

The Family Circle.

SECRETS.

What the wind has sown on the old wet roof,
The night before the moss begins;
Where the spider finds the warp and woof
When his white pleasure-tents he spins
How to valley, and hill, and town the signs
Of royal message are borne and told,
When for one whole year wisteria vines
Must all their purple bloom withhold;
What strikes the hour for the leaf and the
worm,
Whose bed and shroud in wondrous ways
Keep butterflies safe, through cold and storm,
Through the fulfilment of their days.

Whose finger it was that, before sunrise,
When I had kissed her at midnight,
Stole from my darling's faithful eyes
Their sweetest look of youth and light;
That enemy wove, unheard and unseen,
And how the web of his lie could be
Mighty and strong as a wall between
My oldest, dearest friend and me;
What whispers to me, and is never still'd,
"Nor these, nor those can be amiss;
For all things are as the good God willed,
And His other world is better than this!"
—Independent. H. H.

OLD TIFF.

One cheerless old Winter's morning, eleven years ago, Mr. Brown, smoking his pipe by the bright, kitchen fire, heard a faint "m-e-w," just outside the door.

Now, Mr. Brown had a kind heart, and he loved cats; and just then, while sitting alone, he had been thinking of "Little Jack," a beautiful, Maltese pet, which had been found mysteriously dead, only a day or two before, in the barn.

"That sounds like Little Jack's voice," said Farmer Brown, to himself, as he stepped quickly to the door. "Wonder if the poor little fellow was in a trance, after all, and has come back to life, crying to come home."

This man had no children. Five years before, his only child, a sweet little girl, had gone home to heaven. Since that time, "Uncle John," as the young folks called him, had petted, and loved, and helped all the children about him, for little "Allie's" sake; and his naturally kind heart had grown more tender and protecting toward every weak, helpless thing. He had strange fancies—had Uncle John—about animals.

"Who knows but they have souls?" said he; "and feelings to be hurt by unkindness, just as much as we have?" So he talked of them, and to them, sometimes, as if they could understand his words.

So Mr. Brown opened the door, and beheld a kitten, indeed—but what a kitten!

"You're not Jack, that's certain, unless you've taken a new form; and Little Jack had better taste than to choose such a homely body as this, if he had his choice," said the farmer.

Strange-looking kitten, indeed—for mottled in butternut and black, with here and there a dash of salmon color; three black paws, and the fourth a delicate salmon tint, and on this paw and its mate a large, extra toe or claw; ears quite unlike in size and color, one being of the usual size, and mottled, the other not quite half as large, and jet black. Kitty didn't shrink away from the stranger, neither did she take the liberty to enter without permission, but stood looking up with her great, wistful eyes into the face above, as if trying to read her fate therein.

"Well, you are a queer concern, anyhow; but you look sensible, and I'll have you in, and see how I like you."

So saying, Uncle John opened wider the door, and kitty entered; not with unseemly haste; but with becoming dignity. Then, watching her new friend as he once more ensconced himself in his great arm-chair, she waited for his "Come, kitty, come;" and in a trice was on his shoulder, curling herself up against his cheek, and under the shadow of his bushy whiskers, as cunningly and as much at home as if she had never known any other resting-place.

"Why, Mr. Brown, what in the world have you got there? My sakes alive! a cat?" said the good woman of the house when she came in, a little after. "Why, her face looks like a little, old woman's."

"Yes, like a wise old woman's face—this cat knows something. I like her, and she likes me. Her name shall be Tiff, and this is her home."

So Uncle John settled the matter, and Tiff became a useful and important member of that household.

What her previous history was, her new friends never knew; it was sufficient for them that she behaved in all things as a respectable cat should, and came "just in the nick of time." But Tiff did not live without trials. Several times her dear little kittens had mysteriously disappeared from their bed, while their mother was absent on a short hunting expedition, and no search, and no mourning had ever brought them back.

