The Family Circle.

A DREAM OF SUMMER.

Bland as the morning breath of June
The south-west breezes play;
And through its haze, the winter noon
Seems warm as summer day.
The snow-plumed Angel of the North
Has dropped his icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hillside cell forsakes,
The muskrat leaves his nook,
The blue bird in the meadow brakes
Is singing with the brook,
"Bear up, O Mother Nature!" cry
Bird, breeze, and streamlet free,
"Our winter voices prophesy
Of summer days to thee!"

So, in those winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and drear
Or swept from memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear,
Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers.

The Night is Mother of the Day,
The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,
Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God, who loveth all His works,
Has left His Hope with all.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

JESSICA'S FIRST PRAYER.

I. THE COFFEE-STALL AND ITS KEEPER.

In a screened and secluded corner of one of the many railway-bridges which span the streets of London, there could be seen, a few years ago, from five o'clock every morning until half-past eight, a tidily set out coffee-stall, consisting of a trestle and board, upon which stood two large tin cans, with a small fire of charcoal burning under each, so as to keep the coffee boiling during the early hours of the morning when the workpeople were thronging into the city, on their way to their daily toil. The coffee-stall was a favorite one, for besides being under shelter, which was of great consequence upon rainy mornings, it was also in so private a niche that the customers taking their out-of-door breakfast were not too much exposed to notice; and moreover, the coffee-stall keeper was a quiet man, who cared only to serve the busy workmen, without hindering them by any gossip. He was a tall, spare, elderly man, with a singularly solemn face, and a manner which was grave and secret. Nobody knew either his name or dwelling-place; unless it might be the policeman who strode past the coffee-stall every half-hour, and nodded familiarly to the solemn man behind it. There were very few who cared to make any inquiries about him; but those who did could only discover that he kept the furniture of his stall at a neighboring coffee-house, whither he wheeled his trestles and board and crockery every day, no later than half-past eight in the morning; after which he was wont to glide away with a soft footstep, and a mysterious and fugitive air, with many backward and sidelong glances, as if he dreaded observation, until he was lost among the crowds which thronged the streets. No one had ever had the persevering curiosity to track him all the way to his house, or, to find out his other means of gaining a livelihood; but in general his stall was surrounded by customers, whom he served with silent seriousness, and who did not grudge to pay him his charge for the refreshing coffee he supplied to them.

For several years the crowd of work-people had paused by the coffee-stall under the railway-arch, when one morning, in a partial lull of his business, the owner became suddenly aware of a pair of very bright dark eyes being fastened upon him and the slices of bread and butter on his board, with a gaze as hungry as that of a mouse which has been driven by famine into a trap. A thin and meagre face belonged to the eyes, which was half hidden by a mass of matted hair hanging over the forehead, and down the neck; the only covering which the head or neck had; for a tattered frock, scarcely fastened together with broken strings, was slipping down over the shivering shoulders of the little girl. Stooping down to a basket behind his stall, he caught sight of two bare little feet curling up from the damp pavement, as the child lifted up first one and then the other, and laid them one over another to gain a momentary feeling of warmth. Whoever the wretched child was, she did not speak; only at every steaming cupful which he poured out of his can, her dark eyes gleamed hungrily, and he could hear her smack her thin lips, as if in fancy she was tasting the warm and fragrant coffee.

"Oh, come now!" he said at last, when only one boy was left taking his breakfast leisurely, and he leaned over his stall to speak in a low and quiet tone, "why don't you go away, little girl? Come, come; you're staying too long, you know."

"I'm just going, sir," she answered, shrugging her small shoulders to draw her frock up higher about her neck; "only it's raining cats and dogs outside; and mother's been away all night, and she took the key with her; and its so nice to smell the coffee; and the police have left off worritting me while I've been here. He thinks I'm a customer taking my breakfast." And the child laughed a shrill little laugh of mockery at herself and the policeman.

"You've had no breakfast, I suppose," said the coffee-stall keeper, in the same low and confidential voice, and leaning over his stall till his face nearly touched the thin, sharp features of the child.

"No," she replied, coolly, "and I shall want my dinner dreadful bad afore I get it, I know. You don't often feel dreadful hungry, do you, sir? I'm not griped yet, you know; but afore I taste my dinner it'll be pretty bad, I tell you. Ah! very bad indeed!"

She turned away with a knowing nod, as much as to say she had one experience in life to which he was quite a stranger; but before she had gone half a dozen steps, she heard the quiet voice calling to her in rather louder tones, and in an instant she was back at the stall.

