyman said, still with his eye fixed upon him, "I cannot imagine what you will do in heaven. There are no horses, or coaches, or saddles, or bridles, or public-houses in heaven. There will be no one to swear at, or to whom you can use bad language. I cannot think what you will do when you get to heaven."

The coachman said nothing more, and they parted at the end of the journey. Some years afterward the clergyman was detained at an inn on the same road, and was told that a dying man wished to see him. He was taken up into a bedroom in a loft, hung round with saddles, bits and whips, and on the bed, amongst them, lay the sick man.

"Sir," said the man, "do you remember speaking to the coachman who swore so much as he drove over Newmarket heath?"

"Yes," replied the clergyman.

"I am that coachman," said he, "and I could not die happy without telling you how I have remembered your words, 'I cannot think what you will do in heaven.' Often and often, as I have driven over the heath, I have heard these words ringing in my ears, and I have flogged the horses to make them get over that ground; faster but always the words have come back to me, 'I cannot think what you will do in heaven.'"

### FAR OUT UPON THE PRAIRIE.

B. F. T., in the Chicago Journal, gives the following graphic sketch of the dissolving views to be seen from a flying railroad train on a Western prairie:—

When the train strikes out from the wooded bluffs and ravines of the Des Moines upon the broad prairie, and you see the grass rank and strong, now ripening, "with the flowers that grow between;" grass not very long ago trampled by the Lord's great herds, and never burdened with any semblance of harvest but the swaths of red fire, you feel that even by railroad you have escaped from the artifice of society, and begin to think about "leather stockings" and a saddle of venison.

You have got out of the realm of white clover, that Christian grass of human homesteads, for, though one of Cooper's novels has set a clover-field blossoming in an utter wilderness, yet it is a phenomenon never witnessed anywhere else. The prairie is not as rough as you find it farther West. There is less of a heavy sea on. You keep in the centre of a flying horizon of about twenty miles in diameter. The sun shines, but there is a golden blaze in the air. The light reflected from distant points, gives you illusive lakes that you never near but that all at once vanish—"sparkled, exhaled and gone to heaven." The ripening grasses of various species growing harmoniously together, gives you the russets that brighten into yellow and deepen into red, presenting a scene as gay as a painted atlas.

Little hillocks covered with tall, yellow flowers dot the prairie like the knobbed door of a money vault. They are the work of those fellows in striped jackets—the gophers. The sky line for miles is unbroken, and the tall grass seems to rustle against the blue around the edges of the world. At

last a small object is discerned, far out at your right. It has four slim legs, and is backed like a camel. Beside it is a small cigar box about the color of a wasp's nest. The one is a deserted stage-station, and the other a wild barn, to wit; a small haystack on four stilts, Clover, isn't it? When the horses eat up the roof it is spring. But the old route is abandoned, and the lonely objects look as dismal as the fragments of a wreck at sea.

You think how wild this landscape, by and by, when, at the sound of the trumpets of March, the gay old storms croon along these plains, tossing the air full of shrouds that never were woven, blotting out the trails, and making a clean white world in a night. Looking about you in the car, at last you discover that the people have changed as much as the landscape. The finer evidences of a high civilization have vanished; the lady with the tilting hoop that passed along the aisle yesterday, fairly flattened into an interjection, and resembling a quaint letter O, with the back of a woman's head and neck curiously sketched at the top of it, has gone. The man who donned a new silk hat to travel in has given out. The boy that stood up and pulled a screaming accordon by the tail till everybody thought the law against "cruelty to animals" was a dead letter, is missing.

The couple that came on board this morning hand-in-hand, like the "Babes in the woods," he peppermintish and conscious, she red and ribbonish, slipped off together when nobody saw them. The fragrance of "Night Blooming-Cereus" and Patchouly has faded away. The women are fewer, the men franker and rougher. Yonder sits a young lawyer and his family, bound for Dacotah. It is not present ease he considers, but the far future—the day when that small, fat fellow, in short breeches, clambering about his knee like a young bear cub, shall face him even-eyed and be a man. The young father is wise; he will grow with the young State. Here are men bound for mines of silver and gold, for mountain peaks and distant forts, for all wild and far away regions.

### A "DRESSING" FOR THE LADIES.

Men say knowledge is power; women think dress is power. Look at a woman who is certain that she is well dressed—"the correct thing"—how she walks along with stately steps, head well up, parasol held with two fingers at the present, and skirts expanding luxuriantly behind her—proud, self-satisfied, conscious of being stared at and admired. She feels like a just man made perfect—who knows that he has done his duty, and that the by-standers also know it and respect him for it. Dress overgrows and smotherers every other feeling in a woman's heart. Love, marriage, children, religion, the death of friends, are regarded as affording new and various opportunities for dress. The becoming is the greatest good. For finery and fashion, women risk comfort, health, life, even reputation. What matter ignorance, ill-breeding, ill-nature, if she dress well? A camel's-hair shawl, like charity, will cover a multitude of sins. On the other hand, though she speak all omnies and ologies, and the mysteries of housekeeping, and is treasurer of Dorcas societies, *ereches*, and dispensaries, and have not style, it profiteth her nothing. On this great question women never have a misgiving. You may find creatures so lost as to be cast-aways from fashion, but they believe in it. The scepticism of the age has left this subject untouched.—*Atlantic Monthly.*

### A CHILD'S IDEA OF A CHILD'S PRAYER.

Little Nellie, who was only four years old, no sooner saw work laid aside, than she ran to her mamma's knee and claimed a seat there. Mrs. Lee lifted her to her lap, and went on busily thinking of her duties and cares, while she rocked herself and Nellie to and fro.

For a time, Nellie amused herself very quietly by winding a string in and out through her fingers; but presently she began talking to herself in a low tone. "When I say my prayers, God says, 'Hark! angels, while I hear a little noise.'" Her mamma asked her what noise she meant.

"A little girl's noise. Then the angels will do dust so (shutting her mouth very tight and keeping very still for a moment) till I say Amen." "Isn't this a sweet thought? I wonder if the children who read this story of little Nellie have ever thought how wonderful it is that God always hears their prayers. He is surrounded by thousands and thousands of angels, all singing and praising him with their golden harps; and yet, through all the music and all the praises, he hears the softest prayer of a little child kneeling by the bedside. He must be very loving and very kind to children. We should think he would sometimes forget, and be listening to the beautiful sounds in heaven, instead of to the prayer of a little child. But he never does. There is never too much singing or too many praises there for him to hear a little girl's noise. Do you not wonder that children do not pray to him much more and much oftener than they do?—*Child at Home.*