One day Uncle John reported, "Five kittens on the hay-loft."

"O dear," said his wife, "we shall be overrun with cats, if we don't look out. They must be killed this very day."

Uncle John groaned, but acquiesced in the necessity.

Now Tiff was just then washing her face by the kitchen fire, but it was afterward remembered how she sprang to the door and mewed to be let out. Certain it is that Uncle John could find no kittens in the loft that day, nor ever afterward; and Tiff herself had disappeared.

Day after day was she called, and sought for, but all in vain. Three months passed away, and Uncle John was walking in his garden, one evening, when he heard a little "m-e-w" at his side. He exclaimed, "Tiff, as I live!"

And sure enough it was Tiff. At a word from her master, she took her old place on his shoulder; and rode into the house to gladden the eyes of Mrs. Brown, and to be petted and fed to her heart's content.

"Now, wife, I hope we shall be careful how we speak before Tiff in the future. I can't afford to lose her again."

Tiff never deserted again, and she never told what she did with her kittens and herself during that summer's absence.

Years passed on, and the shadow of death fell upon that household. Uncle John walked no more upon earth. Old Tiff—for Tiff was old now, as the years of a cat's life are counted—pined for her dear master. She often sat in his old arm-chair, as if watching for him—listening for the step that never came. She never purred now. No stroking or petting could make her forget the friend she had lost.

One evening, in passing the chair, her mistress stopped to stroke her soft fur, and to speak to her. She was astonished at her stillness. "Why, what ails the cat? Poor old Tiff! Is it possible?"

Yes, it was possible. Old Tiff was dead. Do you wonder that some tears fell on her mottled fur?—Lynn, in *Little Corporal*.

A SOUND PEEAOEER.

The following story is recorded as having been told by the late Rev. Alex. Allerdice, minister of Forgee, in Aberdeenshire:—A neighboring minister was to assist Mr. Allerdice, and arrived at the manse on Saturday, where he was to sleep, and take the duty on the Sunday following. He was a conceited youth—a frothy, declamatory preacher—and, as a stranger, anxious to make a great sensation in the country. After dinner, he strolled out into the grave-yard, and encountered John, the beddal (beddle), and parish oracle, engaged in digging a grave, and much of a humorist in his way,—moveover a formidable critic of the theological soundness of the neighboring ministers.

Our young divine, having been very recently placed, supposed himself to be unknown to the Forgee functionary. Accordingly he began to pump beddal John as to the opinion held of the brethren around who had assisted at the Forgee. To query after query, John gave out his unvarying oracular response "Na, Sir, we dinna like him; he's na soum";—and "we dinna like him eather: he's nae soum";—clenching every decision with a "yerk" of a spadeful of earth on the grave's brink.

At last the reverend pumper having exhausted the circle of his brethren of the Presbytery, and secretly gratified, no doubt, with this summary and unqualified testimony against them, anxious to hear what was thought in the country-side about himself, where he rather flattered himself he was creating a sensation, and trusting to his incognito, (though John was perfectly aware who his colloquist was,) ventured to ask, "Well, now, the parish of ——— has got a famous preacher, the Rev. Mr. ———; what do you think of him? Is he sound?" "Od, sir," replied John, with a sly twinkle, and resting for a moment, on his spade, "I hinna heard him myself; but folks that hae, say *he's a' soum*."

John recommenced digging with redoubled diligence, and exit the reverend querist, feeling, we may fancy, rather small.—Dean Ramsey's *Scottish Life*.

PHIL GREEN'S FAULT.

A TRUE STORY IN MONOSYLLABLES.

Phil Green was quite a fine lad. He had a frank face, and a bold quick step. The rose of health was on his cheeks, and when all went well, his eyes were bright with joy and his laugh rang out glad and free.