"Slip in here," said the owner, in a cautious whisper; "here's a little coffee left and a few crusts. There, you must never come again, you know. I never give to beggars; and if you'd begged, I'd have called the police. There; put your poor feet towards the the fire. Now, aren't you comfortable?"

The child looked up with a face of intense satisfaction. She was seated upon an empty basket, with her feet near the pan of charcoal, and a cup of steaming coffee on her lap; but her mouth was too full for her to reply, except by a very deep nod, which expressed unbounded delight. The man was busy for awhile packing up his crockery: but every now and then he stooped to look down upon her, and to shake his head gravely.

"What's your name?" he asked, at length; "but there, never mind! I don't care what it is. What's your name to do with me, I wonder?"

"It's Jessica," said the girl: "but mother and everybody calls me Jess. You'd be tired of being called Jess, if you was me. It's Jess here, and Jess there; and everybody wanting me to go errands. And they think nothing of giving me smacks, and kicks, and pinches. Look here!"

Whether her arms were black and blue from the cold, or from ill-usage, he could not tell; but he shook his head again seriously, and the child felt encouraged to go on.

"I wish I could stay here forever and ever, just as I am!" she cried. "But you're going away, I know; and I'm never to come again, or you'll set the police after me!"

"Yes," said the coffee-stall keeper, very softly, and looking around to see if there were any other ragged children within sight; "if you'll promise not to come again for a whole week, and not to tell anybody else, you may come once more. I'll give you one other treat. But you must be off now."

"I'm off, sir," she said, sharply; "but if you've a errand I could go on, I'd do it all right, I would. Let me carry some of your things."

"No, no," cried the man; "you run away, like a good girl; and mind! I'm not to see you again for a whole week.

"All right!" answered Jess, setting off down the rainy street at a quick run, as if to show her willing agreement to the bargain; while the coffee-stall keeper, with many a cautious glance around him, removed his stock-in-trade to the coffee-house near at hand, and was seen no more for the rest of the day in the neighborhood of the railway-bridge.

II. JESSICA'S TEMPTATION.

The bargain on Jessica's part, was faithfully kept; and though the solemn and silent man under the dark shadow of the bridge looked out for her every morning as he served his customers, he caught no glimpse of her wan face and thin little frame. But when the appointed time was finished, she presented herself at the stall, with her hungry eyes fastened again upon the piles of buns and bread and butter, which were fast disappearing before the demands of the buyers. The business was at its height, and the famished child stood quietly on one side watching for the throng to melt away. But as soon as the nearest church clock had chimed eight, she drew a little nearer to the stall, and at a signal from its owner she slipped between the trestles of stand, and took up her former position on the empty basket. To his eyes she seemed even a little thinner, and certainly more ragged than before; and he laid a whole bun, a stale one which was left from yesterday's stock, upon her lap, as she lifted the cup of coffee to her lips with both her benumbed hands.

"What's your name?" she asked, looking up to him with her keen eyes.

"Why?" he answered, hesitatingly, as if he was reluctant to tell so much of himself; "my christened name is Daniel."

"And where do you live, Mr. Dan'el!" she inquired.

"Oh, come now!" he exclaimed, "if you're going to be impudent, you'd better march off. What business is it of yours where I live? I don't want to know where you live, I can tell you."

"I didn't mean no offence," said Jess, humbly; "only I thought I'd like to know where a good man like you lived. You're a very good man, aren't you, Mr Dan'el?"

"I don't know," he answered, uneasily; "I'm afraid I'm not."

"Oh, but you are, you know," continued Jess. "You make good coffee; prime! And buns too! And I've been watching you hundreds of times afore you saw me, and the police leaves you alone, and never tells you to move on. Oh, yes! you must be a very good man."

