

The Family Circle.

CHRISTIAN JOY.

[Written by a poor colored woman of this city, for eight years paralyzed and prostrated with pain, but an intelligent, gifted and humble believer.]

"Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." I've often feared my Christian vow was no sincere profession, because the Spirit's varied fruits were not in my possession.

Love, joy,—Ah! there I fain must stop; I had no claim to gladness. My tried and tempted soul was wrapt in sorrow's garb of sadness; because the glowing fruit of joy was not to me imparted, I feared the Holy Ghost had gone, and left me broken-hearted.

It was an ignorant, rash thought,—God's mercy fail-eth never! He sent to me a messenger, (whom may heaven bless forever;) who knowing not my faithless grief, bade me account Temptation itself for joy, and told me to rejoice in Tribulation! The Temple of the Holy Ghost was not then left forsaken, but grief must be accounted joy, and woe glad praise awaken.

What though I enter Heavenly rest thro' much keen tribulation, Still will my heart rejoice in Thee, O! God of my salvation! When first I feel some piercing wound, I know quick tear-drops starting, Might seem complaining to denote; but when surprise departing, Leaveth my spirit calm and clear, the thoughtful impulse welling From the heart's depths, in thankfulness, to fervent praise is swelling.

For many a sharp and secret wound is given me while bending Beneath the yoke, so good to bear, while youth its strength is lending. But never yet had any pang the power to pierce so keenly, That after the first shock was past, my soul could not serenely Bless God with deep, warm, gratitude; for every bitter sorrow, If recognized as sent by Him, joy's soothing light will borrow.

And well it is so, else my life had little worth desiring. For hopes of earthly happiness, for me, are all expiring: No prospect of delight is shown in years stretched out before me, But many threatening shadows cast a pall of sorrow o'er me. Youth's pleasant time is fleeting by,—sweet health long since departed And left no promise of return to cheer the heavy-hearted.

Yet this with many another grief, within my heart deep hidden, Must be accounted for all joy—so hath the Master bidden. My soul is willing to obey; but ah! the flesh thro' weakness, Too often clogs the readiness of humble faith and meekness. The earthly nature shrinks from pain, and cometh near despairing, Through ignorance and fearfulness, God's sternly kind chastising.

Still, while He sees his discipline alone can fit the Spirit For that fair realm of blessedness His children shall inherit, He will not, in His tender love, withdraw the keen correction We need to help us to make sure our calling and election; He will not raise his hand to quench the furnace of affliction 'Till we, refined and purified, have won its benediction!

Thou, Mighty Lord! wilt not despise a heart by trial broken. If contrite, then the healing word already hath been spoken. Sin is our only real foe, and when Thy grace hath stricken The poison source of all our woes, new life our souls will quicken; And with the human cry of pain in mystic concert blending, Shall sound the spirit-tone of joy, in praise to God ascending.

"JUDGE NOT."

In the village where my father is pastor, lives Miss Dora, a pious old lady, who serves the Lord with every action, and praises Him with every breath of her life, and who dwells quietly and peacefully among her neighbors. Several years ago, my father gave her ten dollars, with which to pay an old debt, contracted by her deceased brother, which weighed heavily on her faithful heart. To satisfy her scruples, he said, smiling: "When better times come, Miss Dora, you can repay the money,"—though the meaning of his words was contradicted by his quickly tearing up the written acknowledgment with which she had come prepared.

Tears of thankfulness stood in Dora's eyes; yet not by them alone, but by deeds, was her gratitude displayed.

It was but a short time after this, that the village gossips began to comment upon the unusual stinginess of Miss Dora's conduct; it was rumored that she was growing so miserably as not even to allow herself a morsel of meat throughout the whole week. Surprised at the report, so inconsistent with the known character of the pious woman, and knowing my father's warm partiality for her, I at first discredited it; but the facts which came to my ears, on good authority, led me at last, however unwillingly, to believe that it must be true.

Last year, a terrible conflagration occurred in the town of B—, the consequences of which, to many poor families, called for the assistance of all who possessed the means and the will to aid them. My father sent me to solicit charitable gifts among his people. As I was passing Dora's house, it occurred to me to call on the poor old woman, with the design, only half-acknowledged to myself, of judging perso-

nally of the truth or falsehood of the reports I had heard. She welcomed me most cordially, and I already began to feel ashamed of my mean suspicions, when dear old Dora, learning the motive of my visit, joyfully opened her little closet. I thought of the widow's mite; but just then, unfortunately, while the old woman's trembling hand counted out to me a shilling in pennies, my curious eye fell upon another little box, in which, among other silver coins, several hard dollars were shining. The sight pained me.

