

The Watchman and Southerner.

RELIGION, MORALS AND PHILOSOPHY.

Rev. C. C. BROWN, Editor.

MY PRAYER.

If, when I kneel to pray With eager lips, I say, Health, wealth, fame, friends, brave heart, religious fire, The power to say my fellow men at will, And strength for mighty work to banish ill...

In such a prayer as this The blessing I must miss.

Or if I only dare To raise this fainting prayer: "Thou seest, Lord, that I am poor and weak, And cannot tell what things I ought to seek; I therefore, do not ask at all, but still, I trust thy bounty all my wants to fill, My lips shall thus grow dumb, The blessing shall not come."

And if I only fall, And in my faith I call: "Through Christ, O Lord, I pray thee give to me"

Not what I would, but what seems best to Thee, Of life, of health, of service, and of strength; Until to my full joy I come at length; I therefore, do not ask at all, but still, The blessing shall not fall.

—Richardson.

Mr. Bingle's Old Coat.

"Splendid" said Mrs. Bingle, pulling the collar up and skirt down, and trying the pocket flaps, as farmer Bingle tried on his new overcoat. "Real silk-velvet collar."

"Yes, and such a piece of cloth! Forty-five dollars for the whole thing."

"Forty-five dollars!" echoed Sam and Jim, admiringly.

"Yes. Seventeen for the tailor's and trimmings and twenty-eight for the cloth. It'll do me till I'm gray."

"What you goin' to do with the old one, pa?" asked Jim.

"It's a good coat yet," said Mrs. Bingle. "Sam'll be grown into it by two years more."

"First-rate coat. But—I was thinkin' of some givin' it to Parson Graves. You see, it'll do my account for the year, and I won't have so much to pay on his salary."

Mrs. Bingle measured with her eye how much Sam would have to grow before fitting well into the rosy coat, and decided it might be at least three years in the course of which time, added to the seven during which it might have been doing duty on Sundays and great occasions, it might begin to look old-fashioned, and Sam might object to wearing it, that young gentleman having already begun to develop a taste for clothing which came reasonably near fitting him. So it was agreed that Parson Graves should have the old overcoat.

Accordingly, on the next Saturday, when the farmer with his wife was about to drive into the country town, he asked at the last moment:

"Now, where's that coat?"

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Bingle. "I've been so busy over the butter and eggs, if I didn't forget about it! Sally, Sally, she ran into the house calling to the girl who helped in the kitchen, 'run up to the spare chamber and take that overcoat that hangs there, and some of them papers that lies on the shelf, and wrap it up well and bring it to me.'"

"Sally brought it, and the huge bundle lay in Mrs. Bingle's lap as she rode."

"It is a good coat," she observed, half regretfully, smoothing with her finger a corner of the cloth which peeped through a hole in the paper, and began stroking in her mind the possibility of Sam's growing into it in two years.

"Sam won't be likely to get any ready-made coat half as good as this."

"Like as not won't," agreed the farmer, "but never mind. It's more blessed to give than to receive, you know."

The Bingle household awoke the next morning with the impression that something of an event was impending in the family, which impression became, with full wakefulness, defined into the remembrance that the new overcoat was to be worn for the first time on that day. There was, however, no undignified haste nor trifling in the matter. The morning chores were done, morning prayer conducted with its time-honored lengthiness, and then the farmer leisurely shaved himself as usual, at one of the windows of the great kitchen, before saying, as is indifferently a voice as he could command:

"Jim, run up stairs and get my overcoat."

Jim went, but delayed until his mother had put the last touches to the bow in her bonnet-straps, a process which was almost invariably interrupted by her husband with remarks that they would be late for church, before he was heard shouting:

"I can't find it!"

"Where are you looking?"

"In the closet in your room."

"It's in the closet in the spare chamber," called his father.

"Another long delay, and then Jim came down without it."

"I tell you it's one of them pegs in our closet," said Mrs. Bingle. "I'll go myself. It's dark, and he can't see, but it's there, for I put it there myself."

"No," said Mr. Bingle, calling after her, "it's in the spare chamber closet. I put it there."

She was heard stepping briskly from one room to the other, then back, and then back again.

Then down the stairs, where she stood before them in silence, on her face black consternation, on her arm—the old overcoat!

"When did you hang it there?"

"I don't know—the day after it came I guess. The old one always hung there, so I took it down and hung the new one there."

Mrs. Bingle sank into a chair. "It's gone!"

