

The Family Circle.

THE ANGELS' SONG AT THE CALL OF DAVID.

"And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.'"

Latest horn of Jesse's race  
Wonder lights thy bashful face,  
White the Prophet's gift of oil  
Seals thee for a path of toil.  
We, thy Angels, circling round thee,  
Ne'er shall find thee as we found thee,  
When thy faith first brought us near  
In thy lion-fight severe.

Go! and mid thy flocks awhile  
At thy doom of greatness smile;  
Bold to bear God's heaviest load,  
Dimly guessing of the road,  
Rocky road and scarce ascended,  
Though thy foot be angel-tended.

Two-fold praise thou shalt attain,  
In royal court and battle-plain;  
Then comes heart-ache, care, distress,  
Blighted hope, and loneliness,  
Wounds from friends and gifts from foe  
Dizzied faith, and guilt, and woe;  
Lost'est aims by earth d-fled,  
Gleams of wisdom sin-legalized,  
Sated power's tyrannic mood,  
Counsels shared with men of blood,  
Sad success, parental tears,  
And a dreary gift of years.

Strange, that guileless face and form  
To lavish on the scarring storm!  
Yet we take thee in thy blindness,  
And we buffet thee with kindness;  
Little chary of thy fame,  
Dust unborn may bless or blame,  
But we would thee for the root  
Of man's promised healing fruit,  
And we would thee hence to rise,  
As our brother, to the skies.

Met 1858. J. H. Newman.

THE TWO CROWNS.

Shall I tell you, children, of a dream or vision that I had once? There is nothing so terrible in it that you will be frightened and wish you had never heard it, for if you can carry its end in your mind, as I do it will leave only a sweet remembrance with you.

There appeared before me a vast tract of country. Mountains, with steep, rugged sides; scorched, sandy plains; deep valleys, filled with dark, dense forests; dismal, low swamps, covered with tangled briars and thick undergrowth; and green meadows, with peaceful waters, blossoms, and singing birds—all were stretched out in this diversified landscape, side by side.

Two youthful figures, each with buoyant step, and faces bright with courageous hope, appeared to be eagerly searching for some hidden object, which, though concealed from their view, they nevertheless appeared certain of obtaining.

"I am seeking my crown," exclaimed one, as he approached. "Nothing shall now prevent my gaining it. My road lies there," he said, pointing to a long, broad, weary-looking highway. "I shall persevere until I have in my possession the valuable crown that shall reward me for all the difficulties and fatigues that may befall me on my way."

"And what then?" I asked.  
"I shall be feared and respected. Men will tremble at my feet all my life. I will be rich and great. What more do I ask? With that I shall be satisfied."

"And you," I asked the other, "are you too seeking a crown?"

"Yes," he returned sadly, "it is a lost crown that I seek. No eye has ever seen it, no hand has touched or marred its lustre, that surpasses the light of the sun or stars; but my ear has heard and my heart believes in its wonderful, imperishable glory."

"Pooh!" exclaimed the other. "When will you find the way to this invisible treasure?"

"It is beyond the hills, the forests, the streams—beyond the darkest river."

"Farewell, then, to you; our roads lie in opposite directions. At the end of mine I can almost see even now the dazzling crown that will place me on a powerful throne."

With a scornful laugh, he turned from his companion, and sprang boldly into the great dusty highway, as the other continued the path he had chosen beyond the hills, the mountains, and dark river, seeking his lost crown.

The strength of the first did not forsake him; neither did his courage flag, though dangers and difficulties overtook him at nearly every step, and unexpected obstacles often beset the way. He continued on his relentless course: An orphan child stumbled at his feet; he only trod upon it, and cried:

"I have no time for pity!"

A blind beggar stretched his hand before him asking for alms, but he passed by, unheeding the appeal. Some starving children clung to him, begging for bread; he shook them off impatiently:

"I have no time for charity!"

Weak childhood, blind old age, poverty, misery, and suffering were alike unheeded as he pressed more eagerly forward to his prize.

A feeble, tottering old woman fell at his feet:

"Turn but one moment! Be merciful before I die! It is your mother that speaks to her son!"

"Ah! in that case I might lose sight of the crown I can now plainly see," and he left her, perishing, in her old age, alone.

New difficulties increased the value of the crown, and when he reached the foot of the throne, step by step he attained nearer the coveted object; and though it rested upon the brows of an infirm old king, with trembling hands and strong arms he seized the crown from the fallen head and placed it upon his own, crying:

"Mine, mine at last! I am satisfied, for am I not a powerful and mighty king?"

