

The Family Circle.

LITTLE PEOPLE.

A dreary place would be this earth Were there no little people in it; The song of life would lose its mirth, Were there no children to begin it. No little forms, like buds to grow, And make the admiring heart surrender, No little hands on breast and brow, To keep the thrilling love-chorus tender. No babe within our arms to leep, No little feet toward slumber tending; No little knees in prayer to bend, Our lips the sweet words leading. What would the mothers do for work, Were there no pants or jackets tearing? No tiny dresses to embroider? No cradle for their watchful caring? No rosy boys, at wint'ry morn, With satchel to the school-house hastening; No merry shouts as home they rush, No precious morsel for their tasting; Tall, grave, grown people at the door, Tall, grave, grown people at the table, The men on business all intent, The dames lugubrious as they're able; The sternest souls would get more stern, Unfeeling natures more inhuman, And man to stoic coldness turn, And woman would be less than woman. For in that dim towards which we reach, Through Time's mysterious dim unfolding, The little ones with cherub smile, Are still our Father's face beholding. So said His voice in whom we trust, When in Judea's realm a preacher, He made a child confront the proud, And be in simple guise their teacher. Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm, Were there no babies to begin it; A doleful place this world would be, Were there no little people in it.

"SHE HAS OUTLIVED HER USEFULNESS."

BY MRS. J. D. CHAPLIN.

Not long since a good-looking man in middle life came to our door, asking for "the minister." When informed that he was out of town, he appeared disappointed and anxious. On being questioned as to his business, he replied, "I have lost my mother, and this place used to be her home, and as my father lies here, we have come to lay her beside him."

Our heart rose in sympathy, and we said, "you have met with a great loss."

"Well—yes," replied the strong man with hesitancy, "a mother is a great loss in general; but our mother had outlived her usefulness. She was in her second childhood, and her mind was grown as weak as her body, so that she was no comfort to herself and was a burden to everybody. There were seven of us, sons and daughters, and we could not find any one who would board her, we agreed to keep her among us a year about; but I have had more than my share of her, for she was too feeble to be moved when my time was out, and that was more than three months before her death. But then she was a good mother in her day, and toiled very hard to bring us up."

Without looking at the face of the heartless man, we directed him to the house of a neighboring pastor, and returned to our nursery. We gazed on the merry little faces which smiled or grew sad in imitation of ours, those little ones to whose ear no word in our language is half so sweet as "mother," and we wondered if the time would ever come when they would say of us, "She has outlived her usefulness," she is no comfort to herself and a burden to everybody else, and we hoped that before such a day would dawn we might be taken to our rest. God forbid that we should outlive the love of our children. Rather let us die while our hearts are a part of their own, that our grave may be watered with their tears, and our love linked with their hopes of Heaven.

When the bell tolled for the mother's burial, we went to the sanctuary to pay our only token of respect to the aged stranger; for we felt that we could give her memory a tear, even though her own children had none to shed.

"She was a good mother in her day and toiled hard to bring us all up—she was no comfort to herself, and a burden to everybody else!" These cruel, heartless words rung in our ears as we saw the coffin borne up the aisle. The bell tolled long and loud, until its iron tongue had chronicled the years of the toil-worn mother. One—two—three—four—five. How clearly and almost merrily each stroke told of her once peaceful slumber in her mother's bosom, and of her seat at nightfall on her weary father's knees. Six—seven—eight—nine—ten—rang out the tale of her sports upon the greenward, in the meadow, and beside the brook. Eleven—twelve—thirteen—fourteen—spoke more gravely of school days and little household joys and cares. Sixteen—seventeen—eighteen—sounded out the enraptured visions of maidenhood and the dream of early love. Nineteen brought before us the happy bride. Twenty spoke of the young mother whose heart was full to bursting with the new, strong love which God had awakened in her heart. And then stroke after stroke told of her early womanhood—of the loves, and cares, and hopes, and fears, and toils through which she passed during these long years, till fifty rang out harsh and loud. From that to sixty, each stroke told of the warm-hearted mother and grandmother, living over again her own joys and sorrows in those of her children and her children's children.

Every family of all the group wanted grandmother then, and the only strife was who should secure the prize; but, hark, the bell tolls on! Seventy—seventy-one—two—three—four. She begins to grow feeble, requires some care, is not always perfectly patient or satisfied; she goes from one child's home to another, so that no one place seems like home. She murmurs in plaintive tones,

and after all her toil and weariness, it is hard she cannot be allowed a home to die in; that she must be sent rather than invited from house to house. Eighty—eighty-one—two—three—four. Ah, she is now a second child—now, "she has outlived her usefulness, she has now ceased to be a comfort to herself or anybody," that is, she has ceased to be profitable to her earth-craving and money-grasping children.

