The Family Circle.

LITTLE FEET.

Two little feet, so small that both may nestle
In one caressing hand—
Two tender feet upon the untried border
Of life's mysterious land;

Dimpled and soft, and pink as peach-tree blossoms
In April's fragrant days—
How can they walk around the briery tangles
Edging the world's rough ways?

These white-rose feet along the doubtful future
Must bear a woman's load;
Alas! since woman has the heaviest burden,
And walks the hardest road.

Love, for a while, will make the path before them
All dainty, smooth and fair—
Will cull away the brambles, letting only
The roses blossom there.

But when the mother's watchful eyes are shrouded
Away from sight of men,
And these dear feet are left without her guiding,
Who shall direct them then?

How they will be allured, betrayed, deluded,
Poor little untaught feet—
Into what dreary mazes will they wander,
What dangers will they meet?

Will they go stumbling blindly in the darkness
Of Sorrow's tearful shades?
Or find the upland slopes of Peace and Beauty
Whose sun-light never fades?

Will they go toiling up Ambition's summit,
The common world above?
Or in some nameless vale securely sheltered,
Walk side by side with Love?

Some feet there be which walk Life's track unwounded,
Which find but pleasant ways;
Some hearts there be to which this life is only
A round of happy days.

But they are few. Far more there are who wander
Without a hope or friend—
Who find their journey full of pains and losses,
And long to reach the end.

How shall it be with her, the tender stranger,
Fair-faced and gentle-eyed,
Before whose unstained feet the world's rude highway
Stretches so strange and wide?

Ah! who may read the future? For our darling
We crave all blessings sweet—
And pray that He who feeds the crying ravens
Will guide the baby's feet.

—*The Lady's Friend.* FLORENCE PERCY.

"SAYING THE CATECHISM."

The town of W——, in the old county of Hampshire, and good commonwealth of Massachusetts, exhibited, some forty years ago, several traits of the Puritanical character, one of which, more particularly, we would fain, by this article, fix and stereotype upon the memory of the present generation. The scene of our story lies partly upon the beautiful valley of the Connecticut and partly upon the hills which form the eastern slope of the Green Mountain range, which extends from Canada to Long Island Sound. Few towns in the Bay State are equal to it in scenic effect. The calm, serpentine Connecticut, searching its way to the ocean, Mount Tom, Mount Holyoke, Amherst College, Williston Seminary, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, several churches and smiling villages are distinctly visible from its loftier points of observation. It is far retired from all the cities of our country, and the simple primitive manners of the people were equally removed from the artificial habits of what is termed more polished life. The inhabitants were united, to a most unusual degree, both in politics and religion. At several gubernatorial elections Caleb Strong had all the votes of the town, with but two or three exceptions. In ecclesiastical polity, the people were almost to a man Congregationalists, and in theology they were unitedly Calvinists. Excepting one family, all observed Saturday evening as a part of holy time, and with great conscientiousness and strictness. The pastor of the church, and the only man in town who claimed to exercise the functions of the clerical office, was the Rev. Mr. H——. He was the minister of the place. In his early days his orthodoxy was not regarded of the highest tone, but repeated revivals of religion, and a deeper personal, experimental acquaintance with divine things, rendered his preaching during the last half of his protracted ministry more discriminating and evangelical. His habits were systematic and exact to a proverb. Every family in the neighborhood could regulate its long kitchen clock by the precise punctuality with which he would arrive to preach an appointed lecture. On the Sabbath, every man who was earlier or later than he at public worship, doubted the correctness of his own chronometer. It must be wrong, for Mr. H—— was in the pulpit sooner or later than they were in the pews. He was for many years the clerical officer of the General Association of Ministers of the State. On one occasion the meeting of the body was held seventy-five miles distant from his place of residence. Five minutes only were to elapse before the hour for opening the meeting would come. Speculation was rife as to the probability of his being there in season to attend to the duties of his office. One clergyman who knew him better than the rest, remarked that either the town-clock was wrong, or Mr. H—— would be there punctually at the appointed hour. Curiosity became intense; the interest was prodigious; but before the last minute expired Father H—— drove up and was in his place in the church.

