

Christian Family.

My Birthday.

My birthday! "How many years ago?
Twenty or thirty?" Don't ask me!
"Forty or fifty?" How can I tell?
I do not remember my birth you see!
It is hearsay evidence—nothing more!
Once on a time, the legends say,
A girl was born and that girl was I.
How can I vouch for the truth, I pray?
I know I am here, but when I came,
Let some one wiser than I am tell!
Do you think this flower you plucked for me
Knew when its bud began to swell?
How old am I? You ought to know
Without any telling of mine, my dear!
For when I came to this happy earth
Were you not waiting for me here?
A dark-eyed boy on the northern hills,
Chasing the hours with flying feet,
Did you not know your wife was born,
By a subtle prescience, faint yet sweet?
Did never a breath from the southland come,
With sunshine laden, and rare perfume,
To lift your hair with a soft caress,
And waken your heart to richer bloom?
Not one? O mystery strange as life!
To think that we who are now so dear
Were once in our dreams so far apart,
Nor cared if the other were far or near!
But—how old am I? You must tell.
Just as old as I seem to you!
Nor shall I a day older be
While life remaineth, and love is true.
—Good Company, Number One.

Only.

Only the twilight shadows
Falling across the floor;
Only autumn leaflets
Blown through the open door.
And I clasp my hands by the dying sun,
When the idle task of the day is done,
Troubled and weary.
Not that my life is barren,
Not that my lot is low,
My pathway is strewn with blessings
That many never know.
But over them all a shadow clingeth,
While the restless bells of my heart's e'er
ringeth
Mournful and dreary.
Only the autumn leaflets
Blown through the open door?
When am I but a leaflet
Tossed where the cold winds roar?
Only a leaflet, worthless and quivering,
Every veinlet bleeding and shivering—
This, alas, only!
Slowly the twilight shadows
Deepen across the floor,
Softly the autumn leaflets
Creep through the open door.
And they seem to tell me, as if from heav-
en,
That nothing is worthless that God hath
given—
All may be blest.
O help me now, my Father,
To labor firm and true!
To learn this priceless lesson—
There's work for me to do.
And may I never again sink down,
But cheered by the thought, "No cross no
crown,"
Bless every day.
Again the autumn shadows
Fall on the silent floor,
And softly the autumn leaflets
Creep through the open door.
But I sit no more with my mournful
dreams;
I have found my work, and the sunshine
streams
Over all my way.

How Walter Entertained the Boys.

A hearty laugh burst from the group of boys clustered around the lamppost at the corner. The smallest of them, Alf Lester, exclaimed a little contemptuously, "The idea of a fellow thirteen years old not knowing how to make a snow ball! Why, I'm only ten and I can make splendid ones, hard as anything!"
"I should think you'd have got used to the cold by this time, Walter," added Alf's brother Will.
Walter Perry shivered, wrapped up as he was in an overcoat, comforter, overshoes, mittens, and sealskin cap with ear-lappets, as he replied good naturedly, "They say an eel can get used to skinning, but I don't believe I'll ever get used to snow and ice. If I hadn't promised Aunt Delia that I would stay out doors one whole hour to-day, you wouldn't catch me here."

Ugh!"

"I believe you haven't got much courage! You are afraid of the cold!" sneered Joe Brainard.

"Maybe I am. I am not afraid of a gun that is not loaded, as you were yesterday. I know how to handle a gun, too, if I don't know how to make snow-balls."

The day before this exchange of banter, these same boys and one or two others were in Mrs. Lester's house, admiring a new gun, but Brainard could not be persuaded to touch even the stock, while Harry Greenough was senseless enough to hold it with the muzzle toward him. "I'm accustomed to guns," said Will Lester rather pompously; "my father is a great sportsman."

"So is mine," said Walter; "he and brother Arthur and I often went shooting."

"Did you," exclaimed Will. "Papa said yesterday he thought you must be a sportsman. What did you shoot?"
"Oh, parrots, and—"
"Parrots!" screamed three or four.
"How did you kill them?"
"Easy enough—horrid nuisances!"
"Why, Walter Perry! Parrots nuisances! They cost lots of money. My cousin Mary has one she wouldn't sell for a hundred dollars!" cried Alf Lester, in amazement.

"You must remember that with us—in the West Indies, I mean, where my father lives—gray parrots are as common and as troublesome as the crows in your corn fields. Your cousin just ought to hear a flock of them screaming over the house tops at day-break in the morning on their way to the coffee fields. Oh, don't they make a noise!"

"Something like our crows?"
"Only more so, Alf; does your cousin's parrot ever scream?"

"Yes indeed! Sometimes she has to keep Polly covered up for two or three hours to quiet her."

"Then fancy twenty or thirty all yelling at once up in the air, where you can't cover 'em! Then think of the mischief they do to the coffee."

