

Family Reading.

A New Year's Party.

I gave a party on New Year's Day, And the liveliest featured guest were they...

A little girl, with a loving hand, Invitations bore to this merry band; And though sent only that very day, Not any one said, "Excuse me, pray."

They came all arrayed in robes most fair, Velvet soft and in colors rare; That the earth was brown, not one felt sad, All gaily danced, for their hearts were glad.

"More blessed to give," one chirped to me; All joined the song with a "Chicka-dee-dee;"

"Thanks, thanks," they twittered and flew away, And that was my party on New Year's Day.

HARRIET C. WOODWARD.

Society and Solitude.

Laugh and the world laughs with you; Weep, and you weep alone; For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth, But has trouble enough of its own.

Rejoice, and men will seek you; Grieve, and they turn and go; They want full measure of all your pleasure, But they do not need your woe.

Feast, and your halls are crowded; Fast, and the world goes by; Succeed and give, and it helps you to live, But no man can help you to die.

There is room in the halls of pleasure For a large and lordly train, But one by one we must all file on Through the narrow aisles of pain.

New Select Serial.

MRS. HURD'S NIECE:

Six Months of a Girl's Life.

CHAPTER VII.

While Saidee, in her wrapper, stands before her mirror brushing out her braids and curls, her mother comes in. After she has sat two silent minutes, Saidee steals a glance. A most dissatisfied expression is that upon the maternal face.

"Well, mamma, what went wrong to-night?"

"After still another moment of lowering brow, Mrs. Hurd replies: 'You went wrong. I am vexed with you, Saidee, to thus go making a mess of my plan.'

"O, mamma! how?"

"How? you know very well."

"Still, mamma, suppose you state your grievance," persists Saidee.

"Saidee, you presume! Do you think it can be agreeable to say in so many words that you vex me sorely by bringing my poor sister's daughter so obtrusively into the drawing-room? that you have forced the knowledge of her existence as my niece and your cousin upon people who will not be likely to forget it? You ought to know that you have made it extremely difficult for me to now carry out my plans."

Saidee stands looking into the mirror with a smile, half mischievous, half matronous, — brushing her beautiful rippling chestnut hair.

"Well, mamma, you see I did not like your plans."

Here her door again opens. It is that rare visitor Elizabeth. She has been to look 'good-night' at baby Theo, and has stopped to see her other sister. When she does this, Saidee knows she is very weary. Sometimes the queenly Elizabeth does get so weary that nothing short of a bit of human love will satisfy her.

She sits down in the pillowed corner of Saidee's sofa. She glances at her mother's troubled face, and at the peculiar expression upon Saidee's.

"Well, if one may ask, what's the matter now?"

"Nothing, only mamma and I are having a difference of opinion over our cousin Lois."

"Over that poor little atom?"

"Yes; mamma intends her for a nurse maid, while I want her for a cousin."

The elder sister smiles dubiously. "She looks as though she would be wretched either way—such a forlorn little mite! I was really relieved to-night to see, once or twice, a spark of fire appear in her eyes, when she was left by herself. Should she fall into

mamma's hands, I think in time she'll mutiny."

"Oh, you did notice her then, Elizabeth. If you only would, I think you'll find her what you call a study. She is quite an offset to your infidel books—they are infidel, my own sister, I know that. She is a very good personification of Faith, and is as much of a realist about it, as you in your disbelief. I don't think that you, with all your books at your back, can ever trouble her as you've troubled me."

Elizabeth sighs. "Let my books alone, then, unless you think, indeed, that this wonderful girl will prove an antidote."

"I don't know about that, quite," Saidee says. "I don't know as I shall be satisfied even with her. Her religion doesn't balance her character as I think religion might. I am afraid she is as gloomy as you are."

Elizabeth does not deny she is gloomy. To herself she has long admitted the unrest and unsatisfactoriness which haunt her. "I am not particularly happy to-night," she says, speaking as though it were a great relief to speak. "I have been reasoning with Mr. Clay and Dr. Guthrie. And, as always, when I summon reason against others, she turns against me at last, and points me into a region of impenetrable gloom; points to an end. Her last word to man is, 'Finitis—Finitis, exeat omnes!' And since there is an end, life is no good. Wealth, culture, endeavor, and love, may perfect me, enrich me, but at the end there is nothing but the fate of the ignorant laborer and the feeding brute."