Our readers have been already advertised of the great strictness with which his people observed the Sabbath. When Mr. H—— was settled among them he was ordained in a barn. The first meeting-house was built shortly after, and though it exhibited many symptoms of decay, and though old Boreas often treated himself to the music of the clatter of its doors, and windows, and shingles, it was still standing within our recollection. It was innocent of paint, and bell, and steeple, as well as of a sparse occupancy on the Sabbath. Rain or shine, snow or hail, lighting or thunder, the people were all there. The exercises were conducted with the greatest order and decorum. Father H—— carried his habits of system so far, that he used to read, and request his clerical brethren who occasionally preached for him, to read Watts' Psalms and Hymns *right straight through in course*, whatever might be their relevancy to the subject of the sermon. He always preached with his accurate watch lying on the pulpit before him, and as he used to pray with his eyes wide open, he was careful to cut his sermons and prayers to the prescribed length, and if the moment for closing either arrived when he was in the middle of a sentence, the remaining part was sure to be despatched in short metre.

Bass viol, violin, clarionet and bugle, those modern refinements in the music of some country congregations, had not yet found their way to W——. The only instrumental accompaniment was the shrill pitchpipe with which the leader gave the key-note of the tune, and in a tone somewhat like our modern steam-whistle, sufficiently loud to be audible over the whole house. Then the rude orchestra poured out its music to such fugue tunes as Majesty, Bridgewater, and Coronation, and in "strains," too, which if they were not quite so "sweet" as those which "angels use," were we doubt not, often acceptable to Gabriel and to God.

The pews of the old church were those large, high, square pens, which, as the parents sat below, and the children in the galleries, would seem to have been constructed for the especial convenience of the boys who might be disposed to play at meeting. A remedy for this evil however was at hand; for if any of the thoughtless urchins made too free an use of their hiding places the loud rap and the pointed finger of the stern tythingman instantly reduced them to order and fixed upon them a mark of disgrace never to be forgotten.

But we have detained our readers too long from "SAYING THE CATECHISM." Not that we expect that they can "say" it as well, if at all, as the youth in W—— in those golden times, but we wish to inform them how the heroes of our narrative "said" it, as the phrase then was. The Catechism was divided into three parts. The first part comprehended all between "What is the chief end of man?" and "the first Commandment." The second embraced all "the commandments," together with "what is required" and "what is forbidden" in them all, and "the reasons annexed for observing them." The third included all from the question, "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?" to the end. The Catechism was required by the public sentiment of the town to be perfectly committed to memory and publicly recited in the meeting-house by all the children and youth between the ages of eight and fifteen. These public recitations were held on three different Sabbaths, every year, with perhaps a fortnight intervening between them, to allow sufficient time for the children to commit to memory the division assigned.

When the time arrived for commencing the exercise, the excitement was tremendous. As the great battle of Trafalgar was about to commence between the immense fleets of England and France, Lord Nelson displayed at the mast-head of his flag-ship, the Victory, the exciting proclamation streaming in the wind, "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." That proclamation awoke all the national enthusiasm of his officers and men, and strung every nerve for awful conflict. Scarcely less imperative and exciting was the announcement from the pulpit by Father H——, "Sabbath after next, the first division of the Catechism will be recited here."

There was "no discharge in that war." Public sentiment demanded the most implicit obedience by all concerned. The old Catechisms were looked up, new ones bought, and parents set their children to the work at once and in earnest. Every question and every answer must be most thoroughly committed to memory, *verbatim, et literatim, et punctuatim.* The time for recitation was at the close of the afternoon service. All the children in the town, dressed in their "Sabbath-day clothes," were arranged, shoulder to shoulder, the boys on the one side and the girls on the other, of the broad aisle, beginning at the "deacon's seat," and extending down that aisle and round through the side aisles, as far as was necessary. The parents—"children of a larger growth"—crowded the pews and galleries, tremblingly anxious that their little ones might acquit themselves well. Father H—— occupied the pulpit, and put out the questions to the children in order, and each one, when the question came to him, was expected to wheel out of the line, *a la militaire*, into the broad aisle, and face the minister, and make his best obeisance, and answer the question put to him without the slightest mistake. To be *told*, that is, to be *corrected* by the minister, was not a thing to be permitted by any child who expected thereafter to have any reputation in that town for good scholarship. Many were the "knees" which "smote one against another" during that fearful process. In this manner, the three divisions of the Catechism were successively recited, and many are the persons who recollect, and will long recollect, the palpitating heart, the tremulous voice, the quivering frame, with which, for several years, they went throught that terrible ordeal.

