

The Family Circle.

[For the American Presbyterian.]

HOMESICKNESS.

BY JESSIE GLENN.

Why should I wish to stay,
In this dark world of sorrow and of woe,—
Storms gathering o'er my way,
And clouds of sin, around my path below?

Why love this wilderness
Of dark, damp woods, and clinging, marshy soil?
Why love the bitterness,
That mingles in my daily cup of toil?

Why should I cling to life?
When life is full of tumult and unrest,—
Of sickness and of strife,
Of thorns that wound and tear my fainting breast?

Why should I fear to die?
When dying shadows point to upper light?
Why shrink when death is nigh,
When death but leads the way to "mansions" bright?

O, I am homesick, Lord!
Homesick for Thee,—and weary of each sin!
When from this lead abhorred
Shall I be freed? When shall new life begin?

Jesus! while here I stay,
Oh, nerve my spirit for the conflict wild!
Guide, through life's dreary way,
Then safely heavenward lead thy homesick child.

HOW THE DOG SPITZI HELPED THE REFORMATION.—I.

(From Carters' "Tales from Alsace.")

Three men, the old and venerable town-clerk, Oswald von Gamsharst, Father Bernard Romer, and the pastor Johannes Hofer, were sitting, one fine summer evening, on a bench in front of the Augustinian Convent, deep in conversation regarding the great questions and momentous events of the time. Near them, under the great lime-tree on the market-place, sat the pastor's little daughter Idelette, then two years old, no less engrossed with the enjoyment of her supper. Beside the little one lay crouched a lean, black dog of the "spitzi" breed, whose appearance told of days of dearth, for, as the proverb says, "hunger stared at you from his eyes;" it looked up so lovingly at the child, wagged its tail so beseechingly, and so eagerly devoured every crumb that fell, that it would have melted a very heart of stone. Little Letty, however, who had never suffered hunger, and could not understand the dumb language of the poor beast, pushed away the nose of this intrusive beggar, and in her determined effort to snub him, dropped her piece of bread. The dog caught it and ate it ravenously, upon which the little girl jumped up angrily and began to cry, exclaiming, "Spitzi, you naughty Spitzi!" stamping with her little feet, and striking the creature's black, rough, matted back with her clenched fist. The dog, however, never stirred, but continued imperturbable in the enjoyment of its repast.

"Why are you crying so, little Letty, and what harm has poor Spitzi done you?" asked Hansli, who at that moment issued from the German Court, bringing a basket of strawberries for his uncle the pastor, and his aunt Theresa, fresh from the forest of the Hart, where he had gathered them with his father. The child's screams had also attracted the said pastor and his spouse in hot haste.

But now a rough, screeching voice was heard calling from Finninger, the wheel-right's workshop, across the road,—"Spitzi, Spitzi, come hither, thou devilish beast, or . . ." here followed a vile oath.

"Alas and alack-a-day!" exclaimed Hans, "that is the wicked Mike Finninger; he will certainly beat poor Spitzi to death!" The boy ran to Theresa, who had taken Letty up in her arms and was endeavoring to soothe her. Spitzi, however, cowered down terrified, dropped the bit of bread out of his mouth, and crept trembling, his tail between his legs, behind the minister, as if to implore protection and aid.

A tall strapping, some sixteen years old, now came forward under the old lime-tree, with a thick rope in his hand and an oath on his lips, and asked, in a rude, coarse manner, "What corner the black vermin had crawled away to?" He caught the whining creature, kicked it along, and threw the rope round its ears to take it, as he said, to the butcher's for execution, because of its being mad, and having, that very morning, bitten his sister Agnes.

"Yes,—because, here under this lime-tree, she pricked it in the ears with a large needle till the blood flowed! I saw it myself, for I was present!" stormed out Hans, his dread of the spiteful lad overcome by his pity for the dumb victim of his persecutions.

"That dog is not mad," said Pastor Hofer seriously, taking, as he spoke, a cup of water which stood on the bench, and holding it to the trembling animal. The creature eyed it eagerly, licked his hand, and then obediently emptied the cup to its last drop. "Now, you are yourself witness, Mike, that there is nothing he looks less like than being mad, when he has so gladly gulped down that water!" said the pastor. "The righteous man is merciful to his beast; we are told in God's holy word; but you and your brothers and sisters are constantly plaguing poor Spitzi after a most ungodly fashion, so that often before now I have felt boiling with indignation, and almost called on to use the well-merited rod of correction."

