

The Family Circle.

THOUGHTS ON THE LAST EVENING OF 1868.

BY JESSIE GLENN.

'Tis night again, dark night again! the last one of the year, And round the fire, we, one by one, with saddened looks draw near.

Another year from time's dark roll is swiftly gliding now, And who can see it pass away without a thoughtful brow?

It seems but yesterday since we to last year bade adieu; But now another one has gone, so we are passing, too!

But stay! some moments still remain for calm reflection given, So I'll review the closing year. But hark! the clock strikes seven.

'Tis seven! how fast the moments fly! and so this year has gone, Like sunlight piercing through a cloud, like snatches of a song!

How well do I remember yet the hopes this year began, In fancy's dreams such joyousness throughout its moments ran, Those brilliant hopes, those happy scenes, oh, tell me where are they?

Gone, withered, drooping, dying, dead, the children of decay! The garland hope framed for this year met but a chilling fate, Its buds lie blasted on the stem,—but stay, the clock strikes eight.

Eight, eight! another hour has gone, and like a funeral train, With that last stroke a host of thoughts come sweeping by again: Black, hateful sins come floating up from the forgotten past.

And resolutions half unkept come crowding thick and fast, But stay! what now comes stealing by? A solemn sigh, a tear, Breathed for the sins that mark the steps of the expiring year!

Tell me, my soul, will tears suffice, may pardon still be mine? 'Tis wash them in thy Saviour's blood, then!—stay the clock strikes nine.

'Tis nine! the year is almost gone! and as it hurries by, How many broken hearts remain to bleed, and droop and die? Some mourn because unkindness cuts, and scornful looks are given.

and then he would be quite ready to take his potatoes to market. One or two of the wheels of his wagon had been a trifle creaky; and so he took the greasopot, and gave them a touch of its contents.

"Now, then, I'm off to market," said Sam. "Good-bye, Jenny pet." Oh that little word "pet!" didn't the cunning fellow oil his wife's temper, and even almost her very joints, for her day's work, when he called her that little name.

"Good-bye, Tommy, my darling." Oh you cunning man! there you are with your oiled feather again; for when Tommy was naughty, and his mother reminded him that she must tell his father when he came home, and "father would be sore grieved if his darling was naughty," wasn't Tommy good? for, child though he was, he was able to reason thus much in his mind: Tommy is father's darling and he won't vex him; darlings ought not to vex those who love them.

"I say, Polly," said Sam Parsons to his one servant-maid, as he left the house, "don't forget to clean up those irons, if you can manage it, there's a good lass; you'll find the oil-flask hanging behind the kitchen door," and so, with a cheerful smile on his countenance, Sam Parsons took his departure for market. Ah! cunning Sam; before he went he oiled his wife and child, and now he oiled his servant-maid; and when he turned his back upon his own door, he left smiling faces and glad hearts behind him; and, I warrant, he found them all smiling to receive him, when he came home.

"I have great faith in oil," said Sam Parsons; "I oil almost everything; this very morning I oiled the lock of my street-door, and my penknife; and greased my wagon wheels; and I oiled my wife and child; and I gave the servant-maid a touch too; and I tell you what it is, Neighbor Joe, I slip along famously, where I find many another sticks fast."

"Rusty Joe's" torn nail seemed to give him a fresh twinge when the penknife was spoken about; and so as to the wife, his conscience reminded him how berishly he had behaved to her at breakfast. "What do you mean by oiling your wife, man," said "Rusty Joe," rather tartly; "you haven't been sneaking, have you, and knocking under to a woman?" and "Rusty Joe" edged away from "Polished Sam's" side, as though he were near some slimy serpent.