But the *moral* influence of that exercise upon the youth of W—— was as salutary as its nervous effects were appalling. It indoctrinated them into the great truths of Christianity. They did not, of course, descend into the profound depths of the metaphysics of theology, but they became possessed of *the system* which was embraced by their fathers. They were not indeed prepared to

"Reason high,
Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate;
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,"

but their minds were so filled with the outline of revealed truth, they so well understood the character and government of God, and the method of salvation through a crucified Redeemer,

"That to the height of this great argument,
They could assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

In closing this article, the writer cannot but record his obligations to his parents, now, he trusts, in heaven, for their fidelity in requiring him, much against his will, to commit to memory the Assembly's Catechism, and to "say" it publicly for six or seven years in succession, in the old meeting-house in W——, amid tremblings and agitations, which he can never cease to remember.—*Mother's Magazine.*

LOVE IS THE BEST FORCE.

Once two little boys were on their way to school. They were brothers, and their names were John and Frank. John was the older of the two, and he liked to rule Frank by sharp words; but Frank did not like to be ruled in that way.

"Come on—quicker, quicker. What a slow coach you are!" said John.

"It is not late, and the day is hot," said Frank.

"I tell you I want to get to school in time to clean out my desk," said John. "Come! you *shall* come."

And then John tried to pull Frank along by main force; but, the more John pulled, the more Frank made up his mind not to yield.

While the dispute went on, they came to a place in the road where a man was trying to make a horse pull a great load of stones. The horse had stopped to rest, when the man began to beat him.

This the horse did not like, for he had tried to do his best; so he stood stock still. In vain did the man lay on the lash: the horse would not start. In vain did the man swear at him: the horse did not mind his oaths.

Just then a young man came up, and said to the man with the load of stones, "Why do you treat a good, brave horse in that way? He would pull for you till he died, if you would only treat him kindly. Stand aside, and let me show you how to treat a good horse."

So the man stood aside; and the young man went up, and put his arm round the neck of the horse, and patted him on the back, and said, "Poor old fellow! It was too bad to lash you so, when you were doing your best, and just stopped a moment to take breath."

And so the young man soothed the poor beast, by kind words and soft pats with his hand; and then said to him "Now, good old horse, see what you can do! Come sir! we have only a few steps more to the top of the hill. Get up now. Show you will do for love what you would not do for hate."

The horse seemed to know what was said to him; for he started off at a strong, brisk pace, and was soon at the top of the hill.

"There, my good friend," said the young man to the driver, "I hope you see now that *love is the best force*; that even beasts will do for you when you are kind, what they will not do when you are harsh."

John heard all these words, and they set him to thinking. At last he said to Frank; "It *is* a hot day, Frank; and it is not late. Let us walk through the lane to school."

"No, John," said Frank. "I will take the short cut, and will walk just as fast as you want me to. So come on."

"Frank," said John, "Love is better than hate,—isn't it?"

"Oh, a thousand times better!" cried Frank.

As chance would have it, they that day read in school a fable, two thousand years old, which I will now tell you.

The North Wind and the Sun had a dispute as to which could show the more strength. They agreed that the one that could strip a man first of his cloak should be the victor.

First North Wind tried his strength; he blew, and blew, with all his might; but, blow as hard as he could, he could not do much. The man drew his cloak round him more and more tight; he would not let it be torn from him. So at last the North Wind gave up the tug, and called on the Sun to see what *he* could do. The Sun shone out with all its warmth. The man could not well bear the heat; he soon grew so warm that he had to take off his cloak; and so the Sun became the winner in the trial.

Love has more strength than hate.
—*Nursery.*

HENRY WARD BEECHER AS A BOY.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her new book, "*The men of our times*," tells some incidents of the boyhood of her brother Henry. When he was eleven years old he was placed in his sister's school at Hartford. All the other pupils were girls. Here is a school scene.

The schoolroom was divided into two divisions in grammar, under leaders on either side, and the grammatical reviews were contests for superiority, in which it was vitally important that every member should be perfected. Henry was generally the latest choice, and fell on his side as an unlucky accession—being held more amusing than profitable on such occasions.

The fair leader on one of these divisions took the boy aside to a private apartment, to put into him with female tact and insinuation those definitions and distinctions on which the honor of the class depended.