Oblivious of mother and sister, the girl talks on as though she sat alone among her books by the midnight lamp. Saidee gazes at her with filling eyes. How often, passing her door, she has heard the murmur of that dreary voice.

"Oh, sister," she says, hushing her own doubts, "even should it be as you think, we weaker ones, who believe in a God and in the Bible, are far happier than you while we do live; and even at the dreadful end, it is so much better. We are saved the last awful paroxysm of despair, for we fall asleep at least hoping to wake again."

But in the ears of this disciple of Reason, Saidee's talk is but the babbling of a child at some make-believe play. Still, a sharp pang strikes through Elizabeth's very soul, to think she has argued with her young sister, and read to her until, though a professed Christian, she is not at all certain, but fears that God, and Heaven and a future life may at last prove to be illusions. She remains silent now, simply because if she should speak, she should still farther shatter her sister's faith in those illusions. She is far too wretched herself to care to see sunny Saidee the same.

After a moment Saidee reverts to Lois again. It is in a tone of dissatisfaction. "Now she firmly believes in everything I wish I did, Elizabeth. But I am not satisfied with the result. To my mind, such a sure and blissful belief ought to endue her with a lovely dignity, an unruffled self-possession, and self-respect. Were I she, I could not feel thus in the presence of earthly wealth and fashion. I think it would be so easy to endure the difference between their earthly estate and mine, as seeing Christ. As it is, I don't see but that Christians feel neglects, and slights, and the difference of social position, as keenly as anybody. I wish I could behold some one humble person cheerfully confessing that she is a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth, and looking for the city whose builder and maker is God! I am afraid St. Paul was only depicting his ideal Christian."

Elizabeth has no patience with anything like this. She interrupts her sister, and brings her back within the province of reason. "And you are talking the same ideal nonsense about this girl, Saidee. If you would regard her simply as a human being instead of a Christian, you would see what is the matter. I can tell you that her uncomfatableness to-night was chiefly owing to the fact that two or three other human beings failed in their obligations toward her. It is a matter of moral philosophy instead of Christianity. Religion could not help her out one step from her disagreeable

position, so long as her aunt, and uncle, and eldest cousin, persistently neglected and ignored her."

Mrs. Hurd, who has long been nodding, rouses herself. She wonders if the fastidious Elizabeth is going to take up cudgels in behalf of the girl. —it certainly seems like it. She feels obliged to speak out with the 'directness' which she abhors. "Girls," she says, "in this matter I submit that you do not interfere. I never have required much of either of you in the way of daughter's duty, but all the same, I should quite enjoy having my cares shared by a competent and conscientious person. At present my niece is a good girl, and willing, and I insist that she shall not be spoiled, and so made good for nothing in the only place she can fill."

Elizabeth has nothing farther to say, since she has no interest whatever in 'the competent and conscientious person' beyond proving a point.

But Saidee evidently means that mamma shall understand what she intends concerning Lois.

"Mamma Hurd," she says, in her merry willful way, "I am very greedy of my cousin, and I shall fight with you for her, if it comes to that. I intend to spoil her for a nursery maid and seamstress as fast as I can; and I warn you that I shall embarrass you dreadfully if you go on to install her as such. We are here, I should think, to keep a cousin and the proper servants beside."

Mrs. Hurd, quite out of patience, sweeps out of the room.

Saidee turns imploringly to Elizabeth. "Which is right, mamma or I?"

"Mamma, I should say. For you can never make her over into one of us."

"One of us! Heaven knows I don't want to do that, when her charm for me consists in being so unlike us! But, sister, only think! she is our own cousin, and I say she ought not to toil and lose all her faith in humanity right here in our house, with mamma, and papa, and I, professing to be Christians. It would be a shame! and it shall not be done?"

Well, these are brave words, Saidee —fair spoken Saidee!

But still you slept as usual next morning, hours after 'our own cousin' was up and dressed, and in her chilly room reading her morning chapter by gaslight, in order that she might not neglect her duties to others in attending to her own.