The crown sank heavily on his brows,

and now, when he no longer saw its splendor, he felt its mighty weight, and from his throne could turn and look back over the hard, blood-stained road he had travelled; and the cries of the wounded, suffering, and poverty-stricken, that he had left mercilessly perishing in their misery, sounded in his ear.

He saw his old companion, pursuing his quiet way.

"Hold!" cried he. "Do you not see your folly? Here am I with my crown on my head, while you have not yet even a glimmering of the invisible one you are seeking."

But the other kept on his humble way, stopping only to relieve and give aid and comfort to the poor and distressed. Many difficulties lay in his way; thorns and briars tangled the path, and often he met those who said:

"It is all in vain. Our search has been useless; we are no nearer our lost crowns than when we commenced our journey. We will look no further."

His feet were often sore and weary; poverty, hunger, and suffering were his companions as he wandered wearily on. But in the darkest, dreariest places, he followed the shadow of One who went before—a lowly figure, with bleeding brows, who was bending under the heavy weight of a cruel cross.

"Come back!" cried the king. "Your crown is not yet in sight, and a dark river is ahead. Turn back, and enjoy the riches and power my crown has brought me."

But, within the shadow of the Weary One who went before, he followed on, over the mountains, through tangled forests, across scorched, sandy plains, in deep valleys and dark places, until the buoyant, elastic step had become weary-worn, the eye dim, the hand feeble, and his dark locks changed to the hue of winter snow.

In his ear there then rose the unceasing rise and fall of the swelling waves of the dark river as its waters touched the cold shores he was ever nearing, and as he came near the brink, waiting with feeble step but firm heart for the wave that would bear him over the tide, the king with his brilliant crown came hastily running toward him. He was not eager to cross the river alone, but his attendants were in greater haste to bid him farewell than to bear him company; and in this hour he would have clung to his despised companion.

A huge dark wave advancing, carried them far out on the sullen waters of the dark river, and the king would have cast off the heavy crown, now tarnished and dim, but the heavy weight pressed down upon him. He sank below—none can tell whither. There was a sound of music, sweeter, stronger, and lovelier than that of Æolian harps, and a radiant figure, standing beneath a cross of exceeding light, stood welcoming the wanderer on the other side; and the crown that rested upon the brow that it once pierced far surpassed the brightness and beauty of the sun and stars.

I saw no more; but I believed the promised crown was obtained in the land beyond the dark river. And that One is there awaiting each of us who so run that we may obtain the incorruptible crown.—The Methodist.

GAIETY IN THE HOME.

Gaiety is indispensable to childhood, and I doubt whether it can be dispensed with in after life. There is a innocent craving for it even in old age. God has scattered flowers upon our fallen earth, and sent us the songs of birds. Why should we turn away from them? Why should mirth and hearty laughter scandalize us?

If many of us do not love our homes, the reason is far, far from inexplicable. To tell the truth, I have but a poor opinion of homes where laughter and merriment, and jokes and puns, nay, even absurdities, are unknown. Measure the heartlessness of that confession of Fontenelle, "For the last half century I have neither wept nor laughed." The two best things in this life, those which prove that we have a heart and an imagination as well as a brain, were lost to the man whose universe was academies and drawing-rooms. We are quite aware that there is a forced gaiety and a forced laughter, than which nothing is more sad; and that this spirit may become chronic, to the annihilation of every serious thought. It would be difficult to choose between Fontenelle, who never laughed, and the man who is always laughing; difficult to say which of the two had sunk the lowest.

Without seriousness family life would hardly deserve the name. There is nothing so serious as life; nothing so serious as happiness, duty, responsibility, the education of children, personal education. Is there anything so serious as our sins, our repentance, our prayers? any task more serious than the charge of souls that we love?

But in proportion as seriousness is genuine, cheerfulness will be so too. There will be the "time to laugh and the time to weep." Solomon tells us that the "wisdom of a man naked, his faith to shine, and his countenance is no more sad." This is the magic of wisdom; it is when the heart is turned towards God that the countenance is joyous and beneficent.

A hearty laugh is one of the best and rarest of things; gaiety is the privilege of the simple-minded; it is one of the surest symptoms of moral health; though of course this is a rule by no means without exceptions. Ennui must not be classed among the virtues; we must not give way to morose and languid moods. I know houses where there is a perpetual sighing over the evils of humanity, past, present, and to come; after the evils come the faults, and after the faults the errors, till the melancholy catalogue is gone through; but that does not prevent it from being resumed on the morrow. There are complaints, political, religious, moral, artistic and literary, always in abundance.

