

The Family Circle.

NEARER HOME.

One sweetly solemn thought Comes to me o'er and o'er; I'm nearer home to-day Than I ever have been before;

Nearer my Father's house, Where the many mansions be; Nearer the great white throne, Nearer the crystal sea;

Nearer the bound of life, Where we lay our burdens down; Nearer leaving the cross, Nearer gaining the crown!

But lying darkly between, Winding down through the night, Is the silent, unknown stream That leads at last to the light.

Closer and closer my steps Come to the dread abyss; Closer death to my lips Presses the awful Christ.

Oh, if my mortal feet Have almost gained the brink, If it be, I am nearer home, Even to-day than I think.

Father, perfect my trust; Let my spirit feel in death That her feet are firmly set On the rock of a living faith.

THE WORSTED STOCKING.

"Father will have done the great chimney to-night, won't he, mother?" said little Tom Howard, as he stood waiting for his father's breakfast, which he carried to him at his work every morning.

"He said he hoped all the scaffolding would be down to-night," answered his mother; "and that'll be a fine sight: for I never like the ending of those great chimneys, it's so risky. Thy father's to be the last."

"Oh, then, but I'll go and see him, and help 'em to give a shout afore he comes down," said Tom.

"And then," continued his mother, "if all goes right, we are to have a frolic to-morrow, and go into the country, and take our dinners, and spend all the day amongst the woods."

"Hurrah!" cried Tom, as he ran off to his father's place of work, with a can of milk in one hand, and some bread in the other.

His mother stood at the door watching him as he went merrily whistling down the street; and then she thought of the dear father he was going to, and the dangerous work he was engaged in; and then her heart sought its sure refuge, and she prayed to God to protect and bless her treasures.

Tom, with light heart pursued his way to his father, and, leaving him his breakfast, went to his own work, which was at some distance.

In the evening, on his way home, he went round to see how his father was getting on.

James Howard, the father, and a number of other workmen, had been building one of those lofty chimneys, which, in our great manufacturing towns, almost supply the place of architectural beauty.

This chimney was one of the highest and most tapering that had ever been erected; and as Tom, shading his eyes from the slanting rays of the setting sun, looked up to the top in search of his father, his heart almost sank within him at the appalling sight.

The scaffolding was almost all down: the men at the bottom were removing the last beams and poles. Tom's father stood alone on the top.

He looked all around to see that everything was right, and then, waving his hat in the air, he bowed and answered him with a long, loud cheer. Little Tom shouted as heartily as any of them. As their voices died away, however, they heard a very different sound—a cry of alarm and horror from above.

"The rope! the rope!"

The men look round, and, coiled upon the ground, lay the rope, which, before the scaffolding was removed, should have been passed over the top of the chimney for Tom's father to come down by!

The scaffolding had been taking down without their remembering to take the rope up. There was a dead silence. They all knew it was impossible to throw the rope up high enough or skilfully enough to reach the top of the chimney; or, if it could, it would hardly have been safe.

They stood in silent dismay, unable to give any help, or think of any means of safety.

And Tom's father! He walked round and round the little circle on the dizzy height, seeming every moment to grow more fearful, and the solid earth farther and farther from him.

In the sudden panic he lost his presence of mind, and his senses almost failed him. He shut his eyes; he felt as if, the next moment, he must be dashed to pieces on the ground below.

The day had passed as industriously and swiftly as usual with Tom's mother at home. She was always busily employed for her husband and children in some way or other; and to-day she had been harder at work than usual, getting ready for the holiday to-morrow.

She had just finished all her preparations, and her thoughts were silently thanking God for her happy home, and for all the blessings of life, when Tom ran in: his face was as white as ashes, and he could hardly get his words out.

"Mother, mother! he canna get down!" said Tom.

"Who, lad?—thy father?" asked his mother. "They've forgotten to leave him the rope," answered Tom, still scarcely able to speak.

His mother started up, horror-struck, and stood for a moment as if paralyzed; then, pressing her hands over her face as if to shut out the terrible picture, and breathing a prayer to God for help, she rushed out of the house.

When she reached the place where her husband was at work, a crowd had collected round the foot of the chimney, and stood there quite helpless, gazing up with faces full of horror.

"He says he'll throw himself down!" exclaimed they as Mrs. Howard came up.

