

Family Reading.

Just Like a Comet.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

A little maid, so wondrous wise In speech, and with observing eyes, Was wakened at the early morn, And to an eastern window borne, That she might see the comet bright, And nevermore forget the sight.

The shining star was pointed out, Its head with splendor rayed about: And then, outspreading like a dress, Its train of dazzling loveliness, And all the points that made it far More beautiful than any star.

The little maiden gazed and gazed, At such a wonder much amazed; And never had she seen before The morning sky so spangled o'er, Or fancied that the silver moon Stayed out so late, or rose so soon.

The stars kept winking overhead, As if they longed to be in bed, And two bright orbs in mamma's lap Were closed to finish out their nap, While still the comet swept the skies, The marvel of admiring eyes.

Next day within the nursery The little maiden chanced to be, When baby was on dress parade, Its pretty finery well displayed, As high in nurse's arms was held, With all its frowns and fears dispelled.

Its flaxen head, with aureole bright, Its lengthy train of dazzling white, Were noted by the maid so wise, Who stood, with widely opened eyes, And said, "It looks—" her speech was slow—

"Just like a comet!" And 'twas so. —Harper's Young People.

New Select Serial.

ARCHIE.

A TALE OF INDIA.

CHAPTER II.

Two days afterwards they laid the young wife in the grave, in a sunny corner of the flower-decked cemetery, where the sun's rays rested lovingly in the soft evening light.

The young husband had loved his wife as a Christian loves the better part of himself, for whose happiness and well-being he is accountable to his God. He could hardly realize that she was gone from his side for ever, and the thought which saved him from despondency at this sorrowful time was that now he must doubly love and care for the motherless little ones.

The major would have retired from the army at this time, so as to have given his whole attention to his children, but the rumoured disaffection of the native regiments was at that time a cause of anxiety, for it was not long before the Mutiny. The warning of Sir Charles Napier and other far-seeing commanders had been well considered by all thoughtful officers, and to give up his commission at such a crisis would have been a desertion of duty, affecting his honour as a soldier. His mind was too troubled at that moment, when his sorrow was so fresh, to feel more than that 'he must stick to his post,' and say, 'God in His mercy and wisdom will guide and direct me.'

When he had to rejoin his regiment he felt the parting with his children most severely, though the ayah was one with whom he could leave them with perfect confidence. His plans were to get a further leave of absence, and return to the bungalow for Lola and his motherless babes, she meanwhile making her arrangements to leave for England so as to place them in the care of the major's mother and sister who resided at Breatly Grange in Devonshire.

He knew how fully and truly his beloved Nellie had trusted and regarded her ayah. A very superior woman of her class, among whom there are to be found many examples of high intelligence as well as deep fidelity, she possessed that true-heartedness so rare which is indeed faithful unto death to the loved object; she had also a certain winning grace and abnegation of self which had gained the true regard of her gentle mistress, from whom she received all the kindly consideration her loyal service deserved.

The night before his departure, the major sent for Lola to give her a few

last directions relative to the voyage to England.

Lola was a comely young woman, with that easy lightness of figure which belonged to her race. The tender loving look in her large black eyes, which were fearlessly yet respectfully fixed on the major's face as she entered the verandah in obedience to his summons, gave the major an inward satisfied feeling that his Nellie's trust in her was right.

'The Sahib Major sent for me,' said Lola standing with much respectful grace before him.

'Yes, Lola, I have sent for you to tell you how entirely I confide my orphan children to your loving care, your own foster-child, my brave little Archie, and my wee darling Gracie. I know how your late mistress my beloved wife trusted and loved you, Lola, and I know also how well you deserve the trust, therefore I feel sure you will guard them even as your own life.'

'Aye, with my own life, Sahib,' replied Lola, and crossing her arms on her bosom, eastern fashion, she left the verandah.