I remember once visiting a neighbor who was extremely deaf; every one made it a duty to contribute something for his amusement; the speaking trumpet was passed from hand to hand; and what were the themes that passed through it but the sorrows and calamities of the neighborhood!—how one poor gentleman had broken his leg; how some poor lady had taken the small-pox, and another had lost a child. The most communicative added details of the faults and mistakes of the government, the fears entertained as to the harvest, the failure of sundry attempts to do good; and the unfortunate listener lifted up his eyes to Heaven and sighed piteously; but when the evening had ended, every one congratulated himself on having helped to amuse him for an hour!

If I were asked for a recipe for cheerfulness, I would say, Humbly enjoy the good gifts of God, love those around you tenderly, realize that amiability is a binding virtue, and that we are bound to diffuse joy around us in our homes. But there is just one more item in my prescription; we must be willing to unbend, even to stoop to a little harmless folly. A love for animals will encourage this; the very presence of these true but unassuming friends will do our hearts good. We may talk nonsense to them; they introduce an element of intellectual repose. Dogs, cats, horses, poultry, are so many contributors to the gaiety and simplicity of our daily life. We cannot enjoy them without loving them. I am not going to enter into the ranks of those who contend that they have souls; still I hope my reader holds in equal abhorrence with myself the systems of Descartes and Malebranche, which would make them out to be mere machines. We have but to contemplate the dog that follows us, watches our movements, shares our fatigues and perils voluntarily, either to sink at our side, or perhaps to follow us to the grave and die there—to reply to the theory of mere mechanism. Animals are, in some sort, members of the family. They are the friends of young and old, and young and old alike enjoy and benefit by their gleeful, irrational society.—Count de Gasparin.

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THE PULPIT AND THE LITTLE ONES.

The share of the pulpit in the religious training of children cannot be ignored by any minister who is desirous of doing his whole duty. Pious instruction at home, or efficient teaching in the Sunday-school, can never become substitutes for ministerial duty. Yet there are preachers who rarely if ever have a word for the children in their sermons, and never preach an entire sermon to them, though they may sometimes preach about them. It is a startling truth that there are children of Christian parents who never hear preaching of any kind. Loose notions of parental duty prevail among many, and the children are permitted to decide for themselves whether they will go to church or not—the decision in such cases being for the most part, in the negative. We do not think, however, that the blame for this should rest entirely on the parents; the pulpit has some responsibility in the matter. There is, we are sorry to say, in many churches nothing in the services to interest the children, outside of the singing; and though they are easily interested in this, even here there is sometimes a failure from want of hymn-books of their own, or by reason of strange and difficult tunes which they cannot sing.

Imagine boys or girls of average intellect compelled to sit for a whole hour listening to a discourse, scarcely a word of which they understand, and not one word of which is directed specially to them! How painful the restraint soon becomes! They wish the good man in the pulpit would hurry and get through; and if he uses a manuscript, how wistfully the young eyes watch the turning over of the leaves, wondering how anybody could ever write so much, when their own short school compositions cost them so great labor! And what a feeling of relief these young, lively hearts experience when the last leaf is turned over and the last word read! No wonder that human nature sometimes rebels before that point is reached; no wonder if children, to whom motion is life, break through the unnatural restraint forced upon them, and find relief in the perpetration of childish pranks, or gradually settle down, like some of their elders, into a quiet slumber. The scoldings they get when they reach home are mainly undeserved. How many adults could sit quietly for an hour hearing, but not understanding, a sermon in French or an oration in Greek? And it is no exaggeration to say that much of the preaching to which children are compelled to listen might as well be in French or in Greek as in English, so far as they are concerned.

We would not, of course, have every sermon prepared, in all its details, expressly for children. There are many themes of pulpit discussion beyond the capacity of childhood, and yet of great importance to others. But we would have some part of every service, if not of every sermon, adapted to the capacities and the moral needs of the little ones. Let the children be thought of in the pastor's preparation for the Sabbath; let there be some point in the services of the hour toward which they may afterward look with feelings of interest and of pleasant recollection; let them be recognized in some way as a part of the congregation. They will thus become interested in the services of the church, and will not require compulsion to attend. They will sooner begin to comprehend the nature and design of these regular weekly meetings on the Sabbath, and will delight to learn in them the useful lessons there taught.

