

THE PEOPLE'S JOURNAL.

VOL. VII.

COUDERSPORT, POTTER COUNTY, PA., JANUARY 11, 1855.

NO. 343

THE PEOPLE'S JOURNAL.
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY MORNING.
BY ADDISON AVERY.

Terms—Invariably in Advance:
One copy per annum, \$1.00
Village subscribers, 1.25
TERMS OF ADVERTISING.
1 square, of 12 lines or less, 1 insertion, \$0.75
Every subsequent insertion, 50
1 column, one year, 25.00
1 column, six months, 15.00
Advertisements or Executors' Notices, 2.00
Selling of goods, per line, 1.50
Professional cards, exceeding eight lines, 50
All letters on business, to secure attention, should be addressed (post paid) to the Publisher.

TO A BELOVED ONE.

BY GERALD MASSEY.

Heaven hath its crown of Stars, the Earth
Her robe of flowers—
The Sun's beams—her gladsome words
The song and greeting showers:
The birds have homes, where leaves and blossoms
In beauty dwell above;
High yearning hearts their rainbow dream—
And we, sweet, we have love.

We walk not with the exiled great,
Whose love's dear name is said;
Yet we have wealth we would not give
For all their wealth of gold!
We revel not in corn and wine,
Ye have we from above
Mans' divine, and we'll not pine:
Do we not live and love!

I know, dear heart, that in our lot
May mingle tears and strife;
But love's rich rainbow's built from tears
To-day, with smiles to-morrow.
The sunshine from our sky may die,
The greenness from our life's tree,
But never mid the winter storm,
The nest shall shelter be.

I see thee! Arrant of life,
Smiling the waves above,
Thou hast met the Victor in the strife,
And broken a crown with love.
The world may never know, dear heart!
What I have found in thee;
But though nought to the world, dear heart!
Thou'rt all the world to me.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER; Or, The Last Feast.

It is a cold, dreary afternoon, and the sky which has been overcast all the morning, is now pouring forth torrents of rain; but notwithstanding the weather, the streets of our large southern cities are well filled with people, hurrying some one way and some another, loaded with bundles and baskets, well stocked with good things for Monday's dinner.

To-morrow will be Christmas day! to-morrow will be Christmas day! I lugged a bright, merry child of about eight years of age, as she stood by the parlor window of a handsome dwelling, gazing at the many passers by, ever and anon clapping her hands, and uttering some childish remark, as a face that she recognized passed along, looked up and nodded kindly to her. "Oh, aunt Mary," she suddenly exclaimed, addressing a lady of about three-and-fifty years of age, who was seated quietly before the fire, occupied with her knitting—"there goes one of Mr. Cole's servants, and there goes the biggest turkey I ever saw."

Her aunt smiled and replied, "Well, don't you think, Alice, that Jacob was the old negro servant will be able to get as big a one for our dinner?"

"Even if he should," said the little girl, laughing, "I am sure I could not eat it all by myself, but I may give some of it to some poor little beggar children, may I not?"

"Certainly you may, my dear, and we will tell you—but put down the window," exclaimed Miss Vernon, hastily interrupting herself, for her niece, while she was uttering these words, had placed herself quickly upon a chair, raised the window, and was stretching her head far out, "What did you open it for?" she added, as Alice, immediately obeying her, sprang from her seat and was about to leave the room.

"Oh, aunt," replied the child, "there is a poor boy on our stoop, and I want to tell him to come to-morrow and get some turkey for his dinner."

"Jacob," said her aunt to the old colored man, who entered the apartment at this moment, "just go to the street door, and see about that little beggar child, that Miss Alice wants to share her turkey with."

"May I not go too, aunt?" inquired her niece.

"You may just go to the door, if you want to, but do not let her go out in the rain, Jacob," said Miss Vernon, turning to the old man.

"Oh, no, Missis, I will not let my little tobebed get the least bit wet," he replied, as Alice, clasping one of his large black hands with her small, delicate fingers, drew him impatiently from the room.

"You have got me a very big turkey, haven't you, uncle Jacob?" she

enquired, when they reached the hall. "Oh, yes, Miss Alice," he replied, "but you won't be able to eat all of it yourself."

"I know that, but then there will be more for others; and even as big a turkey," she continued, "as Mr. Cole's wouldn't feed all the little beggar children."

The old man smiled, and the tear which had been glistening in his eye, rolled down his dark face, and as he gazed upon the fair little form by his side, whose cheeks were rosy with health and youth, and whose bright eyes danced with pleasure, he thought this his little flower was the loveliest that ever bloomed.