Daniel sighed, and fidgetted about his crockery with a grave and occupied air, as if he were pondering over the child's notion of goodness. He made good coffee, and the police left him alone! It was quite true; yet still as he counted up the store of pence which had accumulated in his strong canvas bag, he sighed again still more heavily. He purposely let one of his pennies fall upon the muddy pavement, and went on counting the rest busily, while he furtively watched the little girl sitting at his feet. Without a shade of change upon her small face, she covered the penny with her foot, and drew it in carefully towards her, while she continued to chatter fluently to him. For a moment a feeling of pain shot a pang through Daniel's heart; and then he congratulated himself on having entrapped the young thief. It was time to be leaving now; but before he went he would make her move her bare foot, and disclose the penny concealed beneath it, and then he would warn her never to venture near his stall again. This was her gratitude, he thought; he had given her two breakfasts and more kindness than he had ever shown to any fellow-creature for many a long year; and, at the first chance the young jade turned upon him, and robbed him! He was brooding over it painfully in his mind, when Jessica's uplifted face changed suddenly, and a dark flush crept over her pale cheeks, and the tears started to her eyes. She stooped down, and picking up the coin from amongst the mud, she rubbed it bright and clean upon her rags, and laid it upon the stall close to his hand, but without speaking a word. Daniel looked down upon her solemnly and searchingly.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Please, Mr. Daniel," she answered, "it dropped, and you didn't hear it."

"Jess," he said, sternly, "tell me all about it."

"Oh, please," she sobbed, "I never had a penny of my very own but once; and it rolled close to my foot; and you didn't see it, and I hid it up sharp; and then I thought how kind you'd been, and how good the coffee and buns are, and how you let me warm myself at your fire; and please, I couldn't keep the penny any longer. You'll never let me come again, I guess."

Daniel turned away for a minute, busying himself with putting his cups and saucers into the basket, while Jessica stood by trembling, with the large tears rolling slowly down her cheeks. The snug, dark corner, with its warm fire of charcoal, and its fragrant smell of coffee, had been a paradise to her for these two brief spans of time; but she had been guilty of the sin which would drive her from it. All beyond the railway arch the streets stretched away, cold and dreary, with no friendly faces to meet her's, and no warm cups of coffee to refresh her; yet she was only lingering sorrowfully to hear the words spoken which should forbid her to return to this pleasant spot. Mr. Daniel turned round at last, and met her tearful gaze, with a look of strange emotion upon his own solemn face.

"Jess," he said, "I could never have done it myself. But you may come here every Wednesday morning, as this is a Wednesday, and there'll always be a cup of coffee for you."

She thought he meant that he could not have hidden the penny under his foot, and she went away a little saddened and subdued, notwithstanding her great delight in the expectation of such a treat every week; while Daniel, pondering over the struggle that must have passed through her childish mind, went on his way, from time to time shaking his head, and muttering to himself, "I couldn't have done it myself: I never could have done it myself."

VISIT TO THE PYRAMIDS.

Gizeh and its chicken ovens are left behind. On we go, now riding through a beautiful palm grove, now passing an Egyptian village, with its low mud houses, lazy men and dirty women and children. Soon you reach the boundary line which the rich vegetation of the valley of the Nile, and the ever changing sands of the great Lybian desert, side by side, apt emblems of life and death, keep up a perpetual warfare with each other. So marked is this boundary line, it is but a step from one to the other.

The gray forms of these gigantic sepulchral monuments are now just before you. They seem rapidly to increase in size as you approach them. At a distance they appear perfectly smooth and pointed at the top; as you approach them they assume a more ragged outline, for the Caliphs of former days have quarried from their enormous sides, and taken about thirty feet from the top of the largest one. They stand at the foot of the range of hills, behind which lie a vast ocean of desert sands. Upon this rocky eminence they are elevated about one hundred and fifty feet above the plain. When they were built Egypt swarmed with inhabitants, and they could not afford room for them on the fertile lands of the valley, besides the dry sands of the desert was a better place for sepulchres. Now we stand at their base; let us pause and contemplate

THEIR IMMENSE SIZE.

