

A HAPPY LIFE.

How happy is he born or taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his strongest thought,
And simple truth his highest skill.
Whose pastors not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death;
Not tied unto the world with care
Of prince's ear, or vulgar breath.
Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatter feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great.
Who envies none whom chance doth raise
Or vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given with
praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good.
Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend.
This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.
—Sir Henry Wotton.

A BARREL OF HAPPINESS.

BY VIRGINIA DALES.

(From the Boston Youth's Companion.)
"Do you think any one will be there to-night, John?" asked Mrs. Richards, alluding to the weekly prayer-meeting.
"I don't know," responded the minister, as he looked out into the gathering darkness; "the storm is very close. No one will venture except those near by. Perhaps even they will be afraid to come. You know Tom Weir was lost in a blizzard and frozen to death close to his own door."
The gray loneliness of a Western blizzard was settling down with the December night over a great sheet of Kansas prairie.
The dull gray tone of the sky met the soft tan yellow of the prairie in the unbroken circle of horizon which made the monotony of the landscape appear a pocket into which had been tucked a few unimportant weather-beaten houses. Over the great expanse of natural meadow swept the peculiarly dry, biting blast felt only on the Western prairie. A few "one-story frame houses, cheerless and unfinished in appearance, stood together, forming a small settlement, while off toward the horizon line were others that belonged to the larger farms of the neighborhood.
A bare little building in the midst of the village served for both church and schoolhouse, while close beside it was the house occupied by the minister, his wife and child, a little girl of eight.
The approaching storm, which might last several days or only a few hours, drove every living thing to seek shelter. Yet there was little cheer within, for, although it was Christmas eve, the fact would not have been recognized from any preparation for festivity. In a few of the farmhouses a small addition to the usual pathetically plain fare was anticipated, but of anything beyond that no one dreamed.
With the Richards family every shred of material for simple Christmas gifts or holiday cheer of whatever sort had been used little by little, and it was ten years since they had had anything new. Then they had been married—this modern apostle and his busy-handed Martha, with her Mary's gift of loving. Their possessions were few, but Mrs. Richards' simple trousseau had stretched itself along the first eight years with unexpected consideration. First one garment and then another had been remodelled to suit exigencies until the round was made over and over again.
But the influence of that trousseau had been felt throughout the entire community. It had first delighted the eyes of the feminine portion. It was so seldom they saw anything more attractive than coarse chintz or common flannel that even the smallest detail rivaled whole sermons in the attention commanded.
However, that was ten years ago. And since! A rose had found its way into one young girl's hat, a ribbon into another's, a ribbon here, a feather there—and the influence had become a tangible one.
One woman, whose hard, unadorned existence particularly enlisted Mrs. Richards' sympathy, kept folded in her very small box of earthly treasure, a pair of kid gloves,—the first she had ever owned,—while little Betty Jones had been observed to grow slowly but inexorably, month by month, out of her first best dress, made from an old one of Mrs. Richards'.
So, at last, the resources of the humble little parsonage were exhausted. But in the guise of the trousseau a strain of poetry had entered their humble lives, and the rhythm of its homely meter beat in their hearts long after it had become a memory in the continued struggle for existence.
Christmas had come again, and brought with it no hope of better times. Indeed, at the parsonage there was little prospect of dinner and fire enough to enable them to withstand the searching cold of the blizzard. Mrs. Richards was watching with great anxiety over the thinly clad form of little Elizabeth, lest exposure should bring on illness that could only be fatal in such dearth of nourishing food and necessary warmth.
The coals had actually been counted,