Left alone again, the major turned to the one thought now in his mind—the care of his children. In the ayah he had perfect trust, but his great fear now was the disturbed state of India, caused by the revolt of the native regiments, which had now begun, and would long prevent his obtaining furlough for Europe. Long and anxiously he thought, and at last he made up his mind to follow out the plan he had at first proposed.

Tired out, and feeling every hour more than the last the want of the loved friend he had lost, the major sought relief in the fresh air. The night was calm and moonlit, with a silvery mist which seemed to give an unearthly beauty to every object on which the light shone. Wearily the major bent his steps to the little cemetery where, wrapt in her solemn rest, lay his sainted Nellie, his wife! All around was still save the faint whispering rustle of the wind in the long leaves of the fan palms, under whose shade the Nellie's grave was made, and it seemed to the bereaved young husband that in the wind-whispers round him he could hear his Nellie's voice telling him that all was well with her. The hour and the scene all had their effect on the sorrowing heart, and kneeling by the grave of his wife he prayed for submission, and for power to bear his cross as a Christian should; with earnest prayer, too, that God would give him grace to do his duty aright. He rose from his knees with a heart full of subdued and gentler feelings, and bowing reverently his head, said, 'Not my will, but Thine be done, oh God!'

The words had scarcely left his lips when he was conscious that a small figure was beside him, who with tiny clasped hands was repeating, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

'Archie! how came you here?' The small voice, which had been hushed in to such sweet gravity whilst repeating the holy words, now burst out in such a wail of childish grief, as made the father's heart overflow with tenderness for his motherless boy, and taking him in his arms by the grave, he uttered a few words of petition and supplication, such as came from his heart.

'What made you come out to me?' Archie, asked the major, as he had given the child into Lola's care at the nursery door.

Archie's sobs were scarcely yet hushed, and now they burst forth again, 'Oh, papa, I did want you so, and I saw you going to the little cemetery,' which could be seen with its flower bedded graves just beyond the hill path, from the window at which they sat.

The major comforted the little lad with loving kindly words, and when leaving him he bade Archie promise him never to go there alone, when he had gone away. Archie promised, but as his papa left the room his fortitude all at once gave way for a moment, as he repeated,

'When you are gone away! Oh, papa, dear papa, what will Archie do? Be my brave boy, and take care of little sister Gracie.'

Archie brushed his tears away, and looking at his papa, he said, 'So I will—that I will, papa.'

And Archie kept his word. That evening the major went to join his regiment.

In the Fur Country.

BY LUCIE DAYTON PHILIPS.

To the people who inhabit what Jules Verne calls 'the fur country,' their miserable huts, made of blocks of snow, from four to six inches thick, may seem snug and comfortable. They are accustomed to smoke and dirt. They may really enjoy a ride in a sledge, drawn by half-savage Esquimaux dogs, when the thermometer is 30° below zero; but we would not. It is difficult for us to imagine anything a pleasure in those bitter lands; and driving dogs in a team cannot be easy work; they have such uneven tempers and different fancies. They are exceedingly important, however; and for want of them some of the bravest and best of the men who went out in the Second Grinnell Expedition, commanded by Dr. Kane, sank down into the snow-deeps, and had no other grave or winding-sheet.

When the long, cold night settled down upon them, the midnight of the year, there were forty-five dogs upon which they largely depended for their journey further north; but when the end of February brought back the sun, only six were alive. Nearly all of them had gone out of their minds, from want of light, and air; but some of them had died from the intense cold, and so these brave men travelled north and east, over two thousand miles on foot, or with a few dogs, weary, snow-blind, staggering with numb limbs, heavy with fatigue, living through three long, dreary, Arctic winters, and yet finding no trace or token of the missing ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, the brave commander, and his one hundred and thirty-seven picked men!