"Miserly indeed, then!" I thought, and took leave of the grey-haired cottager rather coolly.

What shame was in store for me! One afternoon, some months later, Dora came to my father with a very joyful face; taking from her pocket a little box, she counted out five dollars on the table before him, and, with a warm pressure of his hand, said, "Dear pastor, allow your old debtor the pleasure of repaying half your kind loan! oh, you cannot know, with what joy I have looked forward to this hour!"

My father urged her to take back the money, and pressed her to tell him how she had collected a sum so large for her,—well knowing that her tedious spinning scarcely sufficed to pay her rent and supply her daily necessities.

"It was very easy," said old Dora. "Instead of using the milk of my goat myself, I sold it. In the morning I drank water; for my dinner I had water soup, and learned to do without coffee, as well as without the piece of meat which I used to have every Sunday. So now, with two years' savings, I can pay you half the debt, without ever having had to refuse a morsel of bread to a beggar at my door. Oh, the same good and faithful Lord who never suffered the widow's cruse of oil to fail, nor her measure of meal to become empty, has extended His merciful hand over my poor cottage,—and though it is true I have sometimes been hungry, yet my strength has never given way—He will not leave me to starve!"

My father accepted with moistened eyes and a heart full of emotion, the return which her love and gratitude urged upon him,—who could have withstood her? Nor could she be by any means persuaded to consider the remainder of the debt as remitted.

Deeply ashamed of my thoughtless and short-sighted judgment, I felt heartily thankful to my father for the privilege of carrying to the pious Dora, the basket which my mother has every Saturday loaded with provisions from our store-room. In giving or receiving, her loving spirit is ever manifested. I shall not soon forget her cheerful look, when last week she showed me the first dollar she had been able to lay aside, toward the remaining half of the debt.

"It is very easy now for me to save, my dear Agatha," she said, since through the kindness of your parents, I am never hungry."

I could not but confess to her the story of my idle suspicions,—I wept, and begged her forgiveness.

Miss Dora laid her old, wrinkled hand kindly on my head, and said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged!"—*Reformed Church Messenger.*

ABBABOKRASADEKI.

This is not a common name, and some of my readers will, probably, not be able at once to pronounce it. I hope, however, they will be so much interested in what I am about to tell them, that they will try to master this hard word, and often call it to mind.

Abbaborasadeki was the son of a chief who lived on the western coast of Africa when the slave-trade was extensively carried on. Among those stolen by the wicked slave-hunters, from father and mother, home and friends, was this little boy. Whether the man-stealers had overcome his father, the chief, in battle, or whether they had surprised his native village during the night, or by some other treachery got possession of him, I do not know; but when eleven years of age he was torn away from all that was dear to him, driven down to the sea-coast, put on board a slave ship along with many others who shared the same unhappy lot, and carried over the wide waters, to spend the remainder of his days in cruel bondage, under the lash of the slave-driver. Happily such things are no longer done without an attempt to prevent them on the part of England and other strong nations; who have in a good measure succeeded in their benevolent work.

I must now tell you, in order that you may understand the following story, that in the country from which Abbaborasadeki was carried away, the chiefs, and those immediately about them, were accustomed to speak a language different from the common people; just as, in the courts of European nations, Kings and Queens, and the nobility, until quite lately, were in the habit of speaking the French language, whatever their own might be. This little boy, therefore, though so young, had learned a language which ordinary people did not understand; and this was one sign of his superior rank. This language was Arabic, one of the most ancient tongues in the world and one of the most widely-spread. It is spoken, or understood, by people in a superior condition of life, over a large part of the continent of Africa, as well as in Arabia and the East. This is owing to Arabo-speaking traders, some of whom Dr. Livingstone, the great

traveller, tells us he met with far in the interior of Africa, in most unexpected places, in the course of his journeys.