and there was only enough of the cotton wood kindling to start a half-dozen more fires, which for economy's sake were not allowed to burn longer than was barely necessary.
It made very little difference to Mrs. Richards that her own condition was really the worst. She hardly thought of it. Her face, which was aging pitifully, wore quite a different expression from the sweet, courageous one that had smiled on the little place ten years before, when, as a bride she had hoped they would do great things in the field of labor opened to them. The sweetness remained, but the courage was failing. And just now, of all times, things were hard to bear. When the hour for the prayer-meeting arrived, it was with great anxiety that she watched her husband prepare to go out. She herself must stay at home with Elizabeth, who had been put into bed with very nearly all of the scanty bedding in the house over her shivering little body. The most of a fairly good supply had gone to alleviate the sufferings of other families that had seemed so much worse off than themselves.
At last, when Mr. Richards drew on his thin, shabby overcoat, it was too much for her loving heart to bear. Choking back the bitter tears, she arose and threw around his shoulders her own old, worn shawl. Simultaneously another picture came before her eyes.
"John," she cried, "she asked me today if I thought Santa Claus would bring her a doll!"
"Don't, Martha, dear," a brave note in his voice, "don't mind it so much! It will all come right at last!" But almost their hearts were embittered, as were so many of those around them, by the poverty, the loneliness, the hopelessness of that seemingly forsaken country.
As the door closed, Mrs. Richards sank down on a chair and buried her face in her arms.
The old "Turkey-red" table cover, although no longer the sturdy red it had been, was clean, and the little kerosene lamp gave as clear and hopeful a light as could be expected of its size. But a discouragingly small amount of heat radiated from the "egg" stove, and the curtains were no great obstruction to the air that blew in through the cracks of the casement and the loosely fitting door.
Despite the wind, whose whistling suggested the snarling of coyotes in the distance, despite the tense clasp of the toil-hardened arms, Mrs. Richards could catch the sound of the hymns sung by a few patient souls, faithful through storm and calm alike to the weekly prayer-meeting.
"Forever here my rest shall be," sung to the tune of "Ave," brought no comfort to her soul.
"Just as I am without one plea," sounded like a wail, and she pressed her arms more tightly to her head.
"There is a land of pure delight!" made her think of home, and she sobbed convulsively. The poor head ached with the bitterness of crowding memories; the hope they had enjoyed, the toil they had endured, the privation they had suffered—and now only the "substance hoped for" remained. And was that not enough for them? No! No! It might be enough for her; it was enough. But her little girl! Her faithful, patient husband! She must do something for them! And in the sorrow of her mother heart she wept bitterly at the remembrance of the wistful question about the doll, and the old, thin overcoat at that moment hanging over the shoulders of her husband—she knew there would be very little fire in the church.
The time passed swiftly, as it does when one is absorbed, and she started at the sound of her husband's footsteps.
"The meeting was very much shortened," he said, "on account of the storm," which was then showing itself in fine flakes of snow.
"Who came up to the porch with you, John?" said Mrs. Richards.
"No one, no one at all. They all came from the other direction. There were the two Greys, Silas Jones and—"
"Yes there is some one out there now, rolling something up the path." And Mrs. Richards opened the door letting out a shaft of light on the dancing, flying, quivering snowflakes.
"It's Mr. Howe! Come in, Mr. Howe!" she called quickly, feeling uneasy that the open door was letting out the precious heat and letting in the abundant cold air; yet she could not close it inhospitably.
"No, thank you, Mrs. Richards. I was just over to the station to-day, and the agent told me there was a barrel there for you; had been for some time, but he couldn't send it before.
"I must be gittin' towards home 'r I'll be in Tom Weir's fix. Jim Pike sent y' a little coal an' wood t' do y' 'r a few days, and—uh—he says he'll send y' a couple ton more 'r his share o' the salary, an' some cottonwood, too. So y' don't need t' worry over Christmas," he headed, cheerily, "jus' burn all y' want to. Y'll need it, too, I'm thinkin'," looking back into the storm, "f'r this is a blizzard 'r I'm a tenderfoot."
"Me'n my wife," he added, modestly, turning back, "had a extra turkey, an' we thought 'nebber you'd like one f'r Christmas. Well, good-night. I must be gittin' along."
"I put the coal an' wood on the porch!" he called back, after he had reached the road.
They remembered afterward that they