I said when all went well, for there were times when things went ill with him, and you would look in vain for the kind smile, or glad sweet tone. And whose fault do you think it was then? Not his pa's—whose great wish it was that Phil should grow up good and wise. Not his ma's—for who so kind as she? What would she not do for her dear boy! What toil or pains did she spare to show her love for him! It must, then, have been his own fault.

Now, Phil scorned to tell a lie, or cheat, or swear. He loved his friends, his books, his school. And I can but think he loved God too, though not quite in the way to make him good. Nor could Phil pout and sulk as some do, but he had one great fault.

He would at times get mad. Yes, mad is the right word to use, for one who is out of his right mind is called mad—and there were times when Phil was out of his right mind, and knew not what he said.

If one did to him what he thought was not just or right, he would fire up at once; but poor boy, and he did not see that it was a fire which hurt him more than the one who vexed him.

And more, if Phil was hurt or ill, he seemed to feel as if some one had tried to vent his spite on him.

One day he had a bad pain in his head. It was hard to bear, and his kind ma had him lie down on her bed, and gave him her salts to smell. But soon Phil grew so mad with pain that he threw her gift as far as he could. Of course it struck the wall, the salts were spilled, and bits of glass flew round the room; and it was not his fault that Sis Bell did not have her eyes put out.

Phil's ma looked grave, but she said not a word till next day. Then she told him if he would not get vexed for one whole week, she would give him a nice, white hen, with ten fine chicks.

Now Phil was so fond of pets, he thought this a fine chance; no boy could be more proud than he to think of his fine flock of fowls. But ah! they were not yet his own; nor like to be, for Phil's foe still laid in wait for him.

He was bid to make a fire in the cook-stove, a task which tried his soul far too much, and not for the first time, I must say. How could he keep cool and calm when match on match failed to light; when the smoke crept into his eyes, and nose, and mouth; and when at last he burned his hand, as he tried the lid to see if it was hot. Phil lost his hen.

A few months from this time his pa

thought to help him in the good work, for it grieved him so much to see his son goon in this bad way. So he said: "Phil, you see that fine colt—well, sir—be a man; do not get in a fret, or speak a cross word for one month, and it is yours."

Phil's heart gave a quick bound. To own a colt—how grand! But could he earn it? Of course he could; why not? He would bite his lips till they bled, if need be; but have that colt he must.

Ah! poor Phil—how he tried to be good! Once, twice, thrice, ten times I might say, he fought hard and did not yield, but lost the day at last.

Now Phil had a new sled, that he made with his own hands, and loved as if it were a dear friend. And what do you think Jim Brown did? He came one day to ask Phil for the loan of his sled an hour or two. Phil was gone; the boys stood out by the gate to wait for him and they were in haste. The sled hung in the back porch. Jim thought; I know Phil won't care. So he took it, and did not say so much as, "By your leave," or "thank you, sir."

That was wrong, of course. And what is more, the sled came home with a bad break, and the paint rubbed off.

Phil did care. He cared so much that he flew in a great rage and—lost his colt.

Now all boys must think at times—and one day Phil thought and thought, and at last his thoughts took shape into these words:—"Phil Green, what a fool you are! How much you lose each time you fly into a pet—and pray how much do you gain? How can you hope to keep the love of your best friends? and who knows but you may do great hara yet in some mad fit? And then, is it not a sin to get vexed when things do not go just to suit your mind? Who made you and placed you where you are? Does He not know just what you have to try you, and how weak you are to bear these things? Will He not help you to be meek and kind? Does He not love to help all who come to him, and would it not be a great and good thing to do right for His sake, and for the sake of right? O Lord, help me; watch my lips, and keep my heart right each day, that I may please thee?"

Do you think Phil made that prayer in vain!—*Little Corporal*.

THE DEGENERACY OF YOUNG MEN.

