



# THE HOME CIRCLE

## MY WORK.

Let me but do my work from day to day,  
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,  
In roaring market place or tranquil room;  
Let me but find it in my heart to say,  
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray—  
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom.  
Of all who live, I am the one by whom  
This work can best be done in the right way."  
Then shall I find it not too great nor small,  
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;  
Then shall I cheerfully greet the laboring hours,  
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall,  
At eventide to play and love and rest,  
Because I know for me my work is best.

—Henry Van Dyke.

## THE PINK STRING.

"Peter," said his mother, "I want you to do a little errand for me."  
"Yes, mother, tell me quick, for it's most school time."  
"You will be sure and not forget?"  
"Oh, mother, Jack Ray's been telling me that whenever he has an errand to do his mother ties a string round his finger. That keeps him in mind every time he looks at it that he has something to do. Did you ever hear of any one doing that?"  
"Yes, many a time. So you would like a string?"  
"Yes, here's the string bag, and here's a nice piece of pink string."  
"Now, then"—As she tied it on his finger, mother told him what she wanted him to do.  
"And, Peter," she added, "be sure to speak very politely when you ask it."  
"Yes, I'll remember."  
"I know you always mean to be polite, dear, but you sometimes forget, as all little boys do. Good-by."  
She kissed him, and he hurried away, soon joining some other boys on the way to school.  
"What's that on your finger?" asked one of them.  
"Oh, that's because I have an errand to do so as to make me think of it."  
But as he gazed at it, what was the errand, anyhow? In his interest in watching the string tied on, he had only half listened to what his mother had been saying, and now the most he could remember of it was that he was to be very, very polite.  
"I can do that, anyway—to everybody. And, perhaps, if I do it all the time, I shall get to thinking of the errand—Oh, please excuse me, I didn't mean to."  
In his hard thinking he had run against a big girl as he was turning into the school yard.  
"Peter," said she, "you're such a polite little fellow that it's easy to excuse you."  
"A good thing to say of a boy," said one of the teachers, who was passing in. "Keep it up, Peter. Good manners are a great help to a boy in going through life."  
"If they'll only help me to remember that errand," said Peter to himself.  
He did remember the politeness. He stood up to give a girl his seat on a crowded recitation bench. He said his best "please" and "thank you" when he went to the teacher's desk to ask about an example, all the while thinking:  
"If I'm very polite, perhaps I shall think of the errand."  
At the close of school the teacher said: "Who will carry a book with its marked lesson around to Johnny Park's house? He is sick and could not come to school today."  
"I will," said Peter, rising in his seat as he spoke.  
"Thank you, Peter. I might have known you are just that kind of a boy."  
He had to go several blocks out of his way to do it. No remembrance of his errand came into his head as he left the book at the door, with a polite inquiry about Johnny, and he walked on slowly, doing his best thinking.  
He passed a yard in which were many beautiful flowers. A lady was inside whom Peter had sometimes seen talking with his mother, so he raised his hat to her, with a very polite little bow. She smiled at him, and then said:  
"I wonder if I couldn't get you to do something for me?"  
"Of course, ma'am," said Peter, again taking off his hat. "I shall be very glad to do it."  
"I am cutting some flowers to send to a sick woman," went on the lady. "Mrs. Hale told me about her—"  
"Oh, that was it!" Peter flung up his hat and capered about for joy.  
"That was what?" asked the lady, with a smile.

"My grand, Mrs. Hale's my mother, and you're Mrs. Garde; and my mother told me to come here and ask you, very politely, if you would let her have some of your flowers to take to the sick woman. She tied this pink string around my finger so I wouldn't forget. But I did forget, all but the politeness."  
Mrs. Garde laughed as she put a wonderful bunch of flowers on Peter's arm, saying as she did so:  
"If you hadn't taken off your hat so politely, I shouldn't have thought of asking you to oblige me."  
"Will you please to excuse me for not taking it off to say good-by? You see, my hands are full."  
"Oh, my dear boy, you did remember, didn't you?" said mother, as she laid the flowers before her.  
"We will try the string again."  
"Mother," said Peter, gravely, "it wasn't the string at all. It was the politeness."—Sydney Dayre, in Christian Register.