Now sounds out, reverberating through our lovely forest, and coming back from our "hill of the dead," eighty-nine! There she lies now in the coffin, cold and still—she makes no trouble now, demands no love, no soft words, no tender little offices. A look of patient endurance, we fancied, also an expression of grief for unrequited love sat on her marble features. Her children were there, clad in weeds of woe, and as an irony we remember the strong man's words, "She was a good mother in her day."

When the bell ceased tolling, the strange minister rose in the pulpit. His form was very erect, and his voice strong, but his hair was silvery white. He read several passages of Scripture expressive of God's compassion to feeble man, and especially of his tenderness when gray hairs are on him and his strength faileth. He then made some touching remarks on human frailty, and our dependence on God, urging all present to make their peace with their Master while in health, that they might claim his promises when heart and health failed them. "Then," he said, "the eternal God shall be thy refuge, and beneath thee shall be the everlasting arms." Leaning over the desk, and gazing intently on the coffin form before him, he then said reverently: "From a little child I have honored the aged; but never till gray hairs covered my own head, did I know truly how much love and sympathy this class have a right to demand of their fellow creatures. Now I feel it." "Our mother," he added most tenderly, "who now lies in death before us, was a stranger to me, as are all of these, her descendants. All I know of her is what her son has told me to-day—that she was brought to this town from afar; sixty-nine years ago, a happy bride—that here she has passed most of her life, toiling as only mothers ever have strength to toil, until she had reared a large family of sons and daughters—that she left her home, clad in the weeds of widowhood, to dwell among her children; and that till health and strength left her, God forbid that conscience should accuse any of you of ingratitude or murmuring on account of the care she has been to you of late. When you go back to your homes, be careful of your example before your own children; for the fruit of your own doing you will surely reap from them when you yourselves totter on the brink of the grave. I entreat you as a friend, as one who has himself entered the evening of life, that you may never say in the presence of your families, nor of heaven: 'Our mother, had outlived her usefulness—she was a burden to us.' Never, never! a mother cannot live so long as that! No! when she can no longer labor for her children, nor yet care for herself, she can fall like a precious weight on their bosoms, and call forth by her helplessness all the noble, generous feelings of their natures."

Adieu, then, poor toil-worn mother; there are no more days of pain for thee. Undying vigor and everlasting usefulness are part of the inheritance of the redeemed.

GONE TO SMASH.

BY REV. ALFRED TAYLOR.

A young man recently came into possession of an immense amount of money, and property which yielded so large an income, as to turn the head of almost any one who would have become possessed of it.

He seems to have been a tolerably decent fellow, but without much advantage of early education, and without the power of religion, or even of high moral principle, to give him grace or common sense to take care of such a vast property. He was known as a "clever fellow," without positive vices, and without the power to say "No," when invited to pursue any course of pleasure, extravagance or mischief.

This magnificent estate was willed to "Johnny" by his step-mother, upon whose sudden death Johnny came into sudden possession. Hardly was the old lady cold in her coffin, before Johnny discovered that he had a great many friends. They began to fasten themselves on him after the fashion of leeches. Lacking the resoluteness of character which would have manfully shaken them off, and fearing that it would be a terrible evil to allow his wealth to accumulate at a rate of a thousand or two of dollars a day, he allowed them to drain him. He knew he was wealthy. He felt that his wealth was enormous. He hated to be miserly. The acquisition of the wealth had cost him nothing, and it was "easy come, easy go," with him and his friends.

Johnny became known as a very prince, not only in Venango county, but wherever else he travelled—and his travels for pleasure were vastly more extended than were the travels of the Apostle Paul, in his missionary labors, his benevolence was dispensed, sometimes to worthy people, but generally to the drunken and unworthy, with unsparing hand. Some boon companion, after riding with him, would receive for a present, the magnificent horses and carriage in which the ride had been taken. Large presents would be made to whole companies of loafers and drunkards, who might be passing their elegant leisure in the bar-room where it pleased Johnny to take his drink. Diamond breast-pins, gold chains, elegant jeweled ornaments, would be lavished on vagrants, whose only claim to them was that they were the "friends" of the liberal dispenser of these bounties. The "friends" stuck the closer, the more free he was with his money. They loved him; they hugged him; they sucked his blood like vampire bats; they led him into all manner

