

GOD BLESS THE HUMAN SUNBEAM.

God bless the human sunbeam, The men both strong and true, Who daily sing or whistle At all they have to do.

A SUMMONS HOME.

Mrs. Thaddeus Clayton came softly into the room and looked with apprehensive eyes upon the little old man in the rocking chair.

"How be ye, dearie? Yer hain't wanted fer nothin', now, have ye?" she asked.

"Not a thing, Harriet," he returned cheerily. "I'm feelin' real pert, soo. Was there loss there? An' did Parson Drew say a heap o' fine things?"

Mrs. Clayton dropped into a chair and pulled listlessly at the black strings of her bonnet.

"'T was a beautiful fun'ral, Thaddeus—beautiful fun'ral. I—I most wished it was mine."

"Harriet!" She gave a shamefaced laugh. "Well, I did—then Jehiel and Hannah Jane would 'a' come, an' I could 'a' seen 'em."

The horrified look on the old man's face gave way to a broad smile. "Oh, Harriet—Harriet!" he chuckled.

"How could ye see 'em if ye was dead?" she said. "Well, an' Thaddeus, 'er voice rose sharply in the silent room—'ferry single one of them Perkins boys was there, and Anabel, too. Only think what poor Mis' Perkins would 'a' given ter see 'em fore she went! But they waited—waited, Thaddeus, jest as everybody does till their folks is dead."

"But, Harriet," demurred the old man, "surely you 'd 'a' had them boys come ter their own mother's fun'ral!"

"Come! I 'd 'a' had 'em come before, while Ella Perkins could 'a' fested her eyes on 'em. Thaddeus,"—Mrs. Clayton rose to her feet and stretched out two gaunt hands longingly.—"Thaddeus, I get so hungry sometimes fer Jehiel and Hannah Jane, seems as though I jest couldn't stand it!"

"I know—I know, dearie," quavered the old man, vigorously polishing his glasses.

"Fifty years ago my first baby came," resumed the woman in tremulous tones; "then another came, and another, till I'd had six. I loved 'em, an' tended 'em, an' cared fer 'em, an' didn't have a thought but was fer them babies. Four died, 'er her voice broke, then went on with renewed strength,—but I've got Jehiel and Hannah Jane left; at least, I've got two bits of paper that come mebbe one a month, an' one of 'em 's signed 'your dutiful son, Jehiel,' an' the other, 'from your loving daughter, Hannah Jane.'"

"Well, Harriet, they're pretty good ter write letters," ventured Mr. Clayton. "Letters!" wailed the wife. "I can't hug an' kiss letters, though I try to, sometimes. I want warm flesh an' blood in my arms, Thaddeus; I want ter look down into Jehiel's blue eyes an' hear him call me 'dear old munsey' as he used to. I wouldn't ask 'em ter stay—I ain't unreasonable, Thaddeus. I know they can't do that."

"Well, wife, mebbe they'll come—mebbe they'll come this summer; who knows?"

She shook her head dismally. "You've said that ev'ry year for the last fifteen summers, an' they hain't come yet. Jehiel went West more than twenty years ago, an' he's never been home since. Why, Thaddeus, we've got a grandson 'most eighten, that we hain't even seen! Hannah Jane's been home jest once since she was married, but that was nigh on ter sixteen years ago. She's always writin' fer her Tommy and Nellie, but—I want ter see 'em, Thaddeus; I want ter see 'em!"

"Yes, yes; well, we'll ask 'em, Harriet, again—we'll ask 'em real urgent-like, an' mebbe that'll fetch 'em," comforted the old man. "We'll ask 'em ter have 'em here Fourth; that's eight weeks off yet, an' I shall be real smart by then."

Two letters that were certainly "urgent-like" left the New England farm house the next morning. One was addressed to a thriving Western city, the other to Chattanooga, Tennessee.

In course of time the answers came. Hannah Jane's appeared first, and was opened with shaking fingers.

