

The Family Circle.

THOUGHTS OF HOME.

BY MISS MARY F. KIRBY.

I've been thinking of home! Of "my Father's house... Where the many mansions be..."

I've been thinking of home, where they need not the light... Of the sun, nor moon, nor star...

I've been thinking of home, of the river of life... That flows through the city, so pure...

I've been thinking of home; of the loved ones there... Dear friends, who have gone before...

I've been thinking of home, and my heart is full... Of love for the Lamb of God...

I've been thinking of home; and I'm homesick now... My spirit doth long to be, in "the better land..."

I've been thinking of home! Yes, "home, sweet home!"... Oh! there may we all unite...

DISOBEDIENCE—AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

"Mother! mother!" called up Horace from the yard... "Can't Benny and I go out in the alley a little while to play?"

"Out in the alley, in all this mud!" cried his sister Lou from the chamber...

"No I ain't, mother; let us go, just for a little while—please do!"

"The mother's voice was clear and decisive, and Horace argued the matter no farther."

"The crazy child!" said my sister, turning to me. What attraction can there be in that thick, black mud!

"He must be insane on that one point," said I. And indeed it was a matter of much marvel to me, that a boy, with a nice garden to play in, could still long languidly at the mud beyond; but so it was.

Little Benny, whom some kind fairy had metamorphosed into a horse, for his own especial benefit, was cantering, running, trotting and galloping, by turns, every now and then administering to himself smart blows with his whip.

"Dear little Benny," said I, "he's always happy."

"Yes, bless his heart," said my sister, fondly. "Horace," she called, "you'd better shut the gate now, and don't stay out much longer. Remember, Cousin Robert comes this afternoon, and we must have clean faces and hands before he gets here."

Louise sat back in her rocking-chair, and I, busy with sewing, thought no more of the boys, until I heard the gate creak. Then I looked out. Could I believe my eyes? There was Horace, sneaking out the gate on tiptoe, and worse yet, dear little Benny following in the same disgraceful style. Once fairly out of the yard, a high fence hid them from my view.

I was amazed—for the children though often naughty, were seldom wilfully disobedient; but I was also amused, and could not help laughing a little to myself. Their little figures had such a comically meek and unnatural look.

Louise was nodding in her chair; my first impulse was to wake her, but I finally concluded to let her sleep. "I am curious to know what the boys would say for themselves when they came back; whether they would confess their wrong-doing, or, thinking that no one knew, say nothing about it."

"So, for half an hour, Lou slept and I sewed. Once I caught a glimpse of Benny's straw hat up in the air, then came a few sharp words of caution from Horace, reminding him that they were upon forbidden ground."

Another quarter passed. Lou started up. "How still those children are! Do you see them, Caddie?"

"No, I don't," answered demurely, and was folding up my work to leave the room, when—

"What was it? A screech, a shriek, a scream, a yell, a howl! All these mixed, and mingled, and multiplied by two, might perhaps give one a faint idea of the noise we heard. More than all, it came from the alley. Lou rushed to the window, her cheek blanched; we both stood transfixed. Into the yard crept two little woe-begone figures, one hardly to be recognized for mud, the other for passion."

"What on earth!" ejaculated Louise. "Can these be my children?"

It really seemed a matter of doubt. Benny (or what we took for Benny)

was covered with mud, from cap to shoes; not a white place to be seen, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; yet he was walking composedly along, while Horace (on whom the only traces of mud seemed to be a few streaks on his face) was screeching, shrieking, screaming, yelling and howling, as I have said.

It was really unaccountable; Benny had all the mud, yet Horace was making all the outcry.

The mother flew down to the kitchen. "Horace, for mercy's sake, what is the matter? Are you killed? Are you hurt? What is the matter? Not another step till you get off those shoes."

This last was addressed to Benny, who was making for the kitchen as fast as he could, considering the weight of his armor.

Benny, thus brought to a stand, looked up dolefully at me out of the corner of his eye. It was too much; my gravity was completely upset. I laughed loud and long, and Louise was at last compelled to join, though Horace's screams still resounded through the kitchen.