of unholy excesses. The costliest wines, the most luxurious and enchanting evil women; the fastest and the most expensive horses; the skill of accomplished gamblers at the faro-table, and general and miscellaneous debauchery, wrecked the unfortunate millionaire. One honorable gentleman, recently elected to Congress from New York, is said to have "gone through" poor Johnny to the tune of \$100,000, at his gambling establishment, in one or two nights. With such advantages for rapid destruction, and such companions eating up his substance and robbing him under the guise of friendship, it is no wonder that the princely fortune took wings and flew away so rapidly. In twenty months Johnny got through with two millions of dollars!

Nothing left! The last property sold to pay Government taxes! Friends gone! The harpies, who were such jolly fellows when Johnny's plethoric pockets were open to every demand, are not near to help him when the money is gone, and things go wrong with him. No princely generosity await him from the vagabonds on whom he squandered his magnificent liberality. No refunding of stolen cash by the gamblers who fleeced him at their faro-tables. No horses, or carriages, or glittering diamond pins to be handed over to Johnny in the day of his necessity, as a return for past favors. But, kicked and scorned by the very rascals who preyed upon him, this young man, far poorer than he ever was before the possession of his ephemeral wealth, must begin again, and try to retrieve the follies of the past, by being a decent fellow in the future. Without a trade, without business ability, without particular talent for any thing, this wreck of magnificence finds a situation as door-keeper to the very band of strolling minstrels which he organized, and every member of which he ornamented with a diamond breast-pin.

Young man, a word of lesson for you. To know how to use wealth is better than to be merely wealthy. Had poor Johnny used his means decently and soberly, instead of squandering them in drunkenness and carousing, he might have been respected and esteemed, and lived a life of honor and of usefulness.

Wealth without the ability to use it for your own good, for the good of your fellow-beings, and for the glory of God, is a fearful curse.

An appetite for strong drink, if indulged in, will carry the millionaire, as well as the poorer member of society, to a worse than beastly degradation. Rich or poor, look well to the character of your companions. Godless and drunken company will hurry you to ruin as surely and as speedily as flies are eaten by spiders when once ensnared in the cobwebs.

Be diligent in your business; and if God gives you riches, pray also for grace to use them rightly, to give liberally to that which is good, but not to squander on that which is vile and worthless. And if your toils are not rewarded by vast possessions, labor on, in the cheerful assurance that you are better off with humble gains, honorably acquired and faithfully used, than you would be with credit broken; friends gone, nose reddened, eyes bruised, face bloated, clothes tattered, pockets empty—the miserable wreck of what was a millionaire.

Philadelphia, January, 1867.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GENTLEMAN.

As has been announced, Mr. Jerome, of New York, has donated to the Trustees of Princeton College, New Jersey five thousand dollars, which is to constitute a fund, the proceeds of which are to be annually offered as a prize to that student of each graduating class, who shall be pronounced, by a vote of his fellow graduates, the most gentlemanly student in the class. The Trustees, it is also stated, have accepted of the donation for the purpose specified by the kind donor. The object of the fund thus created, is certainly a novel one, and may have its good results upon the morals of the graduates of that literary institution.

As is natural, the novelty of the object of the donation has elicited much varied remark in different directions. The donor has not laid down any particular criterion by which the vote in each case is to be controlled, but has left this entirely to the judgment of those, by whom it is to be cast. This circumstance has opened the way for various suggestions in different directions, as to what constitutes a true gentleman. One party quotes the following significant language, which Sir Sidney Smith is said to have cut from a newspaper, and preserved for his own use, and regards the putting into practice of what is here recommended, as furnishing the qualifications requisite to insure the proffered prize:

"When you rise in the morning, form a resolution to make the day a happy one to a fellow creature. It is easily done; a left off garment to the man who needs it; a kind word to the sorrowful; an encouraging expression to the striving—trifles in themselves as light as air—will do it at least for the twenty hours. And if you are young, depend upon it, it will tell when you are old,—rest assured it will send you gently and happily down the stream of time to eternity." By the most simple arithmetical sum, look at the result. If you send one person, only one, happily through the day, that is, three hundred and sixty-five in the course of the year. And supposing you live forty years after you commence that course of medicine, you have made 11,600 beings happy; at all events, for a time."

