

MRS. R. P. MEEKS.

HEARTHSTONE ECHOES.

BY

MRS. R. P. MEEKS.

"Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And *grow* forever and forever."

—*Tennyson.*

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
MCQUIDDY PRINTING COMPANY.
1902.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1902,

BY MRS. R. P. MEEKS,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PREFACE.

MANY times have I watched the differently tinted clouds as, on airy wings, they gently floated across the summer sky. I have studied their nature, have wondered at their construction, and have almost wished they could be more durable. I have tried in a feeble way to arrange them in permanent form, as nearly as possible. I have painted them on canvas, as overhanging and giving tint to trees, houses, mountains, and seas; I have painted them encircling the rising sun, then overshadowing "the sunset's radiant glow;" I have painted the monstrous thunderheads, the dismal storm cloud, the snow cloud, the gilt-edged cloud, and the one with a silvery lining. Some of these paintings hang on the walls of our "home, sweet home;" so we can at any moment look at them and be somewhat reminded of the real objects, with their many forms and tints.

In my quiet, serious moments, reflections drift into my mind like the many-tinted clouds, then chase each other a little while and sink beneath the horizon of thought. Now and then I catch one and make a pencil drawing of it or place it in a blank book or in the columns of a local periodical. Friends have repeatedly asked me to gather up and arrange in book form some of the thoughts I have thus preserved, but I have timidly shrunk from the task. It seemed presumptuous for me—*little me*—to undertake

such a thing, especially since "of making many books there is no end." But I began to reason thus: Every one desires to leave specimens of his or her labor as keepsakes or mementos for the loved ones left on the shores of time; then why should it seem more presumptuous for me to leave a collection of my musings than quilts I have made, pictures I have painted, and other works of my hands I hope to leave? So, while standing on the first rounds of the twentieth century, I have made the attempt.

Then what name shall the little volume bear? "Scattered Thoughts at Random Strung" is the most appropriate title I know, for the book is principally the result of odd moments and offhand efforts; but as the length of this title might discourage the reader, I shall select a shorter one—"HEARTHSTONE ECHOES." This will also be appropriate, as most of the articles have been written by the fireside, and are, to a great extent, echoes of the heart's emotions. With few exceptions, no attention will be given to the date of the composition of these articles or the circumstances suggesting them; so they will, indeed, be "scattered thoughts at random strung."

The reader will doubtless observe that in some of the articles the "figures" are slightly overdrawn for the sake of emphasizing the thought.

It is not the purpose of the book to follow any beaten path of science or to attempt an intellectual display. It will leave large words for philosophic minds; it will leave the beautiful flowers of language to be plucked by those whose

literary stature is sufficient to reach them. Its objects are: To try, in a meek, unassuming way, to lift the veil of melancholy from the hearts of some who have grown weary and heavy-hearted pondering over the mysterious clouds of our existence, and to assist them in banishing the clouds and finding the golden sunshine; to aid in the proper education of the heart; to lift some wayward youth out of the quicksands of temptation and vice; and to point the discouraged mind to the contemplation of a higher, holier life in that world without a cloud. Let such be its echo; then God speed its humble mission!

MOLLIE L. MEEKS.

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GEN. JOHN H. MEEKS	"Our Father"
R. P. MEEKS	"Fifty Years Ago"
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HEARTHSTONE ECHOES.

LIFE'S ECHO.

“None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”

RIPPLES quiver on the surface of the lake long after the stone has reached its bed of earth. Speak aloud while sailing on the placid bosom of Echo River, and, though three hundred and fifty feet beneath earth's rugged crust, the myriads of crevices and “clifflets” of the gray limestone walls take up the sound and toss it, like a plaything, back and forth, back and forth, until its vibrations and reverberations fill the immense cavern hall, then die away in the dark distance.

Every life has its echo—its influence. The character of this echo, its extent, and its number of repetitions depend upon the surroundings and the force which produced it. It can be made sweet and soothing, or it can be caused to harshly grate on every ear tuned to the melody and harmony of life. The lives of both good men and wicked men remind us of this; the echoes of both will be heard long after the forces that propelled them shall have ceased to be. The first transgression; the first brother murderer; the fatal looking back at Sodom's flames; the mistake of “Jeroboam, . . . who made Israel to sin”—all these and many others send

harsh echoes down time's rushing river. These echoes, however, are to a great extent overpowered by thrilling vibrations from the lives of righteous Abel, obedient Noah, faithful Abraham, and meek and lowly Moses. Resting here, faith enables us to see the life of the peerless One, whose echo rises in the first century, growing louder and louder, until peal after peal it resounds along the ages, and will never cease until blended with the music that will "make the universe vocal with praise."

Echo speaks without a tongue, yet its voice is heard the world around. Church and college buildings are echoes of the heart's warm impulses; so are the various reformations, such as the great prohibition movement. We trust that such echoes will continue to roll along the corridors of time, becoming louder and extending farther while the ages come and go.

We are too much inclined to let our lives be *nothing but echoes*—to only repeat what others have said, instead of having thoughts of our own; to live off of the labors of others, instead of working for ourselves.

The world is a great whispering gallery, from which are often echoed our very tones; then how essential that our accents be gentle and kind! If we speak harshly to it, we may expect a harsh reply; if we treat it with silent indifference, it will doubtless treat us in a like manner; if we speak in love and tender sympathy, its tones will usually indicate the same spirit. "Can any tongue speak fairer?" We should be like an echo—speak when we are

spoken to; but should not be like an echo—always having the last word. As Longfellow's arrow was hurled through the air and lost, but was at last found, unbroken, in an oak, so our words, which we often consider "wasted on the desert air," may long, long afterwards be found "in the heart of a friend." Likewise, a mother's love, echoing in a youth's brave heart, sometimes checks his downward wanderings and points him upward. In every way we should exert our best influence while living; then we will be neither afraid nor ashamed to

"Let Echo, too, perform her part,
Prolonging ev'ry note with art,
And, in a low, expiring strain,
Play all the concert o'er again."

WEAVING.

WE are aware that the warp of life has been placed in the loom, and we are all busily weaving. The shuttles are flying thick and fast. Our feet are on the treadles, constantly moving—down, up, down, up—keeping time with the old town clock; our hands are busy, catching the shuttles and arranging the threads; our minds are constantly planning and studying how to follow a certain design.

Calmly watch the mystic weavers throwing their shuttles to and fro, amid noise and wild confusion. Some are content with a rough, coarse, common cloth, because it requires less study and work; but every enthusiastic lover of the

sublime and beautiful aspires to something of better quality. Some are content with cheap, perishing dyes; others select splendid colors which never fade. One person weaves into his web the most delicate tints of Flora's bower. Another weaves the azure of the vaulted skies, interspersed with gold, green, and scarlet—richest, gaudiest hues; but his eye soon becomes wearied by the flaming, flashy colors,

And "now with the gold of the wheaten sheaf
He mingles the brown of the russet leaf."

In this mystic web called "life" some weave a soft, delicate fabric; others, the "rough and ready;" still others, a fabric of skips and knots—a regular "knickerbocker." Some weave that which is strong and durable; others, the flimsy gauze, frail as cobwebs—beautiful to look upon, perhaps, but too delicate to be of service. Some weave with slow, stubborn, rebellious motion, complaining at every stroke of the beam; others, with hands swift and willing. The latter class, cheered by the sweet service of song and animated by pleasing environments that seem to strengthen their arms, make their weaving a pastime, and their work is

"Soft and smooth and ever spreading,
As if made for angels' treading;"

the former class in mad haste jerk the sley and tangle the threads, making many ugly "balks" in the beautiful pattern.

Some "snap the minute, delicate threads
Of their curious lives asunder,
And then blame Heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit and grieve and wonder."

Some weavers so quietly and patiently ply the shuttle that their threads never break, nor snarl, nor fray, nor tangle; with others the fabric becomes so skipped and worn and soiled, the threads so frayed and broken, that they become discouraged, fretted, and nervous, spoil the beautiful design, and would fain give up the task. When their work is finished, it is not accepted as a good article; it shows blots or stains placed thereon by many a tear that need not have fallen had they but stopped to correct their mistake at the first little tangle. Some appear color-blind; they seem to think one shade will answer as well as another, and thus they spoil the pattern. Some want to weave the entire bolt, leaving no work for others; some try to do all their part in one day, and thus die from overwork; whereas a much larger number would gladly leave it all for other hands to weave.

At this great, whirring loom of time we all weave our separate threads—"some, stained; others, fair;" some, silk; others, wool or cotton, flax or tow. The warp is, in the main, our natural selves; the woof, our thoughts, our moods, our words, our actions. Some weave in too much of their own pride, temper, sensitiveness, and indomitable will; others make a broad "ground" of their own dark, deep sorrows—their mingled fears and sighs and tears—then "stripe" with their neighbors' vanities and criminal faults. There is a class, however, that will grace the loom with a beautiful web of pure character, tenderness, truth, and love, illumined by a Roman cross that gems the center.

The Master Workman stands near, and sees if our character is real—sees if we ingeniously intermingle the shining warp and woof of each day so as to imitate the pattern assigned us; then he rolls it back on that mysterious beam. We hear his voice, as it were, in the rattle of the loom; we see his pages of history unrolled from the beam. O, the mystic weavers, the mystic thread, the mystic web of life!

Into the warp and woof of every book much is woven which the reader may regard as spurious or foreign; for it is fully as easy to criticise as to *write a book*. To him it may appear as but "a cross and pile of threads" interlaced so as to form a pattern which may please or displease the fancy. "To the writer almost every filament has its own associates—how each bit of silk or wool or flax or tow was laboriously gathered or was blown to him, when each was spun by the wheel of his fancy into yarn, the color and tint which his imagination gave to each skein, and where each was finally woven into the fabric by the shuttle of his pen. No thread ever quite detaches itself from its growth and spinning, dyeing and weaving, and each draws him back to hours and places seemingly unrelated to the work."

If this, my first attempt at "bookmaking," may fortunately escape the hypercritical gaze of those who *criticise but to condemn*, I trust that it may find its way over the lowly doorsill of some humble cottage, carrying with it a bright thread of good cheer to be woven into the web of some discouraged life.

CHASING BUBBLES.

TIME's great index finger has since then made several revolutions, each time pointing one year farther toward the sunset wave; but memory brings back that day, distinct as yesterday. It was the birthday of somebody's little boy.

"Six years old to-day—'mos' a man! What mus' I do 'cause it's my birthday? I'm now too big to sit on mamma's knee and be a 'ba-a-by.' Look at me! Don't you see? I've quit playin' 'girl' now—quit wearin' dresses. Look at my new trousers! I'm a man now—'mos' as big as papa. It's rainin' so hard, mamma says I mus' play in the house. Mamma is awful hard on little chilluns; but while we's little they *will have their way*. O, yes! I know what I'll do: I'll blow bubbles; *that's what*."

With a short cane and a pan of soapsuds he is soon as busy as a bee. For four hours he is oblivious to everything outside of the family room. On an adjoining lot carpenters are toiling hard, completing the inner work of a house; the busy saws are making music for the tired workmen, while the hammers go—tap, tap, tap—as a timely accompaniment. This dear little boy, however, does not see the carpenters, neither does he hear the music of saw or hammer; he is busy. The rain is falling almost in torrents, but he sees it not. The outer world gives him no trouble now. The carpenters are no more intent on their work than is the boy on his; the merchants feel no more interest in their business; the king on his throne has his mind no more fully absorbed in national affairs than is the mind of this

dear little innocent absorbed in his business, for he is blowing bubbles.

Yes, blowing bubbles. Here is one ascending to the ceiling. There! it is coming down. He runs under it and blows it up again. It is now about to strike the mirror, but he blows it back; it bursts, is gone. He makes another; it strikes the lamp, and is no more. Another; he blows too hard; it bursts. He blows one over the bed; it falls on the counterpane and disappears. Watch the next; it falls on the carpet and rolls over and over and over, to his great delight. The next floats about through the room at his bidding (at his blowing). When he makes one which he considers a success, he applauds with his chubby little hands (as "Blind Tom" applauding his own music), thinking he has won a great victory.

For little children this is splendid recreation, and by it several object lessons in science may be taught. You may thus teach them many things about colors and their combination; may show that bubbles must have light in order to reflect the beautiful colors; tell how the prismatic colors are produced, and explain what a rainbow is; speak of the tenacity of soapsuds as compared with clear water; tell about how the bubbles are made to rise by being filled with warm breath, which is lighter than common air; and may then draw the comparison between bubbles and balloons.

That boy is much older now; he thinks he is too large to thus amuse himself. Really, he supposes he has quit that kind of pastime, but he has not; he still spends much of his

precious life blowing bubbles. They rise before him—with assumed names now, however; and he recognizes them not by their real name, "bubbles," but by their *nom de guerre*. They call themselves "life's realities," some having assumed the artistic names "Fun," "Pleasure," "Happiness," "Necessity," and such like; whereas others wear somber colors, and call themselves "Trouble," "Work," "Self-denial," and "Hard Times." With all the earnestness of his baby days he still chases the bright-colored ones and bows and moans over those of somber hues. But—look!—he is not alone in his fanciful employment; there stand some much older than he. What are *they* doing? Watch them! They, too, are blowing bubbles. The workmen around them are busy at their various pursuits, the saws and hammers are now making coffins that may imprison their bodies; yet they regard them not, for they are thinking about their bubbles. They watch these intently as they fly higher and higher in the air; they dash after them as they sail away. How amusing to see "grown-up boys and girls" chasing bubbles! But examine these bubbles carefully. They *say something*; not only do they reflect the beautiful rainbow colors, but something is printed on each of them. Their mottoes are running people wild. Look! What does that large, beautiful one say? Read it! It says: "This old country is too small for me." So it breaks loose from the cane that gave it its start and sails away toward the far west. The man watching that bubble says: "*That's me, shore!*" Then he goes and does like-

wise. He is a middle-aged man, whose life shadow is already pointing eastward. He sells, or gives away, what he and his wife have worked hard for, leaves friends and kindred, and chases that bubble in search of a country large enough to contain him. By the time he reaches his destination he finds that the bubble has lost its force, and *so has he*; not a very large country is required to contain him and his possessions now.

A fair maiden is watching the next brilliant bubble. Painted on its round cheek of beauty (pretty as her own) she spies jewels and diamonds and fine clothing—such as she covets, but cannot consistently wear. Below them she sees written in small, dark letters: “Your parents are not very good to you; they do not dress you as they should. Come, be mine; I will give you all the fine things you want.” She attempts to break loose from parental restraint and grasp the bubble, but a mysterious something prevents her. So there she stands, or sits, and pouts, watching that bubble and murmuring to herself and to her troubled parents its doleful words, changed to suit herself: “They don’t dress me like other girls, or like they are able to do.” Thus she deprives herself of the rosy-cheeked angel, Contentment, and robs her hard-working, self-sacrificing parents of a sweet-spirited, happy daughter. If they have been unkind to her, it is by being too indulgent. Time speeds on. The bloom and beauty of her youth are wasted in coveting the transient possessions of the vain old queen, Style; and before she is aware a sordid frown of discontent has

frozen over her features, rendering the jewels she already possesses unbecoming in the extreme. Another girl seizes that bubble, presses it; it is gone. Boys, does this experience in any respect fit *you*?

A young married couple are intently admiring a bubble now. The picture it presents is a magnificent home, with elegant furnishings—not the homely cottage in which their parents “made their start,” not even the one that is the result of their lifetime savings. It far surpasses either—is “up to date,” has all the modern improvements and the most pleasing environments. They let go everything else, eagerly seize it, and cherish it a little while; then it must go to pay their debts, and they blushing, but thankfully, accept a back room in the humble old cottage home. Yonder is the picture of another charming home; but—look!—it is embraced in flames, and in a few moments the result of a life of honest toil is nothing but a little pile of ashes.

Another bubble says: “With all your getting, get riches. Follow me; I will lead you to a mine of gold.” Some one chases, but finds the dazzling material to be only yellow sand. “All that glitters is not gold.” He pursues another “gold bug” (gold bubble). This one is true to its label. Things turn to money at his touch. He gathers it; hoards it; tears down his banks and builds greater. Finally he is summoned to that other country, the land of spirits; tries hard to arrange otherwise, obtains all the aid he can, and pleads with the messenger to release him from the obligation; but he *must go*. Hurriedly collect-

ing as much of his wealth as possible, he starts with it; drags it along until he reaches the banks of the deep, turbid river; checks his baggage; and— “No, no!” exclaims the Captain. “You cannot bring that heavy baggage on board; it would sink the boat.” “Then I pray thee, O Captain, let me stay with it.” “No, no! You are my captive, and the time is up. All aboard!” And the despondent man crosses death’s river, leaving his possessions on this side to be a “bone of contention”—only bubbles, which burst at least as soon as they touch death’s chilly tide.

What striking similarity between many of life’s achievements and soap bubbles! Both reflect outward light and beauty; both are perishable; both often paint bright visions of a golden future in some far-away land; both often bring disappointment. Frequently a young man works hard, earns money, and spends much of it for indulgences that take the gilt edge from his cultured character and blunt his finer feelings, while the remainder slips from his grasp and disappears. Wealth and fame are often obtained through bloodshed and tyranny, and many have chased fleeting pleasures to their own destruction. They had better have been sitting on the floor making soap bubbles.

The little boy greatly admires the many beautiful colors of his toy balloons, and who does not? But let him catch some of them and weigh them; what are they now? Many of life’s most brilliant phases prove to be mere bubbles, but there is a place where we may store our treasures and they will never vanish.

Each of these tiny globes has a sweet mission, after all. It reflects a beauty and sublimity that should inspire the desponding heart with courage and hope, and seems to say: "If I, only a fleeting bubble, bursting at the slightest jostle, can display the hand of love and power divine, how much more is required of you, O men of little faith!"

The articles in this volume may be regarded as mere bubbles floating through the balmy atmosphere of more solid literature. Then I shall try not to paint on them visionary pictures calculated to lead the mind astray. I would like to paint thereon a miniature rainbow to entertain some child, and thus teach him the bubble's mission. I would like to convince him that the color of the bubble called "life" depends largely upon the rays of light thrown on it; that if it appears too dark, it needs to be placed in higher light. If these articles, though transient bubbles, may but serve this purpose; if they may give some older person a few moments' pastime or cast a gleam of hope over some discouraged and gloomy life; if from them, though dimly reflected, some one may catch a glimpse of the Sun of Righteousness and the "home of the blest," then I shall have my reward.

THREE things with which we are too economical: Kind words, appropriate smiles, charities. Three things with which we are too extravagant: Money, time, tongue.

THE GREAT MIRROR.

MANY pleasures and advantages and some disadvantages are derived from the common looking-glass, even the small pocket mirror. Where there is beauty of complexion or features it is sure to be observed; therefore some individuals give the mirror considerable attention. But—lo!—on the other hand, *imperfection* of face or toilet is just as perfectly reflected; and, sad to say, with most of us the latter predominates. We would be much better pleased with ourselves if all mirrors would flatter. Even the color of eyes or hair is thus shown; and if we have neglected hair, teeth, or toilet in general, our mirror will inform us of the fact.

“Smile at the world, and it smiles back at you; frown at it, and it frowns in return.” Thus the world is a great looking-glass.

Beyond the deep waters there is a certain hall with a magnificent painting overhead, the work of some European artist. Many people visit this hall and feast their eyes for hours on the grandeur of the work, continually finding something new and attractive to admire; but the eyes grow weary and the head aches from so long gazing upward. Some one devised a plan for relieving this difficulty. An immense mirror was placed on the floor, so persons could look into it and see the great beauties of the elegant painting overhead. Thus with life. From the beauties and grandeur of earth we can form some idea of the glories of the eternal “home of the blest.” Our powers of vision are

too short to reach them; but God has kindly placed on his footstool a wonderful mirror, into which we can look and see beautifully reflected the indescribable elegance of the glory land. The more we gaze into this great reflecting medium, the more we see in the upper world to admire.

The mirror is also a reflector of character. Have you told a falsehood? Go to the looking-glass on your dresser, look straight into your own face, and ask yourself: "Who am I, guilty of such a grievous fault?" Repeat your own name, while looking at yourself, and see if you are not ashamed of it; then go to that greatest of all mirrors, your Bible, and there see how your falsehood looks. Have you taken that which belongs to another? View yourself in this great mirror, see the flushes on your cheeks, then watch yourself turn pale at the thought. Have you wronged your neighbor? Are you an extortioner? Have you required usury? Have you oppressed the widow and the orphan? Examine closely your character as reflected from God's never-failing mirror, and see if you are contented with it. Have you taken the Lord's name in vain? Have you been guilty of drunkenness? Have you sold whisky? Are you still selling it, even on the sly? Do you in any way encourage any one to partake of the sparkling beverage of woe? The Bible will show you your picture. Look at it! It is not merely a "proof" entitling you to another "sitting" *ad libitum*. It is the finished work of the great Artist, showing your exact features; it is lifelike.

If we will stand before the Bible mirror as we stand before the ordinary looking-glass, feeling as much interest in it, we will see not only our good traits, but also our errors, follies, and sins, which we did not realize we had until we thus examined ourselves. Frequently we think we see a mote or cinder in our neighbor's eye and want to kindly remove it for him; but by looking closely into this holy mirror we find, to our utter astonishment, it is a beam in our own eye. The reason we do not find it sooner is that we will not look closely into the mirror. It is strange that we can see our own good qualities better than those of others, while to us the faults of others are made so prominent and to many of our own we are blind.

An imperfect mirror invariably makes an imperfect reflection. In a small room in the "Moorish Palace," at the World's Fair, there were arranged in some comical and complicated way a vast number of mirrors, reflecting just that many images of each individual. These images were of various sizes, shapes, and proportions; and the result was a comical confusion, for no one could recognize his own face or figure—sometimes exceedingly long and slender, sometimes short and "dumpy," like the "brownies," and with mouth like that of an alligator. In another room the mirrors were so arranged as to cause a very few persons to appear like a large concourse of people. One woman cried out that she was about to suffocate, and asked to be quickly removed from that densely-crowded room, when it was positively known by her friends at the door that

she was the only individual in the room. Another trouble about these complications was that when an individual tried to get out of the room he was fully as apt to go farther in, for the reflections would bewilder him so he could not know which way he was going.

So if we try to see our true character reflected from various and complicated mirrors, we are sure to receive distorted views—too broad or too long, one-sided, or in some way out of proportion. Sometimes the more we try by these bewildering reflections to get out into the true light, the more tangled we become, until we appeal to the true guide. Our great spiritual mirror is free from spots and dust and waving blemishes, and is fully guaranteed by the firm from which we obtained it—the great and reliable firm of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When about ready to start anywhere, we, as a rule, go before the mirror to see if our toilet is properly arranged. So when about to pass from earth to the next life, we should stand before the mirror of God's truth and see if we are ready. We may think our spiritual toilet is properly adjusted, but on close examination we may find some very important changes to be made.

Again, we should not wait too long before making this examination, for sometimes we have no time to prepare just before starting. We may not know the train of death is due until it arrives at our station, for this train runs on a peculiar schedule. It is too late to make our arrangements after it comes, and we cannot at our pleasure wait

for another train; but as we have lived, so must we die and appear before the great Judge.

Reader, are you prepared to die? Go to that greatest of mirrors and see.

THE "LOST SCHOOLHOUSE."

I FORMED its acquaintance in the long ago, when Dunlap, Tenn., was a tiny infant, cradled in the beautiful vale of Sequatchie. The "Lost Schoolhouse" was old enough to be mother, perhaps grandmother, of the village. It was doubtless the *alma mater* of some who helped to build the little town, which is situated on the highway from Jasper to Pikeville. Its name was very appropriate, as it was situated some distance from the public road and was hidden therefrom by a dense forest. A well-beaten path led thereto from the public road; but at times was obstructed by fallen limbs, pine needles, and oak leaves. When the "lost" was found, it was in a very small sedge field near the "Dividing Ridge," which runs north and south throughout the beautiful valley between and parallel with the Cumberland Mountain and Walden's Ridge.

Around that house still cluster many pleasant memories. I well remember its appearance. It was not a modern building. Nothing was said of its Gothic roof; its corridors, balconies, museums, libraries; its spacious halls; its "up-to-date" folding desks; its opera chairs; for it was simply a "little old log cabin [not] in the lane." Its

"stick-and-clay" chimney was "tumbling down;" its rough-board roof was almost "caving in." Its benches were rustic in the superlative degree—long, splintery punch-ions, or split logs, with small, round hickory posts run through auger holes, elevating the seats so high that we little folks had to keep our feet swinging to and fro to keep them from "going to sleep," as we had nothing on which to rest them while for hours long and weary we daily went over our b-a, bās; a-b, äbs. The surroundings were enchanting. Dense forests that had never been disturbed by the woodman's ax were made cheery by nature's sweet "winged choir;" and now and then were seen a fleet-footed rabbit jumping across the path, a squirrel fleeing from us and seeking refuge among the leafy boughs of the trees, and—need I say?—occasionally a hideous serpent trailing its lowly length in the dust in front of us or hissing at us from the roadside. Springs of clear water, sparkling and pure, gladdened the eyes and throats of thirsty children, while a rippling brooklet quietly wended its way over a gravelly bed, seeking the company of neighboring waters. Walden's Ridge was only a few miles eastward, and from behind it the morning sun quietly climbed, walked proudly athwart the skies, then modestly retired beyond the tall Cumberland Mountain, which looked down upon the "Lost Schoolhouse" from the west.

As the school was near town and especially for the benefit of the town children, there was a large crowd of us in attendance, and a merry crowd were we. Our little

hearts always leaped with joy when our kind teacher announced, "Recess!" but when, two hours later, he called out, "Dinner!" the boys gave a simultaneous yell; the girls, a modest (?) shout or shriek; and such a stampede—pell-mell, helter-skelter over benches and each other, tearing our long-sleeved, homespun cotton aprons on the splintery benches, the larger children priding themselves in pinching the little ones, pulling their hair, snatching off their "headbands," or treading on their shoeless toes with their own heavy, toeless shoes—just anything to make them cry, hoping they would receive a whipping, which would give the "big boys" something to laugh at, holding up their books so as to hide from the teacher their odd grimaces. But onward we rushed for bonnets, hats, and dinner baskets. Greedily and quickly as possible we swallowed our lunches, for "dinner time" meant two hours' solid fun. "Club-fist," "thimble," "hide and seek," "jail," "Ant'ny over," and "poor puss, I want your corner," were daily played with renewed animation; while for more violent exercise we girls engaged in "jumping the rope" (a grapevine substitute), and the boys had a regular, old-fashioned "fox chase." One swift runner was the "fox;" two or three were "hunters," yelling and blowing horns; but most of the boys were "dogs," and such a set of barking hounds! Grapevine swings and sapping horses admirably served the purpose of the trapeze and gymnasium of later days. The clever forests abounded in "scaly barks," chinquapins, chestnuts, persimmons, beechnuts, gooseberries, and huckle-

berries to gladden the eye and tongue of the school child, whose relish for eating always stands next to that for play. We were also a jolly band of little musicians, and how we could and did sing, especially on our way home! "Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow!" "From Greenland's Icy Mountains;" "How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours!" and many other contemporary songs were sung at the top of our voices, until it seemed to us that if the trumpet had then been blown loud enough to drown our music (?), its peals would have almost reached "Greenland's icy mountains" and "India's coral strand;" yet the hours were by no means "tedious and tasteless." I imagine I can now hear the echo caused by Cumberland Mountain's catching the sound and sending it back to the "Dividing Ridge" whence it started. Talk about happiness! Look among a throng of innocent children, like we were, and you will find nothing else. Why should we have been otherwise? We had no care, except to be careful not to fall and break our milk bottles, which we intended to sink in the bubbling spring until dinner time, and our mothers had long since taught us that if such accidents should happen we should not "grieve over spilt milk." It had never entered our minds that progressive ideas would ever make it possible for children to learn any faster than we; and if any one had spoken to us about such studies as algebra, philosophy, rhetoric, or astronomy, we would have thought they belonged to a post-graduate course, or some other course we had never heard of.

On our way we passed a large, open field, a free pasture for the town cattle. Each prominent member of the society of "milch kine" wore a badge, which we called a "bell," and each child could readily designate the tone of his cow's bell. We called our cow "*Muley*." She was large, red, hornless, and somewhat vicious. I can prove the latter statement by a slight scar on my nose. When she lifted me over the fence one evening, she failed to warn me of the rocks on the other side; but I excuse her now, though I was not willing to do so then. Suffice it to say I am still afraid of a cow without horns. Well, really, I treat all cows with becoming courtesy when I chance to meet them on the street. If they prefer the sidewalk, the middle of the street will answer my purpose, mud or no mud. It seems to me that I could distinguish the clear, sweet tone of old "*Muley's*" bell to-night, were I to hear it among a hundred. It did not sound quite so sweet to me while she was helping me over the fence, however, as it always did in the pasture near the "Lost Schoolhouse." Frequently some of the little boys would drive their cows home as they went from school; then what music we would have—the jingle of cow bells—some of the tones, coarse; some, fine; schoolboys' yells—loud, louder, loudest; schoolgirls' songs—high, higher, highest! No wonder nature took up the chorus and reverberated it from cliff to cliff along the mountain side. Had Walden's Ridge been a little nearer, it would also have shared the pleasure as the songs and shouts of merriment glided over the laughing waters

of the Sequatchie River and threw back kisses at the happy little throng. The sparrow's chirp, the jay's cry, the whip-poor-will's call, the dove's plaintive cooing, the frog's croak, the serpent's hiss, the lion's roar, the panther's scream, the locomotive's whistle, would have had poor showing amidst our noisy throng. Even the teacher sometimes needed much sympathy, especially the last day of the session, when he had to give the school a candy "treat" or receive a blessing—no, a *ducking*. How well I remember the day we chased Mr. Deakens nearly all over the woods, through blackberry patches and jungles of alder, swamp dogwood and hazelnut bushes; made him fall over logs, jump fences; and tried to run him into a large pond! He promised us the "treat." I can now almost see that immense bundle of gay-striped stick candy, which "fairly bewildered and dazzled our eyes" (and mouths) as he kindly divided it among us. These were our "commencement exercises."

Years have glided by, and where—O, where—are those merry lads and lasses? Where is my kind teacher? Where are my schoolmates, my playmates, my classmates? Where are the Eliots, Ootens, Phelps, Smiths, Cains, Hatfields, McDonoughs, Stuarts, Heard, Vaughts, Alleys, Johnsons, Walkers? Their school days are over. Time has scattered them far and near. Many now have large, prosperous families, while others have sipped the dregs from poverty's bowl; some occupy prominent positions in society; some, now sires and matrons, live in the same community (my kind

teacher among that number); but where are the others? Many—O, so many!—have passed over into the land of spirits. And where is the “Lost Schoolhouse?” Echo faintly whispers, “Where?” It is lost to the world now, its charms, incidents, and surroundings living only in the memory of a spared few; but

“ . . . dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood ”

and the sweet memories that still lovingly place me on their downy wings and tenderly carry me back to the little hut in the old sedge field. It served its purpose well. What was learned there was learned to stay—no superficial smattering. The building remained faithful to duty until better ones in the community were ready to take its place. May each of us learn a lesson from this humble little cabin—a lesson of fidelity. May we be faithful to the mission assigned us, so that when our body, “the house we live in,” shall give place to a more durable one and, like the “Lost Schoolhouse,” shall return to dust, we may at least leave pleasant memories for our friends who survive us.

THE OLD PERSIMMON TREE.

If trees could talk, I would call for the autobiography of a certain one I know. It stands between the “Lost Schoolhouse,” in which some of my first school days were happily spent, and the little town in which we then lived. If it had a tongue and language to tell its own story, I am sure

we would gladly listen. It would tell of eclipses, of cyclones, of droughts, of waterspouts, of snowstorms, of earthquakes, of "wars and rumors of wars," until our minds would grow weary of its eloquence; then it would give rest to our mental strain by coming down to common things—by telling us of the thousands of busy bees and many-tinted butterflies that have been fed from the sweetness of its blossoms, of the many birds of gay plumage and sweet voice that have perched among its branches, and of the many happy children who have partaken of its luscious fruit.

Its age I cannot tell, but I know it has been "yielding fruit after its kind" ever since, and even before, the Civil (uncivil) War of the sixties. Both armies passed almost under its branches, for it stands beside the public road they traveled in passing through the valley. It showed no partiality, was no prejudiced politician, was "no respecter of persons," hence gave of its sweet fruit alike to the "boys" of the blue and of the gray who at different times were encamped around it. Hundreds of its neighbor trees were cut down to make fires under the "camp kettles" and to warm the aching feet of "somebody's darlings" far away from home and mother. It was present when the glad tidings of peace joyfully resounded throughout the shady vale, gladdening the hearts of Sequatchie's noble daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers by indicating a safe return of their dear ones who had not met death on the blood-stained battlefield. Since then many other hundreds of trees have been felled by the woodman's ax to warm the inhabitants and

cook their food or to feed the sawmill's greedy tooth; some have been uprooted by the tornado's breath; fields have been cleared near it on either side; but, somehow, *it* has been spared—why, we cannot tell; but we could easily tell why *we* would spare it: as a cherished relic of olden times as well as for its usefulness.

There is something peculiar about this tree. Its fruit, luscious and abundant, has never been known, I believe, to produce a seed. When, as a tiny schoolgirl, I trudged along to the "Lost Schoolhouse," this tree, then small, but fruitful, was exactly on our way; and during the season that 'possums, persimmons, and "fatty bread" were abundant we children showed this tree great respect by daily stopping and cheerfully partaking of its offered hospitality; and I well remember one thing that added to the interest was searching for seed, one man having offered a dollar for one that was well matured. It became rumored that this tree produced seedless fruit, which increased the curiosity to investigate. More than thirty years have passed since the close of the war between the States; a reign of "peace on earth, good will toward men," has blessed our beloved America; but, judging by appearance, not much peace has this tree enjoyed. Though willing to give up all its treasures as fast as matured, the greedy passer-by has impatiently and ruthlessly beaten, bruised, and scarred it for its very work's sake. The hand of persecution has fallen heavily upon it; the tooth of time has gnawed in it great holes. Seven years ago, while visiting the little town near by, my husband

and I made a special call to see my good old friend, the persimmon tree. Need I have been surprised at not recognizing this dear old chum of the long ago? Neither did it seem to fully remember me; for when introduced by one of my lady friends after a separation of a quarter of a century, it only bowed its aged head modestly in the gentle breeze and said not a word. Who can wonder at its not recognizing me? I do not look exactly like I did when, as a wee schoolgirl, I wended my way to the "Lost Schoolhouse." My face is not so fair as then; my hair does not hang in black ringlets around my neck as it did when, at the age of seven or eight years, I skipped along on "light, fantastic toe," with lunch bucket, a pint bottle of sweet milk (to be placed in the cold waters of the bubbling spring until dinner), McGuffey's second reader, and Webster's blue-backed speller.

The hand of progress has wrought wonderful works in that part of the country, as shown by the railroads and many new towns which have been built in the interest of the immense wealth of iron and coal; but what of our persimmon tree? Like an unshaken crag on a mountain side, it has braved the storms of these many years; and though dingy, scarred, and bruised, it stands firm and continues faithful to duty. The Savior's eulogy on the humble woman beautifully applies to this tree: "She hath done what she could."

As the tree casts off its foliage to battle with the wintry blasts, lest the additional weight should overcome it, so man

must lay aside many of his superfluous ideas and habits in order to successfully battle with the rough conventionalities of life. This tree gives fruit to its cruel oppressors. What a lesson to us—not “ railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing!” It “overcomes evil with good;” for the harder it is beaten, the more freely it showers its blessings on the earth. Sometimes the harder Christians are persecuted, the more they bless the world with spiritual fruit; and “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Many trees will not give up their fruit unless it is beaten off, but will cling to it until it “dries up” and becomes useless. There is a class of so-called “Christians” who cling with great tenacity to what little spiritual fruit they possess until it is “frailed” off with rods of persecution; then it is like the seedless persimmon—very good to the taste and sight, but with no inclination whatever to propagate good fruits to benefit others. They desire to be fruitful, but persuade themselves that charity belongs at home. The rays of their spiritual lamp shine brightly enough at home (under the bushel), but scarcely ever reach the hearthstone of a poor, dejected neighbor, or even the church house, unless the pulpit is that day to be occupied by some great or flowery speaker. To the Sunday school and prayer meeting their lamp is a “dark lantern,” with the dark side foremost so it cannot light their way.

The reason some church members do not benefit any one by their fruit is because they are so much like “other trees” (like the world) that no fruit is expected of them; and

hence they are not beaten, not persecuted. Listen! The sure way to keep from being "persecuted for Christ's sake" is to walk hand in hand with the world; keep your light hidden, and no one will once suspect that you are a child of God.

The tree we are considering is now very large, old, weather-beaten, rough, and ugly; but pleasant associations clustering around it make it still attractive. A person may be scarred, rough-featured, tanned, and homely; yet to the eyes and hearts of love he can be fair and beautiful still, made so by agreeable disposition and continued usefulness. This tree top is somewhat out of proper shape, limbs having died and fallen therefrom. In old age the mind, supported by a feeble, afflicted body, may lose many of its most fascinating charms and not be so well balanced as in days gone by. When this persimmon tree shall become too infirm to yield fruit, it will by some be cherished for old times' sake; when a good and useful person has become too old and feeble to do active labor, he will still be loved, cherished, and tenderly cared for on account of good done in the past and for the sake of sweet associations. As an old, reliable "landmark," the aged Christian stands, as it were, with outstretched arms, one hand pointing back over a long and well-spent life, the other hand pointing forward across the rapid river to a blissful eternity, where the hand of infinite love is sweetly beckoning: "Come home."

Later.—A message reaches me that this famous old tree has finished its work—it is dead. A piece of its bark now



lies on my table—sent to me as a memento, like a lock of hair from a departed friend. Two years ago (1900) it yielded fruit as usual, then died with the century. It faithfully served its community until time placed a heavy finger on its veins and caused the life current to forever cease to flow. Long will it live in the memory of a “spared few” of the sons and daughters of the fair Sequatchie Vale, and from it may we all impress the lesson of faithfulness.

MRS. SMITH'S CHIP BASKET.

Mrs. SMITH has a chip basket. It is a homely, commonplace little article; but is right useful. It contains large chips and small chips; long chips and short chips; new chips and old chips; thick, broad, straight chips and thin, narrow, crooked chips; rough, ugly, dusty chips and smooth, pretty, clean chips. This basket makes a poor show, but it has an advantage: not very much is expected of it. Some of its contents are very good, but in too small pieces to amount to much; and when she begins to take them out, she is utterly astonished at the great quantity of trash in the basket.

This queer chip basket is Mrs. Smith's mind, filled with all sorts of trash—nothing of much importance. The cause of this odd accumulation is her varied experience—her short-lived employments. It is somewhat after this fashion: Mrs. Smith has a large number of tissue-paper patterns to place together in complicated form. She is arranging them on the bed very cautiously, with studied care,

precision, and thought. It is difficult to place them just right, and much depends upon her doing so. Now she has more than half of them properly adjusted—notches to fit. Some one suddenly raises the window; a puff of wind blows all the patterns off the bed. Woman disappointed, time wasted; the work must be done over. But—lo!—some of the most important patterns have been blown into the fire—are gone, and cannot be replaced. (So much for that chip.)

She begins to write an important letter; is interrupted once, twice, thrice. There! the train has gone; it is too late to send it. (Another chip!) She concentrates her thoughts on a certain theme and tries to formulate ideas which she hopes will be upbuilding to moral and spiritual character; but by the time the “muses” begin to settle thick around her, some foreign element “shoos” them away, and they refuse to return. (What a chip!)

Now, do not begin to ask who Mrs. Smith is; you are well acquainted with her. She is your neighbor—and a good one, too. You remember her husband passed into the land of spirits two and one-half years ago, leaving this delicate little woman to tread life's uneven path without his strong and willing arm to lean upon. So she is having a hard time trying to make a comfortable living for four little children, to rear and educate them properly, and has tried several avocations. True, she has many kindred scattered around, who seem in deep sympathy with her and help her considerably—that is, they come to see her often and help make way with what little she earns by daily toil.

When she manages to get a new supply of provisions, they somehow (or some other how) right then manage to be without and thoughtfully borrow (?) part of *hers*, lest they spoil on her hands. They dislike to see food wasted these "hard times," you know; so they help her take care of hers—in a hurry. She decides to take a few paying boarders, thinking they will be more profitable in a pecuniary sense than her nonpaying ones; but the number in the nonpaying class so far exceeds the other class that the profit is devoured in the ratio of "sixteen to one"—sixteen consumers to one provider. Strange to say, she gives up the boarding business as unprofitable. (A great, big, rusty chip!)

She next tries school-teaching, and hires some one to keep house and take care of her children through the day. During her absence her "kinsfolk and acquaintance" feel it their special duty, as well as pleasure, to see closely after "the poor, lonely little children, whose dear mother is off working for them;" so several of them come daily, and often make it convenient to dine with the new housekeeper, who, of course, must treat them right and prepare the best meal possible, because they are relatives and dear friends of "Mrs. Smith, the school-teacher." Others come late in the afternoon, and decide to wait until after supper, so they will get to see Mrs. Smith and hear from her school. They sincerely hope and pray she is getting along nicely, and feel *so sorry* she has to work so hard to make a living for her poor little orphan children. "Poor woman! She deserves

so much credit." And credit is all she gets from these consuming sympathizers. (More chips!) But the said Mrs. Smith sees clearly that the overmuch sympathy will not only swallow her salary, but will also spoil her children; so she decides to select some employment that will enable her to stay at home with them. She has been reared to work, and can earn an honorable living for her little family if not interfered with. She tacks up her sign, "Dressmaker," and soon has plenty to do and gives general satisfaction. In a little while, however (as soon as her work becomes known as first-class), these selfsame "beloved friends" and others just as dear bring her more work than she can do. Of course she is not expected to charge her own dear "kin-folks" anything; could not think of doing that—is only too glad to accommodate them; and will work for her neighbors at half price. Remember, these are the very individuals who sneered when she put up her "Dressmaker" sign; they said she could not make dresses "fitten for a cook to wear." (A three-cornered chip!) Sometimes the poor woman becomes confused and nervous, and feels like her brain is turning around like a whirligig or flutter mill, and that it is as insignificant as a basket of chips.

She now has her lap full of sewing, carefully placed as she wants it. The "baby boy" suddenly screams in the back yard, as if he had cut off his toe. She, motherlike, dashes her work on a chair and runs, finding that the old hen has robbed the child of his biscuit; then she returns to her work, which must be finished in limited time (persons

are often very exacting of a dressmaker). Where is her thimble? Her needle is lost; her scissors are lying on the hearth, with the point broken off; her spool of silk thread has rolled into the fire. She must call little Sallie to run hastily to the store for more thread. Sallie, unfortunately, has a leak in her memory; brings white silk thread instead of blue; must go back up town—woefully against her will, of course. But the lady is waiting for her dress, and Mrs. Smith must complete it before the evening train. Sallie loiters a little while in town, looking anxiously at the beautiful bisque dolls and lace fans in that large show window, wondering what rich man's little daughters will soon happily possess them; she then returns with the thread, and her mother's work is eagerly resumed.

“Rin-g-ng-ng!” goes the doorbell.

“Run to the door, Sallie!”

Sallie runs. “It is Mrs. Haste, mamma. She wants to borrow the latest designer. She is in a big hurry, and cannot come in.”

“Well, take it to her, dearie.”

“Good morning, Mrs. Smith! O no! Keep your seat; I cannot stay a minute. I hate to bother you, but am worried to death about my new dress and want you to advise me a little. Tell me all about how to make it; you can tell me in a minute; then I must go. I must not take a minute of your time, for I cannot imagine how you can possibly get that work done to-day, anyway; but I just *must* have my dress done by Sunday, for I have no dress fit to wear to

church, and have already stayed away two Sundays on account of not having any. I want something new and stylish, something to correspond with my new hat. O, you just ought to see that! It is perfectly lovely—the cutest thing, and so becoming; but I have had it two weeks and could not wear it for want of a new dress to correspond. If I do not hurry, it will go out of style before I get to wear it, after all.”

Exactly forty-seven minutes are consumed in planning, showing, and discussing Bon-Ton and Buttrick styles; then, after the usual womanly “Much obliged, good-by, come to see me;” “I will, you come back;” “Thank you, I will, you be sure to come, good-by,” Mrs. Haste takes her departure. (Blessed chip!)

Poor Mrs. Smith, wondering what gave her such a horrible nightmare, resumes her work with wearied form and anxious expression. She is now making the machine fairly fly.

“Tingle-ingle-ingle!”

“Telephone! Run, Sallie!”

“Tingle-ingle-ingle-ing-ing-n-g!”

“Run to the 'phone, Sallie! Sal-lie-e-e! 'Phone, Sallie!”

But Sallie has skipped off to take care of Bob, and Mrs. Smith has to answer it herself.

“Halloo, Mrs. Smith! This is your friend, Mrs. Wise. I just want to know if I can borrow your very latest sleeve pattern, and if you can send it over by your little girl, as I

haven't a single soul to send for it and need it *right now*. I dislike to trouble you, for I know how you are rushed with work to-day; but you are always so good you do not mind doing a little thing like that; and then Sallie—dear little soul!—it is only fun for her to run over here and back.”

After nervously listening to a ten-minute jabbering over the 'phone from a woman whose intellect poorly harmonizes with her name, Mrs. Smith hunts up the pattern, then Sallie; then she must take care of “Baby Bob” and try to sew until the pattern is carried across town to Mrs. Wise. In the meantime she answers the 'phone four times, feeds two tramps, and is entertained (?) by a “picture man,” a traveling optician, and a book agent trying to sell a book on “Child Training” written by an old maid. Sweet little Sallie, childlike, lets her memory leak again; forgets that her mamma urged her to “come back as quick as possible;” stops, both going and coming, to gaze a while at the coveted treasures in that wonderful show window, each time spying new beauties which gain her admiration and consume her time. But she returns and takes charge of little Bob again. The older children have not returned from school.

“Rap, rap, rap!”

“Some one at the kitchen door! Run, Sallie!”

“Gude ebenin’! Say, is dat ar dress done? Ole miss say she has ter start to de train in half hour, and has ter w’ar dat very frock; dat dis am three times she’s sent fur

it, an' can't wait a minit longer. Who-ee! Ize run so fas' my breath's gone back on me."

So Uncle Simon stands at the door puffing and blowing, mopping his face with his old bandanna, and fanning with his broad-brimmed straw head shelter until the last two hooks and eyes are sewed on the dress and the bundle is hurriedly pinned up and handed to him.

"Gude ebenin', missus! But, say. Ize 'bout ter furgit to tell yer. Ole miss sed tell yer yer'd haf ter wait on her fur de money tell she gits back; dat it 'ud take eb'ry cent she had—an' mo', too—to make dat big trip to Wash'ton, Nu Ork, Niger Falls, Buff'lo, and all dem big places to see de big show; but dat she'd pay yer jist as soon as she gits back home, ef she has any money lef'; dat it's a good debt eben ef it's neber paid." And off goes Uncle Simon in a hurry.

Somehow, by this time Mrs. Smith has a kind of wearied look. Do you wonder that her mind is like a chip basket?

UNEQUALLY YOKED.

I.

CHILDREN, be quiet, please, and listen to a short story founded on truth. Little Master Idleby and little Miss Domore were near neighbors in their baby days, he only a few months her senior. "Idleby" was only a pet name, or nickname, being a contraction of "idle boy," and was at first applied with hope of reforming the child of his

thoughtless, idle habits, through disgust. In early childhood these two began to show evidence of unusual attachment for each other. In school they preferred sitting side by side, reading from the same book, standing by each other at the blackboard, eating their noonday lunches together, and being partners in the various games. Teachers and students wondered at their apparent congeniality, for they were entirely different types of humanity. He, though fully her equal in general mental capacity, was lacking in resolution, as was shown by his being entirely willing to receive assistance from her ready hand and mind instead of preparing his lessons by means of his own brain, which was stupid only from want of exercise.

As they fast climb into their middle teens, seek an opportunity, if you please, and peep into their private home lives. Watch, listen! Perhaps you may ascertain, on general principles, why the boy is willing to receive help on his lessons; also why the girl is willing and thoroughly capacitated to give the coveted aid. First, visit the little girl's home. Go early. You find her up and doing, as her name indicates. She is bright and happy, busily helping her mother with the morning work and singing a merry tune.

"Now, daughter, go, get ready for school," enjoins the mother.

"No, mamma; I want to *do more* of the work first, so you can rest. You look tired, and I must not leave too much for you to do."

Next you are peeping into the boy's home. Now, Idle-

by's father died three years ago, and among his last words to this boy were: "Son, be good to your delicate mother. Help her with her work all you can, and see that she does not have a hard time. The other children are all too small to help her now. Be quick; be industrious; *be a man!* I repeat: always be good to your mother." Now you may see how the dying father's admonition was carried out.

"Wake up, Idleby, my son! Get up quick and help your mamma! You know we have no cook now, and I am not at all well. Make a fire in the stove and draw some water right quick, please."

"All right, mamma!"

The aching, feeble woman hurriedly arranges her toilet and hastens to the kitchen. All is silence there. She goes back to the boy's room door. "Rap, tap, tap, rap!"

"Son, are you 'most ready?"

No reply.

"Idleby, Idleby!"

"Heh, ma'am!"

"Make haste, boy! I am waiting for my fire and water."

"O, mamma, I'm so sleepy! (I don't see why everybody don't keep a cook.)"

Back to the kitchen the mother goes. She makes the fire, draws water, prepares breakfast; but not to the terror or disappointment of the boy (he has permitted her to do this before). Aroused by the breakfast bell, he gently stretches himself, yawns, gets up reluctantly, dresses slowly,

yawns frequently, and manages to find himself in the dining room in time to severely criticise the fare and ask if there are "any more warm biscuits."

After breakfast he kindly asks his mother if she wants anything from town. Somehow, the average boy does not seriously object to going "up town." She tells him she wants several things from the grocery store, and also the mail, just as soon as she can get them. She then hands him the list and a basket, and urges that he shall hurry back, lest he be late at school.

"All right, ma'am!" and, scarcely waiting to receive orders, off he darts toward town.

His name right now seems to be losing its significance as a contraction of "idle boy." Six hot biscuits, three cakes of sausage, butter and molasses in proportion, and two cups of strong, hot coffee have aroused him from his lethargy. He is wide awake, strong, and active now, and can almost fly to town. He is always quick enough at starting; his trouble comes afterwards. Soon he spies a blue jay in somebody's cherry tree and stops to cast a stone or two at it (and to sample the cherries). Then he sees Jim Baddy and Jack Wild chasing a rabbit; and, of course, common courtesy demands that he shall assist them. The rabbit soon disappears, and so does the boy; the latter, toward town with rapid steps, for his mother is in a hurry, you know. Mr. Toad hops out before him in a friendly way, and Idleby stops to tease him a while (idle boys like to tease). Next, he sees a toy balloon ascending on the wings of the wind.

He stops and watches it until it appears a mere speck in the sky, like a black pin head.

Town at last; groceries and mail secured; a few innocent games played—parcheesi, crokinole, logomachy; a friendly cigarette; a little social chat; another cigarette.

“Boys, I must go home; mother is in a *big hurry* for these things. Good-by! See you later.”

Homeward bound he swiftly glides, with conscience light as his brain. This is not the first time he has treated his mother thus; so the strokes of his conscience fall less heavily than they once did. But on he goes, hurrying homeward.

“Just look! I’ll declare! They are playing baseball, and I just must see that. It’s a test game between our town boys and the ‘nine’ from Idlewild, and I wouldn’t miss it for a dollar. I’ll put this basket of things right down here by this tree, where nothing will disturb it. My arm is tired of carrying it, anyway. I will go and watch the boys play a little while—just long enough to rest my arm—then take the things right on to my mother. She will only think it took the clerk a long time to count the eggs and weigh the sugar.”

Off he darts to the ball ground.

II.

Moments unconsciously multiply and step back, until two long hours mark the time of his watching. The game is ended; “our nine” are miserably whipped (unfairly, of

course); Idleby, sorry he witnessed the defeat and very angry with the victorious opponents, resumes his journey home by way of the tree where he deposited his basket.

"Just look where the sun is! It is now after ten o'clock. I have missed my rhetoric lesson, sure; but I don't care. I didn't know it, anyway; and it is no advantage to me. I never expect to be a school-teacher. It will soon be time for my algebra, and I haven't looked at it. The teacher--but I know what I'll do: I'll sit right down by my girl, Miss Domore, and copy her examples, like I did yesterday. Then I'll know they are correct, for she never makes a mistake."

He arrives at the tree. What a comical sight! What a spectacle! Four dozen eggs, a dollar's worth of sugar, three packages of soda, two ounces of pulverized black pepper, one ounce of cayenne, a dozen bananas, a dozen cucumber pickles, a package of chocolate, a package of cocoa-nut, three bunches of celery, several letters and newspapers—all mixed on the ground in strange proportions; all torn up, broken up, mashed up, chewed up, and a goodly portion "swallowed up;" while two large neighborly hogs, puffing and blowing, are still busy, triumphantly mixing the ingredients with their noses, which are thoroughly white-washed with the soda and sugar, which novel paint is "there to stay," being securely glued by the egg mixture, giving it a golden tint, while the pepper will not soon permit their noses to become chilled. The friendly swine have, indeed, "wasted his substance with riotous living;" yet

they appear more thoughtful than he, for they seem to realize that it is time the ingredients were being mixed; in fact, it is entirely too late for his mother to use them as she desired. This being his birthday, she intended surprising him with a splendid dining and having a score or more of his special friends to be at his home awaiting his arrival from school at noon; but her plans are all disappointed by his delay. This is but a fair sample of his happenings and mishappenings between the cradle and manhood. He is prompt and fast at one thing, however; that is time killing.

Years move on. The characteristics and habits of their childhood cling to the young man and young woman; and, regardless of the wide difference, this couple become ardent admirers, true lovers; and, decidedly against the better judgment of their parents and friends, before reaching their majority, Mr. Idleby and Miss Domore are united in marriage. Mysterious notion!

It is dolefully whispered around: "Unequally yoked!" "She has driven her ducks to a dry market;" "What a downward step!" "Didn't she manifest queer taste?" Her only apology is that she loved him. No doubt this is true, but could she not have learned to love a man worthy of her? Marriage without love should never be, but it is an erroneous idea of some young persons that the "first love"—the premature love of youth—must *never* be canceled. In some instances "first love" proves genuine, but in many cases the "ideal" of childhood is far from being the ideal of the same mind when mature. It is a serious

mistake when persons marry having dispositions and ideas so different they can never be harmonized. Such can never be congenial companions; hence they can never be really happy, prosperous, or useful.

From a desirable home and from the advantages and luxuries of her girlhood Mr. Idleby takes his bride to the dingy hut in which she is to be the humble queen. No king will rule there, but an indulged, spoiled, indolent man will "boss." But he often told her he would put away his childish habits when he married; and she believed him, of course. Like too many other good resolutions, his were made of weak material; so they soon break, and he naturally drifts back into the same old channel—has to be awakened two or three times every morning, dresses slowly, yawns as in boyhood, and goes to breakfast late, but in plenty of time to remind his wife that the biscuits are getting cold, the steak is tough, the butter is old, and the coffee is not half settled. He also gently (?) reminds her that his "good old mother" always kept his breakfast warm when he happened to sleep a little late. Occasionally he arouses her early, says he must have soon breakfast on account of his work, and faintly adds, "If I can help you, just call me;" then he gives vent to a dismal groan, turns over, and "drops off to sleep" again. As a rule, when a man says that, it is equivalent to saying, "Do without me if you can;" for he knows she is not apt to call him.

Never were two persons more unequally yoked; and, what makes it seem so mysterious, they *knew* they were en-

tirely different, having been reared together. She is quick, practical, skillful, economical, tidy, industrious, intellectual, refined, cultured; he is slow, sensitive, pettish, and requires continual petting, and, although extravagant, is very untidy in appearance. (Is it not strange that those who spend the most money on their toilet are often farthest from being neat?) If he goes on errands of speed, he forgets when to come back. He does not forget to find fault, however, though he is a very poor provider. He wants her to cook exactly what *he* likes best and exactly the way *he* wants it cooked—every time. He is a chronic old grumbler. Occupying his favorite corner in the little fireside circle, he smokes and chews and spits, and spits and chews and smokes, before eating, after eating, and between meals, to the thorough disgust of any tidy, refined woman. In the strictest sense of the term, he “boards with his wife,” but boards on credit. He spends enough money for tobacco to clothe her in silk, yet reminds her of the poverty of his pocketbook whenever she asks for fifty cents to have her last year’s hat made over. He is sensitive as a mimosa brier, and “flies to pieces” as quick as a touch-me-not. He should be labeled, “Handle with Care;” for if you do not always approach him with greatest tenderness, his feelings will be ruffled and project like the quills of an angry porcupine.

She has rare musical attainments, and there was a time when he appeared passionately fond of music, but since their marriage he has given her no encouragement what-

ever in this respect; so, like most of married women, she has entirely given it up.

They are fully as unequally yoked in religious sentiment and practice. She finds sweet comfort in the precious promises of God's word, and, though a busy little woman, finds plenty of time for scriptural study and general reading. He, though a noted idler, a regular loafer, has no time for Bible study, and can never become interested in the "old book," anyway. It is always the busy person who finds time for mental development; an idler has no time for anything, sees no merit in any book. This man becomes absorbed in some flimsy "ism;" will not investigate the merits or demerits of anything, but either drifts with the current or takes some nonsensically-stubborn position, and stands like the rock of Gibraltar, regardless of sense, reason, or revelation.

Death will call for this couple by and by. She will be ready. She stays in the fold of safety, is always ready. He has started to get ready several times; at least he has said he knew it was his duty to become a Christian, did not intend to die out of the church, and was thinking about getting ready to make his arrangements to consider the matter as soon as he was good enough and could finish his work and find time to read the Bible through and learn his duty. Poor man! He is so very slow his friends fear he will postpone his preparation until the angel doorkeeper will announce, "Too late!" and then close the door.

Are you acquainted with this couple?

III.

"Well, have you heard 'the latest?'"

"No; what is it?"

"Why, Miss Whimsey is married, at last!"

"Who in the world? I certainly feel sorry for the man who has assumed that burden. Poor fellow! He will have his hands full. Pray tell me who is the unfortunate man."

"Mr. Willing Indulgence."

"I do wonder! Poor man! Well, his name sounds like he might have the will if he only has the power. I doubt his being equal to the emergency; but it is his lookout, not mine. I am glad of that."

Now, Miss Pettie Whimsical has for a long time been a fruitful subject of neighborhood gossip. Being the baby and only daughter in a large family, she, unfortunately, was indulged in babyhood and girlhood until indulgence ceased to be a virtue. It is no longer a virtue when the receiver ceases to appreciate it—begins to expect more and more, to consider indulgence nothing more than her rights.

Imagine you are spending a night with that family and sleeping, or trying to sleep, in a room adjoining the family room when "baby" is only a few months old. At noon of night the priceless jewel awakes and begins her usual tune, pitched in a high key.

"By-e-e-e-e!" sings the mother, half asleep; but her voice does not harmonize with the baby's voice; it is in a different key.

"Father knows what his little girl wants," utters the deep, heavy voice of paternal affection; and he quickly arises and lights the lamp, for nothing else will please her.

When she grows tired of looking at the light, her papa or mamma (this time her mamma) must get up and walk with her; for she is the baby girl, you know—the "firstest and onliest" one—and it will never do to let her cry. She likes walking, and is now all smiles; but even mothers become tired of walking after a while on a cold night. "Rock, rock, rock!" goes the little crib. "By-o-baby!" sings the tired, sleepy mother; for baby must not cry, you know. "Swing, swing!" goes the little hammock; but she does not want to swing this time; she wants to be walked. Up jumps papa and puts her in her pretty buggy. The little old cradle sufficed for the boys, but they were boys; she is a girl, and must have all the up-to-date conveniences. He draws the buggy back and forth, back and forth, violently across the floor, making a loud and lonesome roar. (Who *could* sleep in the next room?) Even papa is growing weary of the fun. The child pitches her voice higher, still higher.

"Hush! Go to sleep, you little imp!"

"Now, papa!" says his wife.