Michael grew crimson with rage, and impudently retorted, "The dog belongs to me, and I am free to do as I choose with it." He straightway fell to indulging in abuse of the Lutheran heretics and their preachers, "who were always meddling with matters that did not concern them, and who ought, one and all, to be burnt on the scaffold," tightening at the same time, the rope he had fastened round Spitzi's neck, and preparing to drag off the poor animal, when Oswald von Gamsharst rose from his seat and barred the way, asking him in a stern

tone, as he pointed to the order of the authorities that was stuck up on the church-door, "Michael Finninger, canst thou read?"

On meeting the glance of the severe town-clerk, whom the good honored and the evil dreaded, the bold and worthless youth turned pale, drew back rebuked, and muttered between his teeth some reply inaudible to all. The town-clerk continued, "In this mandate the Christian authorities have strictly prohibited, under pain of severe punishment, the abuse of preachers of the everlasting Gospel by dubbing them 'Lutheran heretics,' as well as the uttering of blasphemous oaths and curses. Now, as you have just been guilty in both points, and have thus incurred the penalty, you must come with me to your father, who is responsible for you, and with whom I shall settle the matter." So saying, he took the much disconcerted Michael by the hand, and led him to Finninger's house, across the road.

Meantime the rest of the party took compassion on the poor ill-used dog. Pastor Hofer loosed the string round its neck, and kindly stroked its lean back. Theresa fetched a piece of bread, with which Hans fed it; little Letty, who, with the happy inconsistency of childhood, had speedily forgotten both anger and fright, caressed it tenderly, and while she was repeating her call, "Spitzi, poor, poor Spitzi!" Father Bernard gravely exclaimed, "If only we could set the poor animal free from the clutches of those Finningers! After what has occurred, they will vent their fury on Spitzi, and treat it more truly than ever!"

At length Oswald von Gamsharst returned, saying with a look of annoyance, "What a houseful of unruly children that is! The mother promotes idleness, pride, and sensuality; the father is sowing the seeds of self-will and defiance in his children's hearts. They are both assuredly sowing to the wind with a full hand, and soon they must reap the whirlwind. I was driven to poaching on your preserves, Master John, for I preached a sermon to them containing a sharp rebuke, such as they will never either forget or forgive! Besides which, instead of demanding payment of the fine due by Mike, I required that the poor dog should be set at liberty, for otherwise they would have tormented it to death. Take it with you to the German Farm, Hansli,—there it will be out of sight of its tormentors; it is faithful, and a capital watch, and in these evil days may render good service to your father in his wanderings through the Hart and the surrounding district."

Hans was overjoyed, and coaxed the dog most caressingly to follow him at once. Spitzi, however, always slipped through his fingers when apparently caught, lay down at Pastor John's feet, fawning on him, and attaching itself to him in the most decided manner, as if it would say, "This is the master whom I wish to serve, and to whom I will be faithful all my life long!" "Who could have had the heart to repel the poor beast?" as Theresa afterward remarked. And in the quiet family circle into which it was welcomed, whose home was then in the Augustinian Convent, Spitzi did from that time right honorably earn its daily bread.

When Pastor John Hofer, as his senior chaplain of St. Stephen's church at Abersteinbrunn, had to go there to conduct service and to preach, took up his pilgrim's staff in the fulfilment of his pastoral duties, Spitzi, to the great relief and consolation of the devoted Theresa, never failed to accompany him. In the convent and before its door, Spitzi was Letty's playmate, and took tender care of her. When Father Bernard, who lived with his adopted children John and Theresa, happened to fall asleep in his easy-chair, Spitzi kept watch before the door, and when the dog was seen to lie still there and not to bark or growl if any stranger appeared, the familiars of the minister's home were wont to say, "Hush, hush, make no noise, for Father Bernard is now taking his noon-day nap."

Meantime the relations of the family of the Finningers continued far from amicable: open hostilities they did not indeed venture upon towards the inhabitants of the convent, because the town-clerk and all the worshipful magistrates were ever ready to back the pastor and his family. Spitzi likewise they were forced to leave unmolested, for if the wicked Finninger boys approached too near, it at once showed them its sharp, white teeth, growing angrily, often, moreover, barking violently when it saw them at a distance, so that even Pastor John, whose least beck or nod it implicitly obeyed, had difficulty in pacifying it. Nevertheless, bad neighbors these Finningers ever continued to be; ingenious in devising spiteful bits of mischief, calumny, and cunning tricks, all which were unavailing to break the public peace, because the inmates of the convent bore all with patience and Christian love. For in our little republic, as elsewhere, the Gospel had borne blessed fruit, and many a home, besides that of the Augustinian Convent, witnessed tranquil lives of piety, devoted to the Lord's service. In St. Stephen's church, Augustus Kramer, Otto Binder, and Jacob Augsbirger,—in the church of the Augustinians, Father Bernard and John Hofer alternately expounded God's holy word, and when, in the evening, these ecclesiastical leaders assembled under the great lime-tree, the burghers likewise gathered in the square of the Augustinians, and listened devoutly to the beautiful spiritual songs, and to the unctious prayer which, at the tolling of the curfew-bell, one of the clergy was wont to offer up before they dispersed.

