The Family Circle.

MY SAVIOUR.

I am not skilled to understand
What God hath willed, what God hath planned;
I only know, at His right hand
Stands One who is my Saviour.

I take God at his word and deed:
"Christ died to save me," this I read;
And in my heart I find a need
Of Him to be my Saviour.

And had there been in all this wide,
Sad world, no other soul beside,
But only mine, yet He had died
That he might be its Saviour.

One wounded spirit, sore oppressed,
One wearied soul, that found no rest
Until it found it on the breast
Of Him that was its Saviour;

Then had He left His Father's throne,
The joy untold, the love unknown,
And for that soul had given his own,
That he might be its Saviour.

And O, that He fulfilled may see
The travail of His soul in me,
And with His work contented be,
As I with my dear Saviour.

Yea, living, dying, let me bring
My strength, my solace from this spring—
That he who lives to be my King,
Once died to be my Saviour.

—*Dora Greenwell.*

QUITE IN EARNEST.

BY A. L. O. E.

"Now, Father, I want to ask you something," exclaimed Will Blane almost the instant that he rose from his knees, after joining, or seeming to join, in the prayer that his parent had been offering aloud. It was the custom of Matthew Blane to pray morning and evening with his son. The first prayer, he would say, gave him heart for the labors of the day, and the second prepared him for the rest of the night. Matthew would as soon have forgotten his daily bread as his daily prayer to God.

"You seem to be in mighty haste to ask me," observed Blane dryly. He observed how little of his son's attention had been given to the prayer.

"Well, you see, father, as I'm going abroad, I was thinking how useful I should find one of those leather cases, with a knife and pen and pencil complete, and a place for the paper and the stamps. Jem showed me where I could get one very cheap; and I thought, father, as a parting present, that you would not mind buying one for me."

Matthew Blane gave a little dry cough. "You're quite in earnest in wishing for the case?" asked he.

"Of course I am," replied Will, a little surprised at the question.

"A good deal more in earnest, perhaps," observed his father, "than you were a few minutes ago, when you asked for safety and health and forgiveness, and food for both body and soul."

"Well, to tell the truth, father," said Will, "my thoughts will wander a bit while I am saying my prayers."

"Saying my prayers!" repeated Blane, half to himself. "Ay, that is the word for the thing. Saying your prayers is not praying. You ask God for certain things as a matter of course, as a duty; but you don't look to receive an answer, as you did when you told me you wanted the case."

"O, father, it's so different!" cried Will.

"Ay, it's different; I grant ye that," said Blane, slowly stirring the fire as he spoke. "It is a different thing to ask for all that you can need from One who alone has power to give or to take away all, than tell a father that you have a fancy for a trifle that you could very well do without."

"I did not mean that," said Will, coloring; "but it does not seem as if the great God in heaven would attend to the prayers of such poor creatures as we are."

"That's it; 'tis unbelief that makes so many cold in prayer," observed Blane, looking thoughtfully into the fire. "We do not take God's word as we would that of a fellow creature whom we respected. Does He not say again and again in the Bible what ought to encourage us to pray, 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him.' There are many and many promises like that, which we'd hold fast and never let go, if they were made by a friend upon earth. And if promises are not enough to content us, just look again into the Bible, and see if it is not full of examples of answers to prayer."

"But that was in the old times," observed Will.

"God never changes," replied Blane. He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. The same Saviour who stopped to listen to the cry of the poor, when he walked as a man upon earth, now listens with the same love and pity, sitting as God in the heavens. But then, prayer, to be answered, must come not merely from the lips—the heart must be quite in earnest."

"It is difficult to pray from the heart," said Will.

"Ay, the best of us need to say, with the first disciples, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' The wisest of us need to ask for the Spirit of grace and supplication, to help us to pray as we ought."

"But, father," said Will, with a little hesitation, "I don't see as how those who pray hard get much more than those who don't pray at all. If I were to ask God now to make me very rich, and pray with all my heart and soul, do you believe that he would send me a fortune?"