Then he slightly coughs, twice only. "Alice, you will have to get up and do something with this child; she needs killing. She will give me a spell of la grippe. I have already coughed my throat sore. I'm going to bed."

The poor mother, with that dreadful headache caused by

exposure and frequent loss of sleep, has been coughing and sneezing for an hour, and is now too hoarse to sing "Rock-a-by," but gets up again—aching head, aching side, aching back, aching heart—and again walks with the baby; while the little creature "coos" and looks at her with sparkling eyes, wide-awake as a sunflower. She is delighted while her mother walks. Beholding a crystal tear drop that has left the baby's eye and is resting in a dimple on her little cheek, the mother's heart is touched again, and again she decides her treasure must not cry. With aching limbs and aching frame, the walking continues, until the infant, weary of waking, goes to sleep. The mother returns to her bed, not much against her will. She is tired enough to "sleep without rocking;" so is the visitor in the adjoining room. Why all this disturbance? Simply because baby is spoiled.

Swift-winged time speeds on. The little girl is so badly spoiled that even her friends can scarcely tolerate her. The neighbors dread to see her coming. She is into every conceivable mischief—pulling things out of machine drawers and off of dressers; overturning chairs; scratching furniture; whining; fretting; interrupting the talkers; calling for this, that, and the other thing to eat; soiling things with sticky, greasy fingers; then off into the yard, breaking vines and pulling up flowers; back into the house for another buttered biscuit, then water, then cake and pickle—until the poor mother is worried and the neighbor visited heaves a sigh of relief at their departure, though she loved the child's mother and always gave her a hearty welcome. It begins

to be a neighborhood saying: "O, my! Yonder comes Mrs. —, and she's bringing that unruly child. Why didn't she leave her at home? Mrs. — is a good, sweet woman; but—la, la!—that horrid Whimsey!"

Erelong Pettie is a "grown-up" schoolgirl. A home-spoiled child usually gives the teacher trouble, and Whimsey is no exception to the rule. Regarding herself as a privileged character, she wants to be petted and humored in every whim, and thinks she can break the rules with absolute impunity. Miss Pettie Whimsical must not be reprimanded for anything, for she has always had her own way. Her parents and brothers have always seemed to regard it as a special privilege to wait on her and grant her every desire; so they have humored her until she is very exacting, and would be miserable if denied even a slight request. They are by no means wealthy, but have a nice income, or she would have almost sent them to the poorhouse before this time, she is so extravagant. They worked hard for what they have, and it was a pity for them to waste it on her, unless she appreciated it more.

When her parents started out on their wedded existence, they were very poor indeed. She had nothing, and he had to borrow money to buy his wedding outfit. When he would speak of marrying, his mother would, in a jovial way, sing to him:

"As you have nothing and your girl has nothing,
Don't be in a hurry to wed;
For nothing and nothing together make nothing,
And nothing won't buy your bread."

But ultimately this situation was no disgrace and no disadvantage to them. Both having been reared poor, they did not expect much in the way of indulgence, and were willing to work hard and live economically—about the happiest condition in which people can live, after all. It was often said she was the most graceful woman at the washtub in that community, and that her songs sounded sweeter when accompanied by the gentle music of the washboard than at any other time. For many years they lived in a humble rented cottage—he, working for a very small salary; she, with her own industrious and willing hands, faithfully and smoothly running all the home machinery and carefully training the young heart tendrils of an interesting family of boys. Their lives of uprightness and Christian consecration won for them the confidence and esteem of their fellow-men, and it was predicted that they should some time see better days. Little by little, by honest endeavor, they arose from poverty. He attained to special prominence as a citizen, while she was always one of those sweet, amiable, refined, self-sacrificing characters that are loved and admired by all. Their financial promotion did not promote (?) them to indolence and laziness, as is too often the case in these latter days. Persons properly reared to hard work under the “old constitution” are not very liable to drift into a state of chronic do-nothingness. This couple, having themselves realized the sting of poverty, have always fully sympathized with the poor; and, not content with only saying to the half-clothed and hungry, “Depart in

peace, be ye warmed and filled," they have manifested that sympathy in a more substantial way. They have given liberally of their means for benevolent purposes, also for the upbuilding of the Master's work, and, while blessing others, have themselves been greatly blessed. By skillful management and continued industry they have secured a very desirable home, and have been able to give all their children a very good, solid, practical education. Their sons, having inherited a goodly portion of their parents' energy and skill, are among our most useful, influential, and highly-respected citizens. The only objection urged against this family is their sad mistake in rearing this little girl the way they have. To them was intrusted the beautiful lump of clay, out of which they were expected to mold the best possible image. It was their duty to use the best advantages they had to the best effect they could; then if the image should be marred, they could not be censured for the failure. Instead of acting thus, they designed a "wall flower;" and she did not resent—was easily molded into that shape. She has been a "parlor boarder" all her life, demanding what she pleased, feeling confident from experience that her demands would receive prompt attention. She has exalted ideas of life, however, and there is not a stigma on her moral record. There is no discount in her appearance. She certainly dresses elegantly, is a beautiful young lady, intelligent, and the very embodiment of grace. She has had the best advantages, and has many rare accomplishments; but they are seriously clouded by that dreadful disposition—

irritable, sensitive, exacting, and unpleasant in various other ways. If any little thing goes contrary to her notions, she almost drifts off into Bunyan's "slough of despond"—pouts, sulks, cries, makes herself miserable, and drives every smile from the household. She scorns the very idea of work; says the world owes her a living (or some man does), and there are plenty of persons to work without her. She would rather read novels any day; so she spends much of her time reading them, thus filling her bright mind with trashy literature, feeding it with froth. Her mother long ago quit asking her to assist in the home work, for she was never ready to help, and manifested such a spirit of unwillingness as to make even her pretended assistance a drawback instead of a relief. Is it not astonishing that the over-indulged child always shows the least gratitude? Whimsey has always seemed to consider herself under special obligations to "boss" the family, then criticise their work. She would keep strictly aloof from the kitchen and dining room until the meal was prepared by her mother, then go in abruptly, look around scornfully, and say: "Well, we have nothing at all to eat to-day, sure; I thought you would have"—so and so.

Like many others of Adam's race, Whimsey has spent more time studying about what she wanted than thanking for what she already had. Notice it when and where you will, and you will ascertain that, as a rule, the member in every family who criticises most severely, dictates most lavishly, and complains most uncompromisingly if his

whims are not granted is the one who does the least of the work and defrays the least in the family expenses. It is almost as bad in this respect in the natural family as in the great spiritual family, the church. In each the grumbler or fault-finder is the "parlor boarder."

Poor Mr. Willing Indulgence! I fear he will want to appeal to "the powers that be" before long to have his name changed to "Tired-of-it." He does not know her yet like I do. He never heard of her until that grand barbecue here about three months ago, but says her captivating eyes, bewitching smiles, soft and sweet voice, and placid countenance were too much for him; and he decided then and there to win her hand and heart, if possible. I'll never tell him how she has been petted and spoiled nor how she came by (earned) her names, "Pettie" and "Whimsey." I'll let him have the fun of finding it out.

IV.

Six weeks have passed. The couple have returned from their tour, and have gone to their beautiful home which he bought and furnished in grand style before their marriage. He had Mrs. Goodlady and Miss Tidywise (elegant women) to assist him in selecting and arranging the furniture, telling them he did not want them to consider the money question any item at all. He said that he had plenty of that; that he expected to marry but once; and that he wanted the home as nearly as possible worthy of the beautiful bird he was going to put into it, wanted it fitted up to

suit the taste and convenience of the greatest girl in the wide, wide world—the “just one girl.” When they intimated that possibly he had extravagant ideas, he said he did not want to be extravagant, thought that was entirely wrong, but had long since learned that the “best is cheapest” in many instances; that there was no economy in buying “common” furniture, neither any “fad” which would soon look out of style; so he wanted everything attractive, “up to date,” and durable.

Miss Truthful was there yesterday, and she says their home is “awfully nice, perfectly lovely;” that from kitchen to parlor everything is arranged with exquisite taste; and the finest piano—whe-e-e! Having plenty of money, he wanted to give his pretty bride a happy surprise. I intend calling on her to-morrow just to hear her unjust criticisms on the house and its furnishings. If she is pleased with anything, it will be the first time. I have known her all her life. She is nothing but a pet, a spoiled baby. Poor man! He will regret spending all that money in less than a year. Do you hear?

“Good morning, Mrs. Indulgence! I have come to present my congratulations. I have wanted to call on you ever since you began housekeeping. I was so hungry to see your lovely home. Indeed, you were a lucky miss to be presented with such a home, and it so splendidly furnished, too. The location is charming; everybody says it is by far the most desirable in town.”

“ Well, y-e-s; the house does right well, I suppose, for beginners; but it is not planned at all according to my taste, is so inconvenient and miserably ugly. The rooms that are plastered are as white as snow. They make me think of ghosts every time I enter them. I like the plastering slightly tinted. Then all that highly-embossed and ingrain paper in the other rooms—fine indeed, but I do not like the colors; they do not harmonize with the various tints in my fine paintings. As to the location, I think it is perfectly awful; would rather have any other lot in town. It will all do to begin with, though; but I always said that when I married I would have a nice home at first, if I never did afterwards. You know that young folks have high aspirations. They have exalted ideas of life and a perfect mania for elegant homes. Almost anything will do for older people; they have had their day, and it is nothing more than their duty to see that their children have a good time; but it is the strangest thing to me that most parents act as if they want their children to begin with nothing, as they did, and work hard for all they expect to have. I would like to know what they want with what they have laid up, except to give to their children. As children grow up, they respect their parents’ pocketbook much more than their authority. Nothing can please a son or a daughter more than to play at random with father’s purse string. This is the favorite toy; and when deprived of it, what further use— I—I—I mean I do not see why parents will not always grant this pleasant little privilege. It keeps children in

such good humor. There is nothing they enjoy more. I believe in young people having a good time, and money is just what can give it. It takes lots of it, though; and, say (don't you tell him that I said it; I have told him often enough), I would never have married the man I did had it not been for his wealth. He is not a bit handsome, and I never could love him like I did his rival, Mr. —; but how I do love his pocketbook! He has money in half a dozen banks; so if some of them fail, he will have others to depend upon. . . . O, me! I'm almost tired to death trying to arrange things in some passable order. Mr. Indulgence thought he would do something smart; so he bought all this 'old-timey' stuff and had these 'tacky' old women to help him arrange it—or, rather, to throw it into the house; and—I'll declare!—it's the 'tackiest' mess I have ever seen. It's perfectly hideous. I just laughed outright in his face when he brought me here, everything looked so funny. He 'kinder' smiled, but didn't laugh much; and I do not believe he appreciated my looks and comical, three-cornered smiles as I gazed around at the ludicrous display. He seemed to think I would sanction everything; but—mercy!—that would never do. It would look like I had no better taste or judgment than the women who helped select and arrange the old things. I wanted to let him know on the very start that I had been better reared than that. I have guyed him about his 'associate judges' until I do not believe he likes it a bit. You see, he used to go with that ugly old maid, Miss Tidywise; and her aunt,

old Mrs. Goodlady, wanted him to marry her. I wish he had; if this is a sample of the way he is going to treat me. But go through the house (if you can get through for the dirt), and look at the rest of the so-called 'furniture.' The piano there does very well, but—well, I would have selected a different style altogether; but I guess I can make out with it a while until I can sell it for half its cost, then buy the kind I want. Decidedly the worst trouble I have had thus far is with my servants. They worry me to death; they just will not—”

“ Servants? Pray tell me what you want with servants. There are only two of you to work for, and both are young, strong, and able to do what little work you need.”

“ Little, indeed! You may call it 'little' if you want to; I don't. There's all the cooking and that abominable dish washing; then all the sweeping, dusting, shopping [she failed to mention the grumbling, visiting, and gossiping]—a thousand and one things to do. You are just like Mr. Indulgence. Don't you think he wanted us to try to do our own work? He said he would help me; that we could live on half of what it would take if we had servants (I didn't know I was marrying a miser); and that we could keep everything so much cleaner than servants would. Poor idiot! That is just what I want with servants—to keep the house clean and to do the work, so I will not have to get my hands black and hard and rough as nutmeg graters. He has always been tied to his mother's apron string, and has watched her do and do and do and helped her do

until he thinks it is nothing but right for women to do the drudgery. His mother actually taught him to wash dishes, make up beds, sweep, sew on buttons, and do many other unnecessary things. He really tried to reason with me on the subject of housekeeping, but I was too smart to listen. He carefully reminded me that he had put waterworks all through the house; had the coal and kindling in arm's length; had arranged with a dairyman to bring milk and butter to the kitchen door, likewise a groceryman to deliver our provisions; had his office in the adjoining building, so I would not be without his company long and so he could always keep up my fires and do the chores; and then had the impudence to say he didn't think we would need any help; that he really needed the exercise and would gladly help me. (Pitiful paupers that we are!) Such stuff to choke a bride with! Now, what would my hands look like on the piano keys after I had washed dishes for a year? And what would I look like running to answer the telephone and the doorbell every time, just like I had been reared in abject poverty and had always been used to work? He made me mad then and there. I set my limber tongue on a high pivot and whirled it round and round until I told him what I thought of him, of my sad disappointment in 'our home,' as he called it—this pen of trash in which he has caged me. I strictly informed him that I would never attempt to keep house one week with less than three servants—cook, housegirl, and errand boy. [It is astonishing how much use young persons can find for "servants," especially

young persons who have been reared without a servant in the house, except their father and mother.] I also wanted a groom, but thought if my husband wanted to see after the dusty horse and carriage, leave his work, close his office, and take me driving every afternoon, he might do so; I would leave that little matter with him. He didn't object to doing so before our marriage, and I wanted to know how long he would hold out that way. However, I think it looks so much nicer for those of our standing to have a regular coachman; don't you? It is so 'tacky' for the man himself to drive. Then it looks so much grander to see several servants about a home; it looks as if persons are living and up to date."

"Stop, woman! You frighten me. You are flying too high and too fast. If you do not mind, you will light low and drag that good husband down with you. You are discouraging him on the start."

"That's what he says, but I'm determined to live while I do live; and—what do you think?—the other morning, after our first cook left us, he lovingly said: 'Now, wife, let us be right smart and get breakfast ourselves.' I agreed, knowing I could soon convince him. He had the fire roaring in half the time the errand boy would have been dressing, made the coffee (and it was *coffee*, too), broiled steak, toasted cheese, scrambled eggs the nicest, and then came and woke me. He had left nothing for me to do except to make biscuits. Now, honestly, I had never made a biscuit in my life; for, in my rearing, at times when we had no

servants, mamma always did the cooking, and I—I entertained the company. She couldn't do both, you know, she was so delicate; and it was no trouble to me to keep 'dressed up.' Moreover, she said she had always thought there ought to be one pair of soft, white hands in every family. But back to my biscuit story. Mr. I—— told me what ingredients to use, where to find them, and said one cup of buttermilk would make plenty of biscuits for us. He then said perhaps I had better measure the ingredients the first time. I remembered hearing our cook say it took three cups of milk each meal to make our biscuits, but I thought I would obey my husband 'this once;' so I measured my milk, flour, soda, salt, and lard—one cup each—and in went my hand, diamond ring and all. I stirred and stirred and stirred, but it wouldn't thicken sufficiently. I had often heard of kneading dough; I certainly *needed* some then. I called Mr. Willing from currying the horses to come and doctor my biscuit dough. 'You need more flour, my dear,' he said as soon as he looked at it. He then quickly washed his hands, sifted some flour, helped to get the biscuits ready for the stove, and managed the baking, while I straightened up things in the dining room. 'Who-e-e!' came ringing from the cookroom in a few moments, with an old-fashioned, side-splitting laugh—a regular, boisterous 'ha, ha!' 'What is the matter? Now you are making fun of my biscuits, and I won't make any more. I told you I couldn't cook; I told you so. My motto is: "If at first I don't succeed, I try, try no more."' He came to the table, sober

as a judge, with the steaming biscuits that had all run together and puffed above the top of the pan. 'Just look how pretty, dearie!' he says. 'Didn't they rise nicely? A regular golden loaf! I will telephone to the bakery (next block) and get some hot buns to mix along with our nice biscuits.' Down we sat to breakfast. After he gave thanks, I broke open and buttered a biscuit; so did he; but they were yellow as gold, and did not smell like mother's biscuits. 'O, what yellow flour!' I exclaimed; 'and perfectly musty. That grocer ought to be—' He gently stopped me, and said that nothing was wrong, except I had put in a little too much soda; but I'll declare I never used a bit more soda than I did milk, salt, lard, or flour. He had the audacity to say he would show me how to proportion the ingredients the next time; but I quickly informed him that he might have the pleasure of instructing the cook; that I was not going to be a slave for any man. He drooped his head and looked sad. Then I think he tried to retaliate, for he ate three buns and only the top crust of one of my biscuits, after all the pains I took in making them for him. Suffice it to say he had a cook here to get dinner, and will have the next time you hear from him. He regrets it because she is so careless, is breaking up our dishes so fast; but I don't care for that. There will be plenty of dishes after I am dead and gone, and I am not going to worry over little things. I don't like those dishes, anyway. They are of an excellent quality of China and were very costly, but I dislike the decorations. They are wild roses, and I

prefer clover blossoms; they are so much more artistic. But never mind; they will soon be gone, then I will select for myself. Glorious privilege! The housegirl broke the only thing I was really proud of—that large cut-glass fruit bowl, one of my handsomest bridal presents and from one of my old sweethearts, the nicest man that ever waited on me (I was a simpleton for not marrying that man). I cried my eyes red when she broke it; but when ‘Rastus’ broke that large mirror in the folding bed, Mr. Indulgence almost cried, and I nearly split my sides laughing, because I knew that meant a new suit of furniture for my room. I don’t like the finishing of this horrid old furniture; I don’t consider it up to date.”

This was the preface to her prodigious catalogue of objections that she carefully explained to her young husband. She seems to have been born in the objective case, compared as an objective adjective and conjugated as an objective verb; and I do not see why every young man did not decline her as an objective noun or pronoun. She objects, and objects; and when the patience of everybody is worn out, she begins a fresh chapter of objections. I am fearful she will drive that poor man to the lunatic asylum, to a drunkard’s grave, or to suicide. He certainly has a “wasp” to contend with.

V.

Twenty-three years have rushed by. Their firstborn has cast his first vote; their oldest daughter has married a drunk-

ard, a gambler—to get rid of the taunts at home, she said. Three other boys and a baby girl have completed the family. Once has Mr. Indulgence been forced to screen himself behind the bankrupt law; thrice have they seen their home reduced to ashes (twice in consequence of careless servants). They have seen their married daughter neglected and maltreated by the brute she mistook for a husband; they have seen tears of anguish wrung from her tender heart. Often have they lovingly received her back into the home of her childhood when she had to flee for safety from the drunken beast. Hungry, unnerved, quivering, screaming, she would rush for refuge to the home and hearts of parental love. More than once has her father supplied her with the necessaries and comforts of life; but the being to whom in youth she innocently plighted her vows has disposed of everything he could to satisfy the burning thirst for the mad demon, drink.

Weeks and months have found Mrs. Indulgence prostrate on an invalid's couch. Five years ago the hand of affliction fell heavily upon the two youngest children; and the precious little boy, after a few days of indescribable suffering, peacefully passed into the realm of spirits. Then night and day, week after week, anxious watchers waited by a bedside. The unfeeling death messenger seemed to be leaning over that bed trying to decide which of its occupants he should take first, for the mother and her little girl were very near death's door.

“O, Death, hear my petition, I implore thee; spare my

sweet child and take me!" exclaimed the sorrowing, suffering mother.

The little one, slightly startled, softly raised her waxen fingers, her almost transparent hand, as if to say: "No, no! Don't take my dood mamma; take me, take me!"

The heart-crushed husband, the doting father, showered down the tears he had long kept concealed and wept aloud: "O, Death, hear me, I pray! Spare my dear wife and babe! Here am I; take me!"

Such tender pleadings apparently touched even the cold-hearted death angel, and for a while he stayed his hand. Soon he leaned over again, looked at one, then the other, as if still undecided. He then calmly reached his skeleton fingers toward the beautiful babe.

"O," shrieked the fond mother, "spare, O spare, my darling child! You must not take her! I cannot give her up; I cannot live without her! Take me! O, take me!"

"You know not what you ask, woman," replied the angel (through the tongue of the skillful physician); "for if your little one lives, she will be no more comfort to you; if she shall go away, she will be blessed both now and forever."

The father's heart was filled almost to bursting. He felt as if he could endure no more. Trying to grow submissive, he went into another room, where he could be alone with his God, on whose strong arm he had long leaned for support when earthly fascinations seemed converted into im-

penetrable clouds of darkest gloom. He knew his Father Friend had never forsaken him; so after this troubled hour—this Gethsemane of trials and heartaches and victories of resignation—he fervently prayed amid deep heart throbs: “Thy will, O Lord, be done.” Returning to the mother, he found her still frantically pleading for the babe to be spared, as if perfectly rebellious against everything sacred and wanting her desires granted regardless of consequences. She had her wish. The death messenger gradually loosed his grasp and left the waxen figure of the innocent child prostrate beside the invalid mother. But nevermore can the beautiful babe (two years old) climb up and caress the lips that respond as none but a mother’s ever can; nevermore can that little tongue lisp the sweet names “papa,” “mamma,” as heretofore, for there is serious trouble in the spine and brain; never again can the little girl walk; never again can she speak rationally. Her mind is forever gone. O, would that the death angel had taken her with her little brother! But she is spared. Why, O why? Echo solemnly answers: “Why?”

It is too true that we often know not what we ask. We pray without understanding, and sometimes in a rebellious spirit, as if to say: “Not thy will, but mine.” In the first place, we sometimes pray without trying to serve the Lord, without even an attempted obedience to his precepts. How can we, how dare we, ask him for more blessings while we are so unworthy of what we already have and while we stand in open rebellion against his holy will? We have no

promise of answer to such petitions. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" It is our glorious privilege, our unmerited honor, to call on "our Father," but it should be with the spirit of humility and of willing, loving obedience. In the next place, we apparently presume to think we know our needs better than the Father does, whereas frequently if the very things for which we pray should be granted, they would be to us a curse. Our prayers are composed too much of requests and petitions; not enough of expressions of gratitude for blessings past, present, and prospective. We often ask for useless, and even harmful, things. Think of our multiplied requests, as if trying to make the Lord a pauper by asking him to give away everything that is good and desirable! We often pray in a very dictatorial spirit, telling the Lord exactly what to do, when, and in what manner. No mortal knows enough of the future to insist on his own wishes being granted, and it should be with fear and trembling that we approach the throne of grace to ask for more blessings.

Every home must some day have its Gethsemane; so with every life. There will come a crisis in which we will ardently crave the granting of our own desires. We will either be almost, if not altogether, rebellious against the powers that rule, or else we will with bleeding hearts meekly submit and murmur not. The shadow of death sometimes hangs over our homes, and to us all is appalling darkness. As the bitter cup is held to our lips, we go in secret

to our Father for relief. In anguish of soul we each may cry: "O my Father, . . . let this cup pass from me." In our weakness we try to peer into the future. There we see nothing but irreparable loss and impenetrable gloom resulting from the sad affliction that is impending. We see no possible good that could result therefrom, whereas we think we see much harm that would be avoided and great good that would without doubt be accomplished by countermanding what seems to be the inevitable. Then, with all the earnestness of our hearts and with no evil intent, again we implore: "Let this cup pass." The soul within us then makes a desperate effort to throw off all selfishness and yield to what is right. The finger of faith points us back to the garden of olives. Though the passover moon is full, it is clouded by the heavy weight of that mournful hour, and we behold

"Night with ebon pinions brooding o'er the vale;"

we watch the royal Son of David as, with solemn, but majestic, tread on his own funeral march, he begins "to be sorrowful and very heavy;" we hear this Man of sorrows saying to his selected trio, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me;" we see him go "a little farther" and fall on his face, as if in the very shadow of the cross and under the stinging scourge and the hiss of torture; we hear the pleading outburst of his agonized spirit: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." For an instant a mighty bat-

tle seems raging between two natures, the human and the divine; but as in the lonely wilderness, so now in this garden of sorrows, divinity is victorious; the Son of man is in humble subjection to the higher will; and though in his deep earnestness his sweat falls as great drops of blood, we hear those words of sublime submission: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Having nobly submitted of his own will, he, after this troubled hour of Gethsemane, is calm as the unruffled sea. We see him return to the three he had appointed as a kind of inner guard; we hear his touching expression of disappointment that in this dreadful crisis he seemed deprived of all human sympathy—that even his chosen three, whom he wished to have near him in his woe, had become so overpowered they could not watch with him "one hour." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," tenderly admonishes the loving and future-knowing Savior. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." He leaves them and prays again and again, not again requesting that the cup of anguish may pass from him, but that he may be enabled to fulfill the divine will in completing his sacrifice—his glorious work of human redemption—that he may glorify God and magnify his love. From this let us learn the beautiful lesson of resignation.

"Prayer pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God," said Spurgeon. But we should be careful not to ring that bell so as to ask God to do for us what he has commanded us to do for ourselves; neither

should we ask him to do anything not in accordance with divine sanction. If we could have perfect resignation to the Father's will, it would strengthen us, fill us with peace, and fit us for nobler work; it would, comparatively, change the cross into a crown, Gethsemane into paradise, death into immortal glory. How farseeing is the faith and how divine the sweet spirit of submission that amidst the deepest trials can say:

"Father, remove this bitter cup,
If such thy sacred will;
If not, content to drink it up,
Thy pleasure I fulfill!"

VI.

What has become of our "spoiled baby," our neighborhood nuisance, our troublesome schoolgirl, our ungrateful bride, our torturing wife, our "society woman?"

There is an ugly chrysalis that contains a beautiful butterfly, but this butterfly cannot be admired and appreciated until after it breaks forth from its dingy shell. Miss Pettie Whimsical's heart has all the time contained a good principle; but it has been so deeply imbedded in self-conceit, so thickly covered with humored whims, so securely hedged in by petrified pouts, so firmly walled by stones of self-will cemented with the strongest solution of egotism, that the jewel therein could never be discovered unless that formidable wall should be crushed. The strokes of conscience might "tap, tap" forever; the voice of duty might

cry for admittance; but to no avail. The pleading love of indulgent parents and husband and the heavenly gift of six bright, promising children were insufficient to penetrate the heart wall and let the crown jewel appear. The battering-ram of affliction at last planted itself at the door of that heart and demanded entrance. "Rap, tap, tap, rap!" Harder, harder, still harder! There! The cement of egotism has given way. Now a stone of self-will has been removed, now another, and another. Those petrified pouts have been melted by the lava of the heart's anguish; those humored whims and that self-conceit have been dissolved by tears of regret; and now nothing is in the way and the heart jewel appears. The chrysalis has been opened and the beautiful butterfly has come forth, no longer deserving the name "Pettie Whimsical Indulgence," but "New Resolution."

Throughout all these weary years this good man has known that his whimsical wife was fast dragging him downward, and often has he kindly told her so; but the only effect was to ruffle her feelings, set her sensitive nature afire, and make her even more disagreeable. He has long since learned that there is no peace at heart without peace in the household; so he has been determined to try to gratify every whim as long as financially able; then if he should have to fall, she could but fall with him. He would keep her up as long as possible. To keep a wife blinded, or even partially so, as to his financial embarrassment, is a grievous mistake made by many a husband, and often with

serious results. Frequently when a man of natural spirit and enthusiasm realizes that he is failing as to worldly means, he tries to keep his wife from becoming cognizant of the fact, lest she should be humiliated or feel disappointed concerning his ability to comply with his youthful vows. She keeps drawing and drawing on his means until she draws the very "lifeblood" out of his purse strings before she is aware of it. If she realized the situation, she, if worthy of the name "wife," or even "woman," would willingly, gladly lessen her claims, sacrifice her avarice, and curtail her expenses, and thus help to hold him up out of the quagmire of financial depression. Mrs. Indulgence was not thus deceived. At last, however, under the force of many and varied circumstances, she, like the weary prodigal, "came to herself"—not only to find that she had wasted her substance with riotous living, but had also obscured the light from noble lives.

"O that I could live my life over!" often sighs the truly penitent woman. "How differently would I act! I would know how to appreciate the self-sacrifice of my fond parents, whose delight it was to labor hard that I might have the best advantages. Never would I call them 'old fogies' and snatch the reins from their hands that I might do as I pleased. I now sadly realize that the course I pursued in girlhood was inclined to bring their gray hairs in sorrow toward the grave. And think of my dear brothers! How did they keep from despising me? They humored me; they petted me. I scorned their very indulgence, yet de-

manded more, still more. If I could live my life over, I would also have more regard for my own health and less regard for the styles that enfeebled my existence. My parents warned me; I heeded not. Fashion was my ideal queen; I was her obedient subject. My parents pictured for me an invalid's couch, with myself as its unfortunate occupant. I laughed them to scorn, and said: 'You know not what you say.' They showed me an image of distress, with shriveled face, disheveled hair, distorted features, brow heavily knit by pain, body stooped by torturing aches, and mind clouded by dread disease. The image stared at me with a ghastly grin that made me shudder. They said that was myself after a few years of imprudence. I turned away in disgust, and told them they were crazy. I also informed them that I was going to follow the dictates of my stylish queen and let the future take care of itself.

"Again, if I could live my life over, I would not neglect my obedience to my Lord. I would remember my Creator in the days of my youth, while the evil days come not; I would lean on his strong and willing arm, not only in hours of adversity, but also in times of temporal prosperity; I would gratefully acknowledge him as the Giver of all good. In early girlhood I had a strong inclination to flee to the good Shepherd; but as I grew older, I became more and more absorbed in worldly thought. My heart became hardened. I loved worldly amusement more than godly gain. Ungrateful creature I! How has the Lord kept from cast-

ing me off, as he did the wicked king, among the beasts of the field?

“If I could live my life over, how differently would I act toward my devoted, indulgent husband, who has wrongfully sacrificed his time, his money, his pleasure to comply with my unjust demands! He gave me smiles of affection and words of good cheer; I gave in return cold frowns and words of displeasure and humiliating expressions of unkindness. He gave me pure love; I centered my love in his pocketbook. In everything he tried to please me; in haughtiness of spirit I tried to appear even more displeased than I really was. How has he endured me all this time? It is a wonder he has not been driven to desperation; but, as God’s nobleman, he has patiently braved himself against despair, and through all this torture and temptation has remained entirely free from evil habits and rash acts. Noble man he is! Many a man with similar trials would have sought solace in a gambling crowd or tried to drown his trouble in the inebriate’s bowl. God bless the man who has been so true to the unworthy woman who did not merit his love or esteem!

“Moreover, I would see more closely after my household instead of trusting all to careless servants. Our beautiful home, with its splendid furnishings, so lovingly provided by my companion in the days of his youthful prosperity and happiness, would doubtless now be ours to enjoy, had it not been for my lack of watchfulness, my lack of gratitude. Never—no, never—would I commit my tender babes to the care of a thoughtless nurse; for had not my

precious baby received that fall which injured her spine, having been left at home with a nurse while I was seeking pleasure in a country drive; had we even been notified of the fall in time to give the proper attention, doubtless the little darling would now be sound and well, in school or playing merrily around the hearthstone. Poor little sufferer! Yet, with all her affliction, she does not give me half the trouble I gave my parents, for she *never objects*. My other daughter—so young, so attractive, so pure—would never have married that drunkard, that desperado, had I made home pleasant. As I think of her humiliation, her distress, her torture of body and soul, my heart almost bursts with grief. Think of her in innocent girlhood—by nature beautiful, affectionate, intelligent; think of her now—a drunkard's wife, dejected, mistreated, in want, miserable! I have watched our homes crumble to ashes; have watched our gold slip unjustly from our fingers; have suffered indescribably from the pangs of affliction; have seen the skeleton grasp of death seize one of our sweet children when I was too weak to raise my pillowed head, and when the lifeless little body, dressed in burial robe, was for a moment placed by my side, friends kindly lifted my head that I might imprint a loving, sorrowful, good-by kiss upon the marble lips and cheeks; I have kept almost constant watch over our afflicted little girl; yet all these trials together I count as joy compared with the anguish of soul I have felt concerning our older daughter, who has become the unfortunate victim of a worthless man. Language

would falter and fall wounded and defeated if forced to even attempt a true description of her sorrow. Never this side of the dark, deep river will she find relief, and all because I failed to do my duty as a wife and mother. Remorse, remorse! O, if I had only known— But the past I can never undo; it is a sealed book, whose clasp I cannot find. O God, forgive! Parents, brothers, husband, children, I implore you to forgive!

“I have resolved what I will do: I will arise and go to my Heavenly Father through faith and profound obedience, and henceforth my life shall be consecrated to his service. I will so live as to renew the shattered confidence of my husband and other loved ones; I will live aright. I have sown the seed of discontentment and strife; it is but just that I shall reap a harvest of anguish. As Byron once said:

“The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree

I planted. They have torn me, and I bleed.

I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.’

“I will meekly submit, and will carry the load of grief cheerfully, trying all the time to lighten the sorrows and brighten the lives of others till I am permitted to lay my burden at my Savior’s feet.”

She became a thoroughly converted woman. Many—O, so many!—who make earnest resolves as to better living afterwards retrograde, fall back into their old paths; but not thus with this woman. Abiding by her resolutions, she became and remained a humble, obedient “follower of the Lamb;” a devoted, practical, happy wife and mother.

That home looks very different now. Poverty reigns there, but reigns in peace, love, and contentment. Riches found wings and fast sailed away from where they did not seem appreciated—some flying in one direction; some, in another. A very large per cent sought in vain to gratify idle whims; part was buried in the ashes of home; part was cruelly caught by the extortioner and the monopolist; while a goodly portion appropriately found lodgment in the homes of physicians, who faithfully, patiently, and skillfully watched over the sick and the dying. Their present home is a small rented cottage. Their furniture is plain and somewhat scarred and broken, having been rescued from the last fire (nothing was saved from the two former fires); but this is a *home* now, for hearts of love are here. It is enough to cheer almost any despondent heart to pass by at eventide and hear that happy family as with the spirit and the understanding they make melody in their hearts by singing:

“There is beauty all around,
When there's love at home!”
There is joy in every sound,
When there's love at home.
Peace and plenty here abide,
Smiling sweet on every side;
Time doth softly, sweetly glide,
When there's love at home.

“In the cottage there is joy,
When there's love at home;
Hate and envy ne'er annoy,
When there's love at home.

HEARTHSTONE ECHOES.

Roses blossom 'neath our feet;
 All the earth's a garden sweet,
 Making life a bliss complete,
 When there's love at home.

"Kindly heaven smiles above,
 When there's love at home;
 All the earth is filled with love,
 When there's love at home.
 Sweeter sings the brooklet by,
 Brighter beams the azure sky;
 O, there's One who smiles on high,
 When there's love at home."

The once invalid mother is now a reasonably strong woman, and has become a willing, industrious home keeper, with the timely aid of Mr. Indulgence and the boys, all having learned to use the dish rag and yield the broom with becoming grace.

"A charge to keep I have,"

submissively sings the fond mother, as she so frequently tries in vain to attract the attention of the poor little girl who five years ago was so bright, so full of baby life and cheering smiles, but who ever since that time has been as helpless as in her first month's existence and unable to distinguish one friend from another—a helpless, hopeless, mindless charge.

During all this time—almost one-fourth of a century—of sad trials, Mr. Indulgence has retained that same mental equilibrium; that composed, serene disposition; that sweet spirit of resignation which characterizes the true child of God that he is and has been since his youth. His wife's

conscience had been so completely seared over in childhood by whimsical gratifications that nothing short of rough experience seemed able to melt it into submission. Reader, understand me, please. I do not claim that these trials were sent for that purpose, for frequently the most consecrated Christians have similar tribulations, as in this instance the just had to suffer with the unjust. We can never in this life know exactly how much to attribute to "direct providence," and we should be careful along this line. Some of the thoughts I would like to impress in this little serial are these: The impropriety of overindulgence, the evil of procrastination, the danger of not correcting evil habits, the importance of nipping error in the bud, the evil of ingratitude, the need of watchfulness, the peril of neglecting the soul. When we realize that our hearts are growing hard and cold; when we find that we are inclined to become rebellious against the right, not fully appreciating the benefits we receive from God and from the loved ones he has given us, let us not wait until some dire calamity shall befall us to melt our hearts to penitence. Though sweetness often comes forth from bitter, it is not necessary or right for us to create bitter in order to extract the sweetness therefrom. There will doubtless come a time to each of us when we will sadly regret the misspent parts of our existence and would fain recall many of the days and years long since fled; but—alas!—it will be too late.

Youth, take warning! "Now is the accepted time." Catch the golden moments as they pass; try to make your

life like a fair and pleasant day; let the morning sun of your existence drive away the gloom of night, arise in its noonday splendor to cheer and bless the world, then gently sink in sublime simplicity beneath the western sea, leaving a brilliant halo to make the world rejoice that you have lived.

SHATTERED ROSES.

EIGHTY-THREE milestones have been passed since this lady started across the plains of time, but her love for the beautiful has not vanished. Yesterday (September 12, 1896) there was placed in her hands a small box, having been expressed from Marianna, Ark. Those soft, nimble fingers, faithful workers for more than three-fourths of a century, were hastened by a mind of curiosity to open the box, when—behold!—shattered roses, withered flowers, were exposed to view. “Worthless, useless,” do you say? *You* may think so; *some* would thus consider them; but though much of their beauty has vanished, their fragrance departed, to *her* they retain both. They are emblems of love from unseen friends, ties to draw the heart of this noble woman toward those of her unseen sisters in the great cause she so much loves—the cause of Christ.

It is sweet to be remembered by absent friends, and there is a feeling of peculiar appreciation when kindly considered by those we have never met. This is the feeling now in the heart of this good woman, and she would like to meet

those friends and verbally express her gratitude for their loving consideration. Circumstances will doubtless forbid this pleasure, but she hopes to meet them over yonder where flowers never wither. Exceedingly fond of flowers, nature's little eyes of beauty, she always took special delight in cultivating them until age gently removed the little hoe from her hand. She says persons who care nothing for flowers "do not love our Savior as they should."

I watched her as she carefully, tenderly removed each little beauty from the box. She admired and commented on all. Then I began to think of the great similarity between flowers and our own lives. God made both, and for a noble purpose. Both can be useful in many ways; both are frail and tender while very young, and must be tenderly cared for, but are somewhat "toughened" by the atmosphere and other surroundings; both require food, water, light, heat, and air; both need cultivation, in rich soil, by tender hands of those who feel for them special interest; both may be spoiled by neglect, also by overindulgence; both must die—may live to be withered by the frosts of time, may be snatched from the parent stem without a moment's warning. While the bud is yet in its infancy, we cannot tell the color or the properties of the forthcoming flower. So in babyhood; but as the petals open one by one, we discern the characteristics of the forthcoming man or woman.

In that little box bed of choicest flowers were concealed many thorns. So life's beauties and joys are interspersed with thorns of displeasure as well as with trials many and

severe. Let us be cautious how we indulge by greedily dipping too deep into life's pleasures and luxuries, lest we are pierced by a thorn of deception. These flowers were apparently ruined, but by means of abundant moisture and fresh air they revived, and this morning many of them look beautiful. Thus human life may appear almost extinct, but by kind attention and medical skill, together with the dews of God's grace, it may revive and be pretty and useful still. When these little beauties of nature shall have all faded and passed away, the memory of them and of the thoughtful donor will still linger fresh in the mind of the receiver; for

"You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still"

in the form of sweet memory. So the life of a Christian may fade away, his body may return to mother clay; yet his works will remain. In the fond memory of loved ones he will still linger, and, although dead, will yet speak.

In many respects this lady reminds me of these shattered roses. Like them, she has been shaken by the jars of time and of a long, wearisome journey, until her body is naturally somewhat shattered. In the long ago her erect figure, her firm flesh, and her strong muscles indicated more than an ordinary constitution. Her black, curly hair; sparkling, brown eyes; features, regular and smooth; complexion, fair and aglow with the roses of health—these gave her an attractive appearance, at least to her loved

ones; while she possessed an amiable, sweet disposition that won innumerable friends. In the sick room she had but few superiors. She was a messenger of love, with willing hands always finding something to do; she was a sunbeam to divert the attention from ailments and calamities; she was as a garland of flowers with good cheer for the suffering, discouraged invalid. Flowers may wilt, but still be fragrant and their colors bright. This dear old Christian pilgrim's features are somewhat withered by the frosts of more than fourscore winters; yet her mind remains remarkably clear; vision, splendid; disposition, sweet and cheery. She grows old gracefully, and is still gentle and lovely—a character to be admired. Time may blight the rose and deprive it of beauty and fragrance, but where it has cherished associations it will, like “a flower from an angel mother's grave,” be prized as a sweet relic of the golden yesterdays. This loving old grandmother may be so blighted by age; her step, once so elastic, may become so enfeebled; those eyes, so dim; the ears, so “dull of hearing;” the hair, so bleached; the once erect shoulders, so stooped under the heavy pressure of years, as to cause her, by some, to be considered homely and useless; but to the heart of love she is “young and beautiful still.”

Many, many flowers and buds were tastily arranged in the little box which was opened yesterday—far more than we would have thought it could contain. Many—O, so many!—are the kindly virtues, noble qualities, crowded into the general make-up of this little woman. We did not

realize the beauty of the box until its contents were closely examined; likewise, those who know her well are the only ones who can realize her worth. The same can be said concerning any noble, consistent, Christian character.

HOW TO BE MISERABLE.

BE idle. Why? Because while "he that labors may be tempted by one demon, he that is idle is tempted by a thousand."

Cherish Discontent (oldest child of Idleness).

Live always in the "golden past."

Worry constantly about "to-morrow."

Encourage fretfulness and scolding; for they will never bring out Christian graces, any more than a March north-easter will cause the honeysuckles to bloom.

If perchance a spirit of love or kindness springs up within your heart, crush it as you would crush a deadly viper.

Stir the cup of affection with an icicle.

Take no advice; learn only in the bitter school of experience.

Deal in "futures."

Sleep away the best part of the morning, lest you become famous; for

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

Try to darken, waste, and impair life's best activities.

Live for nothing; have no purpose.

Linger near the trap that has once ensnared you.

Be as "moody" as possible.

Sit in "grumble corner" night and day, and you will have a genuine attack of heart fever.

Waste your best opportunities, thus securing abundant want.

Pine over your losses; magnify your crosses; take no notice of your many blessings.

Pray without working.

Confide in riches.

If you make a great mistake, repeat it.

Lose command of yourself; then you need not worry about trying to control others.

Cleave to that which is evil; abhor that which is good.

Disdain the idea of laboring.

Be indolent. True, the door of success is labeled "Push," and Ben. Franklin says, "Plow deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and keep;" but take courage, be slothful, and you shall escape the annoyance of the sale and the trouble of keeping.

Close your eyes to the beautiful; close your ears to the truth.

Be like the clematis, which always climbs about on itself, losing sight of the trellis that supports it.

If in doubt, give up in despair. "Industry pays debts, while despair increases them."

Be cross while others are pleasant, but never pleasant while others are cross.

Watch the man or the woman who fails, then "go, and do thou likewise."

Carry the key to everybody's business chest.

If any one asks you for a favor, give him your fist.

If your enemy hunger, curse him; if he thirst, give him "strong drink."

Always practice naughty manners, for "manners make the man."

There is always "room at the top;" so stay at the bottom, where you will not be alone.

Crush out and bury sweet memories, and on their grave plant only the bitter seed of doleful by-gones.

If your parents reprove you for your wrong doings, avoid their society.

Object to all your mother, wife, and sister do; or if you chance to approve of something, be sure not to tell them so. If they ask for your assistance, give them your tongue.

When you reach home from work or school, do not forget to abruptly ask if dinner is ready and if there is fresh water drawn.

The complexion of home life depends upon the disposition of the inmates; so be as sour as possible. Strong acid paints home "blue."

Keep your mind corrupt by feeding it on froth—by reading impure literature.

Inasmuch as lieth in you, live "at outs" with all men.

With all your 'getting, get contention. It is easy to be pleasant when everything goes right.

Encourage evil thoughts; for as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Always be despondent, and the cobwebs will grow thick over your brain.

Cultivate anger; it is a disagreeable feeling, and will greatly aid in rendering yourself and others miserable.

Spend half of life sowing "wild oats;" the other half will give you employment—reaping the harvest.

Become a chronic fault-finder, so you will not have to "go in a gang by yourself."

Use every device to obtain money, for "the shortest cut to poverty is trying to get rich in a hurry."

Ascertain what your specialty is, then disregard it and try every other vocation.

Always be assured that the wrong officers have been elected.

Trust false friends. Like your shadow, they stay by you in sunshine, but forsake you in the shade.

Rush headlong through life, forgetting that it is by patience the mulberry leaf is changed to silk.

Nourish the bitter thorns of strife; and wherever you go, scatter thistle seeds.

If you suffer financial loss, spend your time moaning and pining over what is gone, never thinking of what is left.

Annoy your neighbors with all your troubles; get them to help to take care of your "family jars."

Search yourself for your virtues; search your neighbor for his faults.

“ If at first you don't succeed, try, try ” no more.

Live without aim, for a steady purpose is one secret of progress.

If you desire anything done, go to the man of leisure, for he never has time for anything.

Always have the “ blues,” and divide them with everybody around you.

Think and talk about how much worse the world is becoming.

Study much about things you want, but cannot obtain.

If you hear anything good about your neighbor, deny it.

Sponge on your friends and relatives; they will not see you starve. Ben. Franklin says: “ To be thrown upon one's resources is to be cast into the very lap of Fortune.” So be sure not to rely on yourself, and you can easily keep out of Fortune's lap.

If you can do no deed except a good one, do nothing; if you can speak naught but a kind word, remain silent; if nothing but pure thoughts, flit through your mind, put your brain to sleep.

Shun education and morality; they are forces that help to move the world.

Frequent the saloons; carry with you a diploma from the rum shop—a red nose.

Stand in your own light and fight your own shadow.

Object evermore; pout without ceasing.

Ben. Franklin suggests: "If a man empties his purse into his head, no one can take it from him." Empty yours into your throat.

Wear a long face; refrain from smiling.

Spend a little faster than you make. The way you spend your income is an index to your financial brain.

Lavishly spend all your dimes, and your dollars will not trouble you.

Let your expenses always exceed your income.

If your salary is small, spend it in fast living; if you receive only four cents a day, spend five cents.

Light your money in the end of a cigar.

Wear your best clothes every day, and perhaps some one will be silly enough to think fine clothes make a fine "gentleman."

"If sinners entice thee, consent thou" in all things.

Avoid instruction, for "whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge."

If you have nothing to say, say much; for "even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Prov. 17: 28); and "whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Prov. 21: 23).

If you have a good reputation, cry it down. You can crush it in a little while, but it will take years to regain it.

In those quiet, serious moments that come to all of us, study all about how sad your condition is and how gloomy your prospect.

“Creeds are narrow; truth is wide.” So select some narrow, shaky plank of opinion, only broad enough for “you and your wife; your son, John, and his wife—you four, and no more,” and walk thereon until you fall hence.

When you awake in health, always forget to thank your God.

Pray for daily bread, then wait for the corn to come to you already “shelled.”

Disregard the laws of nature and of God, then censure Heaven for letting you suffer the penalty.

Consider everything on earth impure, and Heaven will have no use for you.

Observe these simple rules and “apply externally, internally, and eternally,” and I will guarantee them to permanently cure the malady of happiness or contentment.

For reliable testimonials, apply to Mr. Talk And Do Nothing, Grumble Corner, Misery; also to Miss Tongue See Bonnyface, 13 Disconsolate avenue, Tattler’s Bend, Idleho.

For further information, inclose a two-cent stamp for free samples and catalogue of particulars to the firm of Do Little & Steal, Pouting Furnace, Loafer County, U-make-us-go.

IN spoiling a girl, you make trouble for her husband; in spoiling a boy, you make trouble for his wife. This trouble will be realized by and by.

FOREST JEWELS.

THE forests seem vain of their glory to-day. They stand out on dress parade, sporting with the sunbeams. Each tree is arrayed in brightness, each bough weighted down with little jewels of sparkling brilliancy.

Yesterday and to-day the wind and sunshine have been striving for the mastery, the sunshine trying to melt these jewels into tears, and the north wind consolidating them, condensing the tears into sparkling beads, which, like diamonds, reflect the sun's bright rays. The forests stand in shining array, each tree stiffening itself as if proud of its jeweled tresses; but though this crystal drapery is showy and beautiful, it is cold and disagreeable—kept so by winter's chilly breath—while the cheerful, sunny-faced day king would fain relieve the trees of their icy mantle and robe them with foliage tender and green.

We have many bright-eyed "little jewels" in our homes, our schools, our Sunday schools—jewels of worth, fast developing into diamonds of grandeur that shine resplendent in Heaven's true light.

Let us learn a lesson from the little icicle, the crystal pendant of the forest. While King Winter is preparing his subjects for their icy garments, he deprives them, leaf by leaf, of their beautiful robes of gold and green; so while the proud heart is preparing itself for vain display of gold and precious stones, it gradually lays aside its vestures of holiness, then dons those of visible splendor. Again, when the warming beams of the morning sun begin to shine upon

the ice-crowned trees, we see proud nature's tears begin to fall; then, one by one, the icicles, whether pearly beads or glittering spears, will loose their hold and fall to the ground. Likewise, when the Sun of Righteousness pours his healing beams through the gospel into the heart of nature's wayward child, some of the vain display of this world will fall, like cold and weighty icicles; the remainder, as tears of penitence; and he will turn his weary, wandering, trembling feet toward the Father's house. Let us ever keep our hearts open to the reception of God's truth and grace; let these melt the icicles clinging to our cold and weak natures, warm our affections, encourage us, and impress us anew with a realization of our own dependence and with a deeper, stronger, truer love for God and for earth's weary pilgrims to the "summer land."

LIFE—WHAT IS IT?

You quickly say it is nothing but a *flower* or a *song*; that as a "flower of the grass," it soon withers; that as a song, it is wafted away on the evening breeze. Then if it is a flower, let it be the rose of happiness, the lily of purity, or the dandelion—the pledge of blithesome May; nourish it, cherish it, train it, that it may bloom in beauty here and finally be transplanted in the "garden of delights." If it is a song, keep your voice clear and soft, and sweetly sing it to the tune, "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow."

You believe it is more like a *kaleidoscope*. Close your eyes to everything else, turn it in every direction, and each angle will present new beauties.

You say it is only a *bubble* floating on the bosom of time's turbulent sea. Then, ere it bursts, throw on the light and let the bubble reflect the hand of divinity.

You compare it to a *vapor*, a *span*, "a tale that is told." As a vapor, let it carry the fragrance of loving-kindness to the sin-sick soul; as a span, reach across it with the hand of charity; as "a tale that is told," may it be the same "old, old story of Jesus and his love."

You now regard it as a *composite thing*—a kind of mosaic. Then select such precious stones as humility, kindness, integrity, sympathy, patient endurance, fidelity, and charity, and arrange the colors to spell the words "God is love."

You call it a *play* on the great stage of action. Then play your part well. Do not, by your awkwardness or lack of skill, make your Trainer ashamed of you. The time of action is short; the effect may be unlimited. "God is the Author; men are only players. These grand pieces which are played upon earth have been composed in heaven."

Now you are considering life as a *pilgrimage* or *journey*. How unwise you are, then, if you stray from the right road and do not return till the twilight shadows gather thick and dark around your pathway! However, if numb and weary on the mountain you have to sleep in the snow, try to warm

that freezing form beside you, and thus you will both be benefited.

You say it is a *wilderness*, and you sing:

“This world’s a wilderness of woe.”

If you think thus, you should carry with you the torchlight of immortality, that you may keep out of the marshes and jungles and carefully avoid the pitfalls by the way.

You say it is a *desert*, with blazing sun and scorching sands. Look! Yonder is an enticing oasis, yonder is another, and still another. Go to them for rest and comfort, and there slake your mental thirst.

You say it is a dark, dismal *cloud*. Look for its silvery lining.

“Alas, what a heavy *burden* is life!” you dolefully cry. Then lighten it and brighten it as much as possible by casting off the superfluities. Assist your neighbor in bearing his burden, and God will help you to bear yours. Patiently carry it to him who in tears and blood has traveled the same road; humbly and prayerfully lay it at his feet; do as he directs, and he will give you rest.

“Life is a fearful *storm*,” you say. How little infatuated you are if you can sleep while your bark is being driven amidst unknown waters! Listen to the tempest’s voice, and see the lightning’s fiery tongue flash athwart the heavens! Arise, go and kneel on “Calvary’s bleeding brow,” place your hands together above your bowed head, and meekly sing:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.”

What is life? You say it is a little *rivulet* flowing down a mountain side over rocks and through deep gorges. Then, as you float down the stream, fringe its banks with flowers; sow them thick with seeds of loving-kindness.

As a broad, deep *ocean* you see it now. Be a lighthouse, so that when the storm-tossed mariner is “rocked upon the raging billows” you may warn him of the deadly breakers.

Your vision has suddenly contracted. You now see life as nothing more than a small, pale, delicate *plant*. Then remove it from the hothouse of your narrow opinions; give it the air and sunlight of God’s truth; let it be watered by the gentle dews of his grace; do not suffer it to be crowded with worthless weeds of worldly ambition to steal away its richest soil; forget not to fertilize it with the Christian graces.

Now you say it is a *garden* or *park*. True; and it contains not only its “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” but its forbidden fruit as well. It is both an Eden and a Gethsemane.

It is a *candle*, you have decided. Place it not “under a bushel,” neither behind a screen of gold, but upon a “candlestick;” then with it “search diligently” until you find some “lost coin” (lost soul), thus making the angels rejoice.

It is an *hourglass*. Well, “life is not measured by the time we live,” but by the good we do. “He lives twice

who lives the first life well." As one by one the little grains of sand pass through the glass, let them sparkle with deeds of kindness and love.

It is a tangled *skein*. Then "let patience have her perfect work."

Now it is more like a *ball of yarn*. Are you not busy knitting? "Click, click!" go your needles. Stitch by stitch your work is finished. Your ball will soon be unwound. See that your work is not rough and knotty. May your thread prove smooth and strong all the way through, not wound on a large center (heart) of worthless material. Such is the hypocrite's ball.

Now it is a *mixture*—a regular "bittersweet." Give thanks to God for the sweet, and with it try to sweeten the bitter.

Life is an *echo*. Then use words and tones you will not object to having repeated. Do not let the echo be like the sob of a mighty sea, but like an angel's song of peace and good will.

It is a *phonograph*. Are you willing for your life work to be preserved and given over and over to the promiscuous world?

Now it is a kind of *ore*—a peculiar composition of gold and silver, iron and clay; and Tennyson says:

"And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom,
To shape and use."

With chisel and file shape it as nearly like the divine image as you can, then leave it in the hands of the great Sculptor. "He will treat you right."

"'Life is but an empty *dream*,'" you have decided. Then feast on wholesome spiritual food, so the dream will not end in a frightful nightmare.

"It is merely a *shadow*," some one has whispered to you. Then stand not in the light of those who want to see, but stand where you can screen some one from the parching rays of persecution.

But your vision has again expanded. You are now gazing at a great *menagerie* composed of persons whose natures represent all kinds of animals. Then you be sure to keep on the plain of the highest ones. Do not cultivate the cat and dog nature—sly and stealthy or ready to bite, scratch, or snarl on the slightest provocation. Be not the parrot—merely an echo or imitator—with no ideas of your own; nor the stupid sponge, firmly stationed on the rock of doing nothing, absorbing all you can and keeping all you get; nor yet the vulture, always seeking that which is unclean and disagreeable. Be not the terrapin, carrying all your possessions on your back. Be not the monkey—merely a shrewd beggar, though a fine mimic; nor the swine, caring only for what you consume; neither the stinging wasp of scandal nor the kicking mule of stubbornness. By no means be the porcupine, with quills of sensitiveness projecting in every direction, ready to pierce even your very best friends. "Beware of dogs," "neither cast your pearls

before swine;” try to induce “the lion and the lamb” to be congenial. Be the ingenious ant, laying up your winter store at the proper time; and the gentle dove, carrying in your mouth the olive branch of peace instead of the tongue of slander. By all means avoid being the “dog in the manger” or a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

You represent life as a great *canvas*. See that it is stretched smoothly on a substantial frame, and you can paint thereon a superb picture; learn to mix your colors to advantage and handle your brush with skill and grace; bring out your high lights, deepen your shadows, then use your blender to soften the effect; let the frame be oak or walnut, bronze or gold; and when your painting is finished, it will be left hanging in the hall of your friends’ memory to remind them that your life was not a failure.

You say it is a *circle of seasons*. Spend the balmy springtime sowing the seed from which you desire to reap a bountiful harvest in summer and autumn; then in winter you will enjoy the golden fruits; and, having completed the circle, you will enter the spring of another existence.

You speak of it as a succession of *hills* and *valleys*. Climb the hills patiently, and the task will be easy. Many of the tallest mountains are only imaginary difficulties which vanish on approach. While you are in the valley, look upward for the stars.

But you are older now, and you view life as more real. You see in it much to do. You compare the world to a schoolroom, a workshop, a beehive, an art gallery. Then, with

Christ as your teacher, try to properly educate your heart; and be a student, not merely a school goer. Keep your tools bright by use; let them not rust in the tool chest. Be a working bee, not the despised drone to be stung from the hive in derision. See, by all means, that you make a good negative; then test your proof; see that it brings out the proper expression; use reliable chemicals and good material all the way through; and neglect not to give your picture the proper "finishing touch."

Now you are looking at life as a *building*. Very well. If you will lay an imperishable foundation, use none but the best material, see that the work is well done, then keep it well insured in the never-failing company of Heaven, your house will stand the storms of time.

You speak of the mystic *loom of life*, and say we are all weavers. Select a suitable design and imitate it, using colors that will not fade; for, as suggested by the sweet, but lamented, writer, "Ailenroc,"

"When the day is done, the loom is still,
And the arm no longer obeys the will;
When the nerveless hands the shuttles drop
And the tired feet the treadles stop—
Then, before the Master's eyes, unrolled,
Lies the long day's work heaped fold on fold."

You say it is a *race*, like that of Olympia. Then "lay aside every weight, . . . and run with patience." The victor's reward shall be a crown—not here, but at the end of the race; not of withering olive leaves, but of life evermore.

By this time experience has convinced you that life is a *battle*.

Then, my comrade, up and doing,
With bright armor—sword and shield!
Still aspiring, still pursuing,
Drive the foe from every field.

Arm yourself well for the conflict. Do not shrink back into your tent while the battle is raging, neither try to hide when your name is called on the muster roll. Stand firm at your post of duty. Lift your head and gird yourself for brave and cheerful toil. March when your Commander says, "Go;" stop at his command; fire when he says, "Fire;" "ground arms" and put your sword into its sheath at his bidding. Be sure you have enlisted in the right army, and keep on the proper uniform, lest you be mistaken for the enemy. Never prove traitor. Use proper weapons, then beware lest you fire at the wrong party. "Stonewall" Jackson was sorely wounded by his own men, who almost worshiped him, which injury probably led to his death. Many unconsciously fight and spiritually wound valiant soldiers in the Lord's army, when they really believe they are fighting Satan and his host. Lee spoke of it as losing his own right arm when Jackson fell. Thus our great Commander claims the injury when his soldiers are maltreated. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" As a good "soldier of the cross," avoid rashness; consider well; be vigilant; be brave; be faithful. Then, after the hardships of war are over, your rest will be sweet; your glory, bright after the darkness is past; your victory, grand after the

conflict is over. "There are victories to be won more glorious than those of the historic fields of the world's conflict—evil habits to be subdued, passions to be overcome, temptations to be resisted, and life consecrated to noble purpose." Avoid all warfare that brings carnage and bloodshed, but bravely fight in the army of the Lord.

You speak of it as a *watchtower*. Then, "watchman, what of the night?"

At last you think of life as one brief *day*. Then, for humanity's sake, place in it as little cloud and as much shine as possible. Life's sun, sinking in the west, "shines back on clouds unremoved and intensifies their blackness; but good deeds, spots of radiance, are even brighter because of his searching beams. Do not blacken the morning sky with evil deeds; do not, after a glorious morning, cut off the sun in his noonday splendor; do not, after a fine morning and glorious noonday, place along the evening horizon a somber cloud to overshadow those who have been watching your life with such intense anxiety, pleasure, and hope."