The largest of the three now before us is Cheops, and indeed this is the king of all the pyramids in point of size. The figures are quickly given. The base each side 732 feet. But this is not the original size. As we have said, the vandal hands of the old Caliphs were laid upon it, they tore off the granite casement that constituted the smooth exterior, and then removed layer after layer of the huge limestone blocks to build their palaces and mosques at Grand Cairo. They seem to have quarried from it with as little compunction of conscience as though it had been only a bed of native rock in the hillside. Its original base was 764 feet for each side, and its height a little over 480 feet. But mere figures give no just conception of its immense magnitude. It is only by comparison that we can appreciate this mountain mass of stone. The present base covers nearly *thirteen acres* the original base was about thirteen and one-half acres. It is only when we begin to compare it with other structures that our astonishment is excited. If you are a farmer, imagine a lot of thirteen acres; many a man who has thirteen acres thinks he has quite a farm. Or, if you live in the city, imagine a good sized city lot, sixty feet deep. On such a lot you could put a large block of buildings, yet the base of Cheops would give you eighty such lots! A church fifty feet by one hundred is a large church for a city, and yet on the ground covered by this enormous pyramid you could place one hundred and thirty such churches. Now imagine this great field of thirteen acres all covered over with huge blocks of stone, laid closely side by side. Then begin and pile stone on stone, drawing in each successive layer a little, as the farmer does his sheaves in finishing his grain stacks. On you go, piling them higher and higher, in one solid mass, till you reach the top of the tallest forest trees, and yet you have only laid the foundation. Stone is lifted upon stone, layer piled upon layer; you have overtopped Bunker Hill Monument, reached the height of the tallest church steeples of our cities, and yet our clod-towering pile is not half completed. Take one of the churches with a spire of one hundred and fifty feet, and few church steeples are as tall as that, then lift another church of the same heighth, and balance it upon the top of that, then lift another high in the air, and set it upon the topmost point of that, and then the golden-tipped point of this last spire is not as high by more than thirty feet as the original apex of this enormous structure. You ask then in astonishment,

HOW WERE THEY BUILT?

The stones were brought from the opposite side of the valley of the Nile, twelve to fifteen miles distant. The first work was to build a giant causeway or road over which to transport the stones. Herodotus says, one hundred thousand men were employed ten years on this part of the work. After this preparatory work came the levelling of the rocky foundation, the cutting out of the subteranean chambers, and the elevation of the huge masses of stone. This work, the same writer says, occupied *three hundred and sixty thousand men twenty years*. These men were drafted by the authority of a tyrant sovereign, as men are drafted in time of war, each levy serving a certain number of months, then others taking their places.

Such is the structure we have come to examine, and which now stands before us in all its huge proportions. What an immense labor! What countless years of human toil! Could these stones speak, what stories of crushing despotism, of hard-handed slavish servitude they would tell! But the hands that toiled and the hearts that ached beneath this despotic labor have long since crumbled to dust. Centuries of oblivion have rolled over their silent and now unknown resting-places. But here stand the astonishing monuments of their toil. Here they have stood for thousands of years defying the hand of the barbarian, the storms of the desert and the lightnings of heaven. Their lofty heights have looked down with proud contempt upon the changes of time, the rise and fall of nations, and smiled upon the conflicts of human passions, as conquering armies have come to deluge with blood, and heap with carnage the beautiful plains above which they lift their lofty heads.

THERE'S ROCK AT THE BOTTOM.

When my Willie was sixteen he accidentally dropped a valuable watch into the well. His father was absent from home, and without consulting me, he resolved to recover the treasure. Providing himself with a long-handled rake, he gave it in charge of his sister Jennie, two years younger, and bidding her lower it to him when he called, he stepped into the bucket, and holding fast by the rope, commenced his descent. The bucket descended more rapidly than Willie expected, and struck heavily against the side of the well; the rope broke, and he was thrown into the water.

"Mother, I shall be drowned!" was his despairing cry, which Jennie re-echoed with a wail of anguish. But I knew the depth of the water, and shouted to him as calmly as I could, "Stand upon your feet, Willie; the water isn't over four feet deep."

"But I shall sink in the mud," said the poor boy, still striving to keep himself afloat by clinging desperately to the slippery stones.

"No, Willie, there's rock at the bottom. Let go the stones and sand."

The assurance of hard foundation and the impossibility of holding much longer to the slimy surface of the stone wall gave him confidence. He felt for the bottom, placed his feet firmly upon it, and to his great joy found that the water only reached his shoulders. I sent Jennie into the house for a new, strong rope, and fastening one end securely, I lowered the other to be tied into the bucket, and we drew him up.

"Oh, mother," said the dear boy, when he was rescued, "those were precious words to me, '*There's Rock at the bottom.*' I shall never forget them."

Two years after, in a commercial panic, my husband's property was swept away, and we were reduced to poverty. At first I bore bravely up. I did not prize wealth and luxury for my children. I chiefly mourned for my husband's disappointment and his crushed hopes, and strove by unflagging cheerfulness to chase away the gloom which settled so heavily upon him. I endeavored to assist him, not only by the utmost economy in household expenses, but by devising plans for the future. Willie and Jennie were old enough to earn their support, and even to assist in the education of the young children. I succeeded in putting them in the way to do this. I felt strong and brave, and wondered at my husband's despondency.