"The Archduke, now King Ferdinand, was a zealous persecutor of the 'Evangelicals' (or adherents of the reformed faith) in all his dominions, and had moreover counsellors like-minded with himself. For this reason, when the people of Mulhausen gave in their adhesion to the Gospel cause, the Ensisheim Government sought to plague and persecute them in every way, both from old hereditary hatred and from the change of creed." So we read in Peter's *Chronicle of the Town of Mulhausen*, book vi., p. 291.

Accordingly, within a short time a chaplain in the town, who had preached the Gospel in Brunstatt, and Link, minister of Illzach, Johannes Hofer's most intimate friend, were surreptitiously taken prisoners and executed summarily at Ensisheim, which excited great terror, ill-will and distress in the town. Theresa in particular trembled for her beloved John, and felt powerless to quell the gloomy foreboding within her that he too would meet a similar death. But she told her complaint and all her fears to the Lord in silent prayer, as she had learned to do of old from her pious grandmother. She did not wish to unman her husband, nor to hold him back from duty, and full well did she know that "none of us liveth unto himself," . . . but "unto the Lord" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8), every one of His people living and dying for his service, that is for his brethren's good.

In those days, however, a sultry oppressive atmosphere overhung our poor tyrant-ridden town. Almost all her citizens, even Burgomaster and Council, had lost courage; for not only were they surrounded and persecuted by a powerful Austrian Government, but also the dear Confederates of Switzerland, to whom men had naturally turned in this extremity, hoping for protection and succor from them, had taken part against us, and with the solitary exception of Zurich, had refused to mediate on our behalf. The twelve cantons sent four deputies, from Uri, Unterwalden, Freiburg and Solothurn, to Mulhausen, with the express command that, "in case Mulhausen consented to recant the new heresy, they were to spare neither expense nor pains to obtain justice for the town at the hands of Austria, even though they might peril their lives thereby. On the other hand, in case the town refused to depart from the opinions of Luther and Zwingle, the ambassadors were instructed forthwith to ride home again, leaving Mulhausen to her fate."

This message, as already remarked, spread great consternation and anxiety both among the citizens and the authorities, and the majority were disposed to yield. But in this storm, as in former ones, the venerable town-clerk, Gamsharst, stood firm as a rock amid the surging billows: supported by the devout ministers, he succeeded, with God's help, in raising the crushed spirits and reanimating the faith and courage of our forefathers. After long and stormy debates in Council, the following answer was communicated to the Confederate ambassadors, both verbally and in writing: "The people of Mulhausen had abrogated nothing essentially Christian in Divine worship. They had only done away with unchristian abuses. Their hope and comfort were only in the Almighty God and His everlasting Son Jesus Christ, our alone Saviour and Mediator, whose holy word, according to both Testaments, they caused to be preached among them without any human additions. AND IN ALL THIS THEY WERE RESOLVED TO PERSIST. They were willing to comply with the wishes of their well-beloved allies and lords in all things possible; this matter, however, concerned the glory of God and the salvation of their souls; wherefore they could by no means change anything in their Christian reply."

When on the following day, after the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the four ambassadors, who had been entertained in the best style and loaded with marks of honor, rode off homewards, their countenances gloomy and sinister-looking, then indeed our devout forefathers realized that "here we walk by faith, not by sight," and that we must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (2 Cor. v. 7; Acts xiv. 22).

THE GOLDEN KEY.

It was a stormy December day, and Lucy's aunt was seated by the table at work. Lucy was perched in her favorite seat by the window, watching the soft white snow-flakes as they fluttered gracefully to the ground, covering with their fleecy mantle every rough, unsightly thing, and making the broad earth a scene of purity and beauty. She was so very quiet that her aunt at length looked up anxiously, and said, "What are you thinking of, my darling?" The thoughtful look passed from her bright face, and the sunny smile came back again as she threw herself in her aunt's arms and exclaimed, "I was thinking, aunty, that I have found a golden key that unlocks everybody's heart to me. Can you guess what it is, aunty?"

Her aunt smiled and shook her head. "It is only one little word—'Please.' If I say, 'Please give me a piece of bread and butter, Nora,' she says, 'Yes, miss,' and takes her hands out of the suds and goes and gets it at once. John says she is cross. But she is never cross to me. I think one reason is because I try not to vex her."