"Benny," said I, as soon as I was able to speak, "what is the matter with Horace? Is he killed?"

"No!" answered Benny, solemnly. "Is he hurt?"

"No!" answered Benny as solemnly as before.

"Well, what is it then?" "Why, you see," said Benny, "we were playing out in the"—here he stopped and looked doubtfully at his mother, but she said not a word, so he went on. "We were playing out in the alley, and Horace wanted me to be his horse, and I was his horse, and he whipped me, and I fell down, and there was a dead cat there, and she went into my face, and I got up, and Horace laughed, and I just gave him a little slap in the face, and my hand was all mud, and—"

"That will do, Benny," said his mother. "Horace, stop! Now tell me how you happened out there at all, when I told you not?"

Little Benny said nothing, and Horace, who at his mother's command had "stopped," hung his head.

"Whose fault was it?" asked their mother. Still Benny was silent, and Horace hung his head.

"Come, Horace," said Louise, "be a man! Weren't you the one to blame?" Horace looked up. "Yes, mother; I was," said he. "I made Benny go; he said he'd rather play in the yard."

"But I needn't have gone," said honest little Benny; "twasn't all his fault."

"Well, we'll talk about that another time," said Louise. "Come in, Benny, if your shoes are off, before that mud gets baked on your face. Jane," added she, as the girl made her appearance, "wont you bring me the largest tub from the cellar?"

"O, mother, what for?" asked Horace, anxiously. "Do let us go up to the bathing-room."

The mother made no reply, but looked resolute—so the tub came. "Now, boys, off with your clothes."

"Why, mother, I don't need it," said poor Horace.

"I think you need washing, Horace, quite as much as Benny, though we don't see as much dirt on you!" said Louise, with a queer puckering of her lips. "Come, Aunt Caddie and Jane will step out; off with your clothes. Obedient to this very broad hint, I went up stairs, and in about half an hour heard Louise calling, "Aunt Caddie, please bring those old jackets and pants of the boys' from the nursery."

I seized the garments and rushed down stairs; both boys looked up ruefully.

"O, mother, you don't mean those old things? We haven't worn them for a long time."

"It is very fortunate," said Louise, with the same queer pucker, "that I didn't give them to Jimmie Lane last week, as I intended; they will be just the things for my boys to put on when they play in the alley."

"We wont go there again, mother, never!" said Benny; but mother was firm, and the old clothes went on.

"Cousin Robert, too!" cried Horace, as the door-bell rang. "What will he think?"

Cousin Robert did think it very strange, when the boys came slowly out to welcome him, instead of rushing, tumbling, heels over head, as was their usual custom. It was so strange, that he couldn't account for it. Such looking clothes, too. The boys at last, seeing his perplexity, thought they might as well tell him the whole story, which they did—Lou and I listening, unobserved, until they came to that act in the tragedy, where the dead cat and Horace's shrieks came in; then we betrayed ourselves by laughing, and all three boys joined.

"Come, boys," said Robert, when he was about going, "come up home with me, and see my new rabbits."

The boys looked first at their clothes, then at their mother. "O, mother, can't we put on our other jackets now?"

"Not to-night," answered Louise. Robert looked disappointed, and Horace was almost inclined to pout, but his mother said quietly, "You know you deserve it, Horace," which made him feel a little ashamed; and little Benny restored good humor all round

by shouting to Robert, as he left the house, "Bob, if the neighbors think we've had a great railroad accident in here, and ask you how many were killed, you'll relieve their anxious minds wont you?"

"Yes," said Robert, "I'll tell them nobody killed, but two boys seriously wounded."

The two boys never forgot that afternoon's adventure; ever after that, they preferred their nice, clean, pretty garden, to the dirty alley. Occasionally, when the subject is mentioned, Benny, with a sly glance at Horace, will exclaim, "Didn't somebody make a noise, though?"—Little Pilgrim.

THE TWO PARTINGS.