They now opened the street door, and there seated upon the cold marble steps was a boy of about ten years of age. His clothes were very thin, and covered with many darns; he had no cap upon his head, and black hair, which was dripping wet, hung down over his face, as he rested his cheek upon his hand.

"Little boy, little boy," exclaimed Alice, as Jacob, leaving her at the top of the stairs, went down to the child and touched him upon the arm, endeavoring to arouse him. The boy looked up. There at his side was a strange negro, telling him that his young mistress wanted him, and pointing towards the house. Mechanically the child arose, hastened up the steps, and soon stood in the door-way before Alice.

"Come in, come in," she exclaimed, taking him by the hand, and endeavoring to draw him in the hall. But he drew hastily back, and said, while he brushed the hair from off his face—

"Thank you, miss, but I must go home to my mother."

"Where does your mother live?" enquired Jacob, casting an earnest glance at the boy.

"On the corner of Charles and Smith streets," replied the little fellow. "What have you been doing all day?" asked Alice.

"I left home early this morning," he replied in trembling tones, "to try to get some work to do, so that I could make a little money, and then my mother would have something to eat; but," he continued, bursting into tears, "I have not made a cent, and now she must starve. I was just thinking that I would beg," he exclaimed, passionately, hastily wiping his eyes. The tears were now rolling down Alice's face, which the little fellow observing, took her hand affectionately in his, and begged her not to cry for him.

"No," said Alice, "I won't cry. I will do something better than that; and you won't beg, will you?" she enquired, the color deepening upon her cheeks, "but you will come and ask me for everything that your mother wants?"

The boy smiled, looked earnestly at her, and seemed as if almost about to say, "Yes."

"Uncle Jacob," continued Alice, gaily, "has bought me a nice big turkey for my Christmas dinner, and I invite you to dine with me to-morrow. If you are anything of a gentleman," she added, laughing, "you certainly will not refuse such a lady-like request." As she uttered these last words, she placed her hand in her pocket, and drawing out a gold dollar, gave it to the astonished child, saying, "Take that, and buy your mother some supper."

At the sound of the word *mother*, he started, threw himself on his knees before Alice, and pressing her little hands to his lips, while the tears again streamed forth, exclaimed—

"Thank you! thank you! Oh, you have made me so happy! And I will come to-morrow and dine with you, if mother will let me." Then rising, he ran down the steps, and before Jacob, who seemed about to address him, could utter a single word, he was out of sight. The negro looked up the street, rubbed his wooley head, and murmured—"It is strange, very strange! But the boy was so like Massa Charles Howard, I must speak to Massa Vernon when he comes home."

In one of the upper rooms of a poor, miserable looking dwelling, is seated by a table, on which stands a low, flickering light, a tall, slender woman, bending earnestly over her work. The apartment is damp, and gold, for one of the panes in the window is broken, and the wind and rain have free admittance there. "It is strange, Charles does not return," she murmurs, rising and looking anxiously out into the street. "I am afraid something has happened to him. But no," she added, clapping her hands, and raising her eyes towards the dark, cloudy sky, while the cold rain fell upon her pale face. "Thou, oh Lord, relieve the fatherless and the widow, and in Thee will I put my trust."

Mark! there is a quick step upon

the stairs. The mother's ears have caught the sound; she turns quickly, closes the window, and at the same instant the door of the room is thrown open, and the poor boy, to whom our little Alice has been so kind, enters. His arms are filled with various small bundles; he, too, has returned home loaded with good things. He opens the packages eagerly before his astonished mother's eyes. One contains a nice tender steak, another some fresh butter, another a loaf of hot bread, and another a few candles; then he places in her hand about three shillings in change, and completely overcome, bursts into tears. The mother gazes anxiously at her son. How, she thinks, can he have come by so much money! and his tears—he, whom she would so fully trusted, surely cannot have been led, perhaps for her sake, to commit a theft.

"Charlie!" she exclaims, somewhat sternly, "how have you obtained these things?"

The boy raised his eyes, looked earnestly in her face, and said, "Dear mother, you do not think I would steal!"

"I could hardly think so, my son," she replied, with a trembling voice, as she drew him affectionately towards her.

"And I did not beg, either, mother," he said, in a few moments, raising his flushed cheek from the shoulder on which it had rested, "but I bought all this with some money that was given me by a beautiful little girl, and she asked me to come and eat dinner with her to-morrow, and I may go, can't I?"