"DEAR MOTHER [read Mrs. Clayton aloud]. Your letter came two or three days ago, and I have hurried round to answer it, for you seemed to be so anxious to hear. I'm real sorry, but I don't see how we can get away this summer. Nathan is real busy in the store, and some way, I can't seem to get up energy enough to even think of fixing up the children to take them so far. Thank you for the invitation, though, and we should enjoy the visit very much, but I guess we can't go jest yet. Of course if anything serious should come up that made it necessary—why, that would be different; but I know you are sensible, and will understand how it is with us."

"Nathan is well, but business has been pretty brisk, and he is in the store early and late. As long as he's making money, he don't mind; but I tell him I think he might rest a little sometimes, and let some one else do the things he does."

"Tom is a big boy now, smart in his studies and with a good head for figures. Nellie loves her books, too; and, for a little girl of eleven, does pretty well, we think. I must close now. We all send love, and hope you are getting along all right."

Was glad to hear father was gaining so fast. "Your loving daughter, "Hannah Jane."

The letter dropped from Mrs. Clayton's fingers and lay unheeded on the floor. The woman covered her face with her hands and rocked her body back and forth.

"There, there, dearie," soothed the old man, huskily; "mebbe Jehiel's will be different. I shouldn't wonder, now, if Jehiel would come. There, there! don't take on so, Harriet! don't! I jest know Jehiel 'll come."

A week later Mrs. Clayton found another letter in the rural delivery box. She clutched it nervously, peered at the writing with her dim old eyes, and hurried into the house for her glasses.

Yes, it was from Jehiel. She drew a long breath. Her eager thumb was almost under the flap of the envelope when she hesitated, eyed the letter uncertainly, and thrust it into the pocket of her calico gown. All day it lay there, save at the times—when, indeed, were of frequent occurrence—when she took it from its hiding place, pressed it to her cheek, or glared in every curve of the boldly written address.

At night, after the lamp was lighted, she said to her husband in tones so low he could scarcely hear: "Thaddeus, I—I had a letter from Jehiel today."

"You did—and never told me? Why, Harriet, what—?" He paused helplessly. "I—I haven't read it, Thaddeus," she stammered. "I couldn't bear to, somehow. I don't know why, but I couldn't. You read it!" She held out the letter with shaking hands.

He took it, giving her a sharp glance from anxious eyes. As he began to read aloud she checked him.

"No; ter yerself, Thaddeus—ter yerself—then—tell me." As he read she watched his face. The light died from her eyes and her chin quivered as she saw the stern lines deepen around his mouth. A minute more, and he had finished the letter and laid it down without a word.

"Thaddeus, yer don't mean—he didn't say—?" "Read it—I—I can't," choked the old man.

She reached slowly for the sheet of paper and spread it on the table before her.

"DEAR MOTHER [Jehiel had written]: Just a word to tell you we are all O. K. and doing finely. Your letter reminded me that it was about time I was writing home to the old folks. I don't mean to let so many weeks go by without a letter from me, but somehow the time jest gets away from me before I know it."

"Minnie is well and deep in spring sewing and house-cleaning. I know—because dressmaker's bills are beginning to come in, and every time I go home I find a carpee up in a new place!"

"Our boy Fred is eighteen-to-morrow. You'd be proud of him, I know, if you could see him. Business is rushing. Glad to hear you'll all right and that father's rheumatism is on the gain."

"As ever, your affectionate and dutiful son, "Jehiel."

"Oh, by the way—about the visit East. I reckon we'll have to call it off this year. Too bad; but can't seem to see my way clear."

"By-by, "J."

Harriet Clayton did not cry this time. She stared at the letter long minutes with wide-open, tearless eyes, then she slowly folded it and put it back in its envelope.

"Frier, mebbe—" began the old man, timidly.

"Don't, Thaddeus—please don't!" she interrupted. "I—I don't want ter talk." And she rose unsteadily to her feet and moved toward the kitchen door.

For a time Mrs. Clayton went about her work in a silence quite unusual, while her husband watched her with troubled eyes. His heart grieved over the bowed head and drooping shoulders, and over the hurried eyes that were so often surreptitiously wiped on a corner of the gingham apron. But at the end of a week the little woman accosted him with a face full of aggressive yet anxious determination.

"Thaddeus, I want ter speak ter you about somethin'. I've been thinkin' it all out, an' I've decided that I've got ter kill one of us off."