"No indeed," answered Sam, "I've not been knocking any way, neither over nor under; but I just gave her and the bantling a loving word before I started from home; and I said a kind word to the lass to cheer her up through her work for the day; and, for the matter of that I gave the old apple-woman a touch of my oiled feather too; few people say a kind word to her, and so I did, and I dare say it helped her through the day too! I wouldn't cringe to any one living," continued "Polished Sam," "not to the Queen herself; but to cringe is one thing; to be civil, respectful, and loving, according as the case requires, is another; I never knew ill come of it, and I've often known good. Yes, neighbor, I've known the good of it in my own house, over and over again. There's my Jenny; you don't know the work there's in that little creature; bless you! she'd work herself to the finger-bone, if you give her a kind word. I knowed her to sit up seven nights with me, without taking off a stitch of her clothes that time I broke my leg; and when I said to her one morning, as the day was breaking, and I looked at her red eyelids, 'Jenny, my darling, I can never pay you for all this'—didn't she laugh and say, 'Why, Sam, how can you tell such a story? you've paid me now!'"

"Paid you, my wife! why, what do you mean?" "Didn't you say 'my darling?'" "To be sure I did," said I. "Well! wasn't that payment to a woman's heart?"

"And she looked so earnest-like at me, that I felt the tears come in my eyes. Oh neighbor, I couldn't say it as she said it; for these women have a way of speaking that don't belong to us men.—Sometimes I think there's a kind of a pipe that makes music in their throats; but ever since that day, I've been ten times as loving as I was before; and I try to say a kind word, not only to Jenny, but to every one I meet. I believe, neighbor," continued Sam, "that women are of that nature, that they'll do anything for love; no use our driving them, our scolding, and ordering, and banging about; that only makes slaves of them; but give them a little love, and they'll do wonders."

As Sam Parsons found that his neighbor was listening, he was encouraged to go on, even though he received no answer. "And I do the same," said Sam, "by every way that comes to service to me. Servants are made of the same stuff as their mistresses; they all have hearts; and the same kind of oil will reach them all."

Thus discoursing, Sam Parson arrived at his own farm-yard. There was Jenny his wife, ready to meet him with a kiss; and there was Tommy, who received his father with a click, click; leaving it a matter of speculation as to whether he had not been clicking ever since the morning until now.—And then, there was Polly the servant-maid, standing close to the irons, which shone as though they were fresh from the shop; she hoped they'd catch her master's

eye; and she knew she'd get a kind word. And when Sam went into the sitting-room, there he saw a great heap of his stockings, that Jenny had been darning; and when Sam sat down to tea, there was a pie that Jenny had made; and if Sam had been a little boy instead of a grown-up man, he would certainly have patted his chest and smacked his lips and so expressed his opinion, that this was "something like a pie." One would think that Sam Parsons had oiled the pie, so smoothly did each piece slip down his throat, for he was at peace with Jenny his wife, Tommy his son, and Polly the servant-maid. Good humor promotes digestion; and our readers will be glad to hear that Sam slept well upon that good supper, and had pleasant dreams; and woke up refreshed, to be happy, and make others happy all day long.—English Paper.

A PRAYER-MEETING SKETCH.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHICAGO.

The lecture-room of this church is not a basement room, or a room at the rear of the church, but a separate building fronting on another street. On passing by previously, I had supposed it to be a modest little church of some other and less wealthy denomination. To-night, after a brisk walk—for the sky is clear and the air is stinging gold—I find myself on the west side of Wabash avenue, directly in front of the great church.

All is dark. What does it mean? Is it not time for prayer-meeting? Where is the lecture-room? I see the modest little church around the corner glowing at every window with a cheerful light; I wonder if that is not the place I seek? I will go and see. It is. I enter. The room is an unusually pleasant one, and to my notion admirably arranged. It is seated with cane-bottom, half-arm chairs, which can be easily removed when the room is required for social purposes. The carpet is a bright, cheerful one; a few choice pictures hang on the walls, on one side of the room is a slightly raised platform, one part of which is occupied by a small pipe organ, and the other part by a chair and stand for the use of the leader of the meeting. I can scarcely conceive how wealth or taste can add anything to the pleasant, home-like appearance of the place.

And now let me see. Will the meeting I have come to attend correspond to the place? Will the hearts that come in here be as well furnished as the room is? or have these people who worship here, as is too often the case, been trying to make up in outward adornments what they consciously lack in inward adornings? Ah, I remember well many, many prayer-meetings that I have attended in rude school-houses and bare kitchens, where I have met God as in heaven's very gate; and, on the other hand, many, Oh how many! in beautiful, elegant, faultless church parlors, which were as cold and dead as the fashionable trappings around. How will it be to-night?

