American Union.

J. H. EMERSON, EDITOR.

DENTON MARYLAND.

A Needless Sacrifice.

BY NANCY LEIGH.

A few years ago I was visiting an old school friend living in one of our large cities, and while there I passed through the sadest experience of my life. It was a strange drama, the events of which are not likely to be repeated; but I relate it now with the hope that it may meet the eyes of many young mothers whose love of pleasure outweighs love of duty. May they profit by it in their dealings with the young souls God has committed to their care.

My friend had three children. The youngest was an infant, and to that she devoted all her spare time, leaving the two older ones to the care of a nurse in whom she thought, she had great confidence.—We were sitting late one afternoon in the library, talking over the events of our school days, when the oldest child burst in, exclaiming, "Oh, mamma, can't Maidie and I sleep in your room to-night? A dreadful thing comes and wakes us up—so dreadful? Do, mamma, let us sleep with you?' pleaded the little voice.

"Harry, my boy, don't be so foolish,' said his mother. "You are not a baby now, and must not believe in silly dreams.'

"It was not a dream,' sobbed Harry.

"No mamma,' chimed in the little three year old, who that moment succeeded in escaping from Margaret's arms, "it was a dreffful face, and we is so 'faid.'

"Margaret,' called my friend, "what do these children mean?'

"I don't know, ma'am. They insisted yesterday upon telling you, and to-day Harry has cried so I couldn't do anything with him.'

"I am thoroughly ashamed of you, Harry,' said his mother. "You are five years old, and ought to be more of a man than to fill Margaret's head with such trash. Margaret, take them to bed.'

Harry's desire to be a man was very great, but a terror had taken possession of him, and the tumult in his little breast was sad to behold. He could not restain the big tears, while Maidie screamed as Margaret forced them away.

For three nights after I heard the cry of the children at bedtime calling their mamma, but she was confined to her bed with a severe attack of periodical headache, and this had also prevented my usual visits to the nursery. Now, however, I could endure it no longer, and forced into the belief that Margaret or one of the servants must be at the bottom of so real a terror, I determined to watch and know for myself.

Accordingly I went to the nursery just before tea, and was dismayed to find a change in their appearance. They had actually grown thinner in these few days.—Their eyes seemed larger, and the slightest nose startled them. Nurse said they would not eat or play, and she did not know what to do. Not feeling quite sure of Margaret I concluded to watch without her knowledge, but Harry caught my hand as I was leaving, and whispered, with such a wistful look, "Auntie Joe, could we sleep in your room?'

"Why, Harry,' I asked.

"Because such a dreadful thing comes in the night. I can't go to bed, Auntie Joe; it will kill me and Maidie too.'

"What is like?' I asked.

"It's like nuffin in all the world, only dreffful, and Marget wouldn't stay with us,' said May.

"Well, children,' I answered, "I'll go to tea, now, and if you will go to bed quietly I'll bring my book and stay all the evening, and all night, too.'

"Are you very sure you will come?'—asked Harry, trying to force back tears that would come. Perhaps mamma won't let you.'

"My darling,' I said throwing my arms around him, "I promise you that I'll come;' and I gazed into his handsome, pale face, sadly conscious stricken that such nightly cries could have gone on so long unheeded. And yet, mused I, there certainly can be no real foundation for such suffering.' I left them much mystified, and determined that sleep should not again visit my eyelids until the enigma was solved.

After tea, pleading fatigue as an excuse from participating in some entertainment for the evening, I was allowed to retire to my room; and once there, my preparations were made by donning a warm, loose wrapper, and, taking a book for the long, weary hours before me, I retired to the bedroom adjoining the nursery.

Two little beds stood side by side, but only from one peered two pairs of large brown eyes that as though sleep would long be a stranger to them. Maidie had crawled in with her brother and was nestling close to him, as if she expected protection from that small five year-old form.

They welcomed me with bright looks that would have repaid the greatest sacrifice, and I sat by them on the bed talking and soothing them for hours.

Margaret came home and retired, and gradually the house grew quiet, but it was not until near midnight that Harry succumbed to weariness in short snatches of sleep. I dimmed the gas as the twelve strokes from the city clock pealed on the night air, and, throwing myself into an easy chair in a remote corner of the room, began my watch.

For what? I actually grew nervous in the loneliness of the hour, and it was a relief when it past and one struck. I was beginning to feel—perhaps hoping—that no developments would be made that night, when suddenly a click from the door startled me, and lo! an appartian appeared and moved cautiously toward the children's bed.

Of all horrible sights may heaven spare me from a repetition! The face was old and wrinkled, and surrounded with an abundance of white hair that flew wildly in all directions, reminding one of the quills of the porcupine. The eyes were large and glaring, almost bursting from their sockets, and the hands were like claws, clawing the air as she moved, while escaped from her lips a low, whispered howl.—The whole was enough to make the blood freeze.

