

The Family Circle.

A REFLECTION.

Of not by bread alone is manhood nourished. To its supreme estate! very word of God have lived and flourished. The good men and the great. Ay, not by bread alone!

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

On the evening of a sultry Summer's day, Mary, a poor widow, was seated by the window of her little room, and was looking out on the orchard that surrounded her cottage.

Her little Felix, a child of six years old, was standing near her, and his blooming face and golden hair were lighted by the moon.

The poor young widow sat there to rest herself, but great as the labor of this hot day had been to her body, a still greater pain oppressed her mind, and made her forgetful of her weariness.

Mary had become a widow in the beginning of the Spring. Her husband, one of the best young men in the village, had laid by so much money by his industry and frugality that he had bought this little cottage and orchard, but had not quite enough to pay for them.

On recovering from her illness she found her circumstances were very bad. Still she hoped not to be obliged to quit her cottage. Her husband had long been in the service of a rich farmer, who had valued and respected him for his industry, fidelity, and good character.

It was on this account that she was sitting so mournfully at the window, looking sometimes up to heaven, and then again at her little boy; at one moment weeping bitterly, and the next plunged in the deepest melancholy.

made hay to-day for the last time in my little garden; the first yellow plums which I plucked to-day for my Felix are the last that my child will ever enjoy from the tree which his father planted for him; perhaps this is the last night we shall spend under this roof.

To-morrow the house will be the property of another; and who knows whether we may not be turned out immediately? Where shall we find shelter to-morrow? Perhaps we may have no roof to cover us? And she began to sob violently.

Felix, who till now had not stirred, came nearer, and said, "Mother, do not weep so bitterly. If you weep, what my father said, when he lay dying on the bed, 'Do not weep,' said he; 'God is the Father of the widow and the orphan; call upon Him in the time of trouble, and He will take care of you.' He said so, is it not true?"

"Yes, dear child," said Mary, "it is indeed true. But how can I call upon Him? Well, then," said Felix, "why do you cry so? Pray to God, and He will help you. O when I was with my father in the forests, and he was cutting wood, if he was hungry or if a thorn had run into his foot, he would cry a good deal; I went to my father, and he was then alive, and he gave me bread, or he took out the thorn, and he made me better, and will He not help us now?"

"Yes," said the poor mother, still weeping. "My father often said the whole world was God's; then why should we weep? Come, mother, let us pray to God: He will certainly help us." My dear child, you are in the right, said Mary, and her tears were somewhat moderated, and comfort began to take the place of grief.

She knelt down and raised her eyes and hands to heaven, and the little child did so too. Mary began to pray, and Felix repeated each word after her. "O Holy Father, who art in Heaven, said Casimer, 'look upon the widow and her child: A poor widow and a poor orphan look up to Thee; we are in great want, and have no refuge on earth. We pray to Thee that Thou wilt not suffer us to sink under our sorrows; but if, in Thy wisdom, Thou seeest fit to afflict us, help us at least to find another home; and give us comfort in our hearts, and true confidence in Thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Mary's sobs prevented her from proceeding; she looked toward heaven, and was silent; when Felix who was still by her side in the attitude of prayer, jumped up, and stretching out his hands, exclaimed, "O mother, what is that? There is a little light hovering there; it is a star flying. See it hovering about the window! O see, it is coming in! How beautiful it shines! It is like a green light. It is almost as beautiful as the evening star. Look, now it is hovering about the ceiling. It is very wonderful."

"That is a fire-fly, my child," said Mary, "by day it is a mean little insect; and by night it is very beautiful." "May I catch it?" said the child. "Will it not hurt me, and shall I not be hurt by the light?" "It will not burn you," said Mary, and she smiled through her tears; "catch it and examine it carefully without hurting it; it is one of the wonderful works of God."

Felix had now forgotten all his sorrow, and tried to catch the glittering fly, which was at one moment under the table, and at another under the chair, and sometimes near the floor.

"But, O dear!" said the child, for the fly had concealed itself behind the great chest that stood against the wall at the moment when he held out his hand to catch it.