"May be not, my boy," answered Matthew Blane; "for God might see that a fortune would do you harm, and no good, as has happened to many before. If you ask me for poisoned food, I'd not give it, however hard you might beg. I'd not harm ye even to please ye. But what I say, and what I'll stand by, is this: God gives to his praying children all that they ask in faith, if it really is a blessing that they ask for. He may keep them waiting awhile, to try their faith and their patience; but he never forgets their prayer. They have at the last exactly what they would think best for themselves, if they could see all things as God sees—if they could know all things as God knows. And when, in a happier world, they look back upon their past lives, they will find them—I'm sure that they all will—full of answer to prayer."

"Even in little earthly matters, father?"

"Even in matters that may seem to us earthly and little. I'll give you an instance, my lad. One fact will often get farther than many words in the way of convincing. I'll tell you what happened not very long since to our Bible woman, Lucy May."

"What was it, father?" asked Will.

"Lucy had a ring that she dearly prized, because it had belonged to a pious sister, who was dead. I doubt that if there was anything that she had that she would not sooner have lost than that ring. Lucy, as you know, is employed, like many another in London, in seeking out poor, wandering sinners, and trying to lead them to the Saviour. There was one girl—her name was Emily—who seemed minded to listen to Lucy, and even agreed that she would go one evening with the Bible woman to a meeting for prayer. It was on the very day, if I remember aright, on which the meeting was to take place, as the two were together in Lucy's little room, there came the postman's knock at the door. Off started Lucy in haste, for she expected a letter. And sure enough there was one, bringing her news of her mother, who was ill. No wonder that while the poor Bible woman was anxiously spelling over her letter, she forgot that in the room in which she had left the girl Emily, there was her ring, besides a golden sovereign, in her work-box—a work-box that was not locked."

"Ah!" exclaimed Will, "that was a forget indeed! Did the girl open the box and take them?"

"The temptation was too strong for her," replied Blane; "Emily took both sovereign and ring, and slipped them into her stocking."

"Lucy might have expected as much," cried Will. "What could have made her leave such a temptation as that in the way of a stranger?"

"I suppose it must have been her anxiety about her mother, and the worry of the letter" answered Blane. "Any ways, it added not a little to her trouble when she found that the girl whom she had hoped to have as a penitent, turn out such a thief; and that, instead of going to the prayer-meeting, as was settled she went away no one knew where, with the stolen money and the ring, which she denied knowing any thing about."

"Didn't Lucy call the police?" asked Will.

"No, she didn't like to set the police upon the track of the wretched girl; she would rather put up with her loss. And a sore loss it was to Lucy," added Blane, "ill could a poor Bible woman spare the sovereign that had been taken, but that loss might be made up by hard work, or by the kindness of friends; but who could restore the ring, the precious ring of her dead sister? How could Lucy hope to find again that which she had valued so much?"

"How, indeed!" exclaimed Will. "To hunt out one little ring amidst the thousands and thousands in the endless pawnbroker's and jeweller's shops in this big town of London, would be indeed, as the saying is, like searching for a needle in a hay stack! One would as soon expect to fish up a ring after throwing it into the Thames! What did poor Lucy do?"

"She went to her knees, my boy; she laid her troubles before God. She and a friend of her's prayed hard; they were quite in earnest, mind ye! their words didn't go one way and their thoughts another, like those of some one that I know of."

"But did Lucy ever get her ring back? that's the question," asked Will, who did not like the turn the conversation was taking.

"Be patient awhile, and you shall hear. No policeman followed that miserable thief; justice did not trace out her haunts; no one knew but herself in what pawnbroker's shop she had pledged the stolen ring; but it was as if she had been followed by Lucy's prayer; that was an arrow in her heart; go where she might, she carried that with her.

What was the surprise of the Bible woman when, about three weeks after the robbery, the girl Emily came back of her own accord, with a look of shame and sorrow! She told Lucy that she could neither sleep nor eat, her conscience was so troubled by her sin. She had but three and sixpence left out of the sovereign which she had stolen, but this she was ready to give back; and she offered to take Lucy to the pawnbroker's shop, where she might recover her ring."

"And Lucy went with the girl?" asked Will.

"She went with Emily to the place, and long and weary was her walk, before she reached it at last; for so bent had Emily been upon hiding her wicked theft, that she had gone to a shop distant three miles from the lodging where she had stolen the ring. Right glad was Lucy to recover her treasure, and all the more glad because she felt that she got it in answer to prayer. While she was engaged in the pawnbroker's shop, the poor shame-faced thief took the opportunity of slipping away unseen."