It is fifteen minutes early. A dozen are in the room. The quick click, click, crunch, crunch, of hurrying feet are heard on the frozen sidewalk and threshold. In a very short time a hundred are present. A slender, pale-looking young man, seemingly not more than twenty-five years old, comes in and takes his seat on the platform. I am disappointed. I was hoping Mr. Mitchell, the new pastor of the church, would lead the meeting to-night. I wonder if this young man is going to take his place. I inquire of my right-hand neighbor about the matter. "Why, sir," said he, "that is Mr. Mitchell. The cloud is at once gone from my face."

In a moment the pastor is reading with a mellow, rich voice, the hymn commencing: "Jesus, where'er thy people meet, There they behold thy mercy-seat."

At first, the singing promises badly, for three distinct attempts are made before the leader can start the familiar tune, "Retreat." Once started, however, all goes on well, and during the rest of the evening there is no difficulty. I cannot quite understand why no use whatever is made of the organ during the evening.

The pastor prays in a subdued, sympathetic manner, seemingly carrying with him all hearts. I am sure he did mine. I have rarely heard a prayer in which the one who offered it seemed more truly to enter into and sympathize with all the feelings and needs of those whom he led. "May the business-laden who have come in here to-night be rested. May those seeking God find him speedily, sweetly, to the joy and satisfaction of their souls. May the young in Christ cling close to their Lord, and so grow strong. May those of us who are older in thy service forget not to keep the flame of our devotion burning brightly always, by renewing it daily and hourly at thine altar. May the sick be healed; or, what is better if it seem so to thee, taught to abide their affliction in patient submission to thy will. May the bereaved be comforted by finding Jesus standing in the place of the mourned for one. May all hearts here to-night run together in thankfulness to thee, in sympathy for one another, and in earnest longings for our dear unsaved friends."

Another hymn is sung, a short chapter is read and very briefly commented upon, perhaps two more prayers are offered, and then the pastor announces that he has invited Rev. Mr. Rider to be present and address us for a few moments to-night on the subject of mission work among the Jews. Mr. Rider himself a Jew by birth and education. Some of the readers of The Standard will remember reading, perhaps four years ago, of the somewhat remarkable conversion of a young Jew who was at the time acting in one of the theatres in Chicago. Mr. Rider is the man: He is now laboring in this city and the North west for the evangelization of his people. His remarks are full of interest. He shows us plainly that our Protestant churches, amid all our general zeal for missions, have been guilty of a shameful neglect of that particular people, to whom we are indebted almost infinitely more than to any other, and who are as sadly in need of missionary labor as any of the nations of India can be. He finds but a very limited sympathy and co-operation among Christian men. There seems to be a sort of general impression that the Jews are beyond hope. But this is a mistake. In London, 2,000 Jews have been converted, and about a hundred

are preaching the Gospel. In this city, a prominent and learned Rabbi is now under conviction, and inquiring earnestly about Jesus. Yet so faithless are Christian men in the matter, that Mr. Rider has had a package of thirty dollars' worth of Hebrew books and tracts, sent him from London, lying for weeks in the American Express office in this city, because he has been unable to raise money sufficient to pay the charges on them.

As soon as Mr. Rider has sat down, a brother rises and says: "Come to my office in the morning and you shall have the required money." Another brother rises and says: "It seems to me we ought to take up a collection here to-night for the cause which has been set before us." Another responds: "It seems so to me too." Several speak with much interest, commending the cause to each other's sympathy and prayer and support, and indorsing the proposal for a collection to-night. The pastor says: "The brother whom you have heard has not asked for a collection, but I am glad to see that we cannot rest unless we give him one." A collection is taken up.