But new reverses came. The bank in which Jennie had deposited her quarter's salary, which might possibly meet our necessities, suddenly failed and her money was lost. I could bear this too; she would soon be able to replace it. Next, the school in which she taught was disbanded, and Jennie had to take much lower wages; but she still earned a little, and I said cheerfully, "We will not murmur; half a loaf is better than no bread."

Next, Willie's hand was disabled by an accident, and he lost his situation. My courage began to give way, but rallying myself for one effort, I resolved to brave the reproach of friends and the world's dread laugh, and seek remunerative employment for myself. It sorely tried my woman delicacy, yet it brought the needed aid, and I battled with my wounded sensitiveness and again screwed up my failing courage.

But the last blow came. Sickness suddenly laid me prostrate. "I shall give up now; we must sink together," was the language of my despairing soul.

"Dear mother," said Willie, when he heard my lamentation, "do you remember what you said to me when I was at the bottom of the well? I have often thought of it of late. I know we are in deep waters, but God has promised they shall not overflow us. And is His word without foundation? Let us plant our feet on His promises, and stand firmly. We cannot sink, for *there's Rock at the bottom.*"

I heard, and took the lesson to my heart. I saw that I had been clinging to the slippery stones of human strength and self-dependence, and, so when the Providence of God bade me let go my hold, I was in despair. But the bank of heaven had not failed, and though I stood in deep water, it would not overwhelm me, neither would I sink, for "There's rock at the bottom."

So, from the chamber where pain and illness still hold me a prisoner, I send to each burdened and weary child of God who is tempted to feel that all is lost, the key-note of my new and grateful psalm. "Whatever your sorrow or strait may be, plant your feet on the rock of ages, and with me "thank God and take courage."

MORE WONDERFUL THAN THE TELEGRAPH.

You have heard the people talk about the telegraph; perhaps you have seen the wires, as they run across the country, stretched on high poles by the side of the railroad.

What can be more wonderful than the fact, that a piece of intelligence can be sent from the city of New York in one instant to the most distant part of our country? Hundreds of people have said, "When will wonders cease" Surely this is the wonder of all wonders.

George and Mary Bates had often wished to visit the telegraph office. They had heard of the strange doings of the wonderful machine there.

One day Mary asked George how it could be, that on those wires unseen messages were passing to and fro?

"I do not know how it is," replied George; "father says it is by means of electricity; and lightning is electricity, and that is the reason news travels so quickly by the telegraph."

In the evening the children could talk of nothing but the wonders of the telegraph. "Is it not the most wonderful thing you ever heard of, father?" said Mary.

"No," replied her father; "I have heard of things more wonderful."

"But, father," said George, "you never heard of any message being sent so quickly as by this means, have you?"

"Yes, I have, my son,"

"And receiving an answer as quickly?" added George.

"Yes, much sooner," replied his father.

"Are you in earnest, father?" said Mary, looking eagerly in his face. "Is it possible you know of a more wonderful way of sending messages than by telegraph?"

"I never was more in earnest than I am when I say 'yes' to your question."

"Well, father," said George, "do tell me what it is, and in what respect it is better than the telegraph."

"In the first place," said his father, "you do not have to wait to send your message while others are attended to; for your message can go with thousands of others, without any interruption or hinderance."

"Yes, *that is* an improvement," said George; "for we had to wait for some time, you know."

"And in the next place," continued his father, "there is no need of wires, or electricity, or any machinery. And what is more wonderful than all is the fact, that you need not always *express* in words the nature of your message; though it is quite necessary that you truly and sincerely desire a favorably reply to your request.

"Is there any account published of this wonderful matter?" asked George.

"Yes, there is, my son; and I hope your interest will not be diminished when I tell you it is found in *the Bible.*"

"*In the Bible*, father?" cried both the children.

"Certainly; and if you both will get your Bibles, I will tell you where to find the passages confirming what I have said."

The children opened their Bibles, and found, as their father directed them, the twenty-fourth verse of the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which Mary read, as follows: "And it shall come to pass, that *before they call*, I WILL ANSWER; and *while they are yet speaking*, I WILL HEAR."

Next, George found and read the ninth verse of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

"Now turn," said their father, "to Daniel, ninth chapter, twentieth, twenty-first, second, and third verses."

"I see, father, from these passages," said Mary, "that you mean prayer."

"Yes," said Mr. Bates; "and I am sure that you will both agree with me, that this mode of communication with heaven is more wonderful than any other; for, by this means, if we call upon God, with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall receive an answer."