"Harriet!"

"Well, I have. A fun'ral is the only thing that will fetch Jehiel and—"

"Harriet, are ye crazy? Have ye gone clean mad?"

She looked at him appealingly.

"Now, Thaddeus, don't try ter hinder me, please. You see it's the only way. A fun'ral is the—"

"A fun'ral—it's murder!" he shrieked.

"Oh, no; ter make believe, as I shall," she protested eagerly. "It's—"

"Make believe!"

"Why, yes, of course. You'll have ter be the one ter do it, 'cause I'm goin' ter be the dead one, an'—"

"Harriet!"

"There, there, please, Thaddeus! I've jest got ter see Jehiel and Hannah Jane fore I die!"

"But they—they'll come if—"

"No, they won't come. We've tried it over an' over again; you know we have. Hannah Jane herself said that if anything 'serious' came up, it would be different. Well, I'm goin' ter have somethin' 'serious' come up!"

"But, Harriet—"

"Now, Thaddeus," begged the woman, almost crying, "you must help me, dear. I've thought it all out, an' it's easy as can be. I sha'n't tell any lies, of course. I cut my finger today, didn't I?"

"Why—yes—I believe so," he acknowledged dazedly; "but what has that to do—"

"That 's the 'accident,' Thaddeus. You're ter send two telegrams at once—one ter Jehiel, an' one ter Hannah Jane. The telegrams will say: 'Accident to your mother. Funeral Saturday afternoon. Come as one.' That 's jest ten words."

The old man gasped. He could not speak.

"Now, that's all true, ain't it?" she asked anxiously. "The 'accident' is this out. The 'fun'ral is old Mis' Wentworth's. I heard ter-day that they couldn't have it until Saturday, so that 'll give us plenty of time ter get the folks here. I needn't say whose fun'ral it is that 's goin' ter be on Saturday, Thaddeus! I want yer ter hitch up an' drive over ter Hopkinsville ter send the telegrams. The man's new there, an' won't know yer. You couldn't send 'em from here, of course."

Thaddeus Clayton never knew just how he allowed himself to be persuaded to take his part in this "crazy scheme," as he termed it, but persuaded he certainly was. It was a miserable time for Thaddeus there. First there was that hurried drive to Hopkinsville. Though the day was warm, he fairly shivered as he handed those two fateful telegrams to the man behind

the counter. Then there was the home-ward trip, during which, like the guilty thing he was, he cast furtive glances from side to side.

Even home itself came to be a misery, for the sweeping and the dusting and the baking and the brewing which he encountered there left him no place to call his own, so that he lost his patience at last and moaned:

"Seems ter me, Harriet, you're a pretty lively corpse!"

His wife smiled, and flushed a little. "There, there, dear! don't fret. Jest think how glad we'll be ter see 'em!" she exclaimed.

Harriet was blissfully happy. Both the children had promptly responded to the telegrams, and were now upon their way. Hannah Jane, with her husband and two children, were expected on Friday evening; but Jehiel and his wife and boy could not possibly get in until early on the following morning.

All this brought soant joy to Thaddeus. There was always hanging over him the dread horror of what he had done, and the fearful questioning as to how it was all going to end.

Friday came, but a telegram at the last moment told of trains delayed and connections missed. Hannah Jane would not reach home until nine-forty the next morning. So it was with a four-seated carryall that Thaddeus Clayton started for the station on Saturday morning to meet both of his children and their families.

The ride home was a silent one; but once inside the house, Jehiel and Hannah Jane, amid a storm of sobs and cries, besieged their father with questions.

The family were all in the darkened sitting room—all, indeed, save Harriet, who sat in solitary state in the chamber above her face pale and her heart beating almost to suffocation. It had been arranged that she was not to be seen until some sort of an explanation had been given.

"Father, what was it?" sobbed Hannah Jane. "How did it happen?"

"It must have been so sudden," faltered Jehiel. "It out me up completely."