"Poor soul!" exclaimed Will, "there was some good left in her, or she would not have come back at all.

"Father," said Will, gravely, "I never before thought that prayer was so *real* a thing; I never looked for an answer."

"Mark those telegraph wires stretching over the street, observed Blane, who was fond of illustrating his ideas by the common objects around him; "we can't *see* the message that is darting along them quick as lightning; but we *know* that messages are sent, we know that answers are returned, though plain folk, like you and me, cannot understand *how*. Now I often think, as I look at those lines, prayer is like a golden wire that stretches all the way up to heaven, and faith sends her message by it. But there is one thing which we must always remember, Will, whether we ask for earthly blessings, or better gifts for our souls, we must ask all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only for His sake that the Almighty stoops to listen to the prayer of poor sinners such as we."

Will sat silent for several minutes, turning over in his mind what he had just heard from his father. Matthew Blane was the first to speak.

"And now, my lad," said he, "you and I will go together and buy the case which you want. It may serve to remind you sometimes of what we have been talking over this morning. 'Tis well that every one should form a habit of daily prayer; but mere lip-prayer, withou heart-prayer, is like a prayer without a soul, it has no more power for good than a dead corpse has in its coffin. To pray with power we must pray in the name of the blessed Saviour; and whether our words be many or few, our hearts must be *quite in earnest.*"

CHILDREN AT PLAY.

"I never was so mortified in all my life," said a mother, "as once when I overheard one of my little girls, a make-believe mother, scolding a doll word for word, tone for tone, as I was scolding Tom the day before. It was certainly not a pleasing *reflection.*"

Yes, go to the children at play, if you want to really learn what influences are really educating them, for they act out the impression most strongly made on them. It is not the more positive forms of training which at first or most influentially tell upon their young minds, but our *unconscious selves* our habitual looks, acts, tones, expressions, which, like the air they daily breathe, daily mould and vitalize them. If you want to understand your child, see him at play. What variety, what heartiness, what soul on the play ground! How bounding free, outspoken, for good or for evil! Two things about play:

1. Children can play on a very small capital. A little girl had nothing to play with but two empty spools. She named them Anna and Jane; and the endless diversity of character and conduct they took was marvelous. Those children are not the happiest who have the fullest baby-houses. The scantier the material, the more the mind draws upon itself, and its very activity becomes a spring of unfailing enjoyment.

2. Let children *make* what they want, as far as can be. A box of tools, a ball of twine, and a shingle, will educate more than a year's schooling. Our boys never enjoyed their gift of a checker-board—a glad surprise quickly over—as we in our childhood enjoy, constructing one; marking off the squares, papering them, hunting the wood-pile for a crow-stick, and sawing off the men, with all the necessary finish. It took days of most enjoyable work. Nor do our little girls enioy their dolls' bedstead as we did, who manufactured one. Give the constructive faculties room and opportunity, and your children have a perpetual fund of healthy excitement to draw on.

INTO THE SUNSHINE.

"Come, Eddie," said Mrs. Lawson to her boy, who sat on the floor pouting in a very unhandsome way. His lips were pushed out, the corners of his mouth drawn down, and his pretty forehead disfigured by ugly frowning lines.

"Come, dear!" Mrs. Lawson spoke to him again, but he neither moved nor answered, which was very undutiful of Eddy, as every little boy and girl who reads this will say.

"Open the windows, darling and let in the sunlight." Eddy's mother spoke in a gentle, yet earnest voice. He did not understand just what she meant, for he looked at the windows and then back again to his mother, a puzzled expression coming into his face.

"My little boy has shut the windows of his soul and is sitting in darkness."

"What windows, mother? It isn't dark." Eddy seemed still more puzzled. The ugly lines began to fade away from his white forehead; his lips no longer pouted. Getting up from the floor, he came and stood by his mother, with his clear blue eyes looking steadily into hers.

"Ah, the sunshine is coming back!" said Mrs. Lawson, in a cheery way, smiles breaking over her face. "My boy is opening the windows that were shut so tightly a little while ago."