One venture after another was made to establish themselves further north, in the forlorn hope of accomplishing their noble errand; but they all ended alike, in disaster and death. How they must have longed for the sunshine to smite those frozen seas, and make it possible for them to return home in the good ship *Advance*! But the summer that found its way to them, after all these months of waiting, was short and unfavorable. Even in June the snow was still falling, the ice-beds melting and breaking very slowly, though the bare, bleak rocks were clothed with soft, green moss, and scarlet poppies tossed their bright heads and delicate waxen blossoms quivered on their slender stems. A strange, sad summer to those poor men, who no longer thought of rescuing Franklin and his lost companions, but piteously prayed, 'Lord, restore us to our homes!'

And the brief summer was soon gone; the poppies withered and blackened in the waning light; the miseries and trials of the dark winter set in. After many difficulties and great suffering, aided by the Esquimaux, who showed themselves both kind and friendly, they left the *Advance* to her fate, and in three small boats they turned their faces homeward. Their leader, the young and gallant Kane, weakened and exhausted by such hardships, died shortly after his return, even before Captain McCormick had found the leaves of parchment buried under some stones, which recorded the death of Franklin in the year 1849. The fate of the rest of his party will never be certainly known; but it is supposed that one after another sickened and died, perished of hunger and cold, and 'falling asleep' on the hard bosom of mother-earth, the drifting snows gave them decent burial. Their sealed lips can never tell the story of those cruel years. It is locked in the grim and desolate silence of the distant 'Fur Country.'—*Home Circle*.

*In 1854, an expedition under Dr. Rae, discovered dead thirty white men, on the main land, near King Williams Land. He also procured pieces of silver plate, recognized as belonging to officers of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. And these facts led to the conclusion that the party perished there.

Sir Wilfred Lawson, M. P., says he saw an elegant wheelbarrow in Edinburgh, invented for the use of the police, to wheel drunkards to the station. A friend explained to him as follows:—'Most tradesmen send their goods home themselves, but when a publican has completed and finished the article, then we send it at the public expense by the police.'

Marion Hobart.

BY MRS. E. B. BACKUP.

For I am desolate; 'I am desolate and afflicted, the troubles of my heart are enlarged.' The pathetic voice rang out, in sweet, clear tones, and Marion Hobart listened, thankful for the friendly shelter of the veil which hid her tears, which were streaming down her cheeks. She was desolate and afflicted; and it came to her with a new significance on this bright Sabbath morn.

A prayer followed, simple but earnest, and breathing a profound faith. 'I wonder if he would feel like that,' Marion thought; 'if he were situated just as I am. He lives in a luxurious home, where no thought of want can ever intrude. It is easy to trust in the Lord when one's coffers are full. How would he feel if he hadn't a dollar in his pocket, and knew not which way to turn? I have tried, oh, so hard, to cast all my burden upon the Lord; and what has it amounted to? We've grown poorer and poorer; and now father's down with a fever, and Will is laid up with a broken leg. The children are too young to help, and I, a slender girl, am the main stay of a large family. I feel as if God had forsaken us. Oh, that I could be patient and full of faith!'

The prayer was ended, the minister was reading: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Marion listened. She had been taught to believe it; perhaps it was true. When the sermon was reached, Marion was prepared to accept the text as a beautiful Sabbath salutation from God himself. It was that text of texts: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And if he so loved the world, surely none of his little ones would be forgotten. Marion went home comforted, with the words of the closing hymn ringing in her ears, 'The Lord is mindful of his own.'

'You have been helped, dear,' said her mother, with a sweet smile upon her patient face.

'Yes, mother mine,' said Marion lightly, 'and I expect that we shall be relieved, if an angel has to be sent fresh from heaven to minister unto us.'

'It is a great relief to me to see you cheerful again, little daughter,' Mrs. Hobart replied. 'Sussie is reading to Will, and Alice is patiently watching by her father's side. The boys have been models of patient helpfulness. They insisted that I should take a nap; and they are disposing of matters in the kitchen. God has greatly blessed us, in giving us such good children.'