"I can't ever forgive myself," moaned Hannah Jane, hysterically. "She wanted us to come East, and I wouldn't. 'T was my selfishness—I was easier to stay where I was; and now—now—"

"We've been brutes, father," out in Jehiel, with a shake in his voice; "all of us. I never thought I never dreamed—"

Father came—mebbe—"

In the chamber above a woman sprang to her feet. Harriet had quite forgotten the stove-pipe hole in the room below, and sob and moan and wailing cry had been woefully distinct to her ears. With streaming eyes and quivering lips she hurried down the stairs and threw open the sitting room door.

"Jehiel! Hannah Jane! I'm here, right here—alive!" she cried. "An' I've been a wicked, wicked woman! I never thought how bad 't was goin' ter make you feel. I truly never, never did. 'T was only myself—I wanted yer so. Oh, children, children, I've been so wicked—so awful wicked—"

Jehiel and Hannah Jane were steady of head and strong of heart, and joy, it is said, never kills; otherwise, the results of that sudden apparition in the sitting room door way might have been disastrous.

As it was, a wonderfully happy family party gathered around the table an hour later; and as Jehiel led a tremulous, gray-haired woman to the seat of honor, he looked into her shining eyes and whispered:

"Dear old munsey, now that we've found the way home again, I reckon we'll be coming yer year—don't you?"—By Eleanor H. Porter, in the Century Magazine.

Gems of Thought.

It is love and kindness of human hearts through which the divine reality comes home to men, whether they name it or not.

In going up the ladder of fame you may have to be careful not to be knocked off by the other men who are constantly coming down.

A noble cause cannot of itself make man noble. We must despair of growing great, unless we can feel that we are given to the cause to work for it and not it to work for us.

In our quest for truth we would not attempt to stand alone. We would be quickened by a sense of fellowship with serious and honest lives that have touched our own.

I have looked up every scripture where anything like meditation is mentioned, and I find that we are never once told to meditate upon sin.

How near to me must a person live to be my neighbor? Every person is near to you whom you can bless. He is the nearest whom you can bless most.

The art of putting men in the right place is the highest in the science of government, but that of finding places for the discontented the most difficult.

This little story comes from the South. The first slice of goose had been out, and the negro minister, who had been invited to dine, looked at it with a keen anticipation as was displayed in the faces around him.

"Dat's as fine a goose as I ever saw, Brudder Williams, he said to his host. Where did you get such a fine one?"

Well, now, Mistah Hawley, said the carver of the goose, with a sudden access of dignity, when you preach a special good sermon I never axes you where you got it. Seems to me dat's a trivial matter, anyhow.

Can you honestly say that you were never afraid in battle? asked the tactician of the old veteran with a wooden leg.

Well, no, no, I don't think I could say that, was the reply.

Then you were afraid? Yes, but only once. Have you any objections to giving me the particulars?

Not at all. I had lent the captain of my company \$10, and when we were rushed into a fight and I saw him taking the lead and exposing himself I was afraid he'd get killed and I'd lose my money.

—Glagley tells me he is doing wonderful work with his present employer. I didn't know he was particularly strong in business."

"He isn't." He's merely particularly strong in talking about business."

—The Waiter—"What's for you, sir?" The Professor (engrossed in a problem)—"In the correlation of forces it is a reorganizing property of atomic fragments, whatever their age, to join and—"

The Waiter—"Ash, one."

—When a man gets the notion in his head that the world is against him he is very apt to be willing to let it be against him.

Massacre of Missionaries.

Earl SHAFESBURY—not the third earl, author of the famous "Characteristics," but the seventh earl, who became illustrious by his efficient interest in enlarged philanthropy, rational morals, and genuine religion—said that "foreign missions are the most disinterested enterprises in which men can engage."

Like many philanthropic movements, foreign missions entail serious hardships upon some, and often have a reflex influence of twofold worth over those persons, churches, and countries which first undertook them under the influence of disinterested Christian benevolence.

As the members of the General Missionary Committee were preparing to assemble in their annual meeting, to review the last missionary year and formulate plans for the next, they—in common with all Christians—were shocked by the heart-breaking intelligence of the murder of five Presbyterian missionaries at Lienchou station, China, namely, Mrs. MACHLE, AMY MACHLE, Mr. and Mrs. PRALLE, and ELEANOR CHESTNUT, M. D. Up to this hour the accounts conflict in some particulars, and in others are meager.