[In the National Baptist, in which the following story appears as original, it is supplemented by a note saying that it is drawn from real life, and saying that any one wishing to verify the facts of the case can obtain the name and residence of the gentleman referred to by calling at its office, No. 530 Arch street, Philadelphia.]

One winter evening, many years ago, a fair young girl stood before the glass in her own pleasant little room, giving the last touches to her toilet. That night was the first party of the season, and perhaps Emma might be excused if she lingered a little longer than usual, smoothing once again her dark-brown hair, and adjusting the soft folds of her beautiful dress.

"Come, Emma," called her mother at length; "I am afraid you forget that Mr. B— is waiting for you."

No; Emma had not forgotten, as the rosy blush that stole across her cheek testified. Her last thought, as she stood smiling at her reflection in the glass, had been, "This is the color which he likes; I am sure he will be pleased."

Quickly she hurried down stairs, and after playfully excusing her delay, while the flush deepened at Mr. B—'s evident admiration, turned to her mother, saying, "I believe I am ready at last."

"Take good care of yourself, darling," said the mother, as she wrapped a warm shawl around the slender form, "and don't stay very late."

Their destination was soon reached, and as the young man moved through the brilliantly-lighted room, many a glance of admiration was cast at his companion, and more than one of his friends whispered, "James is a lucky fellow; I'd give a good deal to be able to monopolize Miss Emma as he does."

The evening sped joyously on, and at length, toward its close, refreshments were handed around. Mr. B— was standing a little apart from Emma, who was the centre of a laughing group of young girls, when the lady of the house with a smile offered him a glass of wine.

"No, thank you; I do not drink it," was his reply.

"Pshaw! what nonsense," she returned. "No one has refused it this evening, and I don't intend to allow you to be the first. Come, just one glass; it can't hurt any one."

"I cannot do it," he answered gravely, "for I have determined never to taste a drop."

"Come here, Emma," called the lady. "I want you to coax this obstinate young man to take a little wine. I know he will not refuse you."

Emma took the glass in her little white hand, and with a smile which few could have resisted, said, "Come, James, you will take just this one glass?"

"No, Emma," he answered, with a powerful effort. "I have made up my mind, and you must not ask me to change it."

"Then you shall not accompany me home to-night, Mr. B—," said Emma, with an angry flash of her dark eye; "now take your choice."

"I must bid you good-bye then, Emma, if it comes to that," he said sorrowfully. "I would gladly do anything else for you, but that I cannot do." So saying, he bowed and turned away.

"Never mind, Emma, I'll see you home," said a young man standing near, whose flushed face betokened that he had taken more than one glass. "Let him go, the ill-mannered fellow; who cares?"

So saying, he offered his arm, which Emma accepted, and they moved off together.

More than ten years had passed away. Mr. B— was married and established in a prosperous business, and by degrees the incidents of his parting with Emma were almost forgotten.

One day a man with whom he was slightly acquainted came into his store and asked for employment.

"I am afraid I can't give it to you, Norris," was the answer. "I make it a rule never to have any one in my employ who is intemperate."

"But I mean to stop all that, Mr. B—," said the man earnestly. "I have made up my mind to quit drinking entirely. It's rather hard not to give a man a chance when he wants to reform."

"Well," said Mr. B—, partially relenting, "I will try you. Come into the back part of the store, and I will give you some work."

A bundle was soon made up, with which Norris departed. Several days elapsed, and the work not being returned, Mr. B— sent to his residence to ask the reason.

Alas! it was the same old tale of sorrow. The husband and father had gone on a drinking frolic, leaving a sick wife and three starving children.

Mr. B—'s generous heart prompted him to go to their relief at once. He entered the miserable dwelling, and found the sick woman lying in a room almost bare of furniture; while the children, sitting on the floor by the bedside, were crying for bread.

A few kind words and a promise of something to eat, soon dried their tears; and hastening to the grocery, he returned with an ample supply, which he broke among the famishing children.