"He's going to throw himself down!" "Thee munna do that, lad!" cried the wife, with a clear hopeful voice; "thee munna do that. Wait a bit. Tak' off thy stocking, lad, and unravel it, and let down the thread with a bit of mortar. Dost hear me, Jem?"

The man made a sign of assent,—for it seemed as if he could not speak,—and, taking off his stocking, unravelled the worsted thread, row after row. The people stood round in breathless silence, and suspense, wondering what Tom's mother could be thinking of, and why she sent in such haste for the carpenter's ball of twine.

"Let down one end of the thread with a bit of stone, and keep fast hold of the other," cried she to her husband.

The little thread came waving down the tall chimney, blown hither and thither by the wind; but at last it reached the outstretched hands that were waiting for it. Tom held the ball of string while his mother tied one end of it to the worsted thread.

"Now pull it up slowly!" cried she to her husband; and she gradually uncoiled the string as the worsted drew it gently up. It stopped: the string had reached her husband.

"Now hold the string fast, and pull it up!" cried she: and the string grew heavy, and hard to pull; for Tom and his mother had fastened the thick rope to it.

They watched it gradually and slowly uncoiling from the ground as the string was drawn higher.

There was but one coil left. It had reached the top.

"Thank God! thank God!" exclaimed the wife.

She hid her face in her hands in silent prayer, and trembling, rejoiced. The iron to which it should be fastened was there all right. But would her husband be able to make use of them? Would not the terror of the past hour have so unnerved him as to prevent him from taking the necessary measures for his safety?

She did not know the magic influence which her few words had exercised over him. She did not know the strength that the sound of her voice, so calm and steadfast, had filled him with; as if the little thread that carried him the hope of life once more had conveyed to him some portion of that faith in God which nothing ever destroyed or shook in her true heart.

She did not know, that, as he waited there, the words came over him.

"Why art thou east down; O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God."

She lifted up her heart to God, for hope and strength. She could do nothing more for her husband; and her heart turned to God, and rested on him as on a rock.

There was a great shout.

"He's safe, mother! he's safe!" cried little Tom. "Thou'st saved me, Mary," said her husband, folding her in his arms. "But what ails thee? Thou seemest more sorry than glad about it."

But Mary could not speak, and, if the strong arm of her husband had not held her up, she would have fallen to the ground; the sudden joy after her great fear, had overcome her.

"Tom," said his father, "let thy mother lean on thy shoulder, and we will take her home."

And in their happy home they poured forth their thanks to God for His great goodness; and their happy life together felt dearer and holier for the peril it had been in, and for the fearlessness that the father had brought them unto God. And the holiday next day was it not, indeed, a thanksgiving day?—Sunday School Magazine.

THE PIGEON'S ADVICE.

"I shall never know this long lesson," said George Nelson. "I wish there were no such books, then I wouldn't have to get lessons from them."

"What's the matter, George?" asked his grandma, who at that moment entered the room.

"O, this lesson, grandma. I'm sure I can't get it. Just look! both of these long columns, and I don't know one word."

"Well, never mind that; you will soon know every word of it if you try right hard. And then, only think how much more you will know than you do now! I wonder if my white pigeon couldn't help you to get your lesson?"

"Your pigeon, grandma, I didn't know you had any pigeons."

"No, I haven't now; but when I was a very little girl my brother had a pair of beautiful white pigeons presented to him. He told me I might call one of them, mine. They were both very tame, and they would eat corn from our hands."

"What pleased us both was, that they seemed to know us both, for my brother's pigeon would go and take corn out of his hand, while mine always came to me. Well, I was going to tell you, how mine helped me to get my lessons."

"Did it really help you, grandma?"

"Yes; and I think it will help you just as it did me."

"I'm sure, I wish it would; for this is a very hard lesson."

His grandma smiled, as she continued: "One morning I was sitting near the window trying to get my spelling lesson. It seemed so long, and the words looked so hard, I was sure I could not learn it. I sat there a long while, wishing I knew it, so that I could run out and play. The sun was shining bright, and it looked so pleasant out of doors. All at once I saw my pigeon fly up to its house, and then in a short time, it flew down again to the street. I watched to see what it was doing. It picked up a

piece of straw and flew up as it had done before, and then returned to get another. It did so for a long time."

"It was building its nest, wasn't it, grandma?" asked George.