Lienchou is in the Province of Kwangtung, and is a city of about twenty thousand. It is some two hundred and fifty miles from Canton, and near the boundary line of the Province of Hunan. The most available route from the city to Canton is by a winding and rapid river, navigable only by small boats, and the journey consumes three weeks. In an emergency by hard riding it was once traversed overland in three days and a half.

In the neighborhood of Lienchou there are many villages, and the population upon which these missionaries were expected to bestow their efforts numbers about one million. The nearest white men are some Baptist missionaries three and a half day's journey westward, and English and German missionaries four day's eastward.

This mission has been permanently established in Lienchou since 1886. It was begun by missionaries from Canton who had often visited it in their itinerating tours. At first the people were suspicious, but though threats were occasionally made no open violence was committed. The conduct of the missionaries pleased the people; the mission prospered, residences were erected for the missionaries, and schools were opened for both boys and girls; two hospitals were built, one for each sex. Last year Dr. Chestnut treated 5,479 women and girls, and Dr. Machle treated 7,577 men and boys. Converts multiplied; there is now a society with an adult membership of over 300, and a new church seating 700 has just been erected.

Besides these are four other organized churches in the district and groups of believers in many villages. The Boy's Boarding School was so full that many applicants had to be turned away. The Girls' School was prosperous, and many day schools were kept up in various parts.

The cablegrams stated that all the buildings were destroyed.

During the whole Boxer outbreak in 1900, such were the amicable relations that neither property nor person connected with the mission was injured.

Any one of several conditions may have caused the massacre and rapine: An outbreak of religious zeal precipitated by an accident which ordinarily would have amounted to nothing.

Of a prearranged attack winked at by heathen priests or local civil officers.

Or it may have resulted from the exclusion laws of the United States, for nearly all of the Chinese in the United States have come from the Province of Kwangtung, in which Lienchou is situated; and "reports of their treatment reaching there have greatly exasperated many of the people."

Dr. BROWN informs us that no hint from the missionaries has ever reached him of any interference or molestation. In fact, the people of Lienchou had come to feel that "the missionaries were not responsible for the treatment of their countrymen, that they were not there for trade; but to do good."

In that case the mob must have consisted of persons who did not know the missionaries or their work.

Mobs wreak their vengeance without restraint, and those who have no malice, and even are friendly, catch fire from those who have.

The Presbyterian Board is indignant at the newspaper report that the cause of the massacre was "the seizure of an idol from a crowd of worshippers by a deaconess and the daughter of a missionary."

There is no deaconess there and the only daughter of a missionary was Amy Machle, only ten years old.

One report is that Dr. Machle protested against a noisy street theatre near a hospital which was full of sick people.

Another dispatch says that a skeleton used in teaching anatomy to students was stolen and exhibited to the populace as a specimen of the treatment which they would give all their countrymen if they dared. This might easily rouse a mob.

It will be some weeks before reliable intelligence can arrive. The Chinese authorities have taken action, and two gunboats have started up the river with three Canton missionaries on board.

China at heart, with increasing exceptions, is anti-foreign, anti-Christian, and anti-United States, and will be for many years.

The statistics for 1900 and 1901 give the number of American societies at work in China as 33. Of these 22 furnish statistics. The total number of communicants enrolled by these American societies is 53,337, of these 47.3 per cent, or 25,228 are members of the Methodist Episcopal church. The whole number of Protestant Christians, including the converts of American and all other missions, is 100,000, of which our own is 22.3 per cent.

To us, then, this massacre is serious. What happens to Protestant missions in China is of great importance to us. We sympathize with our spiritual neighbor, the Presbyterian church; and shall read with melancholy yet active interest the explanation of this outbreak.—The Christian Advocate.

—Knox—"Why don't you cut that out? Tame our talk down bit."

Kandor—"Well, it's all right to call a spade a spade, isn't it?"

—Knox—"Instead of calling it you might whisper it occasionally."

—Mrs. Hogan—"An' how did the baby get the fall?"

Mrs. Grogan—"His father wor holden' him in his arms when the whistle blew."

—Once in a while we meet a man who boasts that he never strikes his children, but we reserve judgment until we know the children.