He looked under the chest. "I see it very plainly," said he; "there it sits, close to the wall; and the white wall, and the floor, and the dust, shine quite bright around it, just as if the moon were shining on them. But I cannot reach it, my arm is not long enough."

"Have patience," said Mary; "it will soon come out again."

The child waited a little while, and then went to his mother, and in a gentle entreating tone of voice said, "O mother, do reach it for me, or move out the chest a little from the wall, and then I can easily catch it."

Mary stood up and moved the chest, and Felix took the fire-fly, and looked at it as he held it in the hollow of his hand, and it gave him as much pleasure as another would have derived from the purest diamond.

counts with John Blun, and he now only owes me fifty florins." Mary clasped her hands with joy, embraced her child, and exclaimed with rapture, "O Felix, thank God with me, for we shall not be turned out; we shall not have to quit our home."

"Did I not say so?" said the child; "now this is owing to me. If I had not begged you to move the chest you would never have found the almanac."

But Mary said, "My child, it is God's doings, not yours. I feel overpowered with awe and thankfulness when I think of it. Even whilst we were praying, He sent that brilliant fly, and by its flight pointed out to us the very place where those papers lay concealed. Yes, God indeed does all things. Without His knowledge not a hair falls from our heads. Remember this as long as you live, and trust to Him always, especially in times of distress. He does not require an angel to help Him; but can use a little fly as a messenger of His mercy." And how soon His He answered out prayer! O my child, let us never forget to pray to Him!

Early the next morning Mary went to the magistrate, who counselled the farmer to be brought before him. When he saw the paper, he could not help feeling ashamed of his unkind behavior; and when the poor woman proceeded to relate the whole story of her prayer, and the entrance of the fire-fly, he became much affected, and exclaimed with tears in his eyes, "Yes, it is indeed true that God is the Father of the widow and fatherless. He is also their strength. Forgive the cruelty I have used towards you. And now to recompense the injury I have done you, keep the remaining fifty florins, and if ever you should be in want, come to me, and I will always help you. See clearly that whosoever trusts in God will never be forsaken."

Only love and fear the Lord, serve Him still in faith and prayer. Do His will, and keep His Word, God will for His children care of you. Nova Scotia Church Chronicle.

ONE MOTHER AND SEVEN CHILDREN.

One mother can take care of seven children better than seven children can take care of one mother," old Casimer was accustomed to say. He was a shrewd old peasant, and had gone about the world, and had seen a great deal. But his son Jacob thought him in the wrong in that expression.

"See," said Jacob, "I am only one person, and I would do for you everything that I could. I would work until the very blood came out of my finger-ends, sooner than you should not get everything that you needed. Now, how much better it would be for you, if you had seven boys instead of one; and how much better they could take care of you than you could take care of them."

Casimer laughed, and shook his old fur cap from one side of his head to the other, and answered:

"Now, let me give you an example of the truth of what I say. You know old Madelen, who goes around and washes clothes for rich people. She was once a very nice-looking woman, though she always worked hard from morning till night, to take care of her seven children; and she took care of them well, for they did not want either food or clothing without getting it. So long as she was young, everything went on well; but when her seven children grew up to be men, her strength had left her, and now it was their turn to take care of her. But not one of them seemed disposed to pay her special attention, or to offer her a comfortable home. They were all in good circumstances, and each had a thriving business. Their mother was old and very homely, and the truth was that they were very much ashamed of her. They little thought how kind she had been to them, and how she had spared no pains to improve them. If her day's wages did not go far enough to supply her seven children with food, she would sit up in the night, while other people slept, and would make waistcoats and shirts for dealers in clothing. It was astonishing how this woman could make money out of almost nothing. Broken needles, bits of thread, or blocks of wood, were carefully saved by her; for she looked upon everything as worth something. But having raised her children, and seen them comfortable in business, she said to herself, 'Now I am getting old in years, and am almost worn out with hard work, and it is high time that my children should take care of me.'

"One Saturday evening, she invited them to her little house, where she gave them a supper of hard crackers, tea, and prunes, and then she represented her case to them. "My dear children, I cannot live a great while, and I have quite lost my strength. The food I place before you is very nice compared with that which I usually eat. I know my appearance is objectionable to you, but it seems to me quite right that you should take care of me."