A shade passed over Marion's face. I thought I had gained the victory,' she said. 'I am like Esop's damsel, changed from a cat to a woman, who sat very demurely at the board's end, till a mouse ran before her. Those horrid bills and a lean larder are likely to change me from a victorious saint, to a very feeble-minded sinner.'

'The flesh is weak, dear, and the way is dark; but there is one like unto the Son of man, walking beside us.'

'Always hath the daylight broken, Always hath the comfort spoken, Better hath he been for years, Than thy fears.'

'Yes, dear mother, faith is again in the ascendant, and I propose making a raid upon the kitchen, to find what the prospects are for a Sunday dinner. The children must all go to Sunday-school this afternoon, and you must rest. I'll be nurse, housekeeper and all for one afternoon, and I'll keep singing over, 'The Lord is mindful of his own.'

Marion Hobart was at church this morning. She had on a thick veil, and hurried out when the services closed. She hasn't been at church for several Sabbaths; and knowing about Will, I was rather surprised to see her this morning. I hear Mrs. Hobart is almost ill from care and watching.' Thus spoke Mr. Rowe, a good deacon of the Vine Street Church.

'I am so sorry for them,' said his daughter, 'and most of all for poor Marion. We used to be so intimate, before she began to work as a seamstress. But now there is no such thing as finding her at home, and she seems to avoid her old friends. I wish

we could do something for them. They surely must need assistance.'

'Just what I thought myself, as I saw that poor girl wipe her eyes in church this morning. I know Mr. Hobart's business affairs are in a bad state and they must be sorely in need of Christian sympathy, as well as of something still more substantial. We must call soon.'

'Suppose we stop to inquire for Will and his father on our way to Sunday-school this afternoon, and then I shall be sure to see Marion.' And, oh, father, couldn't you send them some money without letting them know from whom it came? Then they couldn't refuse to accept it.'

'I'll see what can be done, my daughter.'

A brief call to inquire for the invalids, with kind-words of love, and sympathy, left something very like pure sunlight in the hearts of the Hobart family. 'I always liked Mary Rowe,' said Marion. 'I didn't think that a few words could make me feel so happy, although, like a goose, I had to cry, of course. I have become very babyish lately.'

'You have worked day and night,' said Mrs. Hobart, 'and your nerves are suffering from the strain.'

'It isn't the work, mother; it's the worry. My nerves would soon recover tone, if my mind were quite at rest.'

An anonymous letter came by the morning mail, with a check for five hundred dollars enclosed. Marion found the family in a jubilant frame when she returned at night. The boys could scarcely be restrained; and the sight of George trying to turn a somersault was Marion's first intimation of a joyful change in the family fortunes. Will, too, had received a letter from his employers, assuring him of their sympathy and stating that there should be no cessation of salary during his illness.

'The Lord is mindful of his own,' said Marion, with grateful tears in her eyes. 'How faithless and unbelieving I have been! Be the day never so dark, I think I can never be so distrustful again. Now we can pay some of our debts, and get a few dainties for father and Will. That brighter day is dawning, dear mother, which your loving faith has so persistently prophesied.'

Marion Hobart is now in a happy home of her own; but she often thinks of those months of sore trouble when her soul fainted within her. She learned then to trust the loving Father, and to believe that 'his plans, like lilies, pure and white, unfold,' and the language of her heart now is:

I ask not that my path be always bright But for thine aid to walk therein aright; That thou, O Lord! through all its devious way, Will give me strength sufficient to my day; For this, for this I pray.

—Jb.

Women Should be Companionable.

BY MARY SMITH.