I sat for those few minutes like one petrified, and this half-clothed visitant from this world or some other had come and gone before I could arouse myself to action.

My boots were off, and I flew to the door just in time to see her disappear through another door at the far end of the hall. I followed. This door led into a large closet, in which was a narrow stairway leading to the roof. She was nearly outside, and a bright moon lighted up the haggard face and white figure, making it fearfully weird and unnatural as she stopped to close the window and looked into the darkness where I stood, her eyes fairly glaring. I watched her as she seemed to glide over one or two of the roofs and then she disappeared.

Whether, in the shadows of the chimney, she slipped and fell to the pavement below, or whether she was a supernatural visitor, I did not stop to determine, but the latter belief seemed plausible to my excited state of mind as I hurried back through that long, dark entry.

I found Maidie clinging conclusively to her brother, while he lay with one arm thrown protectingly over her, his little form rigid, his eyes wide opened and fixed. This fright was one too many. Brain fever ensued, and in ten days that curly head was laid to sleep where the waters of the Schuylkill hum their low music near his bed. Upon a close investigation it was discovered that an insane woman was confined in the upper story of a house near by. She had careful attendants, but the cunning of insanity eluded their vigilance, and brought suffering and remorse upon this once happy home.

Was this a dispensation of Providence? Too often we lay at the door of Providence the consequence of our own evil doings, forgetting that the laws of God, though formed in mercy, yet when broken are inevitable in their fearful results.

Let every mother remember that the woes of childhood are as real as those of mature years. Let her listen to what seems petty nothings with the same earnestness that she will heed higher developments of joys and sorrows, and may the sad experience of one mother be sufficient in its warning for hundreds of others who read this paper.

My friend learned a life lesson, but it was too late to restore the earthly existence of this boy of pride and promise.—Six years have passed since Harry left us, and the echoes of that agnozing cry of conscience is still heard repeating, "A heedless sacrifice.'

DeLadies Objecks.

In the winter of 1867—68, while the writer was a resident of Nebraska, a young man from Missouri—a professed "negro hater"—who had taken refuge in the "youngest State' from the terrors of the bush-whackers in his own, was part proprietor of one of the two livery stables of which the town then boasted. One cold winter evening he was approached by a squad of "colored citizens,' and interrogated as to the charge for a four-horse sleigh and driver for a party who wanted to go to a dance down the river. He did not relish the idea of acting as driver for the "negars' himself, and as he had no hand with whom he was willing to trust his only available team, he endeavored to "bluff them off' by naming an exhorbitant sum, cash in hand, as the answer to their query, and was not a little nonplussed by the prompt, "All right, sah. Hab 'em ready at half past seven. Here's your money.

His prejudices fairly overcome by the pleasan titillation of the irredeemable rags, in his hand, he drove the party to their destination, hitched and blanketed his team, and took his seat in the house to await the "hour of retiring.'

The room was not large, the company was, and the roaring cotton-wood fire soon shot the mercury away up into the nineties, while the perfume from the assembled sons and daughters of Ham grew stronger and stronger as the sound of the fiddle and the voices of the "caller' aroused to increased animation the movements of each succeeding "set.' White human nature could stand it no longer, and just as he had finally decided to go out to the sleigh and roll himself up in his robes in self-defence, our Jehu was approached by the master of ceremonies, and asked, in a very pompous manner, "Would you have any objections to go out into de oddcr room and set by de fire-place? *De ladies objecks to de smell of de hoss on your close.*'

The alacrity with which he complied was only equalled by the gusto with which he told the joke on himself, always adding, "Served me right for driving de gemmen, any way.'

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that there can be no apostasy from Christ where we are not called on to deny his name or burn incense to an idol. We deny our Lord whenever, like Demas, we, through love of this present world, forsake the course of duty which Christ has plainly pointed out to us. We deny our Lord whenever we lend the sanction of our countenance, our praise, or even our silence, to measures or opinions which may be popular or fashionable, but which we ourselves believe to be sinful in themselves, or tending to sin. We deny our Lord whenever we forsake a good man in affliction, and refuse to give countenance, encouragement and support to those who, for God's sake and the faithful discharge of their duty, are exposed to persecution and slander.

"SAL,' cried a girl, looking out at the upper story of a small grocery, addressing another girl who was trying to enter the front door, "we've all been to camp-meeting, and got converted; so when you want milk on Sunday, you'll have to come in the back way.'

Ben Spinner's Composition.

The reason why that the 4th of July is so short is because they signed the Declaration of Independence all in one day. If they only had went slow, and been three or four days about it, then we would have had a longer pull at the fireworks, and plenty of time to make things lively 'most all the week.