"With the greatest pleasure," they cried altogether. "The eldest, who was a goldsmith, said: 'My dear mother, I will do anything in the world for you. Come to my house, and you shall live in the parlor all the time.' "The old lady appointed a Secretary just then to take down the promises, and the eldest son, who had just made that promise.

"The next one who spoke was the tailor. He said to his mother: 'My dear mother, I would drink up the Rhine; I would go through a raging fire; I would leap down from a church tower—all for you—for you, my mother.'

"And that promise was taken down. And so each one made a promise of doing just as great things for his mother as those two had done, and having finished them, and the promises having all been written down, they all sang together, and departed to their several homes.

"The next day, Madelen, their mother, went to the goldsmith's with her budget of clothes. She thought what a happy time she would now have. But one week was sufficient; for, by the end of that time, she found that she was not welcome in the house, though she had no doubt her son loved her very much. His children did not seem to be fond of her, and indeed the whole family seemed to consider her a burden, rather than a pleasure. She next went to the tailor, who had told her that he would drink up the Rhine, go through a great fire, and leap down from a church tower, for his mother. Alas for his promise! She had not been there four days before she learned that she was not welcome at his house. And so she went through from one house to the other, until she had made a visit to all her seven sons, and there was not one of the number who seemed to enjoy her presence. That they all loved her, she had no doubt; but at the same time, she did not seem to be welcome, and she felt that she was not at home.

"All this is very true, father," said Jacob; "but at the same time, is it right for sons to treat their mother so?" "Oh, no," replied old Casimer. "I have not said that it is right; it was very wrong. But it shows us how much better our parents have taken care of us than we take care of them. What would have become of me, if I had not had a kind mother to take care of me, and what would have become of you if you had not had a good mother to look after your interests?"

"But, father," replied Jacob, "I think you have chosen rather an unusual case to teach me this lesson. Do you suppose it is generally so with people throughout the world?"

"As far as I have seen," said old Casimer, "I think it is a general truth. Come now, I want to show you how it is with smaller beings than man. Do you not know that in our bird cage there are just seven little birds, now just old enough to fly about a little? The old bird takes care of them every day, and we leave the door open, you know, for her to go in and out, and bring them worms, and whatever else they wish. The cage is hanging up by the bean vine, at our back-door. Let us see how that old bird and her seven young ones manage. There she goes right in at the open door, taking them something to eat. See how they cluster round her, and how they love her! What in the world would they do without her? Every one of them would die. Now, let us see how she would get along if we let them take care of her."

Then old Casimer took all the little birds out of the cage on his lap, and fastened the old bird up.

"Let us see how soon they will bring her a worm, and do some act of kindness for her."

One little bird jumped off his lap upon a pile of lumber that was lying near the door; another one jumped down in the door; a third flew on the window-sill; a fourth flew on the bean-vine; and so they all went in different directions, and did not pay the slightest attention to their mother.

"Oh! the birds will get away—they will get away!" said Jacob.

"Yes, I think they will," replied old Casimer, "if we do not catch them; for they will never come back to take care of their old mother."

"I believe you are right," said Jacob. Old Casimer smiled and said: "It is the same with men and birds, and all the creatures God has made. One mother will take care of seven children better than seven children can take care of one mother. Let us thank our Heavenly Father for good mothers."—N. Y. Methodist.

TO-MORROW. In "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," Old Rogers, a pithy, pious old sailor, finding his "parson" one day borrowing trouble about a certain matter, comforts him thus: "No doubt King Solomon was quite right, as he always was; I suppose, in what he said, for his wisdom mun ha' lain mostly in his tongue—right, I say, when he said, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; but I cannot help thinking there's another side to it. I think it would be as good advice to a man on the other tack, where boasting lay far to windward, and he close on a lee-shore of breakers—it wouldn't be amiss to say to him: 'Don't strike your colors to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' There's just as many good days as bad ones; as much fair weather as foul in the days to come. And if a man keeps up heart, he's all the better for that, and none the worse when the evil day does come."