Through what sufferings Abbaborasadeki passed, on the voyage, in the stifling hold of the ship,—what he felt when he thought of the home from which he was stolen away,—brothers, sisters, mother, and father,—and of the freedom which he had now lost, apparently for ever,—I must not stay to tell you, or the history will be too long. On reaching the West Indies, having survived the dangers and horrors of the passage, he was sold to a planter, who owned a large estate and many slaves. Here he did his work so well, and betrayed such thoughtfulness, that he was soon put into a position of trust, and was thus relieved of the bodily toil and drudgery which others had to undergo. From one post to another the son of the African chief rose, until he was appointed book-keeper to the whole estate, in which office he became intimately acquainted with everything relating to his master's property.

You will be pleased when I tell you that Abbaborasadeki had kept up, as well as he could, in all his wanderings and sufferings, the knowledge of Arabic, which he had learned while very young. When left, as he now was, pretty much to himself,—for the planter reposed great confidence in him,—what did he do but keep the books in that strange language! I think, if you saw the written letters of its alphabet, you would be as much at a loss as Abbaborasadeki's owner was to understand a page, or a line, of his own accounts. After some time the master was in many respects, entirely in the hands of his slave, who knew all about his property better than he did himself. But though a slave, who had been so deeply wronged in his having been stolen, and sold and bought like the beasts that perish, he was faithful to his trust, and strove to do his duty to the satisfaction of his own conscience.

This was a pleasant change for the poor boy from the state in which he first reached the slave-plantation; but, better still, it by-and-by appeared that he had lost an earthly father to find a heavenly one, and an earthly home for the hope of a more enduring one—the "city which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God." You know what I mean. The Gospel of which he had never heard in Africa, he did hear proclaimed in the land of his bondage; and God's Holy Spirit brought it with power to his heart. When Abbaborasadeki was told of the "pearl of great price," he went, sold all that he had, and "bought it." He was converted, and was now happier than he had ever been before.

One day a slave-merchant called on the planter who showed him over his estate. On entering the counting-house, and casting his eyes on the books which lay open on the desk, the stranger was surprised at the appearance of the handwriting. He had never seen anything like it before, and, on coming close to examine the page, found he could not read a single entry in it. Some inquiry was made, when the master gave so high a character of his clerk, that the merchant there and then offered to purchase him at any price. Here was a sad blow to poor Abbaborasadeki, who feared that, if sold, he should not elsewhere be so well treated. But God did not permit his good character to be the means of throwing him into trouble and distress; for the planter refused to part with him on any terms whatever; and not only so, but not long after, in consideration of his faithful services, and as a proof of his high esteem, gave him his liberty, kindly keeping still in his employ, and paying him well for his services.

Abbaborasadeki was now more than recompensed, thanks to the providence of God which was over him, for his early bereavement and sorrows. He had crossed the ocean in bondage, but was at length his own master, and what was far better, he had been made spiritually free by the power of the Gospel which he had embraced. After some time, circumstances were so far altered, that his friend the planter seemed to have no further claim upon him. What do you suppose he now did? Take another situation, or set up in business for himself, or become a merchant? None of these things. His heart turned towards the land of his birth. Happily, he thought, his aged parents might still be alive; at all events, some of his nearest relatives would be; and, moreover, while he yearned for home and its associations, still so attractive, as seen to the eyes of his boyhood, he felt a strong desire to make known to his kindred and countrymen the "unsearchable riches of Christ." To do this he traversed the deep ocean more, at the hazard of again being seized by the man stealer, and again being sold into an involuntary servitude. The last tidings which the Missionary, who gave him history to the writer, had heard of him, many years ago, was, that "Abbaborasadeki had gone far away into the interior of the unexplored continent of Africa, preaching where the Gospel had never been heard, and where the white man had never trod." Whether he ever found his friends, father and mother, brothers and sisters, we cannot tell. Most likely the family had been diminished by death, or scattered by war and the ravages of the slave-dealer. But who can tell how many, beneath the sultry sun of the tropics, far away in dense forests, or wandering over the boundless plains of the interior of that unexplored land, have listened to the herald of the cross, so strangely sent to them

from the distant West, and have been made happy in the knowledge of the Saviour and the love of God!

I am sure, after you have read this history, you will feel grateful to God for His goodness to the friendless slave. You will also see once more, I think, the importance of treasuring up all useful knowledge you can; since, if you are bent upon improvement, and are industrious, it is certain to be at one time or another, of service either to yourselves or to others. It was not that Abbaborasadeki learned Arabic, but that he remembered and used it, which, under Providence, was the occasion of his obtaining such influence with his master, and of his gaining, ultimately, his own freedom.—*English Magazine.*

THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.