"Dost thou love life? Then squander not time, for that is the stuff life is made of."

FILLING THE GRAVE.

MUCH has been justly said and written concerning the large, warm heart of the Irishman—of his devotion and fidelity to those he loves. Live worthy of his esteem, and as a rule, he will almost die by you.

More than two decades ago one of Ireland's native sons, Mr. John Patterson, was employed by an old gentleman I well knew to do some farm work. He was alone and dejected, thousands of miles from home and relatives. The blue Atlantic—so broad, so deep—lay between him and the home of his youth. All his near relatives, except one sister, slept beneath British soil. He was among strangers, without money, and in feeble health. But the friendly steamer that landed him safe on America's soil did not fail to bring with him that large, faithful Irish heart, which soon won for him many friends. He became devoutly attached to the noble elderly couple who had shared with him their splendid, comfortable, and hospitable home, and he loved each member of the family. For a little grandson of theirs, then a wee infant, he soon began to manifest fond attachment, which grew stronger with the passing years. He would gladly linger in the grove around the country church and "take care of the baby" during services. When this babe was a little less than two years old, his friend was caring for him during the services of a protracted meeting, and one day let him go to see what he would do. The wee one quickly started toward home, not knowing he was so closely watched. After some distance the road diverged into three. The boy paused, turned this way and that, quickly surveyed the three roads, looked very serious for a moment; then, with a look of assurance, a brightened countenance, and quickened step, he started homeward, to the great delight of his kind watcher, who thought it marvel-

ous that his little charge could know which road he was in the habit of traveling. By this time the vigilant friend had permitted the child to get a good way ahead of him, and, being very feeble, found it rather difficult to overtake him. So he spoke excitedly to a man who was passing on a mule, "Head that boy!" which request was readily granted.

At any time when this child would see Mr. Patterson returning from work, he, with ready little feet and with chubby, dimpled hands uplifted, would run to meet him at the front gate, his prattling tongue joyfully exclaiming: "O, Pash! Pash!" No matter how far the man had walked or how hard and rough had been his work, he was never too tired to take the child into his arms, carry him into the house, and entertain him with a little fond play.

Years have sped away. Fleet-winged time has wrought many changes. Two other little jewels were set in that family ring. Years after this the ring was broken, and the first jewel dropped out. That boy was there no longer to brighten the lives of his parents, grandparents, or his good old friend. Near the same country church, two miles from that loved old home, to-day (February 1, 1902) a white mantle let down from the clouds keeps the cold north wind from his lowly bed in the "silent city," and a marble shaft tells us where his body lies, while loved ones sadly miss him from the fireside.

The devotion of this Irish friend had grown stronger and stronger, and was much appreciated by the boy and his par-

ents. After the little mound was raised, this man touchingly said to the weeping parents: "You need not be afraid of that grave's being neglected while I live." His word has proved true, as it always does. Month after month, year after year, he has carried his shovel two miles, filled every sunken portion of the grave, and watched after it with proverbial devotion. His long-continued attention is sufficient to cause others to say: "Behold how he loved him!" Sometimes the gentle zephyrs fan the cedars that wave over the inclosure, the mocking bird sings praises there, and the lark warbles a welcome to its mate; sometimes the dewdrop paints a little rainbow and throws kisses at the morning sun; sometimes the drought parches the clay lips that seal from human sight the once stalwart figure of that boy; but this same faithful watcher carries the key to the iron gate and forgets not his charge. The bodies of the dear old couple he so much loved now sleep in the same family inclosure; and their graves, as well as those of their departed children, are cherished, filled, and guarded by him with the same tender love. Sometimes frost nips the buds, paints the foliage, and drives the birds to the far-away sunny Southland, while on that hillside "the seeds of the future are sleeping under the leaves of the past;" but those hallowed mounds are not neglected. Sometimes when even the rippling streams are frozen over and the trees are brown and bare, he rides through bleak forest and barren meadow from the dear old cottage home to the churchyard to see if the graves need care.

When his earth life shall be ended, when those industrious hands shall have grasped for the last time their shovel and spade, when his worn-out body shall be sleeping on the same quiet hillside, may some thoughtful friend be left to see that his "grave is kept green;" for hard indeed is the heart that would neglect him. If living, I want to claim the pleasure of assisting in at least raising a marble shaft in his memory over his grave as near as possible to the graves he has so long and so tenderly watched.

For many years he has been a faithful soldier of the cross, keeping his armor far brighter than many with better advantages. We trust that he will live prepared for the blessed land that needs no graves.

PAY DAY.

Yes, pay day is coming by and by. How does your account stand? Have you had a reckoning? If you neglect this duty, you will be astonished when you go to make a settlement. Unless you keep a regular memorandum, your account will be greater than you think. How many times have you ever found it less than you expected? How often have you found it greater?

Occasionally our good and reliable merchants make a slight mistake, which they will as readily rectify when their attention is called thereto; but, as a rule, the error is ours. It is often hard for us to distinguish between our needs and our wants; so we many times buy articles we do not espe-

cially need, and which, therefore, make no vivid impression on our minds. Soon we forget having bought them; and when pay day comes and our attention is called to these little items, we are sometimes inclined to doubt the correctness of the statement; but on careful reflection, by looking over the list and observing the date of purchase, we, after a while, slowly and almost reluctantly call it to memory, and find that the merchant was only faithful to his trust.

A greater pay day is coming before long; and while we have time and opportunity, we had better be examining the accounts and ascertaining how our records stand. Have we kept a faithful memorandum? If not, we may be sure there is more charged against us than we imagine. Perhaps we have thoughtlessly purchased things just because we desired them and for which we had no special need; perhaps we did not even ask the price, but simply permitted the merchant to charge them to our account. When pay day comes, we may find that they were more costly than we expected, and were probably not genuine articles. We thought they were "solid metal," but we now ascertain that they are only plated with silver and gold, and endure but for "a season;" yet we must pay the full price.

Young lady, for a long time you have been going to the store and purchasing little articles, with the understanding that "papa will make it all right" with the merchant; but there is one account against you which your father cannot settle. It is your sin account. *You* must pay that account yourself,

and no reduction whatever will be made in consequence of its being "you."

Young man, your father has been "standing good" for you in your idle "trades." He has paid out many hard-earned dollars to get you out of trouble; he has settled many a store account and livery bill that you should not have incurred, rather than have his boy entangled in the litigation of the country. At that great reckoning your good old father cannot stand between you and the Judge.

Man, when you left those little children at home begging for food, clothing, and education, and that humble, faithful wife coaxing and pleading with you to stay with her and the little ones—I say, when you left them last night and went "up town" and bought that jug of intoxicating fluid, did you ask its cost? Did the runseller give you the price in dollars and cents? If so, he deceived you. Its price cannot be thus estimated. To the value he placed upon it you may add hungry children's pleadings, good wife's prayers and tears, your own mental depression and spiritual decline. This will still be a low estimate to place upon it, for it may cost you far more than this, and you may have to pay the full price—*your own soul*.

Thus with all our rude, wicked pleasures. They may be gold-tinted, but are not genuine; they are only gilded with the brilliancy of frivolity, which corrodes as soon as exposed to the light of candid investigation. Our faithful Judge sits enthroned on high and makes no mistakes. It is much safer to "count the cost" and "pay as you go." Then

when the time comes to "balance accounts," you will feel such sweet relief by hearing: "Well done, thou good and faithful customer! Your account is settled; you owe nothing. Moreover, this firm kindly offers a magnificent premium to those who purchase their goods and pay promptly. That premium is a crown of fadeless glory to be worn in the eternal paradise of God. Such is yours. Go to your reward."

THE PROOF SHEET.

FREQUENTLY when an article from my pen appears in print, I am shocked, mortified, and almost horrified at the errors I detect—mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or construction; mistakes I would gladly correct, if possible, before they meet the reader's eye. Sometimes these mistakes have been made by the publisher; sometimes, by myself; for both parties are human and liable to err. I would always gladly read the proof sheet and correct the errors, but seldom have this privilege. The errors go before the public, and are often placed to my credit, whether justly so or not.

It is thus in life. We make many mistakes; many others are made against us. Many of the mistakes we make we fail to realize at the time; many of those made against us we could probably correct if we knew it in time. We cannot possibly obtain a glance at the proof sheet, cannot republish the work of an hour or a moment; so the record goes before the public. Each day is a page, and at dawn it is blank, pure,

white. On it we write, either for weal or for woe. While writing, we should remember that we cannot see the proof sheet; therefore we should not use puzzling hieroglyphics, which might be incorrectly and mysteriously deciphered, but should write in an unmistakable hand and have our ideas so clear as to be distinctly understood.

The printer may innocently make mistakes (to err is human). Many times we cast merciless reflections on an inexperienced printer for his typographical errors. Think how many little pieces of type are picked up and arranged in preparing each column for the press! No wonder mistakes are made. You and I might not do half so well. We should try it and see before we say too much. The very easiest work is to find fault, and the severest critics are often the ones who know the least, especially about the subject considered. The school-teacher is unduly criticised, especially by some who have never taught; the young, inexperienced Christian is often condemned by those not doing half so well; the preacher is censured by some who do not know in which Testament to look for the book of Romans. If these unjust critics would only correct their thoughts—the "proof sheet" of their rough comments—before the harsh words escape their lips, what relief!

The printer should remember that a blemish on his paper, a misspelled word, an incorrect verb, or even an inverted letter, will attract more attention than many letters and words in their proper attitude. Likewise, we who wear the name of Christ should remember much is expected of

us, and any misstep or inconsistent act will attract more attention and receive more comment than many deeds of righteousness. Both should be careful to make as few blunders as possible. The publisher has one great advantage, however: he can inspect all his work; and, if he tries, he can correct his inaccuracies before they are brought to the public gaze; whereas in outer life our maneuvers are frequently made known to others as readily as to ourselves. In our private meditations we should change, modify, and correct our formulated plans, and thus save ourselves much trouble.

The publisher should not claim to do good work unless capacitated and determined to do so. A man should not claim to be a first-class worker in the great vineyard unless his work will justify the "well done." We usually know where we can have good printing done—by the samples sent forth; we usually know where to find genuine Christians—"By their fruits ye shall know them." In this life we may be held responsible for errors made by others. Many an innocent man has gone to the gallows or the guillotine; many martyrs, in consequence of fidelity to their God, have been consumed by the maddening flames or tortured at the Bridge of Sighs. The innocent Son of Mary was nailed to the cross in consequence of the mistakes of others. But let us not be discouraged. The great Keeper of life's record makes no mistakes. His publishing apparatus is always in perfect order; his mind, always clear. Hence the record will be true to life. If we could only be permitted

to glance at the proof sheets of our characters; if we could "see ourselves as others see us" and as we are viewed by the all-seeing Eye, doubtless many times we would blush and as many times turn pale, weep, and plead with the recording angel to let us correct our blunders; but doubtless he would calmly reply: "Your thoughts served as proof sheets for your characters; why did you not correct before sending to press? You had a perfect model; why did you not imitate it?"

HOW ARE YOU BUILDING?

I.

INTRODUCTORY illustration: Building a House.

Consider the plan, material, cost (weigh your pocket-book); employ workmen or a contractor; have a written agreement; let the work begin.

1. Foundation. Consider its importance; dig deep—down below the "frost line;" lay the foundation on solid clay or rock; make a firm support for the superstructure—a foundation "sure and steadfast," a foundation able to stand the fury of storms and sweeping floods.

2. Framework. Select only strong, sound, solid material; then see that all parts are well braced.

3. Carefully measure each piece of material.

4. Have all the work well done, leaving no "loose screws," no crevices to be hidden by additional molding.

5. See well to the covering; let it turn both rain and snow.

6. Look after the heating capacity. See to the chimneys and flues; let them not be mere smokestacks; they should both draw well and throw out heat.

7. Let the painting be well done, so that the building will not soon become weather-beaten. Consider durability as well as appearance.

8. Pay the workmen or the contractor not in promises alone; you are not satisfied with promised work.

9. Use taste and skill in furnishing your house. Harmony between house and contents should be considered.

10. Have the house and the furnishings well insured; compare companies, and patronize the one you believe most reliable.

11. Keep your dues thoroughly paid up; yet try to protect the property from damage. Do not be careless because of insurance.

II.

God has wisely constructed for each of us a house—the body, which is the temporal palace of the soul. He is the great Architect. He has “counted the cost;” he has wisely planned the structure, “like unto himself”—hence “up to date,” of good material, adapted to his purpose; he has laid the proper foundation; he has executed his plans in ways satisfactory to reasonable and uncomplaining mortals, but best understood by himself; he has selected strong, durable material (bones) for the framework; and he has wisely protected all the delicate parts (eyes, lungs, etc.) by proper bracing and projections. Each piece is meas-

ured, is an exact fit. This great Architect does joint work—makes no mistakes. When mistakes are made, some other agency is at fault.

The building is now well finished, and he has placed fire therein, has tested it, has breathed into the nostrils the breath of life. He has painted the building, has tinted it with the glow of health; he has inhabited it with a living spirit—the man proper.

Now, having done his work well and provided all kinds of material, he leaves man to furnish the building according to his own taste. He has placed before him the good, the bad; the wholesome, the poisonous; the elevating, the degrading; the perfect, the deformed; the beautiful and sublime, the homely and ridiculous; also dirt in mournful abundance. Each piece of material is labeled and its qualities are described. Full and free instructions are given as to how the building can be fitted up for the happiness and well-being of its possessor, also for his misery and destruction. So if man selects the wrong furnishings, he alone is to be censured. God does not force him to select the best; for this would deprive him of volition, without which man would not be man.

III.

Character building is only furnishing the house we live in, the structure God has erected as the temporal residence of the soul. An ideal character is pictured out before us. We have explicit directions for imitating him, and the material is supplied.

In arranging a room, we do not first crowd it with heavy furniture, which will have to be lifted or rolled from place to place while we spread, stretch, and tack down the carpet. We first carefully put down the carpet, see that it is straight and free from wrinkles, then bring in and arrange the other articles according to taste and convenience. Neither do we fill the apartment with articles which are not only expensive, but also useless, ugly, unclean; which will not only soil our apparel and other things coming in contact with them, but will endanger our health, our intellects, our morals.

In establishing a character, dig deep; lay a solid foundation on the bed rock of sincerity—not on the shaky, miry quicksands of doubt and fickleness. Spread your carpet carefully; stretch out the wrinkles of skepticism and hypocrisy; see that it is straight and smooth; then make it secure. Now bring in your furniture, gracefully arrange your drapery, and decorate your walls. The inhabitant of this wonderful character structure, also, is permitted to select for himself. Before him, side by side, are placed good and evil—the tree of life and the fruit forbidden. Of which will he partake? One is labeled, “Eat and live forever;” the other, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” In other words, bountiful material is at his door, both good and bad. He may fill his house with the choicest articles, and be happy and useful; or he may fill it with vile rubbish, and be miserable throughout time and eternity. He may choose as he will. Which do you think the man will select? Before him are placed humility, love,

integrity; arrogance, hatred, falsehood. Which will he choose? Suppose he gradually, but knowingly and voluntarily, collects into his new, clean palace all the foul rubbish it can contain. Suppose he refuses the chaste and selects the vile; lines his house with unsightly pictures and paintings, then fills his brain with obscene literature. Suppose he is careful to keep his eyes on that which is wicked, his feet treading the paths of vice, his voice tuned to unchaste music (?). Suppose, instead of gathering sweet, wholesome herbs, he looks around until he finds a filthy, nauseating weed, then chews that and casts from his mouth the disgusting saliva; again, dries some of the weed, and, with its assistance, converts his throat into a chimney and his nose into a double smokestack. Suppose he opens wide his throat and swallows the demon drink, when he knows full well that it will derange his physical make-up and spread cobwebs thick over his brain. Suppose he now opens those polluted lips and thence pours forth bitter oaths and violent rebukes against those intrusted to his care, cursing even the God who made him after such a noble pattern and provided him with such bounty. Suppose he crowds into his beautiful building the very elements that the book of instruction plainly says will cast him into an abode of everlasting misery and woe. Suppose he refuses to pay the insurance, denies the debt, finds fault with the Master Builder, harshly criticises the plan and work, defying the very powers of Heaven, yet claiming a full share of its glory.

Does man ever act thus?

IV.

Let us glance at some of the rough, impure, unsightly articles of furniture that many persons have selected for the temporal homes of their souls—persons, too, with reasonable intelligence and fine advantages. If a man has no mind, he is not responsible, and, therefore, is excused; if he has a little sense and realizes he has but little, we are in deep sympathy with him, whereas if he has but little sense and thinks he has much, we have no patience with him. So, friend, if you have but little sense, try to have enough to know you have but little. We are speaking of persons with good natural endowments and reasonably good opportunities, and who, in spite of these, will squander time and advantages and fit up the abode of their souls with that which is unworthy.

One piece of this furniture so commonly selected is a large trunk of *insincerity*. This contains all kinds of falsehood, fickleness, flirtation, pretense, and deception, and is very difficult to manage. If you try to raise it, sit down on it, or move it, it is so "tricky" it will fly up, slip away from you, assume some other form, or dash at you and thrust you with its forked tongues of fire; it will blind you and throw you, you know not whither. It is dangerous; it is in no way trustworthy. You had better let it alone. Its owner is the most difficult person to deal with. You cannot lead him to a higher life or instill into him the possibilities and principles of the same. He is fickle—stands on a "shaky" foundation. As a boy, he has no "stick-to-

it-iveness;” he is earnest and excited over every new undertaking, but soon becomes restless and tired, then changes to something else. As a man, he has no steadfastness, no firmness.

Then, boys and girls, first put into your character edifice that bed-rock *sincerity* which will have a tendency to keep other things in proper place. In all the relations of life manifest the quality it indicates. At the foundation of pure character you will find a good heart, benevolent feelings, and a well-balanced mind. Be sure you are right, then be firm, steadfast, immovable. Thus you may live an open-faced life, with an unfettered conscience. You may look the world of mankind in the face, and proudly, happily, though not arrogantly, say that in this respect you are free.

V.

Another vile article of furniture that many select and appropriate to themselves is that large cabinet of *murder*. Open its various divisions and see what it contains. Here is a large drawer filled with homicide—records of persons killed in various manners. Some have been murdered through malice; some, through envy; many have committed slow suicide by imprudence in eating and dress; others, through the use of opiates; many have swallowed the red-eyed demon, the viper drink, and close by their side lie the blackened characters who “put the bottle to their neighbors’ lips.” In another drawer we find character murder. Some of this has been accidental, but many of the unfortu-

nate victims have been stabbed with the poisonous tongue of slander and insinuation.

Outnumbering all these are the multiplied instances of time killing. These are scattered profusely throughout the various apartments of the cabinet. Some of them are labeled "Study;" some, "Fun;" and many, "Work;" but the true label on each would be "Lost Opportunity," for

"How often we are grieving and longing all in vain
For a blessed opportunity that will never come again!"

The most ludicrous piece of the unnecessary furniture is that comical little *tickle box*. It is possessed by a girl in her early teens. The boys borrow and use it sometimes, but they soon willingly return it to the owner, who can play upon it with astonishing ease. She giggles at this, that, and the other; at her own wit or that of any one else. She giggles if anything either funny or melancholy is said; in either case it is giggle, giggle, giggle. Her first cousin has a *whining machine*, and it is hard to tell which is less to be envied. One whines and the other giggles, then one giggles and the other whines. The sighs and half-crying tones of the whiner are calculated to distress you, I know; for they make you think she is on the verge of despair, just ready to go to the poorhouse or fall into a suicide's grave. She whines if she is poor, for "she needs money, and needs it bad;" she whines if she is rich, for "money is such a care;" she whines because it rains and then because the sun shines bright; she whines at the weather, at anything and everything, until we "feel so

sorry for her," when really we are the ones who need sympathy. She enjoys whining, but it is distressing to her hearers, and almost as disgusting as the noisy "he-he-he" of that little "tickle box." But hush! "Speak of an angel"—here comes our little girl again, with her "tickle box." She giggles at her cousin's whining; she giggles when you tell her you are sick, and, in a giggling giggle, tells you she is "awfully sorry." She has a brother, known as the "grinning lad." He grins while she giggles, then she giggles while he grins and says: "Heh!" They grin and giggle all the time their whining cousin whines, then she keeps a timely accompaniment by whining while they giggle and grin.

Look around at more of the useless furniture. You will spy some rough, soiled bundles scattered here and there, filled with extortion, covetousness, deceit, "and such like." There lies one burst open. Its contents have swelled, like hot rice, until the cord has broken and the foul contents are exposed. That bundle is labeled "Exaggeration," and it is fondly cherished by many. When we see it, we are reminded of the man who was arraigned before the church for exaggeration. His reply was: "Yes, brethren, I deeply regret to know this is my besetting sin; and I have shed barrels and barrels of tears over it." Again, we are reminded of the man who described a certain house in London. He was anxious that people should know he had "been somewhere" and had seen some of the world's wonders. He was given to exaggeration, and a

friend had agreed to always remind him of it. He began by saying: "The house is nine hundred and ninety-nine feet long, six hundred and eighty-four feet high, and [just here his friend touched him on the foot]—and three feet wide." When his hearers expressed utter astonishment at the odd proportions, he said: "It is a tape factory." Children, let us be careful, lest we waste too many words building "tape factories."

Near that ugly bundle is another bundle that likewise has swelled enormously and burst open. On it is written, "Uncontrolled Temper;" and from it issues a dark-green, poisonous stream of unkind words and profanity. Turn quickly away from it, lest some of it touch and poison you; then ponder in your heart why even one person in all the wide world will have that bundle in his home. Yet some of our very best neighbors, and—shall I say it?—even some church members, actually seem passionately fond of that foul, uncouth bundle. A boy in Boston, quite small for his years, was once jeered by four large men, one of whom said: "You will never amount to much, will never be strong enough to do much work; you are too small." The boy kindly, but quickly, replied: "Gentlemen, I know to my sorrow that I am small and weak, but I can do one thing that none of you can do: I can keep from swearing."

Look to your left! There, on a high marble base, sits a large, attractive-looking cask of some kind. Really, it looks like a magnificent soda fountain. We are tempted to partake of its exhilarating contents. Let us go nearer and see what

it is. Look! It is boiling over. See how brilliant it is as it beads and sparkles in the sunlight! What a delicious, refreshing drink! Even the cask containing it looks so cool and enticing, its sides moist, as the hot air from the outside is condensed by its contact, forming great crystal drops which chase each other in little cool streamlets down its side. It is so inviting; it is a fountain free; it is freely flowing for you and for me. We have only to hold our cups and they shall be filled. Let us take a drink. Fie! The loathsome, disgusting stuff! It is nauseating; it is contemptible. Its name is "Egotism." Do you know of any one—farmer, drummer, merchant, lawyer, or even preacher—who has brought the cask of egotism into the earthly home of his soul?

VI.

Then there is that pernicious old *grumble box*. Why does any one select it? It is as old as time, is of no use whatever, is by no means ornamental, and is one of the very worst enemies to home happiness. The first thing we see on opening it is a smaller box containing the powder of *sensitiveness*. Did you ever see that low species of mushroom which swells up like a toad and is sometimes rudely called "the devil's snuff box?" Yes; I know you have seen it, especially if you have ever lived in the country. Squeeze it gently when it is thoroughly ripe, and it will burst. If you are not careful, its contents, like other bad snuff, will fly right into your face and eyes, making a lasting impression. Thus with the sensitive box: if you squeeze it

even gently, it will burst, and the powder will fly, like snuff, into your own eyes or like ashes thrown windward. It will cause intense pain that will often reach your very heart. Be careful. Do not touch it, lest it fly to pieces, like a touch-me-not, or shrink away, like the sensitive brier, or strike at you, like the quills of an angry porcupine. If possible, refrain from speaking while near it; for many times even the soft vibrations of the voice of love will agitate its foul contents, burst the soft box, and the powder will fly, like disturbed thistle seed, and will sometimes mingle with other combustibles of kindred natures; then all will ignite, and—O!—what a dreadful smoke they create!

You will be surprised that this little "grumble box" can contain so much disagreeable rubbish. Do not touch it; but, with lips closed and hands behind you, venture to lean over a moment; peep cautiously into the box and view its contents. Besides the small box of sensitiveness, you will see large quantities of fault-finding, evil forebodings, borrowed trouble, etc.

Some of the disagreeable contents of the box originated near the beginning of time, when a young man was reprimanded for killing his innocent brother. Since then man has seemed prone to deny being his "brother's keeper," has lived too much for self, has wanted to do exactly as he pleased, and has formed the Cainlike habit of pouting or grumbling if prohibited. This pernicious habit has been multiplied almost to infinity. Its name is "Legion," and in many instances it has become epidemic, contagious, he-

editary, and chronic. It accompanies some persons from the cradle to the grave. The infant will object if the light is put out; the little boy or little girl will sometimes complain when asked to get out of bed in time for breakfast, then throughout the day will likewise object when asked to do the little chores to relieve the poor, tired mother. Many, many times will that loving, self-sacrificing, weary, broken-down, and almost invalid mother draw water, carry wood, or make fires rather than ask that stout, rosy-cheeked little lad or lassie to quit play or even leave the cozy fireside to relieve her. Why? Because she would rather do the work twice, would rather exhaust her already tired muscles, than bear the unpleasant murmurings that so often follow her requests. Moreover, those complaining words from the lips of a dear, darling child burn like embers in a mother's heart, and work ruin to her shattered nerves, thus doing far more injury than the work would do her good. If those sweet, rosy lips of childhood could only realize the many warm kisses of affection they received from that doting mother before they were old enough to be loved by others; if they could only know of the tender watch care, the intense anxiety, the sleepless nights, the scalding tears at different times during sickness of babyhood; if they could only know how much pains have been taken in trying to train them to speak aright; if those lips could only look into that heart of unshed tears when they speak in harsh, ungrateful tones to that fond mother, doubtless when next tempted to speak thus, they would voluntarily lock themselves securely

against that unkind word and not let it escape. Oftentimes the dear children mean no harm by these thoughtless complaints. They love their mother dearly, and do not want to neglect her. Really, they expect to do the work she requests of them, but it seems that they have to prefix it with some sour objections. It is a pity to thus spoil so much of the sweetness of childhood, depriving both the children and the parents of a large portion of the bliss they would otherwise enjoy. Probably the child is just beginning to play some long, tedious game, and is cheery-faced, with eyes bright, full of glee, happy as a free birdie, when called to do something for mother. "Wait a minute till I finish this game," is the impatient reply. After ten minutes of weary waiting, the mother calls again. She calls the third or fourth time. Now the child comes—slowly, reluctantly, with countenance fallen, long face, knit brow, projecting lips, and with that doleful question: "What do you want?"

Many such children are only thoughtless and indifferent, not realizing that it is any more than a parent's duty to do all the chores and let them have a "jolly good time." One common form of this complaint is that other children have a better time than they. They fail to realize that a pair of little arms lovingly encircling her neck, a kiss of affection, and a word of gentle sweetness from those same precious lips, having exchanged a pout for a sunny smile, would cost but little, would work wonders in that tired mother's brain and be a balm to her discouraged heart. Love, though not

blind to faults, is ready to forgive; and, as expressed by Phæbe Cary: "Sometimes one smile can glorify a day." Mother love regards children as little cherubs to help to preserve her, and their innocent smiles help her to bear up under the ills and misfortunes of life. Mother love will follow the child, regardless of his grumbling, through sickness or health, poverty or wealth; through prosperity or adversity; through the palace grand or the prison cell. With him it will ascend either the tall ladder of fame or the convict's scaffold. Ordinarily the child should never doubt for one moment the sincere love of a mother or father.

When children yield to the unpleasant habit of murmuring, it will unconsciously grow on them. It is like stirring the cup with an icicle: it grows colder and colder all the while. At last they will begin to complain when reminded of their evil habits or of the necessity of taking care of their clothes or their health. As they approach manhood and womanhood, they begin to criticise the community, society, the country, and the church. If one obstacle is removed, they search closely and critically until they find another. So it is grumble, grumble, grumble. It is said that "every time a sheep bleats it loses a mouthful." Think of how much joy and good we lose by the pernicious habit of sulking or murmuring!

Strange to say, if you will look around carefully, you will find at least a small "grumble box" in almost every household. It has rather a homely name, I admit; but its name is decidedly too good for the box and its de-

testable contents. Little boy or little girl, examine the furniture in your home and see if there is any "grumble box." If so, look into it carefully and see if you can find your picture. If it is there, take it out quickly, before your parents find it in such bad company. Father, mother, is your picture in that box? If I mistake not, I see the likenesses of many, if not most, of us—some, photographed on the box lid; others, old-fashioned daguerreotypes, showing ancient date, but still true to life—chronic grumblers. Do you not see the pictures? Look again!

Yonder is another droll piece of furniture. Look over there in that corner! What is it? It resembles a "flying jenny." See how it spins round and round, fast enough to make your head swim! "Five cents a ride!" No; read that sign again. It says: "Free ride!" Let us try it. "Halt!" But it will not halt. The manager says we must jump on while it is going, but we will not do that. There are plenty on board, without us, and we do not care for the "sour grapes," anyway. We see what it is now; its name is "Hobbyhorse," and we had better stay off, lest it throw us over the brink of destruction. The difference between a real horse and a hobbyhorse is that the one can usually be stopped, while the other cannot, or usually is not.

VII.

You will likewise be astonished when you examine some of the other furniture selected by responsible men and women and brought into their character homes. Here sits

a large basket of slighted work, labeled "A Lick and a Promise." It shows it has received the "lick," but "promise" is always future, you know. Most of our homes contain "lick-and-promise" baskets.

Yonder is a little dark something on a high perch near the ceiling. It looks half starved; it is so shriveled or wrapped up in itself that we can scarcely see it, and the one who labeled it was too saving with his ink to write the name distinctly. It somewhat resembles a screech owl, and perhaps is one, for its eyes are its most conspicuous feature. Let me see. Lend me your glasses, please. O, yes! Now I see. Its name, "Stinginess," is right between its big, glassy, glaring eyes. Hugged close under its left wing, near its heart, is the "miser," peeping out between the feathers, looking for a penny; but he is too small for you to see. Do not strain your eyes looking for him.

Laziness lounges over there in the opposite corner. He forgets that "sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright." He has just been aroused by the breakfast bell. Do you not see him rubbing his eyes? He is usually awake at mealtime; but often, when his appetite has not been sharpened by labor, his breakfast is not very inviting. He thinks his wife ought to go and prepare a special dish to "tempt his appetite," whereas really the very best thing to do for it is to let it rest a while, as his body is doing. It is not fair to keep his appetite working hard all the time his body rests.

It has been tempted entirely too much already—perhaps last night at supper.

Near Laziness is Theft, with large wings outstretched, ready to dart at everything that is left unwatched. He will not only steal our purses, but will also steal our opportunities, our talents, and our souls. The ugly rogue takes special delight in preying upon the unguarded moments we carelessly let fly. His double cousin is the *eavesdropper*, who is too well known to need description. He spends much of his time around the telephone, catching gossip “on the wing.”

In the center of the room is a large, deep basin of stagnant fluid—Chronic Melancholy. It never sees light, hence is full of evil forebodings—borrowed trouble. In the corner sit two churns, like twin sisters, with their never-tiring dashers forever going. They are “churning up” the faults of their neighbors, their school-teachers, their physicians, their county officials, their preachers, their church. If one becomes a little tired, it slightly checks its dasher a few moments; while the other kindly doubles its speed, so no time will be lost.* These twin churns are, respectively, named “Tattling” and “Backbiting,” and without them the world would lose much—gossip.

Yonder sits a queer-looking something. It looks like a large yellow cat when a little black dog comes into her presence. You know how the cat “swells up her back,” raises her bristles, growls, squalls, and then dashes at the dog as if wanting to scratch his eyes out; and she does

scratch, too. This vicious creature is Jealousy—a disagreeable and dangerous character. She has a twin sister named “Envy,” who is even more to be dreaded, inasmuch as she is stronger and more determined in her low pursuits. She will reach down lower and resort to meaner things in order to carry out her evil purposes. The two so closely resemble that many of their intimate friends cannot distinguish them. They are so very disagreeable it is astonishing that people will receive them into their homes. “Jealousy is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.” In the language of another: “Jealousy is said to be the offspring of Love; yet unless the parent makes haste to strangle the child, the child will not rest until it has poisoned the parent.” “Envy turns pale and sickens if even a friend prevails.” “Bare envy withers at another’s joy and hates that excellence it cannot reach.” By cherishing either of these passions we are only blowing the fire that burns us and kindling it more and more. We are acknowledging our own inferiority as compared with those we envy, for “envy is a kind of praise.” We envy none except those we consider our superiors in the qualities envied, and thus make the distance between us and them even greater. The large dog scarcely ever barks at the train; the little one frequently does.

Look under the bed of Disobedience to Parents, and you will see outstretched on the floor, face downward, the little Pouting Machine. It is not a very noisy machine; indeed, it is often perfectly quiet, except a low “snubbing,” like

difficult breathing. Sometimes even this ceases, and it seems that the little machine has stopped for want of breath. Turn it over quickly, and you will see its face drawn into a score of wrinkles. Be careful! It is "tricky." The band sometimes flies off, and the spokes fly out of joint instantly. It is little, but it may scratch you violently or kick you like a deranged gun. It can be made a good little machine, however. It only needs "boxing." Little friend, be agreeable, or stay by yourself. If you are going to pout, crawl under the bed, out of sight; then do not scratch or kick. Do not be so sour that your very countenance and voice will curdle the hearts of those who look at you or have to hear you speak; do not poison the atmosphere of your friends and neighbors with your own unfortunate or disagreeable environments.

Yonder is the queerest thing of all. No one can describe it, for it changes too often. It makes you think you cannot possibly live without it; yet try to grasp it, and it is gone; pursue it, and it flies beyond your reach; attempt to imitate it, and it assumes some other form. You think it beautiful, "perfectly lovely." You select it as a model and hurriedly collect materials to make something that will resemble it; but by the time you have finished your work the model has changed color, shape, and proportions until your attempt looks out of date and ridiculous. About the nearest you can attain to success is to have some kind of "snap-shot" picture arrangement; and the first time the object seems still, draw your "trigger" instantly. There

will, even then, be a kind of double impression in the picture; but it will look very natural, will serve to fill space in the "Bon Ton." They tell me this is a noted goddess, and that those worshipping at her shrine by far outnumber those who bow submissively to King Immanuel. She is a queer-looking creature, to say the least, and dresses so comically. Sometimes she wears a collar so high and stiff that she almost has to stand on a table and tiptoe to see over it. It actually makes her turn her head as if there was a large carbuncle on the back of her neck. It makes a red ring around her neck, and sometimes causes the muscles of the face to look distorted. It seems to be trying to usurp authority over chin and ears by commanding them to give up their positions and take a seat higher up on the head. The next time you look at her, probably her dress will not have any neck at all. She is as changeable as the March wind, and commands us as she pleases. We "hear the sound thereof," and where she leads us we will follow as closely as we reasonably can, even from the sublime to the ridiculous. Poor, dependent creatures we! The name of this goddess is "Style," and a tyrannical sovereign is she. But, strange to say, temples have been erected in honor of this ungodly goddess throughout the land; at least a small one is found in every home; and subjects are continually worshipping at her shrine.

Over there on the washstand is a little brown jug of spirits—the "I-will-and-I-won't," "You-shall-and-you-shan't" spirits. These spirits are frequently partaken of by differ-

ent members of the family, handed freely from one member to another, then back, again, and again. After their cups have been filled and emptied frequently, each participant returns to the washstand, washes his hands, and, Pilate-like, declares himself innocent—free from the contents of the ugly little jug, which bears the right label, "The Last Word," or "Retaliation."

Have you noticed that large, inflated balloon? It is the hypocrite, puffed with the gascous ideas of self-importance—the "big-I-and-little-you" principle. He is a regular Pharisee, publicly thanking God that he is not like other men. On the contrary, other men may consistently thank the Lord that they are not like he is—a "whited sepulcher." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" But we must not examine this balloon too closely, lest we puncture its beautiful covering and cause it to shrivel to nothingness. Another reason for staying aloof from the hypocrite is that he stands on a loose plank—the trapdoor of falsehood—just barely strong enough to sustain his own light weight. If a single pound of investigation should be added, the trapdoor would give way, and down would go the balloon, hypocrite and all. We have looked at this pernicious furniture long enough, anyway. We might come to the conclusion that all homes are filled with just such stuff as this, and nothing better, which would be a most glorious mistake.

Let us now visit the schoolroom and see how things appear there.

VIII.

From kindergarten to classic hall the student is building day by day. Tools are furnished, directions are given, overseers are appointed. Each student builder should have rooms in his structure for language, mathematics, sciences, and literature; also for resolution, honesty, uprightness, and truth. His motto should be, "Purpose and Determination," and should hang at the door of his heart. He should provide himself with improved text-books, also with the best books of reference; then, comparing wise men's views, should sift them carefully and cautiously, refuse the decaying theories and doubtful opinions, and keep only the infallible.

The world is an open field, and the resources of mind are infinite. How strange that all students do not enjoy building wisely and securely! They should see well to the fundamental principles, which, sad to say, are to-day, in many places, being woefully neglected. How often we hear the most astonishing blunders in English made by those who stand before the world as standard bearers from our college halls, those whose life work is to teach the young tongue how to talk! These errors are most frequently in the very first principles of language—in the use of verbs and pronouns. The double subject, the singular "we," the objective "I," and the nominative "me" are as common as slang among some elite college graduates. It would certainly be wise for the teacher to watch more closely and try to correct these blunders in the language of his students, and thus

he would doubtless become more accurate himself. Correct the little school goers to-day for saying "papa—he," "mamma—she," and in many instances they will cry out, "Pleonasm!" and thus try to justify the most ridiculous blunders.

The active, hopeful, joyful period of college days should be more sacredly used; should have a sound, solid basis; then good judgment should be exercised in selecting material for building. Brutish sport and the demoniac of dangerous games, which coarsen the nature and blunt the finer sensibilities, should be strictly avoided. As some one has said: "Students do not need football, with bruises, fights, broken limbs, and death. There is but little common sense, and no cultivation for their higher natures, in such selfish, brutish sports." The games and study should be cheerful, upbuilding, and calculated to instill self-respect, at the same time maintaining justice to others. "The college student who follows an ideality of manhood is the best representative of the coming man." He is one who has learned to think. Many visions of such a young man have grown into reality, to the utter astonishment of the average school goer. "A country without slavery, without duels, with educated women, with thought flying over the world as rays of light, with men talking with voice across the continent, was only a vision fifty years ago; it is a reality now." Another fifty years may witness changes as great as these, and even greater. Who will bring them about? Who but those noble young men and young women who at home, at school, at

work, are learning to think high and wide and deep; who see in life something brighter and more real than the mists of mere classic honor, which many obtain without meriting?

The wise student builder will not fear examinations and finals. The closing day will be to him, in many respects, the merriest day of all the glad school year, and will be hailed with unbounded joy—not alone because of vacation and freedom from study, but also because of freedom of conscience and knowledge of useful work in sight. Happy that student with visions of his own, that student who has learned to think! Though he may be quiet now, the world will hear from him later on.

"Think for thyself. One good idea
But known to be thine own
Is better than a thousand gleaned
From fields by others sown."

IX.

As in the mental and moral, so in the spiritual, character, each individual is largely responsible for his own edifice. Each spiritual heart is a temple wherein God may dwell. Each person is a workman, with tools provided, and is daily building. He should select the firm foundation, the bed rock of God's eternal truth, with Christ as the chief corner stone; then he should examine carefully each piece of material he places thereon, such as faith, virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

When Mr. J. F. Robertson arranged to build the church at Crockett Mills, Tenn.—that splendid edifice which is

a true specimen of the godly works of Mr. Robertson and his family—he spoke to the contractor thus: “Now, sir, you may place in these walls just as many soft, inferior bricks and bats as you please; but just as sure as even *one* goes in, and I find it out, I will not pay you a cent.” Suffice it to say the work was not slighted.

Each Christian is building a spiritual temple. He should beware of soft bricks, crumbly stones, unseasoned timbers; and he should use plenty of cement, screws, and nails, that his structure be strong and steady. Reader, have you any soft bricks in your edifice that may crumble and fall from their places when touched by the finger of investigation, oppression, temptation, or persecution? In our family residence we have one peculiar chimney, a few of whose lower bricks evidently contain saltpeter, or something similar, absorbed from the earth. These have become soft and crumbly, and roaches and crickets are frequently found nibbling at them. Occasionally it becomes necessary to remove some of the worst bricks and fill their places with others. Be assured, kind reader, that if your spiritual character is composed of soft, half-burned, or porous bricks, containing too much of the weaker minerals or alkalis absorbed from the earth, the crickets and roaches of temptation, persecution, and reproach will continually nibble at you, until, particle at a time, you fall, and great will be the fall. Such material scarcely ever falls a whole brick at a time, but crumbles away, little by little, always giving an appearance of dilapidation. Sometimes its infection seems

to be spreading and affecting the adjoining bricks, in which case it is gently, but necessarily, removed and other material substituted.

Too many whose names are enrolled as spiritual builders seem to regard their edifice complete as soon as the foundation is laid. Imagine a man living in a house (?) with only a floor—no walls, no roof, no furniture! When the July sun, with its yellow beams, shall scorch his cheeks and almost boil the blood in his veins; when the floods shall come and the cold rain shall fall in torrents on him; again, when December shall hiss with its northern breath; when great ice stones shall pelt him from the lowering clouds; when a thick, snowy mantle shall wrap him close, as in a winding sheet, then—O, then—will he realize his error and will try to complete his house; but too late, too late!

No spiritual work avails anything unless built on the foundation Rock. Again, this Rock alone is not sufficient. Imagine a man going to judgment with a foundation and no building or with a building having no foundation!

If our destiny is already eternally fixed, we can do nothing; therefore we should not be held responsible. If all will be saved regardless of action, why try to do anything beyond fulfilling moral requirements? Again, why admonish us to stand firm, "be steadfast, immovable," to be careful lest we fall? But the Lord says: "Hear and do." He also says: "All that are in the graves shall . . . come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection

of damnation." He also says: "Depart," "Vengeance," etc., because they have done nothing; "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Let us all see that we have selected the proper foundation—Christ; let us wisely build thereon according to divine directions. Then, when our spiritual edifice is completed, we can step from its highest pinnacle—*home*.

X.

Boys, girls, you are erecting character structures day by day. As the quiet moments build the years, so your everyday actions build your character. You are building intellectually, morally, spiritually—building for eternity.

Yours may be a castle grand
Or a wreck upon the sand.
"Then build it clean and high and broad;
Build it for the eye of God."

"When a mason builds a wall, the course of bricks he laid yesterday is the foundation on which he is laying another course to-day." Likewise, what you build on your character walls to-day serves as the basis on which to place to-morrow's work. God has kindly given each of you a nice little cottage of your own, far more valuable than a brick or stone palace. It is a convenient house, with rooms suited to all the virtues and accomplishments necessary to make you happy and useful. It has rooms especially adapted to virtue, justice, and truth; for these little "deities of life" will need to hold many private counsels in

solving the problems of your conduct. They should have large, free rooms in the heart of every boy and girl, and it is not a safe young man or young woman who will bar or lock the heart's door against them. I said you were building character. You are either building or tearing down. Which are you doing? Reflect a moment. Within the last year or two have you formed any habit that is useless and even in the slightest degree demoralizing? If so, right now have the manly heroism to lay it aside. You are doubtless to some extent its master now; but if you do not crush it, it will be your master by and by. Is your character better or worse than it was one year ago? Are you trying hard to improve it or carelessly permitting it to go down? Are you trying to become a man or a nothing? If you strive earnestly for nobility of character, you will not fail of your reward. The good of earth will either love or detest the habits you are forming. Which shall it be? With temporal blessings and with God on your side, you are his millionaires. Then take advantage of this, and be something. Do not let your character house be an empty shell. You can make it either a prison from whose gloom you cannot escape or a vast palace filled with all that can delight. If it is now a desirable palace, you can cause it to lose some of its bright coloring and gilding every day until naught will remain but faded remnants of its pristine beauty. On the other hand, if your life thus far has been only a kind of prison—an abode of gloom—you are privileged to break down the bars and open the prison doors by obedience to

God's spirit of truth and grace, which will then set your own fettered spirit free. Then joy will naturally beam from your countenance like jets of light. You will be happy. How sweet the consolation arising from the memory of a well-spent life! As Socrates says: "Be the very man you wish to appear." "Make yourself necessary to somebody," says Emerson. Leave off the "superfluity of naughtiness" and cherish all that will beautify and enrich your soul. Use your will, yet guard your will; for it is the citadel of your character. The "I will" and the "I won't" will continue to chase each other all along the avenues of your existence until you take a positive stand for the right in each virtue. According to your will power will your character be; according to your character will your destiny be.

Then hunt out the sources of power and weakness in your own character. The very "thorn in the flesh" may be made the source of your greatest power for good. Set a strong watch at every character gate of your heart. "Do not let Satan make you believe that you are good enough; this is one of his strongest chains." Do not say you are invulnerable to temptation. If you feel yourself too meek to yield, think of Moses; if too holy, consider David; if too patient, think of Job; if too wise, think of Solomon; if too strong, look at Samson. You may have in your character some weak point you have never discovered—one that has never been tested—and in an hour when you are least expecting "Delilah" may cry out, "The Philistines be

upon thee, Samson!" and you may be suddenly shorn of your strength.

Thoughts, purposes, plans, words, and actions are the principal stones or bricks used in building character, hence in determining destiny. As you arrange your character structure, it constantly discloses your inward self. Your faults and failings, as well as your noble deeds, are laid bare to the scrutinizing eye of the outer world, and your heart dwindles when it comes in contact with small things and narrow interests. The greatest man is he who chooses and follows the right, who wins love by his own wooing. The pleasure of doing good is the only one that never wears out. About all the benefit we derive from the temporal life (besides its common blessings) is the result of being good and doing good, together with that grand social feature—all those precious fascinations connected with home and radiating therefrom until they embrace all humanity. This nobility of purpose, carried into effect and cheered by the blessed hope of a bright forever, certainly makes life worth living.

Let not your life be stained by crime. Never try to acquire fame and popularity by "puffs" either begged or paid for; never let any one say he has "dragged you up;" and be still more careful never to let any one drag you down. The door of success is labeled "Push." Then, if need be, push your way through thorns and brambles; hoe your own row; fight your own battles; shoot the "bear" yourself; chop, blaze, or carve your own way up

the hill of success. As regards this life, let a spotless character be your aim, my boy, my girl. Merit it, and it shall be yours. A good name—think of its value! Do not wear it without meriting it. Wear it consistently; secure it by worthy means. Build upon your own record, not that of your great-grandfather. If false accusation be heaped upon you, like the amiable Joseph, calmly live it down. Let it alone, and it will die of starvation. Place for yourself a high standard, and strive to attain thereunto. If you cannot reach it, reach just as high as you can; then try to reach still higher. The little boy's arrow went higher by the attempt to hit the sun than if he had been shooting at a toad. Wealth and genius may command admiration; only true character secures respect. Neither can you buy your lot already improved; with divine aid, you yourself must build. If you can possess naught but a sound character, stand firm on it, and you will be better off than a crowned king who is impure.

God has blessed you with rich mental endowments—power of discerning between the upbuilding and the degrading; he has then left you to fit up and adorn the palace of your soul as you please out of his unwasting fullness. At the same time he has given you instructions, advising you and pleading with you to arrange it to your own honor and his glory. If you are wise, you will select the very best furniture. At first glance it may appear too costly, but you will at last find it to be far cheaper, handsomer, more durable. It is a wise and kind provision of provi-

dence that the purest traits of character are far less costly and less expensive after being purchased than those pernicious traits that destroy usefulness and produce only misery and woe. The furniture that God would have you select will need no cleansing, no polishing, no apologies. Better still, it will never wear out, rust out, break down, or go out of date. Something "later" may eclipse it for a while, but will prove to be a mere "fad," while the very best is the "old reliable."

You have been patiently looking with me at some of the rubbish selected by persons who have knowledge without discretion. You have seen the evil of selecting such furniture as insincerity, murder, theft, drunkenness, self-conceit, stinginess, tattling, egotism, hypocrisy, sensitiveness, grumbling, procrastination, indolence, melancholy, jealousy, envy, retaliation, etc. If you fill your house with these, there will be no room for articles of a better quality. If you even mix in the bad with the good, the latter will show to poor advantage, and will doubtless be injured by the bad. But your mind's eye is tired; we must give it a pleasant change.

Look just outside your door, and you will see the material you need. It is all labeled. Look at the labels: "Consistency," "Benevolence," "Sympathy," "Kindness," "Self-control," "Industry," "Love," "Patience," "Economy," "Prudence," "Home Piety," "Thoughtfulness," "Congeniality," and "Tact" (without tact, talent is reduced to less than half value).

Be wise! Bring all these and similar articles into your quaint little cottage home, and you will have no desire for the coarser furniture. Frame the Golden Rule and hang it at the entrance; select Order as your private secretary, Good Management as your treasurer, Discretion as your chief counselor, and let Love be the reigning queen. Then be well insured in the reliable company of Heaven; keep your dues thoroughly paid up by unreserved obedience to the great spiritual guidebook, the word of God; continue to offer the incense of Prayer and Thanksgiving on the golden altar of Gratitude, and your house will indeed be a *home*.

“On what are you building, my brother?”

“ELECTRIC TIP;” OR, A COMICAL NAMESAKE.

DID you ever think of how many sorry namesakes some great men have? I would not name a child for a man of world-wide or national renown, lest he prove to be a burlesque and bring reproach upon the honored name. There is many a Ben. Franklin who will never subjugate the lightning; many a Christopher Columbus who will never discover a continent; many a George Washington who *may* cut down the cherry tree, but will never be “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

From the north to the south and from where the morning sun seems to toss his first kiss at the awakening earth to where he looks back at her with good-night glances, elec-

tricity plays with the elements as a child plays with familiar toys. It shoots its dazzling arrows athwart the skies, cleaving the dismal clouds, consuming atmospheric poisons, cleansing the blue vault of its impurities. It is the most faithful servant of the firmament; yet it has stooped to earth, fluttered at the feet of man, and become his errand boy, carrying his messages and lighting his way.

Like great men, electricity has many sorry namesakes, many ludicrous burlesques. One visited our home a few years since wearing the name "Electric Soles," or, as the agent expressed it, "Electricity Soles." These were supposed to be highly charged with electricity, and, worn inside of shoes, were to cause such perfect circulation of blood as to render cold feet a trouble of the past and keep the human frame proof against all ills; hence they would dispense with "doctors' bills" and patent medicines, and, through perfect health, would render life sublime. Although suspecting fraud, my sympathy for the agent—a poor, feeble woman—caused me to buy two pairs of soles; but the foot-warming, health-producing electricity failed to accompany them. I did not censure the innocent woman; I censured the firm whose money-making scheme had induced her to become an agent for propagating fraud.

Electricity has another pretty little namesake that has more recently visited our town, calling himself "Electric Tip." He is a cute little fellow, bright and handsome, and perches himself upon an ordinary lamp wick to spread the flames and produce the equal of an electric light. He

is to serve for two years; the wick is to need trimming only every few weeks, or months; the lamp chimney is never to become smoked; in fact, this little Pharisee is to do almost everything except to furnish light without oil. Many of us blindly jumped at the fraud, and eagerly grasped it as a first-class labor-saving arrangement (to which we women do not seriously object). We very soon discovered the secret: In order to obtain this wonderful result (*except the light*), set the lamp away in a clean place for safe-keeping; then the "tip" will last, the wick will not need trimming, and the chimney will not become smoked. Follow these directions carefully, and success is yours, guaranteed.

Herein we are forcibly reminded of the various packages of needles, lead pencils, patent "solder," furniture glue, furniture polish, door catches, sash locks, and many other impositions which have deceived our unsuspecting citizens and carried from our town the patronage so justly due our honorable home merchants. Like a preacher from a distance, foreign "goods" often seem to "take best with the people." Home industries and home talent should be cultivated and encouraged; then we would not have to purchase all our conveniences, our music, our literary gems, from the passing public and run the risk of their proving to be merely "electric tips."

Another rival of "Electric Tip" has been around. He was a poor, lame, decrepit man, carrying a supply of "insect exterminator" (fifty cents per ounce), positively guaranteed to keep out all insects by three or four drops be-

ing placed on cotton and suspended in the room. He offered five hundred dollars' reward for a fly found in a room thus equipped. The poor old cripple looked too innocent to be suspected of fraud; so we purchased the fluid, and he "went on his way rejoicing." The oil or varnish was so highly flavored that the flies considered it a luxury—a dainty dessert for such tasty epicures (?). The elated agent failed to leave us the additional directions: "Be sure your door and window screens are insect proof, then keep them securely closed."

Why do not such characters offer something worth buying, or frankly, yet humbly, acknowledge that they are "beggars," ask for a little money, and not add crime to crime by giving "nothing for something?" Simon was not the first man who used sorcery and "bewitched the people;" neither was he the last. Agents have been canvassing the country with their impositions, deceptions, hypocrisy, falsehood, ever since their father carried the first package thereof to the quiet Eden home. They are still proudly "walking in his footsteps," having in view the same object—gain. But these crafty pedestrians serve admirably to teach us patience and to make us watchful. We should ever be on our guard, for we "know not the day nor the hour" when some fraud seller shall come, and we may forget to say: "No." This cunningly devised system of beggary so closely resembles genuine honesty that it is liable to mislead us and cause us to neglect worthy agents, even poor outcasts who are real objects of charity.

The fraud agent does not always carry his package from house to house, neither does he always stand behind a gilded screen; but he oftentimes deals out his sordid goods in a bottle of patent medicine, in a yard of calico, in a pair of shoes, in a barrel of sugar, in a pound of butter. He comes nearer and places it in the father's hand, on the mother's tongue, in the child's disposition, in the young lady's parlor. He enters our courthouses, our schools, our churches. Sometimes we permit him to blindfold us; then, like the hungry birdie, with open mouth we accept all he says. The mother bird will not deceive, but we may be deceived by counterfeits—by various kinds of frauds. Satan is often transformed into "an angel of light." Need we expect better things of his stewards?

Thousands accept the fraudulent samples in Christianity, thinking they, like the "electric tips," will save time and labor; others grasp them, hoping they will ward off "insects" of persecution. We need not be deceived concerning heavenly things, though vile theories be daily placed on our doorstep or poured into our ears, for we have the great Test Book with which to compare the "goods."

The chief Agent is coming by and by, and he will give this matter a thorough test, assigning to each his just reward. Let us watch, therefore, lest we be numbered with those who practice fraud.

How to act so as not to be crowded: Keep in the very best society, and always speak the truth.

SMALL SUBJECTS.

SOME persons have wondered and asked why I so frequently write on such small, unpretentious subjects. I will give my apology for doing so. When you look for the melon on a pomegranate vine, are you disappointed when you fail to find a pumpkin? Or do you expect to find a cocoanut on a May-apple bush or a fifty-pound watermelon on a cucumber vine? On the other hand, if you should see a flourishing gourd vine spreading its broad leaves and long arms over fence and bushes, and, going to it for a large gourd, should find growing thereon only a small, green, sour gooseberry or a green persimmon, how would you feel? Well, if I should always select a grand, fruitful, flowery subject, you might expect to find as its outgrowth a much larger thought than I am able to present. You might expect a large pumpkin or watermelon and find only a small, green, crooked-necked cymling. Therefore I often select small themes, so my reader will not expect too much—so he may at least recover from the disappointment.

THE "THUMB PAPER."

Do you remember ever having a "thumb paper," and how it looked? If not, the morning of your existence bears recent date.

Beautiful cards, such as children now grow tired of, were unknown to the little lads and lassies twoscore years ago. We then took a piece of newspaper or an old letter; folded

it in the form of a "love box," or in some other unique shape; and used it as a thumb paper. We were usually fortunate if we could secure a half sheet of blank writing paper to use in this way, for this was a rarity. Such extravagance was not often indulged in. We felt wonderfully blessed, were elated and excited, if we chanced to come in possession of a pretty button card, especially one checked off with narrow pink stripes. Smooth, highly glazed, perfectly white, with its delicate pencilings of pink dividing it into exact half-inch squares—O, how beautiful! How we prized it, and how it made us the source of envy for our little schoolmates! But we did not object to their envy, just so they did not obtain our thumb paper. Sometimes it was actually necessary to hide the book at recess to keep the card from mysteriously disappearing.

A loving mother once gave her two little children a large button card—exactly the kind I have described. She was ready, scissors in hand, to divide it equally. "Please, sister, let me have the whole card," said the brother, whose older mind had already formulated a plan for utilizing the rare beauty. "No, no!" cried little Mary. "Half of it is mine—mamma says it is—and I'm going to have it!" "Please do let me have it all," tenderly, but earnestly, entreated the anxious little man. "I want it for a special purpose, and it will be too small if divided." "I won't do it! I won't do it!" the little sister exclaimed. "But I'll pay you for your half," said her brother. "You shan't have it! I want it for a thumb paper to go in my new

speller. Mamma said she would cut it in two, and she will." King Solomon, of old, convinced the erring woman without dividing the child that was a "bone of contention," but this indulgent, impartial mother failed to reconcile the baby girl so easily; so she humored the childish whims, and of the one beautiful card she made two pieces. With a look of disappointment, the good boy accepted his portion and turned away defeated. Little Mary jubilantly scampered away to hunt her "new speller," mischievously tossing her curls as she looked back over her shoulder, and cunningly said: "I told you I'd have it!"

For the length of an average lifetime the grass has been growing over the grave of that noble boy. Little Mary is passing life's meridian now. Time has shaken the curl from her tresses, is blotting the luster from her eyes, and is fading the roses from her cheeks; the old, reliable artist is gradually, but surely, penciling her dark hair with white. But often—O, so often!—does her mind flit back to the scenes of her childhood; and while recalling the many happy incidents, a dark spot arises before her mind's eye, and on it she sees a pair of sharp scissors dividing that beautiful card. Not many dark spots haunt her childhood musings, but this one often does; and she now feels that if it were possible to unlock the treasuries of the past and restore that brother to life, her first words to him, after the joyous greeting, would be: "Pardon my childish greed, my brother, dear. Here, take the whole card! I will gladly, lovingly give you my part; it is yours, all yours."

This little incident really occurred. Do you say it is too simple to relate? Though it seems of minor importance, no one but Mary knows how many unpleasant reflections it has given her. How gladly, thankfully would she blot that little greedy act from her memory, if she could! But perhaps it has been thus indelibly stamped there for you to see, little reader—yes, you. If you will profit by it, she will be glad she permitted me to tell you. She hesitated a good while before granting me this privilege; but Mary is a warm friend of mine, and consented after I told her I thought it might do good. Do you ever have such reflections? No, not now; but you will have in later years, I fear. Now is the time to be good, loving, and true to your dear ones and to all. Be careful that you do not treasure up remorse or sad reflections for future years. Better sacrifice a little of your self-will to gratify others, even though you see no reason for doing so, than show too much determination to have your own way in every little thing. It is in the little deeds that we see the niceties that distinguish life.

But I have wandered from my theme. At that early day we did not speak of a bookmark; we said "thumb paper," and that is exactly what it was—a literal rest for the thumb, to prevent soiling and wearing out of the book. It was a very essential part of each student's personal property, for without it the "blue-backed speller" suffered sadly; and a book was expected to last the pupil until his education was complete—was often handed down, like outgrown clothing,

from one child to another. I once had a pupil who had no book except that which was left as a heritage from his grandfather; and that pupil was not a member of a very poor family, either.

The rate of each child's advancement could be calculated by the thumb marks on his book; the duller the pupil, the deeper and more worn were the marks on the first pages. Three places were especially damaged—first, at the alphabet, where the child of average talent spent days, weeks, and sometimes months (according to the regularity of his attendance and the progressive ideas of the teacher), before he could say all the letters "down," then "up;" secondly, at the "a-b, abs;" thirdly, at that prince of pages always to be remembered by the old "blue-back" veterans as "baker." That noted page stood as a great signal, or sign-board—as a tall post in the boundless field of literature to which the child of high aspirations eagerly pointed, and which he longed to reach, feeling that when he should reach that page and learn to spell "by heart" all the words thereon, he would have completed half his "collegiate course." A few other difficult pages showed footprints (thumb prints) of the diligent student, as "horseback," "cessation," "publication," and that far-famed page of prodigious words—"immateriality," "unintelligibility," and "incomprehensibility." Suffice it to say that the latter half of the book scarcely ever suffered much persecution, unless it was at the pictures near the back, where old Tray sadly learned the folly of evil associations and where the little

boy found it was not safe to invade his neighbor's apple orchard.