King's Evil

That is Scrofula.
No disease is older.
No disease is really responsible for a larger mortality.
Consumption is commonly its outgrowth.
There is no excuse for neglecting it, it makes its presence known by so many signs, such as glandular tumors, cutaneous eruptions, inflamed eyelids, sore ears, rickets, catarrh, wasting and general debility.
Children of J. W. McGinn, Woodstock, Ont., had scrofula sores so bad they could not attend school for three months. When different kinds of medicines had been used to no purpose whatever, these sufferers were cured, according to Mr. McGinn's voluntary testimonial, by
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had not said a word. They had not even thanked him, but had closed the door and stood dumbly looking around them. There was coal in a barrel outside on the porch, and a pile of wood beside it; on a chair lay a plump young turkey, and there, near the little stove, stood the mysterious barrel.
"John," said Mrs. Richards, helplessly, "you'd better get a hatchet."
Without a word the head was taken from the barrel. It might be apples or it might be potatoes, but from its weight probably was neither.
When the top was off they stood regarding it silently.
At last, with brightening eyes and trembling hands, Mrs. Richards, who had regained her equilibrium, took from the top—a, wonder of wonders!—nothing less than a good warm overcoat!
They regarded it with amazement and even awe. That it should have come to them just at this time!
Afterward they were ashamed that they should have been frightened at gifts so surely from heaven.
Under the overcoat were two suits, one brand new, the other evidently somewhat worn, but so much better than anything the minister had worn for several years that, to their not critical eyes, it looked quite elegant.
In the folds of the coat were found two pretty volumes of recently published essays, on which Mr. Richards seized with the eagerness of a boy. Packed in the corners they found several parcels of tea and cut sugar, such as Mrs. Richards had not seen for ten years, underclothing, shoes and stockings, articles not bright nor festive in appearance, but oh, how dear to their discouraged souls! Nuts, candy, raisins, citron, warm gloves, oranges, dresses, aprons and a coat for Elizabeth, and—
She could scarcely believe her own eyes! Right in the middle of the barrel, safe and sound, its eyes closed solemnly, without the slightest disarrangement of coil or toilet, was a doll—a doll with a dainty bisque complexion and clothes almost too good to be true!
Mrs. Richards was completely overcome. She dropped on her knees beside the table and laid her head on the faded red cover just where it had bowed in bitterness and discouragement so short a time before.
They had borne a great deal together in the past two years; but it was all forgotten—the disappointment, the toil, the care, sorrow and deprivation—at the sight of that bit of china and milliner's art. The clothes were a Godsend—heaven bless the good, thoughtful hearts that sent them! The shoes—oh, how the shoes were needed! The overcoat! Left to himself, John might have esteemed the overcoat and suit as highly as the doll; but somehow his wife's joy at the sight of the latter affected him, too, and when he looked down on her bowed head and trembling form he knelt down and poured out such a prayer of thankfulness as had not been heard on that desolate plain for many months.
When they arose Mr. Richards, who had gotten up more hastily than in strict accordance with the spirit of prayer, went toward the barrel, saying:
"Martha, did you find nothing for yourself?"
A dress almost new soon came to light, one which the accompanying letter explained had been made only to be laid aside for mourning, as its owner had lost her mother. It was of soft durable "Henrietta," and another, from the same source was of chevise, very nicely made.
Some kindly heart had given a fur lined circular, to be re-made into a warm cape for Mrs. Richards, and there it was, ample, even luxurious, in the soft gray and white of the fur and the warmth and durability of the "ladies' cloth."
Two pairs of blankets, silkolene and cotton enough for two warm "comforts," towels, table linen and sheets, a number of dainty fancy articles, a few games and toys completed the generous donation of a church in an Eastern city well known for its good works.
They never forgot that Christmas eve—those two. They could not cease wondering.
"That it should have come just at this time!" Just when their hearts were failing them, when their cup was full, almost to overflowing, of the bitterness of poverty!
They settled down for leisurely enjoyment, and a fire was soon reddening the

cheeks of the little stove. A cup of delicious real China tea, sweetened with cut sugar, was brewed while they tasted their thinly shod feet by the luxurious fire and talked over many things of which they had scarcely dared think for a long time; of the wedding day long ago, the dear old friends in the East; of their hopes and joys, and finally of the suffering they had endured, of the poverty of the charge and their own helplessness in the matter.
They tasted sparingly of the nuts and candy, as if they were touching something not quite their own. And indeed each was thinking of the many poor little children around them that a very small amount of candy would make happy. While they were calculating how many things they could give to others, the little clock announced that a merry Christmas had superseded this memorable Christmas eve, and they prepared for bed.
Just at the foot of Elizabeth's bed they hung a stocking full of nuts and candy, while near the chimney in the little sitting-room the games, toys and the wonderful doll were placed, as if by Santa Claus himself.
Of course it was the most wonderful Christmas in the world! Every one knows the delight of a child over a new toy, but only those who have felt unfulfilled longings for ordinary comforts can appreciate the happiness of a little girl with her first real doll. The stocking full of good things was a mine itself, but the doll brought the greatest happiness little Elizabeth had hitherto known.
The storm hurried off in the early morning; although snow had fallen, it had been blown and scattered about until there were patches of bare ground visible here and there.
That afternoon a queer little party was assembled at the plains parsonage. About forty children were present, but only one doll. Although the boys thought it the prettiest doll they had ever seen, after all, in their estimate, it was "only a doll," and they felt more personal interest in the nuts and candy. But twenty-five pairs of eager little girlish arms were ready to hold it in their turn, or out of it, it by strategem they could secure it for an extra embrace.
When the stars came out that night the skies were clear, and they looked down on some children who had spent the merriest Christmas of all their little lives, and all on a handful of nuts and candy and a glimpse of a beautiful doll.
A few days later a letter was speeling eastward, telling much better than this story can the thankfulness and joy of those people, deprived of the ordinary comforts of life, for gifts so kindly and opportunely given.
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A JOURNALISTIC FEATURE EXPLAINED.
"Josiah," said Mrs. Corntassel, "did you ever see them 'hints on agriculture' that gets into the paper?"
"Yes, I've read 'em."
"Well, did you ever try to run a farm by 'em?"
"Gracious! No! You see, the city folks that takes the paper has a good deal of curiosity about how a farm is run. It don't make much difference what you tell 'em as long as you keep 'em interested."
—Washington Star.

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