The meeting goes on. A young brother speaks for the first time publicly. Another thanks God that he has had strength to do so. Several short prayers follow, all warm with feeling for God's ancient people. One says: "I have been greatly impressed with the thought that ungodly men all around us, while they are not reading their Bibles or Christ, are all the while with keen eyes reading us." We are to them the Bible and Christianity." Another says: "I was in a bank last Saturday, and took the liberty to ask the president, who is not a Christian man, whether he attended church regularly, and if he would not come to ours. He told me to stop and sit down. 'Now,' said he, 'if I were a Christian man, I would not do what you are doing. Why do you not go to work in the spirit that Christ did? Why do you not quit building your palatial churches, and hiring your \$5,000 choirs, and all that sort of thing, and go to work, directly and first of all, to save souls and bless those in the community who need blessing—the poor, the neglected, the degraded?' And, brethren, I felt that that non-professing bank president was speaking true words, and I didn't know how to answer him."

But it is now nearly nine o'clock—time for the meeting to close. Announcement is made that the young people's missionary society will meet as soon as this meeting is over. A hymn is sung, the benediction is pronounced, and the end has come. The meeting has been a warm, good one; but there has been just one sad lack. None of the sisters have taken part—for it is a Presbyterian meeting, you know.—Standard, (Baptist.)

THE AXE IN THE BUNDLE OF RODS.

The axe carried before the Roman consul was always bound up in a bundle of rods. An old author tells us that "the rods were tied up with knotted cords, and that when an offender was condemned to be punished, the executioner would untie the knots, one by one, and, meanwhile, the magistrate would look the culprit in the face, to observe any signs of repentance, and watch his words, to see if he could find a motive for mercy; and thus justice went to its work deliberately and without passion." The axe was enclosed in rods to show that the extreme penalty was never inflicted till milder means had failed: first the rod, and the axe only as a terrible necessity.

Reader, if you are unconverted, I beg you to look at the symbol and learn a lesson. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion toward you. He has waited to these years, untying the knots very slowly, and seeing whether you will, by His long suffering, be led to repentance. Hitherto, few and feeble have been any tokens for good in you. Beware! for mercy tarries not forever, and justice will not long delay. The rods you have already felt. Those burials of dear ones were all rods to you. That fever, that broken arm, that loss in business—all these put together have been warnings to you, which you cannot despise without committing great sin. Many have been brought to God by afflictions; but you, perhaps, have been rather hardened than otherwise. See to it, sinner! For, when the rods have had their turn, the axe must come in for its work. Its edge is sharp, and its blow is terrible. He who wields it will cut through soul and body, and none can escape from His wrath. You have found the rod to be very dreadful, but what will the axe-be? Hell is not to be thought of without trembling; but it will soon be your eternal dwelling place, unless you repent. Can you endure its endless torments? Tremble, there is hope! Jesus died, Jesus lives. Trust in him who stood in the sinner's place, and you are saved. Oh, may the Holy Ghost now, while you read, lead you to Jesus and to safety, for time flies like the weaver's shuttle, and the thread of life is soon snapped. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."—Spurgeon.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS.

A writer to the American Messenger relates the following:

There was a deep religious interest in the town of M. Many had found the Lord Jesus, and were rejoicing in His wonderful grace. The consciousness of God's awful presence was in every heart. The friends of Christ were in gladness, the long-prayed for time had come. There was a harvest of souls, and Christians gave themselves to the unwearied prosecution of the Lord's work.

Among those deeply convinced of sin and thrown thereby into great distress was a strong-minded man, who seemed to make no advance whatever beyond the mere conviction, and for whom no relief came. Agony and pride strove together—the powers of the world to come and an obdurately wicked heart. Sometimes he would avoid the company of Christians and get away from his pastor. Then his distress would be so great that he would open his heart

to some friend. After many days, his pastor felt he must make one more effort to bring him to Christ. He sought him out, pressed upon him the duty of immediate submission to God, pled him with the precious promises, prayed with him; but all to no purpose. The stout heart did not bend, would not break though there was upon it great horror. Never can the look of his face be forgotten, as with freezing words of terror, he exclaimed: "It is of no use; I belong to an irreligious family. My father and mother never loved God, never served Jesus Christ. I cannot, I will not submit to him."