While he stood smiling at their delight, the mother burst into tears, and exclaimed, "O, Mr. B—, can you forgive me?"

"What do you mean?" he asked in astonishment. "Don't you remember Emma F—? Don't you remember my offering you the wine at the party, and your refusing it? God knows I wish I could forget it; but it seems as if it were branded on my heart in letters of fire."

It was some moments before Mr. B— could realize that the miserable creature before him was indeed the bright, fascinating girl from whom he had parted so many years before.

"Poor Emma, how you must have suffered," he said compassionately. "But do you forgive me?" she asked anxiously.

"Certainly; say no more about it. You must not stay in this wretched place. Is your mother living?"

"Yes, sir; in the country. "Would you not like to go back to her with the children?"

"Yes, sir," she answered sadly; "but I have no means."

"Do not trouble yourself," said Mr. B—; "as soon as you are sufficiently recovered, I will take care of that part of the undertaking. Let me know if there is anything else I can do for you. No thanks," he added hastily, as the poor woman commenced a grateful acknowledgment; "good-bye."

This was the second parting. Young ladies, you who are accustomed to press your gentlemen friends to partake of wine, pause now and ask yourselves the question, whether you are prepared for the miserable fate of a drunkard's wife? C. C.

BENEDICT ARNOLD AS A MAN AND BOY.

"The boy is father of the man," and the germs of bad character may almost uniformly be found in the boyhood of men who become great criminals or trouble-makers of society. In Mrs. Sigourney's "Letters of Life" is the following allusion to Benedict Arnold, who lived, when a boy, in the family of Dr. Lathrop, of Norwich, Conn. She says:—

In the course of his extensive business he employed a variety of clerks, whom it was his choice to domesticate under his own roof. Their moral and intellectual habits were to him and his estimable lady objects of interest. Indeed, to their conscientious minds they were in some measure as children, for whose right principles and good conduct they felt responsible, both to the world and to God. Perhaps they were in no instance more signally baffled in these philanthropic efforts as by Benedict Arnold, known in his country's history as the traitor. Being the son of a widow, they received him at rather an early age, and cherished for him added sympathy. Strong capacities and strong faults were soon revealed. Among the latter was barbarity to every form of animal life. Dogs avoided him for good reasons; cats never flourished where he dwelt; it was thought that horses were none the better for his ministrations, unless it might be for habits of breakneck speed and marvelous kicking and prancing. Dismembered birds were found lying about the premises, of whose state no satisfactory solution could be obtained. The blue eggs of the robin were crushed and strewn upon the turf, and the voice of the mourning mother resounded through the branches.

"Methinks," said the kind lady in whose house he was fostered, "her cry is, 'cruel Benedict Arnold! cruel Benedict Arnold!' at which the boy secretly laughed.

In the summer of 1781, the inhabitants of Norwich beheld their whole southern horizon wrapped in the strange, flickering redness of a distant flame. Thundering sounds were on the air, like the cannon's death peal. There was a quick mustering of the men of war. With hot haste, and with as much of military order as the occasion would admit, horse and foot sped on to the point of danger.

The fleetest leader of the cavalry, gaining a commanding ascent, announced that New London was in flames. The soldiers hurried to meet the foe. The fourteen miles that divided Norwich from New London was achieved on eagles' wings. But they came too late for defense; too late for vengeance.

Smoking ruins and homeless people were on every side. The helpless sick had been removed to fields and gardens, and sobbing children clung to their bewildered mothers. Their holy and beautiful temple where they had worshipped God, was in ashes—and Benedict Arnold had done it.

Returning from a predatory excursion on the shores of Virginia, he had

made this visit to his native State. Here were old friends, with whom he had held early intercourse. By them he was recognized, seated on his horse giving orders. He even ventured to take some refreshment in the house of a former acquaintance, but bade the flames inwrap the roof as he rose from the table. He expressed a wish that it were possible to reach Norwich, that he might burn at least the abode in which he was born. Instinct, however, protected him from this exposure, doubtless assuring him that the beautiful region which gave him birth would feel it a duty to provide him a grave.