Children, as we leave the old thumb-paper dispensation, we see portrayed at least two or three distinct lessons applicable to the present day. One is progression. The worn and greasy thumb paper has given place to myriads of beautiful cards and calendars of the most artistic designs. The champion of the log schoolhouse, Webster's "blue-backed speller," has been superseded by vast libraries of text-books less tedious and far more attractive; and the little bare-footed tots of that day, who still live, now see their places filled by others no more intelligent, but better dressed and with better advantages. The log schoolhouse, with its puncheon floor, its many narrow windows in roof and walls, its rustic seats, and its mammoth fireplace, has served its purpose well, and has long since been succeeded by the magnificent college, the pride of the glorious, but newly-buried, nineteenth century. The length of time then usually devoted to the alphabet will now teach a child to read, write, and spell, besides giving him a right good idea of numbers and of the elements of the mother tongue, as well as some knowledge of the natural sciences.

On the other hand, do we show a full appreciation of these superior advantages? Do we strive as hard for thoroughness as we should? Do we not often disregard our wonderful opportunities and drift into habits of extravagance—not only as to property, but also wasting much precious time? If in the thumb-paper age—the age of limited ad-

vantages—a boy or girl could become even a fine speller, reader, and mathematician, how much more is expected of the youth to-day! This is certainly the age of golden opportunities, if we will only embrace them.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

Who will deny that woman has influence? Will *you*? Will you? My neighbor, brother, friend, will *you*?

To *me* it seems hardly appropriate to assign this subject to a *woman*. Her trivial part in life's great play could be better estimated by man, her royal superior, her sovereign companion. *I* think to *him* should have been assigned this wondrous task. However, I verily believe all will readily admit woman has influence. Will you? Thank you! Then my task will not be difficult, since I will have no argument to produce.

As in the dawn of time, even so in the golden now, to her "better self" woman often says, "Eat," and he "eateth;" "Sleep," and he "sleepeth;" "Do this," and he "doeth it;" "Go," and he—*is gone*.

Adam could calmly slumber while the heavenly Surgeon extracted from near his heart that marvelous rib; but too weak was he to withstand his beloved when her nimble fingers presented the forbidden fruit. Samson could conquer ferocious beasts, carry off city gates, and pull down theater walls; but his strength vanished before the decoy of shrewd Delilah. Elijah hesitated not to foretell to the desperato

Ahab the forty-two months' drought, then on Mount Carmel stood undaunted before eight hundred and fifty wicked prophets, a Heaven-sanctioned witness of their sudden extermination; but when the lovely (?), the amiable (?), the sweet-spirited (?) Queen Jezebel gently raised her dainty fist against him, he "*fled for his life.*" In every age Adam has had his Eve; Samson, his Delilah; Ahab, his Jezebel; David, his Bathsheba; Solomon, his "daughter of Pharaoh;" and Herod, his Herodias—man, the acknowledged head; woman, the many-jointed neck that turns the head.

You will never deny woman's evil influence (even before she becomes the far-famed "mother-in-law"). You already know too well her many faults—her extravagance, pettishness, impatience, vanity; her powers of exaggeration (causing you to believe the intruder is a lion or rhinoceros, when it is only a mouse); but has it ever been intimated to you that woman has a tongue; that she is chiefest among fault-finders; that her favorite of all pursuits is tattling—foremost in carrying news, especially bad news, and noted for having the "last word" (part of "woman's rights," you know)? If not, probably I can give you some valuable information.

"Nature, seeming partial in her ends,
 Made man the strongest;
 But then, in order to amends,
 Made woman's tongue the longest."

Swift says:

She sits tormenting ev'ry guest,
Nor gives her tongue a moment's rest,
In phrases battered, stale, and trite,
Which modern ladies call 'polite.'"

Tongue! not always even "tied in the middle," but sometimes set on a pivot, so it may turn in every direction—the outburst of a violent temper. Tongue! cunningly barred and hedged in by two rows of ivory fencing and closed in by nature's ingenious tollgate, a pair of broad lips; then placed far from the heart, that it may not utter all the heart conceives; yet an "unruly evil." Tongue! that often runs almost for ages without a guide—without even being wound up.

"Where is the man who has the power and skill
To stem the torrent of a woman's will?
For if she will, she will, you may depend on 't;
And if she won't, she won't; so that's an end on 't."

It has been said that

"Woman never submits,
But will have her way or will have her fits."

After long consideration and much meditation upon the great reputation he possessed in the nation, King Solomon decided that it was more pleasant to keep "bach." on the house top than dwell in a mansion with a crabbed, contentious woman; and he certainly knew what he was talking about. He spoke that which he did know and testified to that which he had seen. Man can guide the largest steamer on the Pacific Ocean, but not woman's tongue; he can con-

trol the most vicious animals in the menagerie, but woman's tongue he can neither tame nor cage—*never; no, never.*

Now, my beloved sisters—my weak, morose, crabbed, vain, extravagant, fault-finding, tattling sisters—will our superiors deny our influence? Acquainted, as they are, with all our weaknesses, is it not strange that without us but few men seem content?

"The world was sad; the garden was a wild;
And man, the hermit, sighed—till woman smiled."

He has kept her by his side (from force of habit, of course), until without her he is like a bird with a broken wing—*one-sided*; like a species of bird that a Persian poet tells us of, each having only one wing, but by the coöperation of a pair of birds the flight is made with ease.

Gentlemen, pardon me, please. I dislike to appear presumptuous, for modesty should adorn our humble class; but, honestly, I do not believe woman's influence is *all evil*. I cannot think the neck *always* turns its head in the wrong direction; but I readily admit woman is sometimes a man's crown, sometimes a millstone dragging him down. For four thousand years she was your slave. The reign of Christ has made her free. Thanks to Christianity for her promotion!

Woman does not make very great pretensions. In noted achievements she is scarcely known. As to intellect, she generally succumbs as man's inferior; in physical strength, weak. The Bible uses but little space eulogizing woman. The blunted pencil of patriotic fame dimly scribbles the

name "Joan of Arc;" the business world reluctantly acknowledges its Hetty Green; while the charity seeker warmly grasps the name "Helen Gould." In the literary skies a few stars of the third and fourth magnitudes are recognized—as Jean Ingelow, George Eliot, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Charles Egbert Craddock, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Phæbe and Alice Cary, and a few others; while the beloved name "Frances E. Willard" will honor the pages of history until the last recorded utterance of time. In the language of Barrett:

"Not woman with traitorous kiss her Saviour stung,
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;
She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave—
Last at his cross and earliest at his grave."

Has woman any influence? What is home without a woman? Home is her chief study, her workshop, her arena. Schools, society, church, and nations are but the outgrowth of home. This is why "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Speak of the world's great heroes—we find them in the quiet homestead. The heroine of the South to-day is not she who longs for the ballot box, the stage, the pulpit, or the bar; not she who finds chief delight in outer display or greatest gold. The true heroine of the South to-day is she who gracefully, wisely, and willingly reigns as queen over her little home kingdom, looking to the best interests of the girls and boys, engrafting noble principles into their hearts. I repeat: this is why "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

Do you ask the extent of woman's power for good? Eternity will reply. That her usefulness is greatly impaired by the lack of better health, no one will deny. Health and woman did not seem congenial companions; so they have long since been divorced. Queen Style changes her ideas with the ever-changing moon, and commands woman to keep step with her. In her efforts to thus maintain her position in the social world, woman's mind often becomes confused; her body, wearied; the entire telegraphic nerve system, unstrung. Man, do not censure too severely her frailties, but raise your strong will against this ever-changing, oppressive, unjust, ungodly queen. Start her back to the "great Paris" ("Paree"), and pray that, happily, the ship on which she sails may share the fate of the *Maine*. Then you will have a more congenial companion, a more efficient helpmate; your purse strings will last longer; and future generations will rise up and call you "blessed."

A good sister, wife, mother—"these are they that make the poor man rich," says a man of merit. He also says, "A man is what a woman makes him;" that young ladies have it largely in their power to mold the character of young men. Then lift your eyes, you fair daughters of Tennessee, and behold your work! "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." Go, gather a rich harvest of souls, and be assured that a strict account will be kept in God's jeweled ledger. Lose no opportunity. Doubtless in that "great day coming" many will blush with shame or shriek with horror when they see turned to

the left certain young men they might have rescued. "Gather up my influence, and bury it with me," have been the dying pleadings of a misspent life. If anything could cause tears in heaven, it surely would be lost opportunity. In the beautiful "city of the dead" at Lexington, Ky., stands a tall, handsome monument erected to the memory of a young lady, I know not who. Its appearance indicates wealth and care, but it attracts peculiar attention. It is perfectly black, and presents in large, distinct, white characters the doleful inscription: "It might have been." I know not the story. It may have been a wrecked life; it may have been lost opportunity in some other form. Be that as it may, that doleful inscription bespeaks volumes of hidden grief and almost curdles my blood as I think of it: "It might have been." The passer-by tries to ascertain the secret (so he can communicate to others), but the crashing gravels beneath his feet seem to harshly echo: "It might have been." The beautiful evergreens nod to each other, then raise their heads and straighten themselves as if in awe; the weeping willow bows low to the inevitable. The lofty shafts surrounding it seem to gaze in wonder; hundreds of buried soldiers who lie near and point their marble slabs upward, like so many bayonets, seem to say, "To fight and die for our country is sad, but not half so sad as this; what can the trouble be?" while the stately spire of Henry Clay looms high above, and from its lofty perch his marble statue points heavenward as if saying: "Up yonder the mystery is known—'it might have been.'"

What is the secret of woman's good influence? Is it her beauty? If so, a large majority of us are sadly exempt from service. Unlock that large heart of hers, and you will find the secret. Her heart is a great combination lock. Its golden key is *love*. With it she unlocks other hearts and pours in the soothing balm.

To the mother preëminently is given the faculty for home making. O, that sweet, familiar household cry: "Where's mamma?" How natural, coming from the child just in from school or the wearied husband from the store! *It should be heard; something seems wrong without it.* Woman is no longer her own after becoming wife and mother. Called of God to fill this position, eternal interests are committed to her care; and the family tie suffers by the loss of her personality. She is the humblest of burden bearers, and her helping hands and willing feet find plenty to do. She enjoys loving, helpful sympathy. Do not be so sparing with it, young man, and older one. Do not be afraid of "spoiling mother;" she is made of very good material. The growing and distressingly dangerous tendency to-day, especially among the young, is to consider other places more desirable than home. "Tied to mother's apron string!" exclaims the boy in his early teens. Yes, boys; and *stay* there just as long as you can, lest you become wedded to evil habits. Did you know it? Danger comes just after you break loose from that famous "string." Look! See the quicksands and whirlpools just beyond! There darkness falls, the wind is high, dense clouds arise. (Ask some of

these older "boys" for a bit of their experience.) The wreck of boy or girl is often traceable to improper home life, but never to the prudent mother's "apron string." Larger boys, when you have a "night off," call on your mother.

The enthusiastic farmer and his stalwart son are in this assembly. God bless them and their faithful, earnest toil! Without them, how very soon would our country come to desolation and our appetites to want! A fertile, well-managed farm is a perpetual Klondike. (By the way, boys, on the farm is an excellent place to find a wife—a girl with solid, practical judgment, education, and experience; not a "bird in a gilded cage.")

"The city has many attractions,
But think of its vices and woe!
Better risk the old farm a while longer;
Don't be in a hurry to go.

"Better stay on the farm a while longer,
Though profits come in rather slow.
Remember, you've nothing to risk, boys;
Don't be in a hurry to go."

It is in the farmer's home we find woman's work most effectual. Why? Because men and boys stay at home more closely there. There are not so many inducements to leave. Their evenings are spent in the home circle. Their bodies, after a day's steady work, are tired enough to rest; and at an early hour they lie down to peaceful dreams, exempt from many temptations presented in the city.

How attractive the well-regulated farm home—neat, comfortable, with its gardens, “its orchards, its meadows, its deep-tangled wildwood,” its green fields, and its wealth of golden grain; horses, cattle, sheep, and the swine of “olden fame”—all with plenty to eat, at home, with man as their contented king! In the schoolhouse hang the middlings and hams; in the cellar are bushels of “yellow yams;” that spacious barn is overflowing with corn, fodder, and new-mown hay; while in the garner is the stuff to make bread of (and to divide with village neighbors). The pigeon, without fear of being molested, gracefully sails the farm over, surveys his broad heritage, comes back, enters the little many-windowed mansion prepared for him on the barn top, folds his white wings, and goes to sleep amid his multi-feathered companions; and old Tray, after a hearty supper, quietly slumbers in his cozy kennel. For this work of the farmer and his boys we see a counterpart. We see woman’s footprints—not only on the piano treads and around the flower beds, but we also see them as she anxiously looks after the turkeys and guineas, carefully houses the little chicks, then sees to the butter and eggs, which she skillfully converts into “puddings and pies that fairly bewilder and dazzle our eyes” as her work-weary feet tread “that old kitchen floor.” Day’s work ended, supper over, nuts cracking in the corner, “whitecaps” playing “leapfrog” in the corn popper, music in the parlor, Tabby sleeping on the rug, the cricket chirping under the hearth, the katydid without, papa reading the Book of Truth, all

lovingly committed into the Father's keeping, a good-night kiss, "Good night!"—a model Christian home, a beautiful type of heaven, the nursery of heaven, heaven begun. Loved ones departing are links connecting earth with heaven.

Woman in this home: First, she is baby girl; then she is sister, wife, mother—with influence all the way—touching with magic spark the heart of humanity to kindle a flame divine. She is *your mother* now, her dark locks "blondined" by the chemicals of time. She has arranged for a crown "over the river," and will soon go to receive it. While she is with you, respect her. If you love her, tell her so. Do not wait to express all your appreciation in marble and floral praises over her grave. If you love her, "speak it out."

"THE BABY."

To watch and to nourish with tenderest care
 This life bud is placed in our trust.
 Its petals will open the flower to declare,
 Which may be a rose, or a lily so fair,
 Or a thistle to encumber the dust.
 May Heaven direct it to blossom aright,
 To lift its head toward the fair sky,
 To open its petals in heavenly light,
 And thus be a flower so pure and so bright,
 Accepted in mansions on high.

Emblem of innocence, plaintive little dove,
 Like Noah from the ark did release
 To secure the bright token of heavenly love,
 To carry the message as sent from above,
 The olive leaf—emblem of peace.

May love, peace, and honor this loved one attend,
 His pathway with blessings be strown,
 Humility and truth in his character blend,
 And Jesus, our Savior, to him be a friend,
 While mercy from heaven is shown.

An innocent lamb, with a Shepherd on high,
 Who o'er him close vigils can keep,
 Who will come with a heavenly host by and by,
 While anthems of praises resound through the sky,
 And gather to heaven his sheep.
 May this, our little darling, be one of the fold
 Received in that eternal home,
 Abounding in joys and pleasures untold,
 Whose gates are of pearl and whose streets are of gold,
 Where all of the ransomed shall roam.

[*Later.*—The bud had opened almost the last folded petals into sweet maturity, when it was plucked and carried hence. The dove took its flight from earth; the Shepherd lifted his lamb across the tidal wave.]

DIXIE WHISPERS.

WITH other members of our family, I spent the winter of 1894 and 1895 in the fair Southland. The scenery on our way was varied—from low marshes to level cotton fields; thence to the rocky heights of the Cumberland Mountain, with its Lookout Mountain overlooking beautiful Chattanooga and smiling down on the fertile valleys quietly sleeping in the mountain's arms. We passed myriads of cedars as beautifully and symmetrically shaped as if trimmed by the fingers of art; then thousands of acres of lofty pines, with one side gashed about three feet above the ground, from

which incisions the turpentine flows. As this dries, it turns white, and, covering about half the trunk of each tree from the gash to the ground, looks very much like tombstones. On a moonlight night these turpentine orchards resemble immense graveyards.

The people of Florida possess many charming traits. They are large-hearted, kind, and unselfish, seeming to lose sight of self in trying to make others happy. They are a true type of genuine hospitality. They greeted us more like cherished schoolmates than strangers. Children, herein lies a useful lesson. As there is a difference in greetings, there is a corresponding difference in the feelings of guests. In our beloved, our native, Tennessee, as elsewhere, when we see strangers enter school or church, we often look and act as if afraid of them; roll our eyes wildly at them, as if suspecting them to be refugees from smallpox or yellow fever, bringing germs of the contagion for our especial benefit. Many times we are too economical with our thoughtfulness, our smiles, our kind words, and our hand shakes.

Most of the tropical fruits are too well known to need describing, such as the orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit, guava, banana, Japan persimmon, Japan plum, pomegranate, etc. There are also large pear orchards, from which much fruit is shipped, dried and canned.

The Florida climate is delightful. During most of the winter the weather is similar to our balmy May, summer vegetables growing luxuriantly in fields and gardens in mid-

winter. Vegetation grows as if by magic in the warm, sandy loam, though the soil, as a rule, is not very fertile. If a freeze kills a crop of vegetables, others are planted instead, and but little time is lost. There is great diversity in the forest growth. Sometimes the train is passing through dense forests of scrub oak, water oak, magnolia, persimmon, cabbage palmetto, etc., darkened by jungles of thick undergrowth and rendered almost impenetrable by saw palmetto and other productions of the swamp, when suddenly all becomes light, with nothing to be seen except tall pine trees, draped with large cords of long, flowing moss, lonesomely waving like weeping willows over myriads of little mounds of fresh sand thrown above the surface by the salamander. The change back to the hammock land is just as sudden—like going through a thick forest, then abruptly into a cleared field, thence into another dense forest. This sudden change in natural growth makes a peculiar impression on the mind. The salamander I alluded to somewhat resembles a large rat, and burrows in the ground, living on various kinds of roots, sometimes interrupting potatoes and other vegetables. He does his work on the undermining principle, like certain sins we know of. Some localities are destitute of the long, gray moss, and the wind sighs mournfully in the lofty pine tops. In other places the mossy fringe is so heavily draped as to appear burdensome to the trees, hanging in cords from three feet to twelve or fifteen feet long, blown and twisted by the wind, and looking like immense ropes dangling in the breeze. This

peculiar growth is not confined to any species of trees, but grows thriftily on all, from the topmost bough of the lofty, long-leaved pine to the lowest limb of the orange or the tiny branches of the pretty, scrubby rosemary. It is a grand, but somewhat lonesome, sight to see forest trees and undergrowth thus draped, reminding us a little of our Tennessee forests after a moderate snowfall. In factories this moss is deprived of its gray covering and converted into mattresses and other useful articles. We were peculiarly impressed with the camphor tree, whose leaves, when bruised, give forth a strong odor of gum camphor; also with the rubber tree, with its long, blunt, leafless arms, resembling some kinds of cactus.

But few churches and schoolhouses have any arrangements for fire, and many large families have been reared in houses not even ceiled and with no place for fire, except in the cooking stove; but the balmy Floral State experiences some cold weather, which, fortunately, does not last long. It is said that the summers are made pleasant by the healthful sea breeze, and that there sunstrokes are unknown. In consequence of the deep sand, walking is very tiresome in roads much traveled. Instead of wanting rain to "settle the dust," they want it there to "settle the sand," thus making travel more pleasant.

PONDS AND LAKES.

There are many large, peculiar ponds and chains of ponds throughout the State, abounding in fishes, snakes, alligators,

cypress knees, tall cypress trees, water lilies, etc. Among the chief attractions should be mentioned those large, beautiful, transparent lakes, which in grandeur mirror the sun, moon, and stars, and whose borders are fringed with almost perfect reflections of the various tropical growths in which they (these great water mirrors) are framed. Some of the lakes are several miles in extent, and are a source of delight to the hungry fisherman as he merrily plays over their silvery ripples, gathering into his little boat the scaly wealth.

SILVER SPRING.

What I regard as one of Florida's greatest beauties is Silver Spring, six miles from Ocala. Were I to attempt a full description of this, my "magnificent failure" would be but a burlesque on the English language. Poets may write and men of eloquence may multiply flowers of speech trying to paint a word picture of the beauties of that wonderful spring, but, after labored attempts, they will be forced to say: "Pardon me; I am unfitted for the task." I had heard of Silver Spring and its marvelous beauties, but, after seeing for myself, I was fully ready to admit there is but one way to realize its attractiveness, and that is to do as I did—go and see for yourself. However, I will try to give the children a faint idea of its appearance.

When we arrived, there were (waiting for our train) three good-sized steamboats in the head of the spring, which is said to be more than one hundred yards across. The largest boat was the steamer Okahumkee. Besides, there

were three smaller steamers, a large freight boat, and two or three rowboats only a few paces down the stream. (Be it remembered, this spring is the head of Ocklawaha River, and the boats on it pass into the St. Johns River.) Our little crowd of six chose the best sight-seeing way—entered a rowboat, with a skillful manager, and sailed down the stream about half a mile, stopping every few moments, humbling ourselves by placing our eyes down near the water and beholding the beauties beneath. Every imaginable variety of vegetation that grows in fresh water is surely there represented—mosses, grasses, ferns; some, bright green; some, dark; some, dotted with small, white flowers, which look like little stars; others, covered with a white sediment or substance which gives them the exact appearance of being frosted or crystallized.

The peculiar attraction of this spring is the exceeding transparency of its water, seeming to actually magnify, like some powerful lens, everything in the bottom appearing even more distinct than if viewed simply through the purest, clearest atmosphere, though the water is from thirty feet to ninety feet deep. Here we would see a large patch of long-bladed grass, which appeared almost near enough the surface to be reached by the hand; there, a large species of moss arising several feet from the ground, in various shades of green, some almost pure white and looking like gigantic coral standing in the water. A little farther away we would behold peculiar bluish, silvery-looking *some things* several yards in diameter. On approaching we would find them

to be places free from vegetation, covered with white phosphate, sand, and shells, with now and then a bottle or other small object, which had been intentionally dropped from the surface and which could be seen as distinctly as the small turtles crawling over the shells and gliding through the deep water. The fish in great numbers appeared to be on "dress parade," and seemed to delight in sporting leisurely in the crystal stream and then quietly passing out of sight behind vines, grass, and mosses, as if challenging us for a game of "hide and seek." We passed over many large trees, which probably for ages have been buried in this watery grave so deep that large steamers can pass over them unmolested, and yet whose limbs seem in a perfect state of preservation and still cling firmly to their strong bodies. I thought our boatman was about to run against a limb, and, womanlike, took liberty to caution him. He smiled, then pleasantly informed me that the limbs were all many feet below the surface. One woman (not myself this time) kept reaching into the water for moss and seaweeds, which appeared within reach. Of course we all laughed at her. We passed over several "natural wells" (correctly named), which are deep, round holes in the river bed. We could see sand boiling up in some of them. The depth of some has never been ascertained. To vary the scenery, we occasionally looked up and admired the water lilies near the shores; then the dense, viny hammock, with its live oaks, magnolias, cabbage palmettoes, cypress, and pines. Having returned to the head of the spring, we stood

on a high platform. We gazed, we wondered, we admired; and while greedily partaking of our lunch, we occasionally cast a piece of biscuit or a chicken bone to the multitude of small fishes and watched them dart toward the surface to meet it, then follow it down, down, nibbling at it as it slowly sunk in the crystal depths, their number being rapidly reinforced by scores of others which seemed to have been in ambush among the water weeds, all appearing excited, like boys at football. We then involuntarily fastened our eyes on other beauties buried thirty feet beneath the liquid waves—tin cans, bottles, bright pieces of tin, strips of palmetto leaves, papers, and various other objects, each of which shone like a beautiful moon or star as it was reflected by the sun and refracted by the light and water until it appeared near the surface. It is said (and I doubt it not) that a silver dime or a finger ring can be distinctly seen at the bottom of this spring. It is astonishing how slowly even a rock appears to sink in this stream and how long it is in reaching the bottom.

To try to describe this marvelous kaleidoscope of nature would be like attempting a description of the starry firmament, and who feels capacitated to do that? The best that can be done is to use the best descriptive language available, then lay down the pen and say: "Come, expressive Silence, muse its praises."

THE PALMETTO.

Of this beautiful native growth there are several varieties. Hundreds of acres are covered with the scrub, or

saw, palmetto, which has heretofore been regarded as a nuisance—an unmitigated pest to the tillers of the soil—on account of its many tangled, matted roots, which make “clearing” almost impossible. It is said that “the cost of clearing an acre of land of this growth is often much greater than the price of a dozen acres of the rough.” The scrubby tops of the plant become so matted as to be an almost impassable barrier of tangled undergrowth. However, its beautiful fan-shaped leaves have long been used in decorations, in making ornamental articles—such as fans, etc.—and during the war of the sixties the women of the South used them extensively in manufacturing baskets, mats, hats, etc., many of which are still in serviceable condition, so durable is the material. The plant is now receiving considerable attention, being regarded as a fruitful source of both health and wealth. Various medicines are said to be manufactured from the saw palmetto. Its roots, so fibrous, are being made into various kinds of scrub brushes and other articles of convenience; and since it has been recently ascertained that these roots are rich in tannic acid, factories are already in operation extracting this acid and tanning leather therewith. One of the most important uses for which the saw palmetto is available, however, is in the making of paper. It has been thus used for many years in Asia, but not in America until very recently. Doubtless it will ere long supply the great and increasing demand for a satisfactory substitute for wood pulp in paper making. The palmetto “flats” can furnish an inexhausti-

ble supply, for so long as the roots are left in the ground the tops will be abundantly reproduced. The tops may be harvested for paper manufacture every year, with positive assurance that another abundant crop will be forthcoming the next season; and it is believed that before long the finest and best paper will be made therefrom. Many of God's works we reject with disdain because of our own lack of knowledge and investigation.

The cabbage palmetto is a peculiar tree. It is an evergreen, shaped somewhat like the pine, though not so tall, with no limbs, but with immense feathery-looking leaves, whose stems, several feet long, resemble limbs. As the palmetto shrub begins to develop into a tree, its lower leaves fall off, leaving these long stems cupping around and clinging with great tenacity to the trunk and resembling broad basket splits. These form a complete network, a beautiful and systematic bonelike cage for the body of the tree, and sometimes remain until the trunk is a foot or two in diameter and twenty or thirty feet high; then, beginning at the bottom, they fall off, one by one, as the tree grows old and its bark hardens so as not to need protection. These trees are about as large at the top as near the ground, many of them larger, and as blunt as any cactus, simply finished with a heavy bunch of leaves extending from ten to thirty feet in diameter. It is said that bears climb these trees to obtain the delicious bud. The small, black berries, growing in large bunches between the leaves, are excellent food for hogs, and are sometimes substituted for grease in

soap making. The large, white, tender bud tastes very much like cabbage, only it is sweeter, milder, and is good, wholesome food, either cooked or otherwise.

THE SAND SPUR.

Where so much sweet abounds we may naturally expect at least a small portion of bitter. I must not fail to tell the children about the barefooted boy's foe, the little sand spur. It resembles a small cocklebur; but its thorns seem to be bearded, making it very difficult to extract them and causing the wounds to be painful and sometimes dangerous. The sand spur is a complete hypocrite—a "snake in the grass"—growing on a kind of low grass along the edges of the sandy roads, not showing itself until it pierces the foot almost like a needle. It is rarely found in dense forests or well-cultivated fields, but seems to sit as a beggar by the wayside—a kind of hidden trap to catch the person who turns aside from the old, beaten path. Persons can soon learn where to expect the sand spur—on the short stem by the broad blades of low grass in which it nestles; but this grass looks so harmless it is hard to realize it conceals any sting. Its leaf closely resembles that of the wild, delicious little grass nut of our country. A friend with whom I was walking one day suddenly said: "You better 'keep in the middle of the road.'" I told her I was tired of walking in the deep sand. She replied: "Yes, and your fingers will be tired and sore by the time you get all the sand spurs off your dress." Sure

enough, I picked off one hundred and five, after our walk was ended, and put them with other relics to bring home with me. She cautioned me to cork them securely in a little bottle, lest some of them should accidentally be imbedded in Tennessee soil. I carefully followed her advice; and, after reaching home, I decided to boil them, thus utterly destroying all germinating possibilities.

Lessons: (1) Sin is deceptive as the sand spur. (2) Sin is least common amid the live, dense forests and thoroughly cultivated fields of intellectual and spiritual development. (3) Sin often lurks where least expected, frequently planting itself along the highways, as if to catch the unsuspecting passer-by. (4) Sin is a kind of secreted trap, and is sure to catch the person who simply borders along on the "strait and narrow way" instead of walking therein. (5) We may often learn exactly where to find sin—among its usual associates—most frequently nestling in low crowds. (6) Some forms of vice bear such close resemblance to righteousness as to be mistaken therefor; but on close examination the fruit proves to be—not the pleasant-tasted little grass nut, but the torturing sand spur of deception. (7) In traveling life's great highway, we had better "keep in the middle of the road," though our feet grow weary of the monotonous sands of time; for if we stray off to one side, we are liable to come in contact with the sand spurs of vice which may cling to us throughout the journey. (8) If perchance we have in our control the very seeds from which sin is produced, let us absolutely destroy

their germinating properties, not even risk bottling them, as I did the souvenir sand spurs, lest they accidentally become imbedded in some person's heart and life. (9) The thorns of sin are bearded, not easily extracted, and frequently pierce the body and fatally penetrate the soul. Let us beware as to where we place our feet, our hands, our hearts, our thoughts.

THE ORANGE.

A charming sight is a large grove of thrifty orange trees whose limbs are bending with golden fruit, so beautifully blended with the dark, rich, glossy evergreen foliage. We found such groves almost as common in Florida as our cornfields or cotton fields in Tennessee. Where we made our first home there was a great variety of tropical fruits; and, best of all, our yard was an orange grove, laden with luscious fruit, to which we had a standing invitation, which we did not treat with disdain (we did not desire to thus wound the feelings of our clever host and his excellent family). As there were many kinds, of course we had to sample each to decide which we liked best, then would soon forget, and would have to go to the trouble (?) of sampling again. This was our fate (?) day after day for five long weeks; but the trees showed no marks of displeasure, did not even look as if we had ever visited them. We tried not to be greedy, lest we should appear "green;" so we only visited the trees before and after breakfast, dinner, and supper, and now and then between meals. The little children

gathered a large water bucket full, or more, every evening, and had them in the sitting room for all of us to eat at night after coming from preaching. (My husband was conducting a meeting there.)

It is astonishing to see the amount of fruit these trees can bear and yet not break—the wood is so very tough. I do not remember seeing one broken limb in any grove we visited or passed, although some were bowed to the ground. Even the heavy ladders (used in gathering), when rudely thrown against the limbs, found firm support, not breaking even the twigs. This peculiarly strong texture is a wise provision of providence, without which the trees would suffer violently.

I noticed a very peculiar feature about the orange; that is, it rarely ever falls from the tree, unless faulty. Occasionally I would see a nice-looking orange on the ground and pick it up, but almost invariably by looking carefully I could detect a flaw, usually where it had been pierced by a thorn. This reminds me of church members. Where they are pure—true to the faith—they will cling to the church, like the orange to its parent stem, until plucked by the Master to be shipped to another country. When one falls, you may observe that he has let some weakness overcome him; has been unsteady, too "shaky;" and has permitted the winds of adversity to beat him too hard against the world, like the orange against the thorny bough. Sometimes the orange that falls is one of the finest-looking on the tree, and it is only after careful examination that the cause of

the fall can be detected. So with the fallen church member. Sometimes he is one who has always been regarded as a staunch member—solid, faithful; but when tested, it becomes evident that he has permitted Satan's wily darts to pierce his heart, and thus has separated himself from the "true vine."

THE FREEZES.

For five weeks it was our glad privilege to see Florida arrayed in her native glory; then (December 28 and 29) came that noted and very destructive freeze, which had not been equaled in sixty years, and she was deprived of her golden wealth. This freeze was soon followed by another (February 7 and 8), even more severe. All the groves in Northern and Central Florida were completely killed, thus destroying a perpetual fortune of the State. Flower yards and gardens were divested of their glory. The modest little angels of nature drooped and died. Ponds were frozen over; water pipes were burst; long icicles hung as crystal pendants from the tanks. We saw two young calves running and skipping through the forest, as if half in play and half in terror, near where lay the lifeless bodies of their own mothers, victims of the unwonted freeze. We went to Cedar Keys on the evening of the first freeze, and on the way passed a number of houses where there were large fires in the yards, around which the families were hovered, "shivering in the cold." We found the usually delightful gulf breeze suddenly converted into a regular

nother, whistling in all its Western fury, freezing even the salt water of the great gulf as it was dashed upon the shore. Thousands of frozen fishes were washed ashore by tidal waves. The destruction of fish was very serious to those who, like the fishermen of Galilee, spent most of their time plowing the blue waters for a living. This violent freeze seemed to be a dire disaster to poor Florida; and it does not yet appear that its damage can ever be fully compensated, though many young groves have been set out since the freeze, and some of them are beginning to yield fruit. The loss may prove to be a blessing in disguise—may cause the people to develop their varied capabilities and bring to light the many possibilities of Southern soil hitherto unknown.

CEDAR KEYS.

We found much to interest us in this group of many small islands, which was at one time termed the "Venice of America," but which now shows serious neglect and the effect of two storms that swept mercilessly along the gulf shore a few years since. Many of the houses are built of concrete—a mixture of shells, lime, and sand, molded like large brick, about one and one-half feet by three feet. These shell bricks, cemented together, form the massive walls, very durable and attractive, at a short distance having the appearance of rustic stone; but on approach they show that each section is a consolidated mass of various kinds of sea-shells. We spent many hours "gathering up the shells

from the seashore" and collecting other relics to carry back to friends in Tennessee; and, seeing so many kinds of fish, shells, weeds, and other curiosities of the sea, we decided it was a debatable question as to whether the wonders of the land were more marvelous than those of the deep.

There being but little room for traveling even on the largest island, Way Key, there were very few horses and buggies and not a wagon. Drays were used, even as conveyances in funeral processions. There was not a horse on the sister island, Atsena Otie, and the only vehicle (?) there was the wheelbarrow; therefore they have no need for the middle of their streets, except as a place to deposit rubbish, of which there is but little. On this little island we walked over the graveyard, finding many graves entirely covered with shells. We saw the "bier" on which, in the absence of horse and hearse, a lifeless body is carried by six men from the residence to the grave. It is simply a flat, wooden frame, I imagine similar to that from which triumphantly arose, at the Savior's bidding, the son of "the widow of Nain." On the principal island, while the Eagle Pencil Factory was in operation, we were conducted through by the courteous proprietor, who explained to us each process through which the cedar passed, from the time the rustic logs were floated there in rafts for many, many miles till the material was ready for shipment to New York for completion. From the sawdust is extracted the rare cedar oil used as the basis of many liniments and perfumes.

The scenery at Cedar Keys is varied and interesting.

Nature has done a marvelous work there, and art has done a respectable one. We could stand on the wharf and see an ice factory, three pencil factories, and other industries; we could watch the train as it came from afar, crossed the broad bayou on a high wooden bridge, and landed its passengers on a "dock" over water many feet deep; we could see shell mounds, shell bluffs, shell houses, shell streets and streets paved with shells, walks of shells through yards and gardens, and car loads of shells still lying in heaps along the shore; yet, go to the fish houses when we would, we would find greedy man still busy divesting the poor little oyster of its shell. From the same wharf we could look down and watch the weary fishermen unload their boats; we could see wagon loads of fish and oysters brought therefrom into the fish houses and prepared for shipment; then we could raise our eyes and watch the many fish boats, sponge boats, and turtle boats sailing in various directions; now and then a sailboat, like a snow-white swan, with outstretched wings, gently gliding along its watery path; then a swift steamer, with its massive columns of smoke curling upward as if trying to darken the silver lining of the fleecy clouds or change into "smoked pearls" the bright "diamonds in the sky;" and yonder a lighthouse, ever ready, when the shadows deepen, to point out to the mariner the deadly breakers. We could look over the billowy waters and see island after island blending away in the dim distance, gaze beyond at the world of water until it met the distant horizon, then raise our eyes skyward and admire the many-tinted clouds

pictured on the delicate background of blue and mirrored on the quivering bosom of the deep.

We went on board the *Belle of Suwannee*, a medium-sized steamer that plows the gulf and goes " 'way down upon de S'wannee Riber " toward " de ole plantation " concerning which the song author obtained undying fame.

THE GREAT GULF.

March 20, 1895, was the windiest day of the season. Part of that day we spent gazing on the ruffled bosom of the great gulf, as it was maddened by the unusual rush of wind from the southwest. At noon the tide was exceedingly high, and still rising. We watched the myriads of " white-caps " as they danced like things of life over the surging deep; we watched the bouncing billows as, in their mad fury, they dashed against the wharf; we watched many small boats—reeling, rocking, tossed headlong by wind and waves, sometimes their prows buried many feet beneath the rushing billows, the next moment high in the air. The fishermen had left their boats securely anchored and had fled to the land for safety. While standing by the hotel window, I counted thirty-six boats. But look! Yonder goes a sailboat crossing the bay to Atsena Otie. It has passengers on board, but not for the wealth of Florida would I be one of them. Winged, foaming steed of the sea! Like an unruly steed, it is plunging headlong—bounding, leaping, bouncing over the waves, the foaming water splashing, dashing, lashing its sides in wild fury and throwing

the silvery spray over its top, leaving it apparently foaming and dripping with perspiration, caused by the intense excitement and overexertion of the stormy voyage. Landed in safety at last! What a eulogy on the one who constructed that boat and on the skillful manager! The boat was made of strong, sound material, and so constructed that wind and waves could not easily upset or injure it.

After the winds had calmly folded their fluttering wings and the April sun had warmed the atmosphere, we were twice favored with a delightful sail on a neat little sailboat, the *Eagle*. We went several miles, through Waccasasa Bay and out into the Gulf of Mexico proper. It would take a sharper pencil than mine to describe the magnificent scenery on those short voyages. We amused ourselves by watching the pelican, the loon, the "negro goose" (black as a crow), the seagull, and various other winged fishermen as they "sailed the seas over" and skimmed the turbid waters in quest of food. We watched the porpoises (a kind of small whales) as they innocently played along near the sides of our boat, jumping out of the water, each seeming to form itself into a kind of large wheel, then, lowering its head, rolled back into the water. We gazed with wonder at some odd figures, of many bright colors, bouncing up and down in the water, like the mammoth heads of gigantic animals hidden beneath the wave. We learned they were "buoys," made of cork or some other light substance and fastened to dangerous rocks as a warning to sailors. We watched the silvery ripples as they merrily danced in

the sunlight, reflecting in beauty each ray of the sun, as if in gratitude for his gentle, warming beams.

We are all constantly sailing—not across the Waccasasa Bay, not across the Gulf of Mexico, but across the stormy sea called “Time.” Let us thoroughly examine the vessel carrying us across. Through the instruction of our Guide-book we can test every piece of timber used in our ship, and can know if it is able to weather the blasts to which it is liable to be exposed.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET.

A most interesting sight is to watch the great day king as in the early morning he calmly arises above the bosom of the gulf, fresh in his beauty and grandeur, and firmly, though kindly, bids darkness depart. At his steady approach the moon and stars modestly veil their fair faces and retire from service until further needed; each blade of grass, each flower, each leaf, casts off its dark night robe and puts on its Sunday dress; each sparkling billow throws a kiss at him as he triumphantly passes over. Calmly and steadily he glides along, until the great hour hand tells us we must soon bid him adieu. Lower and lower he sinks; brighter and more beautiful becomes his reflection. He soon reaches the western slopes of day. We know he soon must depart. We watch, we gaze, we admire, we behold the glorious halo he spreads over everything. Now he is almost gone; now he flashes forth again as if desirous of taking one more look at our little city before bidding it good

night. He trembles; he quivers; he sends back a departing smile toward Cedar Keys; he apparently sinks into a watery grave; he is gone. We feel a strange vacancy in our hearts, and would be too sad to be comforted were it not for the hope that after the sleep of night we will be permitted again to behold him.

Thus with the Christian friend. We watch him as he gently glides across life's ocean, shedding a halo of glory on all around him, letting his light so shine as to prevent many a weary mariner's becoming wrecked on the shoals and breakers. His light is beautifully reflected from the ripples and billows, growing brighter and brighter as he approaches the western shore. We know we soon must give him up, and how *can* we sustain the loss? He is sinking; he is almost gone. See the brightness of his countenance, the result of right living! The community rejoices that he has lived. He speaks encouragingly to God's faithful servants, then sounds a note of warning to the wicked. He can do no more; his voice is stilled; his work is done. He quivers in the breath of death, revives for a moment, whispers to his loved ones to press forward for the prize, kisses them good-by, casts a radiant smile on those around him—is gone! How *can* we give up such a loved one? If death ends all, we are miserable. But listen! The gentle Spirit whispers through the word of truth: "Let not your hearts be troubled." After the sleep of death, "when the roll is called up yonder," all who have lived righteously shall meet again and shall shine with resplendent glory.

Let us not be a storm cloud, darkening the way for ourselves and others; but let us each try to be a ray from the great spiritual lighthouse, that some storm-tossed soul may thereby be rescued and that we may be safely anchored beyond the mystic sea in the "haven of rest."

THISTLE DOWN.

WHAT is it I see flying through the air? Is it a swarm of grasshoppers? Is it a host of downy feathers blown hither and thither by the breezes? Are the angels, as the little girl says, shedding their pretty white feathers and letting them fall to earth for children to play with? Wonder what it is! It looks more like myriads of snowflakes escaped from the clouds and blown by wintry breezes. Can this be? No; for this is a beautiful, bright, balmy August day; and this place—Corinth, Miss., where I am waiting for the "train to take dinner"—is only in latitude thirty-five degrees north. There is no snow here to-day. But look! Yonder arises a rain-cloud about the size of the eventful one seen by Elijah's servant. It is sending its messenger breezes ahead to notify us that about the middle of the afternoon, while the train on the great Southern Railway shall be going at cannon-ball speed between Corinth and Tusculumbia, we passengers will begin to fear the approach of a cyclone. And thus it came to pass. The train seemed to be racing with the cloud, like Jezebel of old,

and, like her again, was overtaken and flooded with rain; but no harm was done.

But what about our little white objects we were watching from the train window at Corinth? What were they, and what became of them? We know not how far they floated through the air, urged on by the brisk breezes; but we feel sure many acres were sown with seed to produce a *piercing crop* the next year, for the pretty little downy things were thistle seeds. Only a few years ago, at most, one tiny seed was set adrift from the mother stalk somewhere, we know not where. After some meanderings, by chance it fell near the railroad crossing at Corinth. No one observed it. Had it been seen, no notice would have been given it; for it was only a trifle—a little downy, trivial seed. But in its own quiet, unassuming way it sought shelter under a blade of grass and nestled down in the blackened soil. It slept; it died; its little body began to decay. Months were swept back among the yesterdays. King Winter rigidly ruled until at his death the kingdom was quietly given into the hands of the vernal queen. Then came the annual resurrection morn. The little seed heart that had in some mysterious way been preserved awoke from its death slumber, shook off its musty mantle, raised its new head, and opened its new eyes to the light of day. Time, with fluttering wings, sailed on. By and by over the deserted grave of this thistle seed stood a giant stalk, adorned with branches, leaves, buds, flowers, and seed burs—all beautiful and showing a power more than human. Like cotton bolls,

the burs began to open, and soon the air around was filled with flying seeds, which at last imbedded themselves in the fertile soil, sprang forth at the appointed time, and converted the surrounding space into this garden of thistles. Each stalk is covered with its piercing needles and sends forth its thousands of seeds to be carried elsewhere on the wings of the wind.

A little bird, carrying material to build its nest, accidentally drops a seed in an old field. Next year a mammoth thistle grows there, producing thousands of seed, which, in turn, produce multiplied thousands, until the field becomes a mass of thistles. Thus evil can be propagated. The "little bird" is always ready and anxious to carry the seed, and the "rich soil" (the human heart) is ready to receive and nourish it. We usually reap what we sow, increased by a prodigious multiplier. Sow slang, reap profanity. Give a little boy a cigarette or glass of toddy. Result: Tobacco using and intemperance. So with sharp, harsh words. We may think they fall unheeded, but they often find sad lodgment in a tender heart and bring forth bitter fruit—"some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold." This fruit sometimes proves to be harsh words of retaliation; at other times, heart throbs and sighs and tears of anguish. Is it not astonishing that persons can endure more hardness from any other source than from those dearest to their own hearts? (I suppose it is because they feel like they are wounding themselves.) The husband, though devoted, sometimes speaks rather unkindly;

the wife "takes it up," will have her rights—that is, the "last word;" children join in the chorus—some, with "papa;" others, "not going to see mamma imposed on." These thistle seeds keep spreading until they "tickle" the neighbors' ears; then the little "bird" finds employment. Did you ever think of it—when we use a harsh word we are planting seed for an abundant "crop?" Byron once said:

"The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted; they have torn me, and I bleed.
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed."

We should use our "guest's voice" at home among loved ones, not save it altogether for strangers and visitors. We can also spare some for them. Our best dress will soon fade or wear out if worn every day. Not thus with our best "address;" it will grow prettier and better every day by constant use. Four things we can use every day—and Sunday, too—without wearing them out or soiling them: best handwriting, best manners, best words, best religion. We are prone to use them rather sparingly—to save them for company and for Sunday, as if fearful the supply will soon be exhausted if used much. It was Massey who said:

"There's no dearth of kindness
In this world of ours,
Only in our blindness
We gather thorns for flowers."

"Kind words are better than coronets;" and, with their aid, influence for good can be easily propagated. Like a

grain of wheat or a mustard seed, plant them in proper soil, and the result is often marvelous. Wordsworth considers "the best portion of a good man's life his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

Let us not sow so many thistle seed, but in their stead place kind words and deeds, if nothing more than speaking a gentle, encouraging word to the offcast or taking a smiling rosebud to the sick room.

Some minds are light as thistle down;
They prefer literature light as thistle down;
Their education is light as thistle down.

Result: Their life work is light as thistle down.

"THE WORLD OWES ME A LIVING."

"Once upon a time" a handsome youth in this "land of liberty" started out in life with the gratifying idea that the world owed him a living. Usually "a bird is known by his feathers;" so this royal "bird" felt sure he would be readily recognized by his gay plumage. Therefore he donned his best suit, adorned himself with a two-story derby, kid gloves, gold-headed cane, bottle of perfume, a package of cigarettes, and the "cutest" little bat-wing tie of "loudest" colors; then saw again that his hair was carefully parted in the middle and pasted to his brow, spread his umbrella, bade adieu to the rustic scenes of his old farm home, and proudly started off to rapidly travel "the royal road up the hill of science, the flowery path to glory."

"Heigh-ho, you ten-cent dude!" cried his old comrades of the cornfield. "You had better come back and 'hoe your own row!'"

"I will never 'dig my living out of the ground' any more. 'The world owes me a living,' and I am starting after it," replied the jubilant youth.

Soon he reached the foot of Success Mountain, which, to his surprise, could not be "ascended at a single bound." Feeling sure his friends would soon come and carry him to the summit on "flowery beds of ease," he selected the most pleasant shade in what he regarded as "the garden spot of earth," where he could feel "easy as an old shoe" and live off of "the fat of the land," and, quietly seating himself on the "stool of do-nothing," "snug as a bug in a rug," there contentedly waited for the nuts to fall already cracked, for the corn to come to him "already shelled." But "what is everybody's business is nobody's business;" so no one brought the "shelled corn." However, he soon had congenial company in the refreshing shade; for "society, like water, seeks its level;" "birds of a feather will flock together;" "misery loves company;" and "like cures like." They calmly decided to sit still with folded hands and "wait for the wagon and all take a ride." There was no contention among this crowd of loafers, no "*big I* and *little you*;" for it was about "six of one and half a dozen of the other." There could be no consistency in the "kettle's calling the skillet 'black,'" for the quick reply would have been: "Attend to your own business;" you had

better "practice what you preach;" and "sweep the trash from before your own door."

"It is a long lane that never turns," sighed the youth, growing somewhat impatient awaiting the arrival of his helpful friends. "Perhaps something has happened to detain them, for 'accidents will happen to the best of folks.' I may become a little hungry before they get here, but 'every bitter has its sweet;' the hungrier I become, the sweeter will seem the morsel. ('It's a poor rule that will not work both ways.') And do you not think that some folks actually have the audacity to advise me to *go to work*? But I just 'laugh in my sleeve,' while their advice 'goes in at one ear and out at the other.' I will never work for a living if I become 'poor as Job's turkey,' 'poor as a church mouse,' 'ugly as a mud fence,' 'common as dirt,' and even if they call me 'old mossback.' They tell me I was doing well enough at home and ought to have 'let well enough alone;' that I had a neat little capital and 'large oaks from little acorns grow;' then have to 'cap the climax' with those detestable expressions: 'Just as I expected!' 'I told you so!' But—well, the fact is, I was tired of being 'deprived of my liberties.' 'When the cat's away, the mouse will play;' so, with no parents or teachers near, I can do as I please, and not have them forever 'treading on my toes.' I also thus keep out of all the little 'family jars' and discords. I think I am old enough to see after my own affairs, anyway. I'm 'no baby.' True, I am by no means a Jumbo or a Hercules, but 'precious goods are in small

packages.' There are so many 'old fogies,' always expecting me to be 'neat as a new pin,' yet telling me not to study so much about my good looks; that I should be 'useful as well as ornamental;' that 'pretty is as pretty does;' that 'beauty is but skin deep, ugly is to the bone;' that 'children should be seen, not heard;' and reminding me to 'consult my purse before I do my fancy;' that 'honesty is the best policy;' that 'now is my golden opportunity;' that 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;' that I should 'strike while the iron is hot,' 'make hay while the sun shines;' that 'life is not *all* sunshine,' 'all that glitters is not gold;' that 'haste makes waste,' and if I 'marry in haste, I may repent at leisure;' that I am 'judged by the company I keep,' should in all things 'take advantage of a doubt,' and 'look before I leap,' for 'the path of glory leads but to the grave;' that 'troubles, like fires, never come singly;' and that trying to shun troubles by wrongdoing is like 'jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.' They say I should not want to 'impose on good nature' by idly eating the bread others have earned by the 'sweat of the brow,' for 'one good turn deserves another' and 'every tub must stand on its own bottom.' Well, 'circumstances alter cases,' and there are 'exceptions to all rules;' *I am an exception.* 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.' (True, 'the early bird gets the worm,' but 'the eagle gets the early bird.') There are 'many men of many minds, many birds of many kinds.' I am a 'gentleman of leisure,' you see. Thus far my par-

ents and friends have supplied my wants, and I shall 'praise the bridge that carries me over safe.' 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' Sometimes these friends may come in rather late, it is true, as in the present instance; but 'better late than never.' 'Ignorance is bliss;' therefore I shall never try to learn how to 'row my own boat,' to 'paddle my own canoe;' for 'what is the use in having friends if I do not use them?' Work, to me, would be a 'bitter pill;' it would be 'death in the pot.' 'Hurry makes worry;' so I never expect to 'hurry through life;' and if I make a mistake, I shall not 'lose any sleep over it.' There is 'no use in grieving over spilled milk.' 'Better whistle than whine.' I shall 'never cross the bridge till I get to it.' I shall never be 'down in the mouth' or 'convert a molehill into a mountain.' I'll 'never mind the weather, so the wind doesn't blow,' and shall ever remember that 'the darkest cloud has a silvery lining,' 'the darkest hour is just before dawn,' and 'the greater the cross, the brighter the crown.'

"But I will be *up and going*; probably I shall meet the friends with my living. People call me a 'dead beat,' a 'bum;' they say my 'cake is all dough;' that if I do not change my course I will soon find myself 'where all bad children go;' that these are 'hard times;' and that when I depend upon so-called 'friends' to sustain me I am 'leaning on a broken stick' and 'counting the chickens before they hatch.' There may be 'more truth than poetry' in this; but if one friend turns a 'cold shoulder'

on me, there are 'other turtles in the tank' and 'as good fish in the sea as were ever fished out.' 'Still water runs deep' and 'a still tongue makes a wise head;' so I shall 'keep in de middle ob de road,' and not 'kick up a dust' or make 'much ado about nothing.' As 'a new broom sweeps clean,' when the new wears off in one community, I will go to another, where I will be a 'new broom' again. 'The rolling stone gathers no moss;' hence I will never be burdened with surplus property, and 'a short horse is soon curried.' Then I will know that 'who steals my purse steals trash,' for he 'can't squeeze blood out of a turnip.'

"My friend says 'a watched pot never boils,' and urges me to quit watching and waiting for the world to bring me a living, even if I have to make my headquarters in somebody's kitchen, there 'put the big pot in the little one,' and be 'chief cook and bottle washer.' I see, he wants me to 'root, hog, or die.' He says 'every dog has his day,' and that I have now had mine. He then advises me to 'turn over a new leaf' and go to work for a living, to 'catch opportunity by the forelock.' He says 'experience is a dear school, but fools will learn in no other.' He tells me that 'a man of words, and not of deeds, is like a garden full of weeds;' that 'an idle brain is the devil's workshop;' that I had better be 'Jack at all trades' than at none; and that by continuing my wanderings from home I am 'cutting off my nose to spite my face,' but I'm not—*it's to keep from work.* He says I will always keep my 'nose to the grindstone' (but if I have cut off my nose, I

guess I won't). He tells me I 'don't know which side of my bread is buttered.' (Neither side is buttered since I left home, and now even my bread is gone.) He says 'if the shoe fits, wear it.' (I feel like 'most any kind of shoes would fit me now, if I could get them without work.)

"But—O, hush!—here he comes again. ('Speak of an angel, and we hear the flutter of his wing;' speak of the other fellow, and 'his imps will appear.' He always has to have 'a finger in the pie.') He says 'a hint to the wise is sufficient.' Then I hope he will be sufficiently wise to take the hint; I've no use for it. I wish he would quit 'whipping the old boy around the stump' and would 'measure the corn in his own half bushel.' He is 'feeding on wind' when advising me—is 'feeding pigs on diamonds.' True, I often promise him I will 'do better next time;' but 'promises are like pie crust—made to be broken.' He should remember to 'think twice before he speaks,' for 'murder will out' and 'chickens will come home to roost;' therefore his own meanness 'will crop out' some day. It makes a great difference as to 'whose ox is gored,' and 'he that lives in a glass house should not throw stones.' He is 'no saint' himself, and (now this is a 'mighty secret') he is always 'heels over head in debt'—'just barely can make tongue and buckle meet.' He is as full of good advice as 'an egg is of meat,' but always has 'an ax to grind,' always has 'an ox in the ditch,' and, in order to get it out, is willing to 'rob Peter to pay Paul.' If you 'give him an inch, he will take an ell' every time. His brains are

'scarce as hen's teeth;' his tongue, 'limber as a dish rag;' his character, 'spotted as a leopard.' He is 'ugly as a caterpillar,' 'stingy as a miser,' 'sly as a serpent,' yet 'bold as a lion;' is 'ill as a hornet,' 'cross as a bear,' 'slow as a tortoise,' 'lazy as a sloth,' yet 'busy as a bee' (in other people's matters). He is undoubtedly the 'tackiest' man I have ever seen. 'Says I to myself:' 'O, consistency, thou art a jewel!'

"But 'least said is soonest mended;' and 'as we are not to be heard for our much speaking nor commended for our loud crying,' I would not say a word against him 'for love nor money.' I do not believe in retaliation. I've no time for gossip, anyway, and have my opinion of a busybody, a backbiter, or a tattler; still, I do wish he could 'see himself as others see him,' for he is a complete 'snake in the grass.' 'A guilty conscience is the worst accuser.' I wonder if his conscience doesn't lash him. He says I had as well 'hunt a needle in a haystack' as an honest living without work. He keeps reminding me that 'procrastination is the thief of time,' and that 'time and tide wait for no man.' He says I ought not to want to be a loafer and 'eat idle bread' (but I tell you I would enjoy a loaf of any kind just now, whether it be idle or busy. Idle bread would taste better than none. I would not now object to the contents of some of the little 'family jars'). He thinks I had better quit sowing 'wild oats,' lest I become tired of gathering the harvest. ('O, my!' I now feel like I could gladly welcome the harvest field, for I am 'hungry as a

wolf.') His advice is to begin making amends as soon as possible; that a 'stitch in time saves nine.' (Well, I don't like to mend; so he is entitled to the 'stitch,' also the 'nine.') He emphatically quotes 'no excellence without labor,' and '*labor omnia vincit.*' (He is welcome to all the excellence that has to be obtained by labor, even if it does make him 'conqueror of all things.') He comes with that stale 'old chestnut' that 'there will be briars where berries grow.' (Let him please go among the briars and bring me the berries.) 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,' says he. (Then he may keep the prevention and kindly give me the cure.) His final caution is: 'Take care of the dimes, and the dollars will take care of themselves.' I would rather he would take care of his dimes and let his dollars take care of *me*; for I am sure 'the world owes me a living,' and *I must have it.*"

- Moral: 1. He who thinks the world owes him a living is an ingrate.
2. Wholesome advice is not always favorably received.
 3. It takes half of a man's time to attend to his own business; the other half, to let other people's business alone.

EXAMINE your well rope. It represents the thread of your destiny.

"GRIPPE RIGORS."

"FOR three long hours this little engine within my bosom has been beating as if *almost exhausted*. Its little hammers have been falling *so lightly* on the various parts of my body their strokes have been scarcely perceptible. For more than an hour (2 to 3 A.M.) I have been sitting by the fire working faithfully to get warm. I am suffering no special pain, but this feeling keeps me very uncomfortable. Loved ones here are sweetly sleeping, and I think it unnecessary to awaken them, for I feel almost sure I will soon be as well as usual again. If otherwise, this little note will explain the reason."

[The foregoing was written *verbatim* and in all earnestness, though not in the least excitement, during one of those peculiar cool stages I call "grippe rigors," which are caused by repeated attacks of la grippe, and which have often for several hours threatened to forever stop the action of my heart. The remainder of this little article was written during a similar spell, while again hovering over the fire between midnight and day.]

These attacks usually come on like a thief in the night, and often last for several hours. Striking the center of my back, like cold-blooded centipeds, they then crawl in all directions, making me shiver while they crawl. They do not usually cause much pain, but are disagreeable in the extreme, are like the old man's religion—"worse felt than told." They also have a seriously undermining effect on the constitution because of their hostile attack on the general nervous system.

There is another kind of cold spells some of us often have, which I will call "spiritual (?) rigors." Both kinds are sometimes interspersed with spontaneous hot flashes. (Beware of extremes!) In both kinds of rigors our usefulness is greatly impaired, if not destroyed. Both show bad circulation. The heart fails to do its duty.

Remedies: In both instances we need specific treatment. The patients will not often get well of themselves. In both, like the drowning man, we often catch at a straw; in both we are greatly imposed upon by frauds; in both many patent medicines are taken, with but poor result; in both we need more warmth, the system needs "toning up," we need something for our blood; in both we are benefited by rubbing and by general exercise. La grippe and its evil train of attendants furnish a widespread and fertile field for the osteopath. In the first ailment we sometimes resort to some kind of stimulants, as quinine or "Peruna;" in the second ailment we should always imbibe freely of the great Spirit of truth and life. One of the best remedies for the first ailment is a big fire, but it is hard for us to get our consent to leave the warm bed; we feel like we will freeze before we can reach the fire. So with the "spiritual (?) rigor." We need the great source of spiritual heat—the only infallible remedy—but it is so hard to give up our bed of worldliness, though its warmth is insufficient to keep off the dangerous, if not fatal, cool stages. In the first we naturally resort to an unreasonable amount of cover and tuck it closely "around and about us" to break up the

rigor, but even this usually fails; in the second we try hard to cover our spiritual (?) defects by putting on the "cloak of righteousness" and drawing it close around us, without first thawing the frozen heart. This may hide the cold, hypocritical heart from man, but not from God. In short, in both kinds of rigors we need a purified heart and system, with regular circulation.