Since the publication of Gray's Elegy, the fifty-first Psalm of David has been translated into all the languages of the civilized world. New versions of it, in the English, French, and German tongues, have been multiplied beyond all former precedent. So soon as the language of a pagan tribe has been reduced to writing, it has been made the vehicle for carrying this Psalm to the Pagan mind. When the "Elegy" is translated, it parts with many of its original beauties; but this Psalm retains its glow and power when it is transferred to even the rudest language of the rudest men. It is the favorite Psalm of slaves and freemen, the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the learned. Some of the most beautiful passages in modern literature have been suggested by it; some of the choicest hymns in our devotional poetry are founded on it. Its words have been repeated by men as they were dying on the battle-field, in prisons, on the scaffold, and also by the kings of the earth as they were breathing out their life in their palaces, and by the ministers of religion as they were bidding farewell to their churches. It was the sacred poem of the Jews; it has been the still more sacred poem of Christians; it promises to be more and more the fresh utterance of good men in all tribes and all times.

In what manner, now, had David been educated for composing—and he had no leisure for spending eight years in composing—the Psalm which was to touch the sensibilities of the race? We first hear of him as pursuing the occupation ordinarily assigned "to females, or to slaves, or to the despised of the family." He is represented to us as carrying in his hand a switch or wand, and as carrying around his neck a scrip or wallet. We read of him as in a conflict with the lion and the bear, as fighting with the giant, as a busy warrior, a fugitive and outlaw, a statesman, a king. He lived in a dark and barbarous age, not only without the aid of universities and libraries, but without the stimulus of literary companions or a refined public sentiment. Still the poem which he indited will live, when the poem written by a master of the sciences and of the arts will have been forgotten, and the Psalm will speak to the heart of millions while the beautiful Elegy will be speaking to a select few, and the Psalm will be more highly prized, as the sentiment of man becomes the more choice and pure.

On what theory shall we explain this difference between the ancient and the modern poem? Various theories have been invented, but that one which most easily explains the disparity, is that the modern poet wrote under the impulse of his own genius, and under the influences of his multifarious learning; but the ancient poet was elevated above his own ingenuity by communion with the divine mind, and his powers were spiritualized by the inspiration of God, more than they could have been by the largest human erudition.—*Professor Park.*

COME TO JESUS.

CHRIST has waited long enough—too long—for you already. Accept him at once! When the leper came to him for healing, the Master bade him "go show himself to the priest," and report himself cured. The suffering creature did not stop to count his loathsome "scabs," or to pull off a single "scale" from his frightful face. He asked no questions either, but set off at once as directed; and we read that "as he went he was healed." The path of obedience was the path of his salvation. When Christ found Andrew, and James, and John on the lake-shore of Galilee, he said to them, "Follow me." They obeyed the authoritative call, and straightway followed him. He did not come twice after them, nor did he need to speak twice to them. They forsook their nets, their homes, their kindred, and entered at once upon a career of self-denying toil, which gradually grew into the mightiest-mission for God and humanity that was ever intrusted to mortal hands and hearts. Just imagine that those men had said no, instead of yes.

But they did not even sit down to weep over their sins, or stop to chaffer with the Saviour about the profits of the trade they were abandoning. The gripe of that command, "Follow me," was like the gripe of a hand of steel clothed in velvet; it was soft, but strong. They rose up, quit their nets, and set off immediately on a march of toil and humiliation, which led to martyrdom on earth, and to a crown of unfading glory in the presence of God and the holy angels.

You, too, must forsake your "net." It is your favorite sin. Perhaps many a sin; but often a single besetting sin is a "net" that entangles a soul in its meshes, and unless that net is forsaken, the soul cannot follow the Master. What is your net? God knows, and so do you. Perhaps others have seen your hindrance in a sparkling glass which fashion or appetite keeps on your table. Break that glass, or it may break your heart in the world of woe. We

have seen more awakened sinners drawn back to impenitence through the stress of sensual temptation than by any other device of the devil. The decanter, the card-table, and the play-house are damning more souls to-day than all the infidelity on the globe.

