

## THE HOME CIRCLE

### The Seven Ages of Man.\*

All the world's a stage  
 And all the men and women merely  
 players;  
 They have their exits and their en-  
 trances.  
 And one man in his time plays many  
 parts,  
 His acts being seven ages. At first  
 the infant,  
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's  
 arms;  
 Then the whining schoolboy with his  
 satchel  
 And shining morning face, creeping  
 like a snail  
 Unwillingly to school; and then the  
 lover,  
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful  
 ballad  
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow; then  
 a soldier,  
 Full of strange oaths and bearded  
 like a pard,  
 Jealous in honor, sudden and quick  
 in quarrel,  
 Seeking the bubble reputation  
 Even in the cannon's mouth; and  
 then the justice,  
 In fair, round belly with good capon  
 lined,  
 With eyes severe and beard of formal  
 cut,  
 Full of wise saws and modern in-  
 stances—  
 And so he plays his part; the sixth  
 age shifts  
 Into the lean and slippered pantal-  
 loon,  
 With spectacles on nose and pouch  
 on side,  
 His youthful hose, well saved, a  
 world too wide  
 For his shrunken shank, and his big,  
 manly voice  
 Turning again toward childish treble,  
 pipes  
 And whistles in his sound. Last  
 scene of all,  
 That ends this strange, eventful his-  
 tory,  
 Is second childishness and mere ob-  
 livion—  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans  
 everything.  
 —From Shakespeare's "As You Like  
 It," Act II, Scene 7.

### The Saviour's Birth.

And there shall come forth a rod  
 out of the stem of Jesse and a  
 Branch shall grow out of his roots:  
 And the spirit of the Lord shall  
 rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom  
 and understanding, the spirit of  
 counsel and of might, the spirit of  
 knowledge and fear of the Lord;  
 And shall make him of quick un-  
 derstanding in the fear of the Lord:  
 and he shall not judge after the sight  
 of his eyes, neither reprove after the  
 hearing of his ears:  
 But with righteousness shall he  
 judge the poor, and reprove with  
 equity for the meek of the earth:  
 and he shall smite the earth with the  
 rod of his mouth, and with the breath  
 of his lips shall he slay the wicked.  
 And righteousness shall be the gir-  
 dle of his loins and faithfulness the  
 girdle of his reins.

—Isaiah, xi:1-5.

For unto us a child is born, unto us  
 a son is given: and the government  
 shall be upon his shoulder: and his  
 name shall be called Wonderful,  
 Counsellor, The Mighty God, The

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 gressive Farmer by the Editor.

Everlasting Father, the Prince of  
 Peace.

Of the increase of his government  
 and peace there shall be no end, up-  
 on the throne of David, and upon his  
 kingdom, to order it, and to establish  
 it with judgment and with justice  
 from henceforth even forever.

—Isaiah, ix:6-7.

For unto you is born this day in  
 the city of David a Saviour, which is  
 Christ the Lord.

Glory to God in the highest, and on  
 earth peace, good will toward men.

—Luke, ii:11-14.

### Keeping Christmas.

It is a good thing to observe  
 Christmas day. The mere marking  
 of times and seasons when men agree  
 to stop work and make merry togeth-  
 er is a wise and wholesome custom.  
 It helps one to feel the supremacy of  
 the common life over the individual  
 life. It reminds a man to set his own  
 little watch, now and then, by the  
 great clock of humanity.

But there is a better thing than the  
 observance of Christmas day, and  
 that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you  
 have done for other people and to  
 remember what other people have  
 done for you; to ignore what the  
 world owes you and to think what  
 you owe the world; to put your rights  
 in the background and your duties  
 in the middle distance and your  
 chances to do a little more than your  
 duty in the foreground; to see that  
 your fellow men are just as real as  
 you are, and try to look behind their  
 faces to their hearts, hungry for joy;  
 to own that probably the only good  
 reason for your existence is not what  
 you are going to get out of life, but  
 what you are going to give to life;  
 to close your book of complaints  
 against the management of the uni-  
 verse and look around you for a place  
 where you can sow a few seeds of  
 happiness—are you willing to do  
 these things even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and  
 consider the needs and the desires  
 of little children; to remember the  
 weakness and loneliness of people  
 who are growing old; to stop asking  
 how much your friends love you and  
 ask yourself whether you love them  
 enough; to bear in mind the things  
 that other people have to bear on  
 their hearts; to try to understand  
 what those who live in the same house  
 with you really want, without wait-  
 ing for them to tell you; to trim  
 your lamp so that it will give more  
 light and less smoke, and to carry it  
 in front so that your shadow will fall  
 behind you; to make a grave for your  
 ugly thoughts and a garden for your  
 kindly feelings, with the gate open—  
 are you willing to do these things  
 even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that  
 love is the strongest thing in the  
 world,—stronger than hate, stronger  
 than evil, stronger than death,—and  
 that the blessed life which began in  
 Bethlehem nineteen hundred years

ago is the image and brightness of  
 the Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why  
 not always? But you can never keep  
 it alone.—Dr. Henry van Dyke, in  
 the Youth's Companion.