—One of the easy marks is the old-fashioned gentleman who still thinks that it is a lawyer's business to settle disputes.

Preparing for Christmas.

It is not too early to begin the work of preparation for the Christmas festivities. The evenings are long and the prospect for many stormy days is good at this time of the year, and there are always leisure spells of longer or shorter duration in which many bits of work may be begun and finished by nimble fingers. If one is good at contriving, a little money will go a long way, and there is much that may be done that calls for no money. The young people should be allowed and encouraged to prepare little surprises for each other and for their dear ones, and even the little people can add to the cheer, if their contrivances have the oversight of some one who can guide them a little. But it is best to let them think out the most of it themselves, and thus teach them to use their faculties.

Or, perhaps the "store" things may suit them better for bestowal; and in this case, they should be encouraged to earn the purchase money themselves, by doing such chores or work as they may find to do. Do not begrudge them the joy of being independent, a feeling born of having bought their gifts with their own labor. Let them have their time for the earning or the making, and when they have earned the money let them spend it as suits themselves. They will learn, in this way, the worth of their labor and the purchasing power of their money. If it is spent on some worthless thing, they will be more careful the next time. Even grown people do not always spend wisely. It is well enough to counsel them, and point out to them why the cheapest gift will be most expensive in the end, but leave them to their own will, and when the purchase is once made, "let ever hold your peace." Do not estrange their confidence by an ill-timed "I told you so." In this way they will learn to discriminate.

Do not confine yourself, or them, to the useful present. One wears, now and then of militarism, and a useful pretty thing may be more lasting pleasure than one which is "warranted to wash." Some dreams are more lasting in the joy they give than are the mere real things; some adults, as well as many children, hold the beautiful above the true all their lives. Do not deny them their dreams.

Thanksgiving.

It started in 1623. A good harvest suggested it. Governor Bradford planned it. He sent out men to hunt game.

The settlers gathered at this great feast.

"They thanked God with all their hearts" on that day.

At that momentous meeting was set a precedent.

For long years this festival was peculiar to New England.

Late years it has been adopted by the entire country.

It was President Lincoln who first proclaimed the national Thanksgiving.

One pictures the scant fare of the Pilgrims, who had been here three years before their crops justified a celebration.

Their first winter was not such as warranted a celebration, as the wives of Bradford and Winslow and the bride of Standish were among the many who perished.

The beautiful springtime saw them get their real start. Among other buildings they erected a church, which was a fortress as well, four cannon being mounted upon it.

Indeed, there were long seasons of hard work, often upon less than half rations, before each man started in for himself, before the struggling colonists enjoyed this historic celebration.

Famine Near in Russia.

The disturbances now in operation in South Russia are closely associated with the serious failure of crops in the region.

The official return of crops made at the close of the harvest showed that the product of Russian grain is about 880,000,000 bushels less this year than last. This includes the shortage on wheat, rye, barley and oats. Rye in Russia furnishes considerably over three-quarters of the grain supply, and a nearly equal share of the food, rye taking the place of wheat among the lower classes in Russia and Germany.

The annual exports of grain from Russia amount to about 300,000,000 or 400,000,000 bushels. Allowing for this, the supply for home consumption is short about 400,000,000 bushels, as compared with last year.

The supply of grain in 1904 of all orders was 2,750,000,000 bushels; this year it was 1,900,000,000. Some exports are certain to take place in any case, and the heavy shortage falls chiefly on the interior provinces, those of Little Russia and the region to the north.

Famine will come in more than one part of Russia before the winter is over, adding to this all other disasters which are sweeping the great Empire, with manifold calamities.—Ex.

Failure.

The Great Financier sat in his sumptuous office and thought earnestly.

"My life has been a great success. I have secured everything that the heart of man could desire, money, fame, power—everything."

"But you have not secured me," whispered a something from out the surrounding silence.

"What are you?" queried the Great Financier.

"I am Love."

"But I have secured control of the money of the country. I have secured control of the coal mines of the country. I control the grain markets, the railroads, the mills and the factories."

"But you do not control me," said a chilling voice from out of the surrounding silence.

"What is it that I do not control?" queried the Great Financier.