"Gone to Parson Graves!" The boys started, open-mouthed, unable at first fully to take in the calamity.

"But you can get 'em again," at length Jim said, hopefully.

"Of course!" said Sam. "You can tell Parson Graves it was all a mistake, and it was the old coat you meant for him, and of course he'll change back."

But the farmer shook his head ruefully.

"No, that won't do. It's done, and it can't be undone," he said with a groan. "Don't one of you never let on about its being a mistake."

The family and the old coat were late at church, thus missing the sight of the entrance of the new coat, but they over the arm of the little sofa in the pulpit. And farmer Bingle never could recall a word of that service through which he sat trying to bring himself into some friendly recognition of the fact that he had presented his minister with a forty five dollar over-

coat, which he could not hope to have counted at anything near its full value on his yearly assessment, for who ever heard of a country parson having such a coat?

"Don't he look fine though!" ejaculated Sam, as Mr. Graves came down the aisle.

"And don't Mrs. Graves look set up?" said Jim.

"Enough to make any woman, to hang on to a piece of cloth like that," said Mrs. Bingle.

Mr. Bingle was unbitching his horses as Mr. Graves came out of the church door, and did not at first raise his eyes as he listened to the remarks passing around.

"Bless me! What a fine looking fellow our parson is, anyhow! Where on earth did he get that coat?"

"Must have had a fortune left him."

Mr. Bingle could not help feeling that the coat had been well bestowed, as its wearer came to meet him with outstretched hands, and a few quiet, though very earnest words of acknowledgment of his gift. The coat had fitted the farmer, but there was something more than the mere filling out of good cloth in the minister's dignified bearing, and in the scholarly face which appeared above it, something which stirred up a feeling in many members of the congregation that this servant of the Lord had not hitherto been clothed in a fashion worthy of his high office.

"That's a shabby old hat to wear with that," said one of the village store-keepers. "I'll see about that before Sunday comes round."

As Mr. Bingle felt the grasp of his pastor's hand, he began almost to be glad he had given the coat; and then, as the fact of his having given it was whispered about, to feel ashamed of receiving so much credit for an act which he never would have thought of performing. For an honest, and really warm nature lay under the crust of parsimonious selfishness which had hardened over his heart, as it has, alas! over so many, which might overflow in deeds of kindness to bless those who have given not grudgingly, but their whole selves to the Master's service.

"I feel like a liar; yes I do!" said Mr. Bingle to his wife, with an energy which startled her as they rode home.

"To have that man shake me up by the hand, and talk to me about my generosity, and his wife's eyes beam up at me, and me not able to tell out and tell 'em I'm a grudge, 'right fisted old—I tell you what!"—he gave his horses such a vigorous cut with the whip that Jim and Sam, on a back seat of the bod sleigh, nearly went over backwards in the snow. "I've got to get even with myself somehow, but I don't know just how, yet."

It was astonishing what a commotion farmer Bingle's gift created in the parish. Not one eye had failed to mark the justice done by Mr. Graves' goodly figure to the goodly garment, and with an awakening pride at the possession of such a fine looking pastor came a desire to see him thoroughly well equipped. Which desire found expression in such a visitation at the parsonage as had never before been dreamed of. Cheap goods and cast-offs were ignored in the generous supply of winter comforts which each giver made sure should be in keeping with the new overcoat, and the wives and mothers had seen to it that Mrs. Graves and the children should look fit to walk beside that tailor made up piece of cloth.

Mr. Bingle had smiled with a light in his eyes which came up from somewhere under that broken crust, at the set of furs which his wife carried to Mrs. Graves that night. But in the early gray of the winter morning, he with Sam's help unloaded in the back yard of the parsonage, a firkin of butter, the same of lard, and six barrels of his best apples, packed for market.

"A good forty-five dollar's worth if I'd carted it half a mile farther," he said to his wife, with a face which shone as he sat down to breakfast.

"And not a soul heard us," said Sam, rubbing his hands in great glee.

"Wish I could see 'em when they find out!"

"Now I'm even," said the farmer.

"And it was the bot' day's work I over did when I gave away that coat by mistake."—Standard.

TUTT'S PILLS

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From the most scientific of the most eminent of the medical profession, these pills have been prepared. They are the only pills that act directly on the bowels, and are the only pills that act on the liver, and are the only pills that act on the system generally, and are the only pills that are safe and reliable in every case.

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