FLOWER-DE-LUCE.

Beautiful lily, dwelling by still rivers, Or solitary mere, Or where the sluggish meadow-brook delivers Its waters to the weir!—

Thou laughest at the mill, the whirr and worry Of spindle and of loom, And the great wheel that toils amid the hurry And rushing of the flame.

Born to the purple, born to joy and pleasure, Thou dost not toil nor spin, But makest glad and radiant with thy presence The meadow and the lin.

The wind blows, and uplifts thy drooping banner, And roind thee through and run The rushes, the green yeomen of thy manor, The outlaws of the sun.

The burnished dragon-fly is thine attendant, And darts against the field, And down the listless sunbeam rides resplendent With steel-blue mail and shield.

Thou art the Iris, fair among the fairest, Who, armed with golden rod And winged with the celestial azure, bearest The message of some God.

Thou art the Muse, who far from crowded cities Hauntest the sylvan streams, Playing on pipes of reed the artless ditties That come to us as dreams.

O flower-de-luce, bloom on, and let the river Linger to kiss thy feet! O flower of song, bloom on, and make forever, The world more fair and sweet! —Prof. Longfellow.

DISCONTENTED ROBERT.

"There's some fun in working in a place like that," thought Robert, as he peeped through the hawthorne hedge into Mr. Lyman's beautiful grounds, and saw Christie, the old gardener, at his work. "I love to cultivate flowers, but there isn't much pleasure in hoeing cabbages and onions all the time."

Just then conscience whispered in his ear, "There's pleasure in duty, Robert," and then the word "duty"—"duty"—"duty," seemed to murmur all around him. Robert was in no mood to stop and talk with his conscience, and so his face wore a not very pleasant look as he turned his steps toward home.

In a few years the sunset gates wide unfolded their gold and purple bars, and the weary old gardener passed to his rest in the sweet fields beyond. Robert was called to fill his place, and for a while he seemed contented.

One morning Robert was busy among the flowers. It was a bright, warm day—a day to be glad—but Robert was not happy. "I declare, how fast these weeds do grow!" he exclaimed, giving his hoe an angry jerk; it takes all my time; and with the walks to roll, and the borders to trim, and the hedges to clip, I don't see how in the world—"

"What pretty flowers! Isn't Mr. Lyman kind to let me ride in this beautiful garden?" and "O, how happy it makes me to hear the birds sing."

Robert looked, and saw a lame girl—people called her "lame Lucy"—whose brother was drawing her slowly down the walk, in a rough, clumsy, unpainted wagon. As Robert was standing behind a little clump of bushes, Lucy did not see him until she was just opposite. Then she smiled, and bade him good-morning; and as she did so, she looked so happy and contented, that Robert paused from his work, saying: "Why does it make you so happy to hear the birds sing?"

"O, I think God is so good and kind to make such beautiful things, just to please us, when he might as easily have made everything disagreeable. His tender mercies are over all his works," repeated pale-faced Lucy, "and it makes me so glad and happy."

Robert glanced at her poor, wasted, helpless form, and then at her face, so bright with cheerful gratitude, and said, as he thought of his own strong limbs and unthankful heart: "I wish I could feel contented always, as you do, Lucy."

"I cannot help feeling contented when I think of my blessings—I have so many things to make me grateful," and then the little wagon passed on out of sight.

Robert took up his hoe, and, for the first time, he seemed to notice that there was everything about him to delight the eye and ear. The roses, lilies and laburnums wore their gayest robes. The bees, as they darted here and there through the flowers, made music with their humming. The birds sang joyously in the trees overhead. Every tuft of grass, shrub, twig and leaf, as it bore up its twinkling dew-drops, seemed to say, "God is love!" The gentle breeze mingled with its freshness the perfume of briar and clover and mignonette, and whispered in a low, sweet tone, "Praise ye the Lord."

And to Robert's murmuring heart a voice said, "Peace! be still!"—Little Sower.

