

Poetry.

Sleep.

(From Dr. Holland's new poem, "The Mistress of the Manor.")

Oh blessed sleep! in which exempt,
From our threefold long hours we lie,
Our wretchedness and our despair,
And our poor spirits saved thereby
From perishing of self-contempt!

We weary of our petty aims;
We sicken with our selfish deeds;
We shrink and shrivel in the flames
That low desire ignites and feeds,
And grudge the debt that duty claims.

Oh sweet forgetfulness of sleep!
Oh bliss, to drop the pride of dress,
And all the shame of which we weep,
And, toward our native nothingness,
To drop ten thousand fathoms deep!

"What Can It Matter?"

BY THE HON. MRS. GREENE.

PART I.

"Mary, Mary! listen, I have a piece of news for you!" cried Willie Leonard, as he entered the cottage door, and looked round for his sister. "Ah, there you are at that everlasting washing-tub! I suppose you'll say now that you can't come with me?"

"What's your news, and where do you want me to go with you?" asked Mary, raising a pleasant smiling face from the tub over which she was stooping. "If you can wait until I wring these couple of dresses out, and hang them on the wall to dry, I'll go with you wherever you like."

"Why not leave them where they are, and come out at once?" urged Willie. "What can it matter whether you do them now or when you come home? A fellow can't have a morning to himself every day in the year; and, only think, I'm almost certain I've spotted a wren's nest in the glen this morning, besides a goldfinch's and a linnet's; so I want you to look sharp and have a good egg-hunt with me. I would have stopped to bag a few of them on my way to Farmer Stack's with the dairy cart, only I was late already."

"I am quite sure you were late; you need not tell me that as news," replied Mary, laughing, as she drew a long lilac skirt out of the tub, and began twisting it round and round in serpent-like coils, allowing the soapy water to stream into the wooden vessel beneath. "I'd go with you now, and welcome, only I promised mother I would not stir out of the place until I had these two skirts hung up to dry. Suppose you go and hunt for the egg-basket, Willie, while you are doing nothing, for there is no other way one can carry them safely home."

"Not I; I am far too tired to go hunting over the place for it, or anything else. And what can it matter whether we have the basket or not? I can carry the eggs in my hat, which is just as good a place, if not better."

"That's all very well; but you know they fell out of your cap the other day when Sprat jumped suddenly up at your arm, and, only it was in the field, they would have been all smashed and ruined. And if I were you," added Mary, shaking her head at the little rough-haired terrier who followed at her brother's heels, "I would not have you bring Master Sprat with you egg-hunting; he frightens the birds off their nests, and does no good."

"What a Solomon you are, to be sure!" sneered Willie, sitting down, and rocking himself to and fro in the low kitchen chair, while he watched with feverish impatience for the tub to be set aside, and his sister at liberty to join him. "Here, let me squeeze out those rags, Mary; you go up, and put on your hat. I am sure I could do it as well as you." And Willie, standing up again, took off his coat, and began to roll up his shirt-sleeves preparatory to the attempt.

"Indeed you could do nothing of the kind. If you have only patience to wait for five minutes more, I'll have everything finished, and be ready to go with you. There now, don't go off in a rage, that's a good fellow!"

Willie put on his coat again, and strode out of the cottage, followed by Sprat; but he was too fond of his own pleasure to set off really without his sister, for Mary was far too pleasant a companion and too clever a seeker to be left behind. She had small hands, which could find their way through thorns and briars to the coveted nest; and besides, she had never been deceived as to the eggs themselves. She knew by the touch and the weight whether the tiny bird was nearly hatched, or even partially so, in which case the egg was always replaced in the nest; for Mary and Willie were not nest robbers in the true sense of the word—they did not rifle the fledglings, or deprive the mother of her expectant brood—they were only egg-collectors, taking one here, another there, whose hollow shell contained no promise of a bird, and adding each new-found treasure of pale-blue spotted with maroon, or emerald-green dotted with brown specks, to those already in their possession, and never returning to any nest the second time, lest the timid mother might be frightened from her charge, and desert it altogether.

