

Choice Literature.

WHICH?

Above is nothing but the sky,
Below me is the sea,
And at my right hand and my left,
A thousand beauties be.
Sweet valleys, gently sloping down,
Hills, where the wild winds play,
Large waving cornfields, golden brown,
And heaps of scented hay.

Seen from this height, how fair they are!

How broadly stretch the miles!
The little farmsteads here and there
Give back the sun's warm smiles.
The sombre woods, the purple moors,
The pastures softly green—
Oh, the heart fills with quiet joy
In this idyllic scene.

But yonder, where another cliff
Uplifts its massive head,
There is a darker, graver world,
Where men are hard bested.
That cliff looks down on labor's haunts,
On busy scenes of toil,
Beneath thick clouds of heavy smoke,
Above a blackened soil.

If I might choose, which world were mine?

The heather, and the sea?
The winsome, blue-bell'd grassy paths,
Or streets where people be?
Men's voices, and their children's cries,
Or songs of thrush and lark?
Oh, I have loved the country's light,
More than the city's dark!

Yet in this beautiful, clean world,
There is no need of me,
I am not called to scale the cliff,
Nor wanted on the sea.
But, yonder, where the people dwell,
And life is grey and sad,
I hear them calling out to me,
"Come, help us, make us glad."

Little enough of power have I,
Yet, where they need a friend,
I have some sympathy to give,
A little help to lend.
God, both these worlds are Thine, I know,

In this I find my rest;
But let me live for, work for, love
That world Thou lovest best.

—Marianne Farningham.

A HOME MISSIONARY.

According to my usual custom of spending a night once a week with my niece and her husband, I packed my bag one cold morning, and started for the city.

Arriving at the Florence, I ascended the elevator to the fifth floor, with the usual sensation that my inner consciousness was dropping into the cellar, while I rose in space with the celerity of a bomb.

When the elevator box reached the fifth, I stepped out with the feeling of relief that must have made my countenance radiant, if it in any way expressed my feelings. I touched the button of my niece's door, and she usually does the rest in the way of entertaining, but on this visit it was different. But, as the novelists say, I anticipate.

I found Annie in her little rosebud of a bedroom (a flat bedroom is always a bud of a room). Annie had a sunny window (it was a corner flat), and all was pink and palest green, with rose-buds all over the wall; and she, the queen rosebud, threw her arms around her old auntie, and held me closely to her warm heart.

I loved Annie as I would have loved my own daughter if I had had one.

"I am so glad to see you, auntie; I am feeling so lonesome."

"Lonesome, my child, in this pretty nest, and the best man in the world coming home to-night."

Her face hardened a little, and she laughed (unnaturally, I think), and began to ply me with questions about every cat, kitten and chicken on the place, as was her wont, and yet she did not seem herself, but had a sad, hard look.

"Something's the matter," I said to myself, "but I won't ask. She'll tell me when her heart flows over."

So I talked on, and we had a merry day, only the difference I spoke of—Annie was not her usual bright self. We drew up to the fire for our five o'clock tea.

It was snowing fast and the wind howled like a demon.

"A bad night for any one you love to be out," I said, drawing the curtains, after a look into the wintry street.

Again that hard look in her face. She has had a quarrel with Dudley, I am sure. Dear heart, she thinks she has had trouble, and she doesn't know its meaning.

When Dudley came home, I managed to be behind a portiere in the hall; I wanted to see them meet, but I was disappointed.

Annie sat toasting the point of a dainty shoe by the fire, and Dudley went in and stood with his back to it, man-fashion, and I heard him asking for me.

I came in from my eavesdropping, and was greeted with a hearty kiss and handshake.

We sat by the fire talking until late—that is, I talked, and they talked to me, but not a word or look to each other.

"There is serious trouble between these two," I said to myself; "it will out, and I must wait till it comes."

Just as I was comfortably tucked in bed that night, and in that wonderful borderland where you don't know whether you are dreaming or thinking, I heard some one enter the room and stand by the bed.