"Yes, sometimes it would fly up with a little piece of straw, and sometimes it picked up quite long pieces, and when it would get about half way up to the window the straw would drop down, and then, it would go right down after it and pick it up again. I saw it try to get one piece up three times, and the third time it reached the window safely. Just then my eyes fell on my book. There was no lesson yet. How much my pigeon had done while I had been doing nothing! I thought to myself, and yet, it took only one straw at a time. My lesson did not seem near so long as it did at first. In a few moments, I knew the whole of it."

"My lesson looks easier already, grandma. I shall only have to learn one word at a time, and I'll soon know all of them."

George set to work in good earnest; and but a short time had passed till he had learned it perfectly.

"Now, George," said his grandma, afterward, "do you think you will remember the pigeon's advice?"

"O, I am sure I shall," he replied, laughing, "and when I come to the longest words, I'll do as the pigeon did when the straw fell—I'll try them again!"—Pacific Churchman.

MY MOTHER'S CANDLE.

Did you ever loiter beside your mother's stand in the old family kitchen? Perhaps it overlooked the beautiful valley of the slow-winding Connecticut, as my mother's did. Did you ever loiter beside that little charmed "work-table" of a winter evening, and watch the flickering blaze of that well-remembered candle, and trace the outlines of your own childish image in its restless blaze?

And when the door was suddenly opened and shut, did you not please your childish fancy, watching the flickerings of that plant flame, as it bent and swayed like a fiery sailing vessel in the windy current that came in?

Such are some of our early recollections and childish associations connected with the kitchen candle.

Another thing we remember was, that when we took our candle to light ourselves to bed we were sometimes so thoughtless as to pinch the fire on the smoking wick after we had blown out the blaze. In such cases we usually got a sharp burn between the thumb and finger, and a pair of famous black spots to match them.

And sometimes it happened that the thumb and finger became typographical during the night, and left their imprint upon the sheet, not altogether to the satisfaction of the dear woman we called "mother," who sat so late at the kitchen stand, by the old granite hearthstone, mending our jackets and darning our socks.

You smile at the mention of these recollections. So do I, often, at the thought of them. But sometimes I weep, too, that the pleasant scenes they picture will never come again to me in the sweet reality, for the earliest and sweetest aching of my heart is awakened when I think of them.

And tears of sadness, too, have wet my cheeks; that sometimes, too, in those days of headstrong haste, I grieved those faithful guardians of my youth. And yet other tears of sadness I have sometimes shed in mournful selfishness that I shall never, once again, this side the grave, behold the loving eyes that looked so oft with me into the blaze of that forgotten candle.

I forgot, in my sorrow, that they are happy, for they are gone above, and the parents and some of the children. But what wonder if we, of the narrowing circle, sometimes do forget ourselves and sigh mournfully, as we behold in the glass our gathering wrinkles, and feel the multiplied infirmities of the flesh?—Boston Herald.

JOHNNY REED'S FORTUNES.

"Little boy, will you hold my horse for me a few moments?"

Such were the words that a kind voice addressed to little Johnny Reed, as he stood lounging against the wall of a house in Chestnut street one cold winter morning.

Johnny came and held the horse, while the gentleman entered a large store close by. Johnny was very willing to hold the horse, for he hoped the gentleman would give him a few cents for doing so; and to tell the truth, Johnny was both cold and hungry.

This was no wonder when you hear that he had had no breakfast yet this morning, and it was now ten o'clock. His mother was sick and had no money to buy bread, and Johnny was too young and too shabby to be able to procure employment.

His eyes lit up, however, when the gentleman came out and handed him a small note for his services.

Johnny was running away to buy a loaf of bread, when the gentleman, who had been struck by his white, picked look, stopped him.

"Wait; where are you going? What are you going to do with your note, now you have got it?"

"I am going to buy some bread, sir," replied Johnny, honestly.

"I haven't had any breakfast this morning, yet."

"What is your name, and where do you live?" again inquired the gentleman, with a gleaming eye.

"Johnny Reed, sir, and I live down round the corner there a little way," said he, pointing in the direction, "in A court."

"Have you a mother or father?" again asked the stranger.

"O yes, sir; I have a mother, and she hasn't had anything either," said Johnny; "let me go and get her something."

"I will go with you," said the gentleman, "but let me attend to my horse first." He did so, and then followed Johnny to his home. It was indeed a scene of desolation

—no fire, no food, and Mrs. Reed was pale and trembling in her bed from cold and sickness.

