

The Family Circle.

"HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS."

By the still waters lead me, for I thirst,
 And my overheated brow I fain would lave;
 And O permit me, Holy Shepherd, first
 To see thy face reflected from the wave.
 Beside mine own, that so my soul may know
 These are the sources whence all healings flow.

By the still waters lead me! I am faint
 With my long journeying through the heat;
 And my white robes have caught the dust,
 I fain would hide from the revelling throng;
 But thou, O Saviour! canst these sorrows strew;
 In those pure waters where the sorrows strew;
 I feel the rod,
 By the still waters lead me no more unknown;
 A way both dark and long to be
 And to my spirit at rest with thee.
 Nor failed
 But now I feel God's will be done!
 By the still waters lead me, He has laid
 His burden on my race he run
 To get whereon my hope is stayed,
 Ours, guide, control me till I stand
 In the still waters in thine own bright land.

—Christian Register.

FROM THE MORAVIANS USED TO MARRY.

It caused no little sensation throughout the whole of that quiet Moravian settlement, especially among the Sisterhood, when it was announced that wives had to be provided for five missionaries, besides two lay resident Brethren. No marriage had been solemnized in the place since the commencement of the war; for the Society, with their characteristic prudence, discouraged matrimony in such troublous times, unless contracted under circumstances which perfectly justified it as necessary. This, together with the unusual number of candidates offering, caused more than ordinary excitement upon the subject.

Of the latter Brethren, one was the warden of the congregation, while the other, the only store-keeper allowed in the place. These two offices were frequently held by the same individual; but, on account of the onerous duties of the former in this place, there was this division of labor. In those days of the Church, the brotherly feeling prevalent in the Society did not permit more of them to conduct any kind of business in any of their settlements than could readily find a support from it—and no competition was allowed, lest it might produce unpleasant results.

Three of the missionaries had arrived in the settlement, while the other two, not being able conveniently to leave their stations, requested their partners to be sent to them.

This last arrangement very much astonished Elsie.

"Surely, Rosalie, you must manage differently in such cases than with the others, since it cannot be possible you should be able to know how to select for such individuals, more especially if they are not personally known to any of your Conference, and are strangers to most of the rest of you."

"These cases are only stronger exemplifications of our childlike faith and confidence in our Lord," she answered; "and our Brethren who make such an application, fully resign themselves to this peculiar way of ascertaining His holy will, and are prepared to follow implicitly what they suppose to be heavenly direction. Hence they do not reserve to themselves the right of refusing any Sister who is proposed—and the proposition, of course, is first submitted to the Sister. The Conference proceed in such cases somewhat differently from the usual manner. They make a question to ascertain whether the Saviour approves of such a Sister for this or that Brother."

"Well are your Sisters found equally willing to consent to this arrangement?"

"They generally are."

"Then how do you proceed farther?"

"The Sister who is chosen is immediately informed of the decision. She is not bound, however, to accept it, but is taught to consider it a solemn call from God, to try herself before Him. She seeks by prayer to know the Divine will, and then acts according to the impressions she receives."

"But what a wonderful degree of faith and resolution it must require to enable a delicate, sensitive woman to go thus forth to wed a stranger, whom perhaps after all she cannot like."

"The same is the case, you know, with royal marriages," replied Rosalie, "the only particular difference between the two, being rank, station, position, and wealth in the one, and self-denial, poverty, with, perhaps, suffering in the other."

"But yet their situations are not so similar as you represent, methinks," continued Elsie, "for, if I understand you, the Brethren who are thus supplied with wives, have sometimes no knowledge whatever, even of the names of their chosen partners, until they appear before them; whereas, on the contrary, the other party not only know of theirs, but themselves solicit the alliance."

"I grant I did not take this view of the matter when I spoke. And yet our Sisters are asked, and that, too, by a monarch greater than an earthly potentate,—One who has loved us with an everlasting love; and, impelled by his sacred impulses, we feel bound obediently to submit to our Saviour's leading—to throw off all our natural timidity, and readily, cheerfully, to sacrifice every private, personal feeling—and we enter upon our calling sustained with His support and blessing."

Among the single Sisterhood, especially the junior portion of them, notwithstanding their apparent efforts to the contrary, it directly became evidently manifest, that these contemplated marriages were a subject of intense interest. It was attended, however, with this peculiarity—that the heart of each

of these maidens did not partake for herself alone, but for all course, most interested in herself, and in the matter. of personal contentments they generally entertained a wholesome fellowship of sympathy and personal character of their long them; yet their hearts throbbled with the same feelings, and thrilled with kindred emotions of anxious expectancy.