Last night, upon leaving her daughters, Mrs. Hurd had knocked at Lois's door, all smiles.

"Sampson went to day; I forgot to tell you, and to ask whether you will be so good as to dress Theo in the morning. I dare say that, like most country-bred people, you are an early riser; and if so, and you find time hanging upon your hands, you will see in the sewing-room the white apron I cut to-day. I have told Brown to have the room warmed. It has been a tiresome evening for you, hasn't it, my dear? Saidee ought not to have dragged you down-stairs. I have scolded her well. Remember for yourself, my dear Lois, that you are at home and need not be forced into company unless you like it. I hope, however, you will not seclude yourself unduly. In all things follow your inclinations and enjoy yourself."

Watching the cold, red sunrise, Lois sits pondering over her Bible. She is greatly depressed. Her lovely room has already ceased to be a retreat. She has not, for a moment, been able to shake herself free from the invisible grasp upon her arm.

"About part of it I don't mind," she says. "I am sure I never thought of being a fine lady,—only it does seem it might have been managed a little more delicately." Then she thinks of her mother; and she realizes how all her life hitherto she has been petted, and spared, and shielded. It is long before she can dry her tears,—they come, and come, and come.

She takes up the scripture lesson anew, resolving to be simply straightforward, and trust the rest to God. She is alone in the world. It depends upon herself alone whether she becomes a strong Christian woman.

And, behold!—now when she is ready to receive a promise in a teachable and obedient spirit, here it is in

the morning lesson,—a few moments ago she read and did not recognize it. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

"All things?" she asks, thoughtfully. "Bereavement? Poverty? Dependence? Neglect? Can it be so? He has certainly said it—'all things.'"

She closes her book with that upward lit of her eyes, that look of perfect faith and gladness which Saidee noted yesterday. In that moment she vividly feels one of the Christian's peculiar assurances,—that God remembers her personally and especially. She feels that the Infinite Heart is throbbing with tender care, tender mercy, for her. She feels sure that throughout the future every event that is to affect her is touched with that mercy, has been charged already with that care. She feels as near to the loving heart of the Father as if she stood alone in the universe, his only child—from a full heart she calls him 'Father!'

Another moment, and she has gone with a cheerful face and step into the sewing-room.

Singing softly to herself she examines her task. Daring this hour, at least, the young bond-maiden in the house of her kindred surely does 'endure as seeing Him who is invisible.'

She sets many long rows of stitches before the dressing-bells ring. She and the machine buzz away cheerily. She is making brave resolves, exercising wondrous charity. Over and over—the lengths of snowy ruffling rippling from her fingers down over the machine and upon the floor—she sings the burden of an old song:

"While the days are going by, While the days are going by, O, the good we may all do While the days are going by!"

It is at once prayer and song, hope and resolve. She sees her life in a light sublime, ending in a great wide vision of Eternity and Heaven.

See what it is thus to come close within the Father's arms! Leaning upon the promises, see how joyous, how stayed, the most lonely the most humble, life might be! Surely, if she will only thus constantly reach up and take from heavenly hands what she may daily have, it is far better to be Lois than Saidee or Elizabeth.

NOTICE!

Here we are compelled to stop, and leave this beautiful story of Mrs. HURD'S NIECE unfinished, in consequence of the transfer of the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER to St. John, to form the one combined paper, the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, which is to be the successor of the two papers—the Christian Messenger, and the Christian Visitor.

This chapter gives a sort of conclusion to the first part of this book, but the seventeen succeeding chapters are even more full of interest than the first seven.

The editor of the new consolidated paper—Rev. C. Goodspeed—informs us that as the commencement of the Serials now running in, each of two papers have not been read by the subscribers of both papers, he purposes commencing

A NEW SERIAL

in the first number of the new paper. In consequence of this we have been in correspondence with the publisher of the book containing the story—Mrs. HURD'S NIECE—and find that we can obtain it for them in a nice volume and shall be able to send it to those subscribers who wish to read the remainder. It will be forwarded, postage paid, to all who send on 25 cents for that purpose, to the Baptist Book Room, Halifax.