A contemporary in dilating upon "the degeneracy of men," makes the following sensible remarks:

The ambition of parents in lower walks of life to place their sons in a more elevated position is certainly most laudable. Indeed it has been always the boast in America that her institutions favored the advancement of all classes to the most eligible positions. It is doubtless true, however, that many mistake their vocation, and make their lives failures simply because they attempted to be that which their mental calibre positively forbade. Numbers who would have excelled in a mechanical trade, fail utterly in attempting to be clergymen, lawyers, or doctors. But this is no reason why an uneducated laboring man should not, if he can afford it, give his children the education of which he was himself deprived in early life. The error lies to some extent in the parent failing to discover the bent of his child's mind, and place him in the position which he can fill most creditably and with most advantage to himself. One child may have a natural taste for mechanics, another for letters. Each is equally useful to the community. But if the former is compelled to pore over Latin and Greek, and the latter is apprenticed to a wheelwright or to a machine shop, there will probably be another wretched mechanic, and another weak professional man added to the poor ones that already exist.

The true cause for the degeneracy of the morals of the youth of the present day is infinitely broader than in the fact that laboring men wish to place their boys a "peg higher than themselves." It is found in the general lowering of the moral standard of the community, which has been painfully perceptible during the last few years.

Whatever may be the fact as to the good which has been accomplished by the war, it is to be feared that it has been largely counterbalanced by the flood of vice and immorality with which it has deluged the land. Distinctions between right and wrong seem, in the minds of many, to be completely obliterated. The moral miasma of war, which during the contest was visible in the immediate vicinities of the camp, and in localities especially liable to be affected, has been carried by the most natural causes into nearly every village in the land, contaminating thousands who have been hitherto pure.

The political and financial condition of the country has also helped on the ruin of hundreds of young men. Money easily obtained is easily spent, and ten dollars now changes hands with less deliberation than one dollar three years since. Hence has arisen a careless and free expenditure on the part of clerks and young men, which has been the ruin of hundreds. Nothing is more true than that the surest way to ruin a young man is to allow him the free use of money before his principles are fixed. Allurements in a thousand enticing forms meet him at every step, and too often prove successful in accomplishing their object. Nor are those baneful influences confined to any particular class. All departments of business and professional life feel them sensibly and it will be long before they cease to exercise their pernicious effects on society.

Judas comes to Christ with fawning words and demeanor, "Hail, Master, and kissed him." Here is honey in the tongue, and poison in the heart. He heard Christ himself preach, he joined often with him in prayer, but he was never better for it all; it was but the watering of a dead stick, which will never make it grow, but rot it the sooner.

STORY OF A YOUNG GIRL.

I heard a touching story of a young girl, the daughter of a once eminent physician, who, upon the death of her father, was obliged to support her mother and herself. She undertook the management of a Kindergarten school, and established her mother in a neat and comfortable home. She herself took apartments in another section of the city. An intimate friend of hers grew anxious to know how she was living. On a card she had her address, a good street, a good house, in a respectable locality, but five miles away.

"Caroline tells me she gets along nicely," her old mother had said to this friend; "and she must, for you know that she is a very fine girl in London where she is."

So Caroline was sought out. "I found the house," said the friend who related the story. "It is a very imposing mansion, five stories high, and in good repair. A servant came to the door, well-dressed, but smiled when I asked for Caroline."

"She was not in; would be in soon. 'I told her I was an old friend, and would wait. She smiled again.

"Would I care about going up so high? It was over the children's nursery.

"I said I would not mind; but I confess that I was weary long before I arrived at the fifth floor. There I was ushered into—I scarcely know how to call it a room; it was more like a closet. Only in the centre could one stand upright. It was the garret. No carpet covered the floor, which was scrupulously clean. A little trundle-bed stood in one corner, covered with a coarse white linen sheet, instead of a counterpane. Under a calico curtain hung her scanty wardrobe—two black dresses. One chair, a little pine table, a bit of cupboard in one corner,—these were all that were visible, with the exception of a small bathing tub in one end of the poor little garret.