To this we add the following definition of a true gentleman, from another source: "He is above a mean thing. He cannot stoop to a mean fraud. He invades no secrets in the keeping of another. He betrays no secrets confided to his own keeping. He takes selfish advantage of no man's mistakes. He uses no ignoble weapons in controversy. He never stabs in the dark. He is ashamed of inuendoes. He is not

one thing to a man's face and another at his back. If, by an accident, he comes into possession of his neighbor's counsel, he passes upon them an instant oblivion. He bears sealed packages without tampering with the wax. Papers not meant for his eye, whether they flutter at his window, or lie open before him in unguarded exposure, are sacred to him. He profanes no privacy of others, however the sentry sleeps. Bolts and bars, locks and keys, hedges and pickets, bonds and securities, notice to trespassers, are none of them for him. He may be trusted himself out of sight—near the thinnest partition—anywhere. He buys no office; he sells none; he intrigues for none. He would rather fail of his rights than win them through dishonor. He will eat honest bread. He tramples on no sensitive feeling. He insults no man. If he have rebuke for another, he is straightforward, open, and manly. He cannot descend to scurrility. Billingsgate don't lie in his track. From all profane and wanton words his lips are chastened. Of woman and to her he speaks with decency and respect. In short, whatever he judges honorable he practices towards every man."

To the foregoing, we must yet add another definition which is said to be found in an old manor house, in Gloucestershire, England, written, framed, and hung over the mantle-piece of a tapestried sitting room:

"The true gentleman is God's servant, the world's master, and his own man; virtue is his business, study his recreation, contentment his rest, and happiness his reward; God is his Father, the Church is his mother; the saints his brethren; all that need him, his friends; devotion his chaplain; charity his chamberlain; sobriety his butler; temperance his cook; hospitality his housekeeper; providence his steward; charity his treasure; piety his mistress of the house; and discretion, his porter, to let him in and out most fit." Thus his whole family is made up of virtues, and he is the true master of the house. He is necessitated to take the world on his way to heaven; but he walks through it as fast as he can, and all his business by the way is to make himself and others happy. Take him in two words—a man and a Christian."

These are all very good, full and specific as they are. They do not, however, embody more than is contained in the simple but expressive definition of a true gentleman, uttered frequently in a single sentence, by our much revered College preceptor. "He is the true gentleman, who makes every one easy and happy in his presence." In order to do this, however, he invariably insisted, it was indispensably necessary, that the individual be a true Christian; for it is the true Christian only who can invariably make others easy and happy.—German Reformed Messenger.

THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME.

BY REV. JOHN TODD, D. D.

I am now thinking of an aged couple who are called the "old folks," who have lived together, husband and wife, in the same house over fifty years. They came there young, sanguine, and utterly unable to conceive what they would pass through in fifty years, or indeed that there could be an end to half a century. They have reared carefully and properly educated a large family of children. These have all gone from them now, have families of their own, and are filling each an important place in society, and some of them high posts of influence.

They are all members of Christ's church in the order of their parents. And so the "old folks" are left alone, just as they started in life. They have long worn glasses; but at the hour of family worship they take each a Bible, and read in course alternately two verses, just as they did when they read with their children. Then they sing the old hymns, though the voices are not so sweet, nor the pipes of the organ as perfect as formerly. They live, it is plain from incidental remarks, in the past, the present, and the future.

There are certain things that they seldom speak of, even to one another. They keep all the playthings, which their children once used, ostensibly for their grandchildren when they come to visit them; but the forms they see playing with them are those of their own dear children who have gone before them, but who left their images in their memory. The little books and even the little shoes of their bright and early dead are carefully laid up, and though they never speak of them, each knows that they are precious mementoes of the past.

But to see how careful they are of each other! The fires of passion have all burned out, the beauty and freshness of life have all passed away, and the rich harvest of time has all been garnered. But no lovers could be more tender toward each other. If either be absent, the time is anxiously measured till the return; tho' the footstep on the threshold may not be elastic as it returns, yet the ear that hears it and the heart that hears it are awake. They seem to understand each other's thoughts without words, and each feels that life would not be life without the other. They think over the past much and often, and realize that they have together toiled and together struggled and shared all the burdens and sorrows of life. Every memory of the past is equally vivid to each. They don't say much about their separation, so certain to leave one or the other so desolate, but it is plain they think much about it; and from hints occasionally dropped, it is evident that each is contriving and planning how the other can be made comfortable when thus left alone, each expecting to be the first to die.