"Now Henry, A is the indefinite article, you see—and must be used only with the singular number. You can say *a man*—but you can't say *a men*, can you?" "Yes, I can say *Amen* too," was the ready rejoinder. "Father says it always at the end of his prayers."

"Come, Henry, now don't be joking; decline He." "Nominative he, possessive his, objective him." You see, his is possessive. Now you can say, his book—but you can't say him book." "Yes, I do say hymn book, too," said the impracticable scholar, with a quizzed twinkle. Each one of the sallies made his young teacher laugh, which was the victory he wanted.

"But now, Henry, seriously, just attend to the active and passive voice. Now 'I strike' is active, you see, because if you strike you do something. But 'I am struck' is passive, because if you are struck you don't do anything, do you?"

"Yes, I do—I strike back again!"

Sometimes his views of philosophical subjects were offered gratuitously. Being held rather of a frisky nature, his sister appointed his seat at her elbow, when she heard her classes. A class in natural philosophy, not very well prepared, was stumbling through the theory of the tides. "I can explain that," said Henry. "Well, you see, the sun catches hold of the moon and pulls her, and she catches hold of the sea and pulls that, and this makes the spring tides."

"But what makes the neap tides?"

"O, that's when the sun stops to spit on his hands," was the brisk rejoinder.

After about six months, Henry was returned on his parents' hands with the reputation of being an inveterate joker and an indifferent scholar. It was the opinion of his class that there was much talent lying about loosely in him if he could only be brought to apply himself.

HUMOROUS EXPOSITION OF BUCKLE'S "CREED."

This is the creed (let no man chuckle)
Of that great thinker—Henry Buckle.

I believe in fire and water,
And in Fate, dame Nature's daughter;
Consciousness I set aside;
The dissecting knife's my guide.
I believe in steam and ice,
Not in virtue nor in vice;
In what strikes the outward sense,
Not in mind nor Providence;
In a stated course of crimes;
In Macaulay and the Times.
As for truth, the ancients lost her;
Plato was a great imposter.
Morals are a vain illusion,
Leading only to confusion.
Not in Latin or in Greek
Let us for instruction seek;
Fools like Bossuet that might suit,
Who had better have been mute.
Let us study snakes and flies,
And on fossils fix our eyes.
Would we know what men should do,
Let us watch the kangaroo;
Would we learn the mental march,
It depends on dates and—starch.
I believe in all the gases
As a means to raise the masses;
Carbon animates ambition;
Oxygen controls volition;
Whate'er is good or great in men
May be found in hydrogen;
And the body—not the soul—
Governs the unfathered whole.

—*Prof. Edward Forbes.*

DO IT WELL.

"There, that'll do," said Harry, throwing down the shoe-brush, "my boots don't look very bright. No matter. Who cares?"

"Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well," replied a serious but pleasant voice.

Harry started and turned round to see who spoke. It was his father. Harry blushed. His father said, "Harry, my boy, your boots look wretchedly. Pick up your brush and make them shine. When they look as they should, come to me in the library."

"Yes, pa," replied Harry, pouting, and taking up his brush in no very good humor, and brushing the dull boots until they shone nicely. When the boots were polished, he went to his father, who said to him,—

"My son, I want to tell you a short story. I once knew a poor boy whose mother taught him the proverb, 'Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well.' That boy went to be a servant in a gentleman's family. He took pains to do everything well, no matter how trivial it seemed. His employer was pleased and took him into his shop. He did his work well there.

When he swept out the shop, he did that well. When he was sent on an errand, he went quickly, and did his errand faithfully. When he was told to make out a bill, or to enter an account, he did that well. This pleased his employer, so that he advanced him from step to step, until he became head clerk, then a partner, and now he is a rich man, and anxious that his son Harry should learn to practice the rule which made him prosper.

"Why, pa, were you a poor boy once?"

"Yes, my son, so poor that I had to go into a family and black boots, wait at table, and do other little menial services for a living. By doing these things well I was soon put, as I have told you, to do things deemed more important. Obedience to the proverb, with God's blessing, made me a rich man."

Harry never forgot the conversation. Whenever he felt like slighting a bit of work, he thought of it, and felt spurred to do his work properly. *Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well*, cheered him in his daily duties.