"We will see, my son," replied his mother.

He then related to her, word for word, all that had happened to him. And when he told her that the little girl called the negro Uncle Jacob, his mother started, sighed deeply, and inquired particularly about the old man's appearance.

We will now leave these two happy ones to enjoy their unexpected supper, and return to the dwelling of Colonel Vernon.

The fire in the sitting room is burning brightly, and the large globe lamp on the centre table sheds a brilliant light throughout the apartment. Tea is nearly ready, and Miss Mary Vernon, the Colonel's maiden sister, has now laid aside her knitting, and is assisting Jacob's wife in arranging the table. The Colonel, a tall, fine-looking young man, of about thirty years of age, is seated in a large easy chair, reading the newspapers.

"Oh, dear papa, have you come home?" exclaimed Alice, rushing into the room, and springing into her father's lap, she clasped her arms affectionately around his neck, while he drew her towards him, and pressed kiss after kiss upon her rosy lips.

"Why, where has my little daughter been, that she did not know when papa came in? You were not at the window watching for me?"

"Ah, please don't mind," she said, entrancingly, as she placed her little hands upon his cheeks, and looking him full in the face, added—"I just went down stairs to get Uncle Jacob to show me the turkey that he had bought for me, and to tell you, aunt Louisa," she continued, turning towards the negroess, "to put another plate on the table to-morrow, for I am going to have company to dinner."

As the child uttered these words, her father looked at her in astonishment, and the old colored woman exclaimed—"Why, Lor! blessom, who are you going to invite?"

"I have already invited my company. It is only a poor little boy."

Her father smiled and said—"At any rate, we will send your little boy some dinner." Then turning towards the negroess, he added, "Aunt Louisa will attend to it."

"No, papa, no; he is coming here to dine," exclaimed Alice, quite excited. Before her father could reply, however, Jacob entered the apartment, hat in hand, and requested to speak a few moments alone with his master.

"Get the carriage immediately, Jacob, and you can drive me," exclaimed the Colonel, entering the room after a few moments had elapsed, his whole manner bearing the marks of great excitement.

"The horses are already before the carriage, massa, I took the liberty of harnessing them before I spoke to you."

"All right," replied the Colonel, "there will be the less delay." "What is the matter, Donald?" enquired Miss Vernon, grasping her brother anxiously by the arm.

He started, passed his hand through his hair, and exclaimed, "Mary, if my hopes are not disappointed, we are on the track of our dear sister!" "Oh, Alice, my dear sister," he added, "would to heaven that to-night my never-ceas-

ing prayer that you might be restored to us, might be answered, and that I may again clasp you to my heart!"

At these words his sister turned pale as death, while her lips murmured—"I pray it may at last be so, and the two old colored servants, who had been born, married, and would die, they said, in the Vernon family, stood near, their hands joined and their eyes raised towards heaven."

"Where are you going, papa?" exclaimed Alice, as her father, having hastily drawn on his overcoat, was preparing to leave the apartment.

"I am going, my little one, he replied, stooping down and kissing her, to bring you home, perhaps, a little boy to dine with you to-morrow."

"Dear good papa," exclaimed the child, "well, there will be enough for both the little boys."

"O, I won't promise that you can have more than one."

"Well," she replied, as she drew her hand impatiently away and plucked her little lip, "I won't eat dinner with your little boy, if you won't eat dinner with mine."

The widow and her son have finished their nice supper, and she is trying to persuade him to retire to his bed, for he must be fatigued, she says, after being out all day; but he pleads so hard, that he is not very tired, and would just like to sit up a little while, to enjoy the nice fire, which he has been enjoying her to build, that she cannot refuse him. And there the two sit. He, on a low stool at her feet, his head resting upon her lap, while he holds one of her thin, white hands in his, and thinks how he will work for her, and she shall never sew again. Then he looks at the broken pane of glass, through which the wind and rain enter, and he almost thinks that it cannot be very cold out, for he does not feel the air much, but he gazes toward the warm fire, and then knows why he does not feel the cold. Still gazing at the bright coals, so full of pictured images, he falls asleep, dreaming bright, happy dreams. Sleep on peacefully, sweet boy, and may you awake not till they can be realized.