A CHARM STRING.

In the well-remembered by-gones we girls made charm strings. We each selected a small, smooth cord or ribbon, and on it we strung little relics of almost every description—buttons, shells, small coins, finger rings, earrings, breast-pins—any little present that could reasonably occupy a space on that famous cord. This is a neat way to preserve little relics of "ye olden times."

By a little effort we can form a beautiful and valuable charm string—a string of pearls—by daily stringing on the cord of memory some bit of useful knowledge, a fact from history, or a scientific truth worth knowing. There is an ocean of pearls spread out before us, covering the vast expanse at our eye's command—yea, more and more, far more than this: the broad gates to vast fields of solid lore are thrown open wide, and the standing invitation is: "Come in, you that hunger and thirst after knowledge, and gather whatsoever you will."

From that magnificent fountain of divine wisdom, the

Bible, we may obtain another string of glittering gems. Think of the satisfaction we could have in after life from this kind of a biblical charm string, for that which is learned in youth is not soon forgotten. If throughout life we would grasp and retain even one item each day, we would soon have a string of sacred pearls more precious than diamonds and rubies rich and rare, information important in this life and of inestimable value in preparing for the life beyond.

Christ is the great spiritual Charm String holding the sacred Scriptures together, and the hands of divine love were busy four thousand years hanging jewels on this life-giving, life-sustaining cord.

First charm: The wondrous work of creation, which began by calling for *light* and ended in the creation of *man*. If the all-powerful God would not venture to arrange his works in the dark, why will vain man attempt to do so, while there is so much light at his command? And why is it those with the least spiritual light often try to change, arrange, and rearrange God's works and ways? Lesson from this charm: Obtain light before proceeding, then be careful how we proceed.

Second charm: A promised Savior. Again and again this sweet charm of promise is repeated, each time presenting new angles and shining more brilliantly. We see a very peculiar-looking relic—a sacrifice on Jewish altars. At first sight it is a mystery. We investigate it in spiritual light, and through it we see in the distance the paschal

Lamb for sinners slain. Thus one by one the charms are added—one prophecy after another, then the glorious scheme of redemption, then promise after promise, until the cord is filled, the last charm being: "Blessed are they that do his commandments," etc. God's purposes, prophecies, preparations, and promises beautifully cluster around this wondrous cord, making it the most charming of all charm strings, one end of which is hung over Eden's gate; the other, held by the loving John on the lonely Patmos isle. Nay, it extends farther: it reaches back to eternity past, then forward to the throne of the Eternal, where it is held secure by the hand of undying Love. One end of the cord seems far away, as if far back in a dark cavern, and we cannot realize its beauty; but as we approach the door, the way grows lighter and brighter until it bursts into perfect day and the grandeur of each charm is made manifest. This cord at Eden's gate looks dim. By standing there we cannot properly estimate its charms, but the light grows stronger all along the centuries until it reaches the cross. Then all is bright; and, aided by the effulgent beams of the cross, we can look back and realize and appreciate the splendor of each charm, then look forward and view the glories along the Christian's path and those encircling the throne of God.

Break a strand of beads or a charm string, and the relics will be scattered. Thus with the great spiritual Charm String. If the central idea—Christ—should be removed, all would be lost and man would be completely undone.

But—thanks to our blessed Father!—this can never be. Bigoted man has exhausted his powers trying to snap the spinal cord of Christianity, then has clasped his quivering hands upon his dying bosom, and, in horrifying tones, exclaimed: “Remorse, remorse!”

God has granted us the privilege of attaching ourselves to this wonderful cord, thus adding glory—not to *it*, but to *ourselves*. Again—alas!—we can easily sever ourselves therefrom and voluntarily cast our souls into endless ruin; but even *this* will not mar the splendor of a single remaining charm. Christ’s *invitation* is to all; his *promise* is only to the faithful.

DANGER SIGNALS.

I. THE WARNING CRY.

WHEN the mother bird sees the approaching eagle, she shrieks to her little ones as a warning to hide amid the leafy branches; when the domestic mother fowl sees the cunning hawk swooping down, she sends forth a loud note of warning, then hastens to gather her brood under her wings. Even the swine, usually regarded as so dull and by some so contemptible, are wise enough to discern the weather signals and prepare their winter beds as the cold wave advances. They seem to keep up with the “signs of the times” even better than some of their masters. When the early settler heard the panther’s scream or the red man’s

war whoop, he shuddered and fled for life or prepared for battle.

Another danger is approaching, and the warning cry has been sounded. A cold, threatening wave is advancing to envelop humanity if preparation is not made against it. Another war whoop has been sounded; another shrill shriek has been reverberated from continent to continent, from shore to shore. The archenemy has marshaled his forces against the people of God, and Heaven sends forth the warning cry. Think of the Savior's touching rebuke: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The humble creatures of instinct give heed to danger signals. The squirrel forgets not to provide for the future; the tiny ant lays up his winter store. The threatened birdie usually heeds the note of warning and flees to a safety nook, but sometimes he seems to think he knows best, and that the danger is so far away there is no need for haste. Wayward man hears the danger peals and sometimes hastens to the place of refuge, but at other times he indifferently faces the advancing foe, and consequently endures many a needless struggle before breaking loose from the poisonous grasp. Alas! too often he is never released therefrom.

Bible notes of warning have been sounded all along the line from Eden to Gethsemane, thence to the magic vision

on the lonely isle. Warning notices have been given concerning all the evil connected with this life. Solomon "tacked up" hundreds of these notices, which are not yet weather-beaten, but are in clear type and applicable to all times and nations. In our confused rush through life let us take time to consider a few of these. "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord." "It is better to dwell in the corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

The prophets, the Savior, and the apostles kept speaking tender words of warning, many of which have been kindly left on record for our admonition. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!" "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "See that no man take thy crown." The last signal in the great book of warning and promise is against adding to or taking from God's word of truth, and this is in immediate connection with a precious beatitude to those who "do his commandments."

How important for us to give close heed to our Father's warning cry! "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

II. WARNING LIGHTS.

Do you see that lantern yonder, hanging low over the street? Do you know its purpose? It is a danger signal to warn the belated traveler. In its own peculiar language it says: "Do not come this way; there is danger here!" This lantern is usually suspended over an open ditch.

There is a great number of Bible lanterns suspended along life's highway to show the ditches or places of danger. One point of danger is self-conceit, and its Bible lantern is: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts." "Be not wise in your own conceits." Extravagance is another point that needs guarding: "Gather up the fragments, . . . that nothing be lost." Habitual carelessness: "Let all things be done decently and in order." Procrastination in spiritual duties: "Now is the accepted time." Selfishness: "God loveth a *cheerful* giver." Give "not grudgingly," etc. Indifference toward parents: "Honor thy father and thy mother." Impatience: "Let patience have her perfect work." Profanity: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "Swear not at all." Laziness or idleness: "If any would not work, neither should he eat." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways, and be wise." Intemperance: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." The drunkard shall not "inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.) "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink!" Falsehood:

"A false witness shall perish." "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," etc.

Some of these are such dangerous ditches and so many persons persist in traveling *that way*, several lanterns are suspended along them; so if the wayfaring man falls therein, it will be alone through his own carelessness.

Many other danger pits are clearly pointed out, such as oppressing the poor, theft, cheating, covetousness, malice, hatred, hypocrisy, extortion, idolatry. At least one Bible lantern is suspended at each danger point. When in danger or doubt, look for a light. If there, beware!

There are many "blind ditches" along life's road, and some of them are not securely covered. Beware of them! Step cautiously! Some are where the road appears firmest and most attractive. Though the beautiful city, Venice, is "throned on her hundred isles" and her streets are vast water mirrors, reflecting in grandeur the work of skilled architects, still she possesses her Bridge of Sighs. A person may think he is walking in all safety and never suspect any danger, until suddenly the trapdoor gives way beneath his feet and he sinks down to meet his fearful doom. Thus there are trapdoors placed by man's great enemy all along life's highway to engulf the unsuspecting traveler in the pit of destruction, and the warning light says: "Be not deceived."

God has suspended these danger signals low enough for us by their light to discern the flaws in the bridges and to keep out of the quicksands of deceit. If closely observed,

they will be a sure guide for the young and inexperienced who have not traveled life's road long enough to know where the dangers lie. These warning lights for children should be wisely managed at home, on the streets, in school, in Sunday school, in church—everywhere. Do not flash your light at them occasionally, like a blinding electric flash, then let it go out, leaving Egyptian darkness. Such lights are blinding, deceiving, treacherous. Beware of them, lest the children become disgusted and prefer darkness. The lantern of true Christianity emits a clear, steady light.

III. THE YELLOW FLAG.

We read of its being in cities remote—in that “far-away fairyland across the Atlantic.” Later the newspapers say it has crossed the briny blue and has reached the coast cities of our home country. It comes nearer, still nearer. They tell us it is in our little town. We house ourselves through fear. We see it waving at the gates of some of our good neighbors. We shudder and are sad. We know not the day nor the hour when it will be placed at our own door. What does it indicate? *Deadly disease*. What does it say? “*Stay away; beware; use every precaution!*” (Such was once really our experience, when smallpox visited our town.)

There are *many* “yellow flags” in our physical environments. One is placed at every danger station; and as it quivers in the balmy breezes, we read on it the oft-verified truth: “Violate a law of nature, and you shall suffer the

penalty." Along the intellectual and moral highways there are bypaths leading off to idle resorts, to places abounding in low classes of literature and evil associations, where the mind will be starved by feeding on froth and the character will be degraded by wicked conduct. Where each bypath leaves the path of rectitude there is a tollgate, and on it is this glittering, dazzling motto: "*Come through; we have a feast in store for you, and gladly bid you welcome!*" Just above hangs that horrid yellow flag, on which is written in black letters: "Remember, you must always *pay the toll!*" Many, attracted by the beautiful motto or invitation in the gilded frame, pass through the gate without observing the dingy yellow flag until too late; others are warned of it, but go heedlessly on. "The strait and narrow way" to the holy city is clearly pointed out, and danger signals along the roadside warn us not to overlook the stepstones.

Yes, the Book of Life hangs out many yellow flags denoting sin. Do we see them? Are we trying hard to shun the deadly contagion they indicate? Are we prone to consider them as relating not to ourselves, but to some foreign land or nation, and thus neglect to notice how rapidly they are approaching us? Do we ever let it become necessary to place the yellow flag at the door of our own hearts? Do we permit the deadly contagion (sin) to enter there and feast upon our souls?

In some cities the yellow flags become so common many persons walk under them heedlessly, not discerning nor considering their import. In like manner many disre-

gard the Bible's warnings. They are too quick to consider themselves "immunes" against sin. Where the Bible flag says, "Be not deceived," they step right out into the quicksands of deception; where the warning is, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," they walk into the saloon door; where it says, "Be sure your sin will find you out," they try to hide themselves in the hypocrite's cloak and call it "righteousness;" where it says, "Forsake not the assembling," etc., they stay at home or go visiting; where it admonishes, "Watch," they close their eyes; where it says, "Now is the accepted time," they quickly respond: "Wait until to-morrow."

We should carefully observe all these danger signals and ward off the disease (sin), then at the end of the heavenly highway we will see the beautiful floating, fluttering, snow-white flag of peace and on it in letters of purest gold, "Who-soever will may come;" and, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

IV. THE STORM HOUSE.

"The sky is overcast, and musters muttering thunder
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
In forked flashes a commanding tempest."

Of some storms fatal to parts of our native land people have been notified while the winds were still sporting with the billows of the Caribbean Sea. What a wonderful power this! What a blessing to have such warning, given by the

weather signal announcing the approaching storm! It kindly warns the people to prepare their property against danger as best they can, then flee to a place of refuge. Nevertheless, many are heedless, and will not try to protect themselves, even though a strong, reliable storm house may be at their own door.

An objector argues thus: "Many a man has survived a storm without being cramped up in a storm house, and so can I; at least I am willing to risk my chances. I do not enjoy being kept so close; do not want to be deprived of my liberties; want to be a *free* man." The cloud arises; the wind sweeps the land; "the thunder, winged with red lightning and impetuous rage," deepens its groaning, and, with peal after peal, convulses the elements. The presumptuous, self-willed man hears the tempest growl and sees it "wrapping ether in a blaze." He sees the giant oak humbly yielding to the tempest's breath and realizes he himself is in danger. Then he hastens to the storm house and enters, to the great delight of those within who have long realized his danger and have been pleading with him and beckoning to him to come. He feels sweet relief, realizing he is beyond the tornado's reach, even while the storm cloud is still lurid with lightning and the elements still groaning as if beneath a crushing weight. He hears the roaring elements, the crashing of timbers and houses, and the shrieks of his neighbors, but knows he could not be of any advantage to them whatever by coming out and would be running great risk himself. He feels confident he is safe while within,

but does not like certain individuals who are in the storm house, and soon becomes tired of the confinement. He decides he is willing to "risk his chances" outside, where he can have more room and more liberties, and comes out, facing the storm—voluntarily runs into the merciless jaws of death.

Are you astonished at this man's actions? He thus represents a large portion of our race. There is a magnificent "storm house" already prepared by the great Architect, who makes no mistakes. It has abundant room for all mankind, and in it man can obtain all that is necessary for true enjoyment. It is proof against the ravaging cyclone and the surging billows of life's deceptive sea. The danger signal warns all to flee to this place of safety, and lovingly says:

"When the shelt'ring Rock is so near by,
O, why will you die?"

Many heed the warning cry, and soon find succor in the church of God's people, the great spiritual storm house, where they remain unshaken until life's tempest ceases to rage. They wonder why they remained outside even so long as they did. Others are too self-willed, skeptical, or indifferent to enter; others enter, but leave too soon. They do not "enjoy the confinement," and are extremely conscientious as to the customs of the church; so they begin to "pick flaws," and soon decide they cannot "fellowship" some of the "brethren." Without wisely considering how much worse it is outside, they rashly conclude to risk it,

and come out, without the slightest assurance of protection. Thus they are without promise, without hope, and without God.

Although the church of God is the grand spiritual storm house—"the shrine of refuge from life's stormy throng"—it will avail us nothing unless we enter the same and therein remain faithful.

V. THE SINKING SHIP.

Good-by, old ship! You are taking from our shore many of our friends. See them waving and casting back at us their love glances! It is a pleasure ship, and carries a vast excursion. It is considered

"Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle."

It has just launched out on the level brine, and leaves the shore triumphantly. Bright sunbeams are painting its shadow on the Pacific waters. On and on, day after day, night after night, it softly glides over the bosom blue.

"She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife."

All on board feel safe, and shouts of merriment ring forth, only to be lost on the watery world; not a cliff, not a stone, not a mountain or hillock to echo the sound; only the low murmuring of the deep waters to respond to the gleeful sailors, while the heavens in majesty look down upon them with smiles from myriads of eyes—tranquil, serene, glorious.

But a breeze from the westward brings into view a peculiarly-shaped cloud, which soon begins to attract the attention of the crew. The wind is rising higher and higher; the "whitecaps" glistening in the sunbeams grow into mountain waves; the cloud advances rapidly; the sun hides his face in gloom; the affrighted sailors turn pale with awe; the billows throw high their silvery spray and whiten the deck with foam, while they lash the tottering, reeling, almost drowning vessel. Amid the piteous pleadings of friends and captain, some of the frantic sailors leap overboard, with heartrending shrieks, "as if eager to anticipate their graves," and are soon devoured by hungry ravagers awaiting prey. The brave captain tries in vain to quell the fears of all on board, confidently assuring them he will land them safe in the harbor if they will obey his orders; and the faithful pilot stands firm at duty's post, having told them repeatedly the cloud was passing around.

The thunder's peal becomes more distant, the electric flash is not so constant, the winds fold their wings in meek submission, the excited billows drop to sleep. The birdlike vessel trembles wearily, as from excitement and fear; perspiration trickles down her sides; the sun unveils his glowing features to smile the mists away; while the rainbow of victory arches the space between the vessel and the receding cloud. The pale-faced mariners take on new life; and those who have remained on board, standing firm by the captain's orders, are soon landed in a quiet harbor, with joy and gratitude unspeakable.

Thus the old Ship of Zion passes through many storm clouds, is "rocked upon the raging billows," and is often threatened with destruction; but the faithful Pilot remains unswerving. Christ Jesus, the Captain, tenderly speaks good cheer, assuring us that if we will remain on board, following his directions, we will be securely anchored in the haven of peace. Regardless of the loving entreaties of Captain and friends, many shrink from approaching danger and leap overboard, and are *sure* to find awaiting them those who are ready to drag them into the jaws of a fearful and eternal death.

Another ship is sailing on life's turbulent sea, under the management of another captain and crew, and carrying a different company of travelers. It is the Ship of Destruction. It is not seaworthy; the captain (Satan) is not reliable; the pilot is deceitful; the crew is unstable as the wind. An intelligent man remains thereon to be with particular friends who will not leave with him, and who not only ridicule the idea of his leaving, but also offer him inducements to stay. Though fully aware of the treacherous condition, he heeds their entreaties, agreeing that "the cloud is in the distance; there is time enough yet." He sees the danger signal and has plenty of time to go to the stronger vessel, which "throws out a life line" to rescue each of his crowd. The noble crew and faithful Captain of the stronger vessel keep urging him to "Come over!" pointing toward the danger signal and to the advancing cloud, and sending forth loud notes of warning. "There is time enough yet. Do

not be uneasy about me. I am coming after a while, but am not quite ready to leave my old chums. Moreover, there is a man on your ship I cannot fellowship. I will not go aboard while *he* is there." Thus he does not give up his revelry "nor heed the storm that howls along the sky," but only glances occasionally at the approaching storm cloud. Soon he begins to hear the elements sadly groaning under the fearful battle, then feels the vessel quivering, rocking, reeling; hears the crashing of its weak timbers and knows it is sinking into endless ruin. Then he sends forth his piteous shrieks to the Captain of the *safety* ship: "Lord, save, or we perish!" But his tottering vessel has been wafted too far away; it is sinking; he is gone. "Too late, too late!"

On which vessel are you sailing, kind friend, kind reader?

THE MIRAGE.

FAR away in desert lands, and even in the western portion of our own proud galaxy of States, we have pictures striking and grand. The traveler is gazing intently on the desert waste, when suddenly appears a beautiful landscape. How delicate the touchings and tracings of the magic pencil, as if some angelic artist had been summoned to please the eye of man! Rocky cliffs and shady glens; large trees gnarled and twisted by the tempest's breath; an old picket fence, some panels broken down, others leaning; a rustic cabin on the hillside—all these things, and many more, over-

look a crystal lake on which a lone swan is floating, which in an instant is accompanied by a score of its mates. The next moment they dive beneath the crystal ripples. The fence, house, trees, hills—all, all tumble headlong into that sea of glass and disappear, and all is desert waste again. In a short time another scene appears before him, just as striking, but entirely different. This is illusion—a magnificent trick played on the retina of the human eye by reflection and refraction, the theory of which is more easily talked about than explained.

Much of life's joy and heartache, its sunshine and shadow, is merely a suspended mirage—an illusion. Many of our plans—our air castles and our rosier hopes—are only a play upon the imagination; and, before we are expecting it, they tumble over into a mystic sea, a lake of tears. However, *much in life is real*, and we should cautiously draw the line of distinction.

We see lakes and oceans on whose blue bosoms we watch the ships sailing smoothly a while, then plunging madly over the rolling waves; we see homes happy a little while, then transformed into demon hovels.

On life's vast, outstretched prairie or desert may be seen places of resort where man indulges in all kinds of narcotics, intoxicants, vile language, and many other evils. He usually resorts thither long after the sun bids him good night and "the curtains of night are pinned back by a star," "Full glasses are carried to the table, empty ones are carried back" (as suggested by Pomeroy). Time is squan-

dered, cards are shuffled, money is wagered. The foul-scented room becomes smoky; the lamp begins to blush at the red eyes, the dull brains, and the coarse stories told. The clock points its busy finger to twelve; but his brain is too cloudy, his eye too dull, to see it. Just over yonder in that little hut is a heartbroken woman, worn and weary with her waiting. Night after night she has been thus deprived of rest, until that once beautiful face is pallid with care. "The clock in the steeple strikes one." "Has papa tum?" asks the baby girl, arousing from childish slumber. "No, little pet; lie still and go to sleep," replies the mother, forcing a cheerful tone. The little innocent returns to slumber land, leaving "mamma" again watching and weeping alone. Two o'clock, three o'clock! Hush! There are footsteps on the walk, but listen to the heart throbs in that woman's bosom! Those footsteps are not steady. She slyly peeps through the broken window blinds; sees his reeling, tottering form; hears his bitter oaths as he stumbles over the broken-down gate. He "bangs" against the barred door, which she *must* open at his ruthless bidding. He staggers into the room, cursing her for the very darkness he has caused by not providing material for light and by driving every spark of radiance from her once bright soul. The rest of the scene we leave to your imagination. Will some friendly "so-called 'science'" happily come to our relief and say this is only an illusion, not a reality?

Yonder is a splendid home, with charming environments. The triplet sisters—Love, Humility, and Sunshine—dwell

there, and Happiness there makes her abode. In the shady lawn we see some rustic seats, on which two lovers sit and chat and quietly plan for the future. They are surrounded by grass plots and fragrant flowers and cheered by the aerial choir. We count two more years as they are marked on the great calendar; we see these rustic seats transformed into a little damp, cold grave; we behold these same two lovers, now mourners bowing over the lowly mound. A little later we see the silken lace and fine embroidery of that lovely trousseau transformed into a shroud or burial robe. The same nimble fingers that two years ago played the wedding march for these two lovers now softly accompany the voices that sweetly and touchingly sing "Some Sweet Day" and "Death is Only a Dream;" the same hands that so lovingly arranged the bridal arch now sadly fasten down the coffin lid; those who acted as ushers at the hymeneal altar now tenderly bear the wife's beautiful casket to the hearse; the same livery outfits that with quickened step brought the bridal party to the church now slowly and solemnly take them to the "silent city"—"funeral marches to the grave." There is only one lover now, and he is a sad mourner over two little mounds. Is this illusion, or is it reality?

We see another family circle broken, a front room whose stillness is heavy and terrible with death. Listen! A silent step, careful breathing, "low whisper as the sheet is turned back to show the once warm lips now cold and blue in death" (Pomeroy). The crowd of mourners, the slow procession to the grave, the hollow rattle upon the coffin—

all come before us in detail like a panorama. We hear the new-made widow's sobs and the children piteously calling: "Father! O, father!" But there are some who say this is mere illusion. If so, life is an illusion; death, heaven, and torment are illusions. Such ideas are certainly illusions, and those who cherish them are complicated illusions of the queerest kind. True, "many a ghost has proved to be a shadow; many a mountain, but a lake of fog." Imagination has much to do with our "ups and downs" in this life, and our minds can be controlled somewhat by our wills; but the world is deceived by many false notions and false theories, the chiefest of which is infidelity, with all its kindred troupe. Doubtless there are millions of ideas yet to be born; but certainly none of them will be more inconsistent, more contradictory, more ridiculous, than some of these, and no doubt many of them will be the offspring of these.

What do such ideas promise a man that is elevating to him or in any way beneficial? What promise of heaven is vouchsafed thereby? They may promise much, but it is like promising a child an apple when you cannot give even a seed. They build nothing; they tear down everything. "Shake a rattle box before purchasing." The child will buy it because of its gay stripes, when probably it does not contain enough shot, gravel, dry peas, or *common sense* to make a respectable "rattle." So with many man-made theories. Some (and, strange to say, some with more than ordinary intelligence) will grasp them for their "gay stripes" and

because they are "something new." Each will have believers and followers, no matter how inconsistent or contradictory its theory, no matter how small the goal to which it aspires. We should "shake" it and see if it contains enough of God's truth to "rattle." If not, we should bury it deep in the darkest oblivion and plant the tree of faith, hope, and love on its grave. Erelong the Christian graces will spring up thereon, will bud and blossom and yield rich fruit a hundredfold. Let the tomahawk and the battle-ax of the infidel, with which he has so long been fighting the cause of our Redeemer, be buried with him. Death will put an end to his claims by and by; and when he realizes he is rushing through its portals, doubtless he will exclaim, as a renowned infidel of the past is said to have exclaimed, with remorse: "O God, if there be a God, have mercy on my soul, if I have a soul!" No wonder Paul admonished: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Time is too precious to waste in investigating these absurdities which lead the mind from God and from a love for his cause. We should surmount these erroneous theories, walk over them, step on a higher plane far above the mirage of the prairie or the desert waste, and from which we can look across the mystic beyond to the culmination of God's love.

THE youth's favorite toy: His father's pocketbook.

"WATCH—BE READY!"

His countenance was pleasing and familiar; his movements, graceful; his appearance, majestic. It seemed that she recognized his face, so calm, yet so earnest; but her eyes soon rested on that beautiful *banner* suspended above his uplifted hands.

O, that wonderful "banner" (if such we may call it)! How it enraptured her gaze! It enchanted her very soul. Never had she seen anything half so beautiful. The most gifted tongue or pen can never find language to describe it. She gazed with delight, she wondered, she admired. How could anything be so lovely? It was transparent, though composed of all the brightest and most attractive colors, like some fantastically-arranged stained-glass window; like the most elegant and marvelous construction in mosaic interspersed with beautiful flowers and with bright, glittering, blinking, twinkling stars; like a magnificent rainbow all in a quiver, extending from east to west athwart the globe; like the sublime display of lights she had witnessed at the Tennessee Centennial; like the finest wires of spun glass, all colors, woven into the most intricate gauze and hanging in midair like some beautiful suspended mirage. The background was darker, thus displaying to better advantage the brilliant colors and those stars and flowers of indescribable beauty. She stood enchanted; she gazed with ecstasy. It tarried long before her enraptured vision, though she constantly feared it would depart.

But this was not all. It presented in large, distinct let-

ters of exquisite beauty the expressive and impressive inscription: "Watch—Be Ready!"

It was a dear old lady who witnessed this exquisite display. She read the striking words, then exclaimed: "O, the advent, the advent!" The sight produced peculiar feelings of mingled joy and grief. She thought it signified the speedy approach of a great Overseer, who, for some cause, would require exactness in the arrangement of each home. Foremost in her mind was the thought that the house must be cleaned up and everything put in perfect order. It must be "swept and garnished" was the idea so forcibly impressed on her mind. She felt sure much, very much, had to be done in order that all might "be ready." She thought the language indicated there was something each could do, and at least a little time should be granted; that the space between words denoted time in which to prepare. She also realized that this warning was for the *whole world*, not for a special few. Having no particular preparation to make for herself, her affairs being already in order, she went to work in earnest trying to assist others. She resumed the spirit, strength, and activity of her youth, and rushed first into a room occupied by some young ladies. Three times she loudly called the inmates by name, but they were in such commotion they gave no heed whatever. They were all talking excitedly. At one moment they were clapping their hands as if in delight; at the next moment, wringing them as if in agony. In no way could she attract their attention in the least. No wonder. Their

clothes, and even their beds, were tumbled in heaps over the floor; "cyclone footprints" were on the dresser and mantel; dust in mournful abundance had settled on everything. No wonder the girls were excited, for that room *must* be "swept and garnished," and they *must* "watch—be ready." This loving old "grandma" was devoted to these heedless girls, and wanted to help them make their room tidy; but as every effort to attract their attention was in vain and she knew there was no time to lose, she left them and hastened to the boys' room. "O, boys! Your room, your room! It *must* be 'swept and garnished!'" she cried. "You *must* be ready!" But—lo!—the boys were gone, could nowhere be found. Dear grandmother was shocked at the terrible confusion that here met her gaze, and was overwhelmed with anxiety; for she loved the boys much, and would have freely given the remnant of her life to have had them "ready." She worked faithfully trying to get things better arranged. There was such a quantity of dirt and trash and useless "plunder" it would never do to toss it in the yard; yet it must be removed from the room, for she was still haunted by "must be swept and garnished." Being pressed for time, she decided she must raise part of the floor and let some of the rubbish fall through in order to make respectable space for the remainder. She grew still younger and stronger in her efforts, and worked with the life, spirit, and ease of a youth instead of a person on the threshold of ninety. At last she was overcome. Her strength failed before the work was completed. Just as

she was giving down from exhaustion and excitement she clapped her tender hands so hard it aroused her from her exciting *dream*.

For several weeks she would often tell this dream with deep emotion—not that she is superstitious, believing erroneously in signs and dreams, but because it appeared so very much like reality, bore such vivid semblance to actual life.

Application: A beautiful banner is ever before us, bearing the pathetic warning: "Watch—Be Ready!" It is painted on every autumn leaf; the waving grass bespeaks its motto; it is suspended from every cloud and reflected from every billow. The diamond dewdrop bears this message: "Like me, you will soon pass away; therefore 'watch—be ready!'" The ever-changing seasons remind us of this, and we see the same depicted on the faces of our loved ones departing. Do we carefully observe the inscription? Do we heed its message?

"There's a great day coming by and by, when the saint and the sinner shall be parted right and left"—a great day of assortment, when the rubbish must be cleared away. Preparation should be made. But little is needed by some; by others, much. "Watch—be ready!" or there will be much confusion and anguish when the call is given—doubtless much more than is expected. Many in that "great day" would gladly raise the "floor" and hide the rubbish of their lives; indeed, many will say to the rocks, hills, and mountains: "Fall on us and hide us from the great,

impartial Judge!" Many would like to flee from him, be absent when he comes, and thus escape judgment by not being present at roll call. Each of us should take warning and keep his house "swept and garnished." This living, moving, breathing house—the temporal abode of the soul—should be freed from the rubbish of evil habits and wicked works and garnished with pure thoughts and righteous living. We should ever "watch—be ready."

SECRET FIRE.

ONE of our grates appeared somewhat greedy and took upon itself too large a supply of coal—more than it could care for; so part of it rolled off on the floor. But was that all? No; the coal had influence. It was alive and active, and at once began to make a strong impress on the floor, which gently, but steadily, yielded to its power. Burning through the floor and the lathing just below, it was checked by the plastering. A few buckets of water were dashed on, and we thought the good work was done—the fire extinguished; but, placing my ear to the floor, I heard a low, distant roaring. Like an undermining fiend, the sly flame, unable to affect the plastering, had changed its course and tried another plan—had used the floor, joists, and plastering as a flue; and, thus pent up, it had made its way nine feet to the wall. Had not its sly mischief been discovered and arrested, within five minutes the residence of R. P. Meeks would have been in flames. Stroke after

stroke, with great rapidity, the heavy ax was applied by swift and willing hands until the seat of mischief was discovered and the trouble overcome. Thanks to the dear little telephone girl and to all the other willing helpers.

We frequently act like that grate. We receive and try to appropriate to ourselves more of this world's bounties than we need or deserve, more than is really best for us. An overabundance is often worse than scarcity. The motto of fire and water seems to be: "Use me, but do not abuse me." They are excellent servants, but tyrannical masters.

This fire began in the upper story. Sin does not always first tempt the lowest principles of our character, but frequently attacks our highest and noblest characteristics and brings us down, down, down. When the tempter finds he cannot overcome one point in our nature, he leaves that, like the fire left the plastering, and pursues some other course. Sin, like a smoldering fire, often attacks us when and where we are least expecting. Its ravages are steady, and sometimes rapid, until arrested by an antidote. It works on the sly. Often we think the mischief small and perhaps overcome; but the deceiver is creeping along slyly, and is steadily undermining our constitutions, dispositions, moral and spiritual characters. As the first bucket of water put out all apparent fire, so we may often easily cover all the apparent evil sin has wrought without putting a stop to its secret ravages. We must strike with the ax of truth until we reach the seat of mischief—the heart—and there apply the never-failing antidote.

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" As Dante says: "From a little spark may burst a mighty flame." A large flame came near being kindled from that small piece of coal. Only a little harsh word, but it pierces tender hearts like a poisoned arrow and burns like secret fire; only a loving word, but the kindly spark is kindled in the soul of a wayward youth, causing him to stop his downward course and turn his steps heavenward. Each individual has influence over some one, and frequently that influence is spreading when he is not aware. It may be a nettle seed which will yield a large crop of piercing thorns, or it may be the sweet honeysuckle to cheer the sick room with its beauty and fragrance.

The dozen buckets of water thrown on the fire greatly damaged the plastering, paper, carpet, etc., in the room below. Rebuke for sin must sometimes be so severe as to greatly mortify the receiver and others. In our great anxiety to save our house, much more water was used than was absolutely necessary, because we could not tell exactly where to pour it and how much. So in our intense zeal in trying to save a person's soul from torturing flames we may use more persuasion and reasoning than necessary, for often it is hard to combine zeal and discretion in proper proportion. But as no one is offended at the overplus of water, so the sin-sick soul should never become offended or disgusted at the healing balm, though sometimes administered in unpleasantly large quantities.

Half of the floor in one room had to be torn up, removed,

and another floor laid in its stead. In the room below, the stove, piano, and other heavy articles were hastily moved out of danger, and some little ornamental furnishings were utterly ruined by the water. By spiritual investigation sometimes fully half of what is popularly regarded as sound doctrine—spiritual floor or foundation—is proved either to be spurious or to contain some hidden element of destruction. In such cases it must either be torn up and replaced by something that bears divine sanction or the destructive element must be eradicated by the penetrating beams of Heaven's truth. Many times, also, we may be found in dangerous places, and should move or be moved in order to escape the impending doom, although, like removing the stove or the piano, it requires strength and presence of mind to do the work right. At the same time we are compelled to sacrifice many of our preconceived ideas, opinions, and preferences (like those small, inferior decorations) in order to give our attention to weightier matters.

We continued our regular work, ignorant of the secret ruin going on in our own house, until almost too late. Oftentimes persons are very intent at their daily affairs, ignorant or regardless of the secret ruin being wrought by sin in their own households among their own children and other loved ones. We did not know so well how to appreciate our home until we thought it was about to be immediately swept from us. Thus it is with every other blessing of life.

After the fire seemed extinguished, the low, mournful

roaring and crackling indicated danger still. Often in life when all seems well with us, if we will place our ear to the warning trumpet of God's truth, we shall hear the plaintive peals telling us of lurking danger.

In a few moments after our telephone message reached the college and town our house and yard were well filled—students, teachers, merchants, workmen; young men, old men—all willing and anxious to lend a helping hand. When we see a soul in as imminent danger as was our house, do we show as great anxiety about it and try as hard to rescue it from the threatening lake of flames? A soul is of far more value than many houses, and we should manifest much more anxiety to save it.

During our little fire excitement it never once entered my mind that our house and its furnishings were insured against fire; and I thought if the house burned, all would be lost. For twenty-one years we had been carrying heavy insurance, which *appeared* to be a needless expense, as we had never demanded a penny from the company during that time; but since they have so nobly come to our relief and willingly repaired the damage, we feel indeed grateful to them and thankful we had placed our home in their care. There is a great Insurance Company we would like to recommend to all—one that never "breaks" or fails to comply with its contracts. The firm consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The expenditure is small; the terms, reasonable; and the reward, not two-thirds of the value of property lost, but the entire amount multiplied

by infinity. We all have access to the great insurance Guide, and can easily ascertain and comprehend the terms and pay the fee. When Death touches the objects of our affection; when with iron grasp he seizes even those we feel sure are prepared for the realms of bliss, we, for the time, seem to actually forget or lose sight of the insurance. The future then looks dismal, the sable curtain has fallen and excluded the light, and we feel like all is lost, until reminded of the great Insurance Company that will stand firm by those who never fail to keep their dues thoroughly paid up. Had we permitted our insurance to lapse, even the very day before the fire, the company would have been exempt from assisting us. Let us beware and not leave off our contract with the company in heaven, even one day, one hour, lest during that unguarded time Death should call and find us unprepared. We may carry heavy insurance on our homes a lifetime and never realize any benefit therefrom, but to every rational being there is certain to come a time when he will need the protection of heaven's reliable firm, without which all will be eternally lost.

Our houses are in constant danger of fire; our physical constitutions are in danger of being undermined by stealthy disease; our spiritual characters are in imminent danger of being demoralized by the crafty workmen of our dreadful adversary. Therefore, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Different things by which our house was saved from fire:

1. By the smoke pushing its way through unseen crevices

in the weatherboarding, thus indicating imminent danger.

2. By mother and daughter turning aside from regular work to shake some matting, thus discovering the smoke.

3. By a thoughtful daughter's quick observation and attention.

4. By the telephone.

5. By the rapid steps and faithful, steady, earnest work of a stout, willing, and anxious man.

6. By the ax.

7. By water.

It was not by any one of these alone, but by the harmonious coöperation of all. Thus no certain characteristic *alone* is the embodiment of true manhood or womanhood, but the harmonious blending of many, such as patience, humility, determination, integrity, love, and obedience to divine precepts. Education, true and genuine, is not only a fair knowledge of either mathematics, language, or arts, but a happy union of these with practical attainments. Likewise, all of God's requirements must be observed in order to save the soul.

MEMORIALS.

(Read in Sunday school at the Georgie Robertson Christian College.)

MEMORIAL—that which perpetuates memory, that which preserves remembrance.

Gently raising the misty curtain that hides sixty centuries, we are permitted to witness the unveiling of many

remarkable monuments, for memorial institutions are as old as time.

Each day's work in creation was a memorial of God's unlimited power. He called forth light, and at his bidding the infant earth in triumph arose from her cradle of obscurity, shook off her dark mantle, and in her aerial chariot began to ride through the heavens in her destined path, a sublime memento of his handiwork. The mysterious firmament, like a wondrous sea of glass arched above us; the dry land, the surging billows, each giant oak, each blade of grass, each star that "blinks" its eye in that unlimited space above, the sun that in grandeur rules the day, the moon that modestly veils her face in his presence, each silvery inhabitant of the deep, each denizen of the air, each creeping thing, each beast, each member of the human kind, is a commemorative work ever portraying the hand divine.

Gliding down the centuries, we find man erecting monuments in memory of certain events. Jacob's altar at Bethel, the stone that pillowed his weary head as he fled from his enraged brother and on which he was sleeping when in dreamland he beheld the ladder reaching heaven; the altar of rude stones at Mizpah, constructed by Jacob and his father-in-law, Laban, as a token of reconciliation; the great Jewish passover, in memory of protection from the slaughtering angel; the twelve stones from Jordan's bed, constructed into an altar to preserve remembrance of the dry passage across the afterwards historic stream; Solomon's temple, that marvel of architecture—all these, and

many more, are unveiled when we peer through the pages of sacred lore.

Again, those marvelous Egyptian pyramids, still sheltering the dust of departed kings, bespeak the memory of more than forty centuries. Every gravestone that lifts its head above the sleeping sod is a memorial. Think of the numerous memorial churches—the "Church of the Nativity," at Bethlehem; the "Garfield Memorial Church," at Washington; and many, so many, others. Our beloved America is esteemed in memory of Columbus; our proud republic, of Washington. Christianity, or the church of God, is a memorial of our risen and ascended Savior. The Lord's Supper is a monument, the unveiling of which brings fresh before our minds the fact that Jesus died for us.

It is in the power of all to erect memorial stones, either to their credit or to their dishonor. Absalom raised for himself, in the king's dale, a pillar, which he said was to perpetuate his memory—to keep his "name in remembrance." After his untimely death, his body was cast "into a great pit in the wood, and [they] laid a very great heap of stones upon him" to hide him from the idle gaze of passers-by and doubtless to keep his grief-stricken father from finding his mutilated remains. How striking the contrast between these two memorial pillars! The most enduring monument erected by Absalom was his wicked conspiracy against his father. Who envies such remembrance?

The child on the seashore builds a high monument of sand. The tide rises and sweeps it away; it is gone.

Again, he begins to roll a ball of snow. Larger and larger, and still larger, it grows, until he must look up to see its top. The sun smiles on the beautiful plaything, which, in turn, reflects his brightness, like myriads of sparkling diamonds. He merrily kisses it a few times; it feels his warm breath; it is gone. Such is life. Much of our monument building is without calculation, without "counting the cost." The tide sweeps it away. It cannot endure the warmth and light of investigation. Time melts it; it is no more. Not thus with the monument erected by the beloved Mary, of Bethany. *It shall last forever.* The Egyptian pyramids are said not to be so tall, by several feet, as they were centuries ago. The solid rock, in constant use, will wear away. Even the "rock of Gibraltar" has doubtless been somewhat worn by the lashing, dashing, and splashing of the briny waves for six thousand years. But the memorial of this woman, humbly anointing the Savior's feet in token of her loving trust, is growing stronger, higher, brighter; and this day (April 9, 1899), at this very hour, doubtless thousands, if not millions, of children and adults are gazing at this glorious monument, concerning which her Friend and Savior said, "She hath done what she could;" and, "This . . . shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Every rational being can build a monument that will reflect credit even after the builder shall have ceased to live, the grandest and most enduring memorial being a life of usefulness. Behold this splendid college building in which we are to-day assembled and which we so highly

prize! It has recently been erected in memory of a young lady we held in high esteem—one we fondly loved; a pure, lovable character; a devout young Christian whose will was to do her Master's bidding. As I turn toward that beautiful face—that lovely picture hanging yonder on the wall—I think of the time I first met her, a charming little girl of eleven. Then my mind moves along year after year. I see her as she grandly develops into young womanhood, her life all the while manifesting a kind of sacredness unusual for one of her years. Just as she reaches twenty-one, that beautiful life is gently removed from this land of "bitter-sweet." But is she dead? Her body quietly sleeps in a sacred nook near that loved and honored home; we feel sure her spiritual self is safe in our Father's love; but her influence still lives among us, and she, "being dead, yet speaketh"—speaks through this building; speaks through this school, church, and community; speaks of the Savior's sacrifice, the Father's love.

Time speeds on. If nothing interferes, students will continue to go forth from this, the Memorial Hall of the Georgie Robertson Christian College—many of them, to instruct the youth in science and arts; many others, to proclaim the gospel of truth, peace, and love. To this large assembly of students let me kindly suggest: When you are tempted to forsake the Lord or in any way bring reproach upon his great name, think of the sweet-spirited young lady whose influence is here perpetuated; think of her fidelity to the cause; and think of this school, an echo of her

short, but grand, life. Be assured that while living her example was well worthy of imitation, and doubtless in her death she accomplished still more. "She hath done what she could," and, "being dead, yet speaketh."

Long live this, the memorial of Miss Georgie Robertson!

A TRIBUTE OF LOVE.

(To a newly-wedded pair.)

Two streamlets issue from a mountain side. Down the slopes they gently wend their course in separate channels. By some means they at length begin to flow nearer together, then farther apart, still farther; again, nearer and nearer, until they unite and flow as one.

In the central plains of our fair country two lives start forth near the same time and run in separate channels, like two brooklets, independent of and strangers to each other, now coming nearer, now in sight (in the same student band), then swerving and going asunder, again drawing nearer, still nearer, until they are united in purpose, in heart, in love, in name, to gently wend their way—the twain made one—until they reach the mystic river. These two young lives are embodied in the forms of two of my friends, and to them I in love offer this unpretentious tribute.

Two lives combined, two hearts made one. In every instance this is a striking event, at the same time touched with sadness. Since you have each selected the other as the one with whom you desire to spend your remaining days,

see that each works to the interest of the other. Marriage is either a blessing or a curse, a step upward or downward. As to which it proves to be with *you*, much depends upon your future course. Marriage has been quaintly called "a world-without-end bargain;" and, in the language of Longfellow,

"As unto the bow the cord is, so unto man is woman.
Though she draws him, she obeys him;
Though she leads him, yet she follows—
Useless each without the other."

It has also been said:

"Of earthly goods, the best is a good wife;
A bad, the bitterest curse of human life."

We trust this young wife will, as suggested by Byron,

"Be the bright rainbow to the storms of life,
Or the evening beam that smiles the clouds away
And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray."

Regarding man as the head, we hope this "head" will always be properly balanced, with ears ever ready to hear and heed the calls of duty, with eyes looking toward that which is honorable and right, and with tongue ever ready to speak words of cheer to the disconsolate and praises to the Giver of all good. Considering woman the neck that turns the head and holds it in place, let this "neck" see that she never tries to hold the "head" in the wrong place or turn him astray.

It is best that there be harmony in your ages—not one looking forward from the standpoint of youth, the other

looking backward upon his threescore and ten. You have this harmony, the man being one year the senior. There should always be harmony in religious views—"not unequally yoked together." Solomon's wives worshiped idols, and dragged him down. You have sweet harmony in religious sentiment, each of you in early youth having accepted the Book of Truth as your only spiritual guide, Christ as your great Leader, and his name (and that only) as the one to distinguish you from the world. This feature you will appreciate more and more as the years go by. It does my heart good to know you both are daily and unbiased readers of the word of God. When the earth can bud and blossom without the sun, then, and not till then, can the world prosper without the Bible. In order to be congenial companions, there should also be harmony in your dispositions, your aspirations, your affections. This beautiful harmony can, to a very great extent, be cultivated. If one of you has peculiar notions or habits repulsive to the other and which profits you nothing, *true love* will prompt you to sacrifice those notions or habits for each other's sake. Congeniality is a creature of education, and one of its best teachers is compromise. Never sacrifice principle, however, for the sake of compromise, or disregard your properly-trained convictions; but avoid everything that tends to harshness, and do not cling to a fruitless opinion just for the sake of maintaining your position. There are so many unhappy marriages. Such lives run in separate channels—sometimes near each other, then swerving and flowing asun-

der, parted by strong barriers. This is frequently caused by not observing the little courtesies that polish life and make it happy. Never disregard these little things. Home is the place to practice them.

Honor each other with esteem, confidence, praise, and politeness. Do not be afraid to express your approbation. Your eulogies may *rust out*, but will never *wear out* by use. Let each try to always avoid doing anything that will cast a shadow across the other's path. Many do this by unkind insinuations and thoughtless remarks. There is also much—O, so much!—in the tone. Even kind words uttered in a cold or gruff tone fall like razors upon the tender heart of love, especially from the lips that so often have promised sweetness, for “to be wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the brain.” Never permit yourselves to be eccentric, or peculiar, in the general sense of the term, nor to put on an air of indifference, as if you cared for no one except your own two selves. Do not be grum, but take pains to speak kindly to each other, even when greatly against your inclinations. As the balmy atmosphere converts the clouds into laughing dewdrops to revive the wilted flower, so kind words dissolve the rough impulses of even a stony heart and raise or reanimate the downcast spirit. Loving-kindness persisted in will almost melt the ice-cold heart into penitent tears.

“Love is the lock that linketh noble minds; faith is the key that shuts the spring of love.” If you love each other tenderly, truly, your very frowns are fairer to each other

than the smiles of others. Then how quickly would each heart of love be darkened by the other's shadow! You could endure a harsh word from any one else better than from your other self. It would be too much like a dagger hurled from your own hand into your own bosom. On the other hand, as Pope says,

"At every trifling scorn to take offense—
That always shows great pride or little sense."

Do not expect life to be all sunshine, but make as much shine as possible, and carry it with you, in your lives and on your countenances. It will do you good and will inspire others. Cultivate a cheery, sweet, lovable disposition; for "melancholy takes away the appetite, the pleasure, and the golden sleep," while "cheerfulness sweetens toil." Form the habit of being cheerful, and when troubles come, you can endure them better; for

"Sunshine broken in the rill,
Though turned astray, is sunshine still."

To the inevitable yield as cheerfully and submissively as possible. The strong, stiff oak that will not bend to the storm may be torn up by the roots; while the willow, yielding for a little while, recovers its position and stands erect. View life from the very brightest standpoint. If you are unavoidably in humble circumstances, be consoled by the thought that "the scarcity of a thing enhances its value;" if in affluence, remember the poor. Whether in the smile of fortune or the midnight of gloom, be assured that "god-

liness with contentment is great gain." Real riches do not consist of "palatial residence, broad fields, and waving grain," but of Christian character and good works.

Never suffer yourselves to become "moody" (O, that most abominable disposition!)—sometimes all sugar, at other times tartaric acid; sometimes ready to give or receive a joke, at other times offended at the slightest one. "Winter, lingering, chills the lap of May." Then never appear cold toward each other, for you will regret it by and by. A cold, crabbed, or moody disposition is contagious as whooping cough, and but few constitutions are sound enough to resist it. Humanity has faults; so neither of you should expect to find the other perfect, but should bear with each other patiently, lovingly, all the while trying to meekly overcome the faults. It is true that "patience is a bitter seed, but it yields rich fruit," which will make you rejoice that you planted it. A kind, affectionate word, uttered in a soothing tone, is often like oil cast on the angry billows; it is a glorious "Peace, be still." Imitate and encourage the best characteristics of each other, and try to subdue the weaknesses. Let it never be said that either of you has retrograded by your union, but try to daily add to your store of useful knowledge and general culture. Do not consider your education completed; neither lose your desire for personal accomplishments, thus growing old prematurely. You are still young enough to add much to your intellectual store that will benefit you in years to come.

Be good, do good, be prudent. Economize, but never be

stingy. In order to keep within your means, weigh your pocketbook; then "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Think before acting. Remember the Georgia adage: "Foresight is a long way ahead of hind sight." Do not run yourselves to death in pursuit of a shadow, which, when you reach it, is a shadow still. We often make the long, dark shadows that so cruelly haunt us. It is not the sun turning from earth, but earth turning from the sun, that gives us night. You will find some dark places in life, in which it will be hard for you to penetrate the gloom; but you know there must be enough clouds to show the rainbow. Many a time a deep shadow will fall that you have not expected, and will linger long where the sunlight stood before; and as the leaves are often dewy with nature's tear drops, your eyes will often look up through both smiles and tears, while your hearts droop in sorrow. But each "shadow owes its birth to light," and God's promises can chase away your tears. Do not look for dark spots on life's great canvas; but when one is presented to you, go to work and paint thereon a bright picture. Let the clouds serve only as a dark margin which will display to better advantage the brighter colors. Try to make life as nearly as possible a long, perpetual thanksgiving. When darkness overshadows you, remember it takes darkness to reveal the stars. "The sable cloud heals the withered flowers." The rushing storm vividly reminds us of our own weakness and God's strength; and when we fully realize our own frailty, we will trust him all the more.

May each of you be to the other as a guardian angel, hovering with gratitude over the path of prosperity and with tears of loving sympathy over the couch of suffering, always refraining from accents of displeasure or looks of reproach. Try to make your united lives as nearly as possible like a snowflake, which "leaves a mark, but not a stain."

Remember, earth's brightest flowers are constantly fading, and you, too, will pass away. Let the cross of Jesus remain your anchor; and when life's trials are ended, your rest will be sweet. Live so the sun of your existence, while setting, will not have to look back upon you with a blushing face. May he not have to veil his bright countenance with regret when, amid his golden glimmerings, he is ready to bid you good night. Then, after your tired sun is set and your friends look back upon your lives, I trust they shall not have occasion to mourn over a somber cloud that either chased your course or "lay cradled near the setting sun," but shall be enabled to say: "How fine has been the day, from dawn to close!" "Long on the wave reflected lusters play." So may the sweet memory of your lives reflect a brilliance that will be recognized in heaven.

CRUSH THAT SERPENT'S HEAD!

LYING on my table is a picture of what the Lord doubtless designed as a *man*. He somewhat resembles one, and is clothed like a "sort" of a man; but his disheveled, stringy hair, mottled features, woe-begone expression, and

ludicrous posture, while half sitting, half lying on the ground, indicate that the *man proper* has departed, leaving only the wreck. He reminds me of the ugly "shed" out of which the locust or the graceful butterfly has flown. Near him is a beautiful fountain, and on high pedestal is mounted an attractive-looking maiden, holding high above her head a glass of sparkling beverage, while the other hand is extended toward him; but he is in too low a stupor now to see her. However, he holds with firm grasp a large bottle, out of which arises a deadly flying serpent. It lifts itself up, up, higher and higher; at last, with sudden bend, it brings its large head down low over him, its red eyes glaring, its alligator mouth open wide, its poisonous fangs projecting, and its forked tongue almost ready to strike his head. What imminent danger the man is in! It almost makes me shudder; but he slumbers on in his drunken stupor, unconscious of danger.

He is only a familiar specimen of the ruin caused by the mad demon of the cup. Why not crush that serpent's head and stop its deadly work? Such is not impossible. All we need is united effort and proper earnestness. Instead of being a unit in this grand work of reform, a few persons, and only a few, quietly and modestly assert their opposition to strong drink, apparently afraid to express their sentiments in even a loud whisper, lest they should wound the feelings of some good friend or neighbor or "lose a customer," while thousands are continually traveling the downward road and making the strongest efforts possible to pro-

mote the demon's work. Newspapers and other literary periodicals seem afraid to tackle this formidable foe; the press, the pulpit, and the bar handle it too tenderly, as if with velvet gloves; whereas we all should fight against it, write against it, and work against it with all our power. We are simply *playing* at this work, though the widow and orphan never cease their pitiful pleading: "Friends of temperance, save us, or we perish!"

I shall not attempt to give you statistics as to the tremendous cost or expense of strong drink, for to the multiplied millions of dollars thus worse than lost I would have to add the loss of time, health, happiness, friendship, good conscience, peace, intellect, character, life, and immortal soul. This would make the sum incalculable. I shall not tell you of the cheeks it has scalded, the hearts it has broken, the deathbed tortures it has caused, the graves it has dug and filled with victims; nor of how it is filling our country with idleness, ignorance, and poverty; how it is filling our jails, penitentiaries, and lunatic asylums; neither of its hereditary tendency—its imposition on offspring; nor of its hardening, toughening effect on brain and nerves, thus stupefying the senses. You *know* all this. The blood of those murdered by the rum demon cries, as it were, in pitiable accents from the ground; and Heaven appeals to us in authoritative tones: "Remove the curse!" Strong, earnest persons have begun the noble work. They ask our aid. Shall we refuse it? Shall we, as a people, sit with folded hands and silent tongues and permit the curse to envelop our

land? Shall we let its maddening flames spread unchecked until they meet above our heads?

Young man, kindly listen just a moment. When you took the first "social drink," did you once think what a long step you were taking toward perdition? When you jeered at the reeling form, red eyes, and bloated cheeks of that man just leaving the saloon, did you think you would ever resemble him? No, indeed; you valued your character too highly for that. You had been "too well raised," belonged to a "representative family," and occupied too high a position in the social world. But you had plenty of money, and thought it looked social and manly and rather gave you an air of importance to take a "toddy" with your friends and "treat" them occasionally; in fact, you thought it would look cowardly, selfish, and narrow-minded to do otherwise. You were fearful of being called a "temperance crank" or a "goody-goody" and considered out of the "circle"—"not up." That old toper once thought the same, but he visited the grogshops, and there cast in his dimes and dollars; he visited the billiard room, and there tossed in his twenties and fifties. He is now a slave to habit, a slave to sin; his family are paupers; his home has been sold to pay his whisky debts. Young man of intellect and merit, beware lest you also go beyond redemption! Think of Solomon—of his wisdom, popularity, wealth, and social standing; then think of his downfall! Take warning! There has never been a time when a strictly moral, upright young man was more highly appreciated than at present.

Will you not turn and be one of that kind? You will rejoice over the change "some sweet day." But you say you will never become a drunkard, will control yourself too well for that. How do you know you will? If you cannot or will not manifest self-control in the *beginning* of the evil, how can you expect to do so after the viper has secure hold of you? But suppose you never drink "to excess," as you say. Do you know who is decidedly the most formidable character among the immense multitudes who drink? Not the toper; no one will select *him* as a criterion. It is the so-called "respectable dram drinker"—the man who drinks when he pleases, remains in good society, amuses others with his "wit," makes money, seems none the less respected, is probably a church member "in good standing," drinks much more than you do, yet never becomes what the world calls a "drunkard." *He* is the character to be most seriously dreaded.

So many excuses are offered for drinking. A certain man asserts his *liberty*, wants to be *free*; yes, free, like the candle fly—free to fly into the flames; free, like the unguided ship—free to dash headlong against the terrible breakers or into the fury of the storm. Yes, he is free in many respects—free from love and respect for himself and others; free from the confidence of his best friends, or even his companions at the beer shop; free from nearly all good habits and good inclinations; free from the sweet associations of the pure in heart and the sacred influence of God's holy word; free from the promise of life eternal. If this be

liberty, give me bondage or give me death. One man comes with that old moss-covered excuse that he has lost loved ones and his sorrow is overpowering him; he must drown it in drink. Man, stop a moment, I beg you! Think! Are you not fearful that while drowning your sorrow you will also drown your soul? A quantity of the element sufficient for one will often answer for both. Again, is drunkenness the tribute of respect you offer to the memory of your dear departed? Is this your badge of mourning—a *red nose*? Did that beloved wife, while dying, request you to become a drunkard, and thus prepare to meet her in the better land? If she should now be permitted, with some of the heavenly host, to lean over the jasper walls and watch you reeling, staggering, falling, rolling in the dust, and hear your vile utterances, would she be proud to say to those celestial watchers: "That is my beloved husband?" Suppose your children in the spirit land should see and recognize you in this condition, would they be proud (if in their power) to call the angels together and tell them: "Yonder is our papa?"

You say the temptation to drink is too strong for you to resist. Suppose you knew, positively, that each glass contained a sufficient quantity of strychnine to kill you after a few hours' indescribable agony, would you be able to resist it? If so, this is evidence that you have the power to refrain from drink. The exercise of will is what you need. It is more potent in effecting a reform than all the drugs and other medicines in the world, but its

neglect has placed a skeleton made by whisky in many a household. Alexander could conquer the world of arms, but could not conquer his thirst for intoxicants; hence he filled an inebriate's grave. More than two millions of Persians were conquered by three hundred Spartans—the result of temperance.

Whisky makers and dealers, are you proud of your calling, outside of the money it brings you? Think of *your* responsibility! You *know* the ruin you are working. You will not deny it. You *know* you are desolating homes, making widows and orphans, and causing barefooted children to cry for bread. Will you be first to supply them? Will you restore all you have taken from them?

"Just think of the sorrows and cares,
The heartrending sighs and the fears,
Of the words and the blows and the cruelest woes,
And then think of an ocean of tears!"

Notice the attitudes, hiccougs, and winks of your last customer as he leaves your counter! Do not fail to catch a few puffs of his fragrant (?) whisky-tobacco breath. Watch him! He has now fallen headlong across that bed in the corner in a fit of *delirium tremens*. Go to him kindly (he is a *fine* specimen of your work); congratulate him on his wonderful success; then earnestly give thanks to God, whose son you are—you Christian (?) rumseller—for thus prospering your godly efforts. His "spell" is now wearing off. Take him up tenderly and start him home to his wife and children. No; they have no comfortable home, as you have; no good fire to take him to,

and no money to provide any (you have their money). Put him in your own new surrey; go with him to your own splendid home and into your warm, comfortable family room, with your wife and children; have your servants to prepare him a "good, square meal;" let your wife arrange her best bed, and *you* place him thereon; stay right by him through the varied effects of the attack; wait on him like a brother; and when he becomes sober, take him back to your saloon; then repeat your work. He has paid you bountifully for this kindness, and it is your duty to see that he is properly cared for. But, there! Saloon keeper, "your sign has fallen down"—a drunken man on the sidewalk. Be brave; go to him; gently lift him up; fold your arms lovingly around him; then proudly exclaim to your hundreds of spectators: "This is the kind of work done in my shop!"

Moreover, my friend, while you are thus voluntarily dragging your fellow-men down to the lowest depths of earthly and eternal degradation, what are your calm, serious ideas as to your own future destiny? The poet seems to wonder if God is partial in his judgment; therefore he asks:

"O, righteous God, must drunkards be
Eternally condemned by thee?
Must they in endless torment lie,
While drunkard makers dwell on high?"

THE RUMSELLER JUSTIFIED.

"Ah, but my vocation is *legal*," you say. "I have Uncle Sam on my side, and his laws are based upon the Bible."