"That's so; they always love coffee."

"Does coffee grow like corn, Walter?" asked Harry.

"Oh, no, it is a bush with a pretty blossom."

"What color?"

"White and pale lavender."

"Oranges grow there don't they?" Alf inquired.

"Yes, oranges and lemons, bananas, guavas."

"Gauva jelly?" suggested Alf.

"The fruit of which the jelly is made."

"Does it grow on a tree or a vine?" asked Will.

"On a shrub; it has a pretty flower—white and pale yellow."

"Bananas grow on trees, I know, for I saw some growing in the Botanical Gardens in Washington when papa took me there last year," said Joe Brainard.

"There was only one bunch on the tree though."

"That's the way they grow with us. A young tree comes up, flowers out, bears only one, and then dies; but from that same root there will be young shoots coming up all the time, so that a man that owns a banana walk always has fruit on hand."

"A banana walk, what's that?"

"Well, one root, which sending up so many shoots makes a sort of grove where it is always cool and damp—and unhealthy."

"The people are very fond of bananas, are they not?" suggested Will.

"Fond of them? They live on them—eat them raw, baked or fried, for breakfast, dinner and supper. Bananas are a necessary of life."

"Which do you like best—red or yellow ones?"

"The yellow ones. The red ones that grow with us are given to the pigs; even the negroes won't eat them."

Little Alf Lester listened in admiration. "What lots of things you know, Walter! A heap more than any of us."

"Oh no! I don't know how to make snow balls, as you do," replied Walter merrily.

"Let's cry quits, Walter! you may get used to the cold and the snow just when you like; we will not tease you any more. You teach us all you know about West India Islands and we'll make all your snow balls."

"Agreed!" cried all the boys including Walter.

"They have everything nice there, don't they? said Will, who was very fond of oranges and bananas."

"Not quite! No such schools as they have here in Boston, or papa would not have sent me here to be educated," answered Walter. "No one country can have everything; we have beautiful birds, lovely flowers, delicious fruits all the year round—also earthquakes and tornadoes; but oh! so much ignorance and superstition even among well informed people! Give me the intelligence I find here, even among school boys, even if I do freeze six months in a year! Ha! my hour is up and nearly another one gone; you've entertained me!"

"No! no! you were the entertainer! Tell us some more next Saturday?" cried Joe Brainard.

"Maybe I will! Good by; ho for the warm parlor," answered Walter, scampering away.—*Christian Register.*

Be Loyal.

The cause of Christ demands the earnest attention of all who love him. It embraces the salvation of the world, and success in this grand work depends upon the faithfulness of God's people. Should they be dilatory in the discharge of their duty it must languish. This is a work which a few cannot perform; it demands the united effort of all who love the Lord. This union is but a fulfilling of the law of Christ, "Bear ye one another's burdens." The true disciple is willing to submit to this law of the Divine Master, to engage in this work, not as a recreation, but to toil night and day, if need be, to carry it on to a success. It is of all things the most important in which redeemed man can engage; and each of us must feel that we have a duty to discharge which no one else can perform for us. I must do it or it remains undone. The work is equal to the united energy of all.

This work not only demands the united effort but prompt action upon the part of all who profess to take an interest in its ultimate triumph. At this point may it not be said, there are more failures than anywhere else through life. Without waiting to illustrate let us say, promptness is the secret of success, procrastination is the road to poverty and death. This is as true in spiritual things as in the business affairs of life. Neglect is ruinous to our interests, whatever these may be. It is thought, we doubt not, by many Christians that they will do more for the Lord's cause at some time in the future than in the past or present. This is a noble resolution worthy of any Christian. But stop and think. Where is that future in which this work is to be done? When will it become the present? Some have been waiting for years to get ready to do a good work for the Lord, and are no better prepared to-day than when they first set out. If they are not careful they will be called over to the other side before they get started in the work which they are going to do for the Lord. They feel that they are not able to do anything great, and therefore will do nothing. They are going to wait till they come up to spiritual manhood before they will do anything. A greater mistake than this could not be made. Such a course is not only a loss of time and talent for the pre-

sent, but tends to destroy every spark of vitality in the soul, and thus prevent a life of usefulness. We must have nourishment and exercise before we can become men in Christ. As well might we say the child must not—till he becomes a man—attempt to eat or walk, because he can do but little of either. The first great essential then is to take spiritual food that we may grow up into strength and usefulness. The Lord has appointed his word to this end. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter ii. 2. All when born into the family of the Lord are but babes in Christ, and need to be nourished by the word of life; neglect this and your life will die out. It is a matter then of the first importance that all the children of God should make his Book the book of their study. Store your mind with its gracious lessons; let them be a light to shine upon your pathway. By them your life may be a power for good in this world; without them, it will be lost to the cause of Christ.