## GOING BACK.

Out where the alkali patches were thickest and the wind blew every day, where sage-brush and buffalo grass flourished, they lived. The Church at home had sent them out there as home missionaries, and they had never gone back. It was three years now and if sometimes the longing to see old scenes and old faces grew too strong within them, they resolutely pushed it back. To them religion was no light thing, and they had not hesitated.

And so they had braved the biting winds and the long winters, and the stifling summers, borne the inconveniences of a small salary never promptly paid, and gave no sign. But one day as they read the papers from home, she saw in one of them an announcement of a great meeting that was to be held there. She read it, and her eyes grew dreamy. She saw it all—the dear church, the old and cherished friends—home! And what a meeting it would be! O, she wanted to go—go!

"Donald," she cried, "couldn't you attend it, dear? Think what it would mean to get into touch again! Think of the fine addresses, and the music, and the new ideas."  
He shook his head. "We haven't any money, Edith; and besides, there's—you."  
"Me? O, I couldn't go. I know we couldn't spare money for two. Besides, I'm not presentable. I haven't had a hat for three years, and my skirts are out of date; but if we saved and scrimped and managed, could you not go?"  
He kissed her fondly. "I could not go and leave you here alone. No, don't say another word; I would not think of such a thing."

Stephen Hartley, tall and white-haired, halted the minister that morning. "I heard you give out the announcement of the convention," he said. "It strikes me, it's to be an unusually fine meeting."  
"We hope so," was the quick reply. There was a pause. Stephen Hartley broke it. "By the way, I wanted to speak to you about Donald Street and his wife. They went out as home missionaries about three years ago, wasn't it?"

The minister nodded. "Yes, they are over in the Cedarede district, a little pocket completely shut off from the rest of the world. But they are doing a great work, for there are people there."  
There was another pause. Stephen Hartley broke it again. "I suppose they are having it hard enough?" he said laconically.  
The minister laid his hand on the other man's shoulder. "Hard! My dear brother, is the life of a home missionary ever anything else? No; it leaves its mark, its stamp of burdens borne and carried, its weariness and deprivations. But afterward, oh, I love to think of the home missionary's crown."

There was another silence. Then Stephen Hartley spoke. "I would like to have them attend this convention as my guests," he said slowly. "I recall her now as she went out, scarcely more than a girl herself. I believe neither of them has ever been back."  
"No, the salary is small, and the distance considerable."  
"I see, but if I give my check for their expenses to and from this convention, will you get it to them?"  
The minister grasped his hand. "As if I wouldn't!" he said in a moved voice.

When the letter came and the crisp slip of paper fluttered to the floor, the home missionary and his wife stared. They forgot the plain little room, and the wind-swept plains, and the cactus, and the alkali patches.  
Going back—back once more into the old life, with its privileges, its charm, its old tried friends! Going back to be near really fine music again, and culture, and—then somehow she was crying on his shoulder!  
"My hat is three years old, and I haven't a pair of gloves to my name, but O, Donald, who cares! Just think of it, going back, going back, going back!"

And how they did enjoy it! Some- And so it was made possible. how joy was radiated from their features and the smiles would not come off.

And it was in Stephen Hartley's mansion that they stayed; and it was Stephen Hartley who insisted in fitting them out in new garments!

"Not a word!" he had said, with a shake of his white head; "not a word! Don't I know that even missionaries—God bless them!—like new clothes? I"—he hesitated—"I've had rather a peculiar experience about you. I was sitting here alone one evening, dozing just a little, when suddenly I saw you both. You seemed to be sitting in your little aries that went out from us three house at Cedarede, and then I saw a paper in your hands—you were reading about this convention. I was about those two home missionaries, I cried, 'if I haven't been dream-jumped up quick as a wink. Bless years ago.' Somehow I couldn't get it out of my head. It reminded me some way of that passage somewhere in Joel, 'Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' I kept saying to myself: 'They ought to come to this convention—and they shall, they shall! And—I sent for you. I know it's hard, all you've undergone. But I wouldn't ask you to give it up—you wouldn't if I should; but please, please let me do for you as I would for my own children, had God given me any.'"