"Won't you tell me about it, mother? I don't know. What windows?" Eddy was a little boy, and did not understand just what his mother meant, as you may know by his questions. So, taking him by the hand, she led him into the garden, to a place where the sunshine never came. The ground was damp and slimy. Moss covered the stones and rotten wood, and was creeping over the bare ground on which the grass would not take root. A few sickly plants had sprung up in this shady corner, their pale leaves and weak crooked branches giving them a pitiable aspect.

"What is this?" asked Eddy's mother, stooping over a poor little plant that was striving feebly to shoot up a flower stem.

"It looks like phlox," the child answered.

"Yes, this is phlox. But why is it so small and mean-looking, while the phlox standing out in the garden is three times as large, and full of blossoms?"

"There isn't any sun there," said Eddy, who, though a very small boy, had learned that all plants needed the sunshine.

"Just the reason, darling. Nothing can grow in health and beauty without sunshine. No, not even little boys. And that is why I told you, just now, to open the windows and let in the light. You were sitting on the floor on the darkness of ill-temper; and for the lack of sunshine, your face had become as different from the true face of my Eddy, as this weak and deformed plant is from the beautiful phlox in the garden. But, you are in the sunshine again. The darkness of a fallen temper is gone; you feel bright and happy. And now, my dear boy, you must be very careful not to shut the windows of your soul, as you did just now. You felt very unhappy, because the light was gone. Shall I tell you about this light that shines into the soul?

"Well; it is not from the sun that you see up in the sky."

"I know that," said Eddy. "It's another kind of light." And his eyes danced intelligence.

"The light from a loving heart. Is that it?" asked Mrs. Lawson.

"Tell me. You know," answered the child.

"Yes, dear, it is the light from a loving heart, and that makes us cheerful and happy. In this sunshine all the good affections of our souls, like plants in a garden, put forth their green leaves and bright flowers. You shut out the sunlight a little while ago by the hand of ill-temper, and were in darkness. How miserable you felt! But now you are in the light and happy. Don't go into dark corners any more, my dear; but stay in the light, so that you may grow up in the Garden of the Lord, healthy, and strong, and beautiful."—*The Children's Hour.*

BABY ON THE PORCH.

Out on the porch, by the open door,
Sweet with roses and cool with shade,
Baby is creeping over the floor—
Dear little winsome blue-eyed maid!

All about her the shadows dance,
All about her the roses swing,
Sunbeams in the lattice glance,
Robins up in the branches sing.

Up at the blossoms her fingers reach,
Lisping her pleading in broken words,
Cooing away in her tender speech,
Songs like the twitter of nestling birds.

Creeping, creeping over the floor,
Soon my birdie will find her wings,
Fluttering out at the open door,
Into the wonderful world of things.

THE THREE SIEVES.

"O, mamma!" cried little Blanche, "I heard such a tale about Edith Howard! I did not think she could have been so naughty. One day"—

"My dear," interrupted her mamma, "before you continue, we will see if your story will pass the three sieves."

"What does that mean, mamma?" said Blanche.

"I will explain it, dear. In the first place, is it *true?*"

"I suppose so, mamma. I heard it from Miss Parry, who said it was a friend of Miss White told her the story; and Miss White is a great friend of Edith."

"And does she show her friendship by telling tales of her? In the next place, though you can prove it is true, is it *kind?*"

"I did not mean to be unkind, mamma; but I am afraid I was. I should not like Edith to speak of me as I have spoken of her."

"And is it *necessary?*"

"No; of course not, mamma; there was no need for me to mention it at all."

THE RILLS.

I have just been watching the little rills jumping and skipping merrily along, and it made me think of the talk a good doctor once had with some of them as he was travelling one day over the Allegheny mountains.

"What was it?"

Well, he asked them where they were going so fast.

"O," they said, "just down the mountain."

"And what are you going to do as you go down the mountain?" he asked.

"O, we shall make friends with other little rills, and grow bigger," said they.

"And what will you do when you grow bigger?"

"O, we shall turn saw-mills and grist-mills; and when we get down through all the rocks on the plains, we shall set some great iron factories and cotton-mills in motion."

"And what will you do then?"

"Then? why we shall make the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, and when we are big enough we shall make the great Ohio."

"And what will you do when you get to be the great Ohio?"

"O, then we shall take upon our backs great rafts and steamboats and beautiful ships, and help build up all along beautiful villages and cities."