What the gentleman could do to relieve her was soon done; and when a warm fire blazed on the hearth, and Johnny had brought his mother some tea and bread, she told her story. The gentleman was wealthy and kind hearted; moreover, he was a Christian, and regarded himself as only a steward of his Lord, to use his goods for his glory. He took care that Mrs. Reed, after this, had no lack of comforts or medical advice; and when she recovered, he found employment for her in his own house-hold. He found Johnny useful in various ways, and, becoming interested with him, he sent him to school, and when he was of a suitable age, he procured for him an excellent situation in the bank in which he was a director. This Johnny was enabled to support his mother comfortably, and daily "the blessing of them that were ready to perish" was upon their benefactor.—S. S. Visitor.

HOW A MINISTER CONQUERED DIFFICULTIES.

The difficulties attending a minister, and the best mode of surmounting them, were never better illustrated than in this account of the first settlement of Dr. Wayland. It is found in his biography, vol. 7, pp. 129-131:

The minority were determined to make up in activity and persistence what they lacked in numbers. Anonymous letters had been written to a former pastor, of unusually sensitive spirit, with much success. He had taken them into the pulpit and read them in public, showing to the writers how deeply their shots had taken effect.

Similar letters now began to reach Mr. Wayland, ridiculing his awkwardness, and enlarging on every fault he had, and on many that he had not. Meanwhile, Rev. Mr. E., the choice of the minority, had been settled in an adjoining town; and his partial friends, refusing to sit under the preaching of his rival, would toil out three or four miles to hear their favorite, and then would come into the evening meeting, and narrate how they had been blessed, and how glad that good man was to see them, and how he hoped they would come again.

They were anxious, too, that Mr. E. should preach in the pulpit of the First Church, on an exchange with the pastor. But against this the leading members of the Church, especially the pastor's official advisers, the deacons, protested. To allow him in the pulpit would encourage the disaffected, and would result in unsettling Mr. Wayland.

It was well for the young pastor that he had not only learned meekness of the Lord Jesus, but had gained worldly wisdom and knowledge of human nature under the sage Dr. Nett. Mr. Wayland, from the beginning, steadily refused to be informed who in the congregation were friendly to him, and who were unfriendly. He would not have any obstacle put in the way of his treating all with perfect and impartial friendliness.

The anonymous letters, as fast as received, were read before the Lord, in his closet, and then put in the fire. They were never spoken of, save in a few months the writers came to him, and with tears of shame and sorrow, confessed their authorship and begged forgiveness.

The course of the disaffected members in leaving their own church for another was regarded by many as a violation of the covenant, and was animated against on Church Meeting. It was urged, that the offending members should be subjected to discipline. This suggestion the pastor utterly opposed.

He was not at all surprised that they did not like his preaching. He was sure he did not like it himself; and he regarded it as their duty to go where they found themselves most edified. As the distance to their favorite sanctuary was considerable, and as many of them were poor, he thought that the Church ought to supply them with carriage, and be offered to unite in subscribing to procure them. There was no further complaint on that ground, and the practice ceased.

As for the brother's preaching in the pulpit, the pastor, for the only time in all his ministry, set himself in absolute opposition to the deacons, and to all his counselors. If his relation to the Church was of so precarious a tenure as to be affected by the fact of Mr. E.'s preaching in his pulpit, the sooner it was terminated the better.

Mr. E. was invited to preach. For some reason he preferred to preach at the Wednesday evening service. Notice was given alike from the pulpit and in the daily papers; the service was removed to the upper part of the meeting house; the evening came, the pastor occupied the desk with him, and shared in the services. But the people did not come; the audience was small; and the dreaded minister, who depended for his inspiration upon a crowded and sympathizing audience, was greatly straitened.

Nothing more was said on the subject, nor was any desire expressed for a repetition of the act of courtesy.

TRUST IN GOD.

"My father was, you know, a hunter of men, and a fisher of men. He used to hunt squirrels and catch trout. And he carried his venery and piscatory instincts into the pulpit, as he ought to have done."

When Dr. Corngilus, who was Secretary of the American Board, died, father had a dark day. "I can't understand," he said, "what the Lord means, when his work needs just such a man as Cornelius, and he takes him away in the prime of life, at a time when he is carrying on that work successfully, and there is nobody to take his place." Yes there was. Dr. Wisner took it. But he carried it only a few years, when he died. I very distinctly remember the morning when father was preparing the sermon to preach over Dr. Wisner. The wheels dragged heavily. He was very much cast down. Though I was quite young, he

said to me, "Henry, it is all done! it is all done! I cannot see what the Lord means. He is making breach on breach. There is so much to do, and so few to do it! He is taking the best of them."