So Willie sauntered out into the lane, switching at the dandelions, and slyly pebbles at the ducks, who, terrified by Sprat, waddled to and fro across the road, till at length Mary appeared in the doorway, with her large sun-hat on her head, and the linen dresses in her arms which she had been so industriously washing for her mother.

"That will do now," cried Willie, turning at the sound of her step; "can't you throw those wretched things on the hedge, and not wait to climb up to the top of the wall? If there is a short way and a long of doing things, you always choose the long one. I declare you are the most perverse creature that ever lived! What can it matter whether a thing is dried on a hedge, or on a wall?"

"It matters a great deal," replied Mary, good humouredly. "A nice row you made the other morning because your shirt was torn on a thorn, which was sticking somewhere out of sight in the hedge! And, besides, the fowl fly up on the hedge, and ruin the clean things with their dirty feet."

"Oh, of course, you'd have an excuse ready for walking on your head, if you choose to do it; you girls always will have your way in everything."

Mary made no reply, but, running along the side of the lane, soon reached the bleaching wall; she threw the dresses over her shoulder while she climbed the stile, and then, standing on the uppermost step, she shook them out and laid them along the top, the bricks being specially rounded for the purpose, so that no angles or rough corners might tear the linen.

"Hand me up a couple or so of good heavy stones, that's a dear boy," she cried to her brother beneath, "or they may slip off when they dry, and tumble into the field."

"Now Mary, what can it matter whether you put stones on them or not? I believe you are worrying me on purpose."

"No indeed, Willie, I am not! But if you would only let me do as I ought to do at first, I should be ready in half the time; if you don't hand me up the stones, I shall have to go down and get them for myself."

Willie, seeing that Mary was resolute, and that nothing save the stones intervened between him and his promised pleasure, handed them up—somewhat sullenly, it must be confessed—and the dresses being securely fixed on the wall, he followed his sister over the stile into the field beyond.

The way to the glen for which they were bound runs through a series of pasture grounds, deliciously green, soft to the feet, and pleasant to the eye, so Willie's temper soon recovered itself; and, leaning on his sister's arm, he discussed with her the merits of various eggs, their size, colour, &c., while both ardently looked forward to the chance of finding the wren's nest—a golden-crested wren, too, as Willie described it—whose eggs were, to say the least, uncommon.

The first few fields were trudged through almost unconsciously, so interested were they in their speculations, and no stiles or gates having so far obstructed their way, each pasture being only separated from the other by a row of trees, and never used for any other purpose but sheep-grazing; but now, as they came to the middle field, a large stretch of pasture ground surrounded on all sides by a stone wall, they beheld to their dismay that the gap which had been open all the winter was filled up with stones, and no way of entrance left save by climbing the gate, which was an unusually high one and devoid of cross-bars, while the spikes at the top made it difficult for a man to cross, and almost impossible for a girl.

"Here's a pretty go!" cried Willie, angrily, as he gazed alternately at the newly-built gap and the high iron gate. "I'd like to know what they have done this for! Filling up a fence that's useful to everybody, and sticking a gate in one's field that no one can climb over—such tom-foolery. But it's just like Farmer Stack, throwing stumbling-blocks in every one's way."

"He must have some good reason for doing it, I suppose," observed Mary, quietly; though the bright glow of expectancy faded from her face, as she looked hopelessly at the high granite wall before her.

"Some good reason for fiddlesticks!" replied Willie, contemptuously. "But that's just the image of you, Mary—when a fellow is vexed, always trying to prove that there's nothing on earth to make him angry. We may just as well turn round and go home now, for you could as soon think of climbing that gate, Mary, as I could climb over the moon."

"Suppose we walk round by the road," suggested Mary, in a very humble voice; for when Willie was angry he generally found something to carp at in her remarks.

"Go round by the road! why, I think you are just a simpleton, Mary, and nothing else; it's a good hour's walk round by the road, as you call it, to the place we are aiming for; and as I've walked that way once already this morning with the dairy cart, and shall have to go over every step of the ground again this evening, I've no mind to give my legs all this additional work. No, let's go home." And Willie whistled to his dog, who, having slipped through the offending bars, was standing on the opposite side, barking energetically at them, to show the thing could be done, if they only chose to follow his good example.