The day but two preceding the eventful one when these marriages were to be brought before the Conference, was the Sabbath day.

The whole of the Sisterhood were in their appointed seats at church at all the services—thus giving the Brethren whose fates would probably be linked with some of that loving company, an opportunity of seeing them. The rule of the Society, forbidding to the young people even the casual glance to the opposite side of the church, was not on this day enforced, simply because it could not be. Each party seemed to take advantage of this rare liberty, and it is a question which did it the most. Certainly the Brethren took a more extensive range, while the gaze of the Sisterhood was almost concentrated upon the present candidates for matrimony among their dear Brethren.

There they sat, all the youthful maidens of that Moravian Sisters' House, arrayed in their most becoming attire, to be looked at, and inquired of, by the expectant bridegrooms—each of whom had one or two friends beside him to answer the interrogatories he chose to make concerning any particular Sister.

And now, for the space of the brief interval to this important pending event, the excitement visibly increased. What added to this feeling, was the discovery that one or two of these dear Brethren were more than usually desirable.

The eldest of the single Sisterhood, during this period, was a personage of very great importance in the place; for she prepared the list of Sisters, and much reliance was placed upon her judgment in the selection, as well as the opinion she expressed of each of them and their suitability for the partners proposed to them. Some of the interested sought now to propitiate her favor.

Conspicuous among that group of candidates for matrimonial felicity was Annie Dohleman, now twenty-eight years of age. She possessed some good qualities, but other very bad ones—being a tattler, busy-body, and deceptive—disposed to scatter the fire-brands of mischief among her associates, with whom she mingled as the only black sheep. Of course she had few friends. This Sister was one of those spinsters who remain single from necessity, and not from choice. She was exceedingly anxious to be married. Suddenly, a change came over her—she was metamorphosed into a kind and amiable woman—so affectionate and considerate to her companions—so pious and devout in her religious duties, and so filially attentive to her dear elders.

In appearance, she was rather fine-looking, of a good figure, dressed neatly, and possessed a very loud, clear voice. She now indulged the hope, that among so many chances, she would certainly have an opportunity to get a husband. She desired to be the wife of a missionary, and to commend herself to these dear Brethren. She used her vocal powers to her best ability—appeared devotedly pious—spoke in laudatory terms of the missionary life, and her hope to be called to that service. But although, perhaps, she might have been sincere when she thus talked, her conduct was, at the same time, so indiscreet, as to increase the prejudice against her. But loudly, on that memorable Sabbath, did she raise her voice, to sing her way into favorable notice.

The elderess, a very sagacious old lady, saw through her manoeuvres, and only quietly smiled.

The important time at length arrived when all these marriages were to be arranged.

That of missionaries, and others holding official situations among the Moravians, required the sanction of the Unity's Elders' Conference, or of one of the Provincial Helpers' Conferences, which convened in this settlement for that purpose.

The elderesses of the Sisters were both present—the single Sisters' elderess bringing with her the list she had made, which was presented to the presiding officer.

After mature deliberation, and fervent prayer for spiritual guidance, reverently and solemnly they proceeded to propose partners for their dear missionary Brethren. These did not allow themselves to have any preference for any particular Sister; the selection of their companions for life being left entirely to the decision of the Church. Susan Stoltz and Mary Weiss were drawn, and accepted by two of the missionaries then in the place, while Sophy Dohleman and Christiana Huber were the chosen brides of the absentees.

The other missionary, three or four years before, had been to this Conference upon the same errand, when he desired very much to propose for Rosalie Steinberg. Being something of a naturalist, he fancied they possessed kindred minds. But her opinion did not coincide with his. She accidentally heard his intention to ask for her, but through the influence of her father prevented it from being tried by the "lot." Afterwards, he proposed successively for several others of the Sisters, who either refused him or were negatived by the "lot"—so that he was obliged to go to his field of labor unblest with a helpmate. Dissatisfied in being thus thwarted in his wishes, the unhappy and unfortunate man now desired them to try it again—yet, with no better success; and, after several failures, he withdrew his name, resolved to make the same application in another Set-

tlement—for a bachelor he was determined not to be any longer, if he could help it.