### All They Could Afford.

Rev. D. J. Sanders, the negro pres-  
 ident of Biddle University of Char-  
 lotte, this State, related the follow-  
 ing incident to some members of the  
 Presbyterian General Assembly at a  
 recent meeting. The story is report-  
 ed by the New York Times:

"Negroes are great lovers of pomp  
 and ceremony, of titles and decora-  
 tions, and the members of a large but  
 ignorant negro congregation in  
 North Carolina conceived the notion  
 that it would add very much to their  
 influence as a church if their pastor  
 could append the initials D. D. to his  
 name.

"One of the brethren learned that  
 a certain institution in the North  
 would confer such a degree for a  
 price. He wrote, and got a letter  
 from this institution, stating that  
 fifty dollars would secure the desired  
 honor.

"Meantime the members of the  
 congregation went to work to raise  
 this fifty dollars, but their utmost  
 efforts failed to secure more than  
 twenty-five dollars.

"The committeemen put their  
 heads together, and it was finally de-  
 cided to send the money, with this  
 message, to the Northern institu-  
 tion:

"Please send our pastor one 'D.'  
 as we are not able to pay for the  
 other at this time."

### A Man's Best Gift to His Family.

The country is full of men who are  
 overworking, not because they care  
 for money, but because they want to  
 command the most comfortable con-  
 ditions for their families; who, if  
 they were told that they were short-  
 ening their lives ten years, would not  
 hesitate to go on, accepting the sac-  
 rifice as part of their duty, and an  
 opportunity to be welcomed rather  
 than avoided. Those who know  
 American men well know that there  
 is a deep vein of idealism in the  
 great majority of them in their at-  
 titude towards their families. It is  
 here that they spend themselves lav-  
 ishly; it is here that many give their  
 lives without hesitation.

But the American father and hus-  
 band does not always give wisely. It  
 is a great deal to make the most com-  
 fortable conditions for women and  
 children, but that is, after all, only  
 furnishing the foundation upon  
 which the life of the home rests: all  
 that is finest, most influential and  
 spiritual in it is not to be found in  
 its material circumstances. The life  
 of the home lies in the elements of  
 vitality, affectional, spiritual, intel-  
 lectual, which are contributed by  
 every member of the family; and the  
 best that parent or child can give is  
 always spiritual. In giving his means  
 a man often gives himself, because  
 he spends himself in order to acquire

the means; but he ought to give him-  
 self in a higher way. It would be  
 far better for many families if their  
 conditions were not so easy and their  
 family life richer; if the toiling man  
 in the office took more time to ex-  
 press his affection, to contribute his  
 strength, to share his intellectual  
 life, to enrich the breakfast and the  
 dinner table and the evening with  
 his large observation of life and  
 knowledge of men, the varied expe-  
 rience which most men of affairs pos-  
 sess. If family life is to be put on  
 the highest possible basis, there must  
 be the giving of self. The lover who  
 lavishes on the woman he loves pres-  
 ents of great material value degrades  
 her if he does not share with her also  
 the highest and best of his own life.  
 And no matter what he gives her, if  
 he withholds this, he leaves her un-  
 satisfied. If she is in any sense  
 worthy, and were compelled to  
 choose, she would take the richer life  
 and the poorer conditions rather  
 than the richer conditions and the  
 poorer life.

The tragedy lies in the substitution  
 in family life of the material for  
 spiritual things, and for that ex-  
 change many men are unconsciously  
 responsible. They are so eager to  
 furnish comfort that they forget to  
 give life; they are so willing to sur-  
 render their strength and their time  
 for those they love that they forget  
 to share themselves.—New York Out-  
 look.

### Another Cannon Story.

"Uncle Joe" Cannon was the guest  
 a few evenings since of the Potters'  
 Association at a local banquet, where  
 he was belabored by many inquiries  
 about his Speakership campaign,  
 which moved him to a story.

"While Payne, Littlefield, and Dal-  
 zell were floundering around for  
 votes," said he, "I just went up to  
 Chicago and did nothing. One day  
 a Chicago scribe came to interview  
 me.

"'Young man,' I said, 'this is for  
 your private ear, not for your news-  
 paper ear. When I was a boy the  
 circus came to the county seat, thir-  
 teen miles away. I wanted to see  
 that circus the worst sort of way. My  
 father had a negro hand named Eph.  
 He wanted to see the circus, too. We  
 scraped enough money together to  
 pay our way in, and I had a little  
 change to spare for ginger snaps  
 and peanuts. Eph carried me on his  
 broad back a part of the way, and at  
 last we paid entrance fee and were  
 under the big tent. We proceeded  
 past several cages till we came to a  
 big cage containing an enormous  
 ape. There Eph stopped stock still.

"'How is you?' said the old black  
 man, bowing before the monstrous  
 ape.

"No answer.

"'How is you?' Eph repeated, with  
 another profound bow, and still no  
 answer. Then after a long pause  
 Eph exclaimed:

"'You's right ole man. Keep yo'  
 mouf shet or dey'll put a hoe in yo'  
 hand and make yo' raise cotton.'"

The newspaper writer departed  
 without further questioning.—Wash-  
 ington Post.