"Did you try the gate to see whether it was locked?" asked Mary, who did not like the idea of giving up the expedition; besides, she knew Willie had only proposed it because he was angry.

"What's the use of a gate, you stupid, unless it is locked?" But though Willie said this, he walked over and examined it with both eyes and hands.

"I can't believe it is locked," he said, presently; "it seems to open and shut with some kind of a spring, for there is no padlock or keyhole of any kind; some new dodge, I suppose, of old Stack's. I never met such a fellow for dodges in all my life."

Willie worked, and fiddled, and pressed at the spring with all his force, but it gave no promise of yielding; he was obliged presently to call Mary to his aid, who had—after all he pretended to look down upon her—clever hands and clever brains, and very often Willie had found them of service to him before now.

"Come on here, you silly!" he cried, testily; "why do you stand gaping there, as if you expected the gate to walk open at word of command? One can't force open a spring all by oneself that would take a Goliath to move it. Here, do you press against this tongue of iron, while I try to push it up out of the place it has got latched in."

Mary pressed with all her force against the spring, while her brother shoved, and kicked, and shook the gate in his vexation; but it was all in vain, till at last one kick, more vicious than the rest, freed the latch from the bar in which it was caught, and the gate immediately flying wide open, sent Mary sprawling on her face upon the ground.

She was not much hurt, however, and the relief of having conquered the great difficulty which lay in their path prevented her from thinking of the few scratches she had received; she soon scrambled to her feet, once more the bright smile of anticipated joy beamed over her face.

"Come on now!" cried Willie, taking her by the arm. "I'm glad I conquered the brute, though I'm trembling all over from the force it took to open it. I thought I should never have done it, and that last kick I gave was more in a rage than anything else."

"But you'll shut it again, won't you?" asked Mary, anxiously, for her brother had already begun to drag her forward.

"I shut it! Don't you wish you could catch me doing it! I've just as much notion of bothering myself to fasten Farmer Stack's gates as I have of doing anything else to please him."

"Indeed, Willie, you must go back and close it; they would not have taken so much pains to fasten it unless there was some reason for it."

"There you go again with your 'reason'; but I tell you there is neither right nor reason in the matter; it's simply one of old Stack's whims, like his lawn-mowers, and steam-ploughs, and the rest of his new inventions, robbing people of their right of way. Come on, Mary, I say, and don't drag away from me so, for I won't shut the gate, and there's the end of it."

"Then I will try myself and see if I can't do it," replied Mary, firmly; "for I am certain we ought to fasten it; they may be going to put the black bull into the field for all you know; they kept him here all last summer; and, whether or not, I'm certain, as we found it shut, we ought to fasten it."

"Very good; do as you like," replied Willie, turning on his heel, and whistling. "You know you are simply shutting it out of obstinacy, for what on earth can it matter whether the gate is fastened or not?" and Willie, not deigning to look behind him, walked straight on across the field.

(To be continued.)

Hair, Hats, and Hideousness.

We begin to despair of ever again seeing—in public—the natural beauty of woman's head. When unadorned, this, pre-eminently, is adorned the most. Nothing can exceed the sweet gracefulness of the curve lines which contour many and many female faces and figures, when left to themselves, to be as God made them to be; or when treated simply, and in that most exquisite of all tastes, which neither neutralizes nor overrides, but just suits and heightens, every natural trait, and beautifies all inborn and characteristic seamliness, without introducing any alien gaud or glare. How refreshing it is now and then to come upon some woman who has wit and culture enough to know that nothing can make her so beautiful as to part her hair naturally, and sweep it back from her forehead either in loosely flowing simplicity, or coiled and twisted in careless grace into one of those honest knots which painters love; and courage enough to do as she likes with her hair, and her head, whatever others may think, say, or do. It would be bad for those who trade in dead locks, and in those pitiable shams of them, which some women besides our Irish female fellow-citizens are wont to tie, or tack, in greasy, nasty heaps, upon the back part of the head; but what a gain it will be to cleanliness and comeliness alike when the wind of fashion changes, and it is no longer "the style" for a woman thus to overload and disfigure herself.—*The Congregationalist*.