I commend the proverb to every lazy boy and girl. I hope it will make little Annie Careless do better sewing, make better progress with her music lessons, and take better care of her room. I hope, too, that Tom That'll do will stir himself, and show that he regards the proverb by doing his work so well, that there will be no need for those complaints which are made about him every day. O Tom, Tom, you will never be worth a shilling to yourself or anybody else if you don't mend your ways by learning to do your work well. Do you hear that, Tom? *Yes.* Very well, then, *do* as well hear.

CENTRAL IDEA OF ETHICS.

The central idea of the Christian ethics is, that advantage comes of service rendered to others, and not of service extorted from them. It is the answering tone of the string that is genially touched, and not the harsh twang of the string that is cut or broken. The Christian ideal is service; life bestowed for the happiness of others; life so given not lost, but successful, loved, full of power, transfigured, taken up to the presence of God, and sharing with Him eternal beatitude. It is the supremacy of spiritual forces; the impossibility of suppressing love for that which is lovable, of treating successful hatred for that which is not hateful, of causing that to be mortal which is in its nature immortal; the utter nonsense and futility of attempting to thwart the vital forces of the universe, and of attempting to make mankind think and feel contrary to the nature of man. If this central idea of Christian ethics has made slow progress in its application to the lives of individual men, so has other knowledge. It is as much against first impressions as the truth that the earth is not flat, but round; and that it revolves around the sun, instead of the sun around it. Like other kinds of knowledge, it has been mixed with every species of error, and seen through the medium of every human infirmity. Many who have professed to teach it, have seen it but faintly, and have shaped their lives as if it had been something else. If it had been a vital force, instead of an inanimate truth, it might have been lost. But while lingering feebly as a sentiment in the churches, the pressure of wide ranges of experience has given it a firm footing in diplomatic statesmanship as an economy; and a general advance of knowledge has compelled the nations to adopt it as a practical means of self-preservation. It is, to-day, the force which commands peace between nations, between classes, and between individuals. The Christian ethics is the basis of the Law of Nations, and the ideal of polite manners.

VULGARITY OF LOUD TALKING.

A correspondent of the *Liberal Christian* says: I see in your excellent paper a little paragraph on good manners, in which spitting and lounging is described as proofs of a semi-barbarous state of society; and I must beg leave to notice another peculiarity of our social manners, equally indicative of a low state of civilization. I allude to loud talking and screeching laughter. This is so peculiar to Americans that they are known by it in Europe, and, as well-bred people, they never tolerate it. Even in the most social circles it is considered a mark of ill-breeding, belonging only to the lowest class.

Aside from this conventional protest against it, there is a regular objection to it, in the injury it does to the vocal organs. Talking through the evening at the top of the voice is very painful and fatiguing, and yet the noise made by the whole company is so great that no one can be heard who speaks low, or in a natural tone. Many throats are made sore and many heads are made to ache by the unnecessary noise, and persons subject to bronchitis are obliged to avoid it entirely. In all European society the voice is kept lower than usual in large parties, and a general hum prevails, in which every person is easily heard by those he addresses. The loudness of Americans is very marked, and produces disgust and indignation when it breaks the stillness of picture galleries and other public places where nothing but whispers are ever allowed. When a loud voice is heard from an American traveler every one is startled and looks round to see whence it comes, and the comments on this breach of good manners are very severe.

DANGER OF REVERIE.

Do anything innocent rather than give yourself to reverie. I can speak on this point from experience. At one period of my life I was a dreamer and a castle-builder. Visions of the distant future took place of present duty and activity. I spent hours in reverie. I suppose I was seduced in part by physical debility. But the body suffered as much as the mind. I found, too, that the imagination threatened to influence the passions, and that if I meant to be virtuous I must dismiss my musings. The conflict was a hard one; I resolved, prayed, resisted, sought refuge in occupation, and at length triumphed. I beg you to avail yourself of my experience.—*Channing.*

NOT A CHRISTIAN.—"I am not prepared to unite with the church; I am not a Christian." And why are you not? Has God prevented you? Can you cast the blame on him? And if it rests on yourself will you make your sin your excuse?—Not a Christian! And yet the seal of God's covenant may be upon you! Thus he challenges a right to you. He claims you as his; and will you resist his claims, and refuse to give him your heart? Not a Christian! Then you are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity—yet in your sins, yet under the curse of the law—condemned—exposed to eternal death! How long will you thus continue? Is it not time for you to see the Lord?