S. S.

Professor Romanes tells a story about a little girl, showing what perplexing problems children can suggest. She was silently watching her father write his sermon, and after protracted observation put to him the somewhat difficult question, "Papa, does God tell you what to write in a sermon?" With some little hesitation our clerical friend replied in the affirmative, whereupon he was ignominiously nonplussed by the further question, "Then, papa, why do you scratch it out again?"

"In the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat thy bread." This is a curse which has proved a blessing in disguise.

The Beacon Light.

BY BENJAMIN F. HUBBARD.

'It will be eight months ago to-morrow, Elsie, since your father sailed away. He said we might look for him any time after the first of June, and that was yesterday.'

'Do you really think he will come soon?' asked Elsie, eagerly. 'I want to see him so much! He promised me a nice present if I learned to read before he got back; and I have learned, haven't I mother?'

'You have, my dear,' she answered, 'and you will give him a pleasant surprise. I hope he will come this month, when the place looks so pretty with the flowers all in bloom.' And the fond wife and mother gazed wistfully across the restless sea.

'Isn't the water still, mother?' said Elsie. 'It looks just as it did that morning papa bade us good-by.'

But the mother, with more experience than her child, looked beyond the smooth waters of the harbor, and seeing the rolling surf, answered, 'Ah, no! my child. Look at those white caps out there, and the waves breaking on the ledge close by. It is rough outside, and I fear we shall have a bad night. Come Elsie, let us go into the house before it gets dark.' And the two walked away.

John Lamson had been a roving sailor. Six years ago, he married his pretty young wife, and bought her a home in the seaport town of S.—He had recently been appointed mate of the 'Petrel,' which was now on a voyage to some South American Port, with a cargo of merchandise. His wife and little girl anxiously looked for his return; but they knew that his affection for his loved ones at home was urging him on as fast as wind and weather permitted, and, happy in this thought, they patiently waited.

'Hark! did you not hear a gun, Elsie? I hear it again, and there are people talking. Some ship is in distress. It may be your papa. If it is he will make the harbor, if any man can; for a truer seaman never trod the deck. I must go and find out what I can.' And bidding Elsie be a good girl, she kissed her and walked out into the darkness.

Elsie felt very uncomfortable, left all alone. The blinds rattled loudly with each fresh gust of wind, seeming to emphasize more forcibly to her those ominous words of her mother,—'It may be your papa.' Bedtime finally dragged around, but she did not feel like sleeping. She would not neglect her prayers however, and kneeling on the floor, she reverently repeated the Lord's Prayer. Then, as if to give expression to some unsatisfied longing of her heart, she continued in a half whisper: 'And, dear Lord, if that is my papa, please tell him how to steer straight, and bring him home safe; for—for—we love him so! Amen.'

As she rose to her feet, an idea occurred to her; and, supporting herself by a chair, she took down the lamp from the table, and started upstairs. At the first landing, she rested a moment, and, then continuing her ascent, soon reached the attic. In one corner was a rowboat with a pair of oars attached. Opposite, near the window, stood a table. Pulling it to one side, she reached up to put the lamp on it but she was too short. Looking about, she spied a large, old-fashioned family Bible bound in leather; and, using this to stand upon, she succeeded in placing the lamp before the window. Stepping back, she drew a deep sigh of relief, and said: 'There, that will do. If papa sees it, he will know we are thinking of him, and it may help him to find the way.' Groping downstairs, she went to her mother's room, and lying down was soon fast asleep.

Several hours had elapsed, when two figures glided to the attic. The Bible, table and lamp told their own story. For a moment, John Lamson looked at his wife in mute astonishment. Then he said, solemnly: 'That is all that saved our lives, wife. I stood at the wheel myself. You know our house is the first one after you round the point. I saw neighbor Finley's light, and mistook my bearings. Suddenly, the lamp flashed out in the darkness; and I changed my course just in time. Less than a quarter of a league beyond lay Hazard Reef, and no ship's crew ever got off those rocks alive. Where is the child?'

'Go softly, John,' she answered, 'you may disturb her.'

