

The Family Circle.

A PARISH CLERK'S LAMENT.

Our parson's took up with the Ritchelists views,
And he's all over changed from his 'at to his shoes;
His coat is so long, and his face is so grave
And he calls his good crabs tick his pastoral staff;
An' his voice has got hollow, and sad-like, and mild,
And he'd think he was yielding to sin if he smiled;
They may say what they please, but whatever they
I don't like the looks of these Ritchelists ways.

Our parson he once was so hearty and stout,
And knew what the farmers and folks were about;
He'd talk with the men as they walked in the field,
He knew every acre and what it would yield;
He'd a famous loud voice, and a kind, merry face,
'Cept when he was scolding a child in disgrace;
Now he walks through the lanes in a sort of a maze,
And that's what has come of his Ritchelists ways.

And the old village church we've done it up new,
And there's plenty of benches, but never a pew;
And pillars and balustrades, and things queer in spellin',
An' as for the vestry, that's quite past my tellin'.
There used to be two gowns I had in my care—
A black gown for preaching, a white 'un for prayer;
But now there are twenty, wi' gold all ablaze—
And that's the expense of these Ritchelists ways.

There's hirrips and stoles that is always in wear,
And cotes to put on for the Litany prayer,
An' green wi' white edges for churchings, and listen,
He puts on a purple-and-white gown to christen;
There's things that hang loose, and things that fit tight;
And he's mighty displeas'd if I don't bring 'em right,
Oh! it's almost enough a poor body to craze,
The ins and the outs of these Ritchelists ways.

Then there's bowings and scrapings, and turnings and
flexions
It's hard work to mind all the proper directions;
He'll first chant a sentence, then turn round his stole,
Then wheel to the east wi' a sort of a roll;
Now he speaks low and loud, now he jabbars so fast,
As if it were something he wished to get past;
At the back of the building they can't hear a phrase,
For they don't speak distinct in these Ritchelists ways.

And the music, it's altered, I can't tell you how,
But the old Psalms of David are never sung now;
They've got some new hymns, wi' some very queer
words.

And they twitter and pipe like a parcel of birds,
They tell me it's grand, and I shouldn't complain;
But I long for the old Psalms of David again—
Or else for our goodly and Protestant lays,
Not these dreadful quick chants of the Ritchelists ways.

I've been a parish clerk for nigh thirty year,
But the parson and wardens are getting so queer,
And the work of my office is gettin' so great—
What wi' brushin' the vestments and cleanin' the plate:
That I'd almost resolved to resign it and go—
But my friends they say, "don't," and my wife she
says "no";
So I bide in my place, and each Sunday prays
There may soon be an end o' them Ritchelists ways.
—*Liverpool Mercury.*

A STORY FOR THE WET HOLIDAY.

The children had tried every way of spending a wet holiday pleasantly. After a few sorrowful looks at the dull, gray clouds and dripping trees, they had wisely concluded that as out-door sports were not to be hoped for, they might as well try to be happy at home. So with the aid of toys and books the morning had passed merrily enough. Dinner was now over, and a puzzling question arose among the little people as they sat around the fire, "What shall we do this evening?" All the usual evening games had been played during the day time. Who could invent a new amusement?

"Ask father for a story," suggested little Walter, "a real true story about something he saw in his travels last summer." This happy idea met with loud applause, shown by much stamping and clapping of hands on the part of William and Freddy Norton, and a quiet approval from May and Jessie, who chimed in with a chorus of "Oh yes! that is the very thing." So a deputation proceeded to the study where father was just folding up a letter he had written, and petitioned him to come to the drawing-room and tell a story. The suit being graciously granted, he was led to an easy chair, while stools and little chairs were gathered closely round, that no word of the real true story might be lost.

"Now, Freddy, before I begin, bring your new map of France, look towards the southwest, and try if you can find Bergerac, a small town in the department of Dordogne. Ah, there it is on the right bank of the river; but we must travel a little further. Let us drive on for three miles among meadows, corn-fields, and vineyards, skirted by beeches and firs, and we shall reach the place I wish to take you all to see, the village of Laforce. It is on the top of a hill; but look at those great buildings, so much larger than ordinary village houses. There are five of them scattered over a distance of two miles. They are all schools, schools for orphan boys and girls; schools for blind and incurable children; for idiots and epileptics. Try if you can remember the names of these five schools, *La Famille Evangelique, Bethesda, Ebenzer, Siloe, and Bethel.*