"Are you asleep, auntie?"

"No, dear child."

She was in my arms in an instant.

"Dudley won't like you to desert him, dear," I said, patting her.

"He won't care; he doesn't love me any more, nor I him. Our marriage was all a mistake, and we will live apart hereafter."

"What?" I cried, "you are not going to separate?"

"O, no! We will live here for the world's sake. We do not want to make talk, but we have separated in our hearts forever."

"How did this happen?" I asked, holding her close.

"O, I cannot tell you, auntie. A thousand little things have occurred to separate and show us that we are unsuited, unmated, incompatible."

"Stuff and nonsense," I said to myself, but I only petted her as I used to when she was a baby and fretted.

"He will have his way in everything, and I want my way in some things. He goes to the club very often lately, because, he says, I don't love him. He doesn't seem as he used to before we were married. He reads the papers all the evening, and when I tell him he does not love me, he just says he is happy to know I am near him, and he doesn't think it worth while to tell me he loves me all the time; I know it without the telling. O! he is so indifferent, auntie; I know he is growing indifferent to me, and our happy married life is over." Here she broke down and cried herself to sleep.

Young people cry their heartaches to sleep. I lay awake and thought; that is elderly fashion. It is the old story, I crooned to myself, the reaction from the honeymoon; poor children, how they do love each other; and how much they do suffer. I hope Dudley is asleep. I'd like to comfort him, dear boy. I heard a noise in the next room. Dudley was moving about, then I saw the library gas was lit.

He is going to read the night out; he feels it worse than she does, dear, foolish children—then I went to sleep.

The following day the same icy indifference covered aching hearts. Annie told the story over again. I said I was so sorry, so sorry. I could not say more, words were useless, their hearts were steeled against each other. At twilight I opened the piano and began crooning over some old melodies. Annie lay among the cushions on the divan. Presently my fingers strayed into the sweetest and tenderest of all Scotch songs:—

"Douglas, Douglas,
Tender and true,"

I sang it low but distinctly, and when I came to the words: "And would I could have you back again, Douglas," my old voice quavered, a chord in my heart that had long lain silent, vibrated

with the wistful longing of the song. I heard the door shut, and knew, without seeing, that Dudley was by the fire. I rambled in and out of several melodies, not singing, but playing softly. I found my fingers were straying among the Scotch airs again. "Annie Laurie" came out of the throng, and my voice took up the words. When I had reached the second verse, I heard a sound on the divan. Was it a smothered sob and a caress? I hoped so, but I still sang on:—

"For my bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and dee."

Then my fingers strayed into "Home, Sweet Home," and I stole softly away with a side glance at two figures so close together on the divan, the sight made my heart leap for joy. Later I entered.

"Why, you here, Dudley? When did you come in?"

"O, auntie!" and they both hugged me until my breath gave way.

"You did it, you dear old conspirator, with your blessed songs. We do love each other just as well, no, better than ever."

When the elevator dropped me down five storeys the following morning, my inner consciousness, instead of going to the cellar, lifted itself in sheer joy to the very top of the house.—Brooklyn Times.

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL.

Within the last few years the system of kindergarten has become very popular in this country, though but little is known of the history of the man to whom the invention is due.

Friedrich Froebel was born on the 21st of April, 1782, at Ober Weissbock, in the principality of Schwarzberg. His mother died when he was yet an infant, and his father, who was a minister, left the child to the care of servants.

After a few years his father married a second time, but his wife evinced no tenderness toward her step-children. The father himself taught Friedrich, and found great difficulty in making him understand even the simplest things.

When he was about eleven years old, his uncle, also a minister, conceiving a fondness for Friedrich, begged his brother to allow him to take the boy to his own home in Stadlin. Here his mind awakened, and he studied with success. When the time came for him to learn a trade, his father sent him to a forester to learn woodcraft, geometry and surveying. Much to the disgust of this forester, Froebel seemed to waste his time; but in reality he was acquiring in private a knowledge of botany and languages.