In truth, though in many respects a worthy man, he had spoken so foolishly and imprudently in the place, of the manner he meant to manage his wife, as to render him so very unpopular among the Sisterhood, that those who were asked could not be induced to marry him. However, his words proved to be nothing more than idle talk—for when he at last succeeded in obtaining this long-sought treasure, never was a man more thoroughly under petticoat government than he—ay, and I am told appeared to like it well too, being, he said, "superlatively happy." But I am anticipating and must return to where I left off in my story.

It was early in the evening of the day subsequent to the preceding occurrence. The younger portion of the Sisters were all assembled in their usual apartment, either engaged in sewing, knitting or in other useful occupation. The journals of some of their missionaries, which had been sent for their perusal, were just being read by one of their senior associates, when the door softly opened and the confidential attendant of their elderess quietly came in. Expectation being on tiptoe, and the Sisterhood knowing her errand, no sooner did they perceive her than an excitement was directly visible upon the countenances of all that gathered band. She paused a moment, then smiled—

"What you are reading is really very interesting," said she; "don't you think so, my dear Susan Stoltz?" looking significantly at her as she spoke.

Susan replied by simply saying "yes;" then immediately rose and left the room.

By and by the same messenger returned, walked up to Mary Weiss, and while apparently looking at her work whispered something in her ear, when she too retired; afterwards again, twice did this little woman re-enter in like manner, to summon the other two chosen brides.

Each of these maidens were first very affectionately greeted by their elderess; next invited to a seat—then told that by the direction of our Lord she was commissioned to propose Brother (mentioning his name) to be her husband; adding, that it was a high honor to be called to serve the Saviour—and in giving her hand to a servant of the Church she would be enabled to do so in a very efficient manner; that she sincerely hoped and prayed, if she consented to this proposal, she would earnestly seek for Divine support and assistance, to enable her faithfully to discharge all the duties appertaining to it. She recommended to each of them to make the matter a subject of frequent fervent prayer, and not to come to a decision without the most serious reflection; some time being allowed them to resolve the proposition. In the meanwhile they were informed of the duties required of them; how they would be situated at their respective stations, and whatever was known of the character and disposition of their offered husbands.

The following Sabbath not any of these chosen Sisters had as yet given her decision. The congregation assembled, as was their wont, in church; among them the drawers and the drawn in that matrimonial lottery; no marvel again there were wandering eyes, and beating hearts which throbbled with peculiar feelings—not with the grosser ones of an earth-born love, but kindled from the altar of religious faith, and glowing with intense devotion to God.

The evening succeeding this, there was a clustering around that little band of chosen brides; when with much emotion, one and all of these devoted ones solemnly declared their determination of accepting their professed destiny, and were happy in the prospect of being usefully employed in the service of their dear Lord and Master.

This had already been communicated by their elderess to the Conference, who immediately sent the intelligence to the bridegrooms elect.

Soon afterwards came the betrothal; when, in presence of the Conference, their elderess, and mutual friends, the parties were solemnly pledged to their destined partners, and each gave her right hand successively to the different members of the Board a token of their having consecrated themselves to their sacred work. Then a prayer, especially applicable for the occasion, was made, followed by an appropriate hymn. Refreshments succeeded. After partaking of these, the newly betrothed received the blessing and congratulations of the whole assembly.

This meeting was generally the introductory interview between those who had in such a peculiar manner plighted their faith to each other. A short season only, commonly not more than a week, for further acquaintance, usually intervened ere they were married, during which interval both parties were obliged by their rules to be so guarded in their conduct, that it must have been painfully embarrassing, and surely it could scarcely be denominated a courtship.

Such, in brief, I believe to be a true and unvarnished history of the whole course of procedure formerly adopted by the Primitive Moravians, in settling their matrimonial destinies.

It has been the theme of many an idle jest,—often excited the speculation of the curious; and been a marvel to a wondering world; giving, at the same time, a degree of, romantic interest to the people themselves who practised it.

I wish to speak of it with becoming reverence. I admit that it appears singularly unnatural to the general mind to marry thus; but, be it remembered that most of these devoted people possessed a simple, child-like, confiding faith which enabled them, in an astonishing manner, to crush their own wills and desires, and to rely entirely upon Divine direction in every event of their lives.

There were cases, too, and they not unfrequently happened, I have been informed, where, if the individuals concerned had

consulted in the usual manner, they would have made the same choice as the "lot" decided; but not so with regard to all the maidens of whom I have been writing; nevertheless, neither of them had any fears or misgivings about their fitness for each other, nor had a doubt of their future happiness. They were willing to shelter themselves under the canopy of domestic and social love, without deeming it necessary to realize much more than an ideal impression of the nature of this sentiment.