On tiptoe, the two went downstairs; and, as he approached the bed, he lifted his lantern till the light fell across Elsie's face. Then he stood still for a moment; and, brushing back the gathering tears from his weather-beaten face he stooped down and gently kissed the sleeping child.

'Leave the lamp where it is, wife,' he said. 'Some other poor fellow may be looking for its guiding rays. Heaven

help such an one on a night like this. 'Let us go back again.' And leading the way they soon reached the attic. He took up the well-worn Bible and read a psalm of thanksgiving. Then, closing the book, he offered a fervent, grateful prayer to Him 'who walketh upon the wings of the wind' and 'hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand.—Well Spring.

How we Freeze to Death.

AND HOW TO RESTORE THOSE WHO ARE NOT QUITE DEAD.

'By the way,' continued the scribe, 'if I should happen to take it into my head to lie out to night and freeze, what would be the process?'

'It is very simple,' replied the old doctor. 'Did you ever notice how drowsy you become in cold weather! The extreme parts of the body when subjected for a time to a temperature impressively low readily lose their vitality, the circulation in the smaller vessels becomes weaker and weaker until it stagnates, and they are said to be frost bitten. I know a man who, while on a drunken spree, lay out in the woods and had his toes frozen off. But to proceed. The influence of cold being extended and still further protracted there is great drowsiness, with lassitude and extreme dislike to muscular exertion. If you succumb to the feeling of drowsiness and sleep you drop into the sleep of death. You would first suffer intense pain, afterward you would experience a benumbing effect, and if walking your steps would become uncertain and tottering. Your utterance would become indistinct and an irresistible drowsiness would seize you. You would drop into sleep from which it would be impossible to arouse you, and death would speedily follow.'

'If you should happen along in the nick of time and find a man at the point of freezing to death, what would you do?'

'The first thing to do is to restore warmth, but it must be restored gradually. It has been found that in case of insensibility from cold the sudden exposure of the body to an elevated temperature is certainly fatal. If reaction takes place, it is short and violent, and the patient soon dies, not unfrequently in a state of delirium. In order to avoid this danger the man should be first rubbed with snow, if at hand, which, though in itself cold, is, when near the melting point, much warmer than the frozen body, or the patient should be immersed in a bath of very cold water, made gradually less and less cold until temperature is raised to the natural standard. As soon as the muscles and other soft parts are sufficiently relaxed to permit of easy motion, artificial respiration should be resorted to. It might be done by throwing cold water upon the face or dashing it upon the shoulders. The sudden impression of cold upon the surface is a powerful stimulus to the respiratory process. When blowing into the mouth is resorted to, it is best to breathe two or three times deeply, so as to give the patient a better quality of air.'

'Is cold injurious to one's system?'

'Yes; upon the weak and exhausted, cold acts as a permanent debility. There is not indeed a more frequent exciter of disease than cold, when applied to the body under certain circumstances. A short exposure will, of course, do little harm, but should a person be out long in it—say for instance he should lose his way on a winter's night—the result would be dangerous. It is exceedingly dangerous to go from a heated room into the cold. The fair votaries of pleasure and dissipation often fall a sacrifice to the pursuit on this account and many a young dancer has found in the chilling blast the call to an early tomb.—Atlanta Constitution.

The Old Oak and the Little Christmas-tree.

'It's very cold this morning,' said a little Christmas tree out in the forest, one windy December day; 'though I'm fir from head to foot, I am all in a shiver.'

'You'll be warm enough before long,' said an Old Oak, 'I've seen the woodman looking at you several times lately.'

'I know I've branched out a good deal for myself the past year,' said the little tree proudly, 'and I should not wonder if Santa Claus were very well satisfied with me, when I come to be all dressed up for a Christmas party.'

'Ho-ho-ho! laughed the Old Oak, 'you and your family are too green; you should have put on brown dingy jackets like the rest of us, and then you might live to a green old age, as I shall.'

Just then the woodman appeared.

'Well!' cried the little Christmas-tree, as the Woodman bore it away, 'it's a great honor to be chosen, and Christmas comes but once a year.—Royal and Burr Hill, in the CHRISTMAS BY NICHOLAS.