But in addition to the recognition of children in the ordinary exercises of the Sabbath, we think that every pastor should occasionally preach an entire sermon especially to them. Every Methodist preacher promises, on his full admission into the Conference, that he will "diligently instruct the children in every place." He cannot do this by employing Sunday-school teachers

as proxies. He has a personal duty in the matter; and one of the best means, though not the only one, of discharging this duty, is by preaching to the children at stated times. On such occasions they should be made to feel that the meeting is for them especially; that they are expected to take a part in it in the singing, and in a responsive reading of the Scriptures, or repetition of the Lord's Prayer; that the sermon has been prepared for them, and is particularly adapted to them. The pastor who pursues this course will have an influence over the children which he could not obtain in any other way; and, through the children, he will increase his influence with the parents. Of the style of preaching necessary to interest children, we have something to say at a future time.—The Methodist.

THE SACK OF PEARLS.

A traveller missed his way and lost himself in a desert. Nearly famished with hunger and thirst, he reached at length a shady palm tree and a fresh fountain. Near the fountain he discovered a small bag lying on the ground. "Thanks to God!" said the man, as he lifted the little bag, "these are perhaps peas, which will keep me from starving." Eagerly he opened the bag and exclaimed, "Alas! alas! they are only pearls!"

"Worth more than gold or pearls, you see, the little loaf that feeds thee!"

Though he had now a bag of pearls worth several thousand dollars, he was still in danger of starvation. But he prayed earnestly to God for help, and presently there came hastily riding on his camel, a Moor who had lost the bag of pearls. He had compassion on the starving man, gave him bread and refreshing fruit, and took him along on his camel.

"Behold!" said the Moor, "how wonderfully God disposes all things! I regarded it as a misfortune to have lost the pearls, but God permitted it that I might return again and save a life!"

"By little things Jehovah saves His people from untimely graves."

THE RAVEN.

In a village near Warsaw, there lived a pious peasant of German extraction, by name Dobry. Without his fault, he had fallen into arrears with his rent, and the landlord determined to eject him; and it was winter. He went to him three times in vain. It was evening, and the next day he was to be turned out with all his family, when, as they sat there in sorrow, the church bell pealed for evening prayer, and Dobry knelt down in their midst, and they sang,

"Commit thou all thy griefs  
And ways into his hands"  
And as they came to the last verse,

"When thou wouldst all our need supply,  
Who, who shall stay thy hand?"

there was a knock at the window. It was an old friend, a raven, that Dobry's grandfather had taken out of the nest and tamed, and then set at liberty. Dobry opened the window, and the raven hopped in, and in his bill there was a ring set with precious stones! Dobry thought that he would sell the ring, but he thought again he would bring it to his minister; and he, who saw at once by the crest that it belonged to King Stanislaus, took it to him, and related the story. And the king sent for Dobry, and rewarded him, so that he was no more in need, and the next year built him a new house, and gave him cattle from his own stall, and over the house-door there is an iron tablet, whereon is carved a raven with a ring in his beak, and underneath this verse:

"Thou everywhere hast away,  
And all things serve thy might;  
Thy every act pure blessing is,  
Thy path unsullied light."

BRINGING OTHERS TO JESUS.

When Andrew and Philip were led to see Jesus as the true Messiah, and to love him as their Saviour, they began to speak of him to others, and to bring others to him.

The first thing which Andrew did was to find his own brother Simon and to say to him, "We have found the Messiah. And he brought him to Jesus."

Philip did likewise. He sought his friend Nathanael, and no sooner had he found him than he told him the object of his errand. Said he, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Philip's ardor was not abated when Nathanael interposed the question, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" but in the joy of his heart the answer was, "Come and see." Philip's earnest invitation prevailed, and soon Nathanael's testimony to Jesus was, "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

It is natural for those who have found the Saviour to speak of him to others and to try to bring others to him. When our hearts are filled with any other joy, how soon we tell our friends our happiness! Is it not then unnatural, not to speak of the great joy which salvation brings?

Surely the joy in Jesus which a true Christian experiences is too good a thing to keep to one's self. It must needs be uttered. It is with every joyful believer as it was with Andrew and Philip. He seeks to make Christ known to his brother, to his friend, and to every one. Rejoicing himself in the love of Jesus, he sings forth the joy of his heart, and his feeling is,

"O that all might believe,  
And salvation receive,  
And their song and their joy be the same."

My reader, have you ceased to rejoice in the Lord, and to speak to others of Jesus? O, if this is your sad case, return at once to God with the prayer of David, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and up-

hold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."—The Sunday School Times.

"NEATNESS NEXT TO HOLINESS."