"Trembling at my own impertinence, I opened the cupboard. One cup and saucer, a spoon, a knife and fork, and a loaf of bread. The tears rushed to my eyes. She, who had lived in comparative luxury, to be reduced to this!

"No sooner had I made my observations than Caroline came in. I shall never forget her look as she saw me, not of pride, but astonishment.

"'I thought I had so completely buried myself that nobody would find me!' she cried, 'How kind you are!'

"'My dear girl, you could surely live better than this!' I exclaimed.

"'But not cheaper,' was her reply. 'My expenses are next to nothing, you must know; and mamma could not live as she does if I allowed myself luxuries. She is very old, and must not want the comforts she has become accustomed to. Besides I have every thing I really need. My bread and water are sure, and I am healthy. If you look out you will see the swallows' nest just under my window. I feed the pretty birdies every day, and I believe they know me. My books and papers are pleasant companions; I am surrounded with a purer atmosphere; I have no neighbors opposite to watch me, and I want you to believe that I am very happy; and if you see mamma tell her, also, that Caroline is as comfortable as possible.'

"'But, my child, do you never regret the past!'

"'What good would that do me? Regrets are as useless dreams. Of course, if I could have poor papa again—her lip trembled a little. She ran to the closet, lifted her loaf, and laughingly asked me if I was hungry.

"'Pray don't imagine that I want anything,' she added, merrily. 'I have a little store of figs, and nuts, and raisins that I eat for a dessert; one or two of the servants are very willing to cook me a little meat when I want it, and I really do live like a princess; so don't waste any regrets on me.'

"'I came away from there,' said my friend, 'feeling that I had learned a new lesson in human experience, and that there could be, what I had never even imagined possible, happiness in lodgings; even in a garret, whose occupant was a young girl of nineteen, who had been reared in a home of affluence, and with no daintier viands than a crust of bread and a cup of cold water.'

STOP! FOR YOUR SOUL'S SAKE, STOP!

A bold boy, while rambling among the Alps, saw some flowers on the side of a fearful precipice. The guide saw him standing on the dizzy edge, and shouted:

"Come back!"

"Not yet; I see some flowers just below, which I want to get," replied the boy.

"Stop!" responded the guide; "you will be lost."

"I must have the flowers," rejoined the boy.

The guide, with the boy's friends, hurried toward the infatuated boy, as he leaned over the edge of the dreadful gulf. They heard him say, "I almost have them;" and then, "I have them;" but the words were scarcely uttered before he lost his hold, and fell a thousand feet upon the pitiless rocks below. He had given his life for a flower, for a flower that perished with him!

"Shocking!" exclaims my young reader. I am glad to see it so, because it may help you to see your own danger. Are you not seeking a greater risk, to pluck a flower? What is that desire you cherish for a place in that circle of giddy youth to which you are invited? What is that habit which brings a blush to your cheeks whenever it is hinted at? What is that resolution to enter the charmed ring of forbidden amusements? Are not these things your flowers?

Are not your desires the reachings of your soul over the edge of innocence? Dear youth, take care! The gulf below your flowers is bottomless. It is hell!

If you pluck your flowers, you will fall, and perish with them in that fearful realm of darkness and death. Seek them no longer, therefore, but stop! for your soul's sake, stop!

THE PILGRIM'S REST.

BY THE LATE J. R. ORTON, M. D.
The Lord hath a rest for the weary,
And mansions of jasper and gold,
With landscapes that never look dreary,
And pleasures that never grow old;
The skies are all curtained with glory,
His Love giveth light as the sun,
And the River of Life harps the story
Of Death and the Victory won.

The Lord liveth there with his people,
His children redeemed by his blood;
And the bells chime in joy from each steep
As joy rolleth on in a flood,
Resoundeth the organ of heaven,
Untold the pearl-gates of the East,
And the stars clap their hands, as the ev'ning
Spreads out its perpetual feast.