Are they—*all* of them? Where does "Uncle Sam" find divine authority for making drunkards? It must be in one of these two passages: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink!" or, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

Yes, you have license; but for what did you ask when requesting license to sell intoxicants? You virtually asked for the sanction of the law not only to make other men poor that you might be made rich, but also to make drunkards of the noblest youths, young men, husbands, and fathers; sanction of law to make men slaves and to ruin body and soul; sanction of law to take the homes, food, and raiment from helpless women and children; to destroy peace and happiness in the family circle and substitute misery, woe, wretchedness, and tears; to make inmates for jails, almshouses, penitentiaries, asylums, and places of evil resort; to make gamblers, burglars, thieves, highway robbers, murderers, and disreputable characters of every other kind. You ask the sanction of the law to bring men down from high stations to worse than brutal degradation, then to cast their souls, with your own, into the regions of everlasting woe. Notwithstanding all this, you brave saloon keeper, you stand on a high platform of honor, genuine honesty, and uprightness, compared with that class of individuals (whose name is "Legion") who "on the sly" (in drug stores and elsewhere) sell the stuff that converts men into demons. To the terrible sin of selling whisky they add those of shamefacedness, stealthiness, undermining deception,

and outright hypocrisy. Neither does this excuse the physician who gives prescriptions for whisky where it is not essential.

No doubt you are proud of your license, for "license" is your plea. Then take special care of that paper which extends to you such wonderful privileges; keep it; lock it up securely among your choicest treasures; guard it as the apple of your eye. When the drunkard's homeless and forlorn wife and children come, hungry, half clad, shivering, weeping, and fall on their knees before you and in heart-rending tones implore you not to sell that man more drink, quickly unlock your safe of treasures, bring forth the selfsame paper, and convince them your work is *lawful*. Make your will. Do not neglect it too long, for even saloon keepers die, sometimes. In making that will, be certain to arrange for this precious document—your *saloon license*—to be placed in the coffin with you, held secure by your cold, stiff fingers, which will then clinch it even more firmly than now. When by the Lord you are called upon in the spirit realm to confront the souls of your victims, lose no time; select a fleet-winged messenger to flit to earth; let him snatch down that costly rum-bought marble monument, tear open your handsome rum-bought metallic coffin, and thence bring forth that selfsame precious document, dingy and soiled with the foul decay of your skeleton fingers; take it and hurriedly file in your plea of justification; boldly and fearlessly lay down your license on the

bar of the great Judge, and say: "Here, Lord, is my authority, legalized by Uncle Sam."

Worst of all is "the power behind the throne" that authorizes making and selling this soul destroyer. Woe unto the voters, who control "the powers that be," when they do not try to crush the head of the poisonous viper, the serpent of the still! A heathen king once caused the slaughter of two hundred maidens, that he might mix their blood with the mortar in erecting an idol's temple. The civilized world stood aghast and contemplated the horrible deed with commingled disgust and indignation. But atrocious as was that awful transaction, it is not to be compared with what the people of our country are doing every year. By law we have chartered the erection of a temple to Bacchus, in the mortar of which is yearly mixed the blood of from sixty thousand to one hundred thousand of our citizens. "Upon this never-ceasing slaughter most of us are looking with indifference, while many behold it with applause. The nation is unmoved by the shrieks of broken-hearted women, and complacently hears the wails of orphan children. In vain do mothers kneel at the shrine of their country and extend their hands and turn their tearful eyes to the genius of our government, imploring protection against this devouring god who demands the blood of their sons. How long, blessed Lord, must this yearly sacrifice be made to the god of rum?" (J. B. Briney.)

Our merchants set apart days they call "openings." On these days they make the very best possible display of their

goods, and kindly invite everybody to come and see. They are pleased with their selections, and are anxious for the public to examine them. I would suggest a rumseller's "opening" day. As in the other instance, written invitations should be sent to the prominent citizens—those you expect to furnish your trade; ask them to come and examine your goods and the work you are doing; then present all your dram drinkers and drunkards in the strongest possible way—in your show windows, in front of your doors, on the streets; let your counters and show cases be reserved for those unable to sit or stand; have a first-class phonograph to catch and preserve the utterances of your best samples; distribute specimens of your best tobacco and best drink among the most cultured of your visitors; make the most striking display possible. This "opening" will suggest to you the idea of a grand rally of all the forces along your line—a regular Makers,' Dealers' and Consumers' Association—which should be held without fail in the very near future. I would suggest the next "July 4" as an appropriate time for it to begin. It would do great good, and should not be postponed. No special preparations will be required; your work is always in shape for exhibition. Select one of the most prominent cities of our republic, and you can have a wonderful show, far surpassing that of Chicago, Buffalo, or Paris. Let every whisky maker and dealer of every type be there, including every "wild-cat" and "blind-tiger" man of our nation; let their cargoes of intoxicants be arranged in pyramids reaching far toward the

skies; send out illustrated catalogues, showing the magnitude of this business, the extent of its influence, and the result of its work; let the frontispiece be a painting—a home, once a miniature paradise, now a haunt of wretchedness. (For several of the following suggestions I am indebted to a newspaper clipping.) Paint a young and beautiful bride at the hymeneal altar, then the wan, wasted woman, hugging to her heart a babe frightened at the approach of what was *once a man*; “paint an empty larder, a scanty wardrobe, a fireless hearth; paint, if you can, the misery of that abused wife, trembling as she hears the unsteady steps of her approaching husband; open the door; see the affrighted woman crouching in the corner and warding off the drunken blows that otherwise would fall on her child; at length paint Death holding his awful court, the wife and child weltering in blood, and the besotted assassin swinging from the gallows of outraged justice.” Throughout the catalogue give lifelike illustrations of the various work done by drink; then state that these pictures, enlarged and painted true to life by famous artists, will be seen in the various buildings on the exposition grounds; not only this, but that the many scenes represented by the paintings will be enacted in reality there, to better display the work of our nation. Do not forget to advertise the Rum-sellers’ Contest, in which much pains will be taken to “show off” the most striking specimens of work. As some one has kindly suggested, let premiums be offered for the best *young drinkers* and for the best *aged drinkers*; let

the mothers, sisters, and sweethearts of the boys be present; also the haggard wives and broken-hearted daughters of old toppers (they will take a mournful interest in the contest); let the judges be barkeepers who have enticed the men and boys to drink; to give variety, let other nations have some of their best representatives in the contest (you need not fear their rivalry). Congregate as much of the world as you can; then let the contest begin in earnest. When you have decided upon the successful candidate for *dram-drinking* honors, pin on his arm a long blue ribbon, dyed in the anguish and melancholy of women's hearts. Go then and congratulate the weeping mother and the pale, sorrowful sister and sweetheart in whose hearts hope has died; then let this champion, with blue ribbon flying, go reeling round the ring for the cheers of the bloated spectators, while the band plays "Fill Up the Wine Cup."

Next, present the successful toper candidate. "Fill him with whisky until his eyes glare with lightning, with which he shocks his home and its shrinking hearts; until his fist is clinched and strikes those he should protect, until his mouth pours forth curses as a storm cloud does the thunder-claps, until every feature is aglow with the advertisements of the torment that burns in his breast. When your accomplished beast is thus at the height of his debauch, with blue streamer flying and the premium bottle of whisky under his arm, let him stagger around the arena," fall, rise, then fall again, to the delight of the crowd, while the band plays and the glad spectators join in the chorus:

"Shout! the victory, the victory, the victory!"

The premium given the successful *young* drinker is a large bottle of tears. Ah, there is some significance in exhibiting tears in a bottle! He holds this bottle high in his hand; goes around the ring again, shouting, "Three cheers for King Alcohol! Three cheers for a woman's tears!" while over yonder on a low platform stands the shriveled form of a little woman, prematurely gray; and with trembling, but sweet, plaintive voice, she softly sings "A Boy's Best Friend is His Mother" and "O, Where is My Boy To-night?" This is immediately followed by a little girl, who touchingly sings "Father's a Drunkard and Mother is Dead" and "O, Father, Dear Father, Come Home!"

Some one has further suggested that all the whisky on exhibition be gratuitously distributed for the enlivening of the crowd. Do not forget to exhibit a few of the "lean, cold beds on which the wives of drunkards lie nightly and weep;" also a number of shoeless feet, and a basket of the stale crusts on which hungry children subsist. At last open a separate inclosure and let there be seen a pile of bones almost mountain high—bones of all whose death has been caused by dissipation. Their teeth and skulls will be piled on the tables of the fair. Call around these stands the wives and children and other relatives of the murdered and murdering drunkards. Let these relatives present every whisky maker and whisky seller with a souvenir watch charm—a simple tooth from these immense piles of cherished relics; and let these men continue to wear them near

their hearts, and finally give them space in their coffins; also let each of these men select a *skull* and carry it home to his wife as a memento from the "Whisky Fair." When the eye grows weary looking at the teeth, the skulls, and the mountain of bones, turn a little and let it see that crimson pool. It is the blood of the annual "sixty or one hundred thousand." Now see that every whisky dealer of every description dips his pen into that pool of blood, and, in the presence of the vast assembly, signs this pledge: "I will continue to do all in my power to add to this pile of bones and crimson pool." Just before the president of the association (who is a dram-drinking preacher) dismisses the throng with a short, eloquent prayer, thanking God for the wonderful prosperity of the great liquor traffic and praying that its powers may still be extended, let him be presented with a large, handsome painting—a simple reward for his faithful services during this great rally, as well as for his lifelong example which has done so much to encourage drink. That this painting may give a faint idea of the work done in the business, here are a few suggestions you may hand to the skilled artist who is to paint it: "Paint health in ruins, hope destroyed, affections crushed, prayers silenced; paint the chosen seats of paternal care, of filial pity, of brotherly love, of maternal devotion—all, all vacant; paint all the crimes of every stature and of every hue, from murder standing aghast over a grave which it has no means to cover down to the dark valley of death peopled with living slaves; paint home a desert and shame a tyrant;

paint a landscape with trees whose fruit is poison and whose shade is death, with mountain torrents tributary to an ocean whose very waves are fire; put in the most distant background the vanishing vision of a blessed past, and into the foreground put the terrible certainty of an accursed future; people the scene with men whose shattered forms are tenanted by tormented souls, with children upon whose lips no smile can ever play, and with women into whose cheeks furrows have been burned by tears wrung by anguish from breaking hearts. Paint such a picture; and when you are ready to show it, do not let in the rays of the heavenly sun, but illuminate it with the glares of the infernal fires, and still your horrible picture falls short of the truth."

A BROKEN CHAIN.

EVERY "heart knoweth its own bitterness." Almost every love chain has its missing links; the household has its vacant chairs; each heart has its empty corners. Many a trunk, bureau drawer, and closet contains relics treasured as almost sacred because they were once handled by fingers now grown cold. Go to a home of love and ask to see keepsakes from dear ones departed, and some one will show you a pair of tiny slippers and unfold some dainty little dresses which "baby" used to wear. Here are some of its playthings; there is its picture, life-size, on an easel. Ask where is that baby dear, and the tender mother, too full to speak, raises her tear-dimmed eyes toward heaven.

Go to another home. There you will find a lonely, a deserted room, once made bright by a cheerful, sunny-faced youth who delighted in calling that *his* room. There you will find many relics of his boyhood—keepsakes from friends dearly loved. There are his clothes, his hats, his slippers, his books—all these, and many more, reminders that the room was once occupied by a boy just reaching manhood. Where is that boy? Another family chain has been broken, and *he* is the missing link.

Visit another home, and a dutiful daughter, with aching heart, will go to an old-fashioned walnut or cedar chest, take therefrom beautiful quilts pieced according to tedious patterns and counterpanes knit and turfed in antique designs, showing great skill and patience. "This," says the daughter, "is the handiwork of the one I was always proud to call 'my mother.' Her precious fingers became tired, her eyes grew dim, she went to sleep, we laid her to rest in the old churchyard yonder." At this moment the father enters, with an old-fashioned daguerreotype, portraying her beautiful features when young, then points to a portrait on the wall, the same sweet face—this time displaying the furrowed cheek and wrinkled brow of threescore years and ten. "This first," says the dear old man, with quivering lip and trembling voice, "is the darling of my youth, while this last is the companion and solace of my old age. For more than half a century our hearts beat as one, our purposes were one; but now my love chain is broken, and *she* is one of the missing links."

Inquire at another home—no; you need not inquire, only look. Weeping children are gathered around a heart-broken mother, who is bending low over the sinking form of him she loves better than her own life. This bespeaks its own story; it tells who here is soon to be the severed link.

What causes these vacancies? *Death*. We shun his approach in our households and ward him off as long as possible. Physicians kindly aid us in battling against the intruder; but many times all human efforts fail, and, to our sorrow, the "king of terrors" is victorious. He carries away objects of our love, leaving our hearts torn and bleeding. In one household he makes choice of the prattling babe, and unkindly takes it from its mother's tender embrace; in another he selects young manhood's opening bud; from the next he takes blooming young womanhood, the sunlight of home, the mother's companion. Next, he creeps stealthily under the roof where for half a century husband and wife have lived and loved; he looks at the aged couple—first at one, then at the other, as if undecided which to take; and, almost before we are aware of his decision, one has been taken, the other is left to mourn. Sometimes he selects the ripened sheaf which is heavy laden with golden fruit, only awaiting the harvester.

Strange monster this. Sometimes he wrestles long and hard with the physical frame before it yields to his overpowering strength; sometimes he seems to softly place his finger on the heartstrings and bid them cease to beat. In

either case he is victorious, and, sooner or later, carries off the prize, leaving some one to grieve. Thanks to that higher Power that conquers even death and deprives it of its venom sting! The same Power will transform and reunite all the worthy links and in heaven there will be no broken chain.

AN UPWARD GLANCE.

As the exquisite painting on the overhead ceiling in the "great Orient" is viewed by looking into an immense mirror on the floor to rest the eyes from long looking upward, so we may look downward and around us at Dame Nature's laughing beauties and see divine power and love. We look on the placid bosom of a crystal lake and see trees, clouds, sun, moon, and stars duplicated in the water; we behold their portraits in the deep. We often see heavenly splendor by reflection; for, as Young says, "Nature is a glass, reflecting God." But these are mere shadows. By looking downward we can never see the real objects they represent; *they are above us*. We cannot reach them, but we may enjoy their light and beauty more by looking upward.

There are times in life when it seems to us that "everything goes wrong." The little shadows across our paths blend into one broad, dense one, and our way seems—O, so dreary! Have we ever thought of it—that this is because we confine our vision too near *ourselves*? These feelings often haunt us even when we are doing well and are surrounded by the very individuals we most fondly love. We

often complain of our environments when we could scarcely give one reason why. How much wiser and nobler to remove the film from our own eyes, then look up higher! In the beautiful sky of blue no stain or cloud appears; all the clouds we see are confined to the atmosphere surrounding us. When everything goes right and life seems bright, we can walk in the light and cheerfully obey the Lord. When only clouds are in sight and sorrows deepen with the night, if we will look *above* for the light and still gladly, though tearfully, obey, we will feel an inward happiness even amid adversity.

When sad days are ours; when gloom and despondency, as sable curtains, drape our hearts, two maidens, as it were, will stand beside us, each holding a cup and enticing us to drink. The first, with sighs and moans and tears and trembling hand, presents her cup and beseeches: "Drink, and be mine!" The other, with steady hand, radiant face, eyes sparkling as the gems of heaven, and with voice so low and sweet, says: "Drink, and be glad!" The first maiden is Despair, with her goblet of rue; the second maiden, Hope, with her cup of joy. Which cup shall we quaff? We should remember Despair always brings the shade; brave-hearted Hope, the shine.

"As in sparkling majesty a star
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy cloud,
Brightening the half-veiled face of heaven afar,
So when dark thoughts our brooding spirits shroud,
Sweet Hope celestial influence o'er us sheds,
Waving her silver pinions round our heads."

The tall mountain swells from the vale and lifts its majestic head toward the heavens, unconscious of the storm fast sweeping around its base. While the rolling clouds are flitting across its breast amid thunder's roar and lightning's playful flashes, and while the rain falls in torrents about its foot, golden sunshine settles on its uplifted head. By obedient faith we can elevate our souls above the storms of time to the land of eternal sunshine. Blessed thought! No clouds up yonder; no tears in heaven!

Through a small telescope I once counted the many little crystal squares in a window three miles distant. At another time I watched the steady movements of an approaching steamer softly gliding over the sky-tinted wavelets, every part showing as distinctly as if but a few paces distant, though scores of miles intervened. Through Lord Ross' "Improved" the moving, rolling spheres seem brought almost within arm's reach; yet there is another Telescope, compared with which Lord Ross' and Yerke's may hide their faces with crimson blushes. It not only enraptures us with a more wonderful display of the sparkling, "bewitching" eyes of heaven, but into it we can look and form an idea of the great city, the New Jerusalem, and can learn the characteristics of our grand and glorious King.

Through this marvelous telescope of faith we gaze into the glorious beyond as it will appear after time shall have finished its course. It opens to us the pearly portals, and we see the King of glory. It gives us a view of the jasper walls, the golden streets, the tree of life. We keep look-

ing and admiring. New beauties constantly come into view. There is that crystal fountain, the river of life, gently flowing from near the throne of God, its ripples dancing in beauty as if fanned by seraphs' wings; there, the angelic host, the heavenly choir, the redeemed of all ages, the exalted Redeemer, the throne of glory, the Father of love. *There* is where we should lay up our treasure; for "where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

God is the Giver of all our hopes, our blessings, our promises; but—see!—he is *above* them. Let us look to him, *go to him*.

WHAT JIMMIE GAVE.

THE appreciative child who occasionally gives his teacher even a little flower, accompanied by a smile of affection, is unconsciously planting the seed of a beautiful "forget-me-not" that will long continue to bud and blossom in the teacher's bosom. A little boy—a pupil of mine for five consecutive years—formed the habit of bringing me something (to the schoolroom) almost every day. He was an unusually bright child, made rapid progress in school, but was so full of mischief that I often had to resort to some kind of rigid discipline. This, however, seemed only to increase his love for me; and the next morning he would, as usual, bring some little token of remembrance—an apple, peach, shell, or flower; more frequently the latter. I was almost sure of the first violet, pansy, crocus, jonquil, hya-

cinth, and rose that bloomed in his mother's flower garden. One bleak, wintry morning, when no fruit or flower could be found, he placed in my hand a beautiful pebble. With my pencil I immediately wrote on it his name, "Jimmie."

Years have passed. Little smiling-faced, rosy-cheeked, auburn-haired, brown-eyed Jimmie became a man, then a Christian, married, went West, was seized by consumption, came home (he said, to die among his friends), and in the family burial ground his body was placed near his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, who, one by one, had recently fallen victims of the same uncompromising foe. Thus James P. Thompson, of Mars' Hill, near Florence, Ala., has long since gone to his final reward, and his photograph and the little pebble bearing his name are the only mementos I have from his hand; but in my memory still fondly lingers each feature of that bright and dear little face, as well as the many small tokens of a loving remembrance—that many "forget-me-nots" carefully placed on the tablet of my heart. Quiet influence is often the strongest and most durable.

ARE YOU A SLAVE?

IF so, what is your master's name? "His name is 'Habit,'" you reply. Habit? Well, yes. Then probably I am well acquainted with him. He belongs to a very large family, many of whose members it will do to watch. Some of them are trustworthy, such as Work Habit, Tidy

Habit, Truth Habit, Patience Habit, Prudence Habit, and a few others. Love Habit is a large-hearted, whole-souled "creature," but is somewhat fickle; while many of the family are dangerous in the extreme, among whom I shall merely mention Slang Habit, Swear Habit, Falsehood Habit, Drink Habit, and Steal Habit. There are also triplets in this branch of the Habit family, called by the pet names "Dip," "Chew," and "Smoke." Like a family I once knew who had "Ann" attached to every name—"Mary Ann," "Lucinda Ann," etc.—so these triplets have one certain name in common: "Dip Spit," "Chew Spit," and "Smoke Spit." All the Habits show untiring devotion to those who will familiarize themselves with and encourage them—will "stick closer than a brother;" and a passionate fondness is usually reciprocated. Strange indeed to say, man manifests this devout attachment to Habit, whether the same proves to be his very best friend or his very bitterest foe. If there is any difference, he is partial to the latter. These triplets and the last five previously mentioned, as well as many of the others, are dangerous associates, despotic in their natures, and become tyrannical masters. It is not compulscry on us to go into this bondage, however; neither do we usually do so deliberately or willfully. We glide into it by degrees, by association, by yielding. Each habit is, in its infancy, like a spider's web—frail, fragile, easily broken; but it develops rapidly. "If neglected, it soon becomes a thread or twine; next, a cord or rope; finally, a cable. Then who can break it?"

If we have much dealing with these evil parties, they are almost sure, before we are aware of it, to have the "noose" around our necks, then to have us in chains and shackles; and terrible is their despotism.

It would be casting a sad reflection on your intelligence for me to presume to portray to you the evils of the various tobacco habits. You know them as well as I do, perhaps better. Some of you know from experience, for you are slaves thereto. Why? Because you would not master the habit in its infancy, when it was a mere spider's web; and now it has grown into an immense cable, and you cannot break it (you *think* you cannot). It is your despotic master; you are its obedient slave. You have voluntarily surrendered to this bewitching master; now he keeps you in his service, yet makes you pay all the expenses. Friend, what do you think of yourself? Do not tell me you place a higher estimate on yourself in consequence thereof, or that any one else values you more highly. Can you boast of your independence—of your liberty—while yielding submissively to one of nature's roughest, most uncouth weeds—a weed which neither the horse, the cow, the cat, the dog, nor even the filthy hog will condescend to taste? They say sheep will nibble at it occasionally. It is ravenously devoured by one class of worms (*very green* ones), and man stands next. There are two animals in the class—the large, fat, green worm and man; and man stands next to head. He is doubtless justly entitled to the "head-

mark," for he consumes it in many forms the worm would not deign to touch.

You will not now plead the long-since-exploded theory as to its medicinal effect—as a cure for dyspeptics, a preserver of teeth, etc. But you say your constitution needs a stimulant. No doubt of it. You have kept it stimulated until it requires it. I once heard a clever man say he entirely lost control of his temper when without tobacco two hours; that he became nervous, irritable, restless, discontented; wanted to kill every hog and cow that came within his reach; had no patience with even his wife and children. A certain preacher said if he should come into our neighborhood without tobacco he would be so "cross and ill natured" he would not be fit to appear among us, much less preach for us. What a pity intelligent physicians ever recommend the use of whisky or tobacco to their patients! Almost every one thus becomes a slave. Wonder if in any of these instances the "doctor" likes the glass and weed tolerably well himself. (Misery enjoys company.) One preacher was really advised by a "medicine man" to smoke a cigar after each sermon as a stimulant for his weak throat (instead of advising him to take a small piece of ginger or a cubeb, which would not enslave him); and I have heard of two preachers who actually did smoke before leaving the house of the Lord, while the congregation was singing, yet would preach: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." How thankful that we are not commanded to offer tobacco incense! The old tobacco

" toper " would greatly prefer that we should not mention the subject in his presence, yet his candid advice is for the young to forever refrain from its use. Some say they would rather live on " half rations," with plenty of the " comforting weed," than to have every other luxury without it; yet they will say this is a loathsome habit and advise others not to form it. Most persons who use tobacco regret it bitterly some time in life, though they do not always acknowledge this. You say it is *so much company to you*. What a reflection on *us*, your friends! Why not save your tobacco until we are out of your sight, when you will need " company ? " Instead of this you often use it while we are with you and trying to be as good " company " as possible.

You will not deny that this practice is not only unnecessary, useless, ugly, filthy, expensive, dangerous, and unhealthful, but is to a certain extent also demoralizing, inasmuch as it often throws its victims into immoral company—gives them immoral and intemperate associates. True, we find many nice, intelligent persons who use tobacco; but listen! It is difficult to find many *low* characters who do not. Select the lazy men in your community. Most of them use it. Point out the profane, the stingy, the untruthful; the backbiters, the extortioners, the drunkards, and the gamblers, and see how many of them are free from its use. The tramp begging clothes and food often has tobacco in his pocket at the time. So with the loafer on the street; in fact, the loafer's employment (?) greatly encourages him in forming tobacco habits and others of a kindred na-

ture, like the pale, yellow, sallow, swarthy-looking boy who boastfully said, "I can *smoke* and *chaw*, too," leaving us to infer that he was no ordinary boy; and he was not ordinary. Have you ever noticed how many idiots or semi-idiots use and will beg and plead for "baccer?" However, this vice seems to be "no respecter of persons." Many of the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the learned, the illiterate of all colors, are alike its bondmen, and are in this respect brought to a common level. Again, many tobacco consumers never use intoxicants (*other* intoxicants); but most inebriates also use this fascinating (?), nerve-shaking weed—the plague narcotic; and decidedly the majority of persons who drink will also swear. So it is very evident that tobacco is frequently thrown among rude associates. The weed in every salable form is kept in the saloon. Why? For a twofold reason: First, that those who drink may also buy their tobacco there; secondly, often the unsuspecting man or youth steps into the saloon to buy nothing but tobacco, which is there advertised as "cheapest and best," and while there is enticed to drink. There seems to be a strong affinity between the two practices. Tobacco is said to create an unnatural thirst, and to satiate this thirst its victim often takes to drink.

It has been predicted that the time is near when tobacco fiends will have to take "back seats," as is now being fulfilled in such things as the second-rate coach—the "smoking car"—in which a really genteel-looking man appears out of place. (Look between some of the seats in the "first-

class" coach, and you will think there ought also to be attached a "chewing car" or a general "spitting car.") Nor is the "smoking car" the only place the victims of the pipe are thrown in unpolished society. I have seen men and women smoking in pipes used by those whose lips they would consider far from being suitable to touch their own. I have known one woman to ask another for a piece of her tooth "mop," which was already stained its full length, from a mouth whose teeth were—*bad enough*. (No danger of my becoming offensively personal, but it is *you* I allude to.) If she will stand before the mirror and watch each movement as she rubs that wet "mop" around in the box or bottle, then mops her mouth with it, at the same time wondering in whose diseased mouths part of that selfsame delicious (?) snuff has already been; if the cigar smoker will visit the cigar factories and see (as I did) the Italians, Cubans, and even those of darker complexion, moisten their fingers and the outer leaves of the cigar with saliva when the glue was too "sticky," surely disgust would overcome relish. You say that is too bad to write about. It is not half as bad for it to be on the point of my pen as in your mouths. I am no harder than truth, and you know it. Then cleanse your mouths, you snuff dippers, and purify your breath, you chewers and smokers. I have twice seen a girl who, in infancy, was permitted to play with her mother's snuff-covered toothbrush. Result: A slave for life—a *bad* one. On the other hand, I once knew a good lady who, at the age of seventy-two, voluntarily gave up a long

practice of snuff dipping. She lived several years after this, but never said: "I couldn't stay quit." Friends, if you will not give up the practice, will you not help open the eyes of the young? It is already a partially-established law that no smoker is received in certain first-class positions. Especially is this true relative to cigarette smokers. Every one of them is more or less injured by the practice, and he knows it; but it is his master. Many such a boy, otherwise unusually bright, becomes dull, cannot learn fast, cannot remember; hence he drops out of school, grows up to be a stupid kind of man, still "dull," with poor memory, nerves affected, unsteady hand covered with nicotine blotches; and probably he at last becomes a victim of nicotine cancer. Others are dwarfed in stature. (By the way, some one has said: "The only use we find for a dude is as a cigarette holder.") Of course, nervousness, poor memory, etc., are often the results of ailments we know not how to avoid; but when caused by our own recklessness, we certainly deserve censure. Again, many tobacco users are intelligent and prosperous; but can their success be attributed to this practice?

Suppose a check for ten thousand dollars should be offered you by a party you know to be entirely reliable, it to be *yours* if you completely give up tobacco, but to be refunded if you relapse into the habit; would you get the benefit of the ten thousand dollars? What do you say about it, boy, you who have not yet grown old in the service of your master weed? If the love of money will induce you to

do right, will not also the love of cleanliness and freedom from low bondage? Such liberty is a great accomplishment, acknowledged such by even the young ladies who tell you they do not object to your smoking. Let me whisper a little secret in your ear (but do not tell the girls; they would be angry with me): I have seen them make all sorts of ugly faces when they would return to the parlor where they had entertained you—the parlor, with its mingled fragrance of cigar or cigarette fumes and heliotrope or rose water, though you never smoked there. They say of another friend: “He is *such a nice* young man; has no bad habits; does not drink, swear, or use tobacco in any form.”

Many tobacco consumers become exceedingly *sensitive*—doubtless rendered more so by the woeful effect on the nervous system. They want us to handle this subject with “velvet gloves,” if at all. Some of them seem astonished at any one’s objecting to their spitting on the hearth or floor or near the churn or on the church floor, though they know such rudeness is a gloomy reflection on their mothers—on the early training. Some become offended if even gently reminded of the cost, though they murmur “hard times,” say they cannot pay their debts, and stint their families and themselves in the necessary comforts of life. Listen! Shall I say it? The majority of the very *poorest* people use this weed in some form. I know some men who do not possess a good hat or a respectable pair of shoes, neither money to buy the same, yet who both chew and smoke; and their wives dip, even if they have to borrow money to buy the deli-

easy (?). Suppose the ten-thousand-dollar check should be rattled before their eyes, would they accept it? But you say the expense does not amount to much, and "it all goes in a lifetime, anyway." Man, get you a toy bank; drop therein a nickel or a dime or a quarter every time you spend one for tobacco—exactly the same amount; the last day of the year present the little bank to your wife; let her count its contents and use the same to pay your church debt or for some other laudable purpose; multiply this amount by ten, twenty, or forty—the number of years you have thus spent money—and see if the man exaggerated when he said he had burned a fine "house and lot," "kindled in the end of a cigar." "But," says one, "I cultivate my smokin' tobacker." Yes, you spend a good deal of time cultivating and "worming" your "smokin' tobacker," and leave the cabbage for your wife to "worm;" but you at last buy your "chawin' tobacker," and she sells her cabbage and buys her snuff.

"I make my money by honest toil, and it's nobody's business how I spend it," you say (temper rising). Look out! There comes the "brother's-keeper" theory. I thought the Lord buried that theory sixty centuries ago. It has either all decayed and vanished or else it is petrified. In either case you ought to be ashamed to resort to it. You doubtless have it in its petrified condition as handed down the ages. However, it is somebody's business. We live in the same community; and it is our duty, as citizens, to revolutionize and improve society as much as possible, to try to suppress

every unnecessary expense and unprofitable habit. It is just as reasonable for you to argue that it is none of our business to try to stop our neighbor from drinking or his house from burning. It is our duty to try to assist each other over all the rough places along life's road. If you see me about to fall into the mud, you ought to kindly extend your hand or lend me your crutch, and I ought to be grateful and thoughtful enough to return the favor; but should either of us be *sensitive* over the mutual aid?

My *boy* friend—you who have just begun, at least have not grown old in, this loathsome practice—I tenderly plead with you. When your mother so often kissed your baby lips—so pure, so sweet—she could not realize they would ever be polluted with tobacco stain. As you grew larger, she could readily excuse mud stains on her carpet, walls disfigured with prints of small fingers and hands, parlor littered with little treasures and broken toys; but have you any idea how sad she felt when she began to shake tobacco crumbs from your pockets? Being aware that “sin never travels up grade,” she knew this was a step in the wrong direction. She thought ahead and pictured you as you now appear and will appear later on if you keep up the practice. She begged you to quit at once, while the habit was a mere cobweb. She lovingly cautioned you and reasoned with you, but you heeded not. You thought she wanted to deprive you of your liberties, keep you from having a “good time” or from being like other “smart boys.” Attention a moment, please! My boy, for a few seconds

lay aside your determination to *do as you please*. Think, think, think! You know your parents have denied themselves many luxuries and saved money to educate you and prepare you for a life of usefulness. Is this the way you show your gratitude? Is it right? Is it kind? Will you take part of the very money they have kindly saved for you, or that which you have earned and should substitute for part of theirs, and spend it for what they are pleading with you not to use, for that which you *know* will do you no good whatever, but will be a disadvantage in various ways? Is this gratitude? How can you, how *dare* you, ask them to stand by you and keep supplying you with money, when you give so little heed to their wise counsel? If they kindly supply you greater things, ought you not to hearken to their little requests, especially if they are for the upbuilding of your character? Do not be afraid some one will say you are "overly nice" or the only one in your "circle" free from this habit. *Rejoice in being the exception* to such a rule. It is only the vulgar and low who reproach and scoff at virtue and purity. It is the vulture that prefers the decaying carcass; the eagle grasps at something better. The vulture would like for us all to die and be scattered broadcast—brought down to his level; the eagle soars over the putrefying bodies and over the vulture feeding thereon and seeks only the choicest food. Strange as it may seem, one of the greatest barriers to pure young manhood is the fear, the seeming horror, of being considered an "oddy." That kind of "oddy" is commendable—

something to be proud of. Wake up, my boy! Slumber not in the tent of the fathers. The world is advancing; advance with it. Raise a high standard, then try to attain thereto. Luck is only effort well directed. You will either lead or be led. Then why not be a leader in good things? Never be leader in evil, for such a man is dreaded in any community. It gives him the wrong kind of notoriety. God has blessed you with a body to live in and keep clean and healthy—a dwelling for your mind, a temple for your soul. He has kindly given you a mind with which to reason, remember, decide, and store up wisdom and impart to others, but not to be converted into a chip basket or rubbish heap. Satan will never try to induce you to give up evil habits. "Temptations, resisted, are stepping-stones to heaven." Trifles make up the sum of life. Little bricks laid carefully, one by one, side by side, securely cemented, make large and durable structures. Let your character structure be made of a good quality of bricks, not of bad habits and broken resolutions. A young man often spends enough money unnecessarily and nonsensically before marriage to buy a good home and furnish it elegantly, then after marriage has to fall back to his economical parents for a shelter for two. Some one advises the girl to beware of a pocket full of nuts and candy. Very good; and, girls, also beware of the pocket containing tobacco crumbs, cigars, or cigarettes. Here is a whisper for you. Listen! *If you do not try harder to get that young man to give up tobacco, you will, after a while, have trouble and annoyance brought*

home to you; and you ought to, for you are, to a great extent, responsible for his using it. You are not half trying to induce him to stop. Furthermore, if he will not hearken to you now, look out after you marry!

Young man, be your own master (next to the Lord). Break yourself loose from the bondage of contemptible habits. "Vicious habits, when opposed, offer the most vigorous resistance on the first attack. At each successive encounter this resistance grows fainter and fainter, until finally it ceases altogether, and the victory is achieved"—for the wrong. Coleridge "battled twenty years before he could emancipate himself from his tyrant, opium." A certain man writes that he would "rather have rumatiz, corns, and toothake, all together, than be tormented with this hankerin' fur tobacker," after he had "bin a-usin' the weed nigh on to twenty year," and tried to quit. He decided he had almost every ailment mentioned in the "doctur book," but persevered until he prevailed, shook off the shackles, and was free. Nothing short of a moral war of independence will release you even now, my friend. The battle should be a short, decisive one—not a hesitating between duty and inclination. In the latter case wit pleads and fear disheartens. "He who would kill hydra had better strike off one neck than five heads; fell the tree, and the limbs are soon cut off."

Habit is hard to conquer. Cut off the first letter, and "abit" remains; erase the next letter, and the "bit" is still there; another, and we have "it" yet; still another,

and it is not "*t*" *totally gone*. So destroy it utterly, then rejoice in your freedom. An eminent physician advises you to give up tobacco *all at once*, not by degrees. He says the first day will not be very hard, but in the evening of the second day you will feel "pretty tough." Your memory will become doubtful; you will get things "mixed," become sluggish, impatient, irritable; but you should not be discouraged, for this only makes known the extra amount of stimulant you have been taking into your system. He adds: "The third morning brings the tug. Now go and take an old-fashioned sweat. Place an alcohol lamp under your chair, three or four blankets around your shoulders, letting the other ends rest on the floor, and sweat until your skin is fairly parboiled. You will be just as comfortable for one day as you could wish—no dryness of mouth, no nervousness. You are perfectly comfortable for one day. The next day you will be in trouble again. Take another sweat, take a third or a fourth one. Sweating does not hurt people; sometimes it is good for them. Take three or four thorough sweats, and go off under sail, and have no further trouble from your enemy." Boys, if your *will* power is not sufficiently strong to emancipate you, *sweat* off the shackles of this vice, then never again be decoyed into such a slavish trap. In your boyhood is the time to guard against unavailing regrets when you grow old.

LIVING IN THE LONG AGO.

'Tis but folly and madness to sit down in sadness
And sigh for the past, when the future is ours;
Though the way may be dreary and the heart faint and weary,
We may list for the bird songs and look for the flowers;
Though life has its losses, its cares, and its crosses,
The loss and the cross may still be for our best,
And each homely duty holds some hidden beauty;
E'en by labor we learn the sweet meaning of rest.
Thus by pain we may measure the worth of each pleasure—
We value our wealth by the wants we have known;
And joy after sorrow, by contrast we borrow
A completeness and sweetness fuller e'en than its own.

THE arch of time spans the yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. Yesterday is gone; this is to-day; it will soon be with yesterday, then to-morrow will be to-day. O time, how precious! How carefully measured out to us, only one moment at a time, and that moment taken from us forever ere we can grasp another! Yesterday is dead and laid out in its black shroud, with the twinkling stars to guard and watch; the gentle night queen peeps through the crevices. We wonder where the hours have fled. Many yesterdays have placed themselves on record, and "stand as sentinels, warning us not to duplicate them." To-morrow stands with pleading gesture and says: "Make me better than yesterday." In a short time that same to-morrow will be crowded back with the yesterdays; then what shall be its record? Its record must be made altogether in the brief to-day, the narrow span that links yesterday with to-morrow. Think of the brevity of to-day; think of its importance.

How essential that its work be done in the golden now! Yet how prone are we to live in the yesterday or the tomorrow, disregarding the golden link that connects them! The longer we live, the longer is the yesterday and the more are we inclined to live therein.

An aged couple—wrinkled, gray, weak, eyesight and hearing impaired—are sitting by a fireside. They have long been faithful followers of the Meek and Lowly. Both now think they are tired of life, and long for the home awaiting them. Their heads are full of good advice, their hearts are full of love. They are living in the long ago, looking back to the time when they were young. They step back, back, back, counting the scores of milestones they have passed by so speedily—seven years more than their threescore years and ten. They are young again, each around fond parents' knees, among the playful scenes of happy childhood. They hear the same birds singing that sung in the long ago; they gather the same wild flowers; they eat the same ginger cakes, pies, and puddings; together they tread again the old school path; he gallantly carries her books and slate, and she slyly divides with him the dainties of her lunch basket; he looks lovingly at her, and she smiles in return, each almost too timid to speak to the other; they visit the old log schoolhouse, which is taller by far than its wide-mouthed chimney of clay and sticks; they behold again the petrified visage of their old teacher, who seems to regard it as a sin to smile; they hear his deep, stern voice proclaim the ironclad rule: "Go over

your lesson twice; look at your books, and not at me." After a nine-months' vacation, they enter school again—this time to a teacher who rules by love and wins hearts by kind words and smiles of pleasantry; they are spending a while among the merry girls and boys, but—

"Ah me! Those were happy days," says the quaint old man; "but they are gone, all gone. Ah me!"

"All gone. Ah me!" softly echoes the sorrow-shrouded wife. "O, the golden age of the past!"

Memory started with them again and stood them before the marriage altar—she, in white satin; he, in broadcloth. The future then revealed to them no clouds; bright prospects gleamed in front of them. Financial failure was not even dreamed of. He felt that with this fair young bride by his side he could conquer the world, if necessary; but

Life is real, life is earnest.

and hope is often disappointed. They met with reverses, many and severe, but endured them bravely. They became poor, very poor, but not disreputable. They had to work hard indeed, but love sweetened the toil. So the years moved on.

But these noble pilgrims are still lost in memory, still living in the long ago. They talk of the "homespun" days of their young wedded life until they can almost hear the whir of the spinning wheel and the rattle of the loom. They find themselves picking cotton by the handful by the cozy log fire in the humble cabin home, preparatory to the

"big quilting" the next day, which is to be enjoyed by the neighbor women, while the neighbors of the more stalwart class will be busy at the "house raising" or "logrolling." "Rock, rock, rock!" goes the old-fashioned cradle, moved by the mother's foot, while the sunburnt fingers are busily extracting the cotton seed and carefully putting them in a little box to save for the next year's planting in one side of the tobacco patch. Memory gently leads them on through the time when they petted and nourished and cherished the children of their hearts' delight, but—

"O, the happy, happy days gone by! Those good old times are gone forever, and we are left. Why? O, why? We were happy then, and were very proud. We dreamed that we would spend our old age in the loving arms of our dear children—wealthy, honored, loved; but now—now—"

He can say no more. Tears are rolling down his cheeks, and a large lump is in his throat. Her pallid face is buried in her hands and shawl; her sobs are audible. But soon the aged couple regain control of their feelings. They talk of the "good old times" and of the sorrowful times through which they have passed. In memory they find themselves mingling with friends whose heads have long been whited by the snows of time or kissed by the clay lips of the grave; their lives have been as a day of shine and shadow, and they are tracing them back and viewing the varied phases; they are watching the long, dark shadows that have passed over the sky of their existence and for the time obscured the sun; they linger around the bedside of the suffering and

dying; they are in the slow, solemn funeral procession; they hear the cold, damp clods fall over the remains of those dearer to them than life; they return to the home that is bereft, and there find solace in tears and sobs and prayers until the pitying angel of resignation comes to their relief, and, hovering over them, speaks words of cheer. They look again—by faith this time—and through the rifted cloud they see the star of hope; their hearts feel deep emotion; they are resigned; the rift in the cloud grows wider, and they look still farther; they see the judgment past and the pearly gates flung wide open; they see the crowned King of glory at the Father's right hand; they see his beckoning gesture to sainted spirits and hear the welcome: "Come home."

Here the old man lovingly clasps the withered hand of her who has always been so true to him, draws her tenderly to his heaving bosom, and for a little while they are speechless in each other's embrace. Clouds of sorrow have gathered thick over their tender hearts, whose deep emotions are made known by piteous sobs. They have long been thinking and talking over their melancholy condition—financial failures, children dead, lonely (O, so lonely!)—pining over the "used-to-be," recalling happier days; but the sweet spirits of love and submission have united to penetrate the gloom, and the refreshing shower of tears has brought great relief. These noble beings find themselves still happy, though they thought they were miserable. They are happy because, though everything else has been taken from them,

they are spared to each other; happy because they by faith can see so near them the pearly portals of their heavenly home; happy because their heartaches are nearly over and they will soon meet their loved ones at the great roll call. Together they now sing, with tremulous voices, the half-forgotten fragments of a song they used to sing. Into memory's half-vacant chamber stealing, sweet visions of the past now come lightly as the dewfall. The balmy air with music fairly breathes as they hear familiar voices that have not lost their cheer. Listen—the voices of Fannie, Mary, Sam., and John, dear children of their younger days! Listen—the sweet and timid refrain of little Sallie, the baby girl! Hush-sh-sh-sh! Listen! They hear the good old tunes, and all the house is filled with song. The old man leans his head against the mantel, and is soon in dream-land. His wife resumes her knitting, but is still lost in memory, and at times really thinks she is in the presence of those precious children and friends of her life's meridian. No wonder those in an adjoining room often hear her speak low (a few words only), as if confidently speaking to some dear friend. In her soft reveries she really speaks to them, and is aroused, as from a dream, by the cadence of her own voice. Half ashamed that she, forgetful, spoke aloud, she looks around to see if any one is near, then goes on with her knitting.

In a few weeks her needles are carefully laid away; her work is done; she has crossed the turbid sea. Not long is he left without her; his lifeboat is now propelled more rap-

idly, and he is soon beside her on the glory shore. Such is life, and such is the hope of the faithful.

Yesterday is now a part of forever,
Bound up in a sheaf which God holds tight,
With glad days and sad days and bad days which never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
Their fullness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot re-live them,
Cannot undo and cannot atone;
God in his mercy receive and forgive them!
Only the new days are our own;
To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

LIVING IN THE "YET-TO-BE."

ALTHOUGH many persons live mostly in the past—walking in memory the selfsame path which their weary feet have long since trodden, while old memories drag their slow lengths like "wounded sunbeams"—there is another class of people who live almost altogether in the present. They let neither faith nor reason take the helm; they show no appreciation for past favors, make no improvement as to past blunders, attempt no preparation for the future, but seem to think of nothing but gratifying present physical wants. If the demand of to-day is satisfied—if they have all they want to eat, drink, and wear to-day—they appear content, and strictly obey the injunction: "Take . . . no thought for the morrow." If friends have thus far sustained them, they regard it as only a matter of duty, and

they consider God's blessings as merely the result of natural laws. They live strictly in the now, regardless of tomorrow's debt which they thus incur; they live without purpose, as if life were but a fairy tale. Such persons, if entirely responsible (sane), are ingrates, too stupid to provide for their own households or to provide a respectable shelter for their own heads, and are too indifferent to prepare for eternity.

There is another class of people who travel *too fast*. They go rattling along through life looking too far ahead, and stumble over rocks and stumps at their feet. There are many flowers along life's road, but these people do not see them; there are myriads of beauties that should be hunted out and enjoyed, but these fast flyers have no time to look for them. In dreaming of the golden future, the present is overlooked. "There is time enough yet," they reason, "for observing these little things. Fame and fortune are in the future, and must be obtained; after that we will settle down to life's enjoyments and minor duties." Their abode is in the "yet-to-be;" but they find mad ambition to be a cruel "reinsman." He drives them with whip and spur; he rushes them uphill and downhill with stinging lash; he gives them no time for social pleasure with their families and friends, no time for pleasing reveries, no time for intellectual improvement, no time for charitable purposes, no time for church going, no time nor inclination to prepare their souls for the great judgment bar. Ambition is careful never to remind them that

"fame is like crumbling frosting on the bridal cake—hard to make, easy to break;" or that "every kind word is a flower to beautify their final home; every good deed is an evergreen to mark their resting place; every noble purpose is a bird to sing over their graves." Worldly ambition encourages them in striving for as much as possible of this world's wealth and glory, never reminding them that they might be like the child that would not be content with two apples in his hand, but, grasping after three, lost all. In this wild rush they lose many of life's choicest treasures. Part of their wealth takes wings and flies away, but they strive the harder for more. Some of their children die, others wander off into sin; they grieve over it a little while, and make great promises, but soon find themselves rushing as madly as ever.

Some persons do nothing thoroughly, but are like the boy who works at a trade until he sees about half its mysteries, then strikes for higher wages. They are too anxious about to-morrow, forgetting to do to-day's duties, to fight to-day's temptations, to appreciate and enjoy to-day's privileges; they weaken their energies and distract their minds by constantly looking forward to things they cannot see, and could not understand if they could see. "To-morrow will prove to be but another to-day, with its own measure of joy and sorrow." To-day spent right is the great stepping-stone that reaches to-morrow; and that day, when it comes, will know its own task, its own care. Until then let it sleep free from worry. If we will be true to the duties of to-day, we shall

find new vigor to take the next great step toward heaven. We are too much inclined to think it was easier to live righteous lives in the peaceful days of the long ago, or would be easier in some other part of the world, or will be easier when good times come again; but this is not true; if we cannot live aright now and here, we would never have done so and will never do so. These are good times; it is we who are in fault. We forget that we are constantly living away the best part of our existence. "To-morrow is golden till to-morrow comes." By living right each day, we make golden all our to-morrows, also our yesterdays.

These rushing, future-living people look ahead for earth's blessings, while they are thickly showered around them every day. They look to the future for happiness, and often say that when this or that occurs, or when they do thus and so, or attain to a certain position in the social world, they will be happy; whereas the roses of happiness are perpetual bloomers all along their pathway, if they would but stop to pluck them. They look to the future as their time for almsgiving, and let the hungry beg and the starving die, though they themselves have plenty and to spare. They say, "Wait until we obtain our fortune; then we will see after the poor;" but by that time they decide they want the fortune extended, and must again wait. Again, they say, "Wait till to-night," or, "Wait till to-morrow;" but to-night is next day, and to-morrow is never. Suppose God should give us our blessings only in the future—should always wait until to-morrow or next week—

how many of us would perish for food, for water, for air to breathe! We should think of these things oftener.

We can find joy and happiness everywhere, if we will look for it and not expect too much at a time. The present hour may look dark, but we will find in it many bright spots, if we but clear the mists away; and as there is a still brighter light beyond, we should be happy while we can. We need not borrow trouble, neither send out for it; it comes by free delivery. As has been suggested: "The ice man calls in the morning and leaves the cold crystal in small or large cakes, as we use; time leaves cakes, chunks, and blocks of trouble in the same way daily." We should not ask the man to bring us to-day a sufficient quantity of ice to last us a week, a month, a year; we might not enjoy taking care of it. So with trouble. "Let us not borrow it; it might grieve our friends when we pay it back." To-day has enough vexation of its own; it should not borrow from even its next-door neighbor, to-morrow. To-day is a great borrower. It actually disinters many of the troubles long since buried in the grave of the past, and uses them again and again; then it reaches far into the future and borrows troubles that will never happen. Many times it is not to-day which breaks the heart, but the darkened past or the future without a gleam; and we can often bring on the nightmare of sorrow by brooding and worrying over trouble, either past or future, real or imaginary. Again, we can easily expect too much of the future, and be disappointed. A happy medium is always preferable.

We see a young couple, not long since started out in wedded life. Imagination points them to a long and happy existence ahead of them; they fill it with castles of air. They picture out the road they are going to travel, deprived of mud, hills, and stones—life's royal path paved with diamonds and fringed with flowers and tassels of gold, then overarched with silver stars. The young lives intrusted to their love and keeping they expect to train exactly as they ought to be trained—no failure along that line. They will be worthy criterions for the world to follow. "It shall" and "It shall not" will be their passwords; and just as they say, so shall it be. (They are living in the "yet-to-be.") As the years go by, they almost unconsciously drift more and more into the channels made by other parents. While their children are small, they are anxious to see them larger, more susceptible of the excellent training in store for them; then, anxious to start them to school, so as to note their marvelous advancement as they climb toward young manhood and womanhood. These parents are anxious for them to emerge from that especial age of temptation and danger, anxious to see what remarkable men and women they will make, anxious to see them settled in life. So this couple, like all others, are always anxious—looking forward for something better, for that "good time coming," which may never come.

Later: Their days of youthful strength are over; their children have reached life's meridian—only average specimens of humanity, after all. Life has thrown on its great

canvas both lights and shadows. These parental heads are bowed with grief and age, and are still anxiously looking forward for that "good time coming;" but are now looking beyond the shores of time. The grave soon claims them as its victims; their bodies are embraced in earth's cold bosom, numbered with those who lived in the long ago.

Life passes somewhat thus: To-day is Sunday—our life's beginning, infant's prattle; Monday—childhood; Tuesday—youth; Wednesday—stalwart manhood; Thursday—high noon of life; Friday—the evening shadows are lengthening; Saturday—old age, decrepitude; Saturday night—the curtain falls, and we are dead.

Lesson: Let us live in the past sufficiently to enjoy its memories, gather and cherish its lessons, take warning from its mistakes, and profit by its experiences. Let us live in the future sufficiently to plan for its success, for all the good we can do, and to enjoy all its hopes and promises; but remember that the ideal "good time coming" is reserved in heaven for the faithful. Let us live in the present sufficiently to do the work of Him that sent us "while it is day; for the night cometh, when no man can work."

SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

Do you not remember when, in childhood's hours, we made shadows on the wall by holding our heads or hands in certain positions between the lamp and the whited wall on which the shadows were thrown? Some of these were

very attractive in appearance, showing the profile of a smooth-featured face or the shape of beautiful hands; others were grotesque representations of some ugly creature. The principal shadow I remember making was the "sheep's head," with ears uplifted and occasionally twitching as if disturbed by an insect, tongue licking out at times, and jaws in continual motion as if "chewing the cud."

There are shadows of other kinds on the walls of our homes—shadows cast by the photographer on canvas or paper, shadows representing the ideal features of persons we love. Some of these persons are with us still, and can be recognized by their shadows on the wall; some have outgrown their shadows, which now only remind us of how the individuals once appeared; others have passed away from the scenes of the earth home, and their shadows are left as sacred mementos—cherished relics recalling to our minds many scenes and incidents long gone by, and reminding us that temporal existence will not last always—that we should be ready for the "great day coming," we know not when.

Pulpit windows often display pictures of some of the most faithful workers of the church. In the pulpit window of the First Christian Church, at Union City, Tenn., is a life-size picture, so true to life that those who ever saw the original need not look just below to read the name, "T. B. Osborne;" they will recognize him at first glance. I first saw the window at night; it made no special impression on my mind—was simply a circular window back of

the pulpit, with small panes of stained glass encircling a large pane. Though the half-full moon was sweetly smiling from without, and more than a score of electric lights were glowing within the house, I observed no picture in that window until my attention was called thereto. The next morning I returned to the church after the sun had gilded the east and was spreading his oblique rays over the pleasant little city. The picture of Brother T. B. Osborne at once attracted my attention—so natural it looked like it could speak. I admired, I wondered at the marvelous genius that had reproduced on glass a picture with such a superb effect. Then my heart was filled with gratitude for all the Heaven-born powers and privileges granted to man and for the gift of such noble characters as the one whose picture is so worthy of a prominent place in the house of worship he so much loved and from which he was, several years ago, removed by death. I was also present at an afternoon service. The day king, having passed the zenith, was casting the shadows eastward. The picture showed attractiveness not seen in the morning. A striking halo surrounded it, causing a beautiful blending of the small, multicolored panes of glass, resembling some ingenious mosaic. Just inside of this artistic rainbow effect and surrounding the picture was a circle of clear glass, which seemed to soften the rays of the midafternoon sun as they peeped upon the audience and gently fell upon the printed pages of

The old-fashioned Bible;

The dear, blessed Bible;

The large pulpit Bible that lay on the stand.

As the sun sunk toward the western wave the light through the window shone brighter and brighter, until a striking brilliance was cast over the church interior and over the entire audience. So bright was the light that we felt like shading our eyes, yet we continued to admire the glorious halo and to discover new wonders in that picture. The brighter the light, the more distinctly were the high lights depicted on those placid cheeks and that noble brow. The whole countenance was so radiant it seemed that those lips could speak the praises to the God of love, as had their original, both in private and in public, so often done. "T. B. Osborne," in letters of clearest crystal just below the picture, indicated to the stranger him who was held thus dear in the memory of that congregation.

I have been informed that when this good man passed away every store, saloon, and business house in Union City was closed, and even court adjourned, during the funeral services, in which every preacher in the city voluntarily took an active part. The funeral procession was one of the largest ever known in the city, and the grief seemed universal. Everybody appeared to realize that a noble citizen, a gentleman, a Christian, had gone from his devoted family, from the city, from the shores of time.

Reader, if you ever see that picture, or a similar one, do not be content with only one view, but look at it in the mild morning light; then be sure to watch it grow brighter and truer in the glowing sunlight as it passes toward eventide. Thus was the life of this good man, who, though dead,

"yet speaketh;" and thus should be the lives of all of God's children.

Sometimes, in the night of gloom, we fail to behold the attractions of life, because we view them in the wrong light. We permit the ordinary light of the world to obscure their beauty; whereas, if we will view them in Heaven's light, we will realize their merit. How sweet is the life that can bear close investigation, that will shine more brilliantly when tested by the great search light of immortality!

We are imprinting life shadows upon the minds, hearts, and memories of our friends and other acquaintances that will last long after we shall have ceased to live. Let us try not to let those shadows be grotesque representations of evil spirits, but pictures of love, sympathy, patience, humility, and right living.

LET HIM TALK.

You may get through this world, but 'twill be very slow
 If you don't tell your neighbor all that you know.
 He'll be worried and fretted and kept in a stew;
 His meddlesome tongue will find something to do,
 And you're expected to talk.

One neighbor will tell you the faults of another,
 Especially the faults of a church sister or brother.
 He expects you to be in same kind of humor,
 And help him circulate the reports of Miss Rumor.
 He wants you to talk.

He will tell you that sister should be out of the church;
 That *his* brother has done wrong (for his guilt "see" must search);
 That brother has shamefully treated his neighbor;
 The other gets drunk, blaspheming his Savior,
 Hush, and let him talk!

THE OLD WOOLEN SCARF.

I'm an old woolen scarf, both soiled and ragged.
 The days of my usefulness long since have passed;
 My bright hues have faded, my beauty departed
 (Alas, what short time does the beautiful last!),
 In the days of my "youth" I was bought for my beauty
 By a devoted young husband to present to his bride.
 She prized me so highly; she treated me kindly,
 My stripes of gay colors never trying to hide.

Time fled. I grew older, as did the young couple;
 I helped shield three children from the wintry blast,
 But became worn and soiled—too much so for duty—
 And into the rag basket was carelessly cast
 For many long weeks I lay in the closet,
 But on winter nights flew rag carpets were tacked.
 Running short of material, they drew forth this basket,
 And myself, with the other old rags, they unpacked.

A huge pair of scissors yawned over me frightfully,
 Then closed their great mouth and dropped by my side.
 My owner was thinking: "Shall I destroy this old treasure—
 A present from my husband when I was a bride?
 Its usefulness is over; I need not retain it.
 Such keepsakes accumulate till they're in the way."
 So up went the scissors, changing me into "ribbons;" . . .
 In the carpet I was trodden on day after day.

Many years have been added to the age of my possessor;
 I've returned where the grass and the violets grow.
 Time's wrought great changes in this same little family;
 Both pleasures and heartaches have been theirs, you know;
 Yet when in fond memory my owner recalls me,
 Thinks how oft she was wrapped in my stripes gay and wide,
 She regrets having not kept, as a relic of her young days,
 This first present from her husband when she was a bride.

THE MOTE FINDER.

THIS is one of the busiest little machines I know of. It finds motes anywhere, everywhere, and never becomes tired of picking at them. It discovers them where we would not think of looking, and many which would not ordinarily be recognized as such. It finds them in the house or in the field; it finds them in books, finds them in looks; it finds them in man's actions, finds them on his tongue. It is especially gifted in finding motes in the pulpit and in the schoolroom; but the one to which it points its long, slender index finger most frequently and picks at most earnestly is "the mote in the brother's eye." Neither does it attempt to extract it, but causes it to stand out so prominently it is distinctly seen, regardless of the prodigious beams that may be in the eyes of the observer. It embraces every opportunity to display the motes in an individual's character, as if expecting high wages for all such work.

Now, if this small (it is very small) machine would extract the motes it finds, it would be of inestimable worth (would that the world had such a machine!); but it never does that. The little "hypercritical critic" seems blind to everything beautiful or good. It is a specialist—sees nothing but motes, yet never attempts to destroy one of them. It seeks diligently till it finds them, then carefully points them out, magnifying them as much as possible, until everybody can plainly behold them; then goes to work to find others. Nothing is gained by making the little ugly motes especially prominent unless there was some provi-

sion made for eradicating them. The mote finder will take up a book and carefully point out its errors or blemishes, even to persons not concerned in it and to those who would not otherwise discern them, thus unnecessarily depreciating or overshadowing the good therein contained; then it will rashly cast aside a good book on account of a trifling mote which amounts to nothing. If it is to expose false doctrines or theories, or in any way to be advantageous, this should always be done. Many times the motes can be easily detected and removed, leaving in the book much that is valuable, if the finder will only call the attention of the proper individual. A few persons will kindly do this, and such are held in high esteem; but the professional mote finder is not worthy of being personified as "he" or "she," but, as Sam. Jones says about the dude, he must be called "it."

YOUNG man, how long before you expect to marry? Excuse the pointed question, but I just want to make an important suggestion to you. You ought to begin to correct that *tone* at least ten years before you marry, or you will many times unintentionally pierce the tender heart of love to which in youth you have plighted your sincerest vows. I heard you speak to your mother last night in tones that pierced as spikes of steel; I saw the color come and go in her pale cheeks; I heard the sigh escape from her choked throat; I heard her sobs and saw her wet pillow after she fell asleep. She did not know any one was near. Will you not correct that tone?

"PREACH THE WORD."

Preach on, my dear brother; the pure gospel proclaim,
Converting the alien in our Savior's blest name;
Influence the wicked from error to flee,
Their souls from all sin, all corruption, to free.
Fight on, valiant soldier, till the battle you win;
Contend against evil, against temptation—sin;
Let nothing entice you from Jesus to stray;
In heaven awaits you a glorious day.

Hold fast the true armor of hope, love, and faith,
The "sword of the Spirit," which waves over death;
The shield of all righteousness fold to your breast,
And press to that land of sweet, heavenly rest.
Be not "blue" or discouraged, though sorrows attend;
He who was death's conqueror is also your friend.
Remember, "all things work together for good"
To the truly redeemed through Christ's precious blood.