The Difficulties of the Chinese Language.

An able writer in the *Chinese Recorder*, treating of the Chinese language says:

"I need not mention that the Chinese language for an European mind is the most difficult in the world. It is generally believed in Europe, that this language is a very rich one (the number of characters being estimated at 80,000, of which the great Dictionary of Kanghi explains about 40,000) and that every conception is expressed by a separate character. This view is not correct. The number of characters we meet in Chinese books is limited; some estimate them at 5,000 only, and most of the characters have numerous meanings, which depend upon their combination with other characters, upon the branch of science of which the book treats, and often also upon the time at which the book was written. The character *shi*, for instance, means *really*, but in botanical works the *Fruits of plants* are designated by this hieroglyph. For the understanding of Chinese books, it is therefore not sufficient to know the meaning of the single characters, but their position must be taken into consideration, as well as their combinations with other characters. In translating from the Chinese, the principal question is the understanding of groups of words in their connection, or phrases, not of single words; for very often the single characters in a phrase lose completely their original meaning. In the dictionaries for example, you find *fu* to assist, and *ma* horse. But *fu-ma* is not 'an assistant horse,' but is used in Chinese historical writing always to designate the *son-in-law of the Emperor*. Chinese literature is very rich in such combinations, and phrases formed by two or more characters; and the original meaning of the characters, in most of the cases, does not serve to explain the phrases. It is in vain that you look for them in the dictionaries; the greater part, although often unknown to our European sinologists, have come down by tradition to the Chinese of the present day, and they are so familiarized with these terms, that they consider it superfluous to incorporate them in the dictionary."

Moderation in Exercise.

The *Christian at Work* has tried it and ought to know:—

Gymnasiums are grand things; but let common sense dictate quantity, and qualities, and do not allow the dumb-bells to drag down the shoulders, or had you better hang by your feet to a ring till you get black in the face. Fencing is good; but do not be rough, nor play with loafers. Pedestrianism is healthful; but do not forget that the road back is a little further than the road out, though it may be the same road. . . . When we forsake the fitful and extravagant use of gymnastics, and came to their gradual and intelligent use, we found them, next to religion, the best panacea for all earthly ills. We have put down all the burdens of the last fifteen years at the door of the gymnasium, or hung them on the horizontal bars, or demolished them with the butt end of dumb-bells. . . . Do not take so much of anything at once that you cannot take any more of it again. Moderation is a big word, which it takes some of us a long time to learn how to spell.

Rustic Baskets.

Shall I tell you about the rustic basket I made yesterday, and with which I was well pleased?

First came the ground-work, which was half an old paint-keg, soaked in hot water and ashes until most of the paint could be easily removed. I first attempted to weave a kind of basket of weeping willow, but found it too brittle. By the way, this willow can be made into beautiful baskets in February and March, when the sap begins to flow. Failing in this, I found long, straight shoots of the willow as large round as my finger. These, when stripped of the bark, which came off very easily, were of a beautiful greenish white. A blow or two with a butcher knife separated these into pieces a little longer than the height of my half-keg. Then, with my penknife, I split them in two. The willow cuts and splits quite easily if used when first cut from the tree, but becomes brittle as soon as dry.

I tacked these little pieces, the round side out, closely across the bottom of the keg. That was because it was to be hung up, and the bottom would show. Then, I tacked my pieces to the side of my keg, placing them up and down, like the staves of a pail, and fastening each piece firmly near the top and bottom. With my knife, I rounded the upper end of each stave, and my old keg was changed into a neat white pail.