In his own life he worked as though he thought that if he stood from under, a part of the heavens at least would come down. He used to stand with his shoulders straight up, as though he thought he were helping to carry the universe. It was not fancy—it was the instinct of work. There was the sense of work in him clear to the bone and marrow. "I think I love to work as well as he did; but I got from my mother what he did not from his. I have carried all my life long a sense that the work was so vast that no man, I did not care who he was, could do more than a very little; that He who could raise up children from the stones to Abraham, could raise up men when he had a mind to, and men of the right kind, and put them in the right place; that after all the Lord was greater than the work; and that it was of no use for me to fret myself, and set myself up to be wiser than Providence; all I was called upon to do was to work up to the measure of my wisdom and strength, and be willing to go wherever God sent me; and that then I was to be content."

But there is where the weakness of human nature comes in. For though I do not feel personally this sense of connection with the whole of God's work, the world does open up to my mind so desolately, that it really seems hard to live. I have such a sense of the ignorance of even the most enlightened men, I have such a sense of the imperfection of even the best and most Christian people, I have such a sense of the long way that humanity has yet to walk before it comes to the blossom, to say nothing of the fruit; I perceive that things do move so slowly, that it seems to me as though if I were Jeremiah, I too could pray that my head might become a fountain of tears.—H. W. Beecher.

DEATH OF NEANDER.

No more striking illustration was ever given of the ruling passion strong in death, than in the last hours of the beloved Neander. His thoughts, even when reason wandered, were on his work. Mrs. Conant gives the following sketch:

A wine bath had been prepared for him, as a last resort. Refreshed and strengthened by it, he was borne from the darkened room, where he had lain hitherto, into his study, that cheerful little apartment opening to the sun, which had been so long the workshop and the paradise of the man of thought. Here for nearly twenty years he had studied and written.—From this spot had gone forth those great works which have delighted and instructed Christendom. Ere long he murmured, dreamily, as if at the close of a long, fatiguing walk with his sister, "I am weary; let us now make ready to go home."

Just then the rich sunset glow, pouring through the window, lighted up the shelves, from which looked down upon him the masters of thought with whom for so many years he had held silent but high and enduring communion. Raising himself by a sudden effort from his pillow, he commenced a regular lecture upon New Testament exegesis. Soon a new image passed before his restless fancy. Imagining himself at the weekly meeting of his beloved Seminary, surrounded by his fondly attached theological pupils, he called for the reading of a dissertation, shortly before assigned on the material and formal principle of the Reformation. He then dictated the titles of the different courses of lectures to be delivered by him, during the next session; among them, "The Gospel of John, from its true historical point of view."

His last thoughts amid the struggles of death, were devoted to the great labor of his life.—Beginning at the very passage of his Church History where sickness had arrested his progress, he resumed the thread of thought, and in spite of interruptions, continued to dictate in regular periods for some time. At the close of each sentence he paused, as if his amanuensis were taking down his words, and asked, "Are you ready?" Having closed a division of his subject, he inquired the time. Being told that it was half past nine, the patient sufferer repeated once more, "I am weary; I will now go to sleep." Having by the aid of friendly hands stretched himself in bed for his last slumber, he whispered, in a tone of inexpressible tenderness, which sent a strange thrill through every heart, "Good-night! It was his last words. He immediately fell into a sleep, which continued four hours, when his great spirit, in the quiet of a Sabbath morning, passed gently into the land of peace.

NEEDOTES OF DR. WAYLAND.

[From the Life, published by Sheldon and Co.] "Claim no precedence, but take just the place that is given to you, and make no fuss about it. Louis XIV. wished to ascertain whether the Earl of Stair was, as he was reputed to be, the most polite gentleman in Europe. He therefore invited him to ride in his carriage, and when they came to it, the king asked him to get in, first. The earl bowed most respectfully and obeyed. The king said that any other man would have stood bowing, and scraping, and refusing to enter for a quarter of an hour."

"Encourage your husband to sacrifice everything rather than abandon a single point of high Christian integrity. Let it be seen that, although he may have made an error in judgment, he is still determined to pursue a strictly honorable course. No matter how unjustly he may have been treated by others, he is to be called upon to act for himself. Others may have involved him in pursuit; let them not also involve him in reputation. I am particularly desirous that you should both show the elevation of character which becomes you as Christians."