They considered their marriages as being made in heaven,—and surely love, in its purest state, would necessarily follow in a connection thus appointed. Hence they could not only calmly and trustfully consent to a union thus formed, but could willingly relinquish all other ties of kindred and association, and accompany their partners to a distant land. Yea, and two of their numbers had not even seen their chosen companions for life. Hence they could not possibly entertain for them a stronger feeling than respect, with perhaps a large share of that sympathizing interest which I have mentioned as so prominently characteristic of the Moravian community in the primitive times of their Church.

One of these brides, Sophy Dohleman, left a fond and widowed mother, who would then be bereft of all her children, every one being employed in the missionary field. She resigned them cheerfully, because of the work they were to be engaged in. And now, when age and feebleness were come upon her, she would be a childless mother. This good woman was but one of many examples which might be quoted of the self-sacrificing, self-denying spirit which then prevailed among the Moravians.

Immediately after the marriages of the missionaries were decided, the other Conference met to choose mates for the warden and store-keeper. The same solemnities were observed as on the previous occasion. The "lot" was first used in behalf of the former Brother. He selected Rosalie Steinberg, but the "lot" drew a negative. Of this he was immediately informed. He regretted it very much, as he very highly esteemed her. He then mentioned Wilhelmina Leitner. To this some objection was made, on account of her tender age, and the recent affair with Lieutenant Morris. But the warden still desiring it, she was proposed, and the "lot" decided in the affirmative.

Her parents were pleased with this proposal, but pleaded her youth as a reason for refusing their consent to an immediate marriage,—besides, they urged the necessity of more time to eradicate the impressions of her previous attachment. They were both well acquainted with the warden, whose excellent character they appreciated; and considering him a very suitable match for their only child, resolved that if he would consent to wait awhile, they would then willingly bestow her on him, provided Wilhelmina was not averse to it. To this the warden agreed.

The "lot" declared in favor of Catharine Englarth for the store-keeper. She was a very amiable and deserving young Sister, of whom her elderess, and all who knew her, spoke favorably. But this Brother, though he had seen her among the Sisterhood, was so slightly acquainted with her appearance that he could not distinguish her at all from the others. However, after some inquiries, and an opportunity to notice her in particular, he returned a favorable answer. The proposal was then submitted to her. It was an excellent offer to the poor girl, and, after a little hesitation, she accepted it.

These triple marriages were soon after all solemnized.

In the celebration of their marriages, the primitive Moravians were as peculiar as in their preliminary arrangements; but they did not all observe exactly the same ceremonial. I am speaking now of the way they were conducted in their settlements, where, shut out from the rest of the world and with all their usual officials about them, they could and did manage their affairs just as they pleased.

This ceremony always took place in church, before the whole congregation. The brides were dressed with scrupulous neatness. When their toilet was completed, these maidens were received by their elderess, who took them to the elderess of their married Sisters, to whom she formally delivered them. This lady gave them a kindly greeting, and, at the given time, conducted each of them separately into the church, where simultaneously their intended husbands were escorted by the elder of the same choir. Here the congregation and minister had previously assembled; the respective friends of the parties occupying the most prominent situations in the front.

Their entrance was announced by the organ and violin, together with various wind instruments, sounding forth what might be termed a religious epitalamium. Just before the table fronting the pulpit a sufficient number of chairs were placed for the different couples, whether they were wed and seated—the brides on the one side, the grooms on the other—while the brides-elect sat together at the head of the front bench, directly next the wedding group.

The officiating clergyman gave out a hymn. Afterwards he first addressed the assembly, and then these couples. This done, the following verse, or another of a like import, was sung antiphonically:

All. "Thee, God of love and peace,
 We magnify and praise,
 Jesus, who on the cross
 Didst bleed and die for us:
 In thy salvation we rejoice,
 And give Thee praise with heart and voice."

Sisters. "Conscious that all the happiness
 We in the married state possess,
 Flows solely, gracious Lord, from
 Thee;
 For this Thy name we glorify. Amen."