Perhaps your "net" is a complicity with dishonest dealing. You may be making money against the protest of conscience. Perhaps you are held back by fear of your associates; you seek to live on good terms with sinners, and to die on good terms with God. This cannot be done. He who takes up no cross shall wear no crown. But suppose that some irreligious friend does stare at you, or sneer; it may be that some other one may be startled out of his thoughtlessness by your fearless standing up for Jesus, and you may fear a soul unawares. Do right, and leave consequences to God.

We cannot specify all the "nets" of favorite sins, or indulged cavils and doubts, which our thousands of readers may be clinging to; no matter what the hindrance, so that it keeps you from Christ. A man may be crushed by an avalanche, or poisoned by an atom of strychnine; each one takes life! And the sin that keeps you from Jesus takes your life for all eternity!

The only true repentance is an abandonment of known sin. The only true faith is the entire yielding of the soul to Jesus for salvation. The two make up evangelical conversion. And sincere coming to Jesus embraces the two. This vital step may be attended with poignant distress of mind, or it may not. This will depend on your temperament and on the methods of the Holy Spirit's work. Do not be anxious about the degree of your distress. Tears do not save, Christ does. Wait for nothing. Wait for no one. Just begin to serve Jesus in the first duty that comes to your hand. Just refuse to do the first wrong thing to which you are tempted. Do this in prayer for divine help. You will get no help and no comfort while you remain with your "nets." Hasten to Jesus, and at once!—*T. L. Cuyler.*

WHY DISTURB THE SABBATH LAWS?

A writer in the "OLIVE BRANCH," Baltimore, advocates the maintenance of the old Sabbath laws, in Maryland, and shows the injustice and oppression of any legislation that should suspend or overthrow those laws. He says:—

"But the Sabbath, when properly observed, not only prevents dissipation, but affords the only opportunity for moral culture, that the masses, especially of minors and employees, can secure—and thus preserves us from the greater increase of pauperism and crime. Therefore, every tax payer is personally interested in the maintenance of the laws protecting the Sabbath. Even Adam Smith, the apologist of David Hume, induced Sir John Sinclair to destroy his work against a strict observance of the Sabbath, by the remark: 'Your book, Sir John, is very ably composed; but the Sabbath, as a political institution, is of inestimable value.'"

Let men, then, attach as little consideration to the observance of the Sabbath day, as a religious obligation, as they please—it concerns every wise citizen to be vigilant for the preservation of our Sunday laws, against the movements of those whose callings prey upon the vices of society, or of others seeking such partial legislation tending to the general injury and the deprivation of many from their rightful opportunity of improvement. Every exception legalized, like a hole in a vessel, but endangers the eventual sinking of the institution freighted with our civil, social, and moral interests."

MORAL USE OF WINTER.

Rev. Dr. Bushnell, in the *Hours at Home* for March, impressively sets forth the advantages of winter as an element of human culture. He says:—

I will name one other occasion, or contingency of winter, that sometimes takes a wonderfully strong hold of our religious instinct, and often produces effects more decisive than we trace ourselves. I speak of our winter funerals. To bury a friend in winter is a kind of trial that connects strange inward commotions of feeling which it is difficult to master. We have cleared away the snow and hewn a passage down through the solid pavement of the frost, and there, in that inhospitable place, we come to bury our departed, be it child or wife, or mother, or much loved friend. Our heart shudders, in convulsive chill, at the forlorn last offices we are come to perform. While our feeling is protesting, the solemnity, so-called, goes on, and before we have gotten our own consent, the "tribute of respect" is ended. The frozen chips of earth, loosened again by blows, are piled on the loved one's rest, and we return to go. "Will it storm to-night? The wind, alas! is howling even now in the trees, and the sleeting is already begun. O God, it shall not be! We were going to be fools; we see, but now the spell is broken. Our departed is not in that hole, and we scorn to say our farewell over it? Let the snows fall heavy, if they will, and the wind rage pitiless and wild above, ours it shall be to thank Thee, Father, Lord of the warmer clime, that our dead one lives with Thee." Practically almost nothing will more surely compel a faith in immortality, even if one chances to be unbelieving, than to bury a friend in the winter. And, as a matter of fact, it is not in the fresh, outbursting life of the spring, or in softer season of the year, that we think of immortality with half the tension that we do at the winter funerals. We ask it instinctively, as we do a fire for the cold.

"I do not ask to see The distant scene, one step enough for me."