"Sometimes John says to her, 'Get my slippers instantly,' no matter what she is doing; and she answers back in loud and angry words; and John says she is the crosslest person he ever saw. Don't you think, aunty, if John used the golden key she would be kind and pleasant to him too?"

"Yes, my love, and if they would both remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath," and act accordingly, I think there would very soon cease to be harsh words between them. There are few persons so thoroughly bad that they cannot be won by kindness. Even dumb animals are not insensible to its influence. If you should beat Fido, or speak sharply to him, do you think he would show the same affection for you that he now does? If my little girl will always keep in her possession the precious golden key which she has been so fortunate as to find thus early, she will never want friends, and, in trying to make those around her happy, will insure a never-failing source of happiness herself."

Dear young reader, do you not desire to secure this beautiful golden key which Lucy

so prized, and whose magic influence made her happy and beloved?

BOYS YOU ARE WATCHED.

A group of men, at the opening of the state legislature, were talking of the applicants for position in the various offices in the gift of the senate and house of representatives.

Of course, there were a good many applying, and there must be some disappointment falling somewhere; and they were canvassing the matter to make it as nearly right all round as possible.

There were two desiring the same place in the senate chamber, both boys, verging into manhood—one the son of a high state official, the other the son of an officer who had died in the army in the late civil war. He had already performed the duties of the place he sought again.

This is the substance of remarks made, showing the truth of the assertion at the head of this article.

"Well, gentlemen, I think J— ought to have this place, or a better one, if we can give it. He isn't a governor's son, and he hasn't any great friends to push him; but a boy who will do as he did at the last session—not spending his earnings on himself, never seen with a cigar in his mouth, or strutting along the street in dandy clothes, but quiet, and well-behaved, saving all his money and carrying it home and giving it to his mother—that boy, I say, deserves as good a place as we can give him." And so, though he had not that place he did get one as good, and probably better.

Now, boys, these words are for you. Nothing is more certain than, if this boy had given way to the temptation assailing those who are on the boundary line or the debatable ground between boyhood and manhood—if he had learned to smoke and been seen smoking, if he had strutted in stunning and flashy clothes, if he had been all that is so well understood as comprehended in the term "fast," if he had not honored his mother—a precious, praying mother at home—and been a quiet, modest, pure-minded, gentlemanly boy, he never could have secured the appointment that now enables him to help his mother again.

He did not know that he was watched particularly. Probably he was not. But men are unconsciously observing; if not with the purpose of influencing future conduct, yet future conduct is influenced, as in this case. The character earned by him by his simple, unaffected ways and dress, by his filial affection and faithfulness, stood him in good stead; and because those who had watched him approved of what they saw in him they help him all they can.

A DOLLAR AND A THOUGHT.

A few days ago, one of God's faithful stewards, a man endeavoring to glorify his Heavenly Father with his substance, and to lay up treasure in heaven, made this remark to me:

"I sat down a night or two ago, and calculated the increase of a dollar at compound interest, and found that, in less than two hundred and forty years, it amounted to more than two millions and a half of dollars. And I asked myself whether God would not make a dollar laid up for him grow as rapidly as it does by the laws of trade."

The arithmetical calculation, and the transfer thereof to the field of beneficence, struck me.

"Yes, my brother," said I, "we need hardly doubt. The word of the Lord is: 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.' He has also said: 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' The laws operating in the spiritual world must be, at least, as certain as those which operate in any other department of the universe. God is more able and willing to pay his debts than men are to pay theirs. You would not have my money as a loan without paying me interest, and God is more noble-minded than man. How certain and emphatic is the promise that he will pay it again! I have not the least doubt, dear brother, that in two hundred and forty years from this day you will find every dollar you have laid up for the Lord worth more to you than two and a half millions of dollars. And, then, there is this to be thought of about the matter: if you put out your dollar on receipt, you must be certain to collect your money and its interest every year, and every year find a responsible borrower for the amount. When you give to the poor, you lend to the Lord, who keeps the accounts, and does the compounding for you."—Dr. Deems.

IT'S ONLY A LITTLE WHILE, SIR.

"Well, Molly," said the Judge going up to the old apple woman's stand, "don't you get tired sitting here these cold, dismal days?"

"It's only a little while," said she.

"And the hot, dusty days?" said he.

"It's only a little while, sir," answered Molly.

"And the rainy, drizzly days?" said the Judge.

"It's only a little while," answered Molly.

"And your sick, rheumatic days, Molly?" said the Judge.

"It's only a little while, sir," said she.

