

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER

JOURNAL
OVER THE RIVER.

Over the river they beckon to me
Loved ones who have crossed to the other side;

The gleam of their sunny robe I see,
But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.

There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,
And eyes the reflection of heaven's own blue;

He's crossed in the twilight grey and cold,

And the pale mist hid him from mortal view;

We saw not the angels who met him there,

The gates of the city we could not see—

Over the river, over the river,

My brother stands waiting to welcome me.

Over the river the boatman pales

Carried another, the household pet;

Her brown curlis moved in the gentle gale—

Darling Minnie, I see her yet.

She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands

And fearlessly entered the phantom bark;

We felt it glide from the silver strands,

And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.

We know she is safe on the further side,

Where all the ransomed and angels be—

Over the river, the mystic river,

My childhood's idol is waiting for me.

For none return from those quiet shores

Who cross with the boatman cold and pale,

We hear the dip of the golden oars,

And catch a gleam of the snowy sail.

And lo! they have passed from the yearning hearts,

They cross the stream and are gone for aye!

We may not sender the sail apart

That hides from our vision the gates of day.

We only know that their barks no more

May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;

Yet somewhere I know on the unseen shore

They watch, and beckon, and wait for me.

MY TWO HOMES.

I have two homes: one home is here below,
Where sweet, but fading flowers around me grow,
And gentle voices fall upon mine ear;

Love's sunshine or me storms,

Hope brings me pleasant dreams,

And Joy's delightful strains dull moments cheer.

Yet, bright as is this earthly home of mine,
It has some shadows: grief doth round it twine,
As well as gladness; care is ever near;

Friends at my side to-day,

Each long may pass away,

For death can find a steady entrance here.

I have another home: a home above;
Where sorrow is unknown; where hearts that love
Are never severed; there all pain is over;

Naught can its peace destroy;

Unchanging is its joy;

And life eternal flings on evermore.

Therefore I love my heavenly home the best;
For there, not here, is found the Christian's rest;

Here sin and sadness oft together dwell;

There all is pure and bright.

O home of love and light,

No mortal lips can half thy beauty tell.

ANNIE.

Miscellaneous.

JACK, THE SHOE-BLACK.

Some time ago a Christian gentleman in London, in walking home one evening, found himself in the midst of a group of ragged jades, beggars, thieves, or both—who were talking, laughing, and swearing. He longed to do them good, so he stopped suddenly, put his back against the wall, and said, "Boys, listen to me—I have something to tell you—a story of sort."

They were all silent for an instant, partly from astonishment, partly from curiosity! And then in the plainest language he could use, he told them the story of the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ. Not a word or sound interrupted him. Then as the end came nearer, and he tried with all his might to make the last awful scenes seem true to them, he heard an occasional shuffle as one and another tattered figure pushed nearer to hear how the Saviour had suffered for him. They listened with faces of awe, dirty enough, but solemn, to hear of the agony that made drops of blood roll down his face; and when they heard of how he died, hanging by nails on a wooden cross, because they were wretched and wicked, sons of uncontrollable emotion burst forth. Dirty hands wiped dirty faces, as he told them that now while he spoke to them, he was standing among them, and that he loved them just as much as when he died upon the cross for them. He finished his story, and no one said a word. Suddenly he said, "Now, lads, Jesus loves us very much, caught't we to love him? Who loves him? Let every one who wishes to love him hold up his hand. I do, and he held up his own hand." They looked at one another; then one held his up. A little mass of rage, with only one shoe, and a little grimy face, half hidden in a shock of hair, scarcely confined by an old battered hat, with no rim, held up his dirty little hand. It was a touching spectacle! One and another followed, till all the hands—Just twelve in number—were up.

Then the gentleman said, "You all wish to love him. Now, dear boys, hear what he says to those who love him. 'If you love me keep my commandments.' A few words followed to show what this meant for them, and then walked straight up to him who had first held his hand up and holding out his, said, "Shake hands on it, that you will promise me to try to keep his commandments." Unhesitatingly the little black hand was put in his, and he shook it hard, saying, "God bless you." So he went around to see her alone.

"Crying in his room," answered the frightened girl. "I but just escaped, and the stairs are now in flames."

The fire had broken out in that part of the house and the flames were now spreading with a fearful rapidity. Almost distracted, Mr. H. rushed out.

Before he parted them, from he gave them

each some money to get a bed and a penny loaf with.

About three weeks afterwards as he was going under an archway a little ragged shoe-black was cleaning at one side. After the customary, "Clean your boots, sir," the boy made a dive forward, and stood chuckling with delight in front of him. The gentleman had not the least idea who he was, and said with surprise, "Well my boy you seem to know me, and who are you?"

"Please, sir, I am Jack."

"Jack who?"

"Only Jack, please sir."

All at once it flashed across him who the lad was.

"I remember you now," he said; "have you tried to keep your promise to love the Lord Jesus, and show how much you love him, by obeying him?"

"Yes, sir, I have, indeed I have," he answered with intense earnestness.

The gentleman stopped and talked to him a little, and let him clean his shoes.

"Can you read, Jack?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, not overly well; but I can make shift to spell out a page."

"Would you like a Testament of your own where you could read for yourself the story I told you the other night?"

No answer; but an odd sound, half a chuckle of inexplicable happiness, half a choke of emotion at the idea. There was no pretence about the lad. The dirty little thief had set his face heavenwards. He did not know much, but if he had only learnt to say, "Lord, remember me," was there not a worse thief than he, who was in no wise cast out?

Now notice, little friend, that Charles first felt his hopeless situation. He could not escape any other way save by the window. He could not see his father, but heard his voice. In the second place, he thought with his mind that his father was strong; that he loved him, and would tell him to do anything that would injure him. He drew in his breath, unclasp'd his fingers, and in a moment was in his father's arms overpower'd, and weeping with joy at his wonderful escape.

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