"Twenty years ago not even one of those school houses was built. Just then Mr. Bost was chosen as pastor by the Protestants of Laforce. They were few in number and poor in purse, but their minister was rich in faith and love. He had long felt the deepest pity for orphan and outcast girls, and now resolved to try to help them. Wishing to provide a home where some of them could be taught about their heavenly Father and the Saviour who came to seek and save the lost, Mr. Bost travelled through France and England and told his story. God opened the hearts of hearers, and the happy minister returned to Laforce with money enough to build one orphan house. He commenced his school with three pupils—they were soon fifty. Some of the people who sent girls to La Famille Evangelique, as this school was called, paid for them; but many others were far too poor to do so, and it cost a great deal to feed and clothe s

large a family, Mr. Bost was obliged to take several journeys to collect the necessary funds; but he pleaded the cause of the orphans first in the prayer to God and afterwards with his people, and never pleaded in vain.

"It soon occurred to Mr. Bost that poor orphan boys needed training as much as poor girls, and the good pastor began to build another school house. The way in which he got a teacher for his boys was very remarkable. One cold winter evening, passing along a road near his own house, he found a wretched beggar lying on the grass by the wayside, exhausted from fatigue and hunger. The starved creature clasped a little wax image of the Virgin Mary to his breast; with this he had begged from door to door. Mr. Bost helped him up, took him home, and gave him supper and bed. The next morning poor Bartier, that was the man's name, was quite unable to walk. Cold and damp had brought on disease. The pastor allowed him to remain at the parsonage until he was cured, eighteen months afterwards. These were happy days for poor Bartier; he learned to read and write, he learned to love and obey the living Saviour, and soon threw away the wax image. His health being now restored, he was sent to a school where teachers are trained; and two years and a half later, when examined with sixty-five others, Bartier stood at the top of the list, and was appointed teacher of Mr. Bost's newly-built school; and, after thirteen years of labor, he was still the much beloved master of the Protestant boys of Laforce.

"The children in both the boys' and girls' school are kept busily employed, dividing their time between lessons and such useful occupations as may fit them for being servants and artisans. The girls cook their meals, clean the house, make the clothes, and go out two by two to buy things wanted for the family. Even the boys learn to knit and make mats, that they may not be idle when compelled to stay at home in wet weather; but their principal work is in the fields and gardens. But, besides teaching the hands to work and the mind to think, Mr. Bost and his assistants endeavor to train the hearts of the children to love, to love every one, but Him the best who first loved them; and in many cases the Holy Spirit has blessed their labors, and the pupils of these schools have gone forth as Christian men and women to bless the world.

"But I must not forget to tell you about the poor idiots for whom Mr. Bost has built a home. About twelve years ago, a miserable looking little idiot child stood one morning at Mr. Bost's door. He could not put her into the school among the other children, but could not bear to send her away. His pity had a hard struggle with his prudence, but it won the victory; the little girl was taken to live in the pastor's own house, though the doctors told him he had better try to train a monkey or a dog. For some months all Mr. Bost's tender care had no effect, the idiot child seemed unable to learn anything, even to pronounce one word; but one evening during the singing of a hymn at family worship, she made an attempt to join in the tune, and from that moment her kind teacher had found the key of her locked-up mind. Under the softening effects of music the poor girl learned, little by little, to speak, and after two years' patient training she was not much behind other children of her age in the knowledge of common things. She learned to speak, sew, and knit well. Music and love had led her out of the dark state of an idiot into the light of reason.

"There are now two fine asylums at Laforce into which Mr. Bost receives such children. They are called Bethesda and Siloe. Great gentleness and wonderful patience are needed by the teachers of these poor little creatures; but often before the dull mind is able to learn the difference between two and three, the weary heart of the child seems to understand the simple words, 'God loveth thee,' and little ones who were ignorant of everything else have been heard crying, 'O my God, take pity on me, take pity on me; I have great need of it.' Mr. Bost remembers that sickness and sorrow came into our world with sin, and therefore he tries to lead all the children to Jesus, the great Physician, who can, at the same time, forgive their sins and heal their diseases.

"Now, dear boys and girls, I have told you my true story; I want you to learn from it something of the mighty power of patient love. What can you do to help the little ones at Laforce? Can you not pray for them and their teachers? Might you not now and then spare them some money from your well-filled boxes?" Little Walter had already slipped a bright sixpence into his father's hand. That was his practical commentary on the third charity.

THE KIND-HEARTED TANNER.