And the mother, as she sits there, sends her thoughts back to the far past. She dreams that she is again a happy child, roaming the woods of her father's country-seat for wild flowers, accompanied by her darling twin brother, who was ever her companion and protector in all her rambles. They have gathered their basket full, and they now are seated by the side of a rippling brook, while swimming in her golden locks the most beautiful buds, he kisses her, and tells her how he loves her. Again, the cold waters rush over her; she has fallen, in endeavoring to reach a beautiful flower on the edge of the bank, into yonder dark stream, but when just sinking, she feels an arm around her, it bears her up, she is saved, and while almost fainting, carried up to the opposite bank. Then, when she had recovered, both ran quickly home, that she may not take cold, get in by the back door, and she is soon in her own little bed room, where aunt Louisa, her nurse, is immediately sent by her brother to her assistance. Then, while the good colored woman rubs her till she is in a perfect glow, and dresses her in dry clothes, she places her little fat hands against those ebony cheeks, and kissing them again and again, makes her promise that she will not let brother Donald and her go to gather flowers ever again.

Her thoughts come down to later years. It is a cold December night, and the wind whistles are raging around her father's mansion, but there is one who fears not the storm, and he has come to claim her for his bride. There is a horseman beneath the window—he, sounds aloud, whistle, which she hears far above the tempest, and silently, yet boldly, in the dark night, she leaves her stern father's dwelling, and becomes the wife of Charles Howard. Two years have passed. Again she bends over her loved husband's sick bed. That terrible southern fever, which has stricken so many, has not passed him by. He is dying—no power can save him—she and her young babe will be left alone in this cold world. (She has often, since her marriage, written home to her father, but her letters have always been returned unopened.) She days her husband in his final resting place; and as a last resource, she has resolved to go to her parents, throw herself on her knees before him, and implore him at least to take under his protection her son, her only child.

It is a beautiful evening in the early fall; the foliage is assuming its brightest tints. Nature is dying—so is man. The stern old Mr. Vernon is breathing his last. He has stretched upon his bed, and the casement is open to ad-

mit the cooling breeze. By his side stands his son Donald, his young wife resting upon his arm, while Mary bathes her father's parched lips. The dying man utters the name of Alice. All bend eagerly forward. Are his last words forgiveness?

There is a pale face gazing in the open window at the scene before her; but they see her not. None listen more eagerly than she on hearing her father pronounce her name. His words are; "Alice! I have disowned her! let her name be blotted from your memories!" These words enter her brain, she feels as if she would go mad, and clasping her child tightly to her heart, she turns away and hurries down a winding path towards a deep stream. On the bank she stands as if in the act of springing, but new thoughts come over her of her brother who saved her from those very waters, and sinking on her knees, she prays—she acknowledges her own utter weakness, and implores for strength from above to support her under her trials.

The widow starts. The fire has burned low, so that it sends but an uncertain light throughout the apartment. Her son's head still rests in sleep upon her lap, while she has been passing, in memory, again through those scenes of her sad life.

The door of the apartment opens, a hand is laid gently on her arm, and an old, familiar voice whispers in her ear, "Sister Alice!" She turns, and is clasped in her brother Donald's arms, while old Jacob threw himself at her feet, and pressing her hand to his lips, sheds tears of joy.

Christmas day has come, and happy is the party assembled around Colonel Vernon's well filled board. Little Alice's wonderfully big turkey, looms large on the table, and she is very well satisfied to share it with the little boy papa had brought home.

Before partaking of the viands, they bend their heads, while the Colonel thanks the Giver of all Good for the many blessings he has shown them, and with heart-felt gratitude all respond—Amen.

"PREACHING POLITICS."

The soldier of the Cross may fire as many blank cartridges as he pleases, with never so loud and stunning report, may even shot the guns, provided always he fires at some pine board with a painted Indian on it. But let the shotguns play straight into some strong citadel of sin, some gigantic wickedness fortified in the high places of power, let some live Indian be hit, and it is marvellous how soon there is a revival of religion in Congress, and how painfully devout our party journals suddenly become.

Wittily said, and with a truth and justice that gives to irony its keenest point. To read the speeches of some of our public men, or the editorials of certain of our partisan newspapers, one would almost be led to think that the duties and responsibilities of the ministry were but imperfectly understood by the occupants of our pulpits, and that the very men of all others to instruct them therein, are political gamblers, demagogues, spoliemen, and office-seekers generally. Strange, that their disinterested advice is not more generally heeded by the parties for whom it is designed! These teachers of the ministry have a profound reverence for the gospel, and are greatly exercised in behalf of its purity and integrity. Especially are they apprehensive that it will in some way be corrupted by the application of its principles to the every day business of the world around them. They dislike anything from the pulpit that looks like rebuke of the sins "which they're inclined to," though very tolerant of any amount of abstractionism upon the subject of sin in general; that the preacher chooses to indolge in. They never object to eloquent invectives against the *old-time* "Phariseism," but a word rebuking those who, to-day, "devour widow's houses," and for a pretense make long prayers," will be sure to call down upon the offending preacher the most emphatic oburgations; and he may deem himself a fortunate man if he does not hear ominous hints of a reduction of salary, or his dismissal from the parish.