Old Rogers is right in this. Distrustfulness is just as bad as boasting. A man prays that he might neither be overmuch poor, nor overmuch rich; lest in the one case he should be full and deny God, or in the other "steal" because he was "poor." Yet the heart of man, like a pendulum, swings between these extremes—now boastful, now desponding; now prompting him to say, as if he held the future in his own hand, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;" now to cry out, "There is a lion in the way." Truly, "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Truly, then, he only can have per-

fect whose mind is stayed on God. Happy the man who can say with the pious king of old, "O, God, my heart is fixed." Such can, like him, in all such circumstances, "sing and give praise." Whether, to adopt Old Rogers' phraseology, to-morrow seems to us, as we sail on, like a friendly harbor, inviting us to enter, or like a threatening lee-shore roaring with breakers, in either case, Faith should stand at the helm. And if it do so, we shall then, in the one case, know how to thank for the harbor, and in the other, whom to trust amid the storm.

COURTEOUS REPLY TO AN INFIDEL.

An American traveller being unexpectedly detained at the mole of quarantine in Odessa, was very civilly offered "half of his apartments and a sofa to lie on," by a young Englishman, who acted as translator to the mole. After they had formed an intimate acquaintance, and had one evening retired to rest, the traveller asked his friend how he could endure the blasphemy which was so constantly heard. The young Englishman replied, that, as a gentleman, these things were disagreeable to him, but as to their being intrinsically wrong, it was a matter of no concern to him; as he denied the truth of all revelation, and believed Jesus Christ to be an impostor.

The traveller, without supposing that the remark would be heeded, except by courtesy, replied, "Either Christ was an impostor or he was not; if he was an impostor, we have the inconceivable phenomenon of a base man practicing virtue, self-denial, charity, forgiveness of injuries through his whole life, in spite of scourging, contumely, and even crucifixion—is it philosophical to suppose that a bad man would take so much pains to make men good? But if he was not an impostor, then he has told the truth, and we must believe him."

It is possible that I never saw that before, was the only reply of the young Englishman, but the argument sunk deep into his heart; and when the traveller had arrived at Alexandria, he received a letter from the former skeptic acknowledging him as the "best friend he ever had," encouraging him to be equally faithful to others, and praying him not to forget his Odessa convert.—American Messenger.

A MODEL MERCHANT.

"Business is business," is a contract is a contract. These are sound commercial maxims, but the following incident illustrates the nature of the business Christianity, which obeys the inspired injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

A merchant of New York, during the late war, made a contract with a mechanic to supply him with a number of tin cans. Not long after this the price of tin rose so much that the contractor must lose money by completing the work at the price agreed upon. However, he said nothing, but went on delivering the cans. When the first bill for the pay of the cans was received, the employer called upon him and said:

"I understand you are losing money on this job."

"Yes," replied the contractor, "but I can stand it; a contract is a contract, you know."

"How much will you lose?" asked the gentleman.

"O, no matter," was the reply; "I don't complain, and you ought not to."

"I insist on knowing."

"Well, since you desire it, I shall lose so much a hundred," naming the amount.

"Well, sir," said the noble-hearted man, "you must not lose this—it would not be right. I shall add the amount to your bill, and as the price of material may still rise, I will advance you the money for the whole contract, which, no doubt, you can use to advantage."

The difference thus paid, to which the contractor laid no claim, amounted to five hundred dollars. That was something more than business honesty; it was Christian principle carried out in business. The world needs just such examples to convince it of the truth of religion.

MR. GOUGH'S RECOVERY.

The following incident is worthy of being often repeated, as an encouragement to labor for moral or religious reform. A warm heart and wise tongue may overcome the most formidable obstacles. Rev. T. L. Cuyler tells the story:

"On a certain Sabbath evening, some twenty years ago, a reckless, well-dressed young man was idly lounging under the elms 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 on 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 to heaven. But the youth he saved is to-day the foremost of reformers on the face of the globe. He thinks, when I listen to the thunders of applause that greet John B. Gough on the platform of Exeter Hall or the Academy of Music, I am hearing the echoes of that tap on the shoulder, and of that kind invitation under the ancient elms of Worcester! He that winneth souls is wise."