The crisis was reached. The Spirit was grieved. The man was left. His convictions faded, and soon he was a hardened man. It was felt that he was given up. So he lived and thus he died.

The sin of ungodly parents may fasten upon their children a pride of heart and perversity of will that shall lead to their perdition. Shall our children have it to say, "My father, my mother were Christ?" Lie not our example drag them down; rather let it aid them to the true life that is bid with Christ in God.

THE DEAREST NAME.

A remarkable instance of the power of Christ, and His love to arouse the dormant faculties of a mind unable to respond on other subjects was furnished during the closing years of the late Hon. William Jessup, an eminent civilian and jurist, and devoted Christian of Montrose, Penn. During the past five years, while his mind, and memory, and physical powers were seriously affected by successive strokes of paralysis, his Christian life seemed unimpaired. "Worldly things," says The Evangelist, "seemed to be forgotten, while religious things continued fresh and clear in his mind. When walking about the town, he could go directly to the church; but the court-house, the scene of his legal experience, he seemed to have utterly forgotten. His law-books he had forgotten, but his Bible was read daily. He even forgot the names of his own children, but never forgot the name of Jesus. The mention of that name always brought a smile to his face. He remembered distinctly the brethren whom he had known in connection with the church and the religious societies, while he could only with difficulty recall those whom he had known in the sphere of the law, politics and business.

"For many days before his death, as he lay upon his bed, he held in his right hand his long-used walking-staff, as if ready, pilgrim-like, to set out upon his last journey. His death was serene and peaceful as his life had been, and he has left to his family, his church and his country that best of all legacies, the memory of a pure, unselfish and upright life, devoted to the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow-men."

GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MONUMENT.

The annual meeting of the Board of Managers of the Soldier's National Cemetery was held at Washington, December 9th, D. Wills, Esq., of Gettysburg, presiding. Reports were made by Mr. Wills, and Hon. S. R. Russell, Treasurer, and by various committees, exhibiting the financial condition of the Association and the progress of the work. The Monument, which has been delayed by the breaking of one of the statues in Italy, will be completed next Spring. It will be of New England white granite, 65 feet high, the statues of Italian marble. The top statue represents the Goddess of Liberty, and is 10 feet 6 inches high. It was cut in Italy under the superintendence of Randolph Rodgers, and is now on the ground at Gettysburg. The shaft of the monument is of white granite, and is already cut and ready to be shipped from the quarries at Westerly, Rhode Island. Two of the statues, "War" and "History," are finished and were shipped from Leghorn on the 20th of November. The other statues, "Peace," and "Plenty," are in the hands of the sculptor in Italy, and will be shipped early in the spring. These will be placed around the four pedestals or corners of the monument. It was determined to have the final consecration ceremonies on the 1st of July next, and committees were appointed to make the necessary arrangements, which will be on an extensive scale, and worthy of the occasion.

Mr. Russell, the Treasurer, reports the amount received during the year, including balance on hand at previous settlement, \$14,623.50; amount paid out during the year on monument, lodge house, &c., \$13,133.63, leaving a cash balance of \$1,489.87, besides \$23,500 invested in U. S. 5-20 bonds. There has been paid on the contract for the monument \$35,000, leaving \$12,500 to be paid on final completion of the work. This would leave a surplus of about \$11,000 in the hands of the Board, to appropriate to the proposed Observatory, or such other improvements as may be deemed best—Gettysburg Star.

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours; And let them, what report they bore to heav'n; And how they might have borne more welcome news.

Their answers form what men experience call; If Wisdom's friend, her best; if not, worst foe. O reconcile them! Kind Experience cries, "There's nothing here, but what as nothing weighs; 'Tis 'more our joy; the more we know it vain; 'And by success are tutor'd to despair.' Nor is it only thus, but must be so. Who knows not this, though gray, is still a child. Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire, Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

As Claverhouse's dragoons were charging down on a worshipping assembly of Covenanters, their aged pastor prayed three times, "Lord spare the green and take the ripe!" He was among the first that fell.