The Father, in mercy, has promised to save
Those who faithfully triumph o'er sin's dark'ning wave.
Then press on, right onward; the Spirit assures
That, after life is ended, the vict'ry is yours.
Though Death will at last his cold fingers extend,
A victim to grasp you—no pity to lend—
Yet trust with all fervor in God, who is love,
Who will give you a life crown of glory above.

"JACK AT ALL TRADES."

"A poor, slovenly woman, living in a little old log cabin in the backwoods, was asked as to her husband's trade or profession. She replied: 'Well, he's one of these handy, gifted sort o' persons, my man is. He can jest turn his

hand to anything. He's a blacksmith by profession; but he cooked in a rest'rant in town most o' last winter, and he done kyarpenterin' and paintin' all spring, and then he lectured on temp'rance a while until he got a chance to run an injine for a month or two, and then he dug wells and hung wall paper until he got a good chance to lay brick at three dollars a day.'

"'And what is he doing now?' asked the amused guest.

"'Teachin' singin' school; but he 'lows to give it up pretty soon and go to practicin' medicine. He kin do anything he's a mind to turn his hand to.'"

Reader, are you as fortunate as that man? Boys, have a profession or a settled vocation of some kind. Girls, learn to *do* as well as to *be*. A "wall flower" is nice to look upon, but where is the *man of reason* who is willing to give his heart to it? Be such a character that the man who exchanges hearts with you will not decide that he is cheated.

UNFORTUNATE "R."

"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the best of men."

Why is "R" an unfortunate letter? Because it is
 Confined in the cheaper articles—as paper, iron, copper, and
 brass;
 Knows nothing of the valuable stones nor metals of highest
 class;
 Is in no jewel—amethyst, diamond, opal, or onyx of old;
 Is barely found in silver, never in genuine nor plated gold;
 Is crooked, deformed, out of shape, and broken down;
 Corroded, tarnished, cankered, rusty, and brown.

He's always in disastrous war, with no hope of calm or peace;
 Is doubled in sorrow; is horrified; has no solid joy or bliss;
 Hungry, athirst, and weary; no chance for quietude, food, or
 sleep;

Severely crippled in a terrific storm; cannot walk, can scarcely
 creep;

Is "always in riot, in wrath, and in ruin;
 Never in happiness, love, or well-doing."

Tired, decrepit, and miserable, enjoying no ease nor health;
 Born and reared in poverty, with no convenience or wealth;
 Always "pressed," "cramped," "embarrassed;" "does not own
 a penny;"

His "purse strings forever broken," "pocketbook empty;"

Always "rushed"—in a "dreadful hurry" (yet remains till
 driven away,

And never comes until to-morrow when a debt he is to pay).

He never intends to pay his debts; is neither consistent nor honest ('tis funny;

He rattles his dollars by the hundred, but is "bankrupt" when
 we need money);

Is a perfect miser, yet invariably "at the door of starvation;"

Lives like a hermit, discarding scores of friends and relation;

Is very partial—sees first to the rich, last to the poor;

And turns away hungry every tramp from his door.

The girls scorn him and pronounce him "dreadfully green,"

For even a small town or village he's neither visited nor seen;

"A curiosity," they think; "a runabout, yet has never seen a
 city;"

Illiterate, careless, "rusty;" neither fine-looking, neat, nor witty;

Has no taste for the beautiful, sublime, lovely, or gay;

Is neither handsome nor stylish ("his tie not up to date," they
 say).

Wandering, roaming, rambling; never patient, kind, nor still;
 Makes many a precious promise, not one to fulfill;
 Fierce as an enraged tiger, viper, panther, or bear—
 In ev'ry row, quarrel, disturbance, or disagreeable affair.

All efforts to polish and make pleasant are vain—
 This cowardly hypocrite, uncultured, profane.

A fretful old "grunter"—grumbling, suffering, and distressed;
 Worried, angry, miserable, forsaken—severely oppressed;
 Into every trouble, trial, torture, discord, and strife;
 No management, no economy; not satisfied with home or life;
 Unfortunate, from severe tribulation ne'er free;
 Grum, cross, crabbed, and rough as can be.

Shirks out of all duty; is a sluggard, tardy—never on time;
 Thrice in error, terror, and horror found, and second in ev'ry
 crime.

Morose, extravagant; in hatred, disgrace, and despair;
 Ready the ripe fruits (not the tolls) of others to share;
 Appears perplexed, persecuted, yet will squander and bribe;
 The rogue, the extortioner, with no conscience to chide.

He's eccentric, unpopular, greedy, nervous, and fearful;
 Discouraged, dishonorable, careworn, and tearful;
 Never decided; has no employment, no occupation—no vocation;
 Yet must work hard every hour—not one minute's vacation.

He broods over his bitter treatment till he almost goes wild;
 For no kindness is shown him by man, woman, or child.

He's sour as vinegar; a tattler, backbiter, abrupt,
 Ignorant, repulsive, disreputable, corrupt,
 Presumptuous, overbearing, prejudiced, untrue;
 Ready to criticise and censure—not half so quick to do;
 A proverbial, chronic fault-finder; first in retaliation,
 With no inclination to make compensation.

A perpetual dram drinker, a toper—always drunk
 (Oft secreting his rum in his traveling trunk);
 Is in jeopardy for evermore, not one moment free from care;
 Has responsibilities greater than it seems that he can bear;
 Is frail, infirm, and gray, with none to pity or to save.
 He'll expire in a desert dreary and fill a pauper's grave.

He tears up, scatters, and destroys, not attempting to make,
 mend, or find;

A peculiar, forlorn character, with no intelligence—with no mind.
 Not steadfast, independent, accomplished, complete;
 Ragged, barefooted, frost-bitten, with nothing to eat;
 In the midst of dire misfortune, deprived of justice and of might;
 Imprisoned in utter darkness—never sees one gleam of light.

Not happy nor contented, he tries to crawl higher and higher,
 At last dropping prostrate into the burning fire.
 Thence into freezing water he'll voluntarily slip;
 Such extremes, of course, assuring him of a yearly return of
 grippe.

Though not acting wisely, he considers himself "smart;"
 Yet his worst blunders are not from the head, but the heart.

This burglar, this murderer, in the penitentiary must stay,
 Where he curses, swears, reviles, and "jowers" night and day.
 The crazy old "crank," instead of having the tact of a sage,
 Is a boisterous, jabbering chatterbox, keeping up a horrid rage;
 Is a robber—a Barabbas, Harp, Murrell—on and on;
 Never a Clay, Columbus, LaFayette, or Washington.

A notorious gambler, though without even a toe or thumb,
 Or common sense enough to be a second-class "bum."
 Very crooked are his fingers, without a single joint;
 So, in trying to play the various games, he can never "make a
 point."

His brow is full of wrinkles; he has no lips to kiss—
 A queer, irregular character, a curious "creature" this.

He can never be a man; has no limbs, body, neck, or head;

If he had, he could never find a pillow, couch, or bed.

Rarest fragrance is lost to him, because he has no nose.

He never sleeps one moment—cannot even nod or doze.

Deprived of sight, taste, smell, and touch, he can do naught
but hear.

O, the many sorrowful stories poured right into his ear!

He has no hands to feed himself; neither has he feet to walk.

Deprived of eyes, teeth, and tongue, he can neither see nor eat
nor talk;

No mouth with which to speak, or smile, or chat, or sing, or
laugh.

(Of this wreck's deplorable misfortunes I have not mentioned
half.)

His earth lot is a hard one, and will change never, never;

He must remain in torment forever and ever.

If we are in the wrong place, it should give us great alarm,

Lest it should result in very serious harm.

We can change our position, however, no doubt;

But poor "R" is placed there, and can never get out.

So express your condolences, kind friends, near and far;

I know you feel sorry for "Unfortunate R."

My measure is imperfect, but might have been better,

Had it not been for this unfortunate letter.

FORTUNATE "R."

When one side of life looks dark, my brother,
Turn yourself around and look at the other.

Why is "R" a fortunate letter? Because he is

Not idle, lazy, indolent; but remains at honorable work;
Out of vile, wicked company always contriving to "shirk;"
Envies no one; is not jealous; has no enemy to condemn;
Treats others as he desires to be treated by them;
Never opposes nor imposes, but bravely protects,
And earns far more than he ever expects.

Never despondent, woe-begone, melancholy, or "blue"
O'er past mistakes or evils he cannot mend or undo;
Always merry and mirthful—not disposed to insult or fight;
Not mad, mean, nor contentious, but "straight for the right."
Though to outward appearance he is rather rough,
He was never accused of being a "tough."

Is firm, determined, resolute; he'll prosper, or he'll try;
Reliable, trustworthy—never once guilty of telling a—l'e.
None doubt his veracity, fortitude, or worth;
His industry and energy are strongly put forth;
Not vain nor deceitful—utters pure words of truth;
Warns, guards, and encourages the wayward youth.

Entirely responsible, rational—by no means insane;
Knows nothing of sickness, an ache, or a pain.
For every malady he carries a real "sure cure"—
Not patent medicines; they're "first-rate" remedies; he'll insure
All his prescriptions are harmless—from poison free—
Nor will they salivate (this doctor will "guarantee").

Far from being a bondsman, he always was free,
 With "not a stingy bone in him"—liberal as can be;
 Always at leisure—never vexed, "out of sorts," nor in haste;
 The very center of charity; known never to want or waste.
 Faith and hope are grand indeed, but have no "R," you see;
 So greater far than either of these is renowned charity.

He has no patience with the fugitive, vagabond, or thief;
 But comforts the troubled and gives the beggar relief.
 Instead of cheating a widow, he completes her dower,
 Then encircles her door with a rich floral bower;
 Neither too "fast" nor too timid, fault-finding nor in debt;
 But the frailties of others he'll forgive and forget.

Perfectly rested—not dejected, afflicted, nor faint;
 Of his evil companions he makes no complaint;
 His next-door neighbor he does not abuse,
 Nor attempt to cheat others out of their dues;
 Is never a "wolf in sheep's clothing," I'm sure;
 But is honorable, reasonable, upright, and pure.

Firm, persevering, progressive, strong.
 And in proper proportion—not too thick nor too long;
 Large, matured, deliberate, considerate, and brave;
 Makes a paradise of life, yet shuns not the dark grave.
 His correctness is not doubted—he fills contracts "on the
 square;"
 Is sincere, courteous, prayerful, upright, and fair.

Is no dude, speaks no slang—is a "silver-tongued orator;"
 Has friends by the score—not a spot on his character;
 Is never intoxicated—takes no whisky, gin, or wine;
 Remains erect and sober, cultured and refined.
 The vile tobacco habit he will readily refuse;
 For he never at any time smokes, dips, or chews.

In rewards of merit he's first and central—never is last;
 Has never stood one moment at the foot of his class.
 The more important prize he resolves to obtain;
 Then, if at first does not succeed, will "try, try again."
 His own peculiarities he does not try to smother,
 Yet spends no time finding fault with another.

He'll escape ev'ry cyclone, gale, and tempest high and loud;
 Is foremost in ev'ry rainbow bright—sees not a dismal cloud;
 In war he's victorious—sure to triumphantly prevail;
 Heroic, fearless, courageous—knows not how to "fail;"
 Receives slight bruises and scars in each skirmish, and
 sprains;
 But no matter how he suffers, he never moans nor complains.

Has a warm-hearted father; a true, tender mother;
 A pure, precious sister; a dear, darling brother.
 He provides for the poor with a heart warm, sincere;
 Helps support orphan children—gives them tenderest care.
 On none of life's duties he presumes to look down;
 Bears the rugged cross bravely—is sure of the crown.

The richest and poorest alike in him confide;
 He's cheerful, earnest, clever, and on the popular side.
 Girls are proud of him; for he is not "tacky," you know;
 And never scolds, pouts, nor says: "I told you so!"
 Listen, girls! He's not engaged; has not even "got up a case."
 Probably you can capture him, if you have discretion and grace.

He'll not be managed by a gossiping, contentious wife;
 Will himself be the conquering "hero in the strife;"
 But he lays the vexation of politics high "on the shelf;"
 So, as an agreeable partner, he'll treat you better than himself.
 He is well versed in poetry, prose, and history;
 And the way he gathers riches is a "marvelous mystery."

He's a rich "old bachelor"—a millionaire; can marry any hour;
 He gambles not, defrauds not, has great strength and power;
 Is not baldheaded, ugly, deceitful, covetous, deaf, dumb, or blind;
 Dissipated, unchaste, conceited, snappish, ill, unkind,
 Peevish, "moody," fickle, nor speaks in haughty tone,
 But will prove to be a wonderful "power behind the throne."

Though no dude nor egotist, he charms the aristocratic girl
 By wearing an emerald, a ruby, sapphire, and a priceless pearl.
 He'll never let you famish—will provide pork, poultry, butter,
 and bread;
 Has large stores and fertile farms, besides silver and "green-
 back" ahead.
 However, girls, if you want him, you must be more than witty;
 He requires you to be cultured, prudent, practical, and pretty.

On his spirituality I might comment much,
 For he passes by the saloon and enters the church;
 Doesn't show himself silly by giggling or chewing gum;
 Is the principal singer—not the man who can only "hum."
 He praises the Creator with every breath;
 May at last be translated without seeing death.

For each cloud's silvery lining he'll carefully search;
 He is always reserved and respectful at church;
 Never talks during prayer nor passes notes to another,
 Or anything else the good preacher to bother.
 The disturber of worship he reproves there and then;
 Yet if others revile him, he abuses not again.

His years are not limited, like those of men;
 They number far more than "threescore and ten."
 His fair reputation has spread everywhere,
 Like rare, royal fragrance "on the desert air."
 When time's centuries are all numbered with the "used to be,"
 Onward he'll march through eternity.

He's a grand reality—not an object of chance;
 Invariably in worship—never goes to the giddy dance;
 Reads no novel or fiction nor uses language obscene;
 Reads the Scriptures; is righteous, consecrated, serene;
 Is no heathen, infidel, skeptic, atheist, or pagan;
 But a brave Christian soldier, with heartfelt religion.

Slighting not Christ our Savior, Redeemer, Master, Lord;
 Nor neglecting to observe the Father's sacred word;
 Will never see Satan nor his place of habitation;
 Knows nothing of falsehood, foe, or temptation;
 Is immortal—dies not, will not pass away;
 With the redeemed, the ransomed, in glory will stay.

Is a prominent character—tried, trusted, and true;
 Without him we do not see how we could do;
 He helps spell our earth and its verdure so green;
 Leave him out, and a dilapidated sight would be seen—
 No April to bring warm, refreshing spring showers
 That foretell and precede the charming May flowers;

No electricity to brighten our homes and streets more;
 No telegrams darting from shore to shore;
 No wire cable to carry words far o'er the sea,
 Girding earth with the freshest information that be;
 Not even a country paper to circulate the news
 And instruct politicians which candidate to choose.

The grand center of America would be entirely knocked out—
 Every creature, fruit, and flower; rock, tree, shrub, and sprout,
 With all the corn and other grain that furnish us with bread
 And every radiant star that sparkles overhead—
 All these and many other words we could never, never spell
 Without "R," whose wondrous merits I am trying now to tell.

In many places I could have made my rhyme smoother by far
 By slandering the reputation of my mysterious "R;"
 But he meddles not with the business of young or old,
 And concerning his many virtues "the half has never been
 told."
 Then from all who dwell beneath the skies
 Let "R's" triumphant praise arise.

MORAL:

Life has two sides—a dark and a light one,
 We should be sure to look most at the bright one.
 Life is fortunate, or not, somewhat as we take it;
 Gloomy or cheerful, we can do much to make it.
 From one standpoint "R" is an unfortunate letter;
 From another its condition could not be made better.

If you want to see "R" not in dark, but in light, words,
 Turn, as well as you can, from all but the right words.
 Thus life has enough sorrow, any way we take it;
 Then as pleasant as possible let's try to make it.
 If my friends accuse me of exaggeration,
 Please ask them to view life from a different station.

I trust you'll not think I'm without solemnity or care;
 For I, like the rest of you, have a large share;
 But let us look high above it, then some sweet day
 It will be overcome or driven far, far away.
 Let's look more at the bright than the dark side of life;
 At its comforts and promises, not its sorrow and strife.

You remember the shield (whose story has grown old),
 One side of which was silver, the other side gold.
 The two men who quarreled looked in opposite ways;
 One thought the shield gold, the other thought it gray.
 So life is somewhat two-faced—melancholy, bright;
 We can view it as sad and gloomy or cheery and light.

Then "about face!" Turn your back on the world's subtle foe.
Forsake the great enemy, and he will flee, you know.
The way to give life the appearance of pure gold:
Stay on the Lord's side, submissive, steadfast in his fold.
Then the shield will turn to gold from gray
When the mists of life shall have cleared away.

Many other words I have adjusted in rhyme
With mysterious "R;" but I'll spare your time.
For the patience of my reader may already be weary
Tracing a double-faced character—so bright, yet so dreary.
Whoever suggests that this poem might be better
Must remember I am dealing with a two-faced letter;

And should he find fault with my imperfect measure,
He may scan it, arrange it, and rearrange at pleasure.
If he'll adjust all these words into respectable rhyme,
I will give him a premium, and plenty of time.
If he beats me in arranging a "pack of nonsense,"
He may look for his premium a hundred years hence.

ECHOES FROM MAMMOTH CAVE.

(Revised from articles written for a local paper immediately after our return from the cave.)

LONG ROUTE.

I.

THE wonderful underground world—so justly the pride of "Old Kentucky!" Reader, go with us a while in our subterranean rambles.

We stand a moment at the only known entrance. This is said to be "where the roof has been broken through, and whose rocky fragments, partly filling the subterranean dome, serve as stepping-stones down into darkness." This yawning chasm is estimated to be one hundred and eighteen feet below the crest of the bluff. We gaze admiringly on the majestic waterfall trickling from the high cliffs, supplying drink for the beautiful ferns and nodding grasses and reflecting the light of the morning sun. We start down the rustic stairway, and begin to shiver in the cave's cold breath. The great Day King no longer pursues us with his radiant beams; twilight seems rapidly approaching; but—look!—our guide has provided us with other lights. Let us wait until he starts again, and "where he leads we will follow."

Our little party being evenly divided, the seven gentlemen politely carry the lanterns. Being natural curiosity seekers, we women make fine use of our eyes and tongues—strange as this may sound to the reader.

As we lose ourselves from the light of day, we feel more and more sensibly the strong current of cold air, until, becoming chilled, we begin to fear our lovely (?) cave costumes of heaviest woolen waterproof will prove insufficient to keep us comfortable (this, June 13, 1899). However, this current is only near the entrance; and we soon find the cool cave atmosphere so exhilarating we have feelings akin to sporting childhood. It is astonishing to think of the rapid progress and little fatigue in making these underground journeys. We attribute this partly to the convenient

costumes, partly to the bracing atmosphere (almost as pure as that from Hermon's snow-capped summit), and partly to the mental stimulus received from the great variety, novelty, and grandeur of the subterranean scenery, which for more than fifty-eight centuries was unknown to the civilized world.

The "glorious nineteenth" justly boasts of her discoveries and progress as to the many uses of steam, electricity, and other conveniences. Her praises are sent forth in the car bell's tones and the steamship's whistle, then carried from shore to shore by the ocean's cables, and read by tame lightning's flash. While naturally enraptured over these, she should not overlook some of her smaller, yet marvelous, discoveries, among which is Mammoth Cave. Our nation is proud of it, and the gallant old State is rendered more famous thereby. When she raises a banner to the memory of Daniel Boone, by its side let wave a banner in honor of Hutchins, that veteran Nimrod, and permit a piece clipped therefrom to serve as a bandage for the disabled foot of the legendary bear that first led a white man into this wondrous labyrinth. Tennessee has her tall, rocky Cumberland, with its Lookout Mountain; Florida, her mirrorlike lakes; Mississippi, her grandly sweeping namesake; Maryland, her Chesapeake Bay; New York, her side of the leaping Niagara; Utah, her Great Salt Lake; Wyoming, her Yellowstone Park; California, her Yosemite; yet our beloved sister State is proud of her Mammoth Cave.

But our guide, with his double lantern, again moves forward; we must follow. On and on we go, unhesitatingly; for we feel sure he knows the way, though for a long distance he says but little—leaves us to wonder and admire. A peculiar feeling creeps over us, since we have voluntarily turned our eyes from the light of the world and entered a region of perpetual darkness, but not a feeling akin to fear. We feel sure no formidable person or beast is here to molest us; for that "big iron gate," near the entrance, has doubtless been kept locked more than half a century. Unless an earthquake should jostle this terrestrial ball, we apprehend no danger whatever of the structure's giving way and engulfing us; for the

whole cave seems upheld by gigantic pillars and massive walls and covered by an eternal arch of limestone. For a long way most of the passage is very narrow and the smooth overhead ceiling so low we have to retain a stooping posture to protect our heads. Thus we pass through Hutchin's Narrows, the Valley of Humility, view the Scotchman's Trap (a huge rock on corner), go through Buchanan's Way, and other places of interest. Some of these narrow paths are walled on each side by loose stones, the work of industrious miners in the early history of the cave—a silent testimony that "their works do follow them." Not soon shall we forget Grecian Bend avenue, where we must walk stooped so low our heads are entirely hidden in front of our bodies. The guide cries out: "*Against the law to deface the ceiling!*" So we are careful not to *bump very hard* (do not want to violate the law, you know). Again he cautions us: "Don't leave the path and get lost!" (It is impossible to leave the path here.) We are inclined to call this and several other low, narrow passages a combination of "Fat Man's Misery" and "Tall Man's Misery."

But here the walls suddenly recede. The pathway leads gently downward a few feet; the ceiling is greatly elevated; and we find ourselves in the large and most welcome hall of "Great Relief"—certainly an appropriate name for the outlet from these Narrows. Without waiting for special summons from the guide, we here "straighten our spines and enjoy the luxury of a full breath."

We now reach the Rotunda, said to be immediately under Mammoth Cave Hotel. Sixty feet above us is "the grand arch which forms the roof of this immense hall, broken into folds and frets of great beauty along the upper margin. The ceiling is one great expanse of whitish limestone, unsupported by pillar or column, and is formed by the junction of two large avenues which at last take shape as one's eyes become accustomed to the gloom. That great avenue to the right is Audubon avenue, and will take us to Olive's Bower, containing the nearest and most beautiful stalactites to be seen in the cave. To the left stretches away for miles the Main Cave, a wonderful avenue of great height and width."

(Cave Manual.) The Britannica says the Main Cave is "from forty to three hundred feet wide and from thirty-five to one hundred and twenty-five feet high," and contains several vast rooms, such as the Rotunda, the Star Chamber, and the Chief City—the latter with an area of two acres and covered by a vault one hundred and twenty-five feet high.

II.

Soon we find ourselves gazing at a striking example of natural mimicry—"masses of limestone hanging down like hams, shoulders, and sides of bacon" from the ceiling of what is known as Bacon Chamber. This "bacon" is more densely crowded than in most of our smokehouses; but as the large kettle in the ceiling is inverted, we infer they do not care to have us stop and dine. Now we are in Odd Fellows' Hall, first looking at its lonesome monument of stones, then lifting our eyes toward the three large links coupled together on the ceiling, distinct as if made and placed there by one of the five lonely "odd fellows" (bachelors) in our crowd. In an adjacent apartment our attention is called to some "doughnuts" on the ceiling. One of our bachelors, possibly wondering if they will be his only accessible food in the Odd Fellows' Hall, mournfully asks, "*Are the doughnuts baked?*" to which the guide calmly replies: "I doughnut know."

Yonder is the Atlantic Cable, another peculiar stalactitic formation, resembling a massive rope stretched diagonally across the entire overhead ceiling; then a similar representation of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, as they unite to form the Ohio River. We have entered the extensive River Hall, whose subterranean waters "come no one knows whence, flow no one knows whither, and emerge no one knows where." While admiring a beautiful cliff sixty feet high, our attention is called to an isolated pool, far beneath us, guarded by iron railing. In consequence of its sullen water and great depression it is called the "Dead Sea." Near here, in 1881, was found a natural mushroom bed, which suggested the artificial ones in Audubon avenue, which failed for want

of proper irrigation. Had they been placed here amid the perpetual moisture instead of in that dry region, the result might have been a fortune to the owner. Soon we cross the noted river Styx (about forty feet wide), on the Natural Bridge. Here we first really behold the long-heard-of eyeless fish and crawfish—living evidence that God has made nothing without a purpose. We also find cave crickets and spiders, all of which, like the eyeless fish and crawfish, are white and seemingly almost transparent, being forever shut in from the light of day. These sightless "little folks" are furnished with extremely long "feelers," which to some extent supply the place of eyes. In passing, we view the placid waters of Lake Lethe, the Mythological Lake of Healing. The mud-covered limestone ledges in this region are unmistakable signs of high water. At times the cave rivers rise rapidly from torrents emptying into them through the numberless funnel-shaped sink holes in that vicinity, thus "forming a vast, continuous body fully two miles long, varying from thirty to sixty feet in depth." They subside more slowly. You naturally ask how a party could escape if unfortunately caught beyond the rivers during a sudden rise. By sixteen months of hard labor, directed by the manager, Mr. H. C. Ganter, a new way (Ganter avenue) has been opened, obviating this difficulty.

We are now making footprints on a beach of fine yellow sand—a pleasant change for weary feet. This is the Great Walk of four hundred yards to Echo River. The "ceiling" is almost ninety feet above, and "most beautifully mottled with black and white limestones, like snow clouds in a wintry sky. By igniting magnesium we get the wonderful effect in its splendor;" and, enhanced by the cave's wintry breath, we are made to feel almost like there is a possibility of the feathery flakes peppering down into our faces from the densely banked clouds. By the same light we have a magnificent view of Shakespeare's Galleries—beautiful ledges or shelves of projecting stone many feet above us and six hundred feet in length; also of the large picture of this great bard on the ceiling, so distinctly outlined as to be easily recognized.

We have reached the famous Echo River, and here is a nice little fleet of flatboats awaiting us. Consider for a moment the labor of bringing to this place the material for making all these, each of the half dozen boats being of sufficient size to accommodate twenty passengers. For a long time every piece of timber had to be brought in by way of Pat Man's Misery.

Echo River! Long have I heard of it, and now I long for language to describe it, which language has never trembled on mortal tongue nor tipped the point of the most gifted pen. The almost ice-cold stream does not appear sullen; yet its current is so slight scarcely a ripple is to be seen playing upon its placid bosom, except when the guide occasionally uses his long paddle a moment in propelling the boat. Most of the time he slightly pushes with his hand against the overhead arch or the side of the cave. The smooth archway above us is of dull-gray limestone, and varies in height from five to thirty feet; while as to depth the water is said to vary about the same (from five to thirty feet), its width being from twenty to two hundred feet. How delightful this interval of repose, while for half a mile we calmly, gently, sweetly glide over these pacific waters, feeling no fear, though three hundred and fifty feet beneath the sun's bright rays—three hundred and fifty feet beneath a spray of grass or any other vegetation, except the few slight specimens of white fungus growth peculiar to the cave! We feel sure He who planned this wondrous labyrinth can uphold its ponderous walls; so we humbly, lovingly commit ourselves to His care.

The marvelous echo over this stream could scarcely be exaggerated—that melodious prolongation and rapid repetition of sound, vibrating and reverberating along the various ledges, cliffs, and crevices. Wonderful, sublime! The guide strikes the water or side of the boat with his paddle. The blow sounds like an immense gun or cannon, which is answered by another, then another. Again and again, on and on, it is reproduced, until it sounds like armed forces engaged in deadly combat. When this has slowly died away in the distance, the guide gives a succession

of musical tones, which intermingle and have a pleasing effect on the ear as they pass throughout the dark tunnel. Then follow several good old songs by our little party, led by the clear, sweet voice of Miss Trice. Though but few are singing, and most of them very softly, the sound would indicate a magnificent choir of a hundred or more. If a thousand such voices above ground could expand their volume in the same degree indicated by this little band buried so far beneath the earth's rustic crust, surely the vibrations of these same sweet old songs of national renown—"Suwannee River;" "Ben. Bolt;" "On the Banks of the Wabash Far Away;" "Old Kentucky Home;" "Sweet By and By;" "Home, Sweet Home," etc.—would almost reach the Appalachian Mountains, rebound therefrom and strike the craggy heights of the stony-ribbed "Rockies" with such force as to scatter their melodies from the tropics to the arctic snows. Do not tell me such work as this is not directed by a Hand divine!

Look! Yonder is a distant light—a landing in Purgatory! We do not desire to land there; but if we will follow implicitly the directions of our guide, no evil shall betide. Orpheus calling Eurydice from purgatory is here vividly represented by Mrs. Brown. It seems the entire cavern is in sympathy with the unfortunate, and hands down from cliff to cliff, in plaintive tones: "Eurydice, Eurydice, Eurydice!" The ceiling is here so low we have to bow as low as possible—almost lie down in the boat—to pass through, even in time of low water. The mysterious light is held by a welcome visitor—the man who has brought our dinner; but we shall not eat here. On we sail, and soon land at Rocky Inlet. Passing through Minnehaha Valley, we soon enter Cascade Hall and listen a few moments to the melody of the cascades, whose "laughing waters" fall and "break into liquid pearls on the ledges." Passing Wellington's Galleries, we quench our thirst at Dripping Spring, whose water gently trickles from a peculiar stalactite, called, from its shape and appearance, the "Broken Heart." Passing through the Infernal Regions, Pluto's Dome, Old Scratch Hall, Serpent's Hall, Silliman's avenue, and up the rugged Hill of Fa-

tigue, we welcome a full breath at Nebraska Bend, where many years ago the Nebraska Press Association really assembled. We go through Railroad Tunnel. Here confronts us the Great Eastern—an enormous stone, the unique resemblance of an ocean steamer.

III.

We raise our eyes toward the frescoed ceiling of the justly renowned Vale of Flowers. "Cleveland's Cabinet and Marion's avenue, each one mile long, are adorned (at intervals) by myriads of gypsum rosettes and curiously twisted crystals." Descriptions of some of these formations have been overdrawn; still, we are charmed by the striking resemblance of these fair, crystalline flowers to those that bud, bloom, and sweeten the air with their fragrance. Among these gypsum rosettes we find some resembling mammoth chrysanthemums, large as a dinner plate, while others bear a still closer resemblance to the white lily, with its waxlike petals gracefully curling back from its distinct center of yellow. As expressed in the Cave Manual: "We wander bewildered under symmetrical arches of fifty feet span, where the fancy is charmed by the natural mimicry of every flower that grows in garden, forest, or prairie, from the nodding pansy to the flaunting hellanthus." Each rosette is made up of countless fibrous crystals, each tiny crystal in itself a study. All is virgin white, except here and there a patch of gray limestone, or a spot bronzed by metallic stain, or as we purposely "vary the lovely monotony" by burning chemical lights (of different colors). We admire the effective grouping done by Nature's skillful fingers. Here is a great Floral Cross (above us), made by a mass of stone rosettes; while floral coronets, clusters and wreaths and garlands embellish nearly every foot of the ceiling and walls." The "Last Rose of Summer," depicted on the ceiling of a large room, is certainly "left blooming alone" (like some of the fair maidens of our party). To different portions of this crystalline conservatory many fanciful names have been given, such as "Flora's Garden," "Mary's Bower," "Vale

of Diamonds," "Marble Hall," "Walls of Glory," "Charlotte's Grotto," etc. Diamond Gauze resembles the most intricate gauze drapery bedecked with myriads of diamonds. You can imagine the improvement here made by the magnesia light when you think of its effect on an ordinary tableau. The ceiling almost throughout this delightful vale is much lower than in most of the avenues. This seems much more like divine arrangement than a mere "happen so." Think of it—the snow clouds on a ceiling ninety feet high, so distance can lend its enchantment; while these crystalline beauties are so low we can easily observe the intricacy of their formations, combinations, and groupings! It is with effort we keep our covetous fingers from plucking at least a petal from these exquisite formations, but strict restrictions strictly restrict. Too much of this has already been done; but, happily, "the subtle forces of nature are at work to mend what man has marred."

But what is that? Look! Behold the welcome dinner table! Viands of almost every variety, well cooked, and abundant enough for a party thrice as large—a fair sample of the excellent fare at Mammoth Cave Hotel. "With appetites whetted by vigorous exercise and the bracing cave air," we joyously (by no means silently) gather around the welcome repast, so neatly arranged on a long, high, wooden table by the man who permitted his light to "so shine" for us at Purgatory Landing.

Having dined superabundantly, we resume our wanderings. There are gray and white rats and mice in this locality, with large black eyes—not blind. They are supposed to go to the outer world for sustenance; but when our guide was asked what these little animals lived on, he said, "Chestnuts"—that is, jokes furnished by guides and visitors. He says these jokes are essential to the well-being of the visitors, for "everybody that comes into the cave gets down in the mouth." Here is a mass of large Hanging Rocks, one called "Suicide Rock" (it has hanged itself). Now we enter Fly Chamber, on whose ceiling and walls are "myriads of tiny crystals of black gypsum about the size of a house fly." The resemblance is so striking, and the sight so forcibly reminds us of

many kitchens and dining rooms we have seen, it is not our pleasure to tarry here very long; at least, we will not dine here to-day. Passing several interesting scenes, we gaze a moment at a peculiar stalagmite, termed the "Anvil." Its top bears striking resemblance to a large, brown human face; and the guide positively assures us it is the head of a man, not a woman. Being asked why, he replies: "Because the mouth is closed." Even if it were a woman, wonder if he thinks she would keep her mouth open after having served as anvil a term of several centuries. Typical of the "hammering" received by many a woman all her life, this prostrate figure is being constantly pelted in the face by drops of cold water from a giant stalactite hanging above, as if proud that he has subjugated her and determined to retain his dominion. Who wonders at the poor "creature's" keeping the mouth closed?

For a long distance we have been treading the treacherous pathway, Slippery Elm street, forcibly reminding us of the many dangerous places in life, where we must take heed lest we fall. Knee-high Canyon, or Shin avenue, is one of those peculiar gorges, or ravines, washed out by the surging waters, then petrified, and is perhaps two hundred yards long, about two feet wide, and just deep enough to assure the pedestrian that its two names are appropriate, rendered decidedly more so by the splintery rocks jutting from its upper edges. In treading this "narrow way" we are careful not to disfigure these splintery borders.

Into the Flue—a small opening in a ledge above us—the guide throws some ignited substance, and the suction is so great we hear the roaring as of the best stove flue. Into a similar opening he throws, diagonally, a light, which seems to be instantly extinguished. Some one remarks: "The light went out." The guide replies: "No; the light went in." In a moment we see it shining from another window some distance away. Into one of these adjacent cavern halls he now tosses a large red light. We watch it a moment, then move on. "Look at that Indian camp fire!" says one of our crowd. We turn and look "away in yonder" and see apparently a large red fire and Mr. Sharp walking leisurely in

front of it, seemingly as unconcerned and contented as if he had decided to go into winter quarters there. Through which little window he crept, in leaving or returning to the rest of our party, I am not able to say.

Rainbow Walls are striped with different colors, according to the strata, but indistinct. The guide courteously announces, "If any of you desire to go driving, here are some nails," pointing to about a pound of real "eight pennies" lying on a rock. The Tramp's Retreat—a dismal offset in the cave—is pointed out to us; but although we are now an acknowledged set of "tramps," we care not to retreat thither. Look at that large oval pebble, fifteen or twenty feet long, called the "Egg" (Roc's Egg). Near it is the Table—a huge, flat stone—on which the guide says we may serve the Egg. Leaving the wild, rugged pass of El Ghor, we ascend a long stone stairway our leader calls "Jacob's Ladder," pointing to the "angels" ascending it. Here we enter one of the cave's chief wonders—Mary's Vineyard (sometimes called "Martha's Vineyard"). A strange stalactite, three inches in diameter, called the "Grapevine," winds from floor to ceiling. "Around it are countless nodules of calcium carbonate coated with black oxide of iron, which simulate clusters on clusters of luscious grapes (both as to size and colors), gleaming with varied tints through the dripping dew. No covetous hand is permitted to pluck this subterranean vintage." (Manual.) (But we "do not like sour grapes," you know.) Of the "wine" (pure water) flowing abundantly from that wall of grapes into a large beer keg and into a pool below the wall we are kindly invited to partake "without money and without price." We do so, and all become intoxicated—not with the juice of the grape, however, but with the grandeur of the scenery. A natural-looking olive and slice of lemon are imbedded among the grapes, while the water from above constantly trickles over them, keeping all the crystal fruit looking perfectly fresh and glossy.

IV.

We next enter Washington's Hall—a somewhat circular room one hundred feet in its greatest diameter. Here we are reminded more forcibly than ever that we are treading the path of the nations; for here are so many monuments of loose stones in honor of different cities, States, and nations, built by representatives from each. Here we erect one in honor of Georgie Robertson Christian College, have the name cut on stone, and place on the monument a catalogue of the institution. The beautiful Snowball Room next gives us a grand reception. In the language of the Manual: "Its ceiling is thickly dotted with hemispherical masses of snowy gypsum, each being from two to ten inches in diameter. The effect is as if a crowd of merry schoolboys had flung a thousand snowballs against the ceiling, which stuck there as mementos of their sport." The grandeur is superb when illuminated with magnesium. Next, Vibration Hall, over Marion's avenue. The wonderful vibrations are like the roaring of a train or the low, sad murmur of wailing winds. The Strawberry Bed (with its stone fruit), the Ghost, the Prohibition Platform, St. Cecilia's Grotto, the Crucifix, Gumdrop Ceiling, the Mandolin, Popcorn Ceiling, Trilby's Foot, etc., we must pass without comment, and linger but a moment at the Dental Office, whose ceiling looks like a mass of extracted teeth. Thousands of names are throughout the cave—some, carved with knives or stones; others, smoked on the ceiling in "ye olden times" of tallow candles.

Suddenly leaving this "matchless fairyland," we find ourselves wearily toiling up the rugged steeps of Rocky Mountain, anxiously wondering how far to the top. We must walk over rocky fragments tossed in wildest confusion, impeding the progress of us, weary, but determined, pedestrians. On and on, upward and onward, higher and higher, and still higher, puffing and blowing, pulses beating faster, faces growing redder—"How far to the top?" On we go over multiplied thousands of loose rocks, carefully avoiding the deep gorges under and beside us. Here is a place steeper, still steeper. Up we go by the friendly aid of our guide. Now!

The summit is reached. *Let us breathe.* Ample breathing room is afforded us in this hall of incredible dimensions—Call's Rotunda—as large as a good-sized yard. This is said to be not very far from the earth's surface, as verified by large blocks of sandstone, also by the fact that the rumbling of the railroad train overhead is sometimes audible. Down Dismal Hollow we gaze and throw stones, but do not venture. It looks like it might be "haunted." Cleopatra's Needle is a very peculiar stalagmite, translucent, and pointed at the top. Here is the Maelstrom—a monstrous pit into which the guide permits us, only one at a time, to gaze a moment, while he cautiously holds our hand. We are in Croghan's Hall—a very long room sixty feet wide and thirty-five high, with beautiful Starfish center overhead. This is regarded as the terminus of Mammoth Cave. Here we drink from the beautiful spring whose waters are gently handed down from a cluster of large stalactites, one of which is called the "Blarney Stone." This we modestly kiss, as have thousands of lips before our own—not that we expect thereby to receive the mythological blessing, but simply for the novelty of the custom. (Be it remembered, please, that each one's *lip stains* are washed away by the constant flow of water from above.) We have been buried from daylight five and a half hours, and have walked nine miles.

Now we start back to where the grass waves near the nodding ferns and the bird sings sweetly to its mate. Our guide says he "can't tell jokes backward;" so we lose no time until we are kindly led into Nelson's Discovery. This diamond conservatory you can appreciate only by igniting one of those splendid lights and looking above you. See the massive roof teetotally covered with sparkling jewels, in places resembling masses of gold dust; in others, looking as if thickly sprinkled with small, glittering diamonds! We fail to visit that noted "realm of empty darkness," the Mammoth Dome, which is said to be "as wonderful a place as any in this region of silence and eternal night." According to the Manual, the ordinary lights of lard oil or miner's oil suspended from one of the ledges reveal "neither floor, wall, nor

roof of that solemn domain," whose dimensions are estimated by aid of chemical lights to be "about four hundred feet in length, one hundred and fifty in greatest width, and varying from eighty to one hundred and fifty feet, and more, in height," containing a "tumbling cataract higher than Niagara, though of slender size." The walls appear to be curtained by alabaster drapery, hanging in vertical folds that vary in size from a pipestem to a saw log; and these folds are decorated by heavy fringes at intervals of about twenty feet. Six massive "colossal columns, eighty feet high by twenty-five in diameter, stand in a semicircle, flanked by pyramidal towers." These form part of the Egyptian Temple.

From Bandit Hall we wind and scramble our way up and among Kentucky Cliffs via the renowned, the notorious Corkscrew, the exit from River Hall (thanks to the ingenious hands that have constructed wooden ladders leading up the steepest parts). Some of the very slender ones of our party furnish amusement for the rest by squeezing themselves through a very small and somewhat circular window or opening—"gap in the wall" of this monstrosity. It is with considerable effort on the part of themselves and guide—puffing and blowing, inching one side at a time. We laugh till we cry at the ludicrous scene. One of our number, being somewhat long as well as slender and "Sharp," in winding among the various turns and crevices of the Corkscrew, says he has met himself a time or two; but, not recognizing himself, thought he had met another man. Down the rugged, rocky slopes we wend our way, and scarcely stop any more until we pass through the Iron Gate to the entrance. Here (8 P.M.) we find that Phœbus, as if weary awaiting our return, has departed, leaving our good-night kiss to be delivered by the twilight breezes. Up the hill to the hotel, where we hurriedly bathe our faces, then are invited in our cave suits to the welcome dining room, of whose rare treasures we gladly partake. Erelong we are in our rooms in the third story, embraced in the loving arms of Morpheus, preparatory to our meanderings along the Short Route to-morrow. Until then, good night.

V.

SHORT ROUTE.

Having our bodies refreshed by "nature's sweet restorer," we break our fast and start on our second day's ramble.

At the cave's yawning mouth we again for a moment watch and admire the crystal water as it "trickles down with perpetual music" from the midarch, forty feet above, "sounding again and again in mimic echoes from the walls and roof around," then creeping from our sight through crevices in the floor to join some underground companion stream. Obeying the summons of our guide, we again enter the dark recesses of this tremendous cavern, and for some distance retrace the same Narrows, with their rude walls of loose rocks compactly piled by the saltpeter miners of 1812—relics of that deadly combat. In the Rotunda and other open spaces are still to be seen remains of leaching vats and wooden pipes in excellent state of preservation, the same that were used in partially preparing vast quantities of gunpowder used in the War of 1812. A few ox tracks, now hardened into a kind of stone, still clearly show the shape of the cloven hoof. It is fortunate that oxen used by the miners did not have to go as far as Shin avenue and Fat Man's Misery. They did not care for Grecian Bend avenue—did not seriously object to stooping.

We enter Bat avenue, where in fall and winter the walls are blackened by thousands of bats clinging together, like swarms of bees, and sometimes suspended in great "clumps" from the ceiling. It is stated that at a single catch one night, during one of their winter sleeps, Professor Call captured six hundred and seventy bats, most of which were carried to the National Museum.

Passing the Pigeon Boxes, we enter the Church (about eighty feet in diameter by forty feet high), with its natural pulpit or gallery (a ledge of rocks about twenty-five feet high). Preachers of renown have here talked of the Savior, and large audiences have filled these mystic walls with songs of praise. Near this is a real Christmas tree, placed here in 1833, and on it still hang many

cards and labels. Passing many places of interest, we stop and gaze in wonder on a number of gigantic stalactite-stalagmite unions, such as Post Oak Pillar, Elephants' Heads (with their "trunks checked," as the guide says), the Old Armchair, Pompey and Caesar, and the Pillars of Hercules. The latter is a great matted series of columns, whose object seems to be to support the world of rock above. All these aged sentinels appear to be keeping a sharp lookout for the proceedings of their near neighbor, the Bridal Altar. They have already witnessed a dozen real weddings under this triune arch, beginning with the one in which the young lady had promised her mother she would "never marry a man on the face of the earth." She was faithful to her promise. The guide soon points to splendid representations of hornets' nests on the wall, and says: "Hornets' Nests—next thing after Bridal Altar!" Pointing to the Old Armchair, he asks us the name of the junction of the stalactite and stalagmite. We know not; so he tells us: "Mighty Tight." Here is the long, slender, hazardous-looking projection called the "Lover's Leap"—doubtless his last leap. (Wonder if the Bridal Altar suggested the name.) Suffice it to say, it is on the brow of the Hill of Difficulty; and the leap, if made, is almost sure to prove fatal. Lover, beware! Look before you leap! You had better first throw on the light, then look downward, still downward, and behold that "wild and tumultuously grouped mass of rocks" in that dismal abyss, which is the landing of a "leap in the dark." I repeat the warning: Count the cost; look before you leap! Here is Elbow Crevice—a long, narrow opening in "the face of the solid rock." Through it we wend our way, single file, probably a hundred yards, all the while careful not to mar with our elbows the stone walls, which are "wrinkled and folded in many fantastic ways by the waters which have long since ceased to flow here." We carefully peep into Rebekah's Well; then over the ragged edge into Joseph's Pit; then up into Napoleon's Dome, under which is the Dining Table—a huge block of limestone detached from the ceiling above. We pass many novelties, and at Annette's Dome our ears are greeted

by the incessant song of a little waterfall, leaping from a precipice of almost seventy feet to reinforce the waters of Lee's Cistern. We pass through the Ballroom, then see a stone resembling a woman's profile. The artist has been severely criticised for departing from nature—*her mouth is closed*. So here is another instance in which woman can "keep her mouth shut," even if man does have to go two or three hundred feet underground to find such a genial companion. He should never regret his efforts, if he at last succeeds in getting the one he wants. Young man, if you want a companion who will permit you to always have your own way and will not "jaw back," come to Mammoth Cave. However, you may expect her to keep a "cold shoulder" turned toward you; to be very dark; to be a deaf mute, blind, and with a heart of stone. Here are the Standing Rocks, which the guide says are like certain persons—"stuck up." Listen! The regular ticking of an underground timekeeper, the Water Clock—a minute waterfall somewhere hidden behind the rocks, where, drop by drop, the seconds are counted to us—one hundred and six to the minute. (You see? Where woman keeps her mouth closed it seems that even time can run faster.)

VI.

Some of these avenues wind around, forming peculiar turns and angles. In this unique arrangement is found the noted statue of Martha Washington, a marvelous illusion bearing a striking resemblance to a life-sized plaster of Paris statue (profile) of that distinguished lady mounted on high pedestal.

To our right is the Giant's Coffin—a monster rock detached from the wall and very much the shape of a burial casket. Length, forty-five feet; width, from twelve to fifteen feet; height, eighteen feet: estimated weight, more than two thousand tons. Now we pass the Acute Angle, where this long avenue turns so suddenly as to make an angle of only about sixty degrees—a wonderful turn for a sweeping river, especially underground. We enter the two stone cottages, roofless, built of smooth, square stones neatly laid

in cement, where for a while some consumptives dwelt, hoping thus to effect a cure, but only hastening their death.

Now we are to behold the crowning glory of to-day's walk—the celebrated Star Chamber. Seated on a long bench, we quietly rest, while the guide prepares for the tableau. With our lights he slowly disappears into a side avenue, leaving a kind of twilight to gently creep over us. Darker and darker it grows. But look! Yonder is a star in the distant sky; another, and another; now there are many. Look! The miniature firmament is studded with these glittering jewels. And yonder is a comet, the first we have seen for years. Look how it stretches halfway across that wondrous streak of sparkling diamonds, the Milky Way, which now is clearly seen in the dim distance! O, what a dark cloud is rising! Faster and faster it approaches (but our roof does not leak, and we are not afraid); darker and darker it grows. Now the entire face of the miniature sky is covered. O, the blackness of the impenetrable gloom when every vestige of light is taken from us! How cold we are becoming! Our feet and hands almost ache; our bodies are becoming chilled. Surely this is akin to the Egyptian darkness that could be felt. But no tempest assails us. This apparent storm cloud is passing around. A star is peeping through the rifted cloud. It is followed by another, and still another. The gateway of glory has again swung back on its hinges, and the star-spangled vault is again gleaming above. What time is it? The watches of the pedestrians are with the hotel clerk; the guide is gone with his; and the Water Clock we have left far behind us. How can we know the time? Listen! The chicken, that faithful monitor, tells us it is almost day. Another replies: "Yes, nearly day." Look eastward! A gray streak near the horizon! It slowly grows wider and becomes lighter. The chickens reassure us day is dawning. The little calf has aroused from its slumber, feels lonely, and calls its "ma;" and, motherlike, she replies: "Ma!" The little house dog is trying to arouse the neighbors, but becomes too officious, receives a blow from his master's rod, and goes off howling and yelling. The chickens still remind

us day is at hand. It is growing lighter and lighter. Yonder we see the rising sun. Onward he marches, and at his approach the stars and comet withdraw their light and permit his brighter beams to reign supreme.

With thanks to our mimic guide and with hearts filled with deeper gratitude to the omnipotent Giver of all these wonders, we turn back from this end of the Main Cave, more fully realizing how little we know. If there is such grandeur in this illusion, what of the grandeur of the real glory of earth and heaven!

VII.

Reluctantly leaving the enchanting Star Chamber, with its sparkling vault three hundred feet long and eighty high, we retrace our way to the Giant's Coffin; then through another avenue to the Wooden Bowl Room; thence down a rude stone stairway called the "Steeps of Time." Here the railing and some of the rocks are all the year covered with a snow-white fungus growth, whose dense patches of long fibers look very much like the whitest cotton or wool. These shreds are said to be sometimes a foot or more in length, and they certainly give to the Steeps of Time the appearance of antiquity. At the bottom of this rustic stairway, entering Owl Hall, we are confronted by the rude representation in stone of a small owl quietly perched upon a high ledge. Though he seems to be sole proprietor of the establishment, and though his visitors are all perfect strangers to him, he modestly refrains from asking us that impertinent "owl" question: "Who—who—who—who are you?" The guide eulogizes him, saying: "He is little, but owl right." Beneath is a beautiful spring, and the guide claims to be able to tell exactly how much water it affords every week—just to a quart. A surprised listener asks: "How much?" He replies: "Two pints."

The Lover's Retreat consists of two long, narrow, parallel avenues, at right angles with the ones we are traveling, and looming off in the dim distance we know not whither. Soon we reach what is called the "Devil's Kitchen." When asked if His Satanic

Majesty is a good cook, the guide replies: "I suppose so, from his large number of boarders."

In our rambles through this wonder world we see various grotesque resemblances on walls and ceilings—some, in the peculiar shapes of the rocks; others, only in outlines—Fat Girl, Hen and Chickens (small chick perched on its mother's back), Giant and Giantess Tossing the Baby, the Couple Dancing the "Two-step" (while Jealousy stands aghast with back turned, as if in disgust), large Stone Face, the Moon, and many, many others. As to the representation of special figures and flowers, sometimes the resemblance is very striking; but at other times vivid powers of imagination must be employed—something like tracing outlines in burning coals or in clouds. We are now down in the very "Region of Pits and Domes;" and since there is much similarity in their structure and appearance, I will make only a general allusion to a few of the most noted, such as Minerva's Dome, Side-saddle Pit, Washington's Pit and Dome, and the so-called "Bottomless Pit," which has been measured at last and found to be one hundred and thirty-five feet deep; while Shelby Dome, just over it, is one hundred and forty-five feet high, making a pit, or dome, of almost three hundred feet. Over the Bottomless Pit is a substantial wooden bridge, called the "Bridge of Sighs." It contains no hidden trapdoor, as did the Oriental one; but while passing over we could scarcely keep from quivering to think of the possibility of such. These are "vertical shafts that pierce through all levels, from the uppermost galleries, or even from the sink holes, down to the lowest floor," and are called "pits" or "domes," according to the position occupied by the observer. They seem to widen at the bottom and taper off into a conical top, "like the steeples of some majestic temple of silence and night." Their "jagged walls are fluted and folded in ways indescribable." As sanctioned by the Manual, every indication is that this is the bed of a subterranean stream or system of rivers, a system of caverns having become one intricate labyrinth. The appearance is that the mighty billows have carved the granite into natural tunnels, spouting horns, fantastic arches, grottoes, and chasms, its roof

being "decorated here and there by numerous stalactites;" its "walls, fluted and carved, as if by some gigantic graving tool."

Time forbids that we linger. Onward we move, with rapid pace, back toward the entrance, the guide not even stopping to tell many of his pleasing jokes. Soon we are in the open air again, trying to become accustomed to the sultry breezes before walking up the hill. We are taking a long, last, lingering look; for we must now bid adieu to Niagara's great rival, Mammoth Cave, whose marvelous grandeur we can never comprehend. Long in our memories will linger its rocky galleries and arched valleys; its knobs, sinks, and pyramidal peaks; its Grand Crossing; its miniature Niagaras, with their splash of silvery waters; its limpid pools that have secret connection with Green River.

It would be a cold, thoughtless heart that could ponder the almost inconceivable immensity of this underground structure and not be more thoroughly convinced of the power of Him who alone could stay those massive walls under such wonderful pressure.

LESSONS.

Having completed our meanderings through this wonderland, we naturally begin to notice the many similarities between this and the Christian's earth life.

1. In both we must have light. Without it we can neither appreciate the grandeur nor avoid the pitfalls along our way. In both instances we must leave the light of the world and be guided by the light especially prepared for us—a light that has been thoroughly tested, proved to be true and steadfast; one that will endure throughout the journey.

2. In both we should have a guide. He should carry a safe light, should walk in that light himself, and should be acquainted with the way. A blind guide—one who has no light or who will not himself walk therein—is not capacitated to lead others. There are many "false Christs," or "blind guides;" and "where the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." We should not only have a guide, but should strictly follow him. A few weeks since

two boys from Florence, Ala., tried going through a cave without a guide, and were lost for two days, to the great horror of themselves and their parents. Many leave the great Source of heavenly light and forsake the appointed guide, trusting to themselves to find a better or an easier way. Such persons are merely groping their way in darkness, liable any moment to be engulfed in the pit of destruction. There are dangers above, beneath, and on either side. We must watch every way.

3. "The majority of persons never start through Mammoth Cave, and some who start become timid and turn back." (Manual, page 18.) Likewise, the majority never start on the Christian pilgrimage; and many who start have not the moral courage to keep on, but turn back to the world.

4. In Mammoth Cave we pass through a number of low, narrow avenues. In that tortuous channel called "Fat Man's Misery" "the walls, only eighteen inches apart, change direction eight times within eighty yards, while the distance from the sandy path to the ledge overhead averages but five feet. The rocky sides are marked with waves and ripples, as if running water had been suddenly petrified." In life we come to many low, narrow places, where we must not exalt ourselves too high nor "spread ourselves" too wide, but must lay aside many of our opinions, plans, and purposes.

5. We see many high places we cannot reach or comprehend. These, also, should teach us humility. We must not be self-righteous—be not wise in our own conceits. Many of God's ways and works are beyond our comprehension, for even the "angels desire to look into" them.

6. While watching and admiring the grandeur overhead, we must look well to where we plant our feet. In the cave we find some treacherous rocks, as experience thoroughly convinced us; in life we often think we are stepping on safe ground, when—lo!—it proves to be a treacherous rock or a bed of quicksand. Let us examine a platform before we trust our souls thereon.

7. Concerning both these journeys the various stories "must

be sifted with greatest care," for both are often grossly misrepresented. However, the merits of both can be tested; and the stronger and brighter the search light and the more critical the search, the more beauties are discerned.

8. The cave has its vast Rotundas, its Mammoth Dome, and even its Chief City—that marvelous expanse, that "largest subterranean temple in the world," with areal dimensions of two acres, enchanted by utter solitude—the Chief City, whose solid, seamless arch of limestone, as one great, overshadowing canopy, has withstood the shock of thousands of years. Often in life's wanderings we see a vast rotunda or some other vacant hall, as it were, looming dimly before us in the gathering gloom. We know not what to do nor what is there in store for us, for all is darkness. But look! Our kind Guide steps steadily forward with the light of truth, whose rays penetrate the somber shadows and shed a glorious halo on the beauties before buried in gloom. Indeed, this world is one vast rotunda, whose spiritual gloom is horrible until penetrated and banished by the light of God's truth and love. Wherever it shines the beauty and grandeur of his handiwork are revealed.

9. The old mushroom beds in Audubon avenue are standing mementos of man's mistake in trying to cultivate this fungus growth in one of the driest parts of the cave. In religious matters many and far more serious mistakes are made. (And—lo!—"their works do follow them.")

10. Eyeless fish, crickets, spiders, etc.—nothing made without a purpose. No use for eyes in an abode of perpetual darkness. Actually, a number of blind visitors have gone through this cave. Surely they had queer curiosity. (Wonder if any of them were women.) Some church members seem blind to duty—to church work of every kind, even to the Sunday school lesson.

11. Cave fish, etc.—not only blind, but white, because secluded from light. Many so-called "Christians" are not only blind to their own interests, but are also pale and sickly, because they keep themselves from God's light. They are feeble—have no

strength, cannot endure light. Turn on the search light of God's word, and their theories wither away.

12. Echo River. We should be careful as to what we say, for it may be often repeated. If good, all is well; but if bad, —!

13. The cave, though silent, is furnished with sweetest music—vibrations and pattering waterfalls. Often the most quiet Christian life has the best influence and is echoed far and near.

14. The cool, bracing cave atmosphere is of great advantage in traveling; so are the appropriate costumes. Throughout the Christian's journey he should "keep cool"—be deliberate and considerate; otherwise his enemy has the advantage. He should also be arrayed in garments of humility and obedience—should keep on the robe of righteousness.

15. Mental stimulus shortens the way and lessens fatigue in Mammoth Cave. Life's burdens and sorrows are lessened by looking for the flowers instead of the thorns along our way—by fully appreciating our favorable environments.

16. The Snow Clouds in the cave are ninety feet high, while the beautiful frescoed arches are low enough for us to examine their structure. Thus nature is suited to our convenience; and to the thinking, appreciative mind God's arrangements are sublime.

17. In the cave sometimes our lamps almost go out, and we are forcibly reminded of the "foolish virgins;" but our guide trims the wicks, and all is well. The Christian's light sometimes needs trimming, without which it would go out.

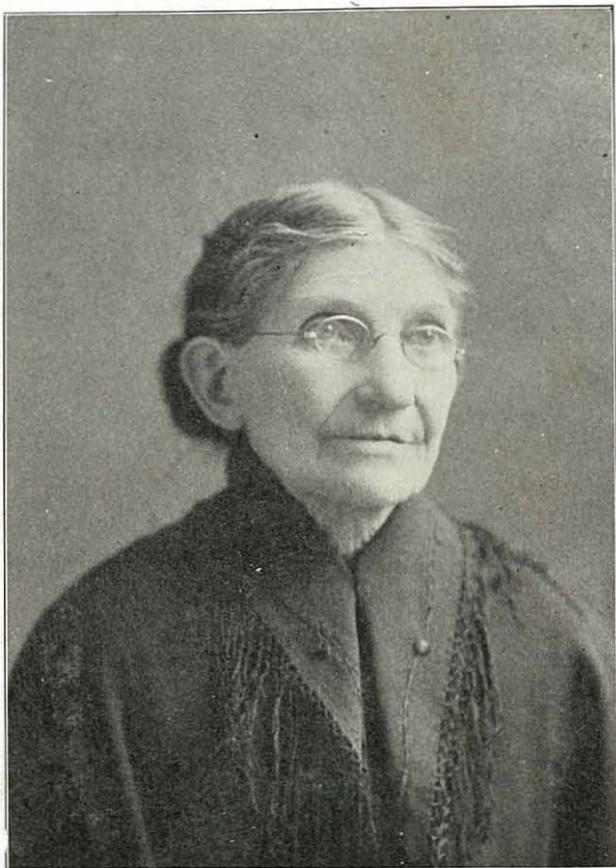
18. In Mammoth Cave we pass through Slippery Elm street; in the church "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

19. In Mammoth Cave we find immense blocks of fallen limestone, detached from the ceiling overhead. Stones in God's spiritual temple sometimes actually loose their hold on the firm structure of Christianity and fall, and great is their fall.