The following incident is so beautiful and touching, that it should be read in every household in the country. It develops the true active principle of kindness. How many an erring mortal, making his first step in crime, might be redeemed by the exercise of this sublime trait in the character of the kind-hearted Quaker:

William Savery, an eminent minister among the Quakers, was a tanner by trade. One night a quantity of hides were stolen from his tannery, and he had reason to believe that the thief was a quarrelsome, drunken neighbor, called John Smith. Next week the following advertisement appeared in the country newspaper:

"Whoever stole a quantity of hides on the

fifth of this month, is hereby informed that the owner has a sincere wish to be his friend. If poverty tempted him to this false step, the owner will keep the whole transaction secret, and will gladly put him in the way of obtaining money by means more likely to bring him peace of mind."

This singular advertisement attracted considerable attention; but the culprit alone knew who had made the kind offer. When he read it his heart melted within him, and he was filled with sorrow for what he had done. A few nights afterwards, as the tanner's family were about retiring to rest, they heard a timid knock, and when the door was opened there stood John Smith, with a load of hides on his shoulders. Without looking up he said: "I have brought these back, Mr. Savery; where shall I put them?"

"Wait till I can get a lantern, and I will go to the barn with thee," he replied, "then thou wilt come in, and tell me how this happened. We will see what can be done, for thee."

As soon as they were gone out, his wife prepared some hot coffee, and placed pies and meat on the table. When they returned from the barn, she said: "Neighbor Smith, I thought some hot supper would be good for thee."

He turned his back towards her, and did not speak. After leaning against the fireplace in silence a few moments, he said in a choked voice: "It is the first time I ever stole anything, and I have felt very badly about it. I am sure I didn't once think that I should ever come to what I am. But I took to drinking, and then to quarreling. Since I began to go down hill everybody gives me a kick. You are the first man that has ever offered me a helping hand. My wife is sickly and my children starving. You have sent them many a meal. God bless you! but yet I stole the hides. But I tell you the truth when I say it is the first time I was ever a thief."

"Let it be the last, my friend," replied William Savery. "The secret lies between ourselves. Thou art still young, and it is in thy power to make up for lost time. Promise me that thou wilt not drink any intoxicating liquor for a year, and I will employ thee tomorrow on good wages. Thy little boy can pick up stones. But eat a bit now, and drink some hot coffee; perhaps it will keep thee from craving anything stronger to-night. Doubtless thou wilt find it hard to abstain at first; but keep up a brave heart for the sake of thy wife and children, and it will soon become easy. When thou hast need of coffee, tell Mary, and she will give it thee."

The poor fellow tried to eat and drink, but the food seemed to choke him. After vainly trying to compose his feelings, he bowed his head on the table, and wept like a child. After a while he ate and drank, and his host parted with him for the night with the friendly words, "Try to do well, John, and, thou wilt always find a friend in me." John entered his employ the next day, and remained with him many years, a sober, honest, and steady man. The secret of the theft was kept between them; but after John's death, William Savery sometimes told the story, to prove that evil might be overcome with good.

AN OLD STORY.

Many years ago a celebrated Italian artist was walking along the streets of his native city, perplexed and desponding in consequence of some irritating circumstance or misfortune, when he beheld a little boy of such surprising and surpassing beauty that he forgot his own trouble and gloom in looking upon the almost angel face before him.

"That face I must have," said the artist, "for my studio. Will you come to my room and sit for a picture, my little man?"

The little boy was glad to go and see the pictures, and pencils, and curious things in the artist's room; and he was still more pleased when he saw what seemed to be another boy looking just like himself smiling from the artist's canvass.

The artist took a great deal of pleasure in looking at that sweet, innocent face. When he was troubled, or irritated, or perplexed, he lifted his eyes to that lovely image on the wall, and its beautiful, hopeful features and expression calmed his heart and made him happy again. Many a visitor to his studio wished to purchase that lovely face; but though poor, and often in want of money to buy food and clothes, he would not sell his good angel, as he called this portrait.

So the years went on. Oftentimes as he looked up to the face on the glowing canvas he wondered what had become of that boy.

"How I should like to see how he looks now! I wonder if I should know him? Is he a good man and true, or wicked and abandoned? Or has he died and gone to a better land?"

One day the artist was strolling down one of the fine walks of the city, when he beheld a young man whose face and mien were so vicious, so depraved, so almost fiend-like that he involuntarily stopped and gazed at him.

"What a spectacle! I should like to paint that figure, and hang it in my studio opposite the angel boy," said the artist to himself.

The young man asked the painter for money, for he was a beggar as well as a thief.

"Come to my room and let me paint your portrait and I will give you all you ask," said the artist.