FIBBING.

"Why, Neddie, where have you been?" inquired Mrs. Stepnay of her son Edward, a boy of ten, as he entered the parlor a little flushed with running. "It is six o'clock, and your school closes at four. What have you been doing since school, my son?"

"O, ma," replied the boy, "when we play base-ball we have such fun we don't think at all about the clock, or tea-time, or anything else. Is tea ready now?"

This answer led Edward's mother to conclude that he had been playing base-ball. What else could she think? But had he been playing that game with his schoolmates? Not at all. He had been "kept in" by his teacher for bad lessons, and was ashamed to confess his disgrace. So he made his mother believe that he had been playing.

"What a shame and a sin it is for you to deceive your good mother so!" said Neddie's conscience, as he sat eating his nice supper.

"I don't care," replied the boy to this faithful but troublesome voice; "I don't care. I didn't tell her a lie. I didn't say I had been playing base-ball."

"But you said words which made your mother think you had, and which you meant should make her think so," replied conscience.

But Edward was stubborn. He had entered the wrong path, and so he went to bed leaving the false impression on his mother's mind.

Children, did Edward lie or not? Of course he did, sir, I hear you reply. You are right, my children. Edward did not plainly lie, because he did not say he had been playing base-ball; but he used words which deceived her, just as he meant they should. He intended to deceive her, and that intention made his words a lie. Indeed, it was a very bad sort of a lie, because it was dressed up in the livery of truth.

Some children would call Eddie's lie a fib. Nonsense! A fib is a lie. Every word you utter, my child, with an intention to produce a false impression on some person's mind, is a lie. So be careful of your words. Always tell the exact truth, for no character is more hateful, either to God or man, than that of the liar.

A TALK WITH THE CHILDREN ON PRAYER.

Dear children, have you learned how graciously Jesus answers the prayers of even the little ones? If he has taught you this himself, there is no need that I should give you proofs of it; but some of us larger children go on and on, making endless mistakes, and suffering bitter losses, from not having learned the easy remedy.

The other day, a Christian mother, whose heart rejoices at every sign that her flock of little ones is led by the Good Shepherd, told me that one of her little girls had learned a lesson in a prayer that she would never forget. She came in from school greatly irritated, saying that she never wanted teachers to disappoint and tease her. After her first excited feeling had spent itself, her father said to her quietly, "Nelly, did you ever try praying for your teacher, to see if God would not make her more gentle?"

"Why, no, father," said the little girl. "Well," said he, "try that, and see how things get on to-morrow." He said no more, but watched the end, and the next day Nelly came bounding into the house, as she had not done for many a day, saying, "O, father, your way was right; you don't know how good Miss K— was to me to-day. I have had such a happy day!"

"Well, my little girl," said the father, "God has many ways of answering our prayers; and I suspect that one way he took to answer you was to make you more obedient and studious." She had not thought of this before, but now began looking back over the day, and then in sweet simplicity said, "Yes, father; I think that was so. I loved to study to-day, my heart was so happy." Many days after, she said to him, as he came in at night-fall, "Dear father, I never shall forget again to ask God for everything I want; for ever since that day my teacher has been so changed."

"Yes," said the glad father, "and my little girl is changed too."

Christ knew when he was teaching that lesson, that it would bear its fruits; that every day some want would come up that he could satisfy; and in his generous love he longed to have that young heart come to him and be comforted.—The Witness.

BOYS USING TOBACCO.

A strong and sensible writer says a good, sharp thing, and a true one, too, for boys who use tobacco. It tends to softening and weakening of the bones, and it greatly injures the brain, the spinal marrow and the whole nervous fluid.

A boy who smokes early and frequently, or in any way uses large quantities of tobacco, is never known to make a man of much energy, and generally lacks muscular and physical as well as mental power. We would particularly warn boys who want to be anything in the world, to shun tobacco as a most baneful poison. It injures the teeth. It produces an unhealthy state of the throat and lungs, hurts the stomach, and blasts the brain and nerves.