"And what then, Molly?" asked the Judge.

"I shall enter into the rest which remains for the people of God," answered the old woman devoutly, "and the troublesomeness of the way there don't poster or fret me. It's only a little while, sir."

"All is well that ends well, I dare say," said the Judge; "but what makes you so sure, Molly?"

"How can I help being sure," said she,

"since Christ is the way, and I am his? He is mine, and I am his. Now I only feel him along the way, I shall see him as he is, in a little while, sir."

"Ah! Molly, you've got more than the law ever taught me," said the Judge.

"Yes, sir, because I went to the gospel."

"Well, Molly, I must look into these things," said the Judge, taking an apple and walking off.

"There's only a little while, sir," said she.

—American Tract Society.

Scientific.

ABOUT SPIDERS.

A few weeks ago, I received a letter from an unknown correspondent in Ohio, who says, "I venture to ask you to give us a letter on the spider. There is no insect that has been so much a mystery to me as this, and I wish to know how the animal gets from one object to another without wings. I have often seen, for instance, one thread across a road from one fence stake to another, and from one tree to another. I know that some have said that the wind carries them from one object to another, but I cannot think this theory is correct, because I have often seen such threads in the morning when during the night there was not air enough to carry a spider. I wish you to write a letter on the habits of this insect, believing it would be a gratification not only to myself but many others."

I like to encounter observers of nature and not only of the great and colossal but also of the small and insignificant. "The meanest thing has greatness in it," and if the Almighty made these things and cares for them, it is not beneath the dignity of man to "consider" them. If you will allow a little Latin, let me say in the words of a heathen writer, "omnia plena sunt Jovis," all things are full of God, and His works should be "sought out" and studied.

In direct answer to my unknown correspondent, I will say, that you would not allow me space enough to say all I know about this hated animal, which, however, displays most extraordinary and almost incredible instincts, yet I will reply to his special inquiries.

He is correct in presuming that the air does not convey the insect from place to place unaided by other means, but he presumes too much when he says, "there was not air enough during the night to carry a spider," for I do not suppose, he watched the barometer all night to be able to judge. We must take nothing for granted in our scientific observations. After this little caution, let me proceed.

Although spiders are not provided with wings, and are consequently incapable of flying, in the strict sense of the word, yet, by the aid of their silken filaments, numerous species are enabled to accomplish distant journeys through the atmosphere. These aerial excursions which appear to result from an instinctive desire to migrate, are undertaken when the weather is bright and serene, particularly in autumn, and are effected in the following manner. After climbing to the summit of different objects, they raise themselves still higher by straitening the limbs, then elevating the abdomen by bringing it from the horizontal position into one almost perpendicular, they emit from the spinners a small quantity of viscid fluid, which is drawn out into fine lines by the ascending current, occasioned by the rarefaction of the air contiguous to the heated ground. Against these lines the current of rarefied air impinges, till the animals, feeling themselves acted upon with sufficient force, quit their hold of the objects on which they stand and mount aloft. It is not exactly, a balloon filled with light air, which they construct, but it is upon the same principle that they are carried upwards.

Spiders do not always ascend into the atmosphere by a vertical movement, but are observed to sail through it in various directions, and the fact admits of an easy explanation, when the disturbances by which that subtle medium is liable to be affected, are taken into consideration. I have seen them rise above the height of a tall board fence and cross it, just as though they were able to guide their flying machine, which I do not suppose is the fact, but the proximity of the fence disturbed the course of the current and carried them upwards near it, and when they got beyond its influence, another current conveyed them horizontally.

The manner in which the lines are carried out from the spinners by currents of air appears to be this. As a preparatory measure, the spinning organs are brought into closer contact, and viscid matter is emitted; they are then separated by a lateral motion, which extends the viscid matter into filaments; on these filaments the current impinges, drawing them out to a length which is regulated by the will of the animal.

Spiders can forcibly propel or dart out lines from the spinners, when in the open air. They turn the abdomen in the direction of the breeze, and emit from their spinners a little of their viscid secretion, which, being carried out in a line by the current, becomes connected with some object in the vicinity, over which they pass upon a bridge. We sometimes see them stretched even over roads.

The webs, named gossamer, are composed of lines spun by spiders, which, in being brought into contact by the mechanical action of gentle airs, adhere together, till by continual additions they are accumulated into irregular white flakes and masses of considerable magnitudes. These are often seen in the morning in grass or low shrubbery.

Now, I think the questions are answered, and having spun my silken yarn, I have become so interested in these little creatures that I do not think I shall sweep down their webs from the rafters of my garret for the next six months.—PARSON in *Lutheran Observer*.