The young man followed the painter, and sat for a sketch. When it was finished, and he had received a few coins for his trouble, he turned to go; but his eye rested upon the picture of the boy; he looked at it, turned pale, and then burst into tears.

"What troubles you, man?" said the artist.

It was long before the young man could speak; he sobbed aloud, and seemed pierced with agony. At last he pointed up to the picture on the wall, and, in broken tones which seemed to come from a broken heart, said: "Twenty years ago you asked me to come up here and sit for a picture, and that angel-face is the portrait. Behold me now, a ruined man; so bloated, so hideous, that women and children turn away their faces from me; so fiend-like that you wanted my picture to show how ugly a man could look. Ah! I see now what vice and crime have done for me."

The artist was amazed. He could scarcely believe his own eyes and ears. "How did this happen?" he asked.

The young man then told him his sad and dreadful history, how, being an only son and very beautiful, his parents petted and spoiled him; how he went with bad boys and learned all their bad habits and vices and came to love them; how, having plenty of money, he was enticed to wicked places till all was lost, and then, unable to work and ashamed to beg, he began to steal, was caught and imprisoned with the worst criminals, came out still more depraved to commit worse crimes than before, how every bad deed he performed seemed to drive him to commit a worse one, till it seemed to him that he could not stop till brought to the gallows.

It was a fearful tale and brought tears into the artist's eyes. He besought the young man to stop, offered to help him, and tried his best to save him. But, alas! it was too late. Disease contracted by dissipation soon prostrated the young man, and he died before he could reform. The painter hung his portrait opposite that of the beautiful boy; and when visitors asked him why he allowed such a hideous looking face to be there, he told them the story, saying as he closed, "Between the angel and the demon there is only twenty years of vice."

The lesson of this tale is in the tale itself. You who read it can tell what it is. Think of it often, and heed it always.

TRUST SONG.

Just as God leads me would I go;
I would not ask to choose my way;
Content with what He will bestow,
Assured he will not let me stray.
So as He leads, my path I make,
And step by step I gladly take,
A child in Him confiding.

Just as God leads, I am content;
I rest me calmly in His hands;
That which He has decreed and sent—
That which His will for me commands,
I would that He should all fulfill;
That I should do His gracious will
In living or in dying.

Just as God leads, I all resign;
I trust me to my Father's will;
When reason's rays deceptive shine,
His counsel would I yet fulfill;
That which His love ordained as right,
Before He brought me to the light,
My all to Him resigning.

Just as God leads me, I abide
In faith, in hope, in suffering, true;
His strength is ever by my side—
Can aught my hold on Him undo?
I hold me firm in patience, knowing
That God my life is still bestowing—
The best in kindness sending.

Just as God leads, I onward go,
Of amid thorns and briars keen;
God does not yet His guidance show—
But in the end it shall be seen
How, by a loving Father's will,
Faithful and true he leads me still.
—*Lampertus, 1835.*

WISE TO WIN SOULS.

Where resolute purpose is cherished in the heart it will always find methods of execution. And any humble Christian who longs and prays to be made useful in the Saviour's cause, will be made "wise to win souls." T. L. Cuyler says:

On a certain Sabbath evening, some twenty years ago, a reckless, ill-dressed young man was idly lounging under the elm trees in the public square of Worcester. He had become a wretched wail on the current of sin. His days were spent in the waking remorse of the drunkard; his nights were passed in the buffooneries of the ale-house.

As he sauntered along—out of humor with himself and with all mankind—a kind voice saluted him. A stranger laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said in cordial tones, "Mr. G—, go down to our meeting at the town hall to-night." A brief conversation followed, so winning in its character, that the reckless youth consented to go. He went; he heard the appeals there made. With tremulous hand he signed the pledge of total abstinence. By God's help he kept it, and keeps it yet. The poor boot-crimper who tapped him on the shoulder (good Joel Stratton) has lately gone home to heaven. But the youth he saved is to-day the foremost of reform on the face of the globe.

Methinks when I listen to the thunders of applause that greet John B. Gough, on the platform of Exeter Hall, or of the Academy of Music, I am hearing the echo of that tap on the shoulder, and of that kind invitation under the ancient elms of Worcester! *He that winneth souls is wise.*

"I stood to-night for an hour at the corner of the street," said Harlan Page, on a cold, wintry night, "laboring with Mr. H—, to persuade him to submit to God." So earnestly did he plead, so faithfully did he point to Christ, that within a few hours the young man found peace. He afterwards became a devoted pastor, and in his turn was wise to win souls to Jesus. Who does not envy Harlan Page his heavenly crown? I had rather wear the diadem that decks his brow, than stand in Milton's or in Bacon's place at the day of Judgment. *He that winneth souls is wise.*

Your own discontent is that which arms your troubles with a sting; you make your burden heavy by struggling under it.