And when they think of the future, even carrying their thoughts into heaven, they seem to have an expressed fear that heaven will not be all they desire, if they can there be to each other nothing more than old acquaintances! It seems as if they must carry something of the tender feeling which the sorrows and experience of life have

given them, into that world, and as if they must go hand in hand forever!

And the thought that they must soon separate, and the one must be left to walk alone in the rooms, sit alone at the old table, kneel alone at the altar of God, go alone to the house of the Lord, gives an inexpressible tenderness to their treatment of each other. They never, even in the days of youthful courtship, lived more in each other's thoughts than now.

Time has covered the rough places of life over which they have walked, and years have healed the wounds they have suffered, leaving only scars; but the rough winds of life have only bowed their heads, and you see not the sturdy oak, but the soft weeping willow. Memory brings up pictures of the past, some of them recalling sorrows heavy as humanity can bear, but mellowed through down in her own golden light; and hope comes still, not to sing of earth, as she once did, but of heaven and the ever-opening future. And faith showing nothing to the eye, contrives to exert his power over them, by mingling his voice in the songs of hope.

They will not be with each other long; but while they do live, no part of their life has been more full of tender regard, genuine respect, unaffected kindness, or deeper love. The young world can't understand the "old folks," but for myself I never go out into their dwelling without seeing some of the most purified, refined, and exalted traits of human nature, which to me are imitatively beautiful. And if what I have said shall lead my reader to feel more kindly toward those who are all around known as the "old folks," I shall have gained my object in writing. Let me add, that few things are more repulsive to a refined heart than to have such a couple as I have described called the "old folks" by way of derision.

THE MINISTER AND A LITTLE GIRL.

A minister once went to preach in a Western village, where there was no house of God. He preached in the school house. A few people came, who did not seem to care much about God or his word. He preached a great many times; "and I had but one thing to encourage me," said the gentleman.

"What was it?" "It was the attention of one little girl, who kept her eyes fixed on me, and seemed to try to understand every word I said," said the gentleman. "She was a great help to me."

What! can a little child be a great help to a minister? Yes, O yes. How? By paying attention. Think of that, my little ones, and when you go to church, fix your eye on the minister, and try to understand what he says, for he is speaking to you as well as to grown up people. He is telling about the Lord Jesus, who loves the little ones, and said, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

FIFTEEN YOUNG MEN.

At a respectable boarding-house in New York, a number of years ago, were fifteen young men. Six of them uniformly appeared at the breakfast-table on Sabbath morning, shaved, dressed, and prepared for public worship, which they attended both forenoon and afternoon. All became highly respected and useful citizens. The other nine were ordinarily absent from the breakfast-table on Sabbath morning. At noon they appeared at the dinner-table, shaved and dressed in a decent manner. In the afternoon they went out, but not ordinarily to church; nor were they usually seen in the place of worship. One of them is now living, and in a reputable employment; the other eight became openly vicious. All these failed in business, and are now dead. Several of them came to an untimely and awfully tragic end. Many a man may say, as did a worthy and wealthy citizen, "The keeping of the Sabbath saved me." It will, if duly observed, save all. In the language of its Author, "They shall ride upon the high places of the earth."

DUTY TO WOMEN.

Courage is a mere matter of course among any ordinarily well-born youths; but neither truth nor gentleness is a matter of course. You must bind them like shields about your necks; you must write them on the tables of your hearts. Though it be not exacted of you, yet exact it of yourselves, this vow of stainless truth. Your hearts are, if you leave them unstirred, as tombs in which a god lies buried. Vow yourselves crusaders to redeem that sacred sepulchre. And remember before all things—for no other memory will be so protective of you—that the highest law of this knightly truth is that under which it is vowed to women. Whomsoever else you deceive, whomsoever you injure, whomsoever you leave unaided, you must not deceive, nor injure, nor leave unaided, according to your power, any woman, of whatever rank. Believe me, every virtue of the higher phases of manly character begins in this,—in truth and modesty before the face of all maidens, in truth and piety, or truth and reverence to all womanhood.

There's a little mischief making Eft'n, who is ever nigh, Thawing every undertaking, And his name is By-and-by. What we ought to do this minute, "Will be better done," he'll cry; If to-morrow we begin it, "Put it off," says By-and-by. Those who heed his treacherous wooing Will his faithless guidance rue; What we always put off doing, Clearly we shall never do; We shall reach what we endeavor, If on Now we more rely; But unto the realms of Never, Leads the pilot By-and-by.