On the singing of the last line, the minister slowly left his place, and advanced towards the marrying party; the elder and

elderess of the married people doing the same. The latter laid with her a small parcel neatly put up in white paper, which, when she neared the brides, she carefully opened. It contained some bright blue ribbon. Hereupon the minister asked them the usual questions; afterwards he joined the hands of the respective parties. Then the elderess herself untied the ribbon of the caps of her young Sisters (they always wore caps in church, when the pink ribbon of maidenhood was exchanged for the blue one of matrimony). The elder and elderess gave the kiss of peace, the former to the grooms and the latter to their brides; after which the minister blessed the newly-wedded, commending them and the lone brides of the distant missionaries to the prayers of the whole assembly. Then this hymn, or a similar one, was sung:

"Since thou, O Lord, with thine own hand
 Hast tied our sacred marriage band,
 Grant that thy dying love may be
 The source of our felicity.
 Our souls and bodies, Lamb of God,
 Besprinkle with thy precious blood;
 Subdue what's carnal, by thy death,
 That Godly we may live by faith.
 With mouth and hand our choir to thee
 Vows homage and fidelity,
 Till we our heavenly home shall gain:
 Thereto, Lord Jesus, say Amen."

And now this service was over. Congratulations followed, and then the congregation scattered. Afterwards a more private meeting was held, where only the relatives and friends of the parties were present, together with all the members of the Conference; when wine and other refreshments were served, and friendly conversations were for a period indulged in.

A few days only elapsed after this, when the missionaries departed for their fields of labor, the two brides-elect accompanying the newly married couples to the West Indies, where they were, in due time, united to their stranger bridegrooms.

THE TWO ARMIES.

There are two little armies,
 On the world's great battle-field;
 Though unnoticed oft by mortals,
 To the eyes of God revealed.
 Though we hear no shouts of triumph,
 Though we hear no fearful fray,
 Though little armies battle
 For the Right, or Wrong, each day,
 The Right, or Wrong, each day.

They must fight; no ground is neutral;
 And watch the sides they take;
 One little army chooses
 To fight for truth's dear sake;
 The banner floating over it
 Rises grandly up to view;
 And I read this glorious motto:
 "Fighting for the Good and True;
 The Beautiful and True."

How brave that little army!
 What a halo o'er it shines!
 And even angels welcome
 Every soldier to its lines;
 How sweet the stirring music
 Of the tramp of little feet,
 That in God's holy highway,
 Swirl upward, upward beat;
 Onward, and upward beat.

Alas! the other army,
 'Neath a gloomy flag unfurled,
 Marches with the ranks of evil;
 Treads the dark ways of the world;
 Not for the True and Beautiful,
 Does it grow brave and strong;
 For lo! upon its banner
 I read, "Fighting for the Wrong;
 Old, surly-hearted wrong."

—The Little Corporal.

THE KEEPING OF THE HEART.

In praying against sins of the lips, let us in every case go to the root of the mischief, and pray against those sins of the heart, out of which these others spring; else we may make more accomplished hypocrites of ourselves, but not more perfect Christians. We pray that we may not speak uncharitably; but oh! let us pray that we may not think uncharitably; that the law of love may not be on our lips only, but in our hearts. There are some cautious persons who exercise much self-restraint upon themselves in not speaking unkindly of others, because they feel that in so doing they should blemish their Christian reputation; but they make up for it by hard, cruel, uncharitable thoughts, which they keep to themselves in the deep of their hearts. We pray that we may not speak proud things, with our lips; but if we confine ourselves to this, it may really be only a prayer that we may not ourselves come to any open shame, lowering ourselves by vaunting, vain-glorious speeches in the estimation of others. But he who is rightly praying to be delivered from the lips of pride, as sinful before God, will at the same time make his prayer to be delivered from the heart of pride. His desire will not be, to seem humble, which is only a subtler pride, but to be humble; to be a man of humble speech, because he is first a man of humble thoughts; to be clothed with the garment of humility within as well as without. So, again, every Christian well needs hate impure lips: he will pray that at no unguarded moment of his life any word may escape him, growing out of the corruption which is in the world through lust. But what is this unless he is also asking for a clean heart? What were he who should be content if only his words were pure words, and should at the same time entertain, or even invite, thoughts and imaginations of impurity and uncleanness? What, indeed, but a whitened sepulchre, decent indeed and fair without, but full of all filth and rottenness within? Seek, then, I beseech you, to make thorough work here. Strive, pray, cry, that in this, as in every thing else, the root of the matter may be in you. If you pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, at the door of my lips," or, "Deliver me, O God from lying lips and a deceitful tongue," remember that behind each and every such prayer there should lie another prayer; which is this, "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me."

—Trench.