A PLEA FOR YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM.

Think how, without a friend like St. Paul to throw his mantle over him, Timothy's own modesty would have silenced him, and his young enthusiasm might have been withered by ridicule or asperity! From this instance we are enabled to draw a lesson for all ages. There are few periods in life more critical than that in which sensibilities and strong feeling begin to develop themselves in young people. The question is about to be decided whether what is at present merely romantic feeling is to become generous devotion, and to end by maturing into self-denial, or whether it is to remain only a sickly sentiment, and, by reaction, degenerate into a bitter and a sneering tone. And there are, perhaps, few countries in which the danger is so great, and so much to be guarded against, as here in England. Nowhere is feeling met with so little sympathy as here—nowhere is enthusiasm so much kept down—nowhere do young persons learn so soon the fashionable tone of strongly admiring nothing—wondering at nothing—reverencing nothing—and nowhere does a young man so easily fall into the habit of laughing at his own best and purest feelings. And this is a danger which the Apostle Paul knew well, and could not overlook. He foresaw the risk of paralyzing that young and beautiful enthusiasm of Timothy by the party spirit of Corinth, by the fear of the world's laugh, or by the recoil with which a young man, dreaded to be despised, hides what is best and noblest in himself and consequently becomes hard and commonplace. In earlier days Appollous himself ran the same risk. He set out preaching all the truth that he knew enthusiastically. It was very poor truth, lamentably incomplete, embracing only John's baptism, that is, the doctrine which John taught. Had the Christians met him with sneers, had they said, "This young upstart does not preach the Gospel," there would have been either a great teacher blighted, or else a strong mind embittered into defiance and heresy. But from this he was delivered by the love and prudence of Aquila and Priscilla, who, we read, "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." They made allowances; they did not laugh at his imperfections, nor damp his enthusiasm; they united him with themselves; they strengthened what was weak—they lopped away what was luxuriant; they directed rightly what was energetic. Happy the man who has been true to the ideal of his youth, and has been strong enough to work out in real life the plan which pleased his childish thought! Happy he who is not ashamed of his first enthusiasm, but looks back to it with natural piety, as to the parent of what he now is! But for one of whom this is true—how many are there whom the experience of life has soured and rendered commonplace! How many who were once touched by the sunlight of hope have grown cold, settled down into selfishness, or have become mere domestic men, stifled in wealth or lost in pleasure!

Above all things, therefore, let us beware of that cold, supercilious tone which blights what is generous, and affects to disbelieve all that is disinterested and unworldly. Let us guard against the Mephistopheles spirit, which loves and reverences nothing.—*F. W. Robertson.*

ECCENTRIC CHOICE OF TEXTS.

The clergy of the present day are less frequently guilty of violating the laws of good taste and true reverence in the selection of texts than ministers of former times. Dr. Shedd, in his admirable volume on Homiletics, just published by Scribner & Co., gives some curious instances both of the choice of texts and the elucidation of doctrine:

A preacher selected Acts 16: 30; "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and preached upon the divine right of Episcopacy. "For Paul and Silas are called 'sirs,' and 'sirs' being in the Greek *kurioi*, and this, in strict translation, meaning 'lords,' it is perfectly plain that at that time Episcopacy was not only the acknowledged government, but that bishops were peers of the realm, and so ought to sit in the House of Lords."

Another preacher, in the time of Charles II., selected for his text the words, "Seek first the kingdom of God," and drew from them the proposition that kingly government is most in accordance with the will of God. "For it is not said, seek the parliament of God, the army of God, or the committee of safety of God; but it is, seek the kingdom of God."

Another preacher takes for his text Isaiah 58: 5; "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush?" and deduces the proposition that "repentance for an hour or a day is not worth a bulrush."

An aged New England minister, during the colonial period, once preached before a very unpopular deputy-governor, from Job 29: 6, 7; "Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reached unto the clouds, yet shall he perish forever like his own dung." Another preached to the newly married couples of his congregation upon a part of Psalm 72: 7; "And abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth."

Dean Swift is said to have preached the annual sermon to the Associated Tailors of Dublin, upon the Text, "A remnant shall be saved." Among his printed sermons there is one upon Acts 20: 9; "And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, having fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead," which thus begins: "I have chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some part in this audience of half an hour's sleep, for the convenience and exercise whereof this place, at this season of the day, is very much celebrated."