At eighteen he went to study in the University of Vienna, where he devoted himself to the physical sciences. Afterwards his father wished him to become a farmer, but Froebel had no taste for agriculture, and upon being offered the position of teacher in Frankfurt, he accepted it. He became interested in the Pestalozzian system, which was attracting a good deal of attention in Germany at that time, but the method did not suit him, and after a good deal of thought on the relation of the teacher to the pupil, he concluded that the first requisite and true mode of teaching was to live with one's scholars and enter into all their feelings and pursuits.

In 1816 he tried to establish a school of his own. Of it he says that during the eleven years in which he kept it his affairs were in a state of chronic bankruptcy. The novelty of Froebel's school was one of the chief obstacles against its pecuniary success.

In 1818 he married an intelligent lady of Berlin, who proved a true helpmate. When he was fifty-three years old he was appointed director of an orphan asylum in Switzerland, and here he enjoyed a season of happiness. But there was one idea uppermost in his mind, and that was a "kindergarten," the interesting and developing the minds of children. He began to edit a weekly paper in

which he explained his method, and upon his opening a school in Blackenberg a number of children were sent to him, and his system was found to work most favorably. The people then began to interest themselves in his school, and the Queen of Saxony showed her approval of this new mode of education by attending his lectures. In a short time its superiority over other methods of juvenile training was so manifest that it bid fair to be universally adopted. But the Prussian government issued a decree suppressing them as dangerous to society.

For fifteen years Froebel labored to convince them of its high moral tone, and at last the decree was revoked, and a little over a year after Froebel died, at the age of seventy, leaving behind him a work that will be a lasting monument to his memory. As long as there are children in this world, so long will the name of Froebel be remembered with love.

THE MORALS OF A CENTURY AGO.

The Saturday Review of London recently contained this statement:—

Sunday was a great day of amusement with the Londoners of 1800. According to a calculation 200,000 of them spent each Sunday in summer in the suburban inns and resorts, in getting rid of \$125,000. The statistician classes these pleasure-seekers as follows: Sober, 50,000; in high glee, 90,000; drunkish, 30,000; staggering tipsy, 10,000; muzzy, 15,000; dead drunk, 5,000; total, 200,000.

The population of London at that time was about 850,000.

It also states that in the year 1800, when the bill to prevent bull-baiting was presented in the House of Lords, the game was warmly defended as proper and right, by many distinguished statesmen, and the bill for its repression was defeated.

Bad as the state of morals is at present, it is not quite so bad as is revealed by these facts. Even though the Established Church of England, which embraces more than half of her pulpits, is so hampered by connection with the State as to have but little spirituality; still the gospel has made a great change for the better in the manners of that metropolis. The Sabbath is now well observed, drunkenness is repressed and order prevails.

Sometimes we see the powers of evil so effective in this country, and resisting so greatly the best efforts of Christian workers, that we are tempted to despondency. Let the improvement that has been realized in London be an encouragement to us to continue striving and faint not.

CHIMNEY SWEEPS.

The London sweeps are protesting against compulsory registration; "if we love one another," says one, "as we ought to in the trade, we should be sweeps to the backbone." But sweeps are not always in a bad or depressed condition. It was in a South Devon town that the rector met the chief sweep of the place. "Well, John, how many chimneys have you swept to-day?" "Eleven, sir." "That means eleven shillings, eleven pints of cider, and eleven breakfasts?" "Yes, sir." "Money comes easily to you, John." "It always does to the black-coated gentry." And the wealthy rector told the tale with great gusto till he died. It is now the property of a man who drives the coach, who watches his chance of dragging it into the talk around the box-seat.

Amongst almanacs and year books the *Star Almanac* of Montreal stands a great leader. The *Star Almanac* for 1894 is just out. The publishers are filling the orders in rotation as they were received, but it is difficult.

Spurgeon: Drinking cold water neither makes a man rich nor in debt, nor his wife a widow; but this mighty fine ale of his will do all this for him, and make him a beast while he lives and wash him away to his grave before his time.