And so Donald Street and his wife, home missionaries, entered into one of the loveliest experiences of their lives—that great, great convention, with its larger visions, its enriching influences, its spiritual blessings. And when it closed and they turned their faces homeward, the face of everything was changed. Back of the wind-swept plains, back of the alkali dust and the buffalo grass and the cactus, was a friend, Stephen Hartley! Home missionaries they might be, but poor home missionaries, never! Some one had remembered!—Pittsburg Christian Advocate.

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## GUARDING THE SNOWDROPS.

One of the old-time emperors of Germany was walking in a garden with his friend, the Czar of Russia. At a certain point in the pathway of the emperor was attracted by the appearance of a soldier pacing back and forth between the rows of plants and flowers. He could see no reason why this soldier should be stationed there, and in a wondering tone of voice he asked the Czar why it was.  
"I am sure I do not know" was the answer. "He has been there as long as I can remember. I never stopped to ask why. But we will try to find out about it now that you have called my attention to it."

And they turned the pages of the nation's history back two hundred years before they solved that problem. Then it was discovered that once when the first lady of the land was walking in the garden, she came upon some snowdrops fighting their way up through the grass. Lest they should be trampled down and destroyed, she asked that a soldier be stationed there to protect them, and

it was done. Ever since that post had been guarded through all the centuries by a soldier of the empire. The snowdrops long ago vanished. The heart of the woman who loved them has been stilled many and many a long year, but the mandate of the king has lived through all time's changes.

What was it that brought about this command? What lay back of all the cost it had been to the country to keep that soldier pacing up sunshine and through storm? What but love in the heart of a woman—love for the lowly and the beautiful? In her soul she loved that simple snowdrop plant. She could not bear to think of its being stamped out and lost. So love prompted her and down there all alone, through quest and it was granted.

What lasts like love? In a little while pride loses its power over the soul. Ambition stirs the heart for a little while and then it fades out of the life. The sweetest dreams we have of winning earthly glory and success soon lose their power to stir the heart; but love holds fast its hold forever.

What do you love? Surely there is something sweet enough in your heart so that you will want it guarded through all time. Is that thing so pure, so high, so sacred that you ask the King of kings to keep it for you forever? He will do it. He longs that you shall put your treasures in His keeping. And it will be safe there through all the sunny days that come into your life.

Have you given Him your most precious treasure?—The Epworth Herald.

An amusing story is told of an old Scotch woman who was walking to church with her family one bright Sunday morning. They were passed by the Auld Kirk minister, riding at a tremendous rate, and the old lady said to her children: "Siccan a way to be ridin', an' this the Sawbath day. Aweel, aweel, a gude man is merciful to his beast."

Shortly afterward her own minister rode past at just as furious a pace, and the worthy old wife cried, "Ah, there he goes! The Lord bless him, pur man! His heart's in his wark, an' he's eager to be at it."

## AN AFRICAN BABY'S BATH.

One morning I heard the baby crying as if his little heart would break, and I went to see what would be the matter with him, and found his mother washing him in front of her house. And do you think she had a nice little bath-tub and scented soap and warm water? Oh, no! But she held the little baby upon his little feet and was pouring cold water on him by the handfuls. The poor baby was screaming at the top of his lungs and fighting against the cold water as hard as he could; but the mother paid no attention to that, and went on with the washing. Did she have nice, warm flannel clothes to dry him with and others with which to wrap him? No; but when the washing was over, she lifted the baby up and with her mouth blew vigorously into his eyes and ears to drive out the water, and that is all the drying he got.

Then she proceeded to dress him.

The "dress" consisted of a string of beads around his waist, one around his neck, and one around each of his wrists and ankles. The air and the sun did the rest of the drying. This baby's name was Ntambu Ngangabuka.—Exchange.

"Could you wait on me before the others?" asked the woman in the drug store. "I am in a great hurry." The drug clerk complied and filled her prescription immediately. "Thank you so much," she said. "I am afraid that Fido will awake before I return and miss me."

Golden friendship is not a common thing to be picked up in the street. It would not be worth much if it

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