This assumption of demagogism to control the utterance of the pulpit, will, of course, be met by a calm, practical repudiation, from every one who is worthy to occupy a pulpit, or has any true apprehension of what is involved in a faithful preaching of the gospel. If the principles of the Christian religion have no application to the business of men—to their every day conduct, as well as to their beliefs and emotions, then they have no special value for this world, however excellent they may be for the next; but if they are to govern all our activities, and enter into the everyday transactions of life—their faithful application to whatever interests or concerns men, becomes the preacher's imperative duty, failing in which, he fails to preach the gospel.

There is no domain of human interest, or of human activity, that these principles do not reach. They are to be applied to the designs and doings of parties and of governments, as well as to the purpose and conduct of the individual man. If the rum seller pursues a traffic fraught with deadliest evil to his fellow-men, the minister of the gospel may not keep back God's testimony, against so terrible a wrong—"Woe unto him that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips!" If the civil power sanctions the wrong, he may not suppress the denunciation of Heaven against those "who decree unrighteous decrees." If politicians league together to sustain it, that does not lessen his obligation to speak out in condemnation of it, and in faithful rebuke of all who are implicated in its perpetration.

Let it be said, he is accused of "preaching politics." Very well—such accusation is a certificate of his faithfulness as a minister of the gospel. The man who does not "preach politics," in a country like ours, where all the machinery of civil government and all the responsibility of enacting and executing laws are devolved upon the people, should never enter a pulpit; nor delude himself with the idea that he is qualified to lead and instruct his fellow-men—for either the intelligence that apprehends a duty, or the faithfulness that discharges it, in the serene confidence that God will take care of the consequences, is in his case, wanting. But perhaps some one will ask, "What do you mean by the phrase 'preaching politics'?" Exactly what those ministers of the gospel mean by it, who are accused of doing so—viz: the faithful application of Bible principles to all our political activities. If a man, in his business transactions with his fellow, where only comparatively trifling interests are involved, affecting none, but the parties immediately concerned, is bound to obey the moral law, his obligation to do so, can certainly be no less, in matters that involve the public interest, and have a most important bearing upon the public morality. Law educates the people into just that kind of morality which it represents. If it sanctions a wicked traffic, that debases and demoralizes men, it educates whole communities into false moralities; if it condemns the wrong and sustains the right, then "becoming a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well," it is, "a minister of God for good." How absurd, then, the idea that the pulpit has nothing to do with the morals of politics!—or that the minister of the gospel departs from the line of duty when he claims that God's jurisdiction extends over the ballot-box, and that *votes are acts*, and as such are to be tested by the unchanging principles of morality! To tempt a brother to ruin, or to plunge him into an abyss of infamy, through the operation of law, is no less a crime against God and humanity, than to do the same without the sanction of the State; upon one's individual responsibility. The principles which should govern all our actions, public or private, are proper subjects for pulpit discussion—as are the moral qualifications of rulers, and the moral character of laws. The fact that the Bible is not silent upon these topics, but contains specific instructions in reference to them, is demonstration absolute that they come within the province of the pulpit.

We are glad that we can add that hundreds, if not thousands, of clergymen in this State have practically committed themselves to this rational and Scriptural view of the subject, by a faithful application of the principles of Christianity to the laws licensing the liquor traffic. In another portion of our Paper we have given a specimen of what we understand by "preaching politics," in extracts from Key, Dr. Cheever's Temperance Sermon. We presume that not less than a thousand similar utterances were heard from the pulpits of this State, during the pendency of our recent election. Who will venture to affirm that such teachings are not Scriptural, or that Bible morality should not be faithfully applied to our political action, as well as to our ordinary business transactions, between man and man?—Prohibition, of course, will go with them.

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The Mormons are about to establish their churches and colonies in the principal cities of the Union. All those peculiar customs, of course, will go with them.

A gentleman asked a negro boy if he would take a pinch of snuff. "No," replied the boy, very respectfully, "no thank you, Pomp's nose not hungry."