When your mother sends you to the grocery with a basket for two dozen eggs, in a hurry, and you get into a soft game of marbles on the way, and win a good many, and don't come home for two hours, that's forgetfulness. But your mother don't forget you when you come back.

There is a boy lives in the Fourth Ward has got feet so egregious big that he can't play hop scotch, but then no hair pin can throw him in a fair rassel, and a hard wind could never blow him over in a storm.

When you slide down on the long bannisters of the front hall stairs, and go down to the bottem so fast that it burns you clean through your trousers, that's friction.

Some Saturday when you are in the kitchen, and the hired girl has just shined up the knives, when she turns her back you musn't dip them one at a time in the vinegar jug, because if you do the chemistry will turn 'em black, and then you will have to go careless down to the back fence to get out of the way of some hot water or something.

When you see a boy with a splinter new overcoat as fits him, and is real tailor made, and you havn't got any overcoat yourself, and it's cold day and you want his'n, that's envy. But you can't help it when you ain't a Christian.

Your father would spend $12 for a big dictionary for you in a hundred years, but if you was to win one in a hard spelling match, he would make you study it nights till you nearly went crazy. That's always the way.

When your mother is frying doughnuts, and you're hungry, it don't make any difference how her hair is combed, or if it is combed at all or not; just only tell her that you think she looks so handsome with her hair done in that way, and she will feed you on hot doughnuts till you swell up like a toad.

When a sack of peanuts get bursted on a dray and spilt out on the street, and your pockets don't hold many, because they're nearly full of other things, then a daily newspaper would be a good thing to have, and would be useful.

Why is the world like your father?—This is a hard conundrum, which you might just as well give up. Because the world is round always, like a ball; but your father is round only of a Saturday afternoon early, just when you don't want him, and when the circus in the stable has only just commenced.

Vary the Monotony.

Home life is apt to become monotonous, and monotony means humdrum. The ladies of a family hold this matter in their own hands, for men, living an active outdoor life, frequently settle down to inactivity during their evenings, unless roused by some pleasant episode into loveliness.—It is the wife's privilege to make the home lively, and to give variety and interest to home life. It is surprising how very little invention it requires to do this. All that is wanted is just an excuse for loveliness. A little variety in the amusement of the children, if there be any; a little delicacy at a table, or at an unexpected hour in the evening, some little novelty of dress, or the bringing in of an agreeable visitor. When people go traveling they discover how many things they had at home which befor they had barely thought of. Just so, when our friends are absent, they show us in their letters so many qualities of observation and sympathy and expression, which had remained undeveloped right under our nose. Somebody has discovered that change of situation has a wonderfully stimulating influence on the mind. We have to accommodate ourselves to new circumstances and this friction rubs off some of the rust which made us half insensible.

DEATH.—We shall have come down to the time when we have but ten days left, then nine days, eight days, seven days, six days, five days, four days, three days, two days, one day. Then hours; three hours, two hours, one hour. Then only minutes left; five minutes, four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one minute. Then only seconds left; three seconds, two seconds, one second! Gone! The chapter of life ended! The book closed! The pulse at rest! The feet through with the journey! The hands closed from all work! No word on the lip. No breath on the nostril. The muscles still. The lungs still. The tongue still. The nerves still. All still. You might put the stethoscope to the breast, and hear no sound. You might put a speaking trumpet to the ear, but could not break the deafness. No motion. No throb. No life. Still! Still!

A NEGRO'S LOGIC.—An old negro named Pete was very much troubled about his soul. Perceiving him one day with a very downcast look, his master asked him the cause.

"O, massa! I's sich a great sinner.'

"But Pete, said the master; "you are foolish to take so much a heart. You never see me troubled about my sins."

"I know de reason massa.' Said Pete; "when you go out duck shooting and kill one duck and wound another, don't you run after the wounded duck?'

"Yes, Pete.'

"Well, massa, dat is de way wid you and me; de debbil has got you sure; but am not sure of me, he chases dis child all de time.'

THE great pictures of Nature afford a pleasure to the inner being of man which is never afforded by human works. It is the flowing of a happy stream, whose rise is in Purity and whose outlet in Eternity—Who can behold the grand and varied beauties of earth and sky and not reverence the great Hand that has brought them into being.—*Isaac Deam.*

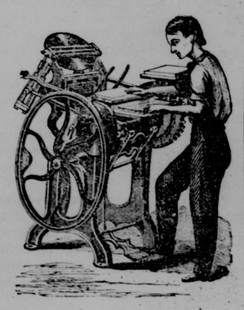
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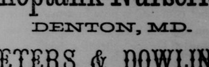
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oct20 tf

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