"And what then?"

"What then? Why, we shall unite our forces—for we do not mean to live by ourselves and for ourselves—with the great Missouri and Mississippi, and help them carry a thousand ships to the ocean."

"What, are you going to do this, you little rills?"

"Yes, sir, we are; and if you don't believe us, we can't stop to convince you of it, for we are in a hurry," and off they ran on a jump.

If the little rills are going to do so much, what will not the children do, the boys and the girls who are growing bigger and stronger every day, and will by and by be felt for good or evil in the world? Some who are bright and sparkling now, will, I am afraid, run into the first snug and sunny spot, and there stay until they dry up. An easy, selfish life, blessing nobody, at last shrinks to nothing. Others who are promising now, will, I am afraid, by and by be diverted from the right way, and turn off into dark channels, where they will be lost; and others, a great number of our dear boys and girls, I pray God, may grow up strong and good, to unite their forces with all good and noble work, to bless the places where they live, and make the nation better for their having lived in it.

YOUNG CHILDREN ONCE.

Young children once to Jesus came,
His blessing to entreat;
And I may humbly do the same
Before his mercy seat.

For when their feeble hands were spread,
And bent each infant knee,
"Forbid them not," the Saviour said,—
And so he says to me.

Well pleased these little ones to see,
The dear Redeemer smiled;
Oh, then, he will not frown on me,
A poor unworthy child.

If babes, so many years ago,
His tender pity drew,
He will not surely let me go
Without a blessing too.

Then, while this favor to implore,
My youthful hands are spread,
Do Thou thy sacred blessing pour,
Dear Jesus, on my head.

VULGAR PEOPLE.

"Those are not vulgar people," says Dante, "merely because they live in small cottages, lowly places; but those are vulgar who, by their thoughts and deeds, strive to shut out any view of beauty." There are vulgar rich men as well as vulgar poor men. Being poor is not a disqualification for being a gentleman. To be a gentleman, is to be elevated above others in sentiment rather than situation; and the poor man with an enlarged and pure mind may be happier, too, than his rich neighbor without this elevation. Let the former only look at nature with an enlightened mind, "a mind that can see and adore the Creator in his works, can consider them as demonstrations of his sublime power, his wisdom, his goodness and his truth: this man is greater as well as happier in his poverty, than the other in his riches. The one is but little higher than the beast, the other is but little lower than the angels."

A TREACHEROUS HIGHWAY.

Once let the people get poisoned with the wretched falsehood, that in order to carry on the work of the church, and meet its costs, they must contrive some roundabout device of sale or fair or picnic, a mixture of merchandise, cajolery, and merry-making, by which the few shall be deluded into parting with more than they want to give, and the many shall be educated into the worse delusion of supposing they are not to surrender any thing to the Christ who died for them, without an ostensible equivalent taken back, and you strike at the root of all Christian charity while the name is on your lips. You cast up a treacherous highway for the Lord's feet. You hide out of sight the central reality of sacrifice; which is the giving up to God of that which cost the selfish heart something. You eat out the heart of the church to extend its outward prosperity. No scheme to endeavor to carry up missionary zeal will bear inspection which interposes a worldly or self-seeking or ambitious motive between the soul and the Saviour.—*Dr. Huntington.*

BISHOP SOULE ON DANCING.

One of the best things "out" of late was recently given in the Memphis *Christian Advocate.* "A friend," says that paper, "sends us the following incident:"

"Once in Alabama, in a parlor filled with an intelligent and refined company, while the Bishop was conversing with a group of friends, another group in a corner was discussing the innocence of modern dancing—most of them in favor of it. At length they agreed to leave it to the Bishop, and approaching, asked his opinion. (Silence.) 'Well, I never saw dancing but *once*, and I must confess I *was pleased with it.* (Great surprise, and glances exchanged,) I have been to Paris and to London, and over most of our own land, but I have never seen the exercise *but once.* (Eager attention,) While I was in Paris, among other things, I saw several monkeys, taught to dance and keep time, and I *must confess I was pleased with it,* for I thought it *became them very much.*"

"LAMB OF GOD."

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,—
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name;
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek and he is mild;
He became a little child,—
I a child, and thou a lamb:
We are called by his name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!