But it looked unfinished. The tack heads showed, and it needed hoops. Our yellow willow furnished just what was wanted. Its long twigs proved to be capable of being twisted into any shape, and without breaking the bark. Three strong twigs, twined nicely together, and nailed very strongly to the inside of the keg, made a splendid handle. Other twigs, tined into thick rustic hoops, slipped on and fastened, nearly covering the tacks, and gave the basket the finish it needed. They prevented the staves from springing off, while the golden green of the yellow willow contrasted beautifully with the clean, white staves. When varnished, my basket was all ready to receive the Kew-needle, which I have been petting all summer. It draped it perfectly, and I would not ask for a prettier ornament than it will be, when hung between the fringed white curtains, over my fernery.—*N.E.T. in The Advance*.

First Efforts.

It is curious to observe the first efforts of the child to exercise his powers and enlarge his range of experience. He begins to manifest his innate wish to do something, and to connect his little intelligence with things around him, by inarticulate crowing, and by vague, unsteady motions of limbs and body. His tiny fingers are always busy. He soon exhibits curiosity, and picks and pries into everything. His first attempts to walk are most awkward, feeble, and ludicrous. His activity is incessant. He rolls and tumbles and babbles for hours together. After hundreds of falls he learns to stand. How little control he has over his own motions. He starts to go forward, and staggers backward or to one side.

His first attempts to utter words are as wide of their aim as his first attempts to walk. He has no distinct idea of what he wants to do. His organs of speech are unformed. He makes the oddest approximations to correct articulation. The strong tendency to imitate everything he sees and hears continually incites him to make new trials of his powers. He mimics everything. Almost the whole of primary education is imitation. Therefore what little children most need are good models and examples.—*National Teacher*.

Primary Instruction.

It is not uncommon to hear young teachers complain that they are obliged to instruct beginners in the elements, while they would prefer to teach the higher branches to scholars of considerable culture. This complaint may arise from a total misapprehension of the nature of the teacher's vocation. The best teacher has in view not his own education, but that of his pupils. His chief interest centres in the art of instructing and developing—not in the matter imparted. He takes peculiar pleasure in the building to be erected rather than in his lumber and tools. The primary teacher who is really master of his profession, discovers perhaps more intricate problems to solve, greater demand for consummate skill, and higher triumphs of educational genius, in his apparently humble position, than are possible in the advanced grades. Too much importance can scarcely be attached to elementary teaching. Too much credit can hardly be given to the successful primary teacher.—*National Teacher*.

It Has Two Ends.

Did you ever see a person carry a ladder? He puts it on his shoulder; or, it may be puts his head between the rounds and has one of the sides resting on each shoulder, and having it nicely balanced walks along. A man with a ladder is an interesting object in a crowded street. He looks at the end before him, but the end behind him he cannot see. If he moves the front end to get out of the way of a person, away goes the rear end just as far in the opposite direction, and the slightest turn of his body, only a few inches, will give the end a sweep of several feet, and those in the way may look out for bruised hats and bumped heads, while the window glass along the street is in constant danger from the unseen rear end of the ladder. When a small boy, I was carrying a not very large ladder, when there was a crash. An unlucky movement had brought the rear end of my ladder against a window.

Instead of scolding me, my father made me stop, and said very quietly: "Look here, my son, there is one thing I wish you always to remember; that is, every ladder has two ends." I never have forgotten that, though many, many years have gone, and I never see a man carrying a ladder or other thing but what I remember the two ends. Don't we carry things besides ladders that have two ends? When I see a young man getting "fast" habits I think he sees only one end of that ladder, and that he does not know that the other end is wounding his parents' hearts. Many a young girl carries

a ladder in the shape of a love for dress and finery; she only sees the gratification of that ladder, while the end that she does not see is crushing true modesty and pure friendship as she goes along thoughtlessly among the crowd. Ah! yes, every ladder has two ends, and it is a thing to be remembered in more ways than one.—*Selected*.

The Roman Forum.