None enter therein but the lowly,
The lovers of God and of men,
And they become angels of glory,
Are active in uses again,
The Lord giveth wisdom and spreadeth
His Universe out to the loek,
And the archives of God the child readeth
As in earth-time he read in a book.
Independent.

"NAE STRIFE UP HERE."

It is related that an old Scotch elder had once a serious dispute with his minister at an Elders' meeting. He said some hard things, and almost broke the minister's heart. Afterwards he went home, and the minister went home too. The next morning the elder came down, and his wife said to him:

"Ye look sad, Jan; what is the matter with ye?"

"Ah!" he replied, "you would look sad too, if you had such a dream as I have. I dreamed that I had been at the Elders' meeting, and said some hard things, and grieved the minister; and when he went home I thought he died, and went to heaven; and thought afterward I died too, and went to heaven; and when I got to the gates of heaven, out came the minister, and put out his hands to take me, saying: 'Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here—I am happy to see ye.'

The elder went to his minister directly to beg his pardon, and found he was dead. The elder was so stricken with the blow that two weeks after he also departed: "And I should not wonder," said he, who related the incident, "if he meet the minister at heaven's gate, and hear him say: 'Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here.'—*Presbyter*."

THE THEATRE.

The theatre is no novelty, but an institution of centuries. From its birth it has possessed a well defined character. Twenty-two hundred years ago the great Athenian, Aristotle, observed that the dramatic poets of his city had improved upon each other, and had refined their own taste, and that of their audience, until tragedy had attained perfection. The modern drama has made no advancement. In the grandeur of its exhibitions it has greatly deteriorated. A Grecian theatre held from fifteen to twenty thousand spectators; a Roman even eighty thousand. The theatre of Scarrus, at Rome, cost five millions of dollars. What are our paltry opera houses in comparison?

The theatre, then, has been tested by time. Its matured fruits are familiar to the world. It has been tried by the impartial judgment of the good and wise, for many ages. The judgment which they have pronounced upon it will constitute my argument against theatrical amusements, which may be stated thus:

The wisest men of every age—heathen and Christian—legislators, philosophers, divines—the Christian Church, ancient and modern—have, with one voice, from the very birth of the drama, condemned, opposed, and denounced theatrical exhibitions as essentially corrupt and demoralizing, both to individuals and society.

Solon, the chief magistrate and lawgiver of Athens, who witnessed the very dawn of the drama, remarked that "if we applaud falsehood in our public exhibitions, we will soon find it in our contracts and covenants."

Socrates never attended the theatre, in consequence of its immoral character, except when some play of his friend Euripides (the purest of ancient tragedians) was to be acted. Yet the glory of the stage in his day was never surpassed; perhaps never equaled.

Plato the disciple of Socrates, whose genius is an honor to humanity, tells us that "plays raise the passions, and pervert the use of them; and, of consequence, are dangerous to morality." He therefore banished them from his imaginary commonwealth.

Aristotle, the world-renown philosopher, the tutor of Alexander the Great, laid it down as a rule, that "the seeing of comedies ought to be forbidden to young people; such indulgences not being safe until age and discipline have confirmed them into sobriety, fortified their virtue, and made them proof against debauchery." At what age, then, Aristotle, should a sensible adult expose himself to such contamination?

An Athenian spoke to a Spartan of the fine moral lesson found in their tragedies. "I think," said the Spartan, "I could learn much better from our own rules of truth and justice than by hearing your lies."

Ovid, the famous Roman poet, though neither a wise nor a good man, is a competent witness. In his celebrated poems, written expressly in the interest of lewdness, he recommends the theatre as favorable to principles and manners. In his latter days, in a graver work, to the Emperor Augustus, he advises the suppression of this amusement, as a chief cause of corruption.

God's livery is a very plain one; but its wearers have a good reason to be content. If it have not so much gold lace about it as Satan's it keeps out foul weather better, and besides, it is a great deal cheaper.