The question is asked, "When am I to begin to work in the cause?" Now. The time for action is just as soon as you enlist in the service of the Savior. You are not to wait till you can do everything in a perfect manner. If so, you will never act at all. As a babe you must begin to walk, and doubtless will take many a mistaken step, and in stumbling will be sorely wounded, but you must rise and try it over again, and every failure may be looked upon as one step towards success. Think not that because you cannot preach the Gospel there is nothing for you to do. The Lord never intended that every one should be a preacher. He has not given all the talent necessary for that work, and therefore does not ask you to engage in that special work. But he has given ability to all to perform some work in the Church of Christ. It may be that you think your place is to exhort your brethren in the church. If so it is your duty to cultivate that talent and to begin now. But don't think that because you are a Christian you must talk in the church. He did not intend this. If you cannot speak to edification then it is your duty to be silent, and let those speak who can. Every one should try to find in what field he could be most useful, and occupy it faithfully through life. There is work for all. All can visit the sick, the poor and suffering, find out what their wants are, and if not able to give the necessary assistance tell those who can. You can engage in prayer with those who wish you so to do. You may have a cold, lifeless brother or sister who neglects the prayer meeting or Bible lesson. Go and urge such to duty. Whatever you can do, do, and do it now. Never cease to work whenever, or in whatever way you can, and eternity alone will reveal the amount of good you will have done.—C. S. in *Bible Index.*

Disagreeable People.

We should bear with disagreeable people better—and generally find them more agreeable, probably—if we were accustomed to look on their mental infirmities with more of the pity with which we regard their physical deformities. We have only commiseration for the man who is born with club feet, or cross eyes, or St. Vitus' dance. We do not blame and berate him that his efforts are crippled by such disadvantages. But the man is just as deserving of pity who comes into life afflicted with a club-footed sense of propriety, or a cross-eyed judgment, or an epileptic temper. At least the reflection that we might not do near as well as he, were we in his place, should temper our criticism and dislike. "You are pale," said one soldier to another, as they were waiting for the enemy's attack, in a tone that implied some

question of his courage. "If you were as afraid as I am you would run away," was the pat reply.—*Ex.*

Coonie.

"Here's a new pet for you, Mary," said my brother, entering the house, and laying a "baby raccoon," as he called it, in my lap.

I shrank from the ugly-looking creature, but when my brother told me that our dogs, Trip and Tige, had killed the mother coon, and left the little orphan coon unprotected I was moved to compassion.

We prepared a soft nest in a box for it, and from that time did the best for our pet that we could with our limited knowledge of raccoon-life and its requirements.

We learned to love Coonie, as we call him and he was apparently fond of us but woe to the chickens that went too near its kennel!

The squaking would soon cease when Coonie settled himself upon his hind-legs, and took the chicken in his forepaws to his mouth.

Coonie was with us two years, and during that time we spent one summer on the sea-coast.

While there, he had no opportunity to capture chickens, and we thought he would have to content himself with such food as we chose to give him.

But we were mistaken. Coonie could get his dainty bits independently of us, and he did so.

We unfasted him every day, and allowed him to walk on the shore with us.

One day when we were walking there, followed by Coonie, we missed him, and retracing our steps, found him sitting on a small rock with his tail hanging over in the water.

"Coonie is up to some new game," said my brother, "let's watch him." We waited but a few moments when there was a jerk and a spring, and Coonie was upon the dry land with a crab clinging to his tail.

The crab was eaten with evident relish, and every day after this Coonie hung his tail in the water for bait, and usually secured his crab, and, after eating it, would follow us home in the best of moods—a perfect model of a coon.

But when crabs refuse the bait, as they sometimes did, he was ill-tempered, and we would be compelled to force him back to his kennel, where he would spend the remainder of the day in sullen silence.

Temperance Work Perpetual.

In one respect temperance work is like house-work. Women at sometimes heard to wish that they could get this dusting, and darning, and dish-washing done up once for all; as a man builds a barn, clears a wood-lot or digs a well, and is through with it. It is tedious to keep pegging away at the same hum-drum task to-day, to-morrow, and the year round, as long as one lives—always doing it but never getting it done. But that is what temperance people must make up their minds to do. There is no discharge in this war. We may whip in many a skirmish and carry many an entrenchment; we may burn the enemy's supply trains and break up his camps. But so long as human nature, so long as men love self-indulgence, we shall have to keep up a running fight with this foe. To call this task a "reform" is misleading. It will not be like the crusade against slavery. That evil has been wiped out. When temperance is wiped out we may expect to hear the trumpets blowing for the millennium.—*Ex.*

—The *Weekly Review* (London) says that since 1860 upwards of six hundred Jews have confessed faith in Christ crucified, in the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, Palestine Place. Since December last thirty-four persons have been added to the number.