An important step has been recently made towards the more perfect elucidation of the topographical and archaeological history of ancient Rome by the complete uncovering of the Forum, the true dimensions and exact site of which have hitherto remained a matter of discussion. At the close of the last month the excavations of the Colosseum and the Forum were resumed with great energy, under the direction of Signor Rosa, whose well-directed and unremitting efforts have been rewarded by important results which have definitely determined the limits of the Forum of ancient Rome. In 1848 the first real advance to this discovery was made by Canina's detection of the site of the Basilica Julia, which stretched its entire length on the southern extremity of the Forum, from which it was separated by only a narrow road. After a temporary resumption of the works in 1852, nothing more was attempted in this direction till 1870 and 1871, when the true pavement of the Forum, with its many-sided large stones, was laid bare, and followed eastward toward the left, till it was found to be intersected by four lines of similarly paved roads. The south side of the enclosure was then clearly defined with its seven pediments, on which an equal number of votive statues had stood. One enormous columnar shaft was found shattered and split beside its base, both alike covered with the accumulated debris of ages. In 1872 the question of the extent of the Forum was decisively settled by the discovery of a traverse road, paved like the others, which formed a right angle with the front of the temple of the Dioscuri, and thus proved that the Forum did not extend towards the arch of Titus, as older topographers had assumed. At this point the workmen came upon the bas-reliefs which commemorate Trajan's erection of schools and asylums for orphans and outcast children in Rome and other parts of Italy, and his remission of all arrears of certain taxes. Although these tablets, which have been replaced on their original site, are unfortunately much injured, enough has escaped mutilation to show the beauty and harmony of the design. Near these bas-reliefs the eastern boundary of the Forum has been traced by the travertine stones of the pavement, and the line of pediments which skirted it. Among these is a columnar base, inscribed in still legible characters, and proclaiming its dedication by the prefects L. Valerius and Septimus Bassus to the three emperors, Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, and belonging, therefore, to the period between 379 and 383 A.D. An enormous mass of broken architectural fragments has been brought to light in the process of clearing out this sacred spot, but few perfect remains have been recovered, which perhaps can scarcely be wondered at when we bear in mind that at one extremity of the Forum the superincumbent mass of debris, has risen to a height of more than twenty-four feet. Yet in the year 1827, not three and a half centuries from our own times, the German and allied troops of the Emperor Charles V. were able with small labour to clear the Via Sacra from the arch of Titus to the Forum, for the triumphal passage of the conqueror of Rome.—*Academy*.

Putting out the Goos.

During the singing of the first psalm in the parish church of Birsay some years ago, a goose entered and quietly "waddled" up the passage toward the pulpit just as the preacher had got out of the tune and almost come to stand still—a not very unusual occurrence at that time. The minister, observing the goose, leaned over the pulpit, and, addressing the church-officer, said, "R., put out the goose." That functionary, not observing the presence of the feathered parishioner, and supposing that the minister's direction had reference to the preacher, marched up to that individual, and to the no small amusement of the meagre congregation, collared him, saying at the same time; "Come out o' that, follow."

Austria, Germany, and Prussia have united in a diplomatic note to the Sublime Porte, asking the consent of the Turkish Government to negotiation of commercial treaties with Roumania, which was refused by the Sultan as suzerain of the province under the Treaty of Paris.

The trial of Dr. McKaig for alleged heresy is not likely to result as did that of Professor Swing. At the recent meeting of the Presbytery of Sacramento, Dr. William McKaig communicated, by letter, his desire to withdraw the first of his offensive sermons. He professes his acceptance of the "plenary inspiration" of Scripture as taught in the Presbyterian confession of faith. He expressed also a purpose not to touch anything contrary to the standards of the Church. It is now anticipated that all disagreements between him and the Presbytery will soon be reconciled. Dr. McKaig is still serving in the Ninth Presbyterian Church of Chicago.

SPEAKING of "undermining the foundation of religion," the *Watchman and Reflector* says: "When we build our churches by faith; sweep off great debts by men hired, at a great price, to manipulate an audience under circumstances of tremendous pressure; sustain public worship by the sensationalism of the pulpit, or the artistic attractions of the choir; fill up our Sabbath Schools by pious and prizes; raise money for the various benevolent objects in all sorts of ways, we are weakening the legitimate motive that should govern us, and which it is the very purpose of God to develop within us; and without which the religion we would sustain is not worth sustaining—viz: the simple sense of duty."