20. As if guarding the dangerous entrance to Olive's Bower stands the Sentinel, that grand old stalactite that after centuries of slow, but constant, growth has met his companion stalagmite,

and boldly, firmly "stands like another Atlas to hold in place the world of rock above." The aged Christian stands as a noble sentinel, tenderly guarding the wayward and boldly supporting the right.

In after life, as we think of this wonderful cavern, with its quiet, mystic walls, fluted by deep furrows; as, in memory, we catch the sound of its falling waters, and even hear the steady, gentle ticking of its Water Clock; as we hear the enchanting vibrations of its Echo River; as we promenade its spacious "halls canopied by fleecy clouds or studded with mimic snowballs;" as we gaze with wonder on its starry vault and watch the little eyes of heaven blinking in beauty, we trust the spirit of love and gratitude may be ours. May we more fully than ever realize our own inability and our dependence upon the One whose strong arm alone can uphold the ponderous walls of Mammoth Cave.



MRS. JOHN H. MEEKS.

HOME CORNER.

[What follows may appear to the casual reader *too personal*; but, as you see, I have placed it *last*; so, without trouble, you can exercise your pleasure as to the reading—may read or omit. However, it occurs to *me* that “Hearthstone Echoes” would scarcely be complete without a few faint echoes from our own fireside—without some expression of the heart’s impulses in its calmest, serenest moments, also when under the severe pressure while passing through the sore trials of life and carrying its heavy burdens. The arrangement of the “Home Corner,” like that of the body of the book, is by no means chronological. Some of the pictures are not of recent date. That of Gen. John H. Meeks represents him at the age of fifty-six; Mrs. John H. Meeks, seventy-two; “Grandmamma,” seventy-eight.—Author.]

“WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER?”

THAT “death loves a shining mark” seemed strikingly shown when the home of Gen. John H. Meeks was deprived of its noble queen.

June 24, 1820; June 20, 1896—these dates mark the limits of her earthly career, but not of her benign influence. Our memories will ever revert to the latter date as one of our *saddest* days; for on that morn, as the sun began to scatter his golden rays around us, there was a *sunset* in our midst; the sun of our dear mother’s existence was steadily sinking behind the waves and ripples of life’s sea, to rise in splendor on the glory shore. Truly, hers was a life of sunshine, spent casting golden beams into the lives of others. She was the leader of a large, influential family into the

good Shepherd's fold, where she continued in cheerful obedience until lovingly invited to her reward.

Mother was not so much a woman of words as of deeds, and one of her charming characteristics was the *quiet* influence of her noble life. Wintry winds may strive to dislodge the avalanche, and fail; but gentle sunbeams will gradually melt the snows and cause them to forsake the mountain side. So her influence, like warming beams, had a melting, soothing effect on hearts made cold and hardened by the storms of time. Her friends were many and sincere, their number being limited only by the extent of her acquaintance. Neither did her acquaintances wait until she was *dead* to speak her praises. She was genial, kind, affectionate; the life of the family and the regulating wheel in the social circle; always found at the post of duty; self-sacrificing, wasting her life for her friends, seeming to have no greater pleasure than trying to lift the burden and brighten the lives of others. Wars might come, storms might rage, friends forsake and foes oppress; but she was the same faithful, humble, loving, self-sacrificing mother, wife, neighbor, friend. Much of her time was spent in denying herself and blessing others. She would stint herself any time rather than neglect any one else, her thoughtfulness of others and forgetfulness of self being part of her very nature. She was indeed a true heroine. Many a woman has as such been made prominent in history, at the same time far less worthy of the honor.

Her untiring devotion for her children was proverbial,

and in them she seemed to find no fault. Without lecture or rebuke, she controlled them in a quiet, modest way that won their confidence and esteem and made them shrink from the idea of displeasing “mother.” (By this sweet name all her children called her, and it was the appropriate inscription on her coffin lid.) This devotion for her own children and for those of us whom “the powers that be” kindly permitted to become hers was sweetly and charmingly reciprocated by each, and could not have been otherwise, except by a heart grown cold. Noted for economy, skillful management, benevolence, and charity, her life, as it advanced, grew gradually more sublime, the magnitude of her worth not being fully realized until she had passed life’s meridian.

Her industry and frugality were largely the cause of her husband’s success in life, as was for many years freely admitted by himself. For more than fifty-five years she was his dear, devoted companion; and now he solemnly realizes the meaning of the word “bereft.” While in quiet sleep she was calmly breathing her last, he, with trembling voice and breaking heart, very touchingly said: “*There lies the darling of my youth—‘Ellie,’ that sweetest name ever called. As she passes away, life to me loses its charm.*” Yes, dear father, there will ever be a sad vacuum in your heart this world can never fill; and you would not have it filled, for you want to reserve it for her memory. The treasured home will be brooded over by a spirit of melancholy, but you have the comforting recollection that you have ever been a true and faithful companion; that she was never once

neglected or illy provided for. Late in the afternoon before her sweet spirit left us, the fingers of nature painted a beautiful rainbow on the heavy, dark cloud in the east, which then suggested to me the following analogy, now so apparent: From you the sunshine of her presence is withdrawn, but from the dismal cloud overshadowing your bereaved heart there is reflected a beautiful rainbow promise. Try not to gaze too much on the dark background, but spend more time tracing out the beautiful rainbow tints. "When the roll is called up yonder" at the reunion of Christian soldiers, we believe that to the names "John H. and Ellie Meeks" you and dear, sweet mother will be ready to respond: "*We are here.*" We are thankful God did not bid us, "Weep not" (there is relief in tears), but lovingly said: "Weep not as others which have no hope." While of the eight noble children with whom you and mother were blessed, four preceded her to the other shore, four are yet spared to love and try to cheer you as you sadly steer your lonely bark. To you the remnant of the voyage will be cloudy and drear, and you will feel your task a hard one without that patient hand that, with divine aid, so long and so faithfully guided one of the oars; but when the gloomy mist grows too thick for you to penetrate, you will raise your eyes by faith and resignation and look across to the bright beyond.

As the sun, after lending his golden beams to our hemisphere as long as expedient, at last withdraws them so gently we can scarcely know the moment of their exit, so



GEN. JOHN H. MEEKS.

was the closing of that precious life. As a glorious, golden day, her life smiled away many of the clouds that otherwise would have been almost impenetrable. Even when overpowered by heartaches, she would try to drive clouds from the hearts of others. She always had consoling words for those in trouble. After the sinking sun passes from sight, it is reflected back, and a long, sweet twilight ensues. Though the sun of her existence has passed behind the billows, there is still a beautiful twilight gladdening our hearts—the sweet memory of her noble life.

"OUR FATHER."

"Gathering homeward one by one."

THE sad message reached us that father was dead. We hastened to the loved old home. They had carried him into the parlor; and that dear, familiar form appeared as if only enjoying sweetest slumber—eyes and lips closed naturally, hair combed in its usual way—he looked *so natural*. His death had come unheralded, his sickness having lasted only twenty-two hours. He was in his eighty-fourth year when the reaper carried away the golden sheaf—a ripened sheaf—full of precious grain for the heavenly garner. Thus another beautiful life was ended, and the community was caused to mourn the loss of one of its oldest and best citizens. When we gazed on his noble face—so calm, so bright, even in death—we esteemed more highly than ever before the character he had always sustained: that of a strictly

moral, upright man, whose integrity was never questioned, and whose practical, good sense manifested itself to all who observed his ways. He was emphatically a home-loving man. His social life was also embellished by many noble characteristics, among which stood prominent his generosity and sympathy. Surely many of the poor should "rise up and call him blessed." It was a touching scene at Clear Creek Church the day of his burial—mothers lifting their little children in their arms so they could look into the coffin, look the last time upon the lifeless, but cherished, form and placid features of him who had been their friend and benefactor in time of need; mothers, widows, some of whom had for years depended largely upon him for sustenance. The immense audience mournfully, but sweetly, sung "Some Sweet Day," then "God Be With You," while sadly passing around and taking the final look at his face. *No wonder* on that occasion so many cheeks, besides those of his kindred, were bathed in tears; for many considered, as they said, that "the poor man's friend was gone." For more than thirty years he had faithfully filled the office of elder in the Clear Creek congregation. He was regarded as a Christian everywhere—in business, in the family circle, in everything; was held in high esteem by all who knew him; was kind and charitable to all, honored as a friend, trusted and respected as a citizen.

For two years he had survived the darling of his heart—his amiable wife, whom he adored. *No wonder* he felt as if life had lost its charm. For more than half a century

mother had gladdened his life and home; and a gentler, nobler, sweeter spirit none ever knew. She was a woman of intrinsic worth—a woman of great nobility of character. Tenderly devoted to her home and family, she gave herself most affectionately to the sacred relations belonging thereto. Her energy and industry knew no bounds, except feebleness of health. She was quiet and unassuming, but faithful to her trust. Dear, heart-crushed father endured his sad trial more bravely than we expected, though he pined her absence—poor man!—like a moaning dove bereft of its mate. Ever afterwards, although often he could not speak her cherished name without a quivering chin and many times would weep bitterly, although even at the lonely midnight hour he was often heard weeping or mournfully sighing and speaking that loved name, "Ellie," he tried hard to be submissive as possible and to carry his heart burden without grieving others therewith. Though in deep sorrow all the while, his sentiments seemed to be:

"The night is long, but the day will break
 When the light of eternity, streaming down
 On the cross we bear for the Master's sake,
 Will guide our steps to the promised crown.
 A little while, and the gate is passed—
 Home and heaven and rest at last."

Surely for this noble Christian pair there is a place in that many-mansioned city. The death of each spread a shade of gloom over the entire community. In their death many lost good friends; no one lost an enemy. Especially

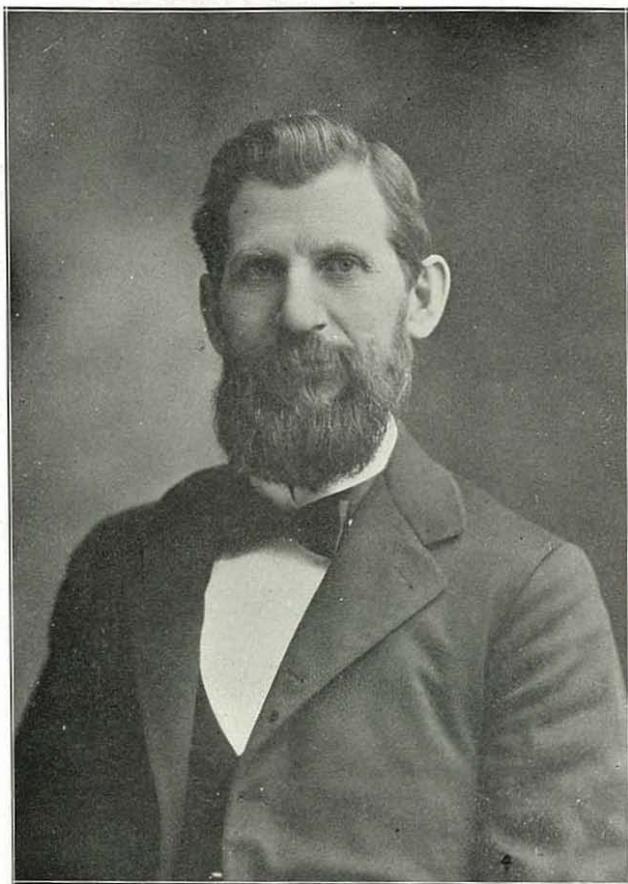
at their home fireside and in the church we look with sadness on their vacant seats. But they have left as a rich legacy a good name, a noble example, a record that will only brighten by investigation—a spotless character which pen need not praise, for it is well founded in hearts and lives left behind. Theirs were beautiful and well-rounded lives—sheaves ripe and ready for the harvest. They passed the last ordeal supported by that beautiful faith which marked their course on earth and sustained them in all their trials and sorrows. Hope grew stronger and faith brighter as the time of departure drew near, for “life’s evening usually takes its character from the day which has preceded it.”

Sweet memories of these dear old people (my fondly-loved father-in-law and mother-in-law) will ever linger about my heart; and I am thankful for my association with them, for I feel sure I have been made happier and better thereby. Their influence will long live to brighten and to bless.

OUR OWN FIRESIDE.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Just fifty years ago! The aged winter king, the blushing spring maiden, and the fruit-laden summer had completed their work and had quietly taken their exit. September, as a kingly sentinel, then stood between the seasons, with one hand outstretched toward the blazing summer, the other pointing to winter’s snows.



R. P. MEEKS.

Just fifty years ago! Nature was preparing her rich robe of yellow and scarlet, with a background of tinted green; her downy sycamore, her black gum, her poplar, her sugar tree, her sumac, her golden-rod—her wealth of yellow and bown and red enchanted by the mellow September sun. Long rows of corn were waving in the sunshine and whispering secrets to the breezes, while leaves of the locust and walnut hung lazily from the boughs,

"And close at hand the basket stood
For nuts from brown October's wood."

Just fifty years ago, in golden September, Rufus P. Meeks was born. Seventeen years and one month later he was "born again"—born into the great spiritual family. A little past high noon on a September day—the day his years numbered twenty-four—he united his large heart of love with the one he had chosen to share with him life's bittersweet; on another September (two years later) to him was first applied the then strange-sounding appellation, "papa."

Years speed away. Each revolution of the hands on the clock of life marks his age higher, higher, still higher, until to-day it has reached the capital "L." The sun of his existence has reached its zenith. He stands upon Zion's walls with the sword of the Spirit, and with one hand points back to a life spent in God's service, while the other is pointing upward toward the crown. From the summit of life's hill he looks back through the long avenue of five decades, takes due cognizance of the many blessings along the way, now and

then discerning a somber cloud obscuring them, but keeps looking until he sees the silvery lining. Then he turns, looks down the slope on the other side, sees shadows and sunshine, joys and tears. Quickly raising his eyes, he looks farther, still farther. Now he sees beyond the river the city of life, the golden gate, the victor's crown, the heavenly home—the reward of the faithful.

Fifty years ago, a babe in the cradle; to-day, a tried and trusty soldier of the cross, never, even once, having broken ranks or fallen out of line. Time's rushing charioteer will speed the day when he will realize he is steadily descending the slopes of life toward vast eternity, though I trust many more years may be added to his earth life, rich with the wealth of the Father's love. His pilgrimage will doubtless be checkered with many reverses. I plead with the fitting moments to deal as gently with him as he has dealt with his family and his fellow-men. May he continue to "scatter smiles and sunshine all along the way" of others and gild his own pathway with cheerfulness, remembering that "to a *good* man the best things are always ahead," and that "the highest rate of interest we pay is on *borrowed trouble*." Upon the many failings of his own loved ones let him look—not with malice or impatience, but with pity, and thus admonish them in gentleness and affection. If at any time assailed by the tempter, may he conquer by a skillful use of the Spirit's sword. Walking in the light reflected from God's faithful mirror, he may, with tongue and pen and example, continue to check the sinner in his wild and reck-

less career by plainly, peacefully, patiently, persistently, and prayerfully presenting the golden gleams of gospel truth—the message of “peace on earth, good will toward men.” May he remain steadfast *at the feet of Jesus*, making known the Father’s love which prompted him to send to earth the most exquisite jewel heaven owned—the King of glory.

When afflictions fall heavily upon him, may he never lack for willing hands to bathe the fevered cheek and press the aching brow, or for the glorious promises of Heaven to cheer; and may the evening of his career be a sweet reflection of the triumphant day fading into life’s gentle twilight.

“September 18,” 1899.

BIRTHDAY MEDITATIONS.

TIME’s great chariot wheel still keeps spinning and spinning around and around. Watch its spokes flit by our door! Now, do you see? It has completed another circuit, and has again placed April on the throne.

Ha! It waves at me in passing, and tells me this is my birthday. Sure enough, this is “April 25!” Leave me alone a little while, if you please, and let me reflect. Well, be this my consolation: My friends surely will not expect much of me when they learn that I was born in April. They certainly will not require much of an “April f—l.” I am sure they need not, for I realize too sadly that my life work

thus far has been small, and I fear that when it is all told it will still amount to but little.

Nature keeps busy. The buds and flowers of one year ago have long since sunk deep into the soil to await this, their annual resurrection. The trees that a few months since changed their green for gay have since been draped in crystal beads, and in somber gladness the Old Year has taken up his bright inheritance of golden fruit, and, as Bryant suggests, has "smiled even while drawing his last breath." The New Year has stood over the grave of the Old; has bedecked it with dewy diamonds and gently covered it with whited shroud; then has turned from the scene of death to begin his life labor. He has already dissolved the icicle and the wintry snow; has drawn the life current from the earthen reservoir and placed it in the veins of the dormant trees, bedecking them with green twigs and many-tinted flowers; then has called back the gay-plumaged songsters from a snowless clime.

Let me see. How many times? Yes, nine and forty times have I witnessed this great revolution, though the first few made no impression on my mind. The older I grow, the more rapidly do birthdays seem to come; and full well do I realize the speed with which they have already begun to pull me down the "steeps of time."

The scroll of the future is not yet unrolled. I cannot tell whether most of its contents speak of eyes with gladness filled or of tear drops on the cheek. Let it remain unseen; it will unroll fast enough. If sadness come, I will try,

though with breaking heart, to meekly, bravely bear it; if gladness shall be the greater part, I will enjoy it all the more for its being a surprise. We are all frail creatures, like "leaves borne to earth by the breezes of time;" but we do not desire to have marked on our records, "Nothing but leaves," after we shall have fallen into our silent resting places. The dewdrop and the floating bubble are little things, yet both reflect the sun. One soon bursts, and is gone; the other sinks into the soil and sends forth the ear of wheat to feed a hungry neighbor. Which shall we be, the dewdrop or the floating bubble?

Since I think about it, my month is not so bad, after all. It drives back the cold March breath and melts, as into tears of loving sympathy, the icicles that hang like pendant spears from the cottage eaves. My month uncovers the little flower's grave. The wee beauty peeps out from beneath its mossy quilt, and, with eyes half open, nods to us: "Good morning!" My month brings the humming bird, without which the flower bed and the forest glade would be incomplete. My month plants much of the farmer's grain; it fills his dairy with rich butter and cream; it paints his lips with ripe berries; and it points him to his smiling fields. Would that I could only do as well as my natal month, April! Then it would some day be whispered of me: "She hath done what she could." But we are all weak and ungrateful. How often we "drown the night in peaceful slumbers, then arise in health and forget to thank our God!" How often "we pray for better bread, when we only need

better appetites" caused by better work! Sometimes we forget that happiness is like manna—has to be gathered in grains and enjoyed one day at a time. We want to get it all at once.

I trust my friends will not think of me as a pouting, discontented, disconsolate creature, though what I have just written may sound like it. I would dislike to be considered the fern that begged, pouted, and pined to leave the shade and go and grow by the rose. I have never censured my God for not causing me to be a man. I find pleasure wherever I am; have never had to leave home in search of happiness. If others have more favorable surroundings, probably they deserve better; mine are far better than I merit. I have all these years lived in a world of good people and where there was plenty of ground to grant me a final pillow—a grave. I have always been blessed with good neighbors and good friends, and I try to search them for their virtues, while searching myself for my faults, of which I find many. Whereas I see some who may be more pleasantly surrounded than myself, I see many with environments far less favorable. I would like to possess more wealth—not so much the dissolving mammon, but rich coins of sympathy, cheer, kindness, and gratitude. I do not know that I would be able to endure the burden of riches. I know not the strength of my heart in resisting such temptation; it has never been thus tested. Perhaps it is best I have only had plenty; otherwise I might have been led even farther from my duty—might have permitted the love of worldly

gain to stand between me and the cross of the Savior, on which I am trying to lean. (However, Christ's having said man "cannot serve God and mammon" is no indication that he cannot serve God with his mammon, if he tries.)

I try to keep my heart filled with sincere gratitude for all the blessings I receive, and realize they come from a source divine. I try not to borrow to-morrow's cares, thus stealing from the treasury of the gray-haired veteran, Time; for "the misfortunes hardest to bear are often those which never happen." So I have decided it is better to gather all the sunshine we can to-day—to cherish the jewel content. I know the trees must bow before the blasts, and so must we; therefore I always try to hold up bravely in hours of distress, for why burden others with my own bleeding heart? They have enough sorrows of their own. I try to be cheerful even when suffering intense pain or when my heart is aching. May I be patient; not spend my time fretting and scolding and finding fault, but always do my best to crush any thorns of strife I see by the wayside and scatter the bloom of peace in the path of others while traveling the dusty road of time; and by all means deliver me from being "moody," which J. G. Holland pronounces one of the very meanest among the mean dispositions, and one for which there is no excuse whatever.

It is my heart's desire to always keep a pure record, thus never bringing reproach upon our dear Redeemer's cause, and to so live that my precious children may always be in love with their mother and so that my devoted husband may prize

his wife as highly in her sear-leaved autumn as he did in the daisied springtime of her life. Even love is not blind to faults; therefore I know my own loved ones can plainly see my many weaknesses. I sadly see them myself, and am trying hard to conquer them. Let my dear ones try to overlook them as much as possible, for I do not want my faults hanging in the halls of their memory for them to sigh over when I am gone.

Would that I could make my disposition mild enough to correspond with these pleasant April breezes and with April's refreshing showers! This I am daily trying to do—not only by attempting to expel the acid fluids of my soul, but also by putting in something to neutralize that which remains that is impure. The best prescription for the latter is the love and spirit of Christ, our great Physician. When we follow his directions, we need not fear, for he will not fail to cure. Neither do we have to wait for the "next train" on which the physician "is expected to come." We never have to send a message over the wires, wait for it to make several changes, and then pay a messenger fee at the other end of the line. Every Christian's heart is on direct line with the throne of God, and he is always there, receiver in hand, as it were, ready to hear our feeble, but sincere, petitions.

Then let us never stop serving him faithfully while we live, for we know full well that Heaven's rewards and crowns lie beyond the battle plains.

"April 25," 1901.

YES, WE MISS YOU AT HOME.

(Parody.)

(To my absent husband and daughter, who spent the winter of
1895-1896 in Florida.)

Yes, we miss you at home—yes, we miss you;
Be this your assurance most dear:
To know that this moment some loved one
Is saying: "I wish they were here."
You *may know* that the group at the fireside
Are thinking of you as you "roam;"
And be this your joy beyond measure:
To *know* that we miss you at home—
To *know* that we miss you at home.

When twilight approaches (the season
That ever is sacred to song),
Then some one repeats your names over,
And sighs that you tarry so long;
And there is a chord in the music
That's missed with your voices away,
And a chord in each heart that awaketh
Regret at your wearisome stay—
Regret at your wearisome stay.

As we draw up our chairs near the table,
When evening's home reading is nigh,
While the lamps gently burn in our bedrooms,
And the stars in the calm azure sky,
And when the "good nights" are repeated,
As all of us lie down to sleep,
We offer a prayer to our Father
O'er our loved ones his vigils to keep—
O'er our loved ones his vigils to keep.

HEARTHSTONE ECHOES.

Yes, we miss you at home—yes, we miss you
At morning, at noon, and at eve,
And lingers one gloomy shade round us
That only *your presence* can relieve.
Joys are less invitingly welcome,
And pleasures less hale than before,
Because you are missed from our circle,
Because you're not with us at home—
Because you're not with us at home.

THE SEVERED LINK.

ON the united heart wall of my kind husband and myself was placed a chain of three strong links. A mysterious messenger visited us; we called him "Death." He removed the first link, leaving a broken chain and bleeding hearts. A social little band were we, and very happy. Perhaps we were too happy in our surroundings, and needed that some of our hearts' tendrils be torn from earth by having a support around which they were entwined removed to a fairer clime.

Almost in the same moment we think of George Larimore Meeks as a helpless infant; then a fair-faced, brown-eyed baby boy, tottering around our knees, with dark ringlets hanging over his brow; then from four to six years old, singing a score of songs and acting temperance pieces; then as a little schoolboy, merrily on his way, with book satchel across his shoulder; next, at the age of eleven, lovingly and manfully yielding obedience to his Lord; next, as a hopeful



GEORGE L. MEEKS.

youth of seventeen, delivering his graduating "final" on the subject he had selected years before, "*What I Have Written I Have Written*;" next, we think of him at Kentucky University, associated with brainy men of national renown. In one of his letters from there, in alluding to his aged grandparents, he said: "The wheels of time have turned so smoothly with us for so long we need not expect it to remain thus much longer. There will necessarily be a change before a great while, but we cannot know who nor when." Little did he think *he* would be the first to make the change, and that so soon. We were permitted to give him a welcome home greeting, and his prospects for long life seemed unusually flattering; but—alas!—in less than a year what a change!

Almost seven years ago! Yet the intervening space seems so short—it must have been yesterday. The May skies were fair indeed without, and for a long time love's sunlight made it bright within. Almost seven years ago! Silent darkness had for hours brooded over our native land; all without was quiet and serene; all within was calm and still, except the anxious heart throbs of loving friends bending over a sinking form. We had often gone in secret to a throne of grace and earnestly pleaded: "Lord, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me [us]: nevertheless [help us to say] not as I [we] will, but as thou wilt.' Help us to humbly pray: 'Thy will be done.'" We watched our boy's calm countenance, unaffected by all his suffering and by our manifestations of grief; we gave ear to his dying songs,

so soft and sweet, as if sung for only angels to hear. Moments and hours steadily passed, we knew not how. We glanced at the window. The sun's cheering rays were climbing from behind the eastern hills as an encouraging signal that day would soon be here in all its brightness, but to the anxious little group his messages failed to give the usual cheer. As the golden beams brightened nature, having bidden darkness depart, the deep shadows lengthened and darkened on our hearts; for we saw too plainly that the object we were so tenderly, lovingly watching was sinking, sinking—was fading away. "Papa, what time is it?" he asked. "Fifteen minutes after six, my son," softly replied the grieved father. Beads of cold perspiration were standing like dewdrops of pearl on that tall, full forehead; we heard the repeated "Mamma, don't cry—I'm not suffering *one bit*;" his lips were forbidden utterance; his eyes ceased to turn and behold the familiar faces surrounding him; his eyelids became still in death; his pulse had almost ceased; and, like a candle burning low, we at times would think the light was extinguished; then it would shine forth again, then go out. Not a sigh, not a murmur, not a tremor, not a groan, not a frown; and by the time the darkness of night had entirely retreated and the day king was fully established on the throne, the feeble glimmer of earth life had forsaken our boy, and a pall of darkness overshadowed our hearts. Our family chain was broken; there was a missing link. Our hearts were full; scalding tears would unbidden flow. It had never seemed to us that *George* would die so young;

he had always been so strong, so hardy, so buoyant with hope, so full of life and ambition. Our selfish natures had told us we had not one child to spare; but the same divine finger that pointed to the hour hand of his earth life and marked its limit, pointed also to the eternal gates of glory ajar. The Lord gave; it is his privilege to take away, our duty to humbly submit. We must "wait, meekly wait, and murmur not." Our boy had much pleasure in his short life and missed life's sorrows.

On his last birthday (when nineteen), he, of his own accord, wrote some resolutions beautifully covering the entire ground of morality and Christianity. Relative to these resolutions, his uncle, M. H. Meeks, wrote as follows: "They are a remarkable production. No one but George could have gotten them up. There is a nobility of character in them, plainly visible, rarely to be seen. His memory is so sacred and touching to me. I loved him so much, *so much*. I cannot picture a heaven for me without him. You know my attachment for him was always singularly great."

George had always manifested a fondness for home that was charming, especially for his own upper room. When at home, he could scarcely be induced to sleep in any other; said this room was the "spot on earth" he loved best. Though then made so bright and cheerful by the sunshine of his presence, it and many of its furnishings now only remind us that he once was there. His trunk still contains many relics he so highly prized—keepsakes he regarded as

almost sacred. In his bookcase are the books marking his extensive course of study; there is his bed, unoccupied; there, by the door, is the same brick bearing his initials, "G. L. M.;" on the mantel is a mirror he neatly framed, and a picture of our home, with the little family group, *he* one of the number. But there is a cold stillness in that room, and the passing breezes without seem to catch the impulse of a maternal heart and sadly repeat: "The loved occupant is gone, gone!" His familiar footfalls have forsaken the stairway; we miss him from his accustomed seat at the dining table and around the family hearthstone; we miss his cheerful companionship, his merry laugh, and his musical touch on the piano keys. His unusual fondness for music had developed into decided talent for the same, and during the last year or two he composed many beautiful little instrumental airs, among them "Variations of Happy Day"—the first song he ever sung. Two or three times during the first week of his illness he slipped out of bed and into the parlor to the piano, and played with remarkable sweetness. One of the last songs he sung and played was "A Boy's Best Friend is His Mother." Now, when we assemble in the parlor to hear music made by our children, one of our little home band is sadly missing—no George there now to play with his devoted sister those beautiful duets; no George to aid in the music, to which his very fingers and breath seemed tuned. He had looked forward with much anxiety to the time when he should be "twenty-

one;" had planned great achievements, and thought it would be a wonderful thing to be a MAN.

He always had an eye for the beautiful, and was a great lover of nature. He called flowers "babies" before old enough to speak their names. During his sickness kind friends tenderly remembered him with floral tributes, for which he never failed to express his appreciation; and when laid in his coffin, hands of love gently and gracefully placed therein a modest wreath about his head and left many beautiful garlands to fade and wither on his grave. Do we miss him? We sadly miss him; but there is a sweetness connected with his memory we would not willingly lose, brightened by the assurance that as a Christian he was faithful to his trust.

The great calendar has made seven circuits, but I still often imagine he is only off on a visit, soon to return; and when something seems to whisper to me, "George is dead!" a strange kind of chill creeps over me, and I feel like my heart will sink. During the three weeks of his serious illness (typhoid fever), I scarcely lost consciousness in sleep. When I would close my eyes and try to relieve my mind of maternal anxiety, I would imagine I was rubbing the hands and arms of my poor, sick boy or preparing his medicine, when the sweet cadence of his plaintive, manly voice, trembling from weakness, would reach my ears, saying: "Ma-ma!" All inclination to sleep would instantly depart, and the next moment would find me at his side. Those three

weeks still seem to me like a dream; the departure of our child, like a frightful nightmare.

Life itself is somewhat like a dream—eternity, the great awakening; and—O!—when this dream life is over and the angel's trump shall arouse the sleeping millions, only imagine what a glad awakening, and "what a gathering of the faithful that will be!"

WEDDING BELLS.

LISTEN! We hear the peals of wedding bells. Who? O, who? Is it a couple from afar? *They say not.* Are some of our neighbors going to marry? Come nearer our home, still nearer, and ask again; come under the shadow of our own roof; come to our own fireside, to our own bosoms, to our hearts throbbing with parental devotion. Here you will find a darling of our lives—a brother's loving sister, a "mamma's" companion-daughter, a "papa's" precious treasure. She it is who is about to link her destiny with another. Can this be? Is it possible our only daughter—the one we have watched and nourished with such tender devotion, the one upon whom we have lavished our impartial love—is it possible *she* is so soon to become a bride? But this is part of life. Jean Ingelow pathetically says a mother's lot is

"To love, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose—
To see her loved ones disappear;"



MR. AND MRS. W. H. BALDY.

while

“To hear, to heed, to wed,
Is the fair lot that maidens choose.”

Winter is now enthroned as king of seasons, and has appointed December (1899) as ruler over this division of his kingdom. December has appointed his thirty-one subjects to stand on duty, one by one; and six of them, having completed their work, have retired from service. Winter has not yet donned his snow-tipped crown, nor raised his harsh voice, nor pierced our natures with his icy breath. He seems to be kindly waiting in behalf of the parties most deeply interested in those wedding bells I now hear. The days continue cool, but pleasant. True, the autumn frost has searched through garden and woodland, has gathered the flowers into the soil to await another awakening; but hands of love, anticipating this occasion, have beautified the church with lace curtains, evergreens, and mammoth chrysanthemums; with “blushing buds from cupid’s bowers and trailing vines from wonderland.” A large bell of holly, dotted with roses and deeply fringed with its own beads of coral, hangs just under the bridal arch. Inside this mammoth bell is suspended a small, sweet-toned bell of sterling silver, to which is attached a bolt of ribbon. A charming little girl in white is to stand near, gently pulling the ribbon, causing the little bell to modestly ring forth its soft, silver chimes, mingling and keeping time with the other music of the wedding march, and continuing while “Brother Freed” shall speak the words that unite the twain.

But listen again! The church bell is still ringing, while I muse. Listen to its plaintive vibrations wafted to us by the cool evening breezes! What is the language of those vibrations? What do they say? Give ear while they speak to us. Listen! Do you understand them? *I do, distinctly.* To the young lovers of merriment they bring a thrill of joy, for they tell of "*something to go to.*" To the eight couples of attendants they are vivid predictions of the time to which *they* look forward with bright anticipation, when *they* will be the ones most interested in the wedding bells; to the young couple to be *made one* they bring a feeling none but *that couple* can know and which they cannot describe. To them these thrilling peals tell of the past, present, and future almost as one. They whisper to them in love and tremulous emotion; they tell of appreciation and hope; they recall to mind the many earnest talks of the two young lovers; they point them to their future destinies, building for them many lofty and beautiful "air castles," with now and then a light cloud intervening. To the fond parents they bring a strange feeling of mingled resignation and sadness—sadness at the thought of their only daughter's being placed so strongly on the claims of another, yet resignation at the consoling thought that, instead of becoming "unequally yoked with an unbeliever," she is uniting her destiny with another consistent branch of the "true vine"—with a young man *free from evil habits*, and one we feel sure will ever love, cherish, and protect her. To the keen insight of parental love these melancholy chimes

announce the death of boyhood and girlhood and tell of duties and responsibilities the young couple have scarcely thought of.

Peering into the mystic future, they reveal the many-tinted pictures hanging in the halls of the heart—pictures of joy and sorrow, smiles and tears. Then parental love pierces the gloom; hope, in dovelike innocence, strews the pathway of this young couple with roses of peace and contentment; and faith sees them at last safe together in the blessed beyond. Such is the message of the “wedding bells.”

WHO'LL BE NEXT?

Who'll be the next to cross the river
That flows between us and that home?
Who'll be the next among our loved ones
To answer to the summons: “Come?”

Shall I be next? O, blessed Father,
May I but say: “Thy will be done!”
Thou knowest best, thou judgest rightly;
May my will and thine own be *one*.

Shall father, mother, sister, brother,
Sweet children, or *companion* dear?
O Father, bless the ones left weeping!
May thy word be their constant cheer.

Those left behind not long will linger;
From toils of life we'll soon be free.
Let's be prepared to safely anchor
Beyond the bright, the “Jasper Sea.”

THE FAMILY WHEEL.

A LITTLE babe—how frail, how helpless! Even when in perfect health it is almost as delicate as a snowdrop. What tender nursing, what vigilant attention in bringing it where it will be, even in a measure, self-reliant! Yet with what pleasure is this care bestowed by the fond parents, who feel themselves doubly paid by the dovelike “cooing” and by the smiles and prattle of baby love!

Three bright little cherubs were ours to make smiles around our hearthstone. The first proved to be a “boy” in the true sense of the word—a boy full of life, with large heart, mind, and principle; a boy bright for study and keen for play. Our next (three years younger) was a blue-eyed baby girl, whose hair hung thick with many a glossy curl, and we called her our precious, *priceless* “Pearle.” Five years later came another baby boy—in appearance, a “goodly child;” in disposition, lively, affectionate, and true. These three, with their papa, mamma, and dear old “grandmamma,” constituted our little family wheel; and for several years it turned gently and smoothly, with scarcely a jostle.

Moments fast grew into years. At nineteen our older boy was seized by an unfriendly fever. We gave him every attention; but, in spite of care and love and art and medicine, he seemed to be slipping away from us. We saw the inevitable drawing near; we steeled ourselves to bear the blow; those three devoted, silver-haired grandparents wore solemn faces and wiped large tear drops from their furrowed

cheeks; friends and neighbors stood in awe; he could take no food; we watched, we hoped, we prayed; hope would vanish, then return; the group about the fireside would faintly whisper, "*How is he?*" his respiration and heart beatings became incredibly fast; his eyes gave up their radiance; he softly, sweetly sung "O, How I Love Jesus!" but his tongue grew weary, his voice grew weak; his breath was exhausted; his heart lost its power; he quietly, patiently, peacefully passed into the realm of spirits. A dotting sister was bereft of a companion brother; a little brother, of a true friend and "partner;" devoted parents, of a promising son. Thus a cherished spoke was broken from our precious family wheel, which we still sadly miss. "From love's shining circle the gems drop away." Time and trust have *softened*, but they have not *healed*, the bitter sorrow.

At home, at school, out of school, off at school, back from school, a young lady at home—these few words extend from the cradle to "grown-up" girlhood. By and by the prevailing powers whispered that we were to have another son—not an heir according to the flesh, but by virtue of the law—that a "grown-up" boy should become a spoke in our family wheel. This soon came to pass; the additional spoke was inserted; the "baby girl" became a bride.

The little wheel still keeps constantly moving—rolling across the plains of time toward eternity's boundless sea. As a unit we trust it will long continue to move as now, all its spokes harmoniously united in one grand center—
CHRISTIANITY.

WHOSE BOY?

UNROLLING the scroll of the past, I see a precious little jewel placed in a family ring. It is a baby boy. I stay near; I watch his maneuvers; I mark his course. Soon he develops a disposition remarkably affectionate. The keynote of his heart, as a sweet echo, quickly responds to any chord of love. He is tender-hearted; often does his mother kiss from the baby cheek the tear drops placed there by infant grief. By the way, we should never be sparing of our kind words to a child. Only a word of sympathy, in time of childish trouble, may break the thread of grief encircling and choking the infant heart.

This little one is easily controlled. A word or look of love usually suffices; but when a more horrible weapon becomes necessary, it is ever ready—a single broom straw on the mantel, leaning against the clock. It is not often used, however. An earnest look at *it*, then a glance at the boy, is, as a rule, all-sufficient. He has a mania for running away to a gum spring, not far from the house—the same spring in which his father, when a wee laddie, came near being drowned. One day his mother, realizing the danger, whips him nearly all the way back to the house. *O, what screams! Just listen!* Surely the neighbors will think the little one is snake bitten, or a mad dog is tearing him to pieces, or his clothes have caught on fire and he is burning to death. No, no; his mother is only peppering his bare “footies” with a single straw of sedge grass. These are



JOHN H. MEEKS.

“love licks” to save the baby from a watery grave, but they almost break the little heart.

His mamma often trots him on her knee and sings “Prettiest Little Boy in the Country—O.” He exclaims, with all the earnestness of his nature: “Say ‘*girl*,’ mamma; say ‘GIRL!’” She continues to say “boy.” His brow becomes crowned with frowns, his face grows red, tears begin to chase each other down his fair and rosy cheeks, and his whole being seems to indicate a disapproval of her course. By the continued repetition of the word “boy” he becomes perfectly indignant, and cries as if an arrow had pierced his heart; but when she changes to “prettiest little ‘*girl*,’” an instant brightening is seen in his countenance. With mouth open, tongue out, face wreathed in smiles, eyes sparkling with love, he shows ecstatic delight—which, however, is instantly exchanged for horrid frowns and exclamations of sorest displeasure at substituting the word “boy.”

When he is three years old, the family move to Jackson (in January). When asked his age, he readily replies: “I was free years old the last nineteenth of December.” He is a remarkable speller, never hesitating a moment on any word we give him. He scarcely ever uses a vowel. For instance, “P-h-d-k—bread; f-k-g-d—house.” A month’s series of meetings being held at the church three-fourths of a mile from the little boy’s home, he is taken every night with the family. He goes to sleep at the beginning of the services, according to his early training, and at the close is led home asleep, by two of the family—one on either side.

His little feet seem wide awake and ready for duty; they carry the little body at usual speed; but the head is fast asleep; eyes, closed; ears, dull of hearing; tongue, silent. The tiny neck seems unjointed, and permits the head to bobble and tumble about promiscuously, striking first one, then the other, of the parties leading him, tossing the little chinchilla cap off on the pavement—sometimes, behind him; sometimes, in front. Not a cry, a pout, nor a whine—he is oblivious to the world and all its happenings. A very especial friend of his, Mr. Biggs, ascertaining how he walks home every night in his sleep, is touched with sympathy and carries the forty-five pounder in his arms all the way home the three or four remaining nights of the meeting.

A year later the family move to Henderson. The one who makes the family biscuits frequently cuts one or two in some peculiar shape, "*just to please the baby.*" He regards it as almost criminal and sacrilegious to eat his "funny biscuits," as he calls them, at mealtime. He lays them beside his plate until through eating, then carefully puts them away for his lunch. One morning at breakfast he alarms us with a sudden scream, which is often and rapidly repeated. Surely the child has bitten his thumb half off! In excitement we run to him, expecting to see the blood streaming down his large bib and on the table linen. Finding no blood, we decide it must be a broken tooth. When he recovers sufficient control of his feelings to speak, amid tears and sobs, he says: "I—I—I bit—I bit my—FUNNY BISCUIT!"

During an entertainment given at the college by the little folks, their teacher, Miss Sue Inman, secretly attracts this little boy out of the audience; and all are astonished when the "four-year-old"—small for his years—walks fearlessly out on the rostrum, and, in an unconcerned manner, looks calmly over the large audience as if counting the many familiar faces, while he slowly and distinctly sings two verses of the good old "meetin' hymn," "On Jordan's Stormy Banks," with the chorus: "We'll Work Till Jesus Comes."

Just about this time a colored man—*liberal with words*—is hauling stove wood. Being on the "good side" of this child, he promises him a "shore-'nough one-horse wagon and a shore-'nough *live* horse;" is to bring them "*to-morrow, shore.*" The mother, anticipating the disappointment, tries very hard to convince the child that the man is only jesting. "No, MA'AM; HE'S NOT JOKING. HE SAYS HE'LL BRING 'EM, AN' HE WILL." Several to-morrows glide back with the yesterdays, and "next week" takes their place in the promise; yet he cannot be convinced it is a "joke." He goes on a visit to "grandpa's" to stay two weeks. The "shore-'nough" horse and wagon are, "without fail," to meet him at the train on his return, and *he* is to "drive up home." At the stated time he returns, with full assurance that his royal conveyance is at his command. Almost heartrending is his disappointment. *Never* previous to this moment has his confidence been shaken in a positive assertion from the human tongue.

He shows great inclination to be self-sustaining. He decides to be a merchant. Arranging with Mr. Clark for space by his store door, he buys all his goods from him. The stock invoices twenty-five cents; capital, borrowed from "papa;" profit, minus one cent, the loss being caused by his great liberality, he voluntarily giving his sister a valuable piece of candy worth one cent. This, his first merchandise, is all in a cigar box.

A year glides by. He is a little more than five. An excellent and very near neighbor, Mrs. Murchison, sends for him (she calls him one of her *pets*). A few moments later he returns home, *perfectly wild*. What is the matter? Has she *poisoned* him? Watch his strange actions! There he goes! Watch him! He runs like a lion is after him. He darts through the house into the front yard, lies down in the grass, rolls over and over, jumps up, falls down, springs up like a rubber ball, falls again, turns somersaults, jumps up again, wheels around and around, down in the grass, stands on his head, then on his feet, dances a while, runs from one side of the yard to the other, then back, dashes around in a large circle, then in a smaller one, falls, rolls over and over again, his eyes flashed, face flushed, veins swollen in neck and throat, panting like a lizard. "*What is the matter with that boy?*" is the cry. The answer can be best given by some other little boy in his "FIRST PANTS." Three times does a "boy" feel indescribably large—when he exchanges kilt skirts for "first pants," when he goes with his first girl, and when he buys his marriage

license. After this he begins to feel the pressure of years and pocketbook, and is never again in the same degree impressed with his own importance.

This little one is a "sure-enough *boy*" now, six years old, and continues full of life, but not of mischief. He is not the boy to cut the telephone wires, throw stones to break windows in vacant houses, or laugh at children who wear patched clothes. He still desires to earn his own money, and tries different traffics with all the earnestness any candidate manifests in a "stump speech." He deals largely in live stock; buys—not all at the same time—several calves, four goats, a number of pigs, and four dozen chickens. Mr. Hardeman gives him a pig, which he carries home (a quarter of a mile) on his shoulder, holding it by two feet. On his arrival his papa asks him the weight of his pig. He quickly replies: "Well, sir, when I started with it, it weighed about fifteen pounds; now it weighs about sixty-five." Later he carries two pigs in a tow sack on his shoulder half a mile, having paid two dollars for them. Sometimes he realizes a small profit in his traffic; sometimes, sustains a heavy loss. For instance, he goes "up town" with his goat wagon filled with nice fruit for sale. A boy in his higher teens ruthlessly snatches some of the choicest fruit and jubilantly walks off eating it, leaving a *lasting impression* on the young mind. The cholera invades his poultry yard and claims half the inmates. Some of his pigs are found dead in their bed. One goat is killed by the railroad. His favorite goat, Charlie, grows weary of running

uphill and downhill from town with the large (?) boy and a ham, a sack of potatoes or flour in his little wagon; so he begs to go and be with other goats. He is not satisfied with "well enough," but thinks he can do better by being his own master. (Wonder if any little girl or boy ever thought thus.) Permission is granted. Charlie scampers away, and is soon in the pasture with his brethren. Being a *town* goat, he possibly feels his importance, and soon begins to lock horns with one of his fellow-citizens. Not returning as early as expected, his master seeks and finds him, then comes home with sobs and tears, dirty face, and bloated eyes, and unable to utter a single word, except: "*O, my poor little Charlie!*" On investigation it is ascertained that, in the tussle with other goats, Charlie has been dehorned.

However, the boy does not long suffer himself discouraged over trifles; but, like the oft-defeated spider, he ties the thread and tries again. When scarcely too large to wear a kilt skirt and sunbonnet, he picks enough strawberries in a very few days (at one and one-half cents a quart) to buy himself a five-dollar suit of clothes, at the same time going to school half of each day. Sometimes he uses his papa's study for a store and deals largely in the "pin-and-card" trade, keeping his books with great accuracy. This instills into him a love and aptitude for mercantile work; and finding favor with some of the merchants in town, they sell him a few little articles—matches, soap, bluing, soda, candy, bananas, etc.—at discount, so he can sell for a small

profit. Also, when they have a vacancy in their stores, they permit him to "clerk" for them, which seems part of his very nature.

When he is almost seven, he attends the fair one day, and is so highly entertained he greatly desires to return the next day. The next morning his mother says to him: "Son, I cannot let you go to the fair to-day, for there is no one going from home to take care of you." He makes no reply, but droops his head and looks *very, very sad*. In a few moments it is ascertained that a young lady living with the family is going and is willing to take the child. His mother calls him to her and says: "You have acted so nicely not to cry and pout over your disappointment I have decided to let you go, for Mattie is going and will take the best care of you. If you had been an ugly boy and cried, I would not have consented to your going; but you have been so sweet about it—" He turns his head to one side, looks at her with pleased countenance and sparkling eyes, and says: "I knew you would be more apt to let me go if I said nothing. Mamma, *I have been knowing you just about seven years.*" About this time, having proudly (but not the first time) escorted a little girl home from a birthday party, he is returning home alone, a half mile or more, from "across town," when, in the blackness of night, he suddenly comes in severe contact with a lamp-post, which seems determined to knock him backward. Regaining his lost forces, he trots along, whistling a merry tune. Going rapidly down College Hill, he gazes at a mysterious white "something" to

his left and runs against something black, when, to his relief, "Bah, bah!" says the black goat and scampers away to its white companion. Another very dark night he crosses Owl Creek bottom alone, on horseback. "Who, who, who, who-oo-oo?" comes lonesomely pealing through the impenetrable gloom from some unknown sentinel near by. The pony becomes frightened; the boy feels "kinder queer like." "Who, who, who oor ye?" says a deeper-toned voice on the other side of the road, while just in front of him a shrill voice impatiently demands: "Who-oo oo-oo? who-oo oo-oo?" The boy wants to tell the strangers it is *none of their business who he is*, but for some reason the pony seems to have suddenly decided "there's no place like home;" so the boy has no time to reply. It is his first acquaintance with the impertinent, big-eyed, horned fowls.

At ten years he enters the fold of the good Shepherd, being led into the waters of obedience by the tender hand of his loving father, as were his brother and sister at the ages of eleven and ten. The following winter he accompanies his parents to Florida; feasts on the luscious fruits until, by the intense freeze, the fair State is shorn of her golden glory; then finds favor with a business man in Ocala, for whom he sells papers until he clears for himself the neat little sum of twenty dollars, clearing one cent on each paper. He possesses wonderful power of absorption—can learn much from his environments without special study; yet while in school he studies well, makes good grades, and manifests much interest in his classes. In the Georgie Rob-

ertson Christian College, at Henderson, he completes the Commercial Course at the age of fourteen; has spent part of his time on the farm trying to better develop his physical self; and at the time of this writing is engaged in what seems his natural pursuit—mercantile work. He is now “sweet sixteen,” and his worth (to his parents) is at least “*sixteen to one.*” In him centers much of their love, their anxiety, their hope. Parental devotion shrinks at the idea of picturing for him any other than a pleasant future here and a more glorious hereafter. He is not overgrown in stature, but is *immensely* large in heart, and I trust has learned that the index finger to success continues to point heavenward.

Who can guess whose boy this is? Who is ready to claim him?

BIRTHDAY LETTER.

(To Mr. R. P. M.)

HENDERSON, TENN., “September 18,” 1901.

My Own True Companion: Twenty-eight years ago this day—this hour—I became yours, you became mine. Happy, fortunate incident in *my* life; can *you* say as much?

Well, as you doubtless remember, the way it “so happened” was somewhat after this fashion: You had claimed a birthday present from me (since we were reasonably good friends). Rubies and diamonds I had none; so you concluded you would *try* to be content with a cheaper present,

and such as I had *gave I thee*—rather an insignificant birthday gift, I will admit, and *so will you now*, since you have learned more about it; for it was nothing but *my own little self*. However, you have endured the disappointment with great fortitude, for which you deserve much credit.

Twenty-eight years ago! I believe we are now a little older than we were then. The great index finger points to your record and pronounces you fifty-two. Well, that is not so very old—at least not old enough for *me* to place a lower estimate on you. I am keeping right well up with you—only two and one-half years behind. We are aware of no especial crime on our record to make us blush or weep; and it is our intention, with divine aid, to make the future, if ours, contain still fewer blunders. If we are spared to each other until “silver threads” usurp the place of all the dark ones on our brows and our vision becomes seriously impaired, we, fortunately, will not see the deep furrows in each other’s cheeks as distinctly as others will. They will appear to us, doubtless, like slight dimples, in which are stored away the essence of sweet memories of the “used to be.” Like “Jamie” and “Maggie,” let us try to be blinded to each other’s imperfections, so each to the other can say:

“To *me* you’re as fair as you were, —,
When you and I were young.”

Let us live patiently, live honorably, live godly, and try to grow old gracefully if granted long life, so to us the “hoary head” will be a “crown of glory.”

Of course, our wedded life has not been all sunshine. Now and then a dense cloud arises, and nature weeps. Sometimes the darkness grows so deep, so heavy, we feel the chill of despair creep over our very hearts. Darkness before us, around us! Together we have seen bright days and dark days; together we have "passed under the rod" of affliction. There is a sadly vacant room in our home and a strangely sad vacuum in your heart and mine. The parent stem always bleeds and suffers when from it is plucked a cherished rose. "But the Healer is here, pouring balm in our hearts," and assures us: "Earth hath no sorrows that heaven cannot cure." The star of hope appears brighter when seen through tears. When tears flow freely and swiftly for a while, they leave the vision clear for stars and sun; but we must *look up* to see them. Byron calls a tear "the weapon of a woman's weakness." Be that as it may, tears many times give the pent-up, crushed heart relief. Then when heart-crushed, we should not keep the tears pent up against their will, but should let them flow unchecked, until, like summer raindrops, they will be pierced by sunbeams. However, we should not go "tear-blinded through life and touch but tombs," thus blighting the happiness of ourselves and others. Let us look at the "shield" from the golden side. A source of unspeakable solace and joy you have always been to your family and other loved ones, and they wish for you a long-continued service in the work of our risen Lord, with Heaven to smile in love upon your life and labors. After the night of death, may you

gladly, joyously, triumphantly awaken in that beautiful
"home of the soul."

As a willing partaker of your sunshine and sadness, your
sorrow and gladness, I am,

Your faithful, though inferior, life partner,

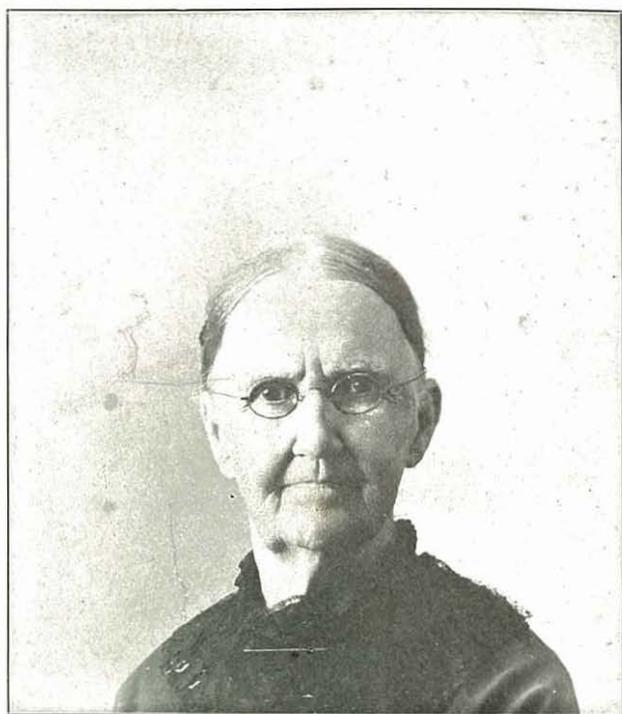
"GRANDMAMMA."

"HOME, sweet home"—a household of peace, crowned
with Christian love and unity—is made sweeter still by the
presence of an honored, well-balanced, hoary head which

"Time has touched in his rapid flight,
And changed the darker locks to white."

Time has thus dealt with a dear old fireside jewel of our
little household, and now she is lovingly called "*grand-*
mamma."

We often speak of the milestones along life's road. This
is very appropriate until we cross the half-century mark,
after which some one says anniversaries come "like tele-
graph poles when we are on a lightning express train."
Doubtless they seem to pass incredibly fast to this aged pil-
grim, who still adds so much cheer to our little home circle
and for whose prolonged existence we are truly grateful.
Among the first things I remember about her is when good
old Brether Love—one of the Lord's best watchmen of
souls—gently led her down into the waters of baptism. I



GRANDMAMMA LARIMORE.

wondered why he did this, for I was *then* too young to realize the importance of obeying even a command of God for which we could see no necessity. It does not seem long since that day, but time has passed with winged feet and has buried more than twoscore years in the grave of the yesterdays. Years seem long or short according to their goal, and her aim has been to honor the divine name she that day assumed, try to advance the Master's cause she that day espoused, and lighten the burdens of frail humanity. During this long journey, since she entered the ranks of the world's great Leader, not one backward step have we known her to take.

"That load becomes light which is cheerfully borne." The spirit wrapped in this little borrowed thought has greatly aided her in enduring life's trials, of which she has had her share. Realizing a busy hour seems shorter than a leisure one, she, with heart full of unshed tears, has many times put on a bright countenance and looked around her for some one she could benefit; and in benefiting others, she has herself been blessed. The bitter of life's cup she has sipped with meek submission, though many times with breaking heart; of the sweet she has participated with humble gratitude. While blessed with physical strength, to the distressed she was always a "good Samaritan;" to the needy, a ready friend. She never impairs the happiness of others by frequent allusions to her own ailments, misfortunes, and sorrows. She has always manifested a devotion for her friends and loved ones which is really charm-

ing, forgetting herself in their behalf, no sacrifice being too great for her to make for them. She possesses a sweet, amiable, cheery disposition which few can claim in so high a degree. Her mind has been so wholesomely and actively employed it has been less susceptible of the decrepitude that usually attends the aged than a mind that "feeds on itself." It is remarkable to see one at the advanced age of *eighty-nine* so well preserved and so free from being childish and sensitive. So many in their declining years lose interest in the activities of the present and live only in the memories of the long ago. Not thus with her. In memory her strong mind can look back and view the scenes and incidents of more than three-fourths of a century, and she can thrill the youth to-day with verbal descriptions of the same. At the same time, with her active brain and well-preserved visage she keeps informed as to the occurrences of the present, and is interested in the world's daily happenings. She finds great solace in good books, and reads until her eyes falter over the printed page; then stops a while, walks around, works with her flowers, looks admiringly on the beauties and grandeur of earth and sky; then comes back, and is soon busy again with her work or reading. Her industrious habits are proverbial. Reared under the "old constitution," she is, in one respect at least, far from being up to date, and may by some be regarded as "old fogy"—that is, when in reasonable health she *never lies down during the day*; cannot be persuaded to do so.

"Grandmamma Larimore" has many friends among

young and old, won by her mild, lovable disposition. She is so grateful for every little service rendered her, and never forgets the golden key: "*Thank you.*" When suffering, she tries to keep any one from knowing it. She has kept folded from us hundreds of ills which we would by chance at last discover. Then she would mildly say: "Well, what good would it do to tell you of every little ache and pain?" I often wish she would complain more when suffering, so I would not neglect her and could give her at least a little more sympathy. (She is averse to medical treatment.) It is said that suffering becomes beautiful when borne with cheerfulness through greatness of mind. She often locks her sorrow in her own bosom and keeps her aches to herself, that others may not be grieved thereby.

Though this dear old "grandmamma" (my own tender mother) may live years after seeing me buried, yet I realize too sadly that, according to nature, she is rapidly going down the hill of life—nay, rather, that in the sublimest sense she is fast going up; is climbing higher and higher; has already climbed so high she can plainly see, through the telescope of faith, into the city of gold and pearls. She is nearing the last round of life, from which she can step into the portals of glory. When I think of this (which is often), I am haunted with such questions as these: Am I doing what I can for her? Am I making her life as bright as I could? She freely gave much of her time and strength for my benefit when time and strength were hers to give. Am I doing as much for her? Through winter's blast and

summer's scorching heat she has toiled for me, and has willingly and gladly sacrificed much for my sake. She watched my infant slumbers with an anxiety that none but a mother can feel. With her soft, velvety hand she has lovingly bathed my fevered cheek and pressed my aching brow. Have I repaid her? Nay, verily. She is now where, if I am spared, the wheels of time will soon place me. It is mine now to bear her burdens and to shield her as she long ago shielded me. Am I doing thus? (I hope the public will forgive me for what I am saying.) She is doubly dear to me; is so much comfort and ever ready and anxious to do all in her power to add to my pleasure; is such good company, so companionable, so sweet; but do I tell her so as often as I should? That great heart of love which glowed with devotion for her children in their babyhood has never grown weary in its devotion; but as the sunflower continually turns to face the "day god" as he traces his course across the skies, so *she* ever turns her fond vigils on us as we travel the dusty road of life, and is ever ready to weep at our failures or rejoice at our success. If I love and appreciate her, shall I wait until she is gone before I tell her so?

I trust no one will censure me for saying that *to me* it gives a sense of rest to look upon that open countenance—so earnest, tender, strong, and true. *To me* there is an inward beauty shining through "the chinks that time has made," illuminating the face with a soft, mild splendor, giving sweetness to the expression and charm to every word

and look. I can imagine those wrinkles as only bright wavelets of sunshine chasing each other over the dear old face; I can see true, pure mother love peeping out from the shallow furrows which time has plowed in her cheeks; but shall I wait until the death angel calls her and is closing the gate of day before I tell her how I love and appreciate her? Shall we all wait until she is gone, then speak her praises only on paper and marble?

I feel so thankful that, though seemingly she is perfectly resigned and ever ready for the summons to go hence, she does not, like some, appear to grow weary of this life, become homesick, and pine and sigh for home. It is my hope that, with her wonderful constitution and vitality, braced by her patience, prudence, and sound judgment, we may for several years yet be blessed with her presence to cheer our homes and hearts. May such our fortune be; then "when in the bosom of the west the weary sun sinks to his rest," may she only wrap the mantle of faith more closely around her and lie down to peaceful dreams, to awake in the happy beyond.

THE END.