A bright, intelligent girl has no right to think as soon as she has succeeded in capturing a man that she has fought the good fight, finished her course, and that there is nothing to do but wither away, sink into insignificance, and be heard of no more. She should be companionable; she has passed the age when beauty is a sufficient passport, and must henceforth cultivate that merit which alone wins respect and retain love. Man is thrown with his fellow-beings more than women, and this contact with other minds tends to strengthen and cultivate his mental powers, and ere long he will be of a higher intellectual order than his wife, if she is content to go on with her daily round of prosy duties, not caring to look after the mind's requirements, or to make herself capable of intelligent conversation on affairs outside her own kitchen. What she cannot gain by business association, she must make up by reading. She must keep even somehow. Surely no woman wants to be considered inferior to her husband, and have people wondering why such a sensible man should have married such a stupid woman.

There is no standing still in this life; if we do not advance, we retrograde; if we do not grow more companionable, we grow less so, and it frequently hap-

pens that a man advances and woman recedes. But, says one, how can a woman, with a family of children, and a house, and everything to look after, be anything but a poor drudge? The case does seem almost a hopeless one at first view, but it can be done, it has been done, and it must be done.

Women put too much labor on their cooking, often taking a great deal of time and pains to spoil good things and make them unhealthy; they often put twice as much work on a garment as is required, ruffling and befringing their children's clothes in a way to altogether spoil the beauty and simplicity of childhood; they often make slaves of themselves for their children and ruin them by doing so, they often scrub and clean more than necessary, and do not manage to economize labor and steps. Where there is a will there is a way, and if women once really want to find time for reading and self-improvement they'll accomplish the feat.

They exhaust themselves in preparations for visitors, which is one of the great follies of the age. If we give our guests a hearty welcome, they will not care for intricate time-consuming cookery. Plenty of good, plain, wholesome food will satisfy any reasonable person, and an unreasonable one you don't want to satisfy. 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,' yet we would never advise any woman to be indifferent as to what she puts on her table. It should be well supplied with satisfying, nicely-prepared dishes, but these need not be elaborate or require a great deal of time in preparation.

After simmering away their brains, women wonder what their husbands see to admire so much in Mrs. So-and-so, who can't get up half as good a feed as they can. Mrs. So-and-so is a thinker, full of talk, and wit that comes of thought; and, though her table is plain it is good, enjoyable and hospitable, and presided over in a way to make people glad they were there. Mrs. So-and-so is companionable, and that is why she is admired.—*Housekeeper*.

Healthfulness of Honey.

The following article may apply to this 'Canada of ours' as to the United States:

American people are lovers of sweets and consume an average of forty pounds or more of sugar for every man woman and child of our population, says an exchange: To meet this demand, millions of dollars worth of sugar is imported annually, and millions of dollars' worth honey is allowed to go to waste from want of bees to collect and put in proper shape for the use of man. It is not generally known as it should be, that honey may be employed for sweetening purposes instead of sugar for most of the purposes for which the latter is used. But could we supply it to the extent of diminishing our imports of sugar to one-half their present proportions, millions of dollars would be saved for the purposes of business in our own country. But far above all money considerations would be the use of a pure sweet-upon the health of the people instead of the vile compounds now sold as sugar and syrups. The healthfulness of honey has been admitted from the earliest writers down through the centuries to the present time. Hence we have nothing to fear from the use of honey, while recent developments show that we have much to fear as to health in the use of adulterated sugars and syrups. But the price of honey in the past has had much to do in keeping it from the tables of men of limited means—who did not possess the workers, to collect and store it for them. Honey is a vegetable production, appearing in greater or less quantities in every flower that nods to the breeze or kisses the bright sunlight in all this heaven favored land of ours. It is secreted in the flower for the purpose of attracting insects, thus securing the complete fertilization of the female blossoms. Hence it follows, that all the honey we can secure in the hour of its presence in the nectaries of flowers is clear gain from the domain of nature.—*Iowa Homestead*.

Hand in hand with angels, Through the world we go; Brighter eyes are on us Than we blind ones know; Tender voices cheer us Than we deaf will own; Nor, walking heavenward, Can we walk alone.

Lily Larcum.