The above is quoted as a saying of Whitefield. Certain it is Whitefield was a very neat man; and none will deny that he was a holy man. It is said of him that he picked from his nicely brushed black cloth coat a small piece of lint, saying as he did it, "A minister must be without spot." Neatness is not finical nicety, nor fashionable cut. It is perfect cleanliness, and is usually combined with good taste. The idea seems to be instinctive rather than acquired; and, though it respect the body, has a mental or moral origin. Cleanliness was insisted upon in the Old Testament, and many were the washings required. Its relation to holiness was recognized, and Jehovah said to the priesthood, "Be ye clean; that bear the vessels of the Lord."

What a shame, then, it is to see a Christian man or woman chargeable with habitual untidiness! It is disgusting in a man; it is intolerable in a woman. I am ready to quarrel with my favorite poet for indicating that, in my judgment, unfortunate apology for the slovenly Christian:

"A heavenly mind may be indifferent to its house of clay."

No, Mr. Cowper, you are wrong: That house of clay is a sacred thing, a sanctified vessel for the Master's use; and every Christian is to see that even material defilement is not allowed. It is as much a part of redemption as the soul. Cowper was wrong. Had his sweet aged friend, Mrs. Unwin, descended to the breakfast table with uncleaned nails and untidy cap, would the poet have relished his radish and egg? I row not.

We have heard of some distinguished preachers who were celebrated for their careless attire. It may have added to their celebrity. It certainly did not add to their usefulness. Homeliness is made beautiful by neatness, and Cleopatra's beauty would have been disgusting without it. Do we make too much of it? I think not. It is closely connected with morals; that we know. Has it no connection with health? Ask the physician; ask your own experience. That first thing a convalescent calls for is clean linen. It is a tonic. It is better than medicine. As the clean things are all nicely adjusted he smiles and says, "I feel better."

But how shall the poor and the laboring class meet the requisition? Their work in many cases, is necessarily defiling. That is so; and yet we have seen a great difference among them in regard to this matter. Some will have working clothes, and shed them off when they get home. They will call for soap and water and do the best they can to put the body in decent trim. Others care not, but let the sweat and dirt settle on them for a whole week. They miss a great good. We enter some poor habitation and all is neatness. The floor is scrubbed; the stone polished; the tins are bright; the chairs are dusted; the mother looks tidy, even in her poor raiment; the children are clean, with well-combed hair; and every thing betokens a desire to make the best out of a little. You may look there for some virtues besides neatness. You enter another tenement and every thing is dirty and out of order. You can't find a decent seat. Floor, tables, chairs—all in disorder; children with dirty faces and frowny heads, and she who ought to set an example of cleanliness is herself not fit to be seen.—Poverty is pitiable, but dirt and poverty combined almost change pity into disgust. He will be a benefactor indeed to the poor who succeeds in raising them generally to this almost indispensable condition of happiness—cleanliness; and we have thought that our city missionaries, in their visits, should, in many cases, leave a bar of soap first, and a tract afterwards, instead of a reverse order in their bestowment.—New York Observer.

THE FLOWERS OF PALESTINE.

"The hills in the region of Mount Tabor," says Dr. Bellows, "offer better pasturage than any we have met in the Holy Land, and yet there seem fewer flocks upon them. But the flowers have taken advantage of this absence of cattle and people, to spring up in a variety and beauty I have never seen equalled. We gathered bouquets in a few moments by the path, which I defy any London or New York conservatory to equal in beauty, and freshness, and variety, or in rarity. Such feathery things, such fairy shapes, such delicate colors, such exquisite contrasts were never, it seems to me, combined in any nosegay, and I felt then, as I do now, ashamed that my feeble botany could not name and place them. I make their beauty the amende of a most honorable mention. Could I have sent one of these Syrian bouquets to each of my best beloved friends at home, I would gladly have paid the largest New York prices for a hundred, and a hundred might have been plucked from a rood of ground. But their frailty was equal to their freshness and delicacy. There is a solemnity in the houseless, treeless, unpeopled state of this fine country which is an affecting preparation for the approach to the great centre of Jesus' ministry, the Sea of Galilee. Nature seems to say there is no room for any thing in this sacred region but the memory of Him whose glory fills the earth. The hills are green, and flowery, and fragrant, but they refuse any meaner service than that of acting as the witnesses of Him who once put their lilies above Solomon in all his glory used them as His altar and His pulpit."

"Without free grace there would be no God to save man; without free will there would be no man to be saved."—Augustine.